

Newsletter – July 2022 /2

Derbyshire Association of Local Councils



In this newsletter:

1. [*Cost crisis – how are councils helping out?*](#)
2. [*Call for climate help*](#)
3. [*Sign up... for civility*](#)
4. [*Ease your audit headache*](#)
5. [*Cutting the cost of energy*](#)
6. [*Fraudster steals £161,000 from parish councils*](#)
7. [*DET doubles its grant offer*](#)
8. [*You have to be in it... to win it!*](#)
9. [*Dementia Communities survey – last call*](#)

1 – Cost crisis – how are councils helping out?

As costs continue to rise, we've been hearing about councils across Derbyshire helping their communities with food banks, energy initiatives and other projects aimed at easing the effects of soaring prices. In a bid to do everything possible to help ease this crisis, we'd love to share your council's ideas with colleagues across the county - so please let us know via support@derbyshirealc.gov.uk. Thankyou!

2 – Call for climate campaign help

Derbyshire's climate campaigners are some of the most active in the UK, and we'd like their help in bringing the county's parish and town councils together. We've already teamed up with Marches Energy Agency, and would love to get in contact with a clerk or councillor who might be able to co-ordinate learnings and experiences – and possibly projects. If you know of someone within the sector who might like to help us develop a county-wide strategy, please put them in touch with Wendy Amis at chiefofficer@derbyshirealc.gov.uk

3 – Sign up for civility

A new pledge has been announced as part of the drive to eliminate bullying, harassment and intimidation from the local council sector. The Civility and Respect Pledge, [details of which can be found here](#), will show a council's commitment to driving out bad behaviour. Every council which [signs up](#) will receive a certificate via email and will be listed alongside others on a national map.

4 – Ease your audit headache

Worried about internal audit? Hassled by governance documents? Stressed about risk management policy?

If the answer to any of the above is 'yes', you'll be pleased to know that DALC is launching its own internal audit service – with the specific aim of supporting clerks and councils through the legal requirements and governance responsibilities. All members of the team are highly experienced parish clerks and RFOs, and all have been fully trained in every aspect of internal audit.

Our service will offer –

- A cost-effective and professional full internal audit
- Completion of the Internal Audit Report of the AGAR
- Evaluation of whether the systems of internal control are adequate
- Review of risk management arrangements
- Comprehensive audit report with recommendations of best practice

How will our new service work?

With the specific aim of removing some of the year-end pressure on clerks, we'll be offering the audit service in two parts:

Autumn - an audit of the Council's governance documents, a review of policies, publication of information, asset register, employee records etc.

Spring - focus on the AGAR and year end finances of the Council.

Most of our audits can be carried out remotely with access to essential documents, although in-person audits will be done if requested or considered necessary. Email us at admin@derbyshirealc.gov.uk for an audit quote for your council.

5 – Cutting the cost of energy

Fourteen Derbyshire councils so far have saved an average £944.35 each since signing up with [Clear Utility Solutions](#), who we partnered with last year. With carbon savings of 112,607kg in addition to the cash savings, the firm's Chris Draper believes many more of the county's parish and town councils can benefit from his advice as prices continue to rise.

6 – Fraudster steals £161,000 from parish councils

A 47-year-old woman stole £161,000 from two parish councils by creating false invoices and fake meeting minutes. Joanne Wills from Chinnor in Oxfordshire was jailed for four years after pleading guilty to four counts of fraud by false representation. DC Nicola Clark of Abingdon CID said: "Joanne Clark was employed by both Chinnor and Towersey parish councils to safeguard their financial interests and protect their assets, and not to act against those interests for her own personal gain. A custodial sentence is a good result, particularly due to the financial deficit that she has left the parish councils in because of her greed."

7 – DET doubles its grant offer

Nearing its 25th anniversary, the Derbyshire Environmental Trust (DET) has more than doubled its available funding in 2022 to £100,000 – with grants ranging from £2,500 to £25,000 available. In its guidance notes ([which can be found here](#)), the Trust says: "This year there are two key changes to the assessment criteria, in that the Trust will give consideration to environmental impact/carbon reduction and energy efficiency... the Trust will also take note of the level of deprivation in the area of the project."

8 – You have to be in it... to win it!

Over 250 charities stand to win £1,000 each in the third Movement for Good Awards programme. Nominations are for charities in the following sectors: community, disability, education and skills, environment and climate, health, and poverty. Organisers the Benefact Group say: "The more nominations a charity receives, the more times will appear in the draw – so spread the word!" [You can nominate via this link.](#)

9 – Dementia Communities Survey – last call

Final call to complete NALC's survey of dementia-friendly communities! The deadline for the survey is 23:45 on July 22nd, with the goal being a report on the [dementia guide](#) published in 2020. Please help out if you can spare a few minutes – the [survey can be found here](#).

Best regards,

Wendy Amis, Chief Officer