

Publications
**Star Council
Awards 2019:
The Finalists**

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National Association of Local Councils
(NALC)

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

NALC's Star Council Awards are the only national awards which recognise the achievements of the local (parish and town) council sector.

The awards rightly celebrate the positive difference England's 10,000 councils, 100,000 councillors, 43 county associations, and thousands of clerks, make to building strong communities.

I want to extend a huge personal thanks to this year's sponsors, as without their continued generous support, the awards just wouldn't be possible: BHIB Councils Insurance, the overall sponsors of the awards; and the category sponsors Blachere Illumination, CCLA, Came and Company, DCK Accounting Solutions and Vision ICT.

Thanks also to Vaughton's, who have once again supported the awards by supplying the trophies for each of our finalists, all manufactured by highly skilled craftsmen at their factory in the Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham.

This year our tier of local government marks 125 years of building strong communities that are cohesive, healthy, safe, sustainable, and prosperous. Therefore it was quite fitting that our awards saw a record breaking number of entries - a third more entries than in 2018. I am grateful to everyone who put themselves forward and told us their story of how they are making a difference, reiterating just why local councils are the key to our grassroots democracy and at the heart of many communities in England.

Of course this made the job of our expert panel of judges even more difficult!

This year's judges were; Chris Widgery, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Helen Jenkins, Local Government Association, Lis Moore, Society of Local Council Clerks, Rachel Wall, De Montfort University Leicester, Cllr Mike Beal, West Sussex Association of Local Councils, and Michelle South from the award headline sponsors, BHIB Councils Insurance.

My thanks to them all for giving up a considerable amount of time to read and assess all entries, then meeting at the NALC office in London to discuss and debate at great length each entry and their impact on the local community, before finally agreeing on their winners and runners up.

I know they were hugely impressed by the ambition, innovation and impact of the work being done by local councils and county associations right across

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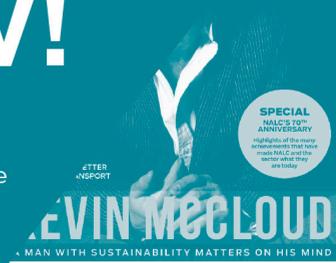
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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

the country. The standard of entries bears witness to councils' dedication to improved working, community leadership and service delivery.

Once again the winner of the Council of the Year category was taken out of the judges hands, as the three finalists selected by the judges panel were put to a public vote to determine who would be crowned the winner.

Building on this innovation introduced last year so successfully, this year we also asked county associations to vote in the County Association of the Year category, adding their votes to those of the judges.

As the chairman of NALC, I am immensely proud to be able to represent and promote our tier of local government on a national stage. Being able to draw on examples of the amazing work of our local councils – such as those through the Star Council Awards, Council Spotlight, Points of Light, the Local Council Award Scheme, and Peer Review – is vital to helping me to do that.

And just as importantly, it allows us to be able to share good practice across the sector, to provide inspiration to others, and help the sector improve its effectiveness.

Thank you once again to everyone who entered, and congratulations to our winners and runners up.

Cllr Sue Baxter
Chairman of NALC



We are proud to be headline
sponsors of the

Star Council Awards 2019

Best of luck to all the finalists!

From everyone at

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Over the past year, our relationship with NALC, county Associations and local councils have flourished. We have provided training, advice, insurance and risk management solutions. We can be confident that you have the right knowledge and protection for your local council. The relationship with our partner insurer, Aviva, has helped us open doors to the Aviva Community Fund to secure valuable funding for many projects in your communities.

We are delighted to headline sponsor this year's awards. Many amazing people are working tirelessly for their local communities and striving to make a difference. The Star Council Awards provide an excellent opportunity to recognise individuals and councils and share stories to inspire others and celebrate achievements.

Enjoy the evening and the rest of the conference. My team and I look forward to meeting many of you and celebrating your achievements with you.

Ashwin Mistry OBE
Chairman of BHIB Insurance Brokers

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CLERK OF THE YEAR SPONSORED BY VISION ICT

Steven Fletcher, Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council, Lincolnshire

Mr Fletcher has completely transformed the workings and ethos of Mablethorpe and Sutton Town Council. Under his leadership the council became the first in Lincolnshire to receive the Local Council Award Scheme's Quality Award in 2015, followed by Quality Gold in 2017. Mr Fletcher is Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualified and obtained the community governance qualification in 2016/17. At the council Mr Fletcher oversees a team managing a range of assets and services including CCTV, cycleways, a nature reserve and public toilets. Mr Fletcher is always willing to go the extra mile. During recent flooding in Wainfleet he did not hesitate to offer to open and staff two centres for residents evacuated from their homes.

Donna Ford, Midsomer Norton Town Council, Avon

When Ms Ford became clerk of Midsomer Norton Town Council in 2018, the town had been locked in negotiations with Bath and North East Somerset Council to secure its community buildings, including the town hall, for over a decade. Ms Ford brought together a team of stakeholders and put together a community benefit case which resulted in Bath and North East Somerset Council agreeing to transfer two additional community buildings and a nature reserve. Bath and North East Somerset Council also dropped their price for the town hall and agreed to install a new lift and bring it up to standard.

Linda Larter, Sevenoaks Town Council, Kent

During her time with Sevenoaks Town Council Ms Larter has led on numerous complex projects. Most recently she worked with stakeholders to establish a masterplan for the northern area of Sevenoaks. The new masterplan relied heavily on the improvement of the Bat and Ball Station. Ms Larter successfully negotiated a 25 year lease of the station building, secured over £750,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to pay for the renovation works and project managed their delivery. The building opened in early 2019 and is now a successful venue for community events, in addition to providing a community cafe and public toilets for travellers and residents.



“A garden requires patient labour and attention.
Plants do not grow merely to satisfy ambitions
or to fulfill good intentions. They thrive because
someone expended effort on them.”

– *Liberty Hyde Bailey, Horticulturalist and Botanist*

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COUNTY ASSOCIATION PROJECT OF THE YEAR SPONSORED BY CCLA

Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC)

The Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC) has been working with Essex County Council to improve health and wellbeing in Essex. EALC organised focus groups looking at how local councils assist with health and wellbeing. One outcome was to provide mental health first aid training for local councils within Essex. EALC is now working with Essex County Council and training providers to organise and deliver courses to as many local councils as possible. EALC has also recently appointed a new member of staff as a health and wellbeing officer and set up a health and wellbeing board for local councils.

Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC)

The Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (NCALC) saw the recent community governance review (CGR) in Northampton as an opportunity to create new local councils in unparished areas of the town. NCALC successfully applied for a grant to enable allocation of officer time to support the CGR. The county association convinced Northampton Borough Council to extend the CGR to cover the whole borough and worked to sell the benefits of local councils to principal authority councillors, officers and local residents' associations. Northampton Borough Council has since approved two models to go to a second stage consultation, both of which will result in the borough being fully parished from 1 April 2020.

Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC)

The Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC) held six prospective councillor events to encourage people to stand as local councillors in the May 2019 local council elections. To promote the events, WALC produced posters and asked members to include them on their websites and noticeboards. WALC approached borough and district councils in Warwickshire, who provided venues, refreshments and advertised the events locally. WALC also approached Warwickshire County Council, who promoted the events through various communications channels. A consistent programme was devised for each event and attendees were given handouts providing information about local councils and guidance on standing as a candidate.

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YOUNG COUNCILLOR OF THE YEAR

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Cllr Emily Benner, Croxley Green Parish Council, Hertfordshire

Over the last year and a half, Cllr Benner has worked tirelessly to bring Croxley Green Parish Council into the modern world. This has included introducing the use of videos into the council, designing posters and increasing the council's presence on social media. As the only active female councillor last year, Cllr Benner ran an inclusive campaign which attracted both working age councillors and three new female councillors. Cllr Benner has also raised over £1000 for charity by running a community quiz night and led on engagement for the Croxley Green neighbourhood plan.

Cllr Gilly Reynolds, Oakengates Town Council, Shropshire

Cllr Reynolds began her involvement in the community at a young age, firstly as a school councillor and then as a member of Labour Youth. She has continued to be involved in the community, gaining election to Oakengates Town Council whilst at university. Cllr Reynolds has a passion for helping families, backing the transfer of the children's centre to the local council and providing opportunities for free activities as chair of the council's community and events committee. She is keen to see more young people get involved in the community.

Cllr Daniel Thomas, Much Wenlock Town Council, Shropshire

Cllr Thomas has worked incredibly hard since being elected to Much Wenlock Town Council in May 2018. His standout achievement is organising an event to commemorate the end of the First World War. Cllr Thomas joined the working group, secured a venue and liaised with the local senior school to safeguard the public and ensure an excellent view of the event. He built the brazier that was the focal point of the event and organised for a roll of honour board to go on display. Cllr Thomas also organised the lighting up of a church featuring First World War images and arranged for silent soldiers and poppies and to be displayed around the town.



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COUNCILLOR OF THE YEAR

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Cllr Sara Burrell, Plaistow and Ifold Parish Council, West Sussex

Cllr Burrell led a successful project opposing a company that took over a dairy farm in order to produce gas from an industrial scale tank. She developed close relationships with the adjoining local council, district councillors and a community pressure group, resulting in her leading the combined effort challenging the development. Successful argument by Cllr Burrell resulted in the District Council refusing permission. When the developer appealed, Cllr Burrell led the joint local councils' successful case in two public planning inquiries. She attended every day during the two hearings, assisting the council's legal team and drafted and presented a 128 page environmental impact proof of evidence.

Cllr Eartha Pond, Queens Park Community Council, London

Cllr Pond has contributed to community life in many ways. She is actively involved as a local councillor on Queens Park Community Council, where, as vice chair, she provides access to a range of local projects including a summer and winter festival and an over 50's Christmas party. Cllr Pond has also contributed to community life through her positions as a teacher and trustee, providing over 30 opportunities for pupils to participate in physical activity each week and acting as a mentor to young people and staff.

Cllr Sarah Williams, Bridport Town Council, Dorset

Councillor Williams led Bridport Town Council through a period of major change. Between 2013 and 2019, Cllr Williams guided the council in: leading a neighbourhood plan to submission; launching a community bus service; expanding the range of events held in Bridport; taking on assets from Dorset Council; developing management plans for major green spaces; enhancing the council's reputation as a model employer; making a major commitment on climate change; adapting to the reorganisation of principal authorities in Dorset; negotiating the devolution of services from the former district and county councils and the maintenance of highway verges and open spaces in Bridport.



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COUNCIL OF THE YEAR

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Feock Parish Council, Cornwall

Feock Parish Council has worked in partnership with other organisations to provide services and facilities including a community connect project, community garden, water refill point and community transport scheme. The council is currently working with local stakeholders to turn an area of wasteland into a community wood. Pedestrian safety is another area of priority for the council. The council's footpath working group is looking at providing five safe surface walking routes and the council has funded a range of highways improvements. The council has also declared a climate emergency and has set up focus groups to look at aspects including how the council works, recycling and green spaces and communication and green energy production.

Salisbury City Council, Wiltshire

The city of Salisbury experienced a tough year in 2018, however, for Salisbury City Council it was business as usual. Day to day services continued to be delivered, local markets still took place and the council organised numerous public events. The information centre and shopmobility team stayed open and the grounds team worked to ensure the council's parks and open spaces were at their best. The council's communities team embarked on delivering the stronger families project with Wiltshire Community Foundation and physical activity leaders gave schools and care homes access to physical activity sessions.

Woughton Community Council, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes

Woughton Community Council covers a diverse parish with a unique set of challenges. Residents were clear that they wanted the council to focus on addressing three in particular: poverty, youth provision and the local environment. As a result, the council developed a comprehensive and challenging service plan. The council now provides community food projects, an advice service, specialist mental health support and youth provision which reaches across the parish and beyond. The council has also merged its landscape and environment teams and invested in green approaches, resulting in improvements in key areas such as fly tipping and litter.

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