

MINUTES OF PARISH LIAISON MEETING – Clerks Only

Tuesday 24th October 2023 / 18:00 – 19:00

Virtual – Microsoft Teams

Attendance	
Town and Parish Councils Andrea Robinson – Ashby Woulds Town Council Donna Purday – Heather Parish Council Emma Andrews – Charley Parish Council Jack Fargher – Ashby de la Zouch Town Council Mel Mitchell - Ashby de la Zouch Town Council Nicola Land – Ibstock & Worthington Parish Council Tracey McLean – Whitwick Parish Council	
Presenters Emma Trahearn – Community Focus Team Leader, NWLDC Mel Mitchell, Deputy Town Clerk, Ashby de la Zouch Town Council	
Officers Molly Neeson – Communities Administration Support Officer and note taker, NWLDC,	
Sent apologies Chris Jamieson – Normanton le Heath PM Donna Griggs – Kegworth PC Fiona Palmer – Castle Donington PC, Coleorton PC, Swannington PC Kelly Grove – Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford PC Sarah Tombs - Stretton en le Field PM Simon Weaver – Hugglescote and Donington le Heath PC	
Detail	Actions
OPENING THE MEETING Emma handed the meeting over to Jack Fargher to chair as Mel Mitchell was having technical issues. Jack apologised for Mel’s absence & introduced himself. Jack requested all Clerks introduce themselves, welcome to the new clerks joining the meeting Jack then passed the meeting over to Emma Trahearn to present the first agenda item.	
UPDATE ON SKILLGATE FOR PARISHES Emma Trahearn, Community Focus Team Leader, NWLDC Emma shared the Skillgate presentation and ran through what the system included once log in details have been received, highlighting that the District Council mandatory training is also available to town and parish councils if they wish, certificates can be printed off as evidence that the training has been completed, there are many other learning options available such as influencing skills, budgeting, excel etc and this service is free for parish and town councils. Emma did confirm that the options should not conflict with the training that it available from LRALC Any questions about Skillgate please contact Cat Ridgway catherine.ridgway@nwleicestershire.gov.uk . Jack thanked Emma & asked the group for any questions. Questions Q - Jack asked Emma to clarify that the mandatory training is mandatory for NWLDC staff only. A - Emma confirmed this is the case and the training is available for town parish councils but it is not mandatory.	

	<p>Jack asked Emma to share the list of all the courses available. Jack advised on Skillgate there is a course labelled ‘Emergency Planning’ this might be of use for t/p councils especially given the recent weather challenges. Ashby de la Zouch Town Council are currently looking at updating their community resilience plan, this training may offer some support to parishes.</p> <p>Jack requested if someone from the Leicestershire Resilience Forum could meet with the town council.</p> <p>Jack explained the importance on Skillgate & how ideal it is for the courses to be picked out by the type of training that works well for each individual.</p> <p>Mel Mitchell, Deputy Town Clerk, Ashby de la Zouch Town Council, joined the meeting</p>	
	<p>SLCC (SOCIETY OF LOCAL CLERKS COUNCIL) FORUM AND NATIONAL CONFERENCE UPDATE</p> <p>Mel Mitchell explained that Leicestershire was not very well represented at the SLCC conference. Mel highly recommended the conference and explained there was an online option.</p> <p>Mel is the representative for Leicestershire & Rutland clerks as a National Forum Representative and therefore offered if any Clerks wish to raise issues with her she could take that to the forum. .</p> <p>Mel provided the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLCC are revising a version of the model contract. SLCC may be proposing their own version of the model contract. - Chair of SLCC was asked what the forum could do better, the Chair advises the SLCC Forum do not raise enough issues with the board. Mel advised she can raise issues with the SLCC board. - Update received from external affairs officer who advised there was still no clarity on the funding available for Parish Church’s and places of worship. The Department for Levelling, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is looking at changing the rules for parish polls – potentially increasing to 10% or 60 electorates. - Head of member services has been working with the Barclays Bank to try and improve the service provided to parish councils. She had also arranged a meeting with Natwest Bank. - A question was raised by the Wiltshire branch regarding publication of pay details where the clerk is the sole employee. It was agreed that the vice chair of the forum would create some guidelines around what should and shouldn’t be published. - Martyn’s Law background was provided, it will be voluntary for smaller venues. It is not mandatory for parish and town councils. Recommend the free online event 16/11/23 at 12:00. https://www.slcc.co.uk/event/martyns-law/?mc_cid=a958f98181&mc_eid=7dff8a3264 - A senior officer from the DLUHC presented at the conference. They touched on some of the same items previously raised by the external affairs officer as well as remote meetings and careers allowance – this is paid throughout Wales and also to all other councillors other than parish and town. They also said that that with regards to civility and respect central government will not get involved as believed this was better dealt with at a local level. <p>Mel asked if there were any questions.</p> <p>Questions Q – Donna requested a brief explanation of Martyn’s Law. A - Mel provided a brief explanation of Martyn’s Law and how it is focused on security around the public sector.</p>	

	<p>Q – Jack raised concerns about Parish Church’s receiving funding. Jack asks Mel to provide an update. A – Mel confirmed there is still no clarity on this. Jack explained he advised his Town Council to proceed with caution when it comes to donating money to the church for repairs etc. Q - Jack also expressed concerns on parish polls, Jack asked Mel if there is an update on this. A - Mel confirmed there was no update on this, other than that it is being explored within government, but Mel could raise this at the next forum.</p> <p>There was a discussion regarding parish and town council annual meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea confirmed the standard annual meetings do not receive much or any community interest. Last year they changed it with inviting the National Forest to give a presentation, this resulted in approx. 60 people attended. Suggesting it is perhaps what we call it “annual meeting” not attracting residents to the meeting. • Nicola also confirmed their annual meeting had poor attendance from the community. <p>Other points that were raised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicola confirmed a meeting was held at her parish and the outcome was the current local plan was not currently strong enough to support a neighbourhood plan. • Andrea shared that the warm space they set up last year has turned into an informal coffee morning which has been running throughout the year. It is extremely popular and it is engaging the community, making it more than just a warm space. Jack suggested this might be a good topic for a future parish liaison. • Jack clarified with Mel that unfortunately parish and town council can still only have face to face meetings. Mel agreed. Jack mentioned that his Councillors can join online but cannot vote at the meetings if not present. 	
	<p>FUTURE OF THE PARISH LIAISON/CLERKS MEETING</p> <p>Mel asked the attendees what can be done to encourage people to participate in the meetings. The following ideas were suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The meetings to offer a networking opportunity • The meetings to be more informal • There has been a lot of change in NWL town and parish councils, perhaps there is a need for a separate clerks meeting arranged and hosted by clerks that does not involve the district council? • The meetings are useful for clerks, can be a lonely role and it also helps with finding out wider information. • Emphasis on getting to know others, sharing learning and knowledge, especially when you are a new clerk. • Face to face is ideal rather than online. • Different location to Coalville • Topics to come from clerks, chairperson, councillors. • The meetings to be chaired by a town or parish council • Strategic topics and the floor not hogged by one parish or town councils local issues • A day time or lunch time meeting 	

	<p>Outcome Action for all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have a think about topics or presentations they want to hear • To offer topics they wish to present • Does any parish or town council have a venue they would be happy to host a parish liaison in? <p>The next meeting planned for Tuesday 5th December, to hold it during the day over a lunch time and not in Coalville. The meeting to have an element of networking and considerations for future liaison meeting topics.</p>	
	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Donna requests the link for Skillgate.</p>	
	<p>CLOSE AND THANKS Mel thanked all those for attending and contributing, much appreciated.</p>	
	<p>Finish time</p>	19:11
	<p style="text-align: center;">FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tell us who you would like to hear from or what information you want to know in 2023 and beyond – community.focus@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>	
	<p><u>Future Parish Liaison Dates</u></p> <p>Tuesday 5th December 2023 – Parish Liaison (Clerks and Chairpersons) in person location and time to be changed Date for 2024 still to be confirmed but likely March, June, September, December. Potentially Parish/VCSE fair in September 2024.</p>	