From: **Comms GAPTC** comms@gaptc.org.uk
Subject: Latest important news - April 2021 including confirmation of return to face-to-face meetings
Date: 29 April 2021 at 15:33
To: Alison Robinson ceo@gaptc.org.uk

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What you can find in this newsletter:

Return face-to-face council meetings after 6th May confirmed
GAPTC AGM
Updated Legal Topic Notes on website
Star Council Awards
VAT on digital services
Save money on fuel costs
Survey and two consultations
Training programme update including new courses

Return to face-to-face council meetings after 6th May confirmed

Last Wednesday (21st April) the High Court sat to discuss a legal challenge to allow virtual meetings for Local Government. Judgement has been passed and the conclusion was "... we conclude that the Secretary of State was correct in November 2016 and July 2019 to say that primary legislation would be required to allow local authority “meetings” under the 1972 Act to take place remotely. In our view, once the Flexibility Regulations cease to apply, such meetings must take place at a single, specified geographical location; attending a meeting at such a location means physically going to it; and being “present” at such a meeting involves physical presence at that location.” Therefore Town and Parish Councils will have to meet face to face beyond the 6th May.

Hybrid meetings - We have received questions about holding hybrid meetings where councillors can join in remotely if they prefer not to attend in person. Legislation does not allow this, but if you have the technology, councillors can watch but not participate in discussion or vote and the same would go for the public, who could watch but not ask questions in public participation or comment at any other time.

GAPTC AGM

We are planning to hold our AGM at Highnam Community Centre on Saturday 24 July, all being well. The event will take place from 10.30am – 1.30pm and we are hoping that our guest speaker will be from Gloucestershire Highways. As usual there will be a scrummy lunch and an opportunity to meet our sponsors, CCLA and Scribe Accounting. Look out for further information.

Updated Legal Topic Notes on website

We have added the latest updates to the documents section of the website:
LTN37 Freedom of Information
LTN87 Procurement

Star Council Awards

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is once again running its awards programme this year as part of its work to recognise the local (parish and town) council sector’s achievements. The Star Council Awards are the only

awards in England to celebrate the local council sector's brilliant contribution to its communities. Therefore, the awards are an excellent opportunity for councils, councillors, clerks, and county associations to showcase how they have made a real difference locally.
This year, the theme of the awards will focus on projects that have positively impacted communities in the context of COVID-19. Details: www.nalc.gov.uk/our-work/star-council-awards

VAT on digital services
The Parkinson Partnership has updated our guidance note about VAT on digital services from outside the UK (see attached) and this includes Zoom Inc's new GB VAT number.

Save Council Money on Fuel Costs
If you are responsible for street lighting or running a community building, then this recording of a recent talk by Clear Utility Solutions might be of interest. They specialise in green energy so they may be able to help you save money on your gas and electricity costs. Clear Utility Solutions work with other county associations and have saved over £35,000 for Northamptonshire local councils, plus a lot of carbon emissions as well. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLzE73VpO9w

Survey and two consultations for your contribution

Survey on Support for Young People in Communities

NALC is calling on local (parish and town) councils to complete its new survey on young people. The survey (link below) will explore what local councils are currently doing to support young people in their communities.
How do local (parish and town) councils support young people in their community?

Rural Broadband Consultation

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has just launched a consultation into rural broadband that NALC will be responding to (see attached). NALC would welcome your input, so please send your response to Chris Borg, Policy Manager, National Association of Local Councils at **nalc@nalc.gov.uk** by 17:00 on Tuesday 25th May at the latest.

Electronic Communications Consultation
The Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government has just launched a consultation into electronic communications infrastructure that NALC will be responding to. Again, they would appreciate your input and all details are included in the relevant attached policy consultation briefing. Please send your response to Chris Borg at NALC by 17:00 on 21st May.

Training programme update including new courses

We have added training courses arranged into the autumn and these will continue to be delivered online. A return to some face-to-face training is being kept under review.

Full information and pricing can be found in the Training calendar on the website and bookings should be made using the online booking form. If a course doesn't appear in the list below, it is because it is already fully booked.

Being a Better Councillor Part 1 - 26 May 10am – noon (Priority is given to candidates booking both Part 1 and Part 2)

Being a Better Councillor Part 2 - 23 June 10am – noon (Priority is given to candidates booking both Part 1 and Part 2)
Being a Better Councillor Part 1 - 28 June 10am – noon (Priority is given to candidates booking both Part 1 and Part 2)

Finance for Councillors - 30 June 10-11.30am (book online but bookings subject to confirmation by the Parkinson Partnership)

Chairmanship Skills - 8 July 10am - noon
Finance for Councillors - 15 July 10-11.30am (book online but bookings subject to confirmation by the Parkinson Partnership)

Being a Better Councillor Part 2 - 19 July 10am – noon (Priority is given to candidates booking both Part 1 and Part 2)

Internal Controls - 20 July 10am - 11.30am (book online but bookings subject to confirmation by the Parkinson Partnership)
GAPTC AGM - 24 July Highnam Community Centre – 10.30am – 1.30pm

Introduction to VAT for local councils - 8 September 10 -11.30am (book online but bookings subject to confirmation by the Parkinson Partnership)

Clerks the Knowledge - the essentials - 16 September 10am – noon

Planning in Plain English – 30 September 10am - noon

CiLCA Training & Mentoring (first of four sessions) - 5 October 0930-1400 (remaining sessions take place on 7 December, 8 February & 12 April)

Budget Planning & Precept Setting – 7 October 10 – 11am

Introduction to VAT for local councils - 12 October 10 -11.30am (book online but bookings subject to confirmation by the Parkinson Partnership)

Clerks More Knowledge - the finance module 14 October 10am - noon
Clerks More Knowledge – a miscellany, including planning 18 November 10am – noon

Kind regards

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