

Jenny Riddell-Carpenter MP
Rural Communities Minister
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

By email: Ministerial.Correspondence@defra.gov.uk

25 August 2026

Dear Minister,

Re: Congratulations and invitation to meet with NALC

On behalf of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), congratulations on your appointment as the new Rural Communities Minister. We look forward to working with you and your officials over the coming years.

NALC represents England's 10,000 parish and town councils, the tier of local government closest to communities, with a vital role in protecting the environment, supporting local services and helping sustain thriving rural communities.

As the Government pursues its ambitions for nature recovery, cleaner rivers and waterways, flood resilience, food security and a green economy, parish and town councils stand ready to help deliver these priorities locally. Through biodiversity projects, tree planting, community green spaces, local food initiatives and action on climate adaptation, our councils are already helping to create greener, more resilient and thriving communities across England. Engagement with our members is of increasing importance given the extreme weather across the country, so it is welcome to have a named Rural Communities Minister in the Department.

As you may also know, as a member of the Rural Taskforce that helped shape the Future of Rural England Report, NALC was pleased to see the report's emphasis on stronger rural proofing, the establishment of a cross-government Rural Board, and recognition that devolution must not overlook the needs of rural areas. Our councils cover most of rural England and we look forward to working with all tiers of government to help rural communities realise their full potential.

We also welcome the Government's commitment in the Rewiring the State policy paper to move powers and resources closer to communities, enabling decisions to be made locally and strengthening collaboration between national, regional and local government. Parish and town councils are already the most local and accountable part of the democratic system and can play an important role in helping government, mayors and local authorities deliver better outcomes for people and places.

Thriving rural communities are central to the nation's future prosperity and all government departments, not just DEFRA, have a role to play in unlocking their potential. It is welcome to see that recognition already, with your appointment as Minister for Rural Communities reflective of this. We also welcome your early commitment to work closely with local communities to help combat extreme weather events, such as droughts.

Further to this, NALC and the parish and town council sector can help you and the Department deliver your ambitions locally— but the Government needs to give the sector greater recognition, direct access to funding, and the powers and assets to act. We therefore look forward to working with you to progress cooperation across all tiers of government and enhance the contribution rural communities in England can make.

We would therefore welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how parish and town councils can be recognised as delivery partners in creating thriving rural communities and achieving the Government's environmental, rural and community objectives. I would be grateful if your office could contact nalc@connectpa.co.uk to arrange a meeting.

Congratulations again, and I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Iain Hamilton,
NALC chair

