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BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

**Jonathan Owen, chief executive
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Councils**

#NALCConf19

125 YEARS OF BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Established in 1894 by Mr Gladstone to move parishes onto a more systematic and democratic basis

December 1894 elected 57,000 councillors

These new councils got on with it and delivered for their communities!

And that's continued ever since.

125 YEARS OF BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

By 1914 Horsham At Faiths (Norfolk) managed 200 acres of heathland, provided allotments, established a savings bank

Drinking fountains, firefighting equipment, street lighting, recreation grounds

Baths, washhouses, laundrettes, a castle, a pier and pubs
Boughton and Mottisfont (Hampshire) co-operated and bought a community bus.

LOCAL COUNCILS – CONTINUING TO GROW, DELIVERING AND AS RELEVANT AS EVER!

120,000 councillors, £600m precept, £20m public works loan board; £2-3bn contribution to local communities

More and more being set up in urban areas, in unitary councils and even “popping up” in London

Health and wellbeing; housing and the economy, social cohesion, connectivity, young people, climate change

NALC Councils of the Year 2019: Salisbury City Council (civic resilience), Feock Parish Council (community navigators), Woughton Community Council (youth service and community fridge).

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Alcester Town Council, Warwickshire and West Midlands (Electorate: 4,835, Precept: £250,746)

Set up a Health and Wellbeing Board in 2015 and appointed two part time health and wellbeing coordinators. With one third of residents of Alcester aged over 65, the coordinators aim to tackle isolation among older people and focus on preventative steps.

Heybridge Parish Council, Essex (electorate: 10,500, Precept: £222,000)

Works with Hearing Help Essex to supply hearing aids to local residents

Horwood Lovacott and Newton Tracey Parish Council, Devon (Electorate: 392, Precept: £12,000)

Agreed a night landing site in the village for the Devon Air Ambulance

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Husbands Bosworth Parish Council, Leicestershire (Electorate: 891, Precept: £45,600)

Acts as a food bank referral centre for local residents. Parishioners in need of an emergency three day supply of food can visit the council office during office hours for a referral.

Dementia friendly parishes around the Yealm. Devon (5 parishes between 500 and 2500)

A group of local (parish and town) councils committed to improving the lives of people with dementia and their families and friends

Harden Parish Council, Yorkshire (Electorate: 1,464, Precept: £20,475)

Purchased and installed a defibrillator in the village with support from the Big Lottery Fund.

Didcot Town Council, Oxfordshire Electorate: (20,522 Precept: £980,795)

Runs Willowbrook Leisure Centre. The fully equipped, air-conditioned facility includes a gym with a wide range of state of the art cardiovascular equipment;

YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH SERVICES

Coxhoe Parish Council, County Durham (Electorate: 3,444 Precept: £107,000)

Developed a youth services provision following the withdrawal of investment in youth services by Durham County Council. The council now employs a dedicated youth team who run junior, senior and girls only youth

Great Ness and Little Ness Parish Council, Shropshire (Electorate: 878 Precept: £20,504)

Stepped in to pay for a qualified youth worker to continue at Nesscliffe Youth Club following Shropshire Council's decision to cut its youth service budget.

Ryde Town Council, Isle of Wight Electorate: (18,453 Precept: £923,635)

Developed "Network Ryde," a new youth project supporting young people in and around the town to achieve their potential and have fun.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUTH SERVICES

Beccles Town Council, Suffolk Electorate: (8,041 Precept: £113,427)

Produces the 'Beccles Youth Express,' a magazine promoting youth organisations and providing a voice for young people in Beccles. The magazine was the brainchild of the Beccles Youth Champion Team at Beccles Town Council.

Chulmleigh Parish Council, Devon Electorate: (1,224 Precept: £29,000)

Ensures the views of younger residents are taken into account at the monthly council meetings. Students from the local community college are invited to give feedback.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY

- 100s of councils of all sizes and all tiers declaring a climate emergency
- Solar gain and geothermal heating in neighbourhood plans and in community halls
- Electric car charging points
- Walking/cycling policies
- Signing up to the tree charter and being one of the 240 councils that have set up tree charter branches – 30 November mass tree plant

AND LOCAL COUNCILS ARE PLANNING MUCH MORE!

Latest NALC research in LCR shows 75% are planning to invest more to strengthen their communities.

73% are optimistic about their communities' future

Affordable housing, community hubs, combatting loneliness, co-ordinating volunteers, lobbying for bus services

All themes that will be picked up in our workshops

YOUR SAY

We asked you: What plans do you have for strengthening your community over the next three years? You answered...

"Our vision is to make our community a place of prosperity, wellbeing and opportunity for all. To support this we have five corporate priorities: Your Home, Your Place, Your Health and Wellbeing, Your Opportunity, Our Council"

"I am trying to collect volunteers who will give some time every week to residents who are mostly isolated or infirm. The aim is to provide a little time to someone who may be feeling depressed, lonely and would then look forward to an hour or more with a visitor"

"My councillors have just walked around the parish to introduce themselves, speak with householders and deliver notices explaining that the council would like to host a coffee morning every so often to bring people in the rural area and village together. It could combat loneliness, foster community cohesion, and is one way to keep communication open between the council and the community it serves"

"Working together to tackle climate change, providing services that have been discontinued by other authorities, improved partnership working for the benefit of the community and protecting and promoting our town centre"

"Building a new 80-space car park with electric charging points, rebuilding a 50-year-old toilet block and the continued renovation of ageing council buildings and facilities"

"At present, the council wishes to work with traders and community groups to strengthen communication and get a better understanding of expectations and what is deliverable"

"Key is progressing from the Foundation Award of the Local Council Awards Scheme to the Quality Award. We have a social prescribing project in preparation, a new newsletter on top of other communications, a new youth and community centre planned with the probability of the parish council taking over responsibility for youth services"

"Getting local planners to allow affordable housing so that young families can live in the parish and support our small primary school; lobbying for a bus service so that non-drivers and car owners can get to work; ensuring a new unitary council realises that information used by the current district council is out of date and biased towards urban areas"

"We're mostly fire-fighting to plug the gaps as principal authorities or other public services retreat. But having often to be reactive, rather than proactive, makes planning difficult"

"Bringing more transparency and efficiency to council management"

"Creating a £2.2m community hub building as a focal point for all sectors of the community"

"Taking over more community assets. Developing provision of youth services"

"Try to complete the local neighbourhood plan"

Will you be investing more funds in your community?

YES 75%

NO 8%

UNDECIDED 17%

Are you optimistic about the future of your community?

YES 73%

NO 10%

UNDECIDED 17%

- THE SECTOR IS GROWING AND ITS REPUTATION ENHANCED

- Increasing recognition by political parties, think tanks and other agencies that parishes have a key role to play
- Taking on new and wider responsibilities
- More being created – Lowestoft, Sutton Coldfield, Weymouth
- Seizing the opportunity provided by devolution, austerity & unitary government
- Read Rishi Sunak speech to NALC: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/national-association-of-local-councils-conference-2018>

Sajid Javid's speech to the National Association of Local Councils conference 2017

The Secretary of State's speech to the National Association of Local Councils annual conference 2017.

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From: [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#) and [The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP](#)

Delivered on: 31 October 2017 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)



Related content

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Introduction – importance of parish councils

Thank you Sue for that kind introduction, and thank you for all of the vital work you do, strengthening local government.

Firstly, I'd just like to say how fantastic it is to see so many of you here. I just spent some time outside speaking to people and there's a real sense of excitement and energy. This is 'parish power' in action.

The subject of today's conversations – 'shaping the future' – is one that is close to my heart.

Since taking up my role in January, I've been inspired by NALC's ability to bring people together and represent us. And I look forward to working closely with you.

CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY

- The government wishes to go further and devolve more power to community groups and parishes
- There are opportunities for 'onward' devolution of service delivery and decision-making
- Explore the option for local 'charters' between a principal council, local councils, and community groups setting out respective responsibilities.



**CIVIL SOCIETY STRATEGY:
BUILDING A FUTURE THAT
WORKS FOR EVERYONE**

The role of local government

Local authorities are uniquely placed to bring together all partners, including the voluntary community and social enterprise organisations, to take a wider view in addressing some of the key challenges faced by communities and to ensure the most vulnerable people are not left behind. As the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said recently at the Local Government Association conference – “the power of local government is an incredible force for good – not as a distant, faceless bureaucracy, but, from the biggest unitary to the smallest parish council, as the heartbeat of the communities it serves”.



HM Government

A connected society

A strategy for tackling loneliness –

laying the foundations for change



nalc



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

By deeds and their results:

How we will strengthen
our communities and nation

COMMUNITIES FRAMEWORK JULY 2019

We will also champion the important work of parish and town councils and explore opportunities to strengthen their purpose and role across the country.

This will include updating and strengthening Community Governance Review guidance to support the creation of new parish, town or community councils where local communities wish to establish them.

COMMUNITIES FRAMEWORK JULY 2019

We believe in localism and want to encourage more meaningful involvement for communities in decision making. This includes championing 'onward devolution' that puts power in the hands of communities and seeks to expand the opportunities available for local community control.

We want to build on existing civic infrastructure and models of local accountability and democracy, including exploring opportunities to strengthen the role of parish and town councils.

NALC's SECTOR VISION – FOR WHEN THINGS CALM DOWN!

Because of the work you do and our national reputation we have an ambitious vision to put local councils at the heart of bringing communities together

“Parishes – of all sizes - will be at the centre of community effort.

The natural focus of a range of public activity and service delivery.

Giving a democratic voice to those communities in the deliberations of other agencies. And supporting those agencies, in partnership

Vibrant, dynamic, and effective local councils will help communities to help themselves building strength and resilience and improving the quality of life of residents.”

A CALL TO ACTION – FOR US, OUR MOVEMENT!

If local councils are to fulfil this potential:

- We need to up our game too!
- Councils must behave as the first tier of local government
- We must all work to promote diversity in the sector encouraging people to get involved
- Work in partnership with upper tier councils and other agencies
- There must be national and local support for training and development for councils, councillors and clerks to ensure good governance
- Share and publicise what you do
- And above all be ambitious for your communities

A CALL TO ACTION – FOR GOVERNMENT, UPPER TIER COUNCILS, NATIONAL BODIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Work with us to parish the whole of England! And use us!
- Every community to have an elected body of residents of all ages and from all backgrounds
- With a paid official supporting them to:
 - Provide a safe community space for groups to meet and for citizens to find out what's going on
 - Give that community a voice in deliberations of others to deliver that vision – business groups, councils, police, health, government
- Engage residents in creating a vision for the future of their community

IMAGINE WHAT A DIFFERENCE THIS COULD MAKE TO POST BREXIT BRITAIN!

- Deliver that vision by shaping housing, roads, public amenities etc. in an effective neighbourhood plan
- Bring volunteers and voluntary groups together to support lonely people, older and vulnerable people and the young
- Providing local services that people want
- Raising revenue from each household to support this work and able to raise finances from other sources and borrow to support local activity.
- Building Stronger communities.