

DISExtra – NALC’s Direct Information Service

Issue 856 – 7 April 2015

Contents

NALC.....	1
General.....	3
Government.....	8
Planning.....	10
Grants and Funding.....	11

NALC

856/1 – NALC launch new Star Councils 2015 awards

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) will once again be running an awards programme this year, as part of its work to recognise the achievements of the local (parish and town) council sector.

The NALC Star Councils awards will celebrate the individual achievements of local councillors, council officers and council workers as well as local councils and county associations. Specific projects and exemplary digital communications will also be recognised with separate award categories.

NALC’s Star Councils awards have some great prizes up for grabs for the lucky winners. All winners will have the honour of collecting their prizes at an awards ceremony later this year.

NALC is looking for good practice from the local council sector regardless of size or location. It is looking for individuals and councils that are really making a difference in their communities.

Nominations for this year’s awards are now being called for, with entries due in by 30 June 2015 and the awards event taking place in October.

The nine award categories are: Young Councillor (Aged 18-30), Clerk, Councillor, Chair, Council Worker, Digital Communications, CALC Outstanding Project, Local Council Outstanding Project and Council of the Year.

[Read more and to view the nomination guide](#)

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856/2 – NALC calls for new devolution deal for communities

NALC has backed two-tier local government in its latest contribution to the UK devolution debate, calling for the creation of unitary principal authorities coupled with the establishment of new parish councils.

[Read more](#)

856/3 – NALC and SLCC forge a way forward

NALC and the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) held their first meeting on 20 March 2015 following the agreement of a new protocol between the two key national bodies representing local council staff and councillors.

[Read more](#)

856/4 – Frome Town Council gains EU funding

Frome Town Council and the Frome Twinning Association have received £26,000 of funding from the EU to host a renewable energy conference in March 2016. The funding stream is part of a new approach to Twinning and aims to bring together experts and decision-makers from Frome, and its three twin towns in France, Germany and Poland, to share knowledge and best practice.

[Read more](#)

856/5 – Making it easier to set up new local councils

Communities minister, Stephen Williams MP, has confirmed new measures that will make it far easier for communities to set up new local (parish and town) councils giving them a greater say in how their local neighbourhood should be governed.

[Read more](#)

856/6 – NALC secures £4.7m fund

NALC has secured a multi-million pound package of funding from the government to help smaller parish councils meet new audit and transparency rules.

[Read more](#)

856/7 – Do parishes need further regulation?

NALC gave a warm welcome to the government’s idea of extending the jurisdiction of the Local Government Ombudsman to some parts of the local (parish and town) councils sector.

[Read more](#)

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856/8 – Parish power can boost the My Community programmes

With two town councils and one shadow parish council involved in the Neighbourhood Community Budget pilots – the forerunner to the Our Place programme and totalling 12 areas across England – the parish sector has been involved right from the outset in a new approach to bringing the community together to shape public services.

[Read more](#)

856/9 – Possible new regulator for local councils on the cards

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has published the consultation on extending the Ombudsman to larger local (parish and town) councils.

[View the consultation](#)

856/10 – NALC backs government aims to protect community pubs

The government is toasting the first-ever Community Pubs Day with an announcement of measures designed to bolster the ‘Great British Pub’ and protect it for future generations.

[Read more](#)

856/11 – Giving communities a planning voice

The government held its National Planning Summit on 2 March 2015, which saw a range of speakers from government minister, Brandon Lewis MP, to NALC’s chief executive, Jonathan Owen.

[Read more](#)

856/12 – A national voice for communities is out and about

NALC published its Spring 2015 edition of its flagship magazine, LCR (Local Council Review), on 23 March 2015.

[Read more](#)

GENERAL

856/13 – Branch closure protocol disappoints

The BIS announcement of the banking industry’s agreement to a new Branch Closure Protocol, replacing that in the Industry Guidance agreed with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), will be a disappointment to communities and bank customers affected by branch closures – past, present and future – who need much more commitment from the banks and government, given the escalating rate of bank branch closures and the cancellation of the voluntary pledges to keep open the ‘last bank in community’.

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The protocol makes it clear that once the decision to close has been made by the bank, and the required 12 weeks’ notice given, there will be no negotiation on that: all conversations with communities relate solely to post closure provision, whereas the Centre for Central Banking Studies’ (CCBS) experience of working with communities is that they seek a preparedness on the part of the bank to consider delaying or reversing the closure or at least a compromise such as reduced opening days/hours.

Derek French, director of CCBS, said: “The government took a long time before engaging in the debate on damage to communities caused by branch closures and what has been announced is no material improvement on what is in the present FCA Industry Guidance for Banking Conduct of Business and the established practice of the major banks responsible for branch closures, neither of which satisfy the communities concerned.

“We had hoped for more progress and now look to individual consumer and small business organisations to keep up the pressure on the industry and the next government to make meaningful progress on shared use branches and improvements to Inter Bank Agency Agreements to ensure comparable transaction services are available to business and ‘third sector’ organisations when local branches close.

“CCBS has deep concerns about the capacity of post office outlets to cope with the cash, cheque and change activity of businesses and similar bodies that bank with all the major banks while at the same time providing an acceptable level of service to other post office users.”

The banks more than doubled the rate of closure of branches in 2014, to 479, and 210 have already been announced this year, of which 124 and 55 respectively have been ‘last bank in community’. The impact on post office outlets cannot be assessed from the present usage by business customers of a few small banks and the very new agreement by RBS/NatWest has not been tested in practice where branches have closed in the past and inconvenience by business customers especially is being suffered daily: the RBS/NatWest agreement involves an extra two days delay in obtaining ‘available funds’ status on credits paid in at post offices.

856/14 – National Trust to help councils fund parks

The National Trust is investigating how it could help councils fund maintenance for local parkland, in a bid to protect this precious asset.

A new plan from the country’s biggest landowner is understood to involve joint working with town halls to establish sustained financial support for public parks.

The strategy will employ a similar funding model currently used to support historic houses and gardens across the country.

The Times reports the concept will be tested in Sheffield, where the National Trust aims to lock-down annual funding to permanently cover costs at the city council’s 70 parks and open spaces.

Peter Nixon, the trust’s director of conservation, told the paper: “While many local parks may not be of outstanding national importance under normal criteria, to those people living near them they are the most precious thing possible.”

Efforts are also expected to focus around training a network of volunteers who can use the National Trust’s experience to look after council parks.

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856/15 – New employers guide on managing older workers

A new guide for employers on managing older workers, written by leading experts in ageing, has been published by Healthy Working Lives (HWL), part of NHS Health Scotland.

The guide, *Managing Health Ageing Workforces*, has been written by Dr Matt Flynn, director of Newcastle University’s Centre for Research into the Older Workforce and Kathleen Houston, development manager for Healthy Working Lives.

The guide aims to provide advice to businesses on hiring and managing older employees and is the first of its kind to specifically target smaller employers. It was written based on discussions with SME business leaders in Scotland organised by HWL and in the South East of England organised by the Surrey Chamber of Commerce and South East of England Forum on Ageing.

The UK population is ageing at a rapid rate; one in six people in Britain are now over 65, with 8m workers aged 50 and over. Of these, 5.2m work for businesses with less than 250 employees. The guide therefore looks to support these smaller businesses in managing their older workers, seeing an ageing workforce as an opportunity rather than a challenge.

Dr Matt Flynn commented: “Older workers present a great opportunity for businesses in being able to harness their talent and expertise. In many firms but especially in smaller companies, more experienced workers play a critical role in passing on not just technical skills to the younger generation, but also the tacit organisational knowledge that businesses need to retain their competitive advantage.

“Small businesses, for example, need employees who can be ‘all-rounders’, and jobseekers who are rich in experience are also likely to be multi-skilled. The problem small business leaders have is that they simply don’t know where to find the experienced job seekers they want – this guide seeks to address that, as well as providing practical advice on how best to manage an older workforce.

“The contribution of older workers to the British economy is undeniable. We must ensure that as people stay in work for longer, their extended working lives are healthy, sustainable and mutually beneficial to both employees and employers.”

Kathleen Houston added: “In the coming years, many more people will continue working into sixties and seventies. It is vital for business owners and managers to be able to get the best from ageing workforces.”

The report can be [read here](#)

856/16 – Pub-goers value local inns like community centres, poll suggests

Pubs are just as important to local life as community centres or post offices, a poll suggests.

A survey from the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) suggests three quarters of pub goers think a well-run inn is of equal value to community life as other local services including regional shops.

The results came as CAMRA launched its community pubs month, involving over 7,000 sites across the UK.

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It is thought around 29 pubs are currently closing every week due to financial pressures.

CAMRA chief executive, Tim Page, said: “Pubs are unique in their ability to bring together all sides of a community in one single welcoming environment.

“A well-run pub which engages with its surrounding community – whether that is via charity events, family fun days, live music or quizzes – will not only help to remain popular and profitable, it will also be viewed as something of real value to locals.”

856/17 – The future high street summit discusses strategies

Future High Street Summit in Nottingham saw the UK’s leading organisations and town centre stakeholders join together to discuss strategies and visions for the high street of tomorrow. The two-day conference ended on a high, with agreement between attendees that the future high street depends on three ingredients: people, purpose and technology.

“This year’s event had some great content and an overwhelming response, with almost double the number of attendees, compared to our debut summit in 2014. We covered a lot of topics in a relatively short amount of time, and throughout the event these three messages came across loud and clear,” enthuses Clare Rayner, founder of the summit.

She added: “The people behind our high streets are the ones with the passion, commitment and determination to address the current and future needs and wants of the community. Collaboration between all town centre stakeholders is a vital component of successful place-making – from local authorities to investors, businesses to volunteers. The future depends on the people who are invested in their place, who share a common vision and a strong sense of civic pride. We also heard how great leadership is essential to effecting that change, to supporting those who find the process uncomfortable, and to achieving the transformation required.

“Of course, every town has a purpose. It has a unique personality, its ‘DNA’, driven by the role it fulfils for the people it serves. Many of the keynotes drove home a clear message about the importance of understanding a town’s purpose – each local authority, town team, Business Improvement Districts, town centre manager and volunteer needs to identify what that is for their specific place. Strategy and vision need to match a town’s personality and towns should also celebrate their heritage – as one speaker pointed out, what happened in history influences what will happen in the future!”

In one keynote, bira’s Michael Weedon urged local authorities to recognise that the independent retail sector has been growing for five years, filling the gaps left on the high street by departing chain stores. However, with the latest figures showing that the rate of growth in indies is slowing, Mr Weedon emphasised that town centre managers need to do everything they can to continue supporting the retailers that have kept our places alive.

Fortunately, it appears that the message was well received, as the Support for Independent Retail Campaign’s new licensed structure, launched at the summit, received much attention and several local authorities expressed interest in joining the nationwide efforts to raise awareness and draw footfall to smaller businesses.

Equally important to this support, however, was Springboard’s Diane Wehrle’s observation that the future high street isn’t exclusively about traditional retailing. Springboard’s figures show the importance for town and city centres to conduct analysis and use insights to better understand their purpose. While some towns still rely on their retailers to draw in

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visitors, others are better known for an excellent leisure offering or for great historical value.

In fact, one of the highlights of the event was a keynote by volunteers from Belper in Derbyshire, the Winner of Winners in the Great British High Street Awards 2014. Local campaigners Adrian Farmer and Ian Jackson impressed delegates with their inspiring journey, illustrating what can be achieved when a town invests in its independent businesses and leverages its heritage assets. Their key message was to enjoy your place and celebrate its culture, personality and key features.

However, in this digital age, one of the most significant drivers of change is technology. The summit was fortunate to get insight into the Future High Street Forum’s Digital High Street 2020 report and heard much about its key recommendations. Throughout the event, the theme of using technology to enable better community engagement and greater business opportunity was apparent. The opportunity for high streets to embrace digital is immense; however, it was acknowledged that there is a fundamental skills gap to overcome.

Ms Rayner said: “We need to keep a close watch on technological advancements, paying attention to the innovators and early adopters. Initiatives that we might see as ‘new’ technology are already pushing the boundaries of consumer expectations, and consumer demand for fresher digital experiences will only continue to accelerate. Place-makers need to respond to this and make sure that they have the infrastructure in place, invest wisely in digital solutions, and, more critically, support local businesses in developing their digital skills.”

So strongly did the message about digital come across, Ms Rayner plans to develop a spin-off event that will focus on action – what towns can do to engage with both businesses and residents. This event will focus on both activities and events that draw people into town but also on how digital must seamlessly integrate with the physical experience.

Those who missed out on this year’s Summit and want to read more content can search for #FHSS15 on Twitter, or visit www.futurehighstreet.wordpress.com for eight session summaries that were published live during the event.

856/18 – Village SOS campaign ready to go

Rural residents who want to improve their local community are being urged to sign up to the Village SOS campaign.

The £1.4m Big Lottery funded campaign aims to encourage flourishing rural community enterprises – from car-sharing schemes to community cafes.

Led by rural charity Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), Village SOS will offer volunteers a package of advice and support to get projects off the ground.

It will inspire communities by matching them with someone in the UK who has already ‘been there and done that’, and will offer expert mentoring through a local support organisation.

Chris Cowcher, Village SOS community manager, said: “We really want to hear from people who want to breathe new life into their local community.

DISExtra – NALC's Direct Information Service

"Perhaps you've got a great idea for a project but don't know where to start – or maybe you've already started an enterprise but need help with business planning, marketing or raising funds.

"Whatever you want to do – whether it's starting a playgroup or saving the village shop – Village SOS can help. To sign up, all you need to do is visit our website at: www.villagesos.org.uk.

"We'll put you in touch with a local support organisation that knows your patch and can help you create an action plan at your pace."

Successful applicants could also be matched with a Village SOS mentor from a community in the UK who has already had success with a similar project.

"This is a nationwide campaign and we will be collecting and sharing the best examples of community action from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Communities learning from communities is at the heart of what we want to achieve," Mr Cowcher said.

More than 120 people have already signed up as mentors for potential projects following community workshops in Bristol and Darlington.

Mr Cowcher added: "We are ready to help, so if you have a great idea that will reinvigorate or revitalise your community, now is the time to get involved."

The Big Lottery Fund is keeping the spirit of this success alive with the new two-year Village SOS campaign – helping more communities with the support of people who have already done it themselves.

GOVERNMENT

856/19 – The government responds to inquiry into the Community Rights

The government has responded to the Communities and Local Government (DCGL) Committee report on the Community Rights.

The DCLG Select Committee launched an inquiry into the Community Rights on 9 June 2014, with a report being published on 3 February 2015. The government has responded to the 16 recommendations of the committee.

Some of the main responses are summarised below, grouped into five headings (with recommendation numbers in parentheses).

Community Right to Bid (1-8)

Following the government announcement of greater protections for community pubs that are listed as Assets of Community Value (ACV), it currently has no plans to make any broader changes in respect of permitted development rights for other assets.

The government does not accept the following recommendations. The establishment of a fund for compensation claims in relation to Article 4 directions. That it should consult on a proposal to amend its guidance so that ACV listing is a material consideration for local authorities in all planning applications other than those for minor works. Extending the moratorium on the sale of an ACV to nine months, or that the moratorium on a sale can be brought to an immediate end if a community group bid has been abandoned.

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The government is prepared to consider giving communities powers to appeal a listing decision in the review of the Community Right to Bid.

On closing the loophole in the current legislation which allows an ACV to be sold as a going concern when the buyer has no intention of retaining it in its current use, the government believes that there are adequate safeguards in place to ensure that all disposals of assets of community value.

It accepts that a greater proportion of overall funding to support Community Rights be directed to ensure local people are adequately prepared to take on the public assets they are offered.

Community Right to Build (9-11)

It does not see the need for further action to incorporate Community Right to Build into the neighbourhood planning process.

Community Right to Challenge (12-13)

It accepts that it should find out what has happened to groups receiving capacity-building assistance and to those that have made Expressions of Interest under the Right to Challenge process.

Community Right to Reclaim Land (14)

It agrees that it should issue draft guidance on what constitutes unused and underused land. It also accepts the recommendation to analyse the outcome of all Community Right to Reclaim Land applications.

Future Community Engagement (15-16)

It welcomes the suggestion for potential issues to address within the scope of the post-implementation reviews of the Community Right to Bid and Challenge.

856/20 – Pickles welcomes passing of a new law to ensure councils have the right to hold prayers

The communities secretary has welcomed the passing of a new law to ensure all councils have the right to hold prayers at the start of their meetings.

The Local Government (Religious Observances) Act received Royal Assent from the Queen on 26 March 2015 after clearing its final stages in parliament this week.

The act puts beyond any doubt the fact that all councils, including parishes, can choose to hold prayers at the start of the sessions, maintaining the longstanding British tradition.

The government-backed legislation was taken through parliament by Jake Berry MP and Lord Cormack following legal challenges against some councils that conduct prayers.

The act builds on the Localism Act, which gave a general power of competence to councils and allows councils to pray; the power of competence did not apply to small parish councils. The act also makes clear that councils can support any religious event or event with a religious element – such as commemoration services.

Communities and Local Government secretary and minister for faith, Eric Pickles MP, said: “The right to worship is a fundamental and hard-fought British liberty, and the fight for religious freedom in British history is deeply entwined with the political freedoms we take for granted.

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“Building on what we have already delivered through the Localism Act, this further act strikes a further victory for localism, for freedom to worship over intolerant and aggressive secularism, for long-standing British liberties over modern-day political correctness, and for parliamentary sovereignty over judicial activism.”

Jake Berry MP said: “Councils should have every right to hold their traditional prayers sessions if they choose to. No one is forced to take part but everyone who wants to should have that freedom and this should never have been a matter for the courts.

“I’m really pleased that we have now made the law crystal clear and that councillors, including those in parish councils, can now conduct their prayers free from the threat of legal challenge.”

This act supports our fundamental core British values of faith in our society and people’s freedom to observe their own religion and beliefs without interference from the courts.

Lord Cormack, a former member of the General Synod of the Church of England, added: “It has been a privilege to take this Bill through the House of Lords. While there has been some opposition, it is clear that this gentle, permissive legislation has the overwhelming support of parliamentarians.”

PLANNING

856/21 – Pickles blocks Sussex homes over neighbourhood plan clash

The communities secretary Eric Pickles MP has dismissed an appeal against a council's refusal of planning permission for an 18-home scheme in East Sussex, saying to allow the development would undermine an emerging neighbourhood plan.

Mr Pickles agreed with planning inspector advice and declined to give permission for developer MJH Executive Homes’ 18-dwelling project at Brede Lane, Sedlescombe.

Rother District Council had refused planning permission for the scheme in March 2014, saying it would amount to unnecessary and unwarranted loss of countryside.

A decision letter issued on behalf of Mr Pickles said: "Although the provision of new homes, including affordable housing, would be an important social and economic benefit, the secretary of state concludes that granting permission for the appeal scheme would be contrary to the plan-led approach, which demonstrates the availability of a five-year housing land supply; as well as being premature in terms of the neighbourhood plan making process."

It added: "The secretary of state agrees with the inspector that ... granting planning permission for 18 dwellings on the appeal site would undermine the neighbourhood plan process by pre-determining decisions about the location of housing development that are central to an emerging plan."

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856/22 – Three more neighbourhood plans secure backing in local polls

Residents of three communities in Sussex, Devon and Northumberland have voted in favour of introducing neighbourhood plans for their areas, bringing the total number of successful referendums to 68.

Residents of Lympstone in East Devon supported a neighbourhood plan in a local ballot, with an 87% vote in favour on a 44% turnout.

In addition, residents of West Hoathly in Mid Sussex supported a neighbourhood plan at a local referendum with 74% of the vote on a 28% turnout

Meanwhile, residents of Allendale in Northumberland backed the adoption of a neighbourhood plan. There was a 79% vote in favour on a 20%.

DCLG said that the results took the number of successful neighbourhood plan referendums to 68.

In a written statement, communities secretary Eric Pickles MP said that neighbourhood planning is "proving very popular and over 1,400 communities, representing around 6m people, have now applied for a neighbourhood area to be designated".

The statement, issued before the three latest referendum results, said that the average neighbourhood plan referendum turn out is 33 per cent and the average "yes" vote is 88%.

GRANTS AND FUNDING

856/23 – £800k up for grabs from Prince's fund

The Prince's Countryside Fund is looking to invest £800,000 in initiatives that protect and sustain Britain's rural communities.

Groups and organisations can apply for funding of up to £50,000 from the charity, which celebrates its fifth anniversary this year.

Since its inception in 2010, the Prince's Countryside Fund has given £5m in grants distributed to 120 projects across the country, directly benefiting 100,000 people.

The fund recently reviewed its funding criteria to clarify the sort of initiatives it will support.

Fund manager, Helen Aldis, said: "We are looking for projects that will have a long-term positive impact on rural communities and enterprise, helping the people who care for our countryside and make it tick.

"It is one of our most valuable national assets and this funding will give much needed support to the remarkable people working to sustain a vibrant rural economy."

Projects will be considered on their contribution to one of three key countryside issues:

1. Thriving Rural Communities – projects that provide innovative solutions to deliver assets and services that keep rural communities together and develop a more sustainable rural economy – that is empowering communities to provide village services or create business hubs and employment for local people.

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2. Rural Livelihoods – projects that focus on developing stronger, more sustainable farm and rural enterprises with the aim of halting the decline of the rural economy – that is providing rural businesses with support and advice or supporting farmer led initiatives.

3. Farmers of the Future – projects that help improve skills and increase opportunities of taking up rural careers, in particular in farming, with the aim of helping people to remain within and contribute to the rural economy – that is training opportunities and apprenticeship schemes that inspire and enable new entrants to consider a career in farming.

Since 2010, The Prince's Countryside Fund has given grants to support 160 rural communities by improving service provision.

It has also supported 4,750 farm businesses by funding projects that work directly with farmers to improve efficiency and profitability and 1,100 rural enterprises through supporting innovative rural business projects.

Some 4,850 young people have benefitted from projects offering training opportunities and 18,000 children educated in food and farming in a sustainable countryside.

For details, visit: www.princescountrysidefund.org.uk.

856/24 – Coastal Revival Fund and Coastal Community Teams

A new £3m fund aims to help kick-start the revival of at-risk coastal heritage that has potential to create opportunities for new businesses and jobs.

The Coastal Revival Fund will support communities looking to unlock the economic potential of those hard-to-tackle buildings, facilities and amusements such as piers, lidos and proms.

Grants will be used to get restoration projects underway by funding initial work that will be a catalyst that attracts additional financing from the private and charitable sectors. The fund will support projects that demonstrate the creativity, enterprise and passion needed to help seaside towns become year round destinations that people want to live and work in and has the potential to kick-start the revival of the remaining lidos and piers currently not reaching their full potential or facing neglect.

Seaside areas will also receive support from new Coastal Community Teams. More than £1m will be provided for 110 teams, which will create a long-term vision and strategy for their area to tackle the specific challenges their coastal town faces.

Details of how to apply to be a Coastal Community Team and further information about the Coastal Revival Fund – Heritage Restoration: Economic Regeneration will be published shortly. If you would like further information on these schemes in the short term or to register your interest, please email: coastalcommunities@communities.gsi.gov.uk

More information is available via this link.

DISExtra – NALC's Direct Information Service

856/25 – Communities share £25m minibus fund

More than 300 communities across rural England will receive new minibuses thanks to a £25m government fund.

The funding will help elderly residents, people with learning and physical disabilities and those who do not have access to a commercial bus service, said the Department for Transport.

Transport secretary, Patrick McLoughlin MP, said the minibuses would improve the everyday lives of people in rural communities and provide a vital link to medical services, shops, and social events.

A full list of successful applications – sorted by region – has been published.

An interactive map showing successful schemes has also been published.

Following this first round of allocations, the Department for Transport would look to use the fund to support additional schemes this summer, said Mr McLoughlin.

He added: "I know first-hand how important transport providers like these can be to keep rural areas alive and protect the independence of local residents.

"They are often the lifeblood of local communities so it is only right that the government gives them the support they deserve."

The Transport secretary marked the announcement with a visit to one of the successful schemes, Halesworth Area Community Transport in Suffolk.

"This £25m fund will buy over 300 new vehicles, some specially adapted, to help these organisations continue to carry out their important work in the community.

"We have had an overwhelming response, which demonstrates the importance of this fund, and I am keen to support similar schemes in the future."

Winners from across the country will each receive a 9 to 16-seater minibus specifically tailored to their requirements - such as disability-friendly access and adapted seating.

The Department for Transport announced the funding and criteria last November and invited applications until January.

856/26 – My Community – free advice and grants to be had

You have powers to make a difference in your area – saving local pubs, shops and community centres. Support and grants for developing your area through neighbourhood planning and building for your community are available, help with owning and managing local land and buildings, running services and boosting the local economy opens on 1 April.

Visit: mycommunity.org.uk for information, resources, advice and grants and connect with others on the My Community Network.

856/27 – Neighbourhood planning grants available from Locality

Funded as part of the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Neighbourhood Planning and Community Right to Build support programme, grants are available to help local councils and other groups to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. As part

Direct Information Service, National Association of Local Councils, 109 Great Russell Street, London, WC1B 3LD.

Tel: 020 7290 0308. Fax: 020 7436 7501. Email: Dis@nalc.gov.uk

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of the £22m programme, grants can be used to pay for events to engage the local community, print leaflets and to pay for specialist planning expertise. The support programme runs to 2018.

All groups writing a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order will be eligible to apply for up to £8,000 in grant. Groups facing more complex issues can apply for specific packages of technical support where needed, and may also be eligible for further £6,000 in grant.

A rolling programme of applications is underway and is expected to be operated throughout the year.

[Read more](#)

856/28 – Coastal Revival Fund and Coastal Community Teams – Department for Communities & Local Government

A new £3m fund aims to help kick-start the revival of at-risk coastal heritage that has potential to create opportunities for new businesses and jobs.

The Coastal Revival Fund will support communities looking to unlock the economic potential of those hard-to-tackle buildings, facilities and amusements such as piers, lidos and proms.

Grants will be used to get restoration projects underway by funding initial work that will be a catalyst that attracts additional financing from the private and charitable sectors.

The fund will support projects that demonstrate the creativity, enterprise and passion needed to help seaside towns become year round destinations that people want to live and work in and has the potential to kick-start the revival of the remaining lidos and piers currently not reaching their full potential or facing neglect.

Seaside areas will also receive support from new Coastal Community Teams. More than £1m will be provided for 110 teams, which will create a long-term vision and strategy for their area to tackle the specific challenges their coastal town faces.

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More information is available [here](#)

856/29 – The Power to Change – Power to Change Trust

The Power to Change is an independent charitable trust endowed with £150m from the Big Lottery Fund to support community businesses across England.

Power to Change want to back people to build successful community businesses for the benefit of their local places.

It will fund successful community businesses with ambitious and innovative plans to transform local places, and inspire many more people to start, support and grow community businesses.

DISExtra – NALC’s Direct Information Service

The Big Lottery Fund announced its decision to make the endowment to the Power to Change in January 2015. Work is now underway to develop a full range of funding and support programmes and activities for community businesses at different stages of development.

In the meantime, Power to Change is looking for the most inspirational existing community businesses through a call for community business champions.

More information is available [here](#)

856/30 – Main Grants programme – BBC Children in Need

BBC Children in Need’s Main Grants programme is open to charities and not-for-profit organisations applying for grants over £10,000 a year for up to three years. Grants are aimed at children and young people of 18 years and under who are experiencing disadvantage through:

1. Illness, distress, abuse or neglect
2. Any kind of disability
3. Behavioural or psychological difficulties
4. Living in poverty or situations of deprivation.

The next deadline for applications is 19 May 2015.

More information is available [here](#)

856/31 – Project Viability and Project Development Grants – Architectural Heritage Fund

The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) can provide grants, subject to eligibility, to help with assessing the viability of a project, or to fund development costs.

Project Viability Grants are to fund short studies to look at potential uses for a building and at its current condition. Successful completion of this initial stage will be used to judge whether applicants can then apply for the AHF’s Project Development Grant funding. This grant is administered on a rolling basis.

The Project Development Grant scheme is intended to assist an organisation to cover some of the costs of developing and co-ordinating a project and taking it towards the start of work on site.

The next application deadline is 19 May 2015. More information is available [here](#)

856/32 – Planning Enforcement Fund – Department for Communities and local Government

This new time-limited fund is available to local planning authorities in England, including National Parks. The scheme provides a grant of up to £10,000 or 50% of its legal costs (whichever is the lesser) to local planning authorities to secure a court injunction to prevent actual or apprehended breaches of planning control.

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The scheme will run for the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16 commencing in January 2015 and ending in March 2016.

More information is available [here](#)

856/33 – Community Sport Activation Fund – Sport England

The fourth round of this fund opened on 20 January 2015. The kind of projects Sport England expect to fund include:

- activities reflecting a broad range of sports
- informal opportunities that could lead to regular participation
- multi-sport activities that provide people with a range of choices and opportunities to suit them
- family orientated activities with a focus on the 14 plus age group
- local activator roles that focus on directly organising and delivering new opportunities for participation.

Projects can be up to three years and grant awards will range from £50,000 to £250,000.

The closing date for applications is 20 April 2015. More information is available [here](#)

856/34 – Grants for war memorials from the War Memorials Trust

This scheme, funded by English Heritage and The Wolfson Foundation and administered by War Memorials Trust, is currently being reviewed. As such, information may be subject to amendment in the near future. A maximum of 75% of eligible costs are available up to a maximum grant of £30,000. Eligible projects are:

- Freestanding war memorials in England with no other functional purpose than as a war memorial (plaques, bridges and buildings, for example are ineligible)
- Projects must be over £3,000 to be eligible.

Eligible works include: urgent and necessary repairs and structural stabilisation; cleaning, under certain circumstances; works relating to ‘hard’ landscaping which form an integral part of the design of the memorial; reinstatement of lost elements which form an integral part of the design of the memorial when supported by historical evidence.

Ineligible works include: new war memorials; works to graves of any type; maintenance; alterations or additions to the original design; relocation; addition of names; cosmetic cleaning; work which has already started or been completed.

Annual deadlines are 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December. The scheme is currently confirmed until 2015. More information is available [here](#)

856/35 – Neighbourhood Planning local authority grants

Local planning authorities can take advantage of a £12m funding pot to help them meet the cost of their responsibilities and to support local communities preparing Neighbourhood Plans.

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Local planning authorities can claim £5,000 for each neighbourhood plan area designated, up to a maximum of 20 areas a year. They can also claim a further £5,000 for each ‘neighbourhood forum’ designated.

A further £5,000 can be claimed by the local planning authority when a parish or neighbourhood forum submits a neighbourhood plan (or neighbourhood development order) to them for examination.

The local planning authority can claim a final £20,000 for each successful examination of a neighbourhood plan or order. In business areas an additional £10,000 is available to reflect the need for an additional referendum.

There will be four opportunities for local authorities to submit claims in 2015/16. There will be windows between 1 and 30 June, 1 and 30 September, 1 and 31 December and a final window between 1 and 31 March.

See the [website](#) for more details.

856/36 – Childcare Business Grants Scheme introduced

The new Childcare Business Grants Scheme has been introduced to boost the provision of childcare in England and to incentivise entrepreneurship. It will encourage and support the starting up of new childcare businesses by providing a flat rate start-up grant of:

- £250 for new childminding businesses setting up in England (those who are looking after one or more children under the age of 8 years, to whom they are not related, on domestic premises, for reward and for a total of more than two hours in any day);
- £500 for new childminding businesses, as above, that will provide care for disabled children (applicants will need to demonstrate that they have incurred additional expenditure in setting up their business as a result of this);
- £500 for new nursery, out of school club, or childcare on domestic premises setting up in England.

The scheme was due to finish in March 2014 but has been extended. The government has subsequently announced a further £2m extension for the existing Childcare Business Grant scheme to cover 2015/16. The scheme will, therefore, continue to accept application forms after 31 December 2014. More information is available [here](#)

856/37 – Rural Community Energy Fund

The Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects that provide economic and social benefits to the community. The fund will provide up to around £150,000 of funding for feasibility and pre-planning development work to help projects become investment ready. RCEF provides support in two stages:

- Stage 1 provides a grant of up to approximately £20,000 to pay for an initial investigation into the feasibility of a renewable energy project;
- Stage 2 provides an unsecured loan of up to approximately £130,000 to support planning applications and develop a robust business case to attract further investment.

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The fund is being delivered on behalf of the government by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). Applications will be reviewed on a monthly basis and there is no set deadline for bids. More information is available [here](#)

856/38 – Urban Community Energy Fund is launched

The Urban Community Energy Fund (UCEF) is the urban counterpart to the RCEF and was launched on 13 November 2014. UCEF is a £10m fund to kick-start renewable energy generation projects in urban communities across England. Community groups will be able to access grants and loans to support renewable energy developments.

Grants of up to £20,000 are available for the more speculative, early stages of a project’s development, such as public consultation and preliminary viability studies.

UCEF will also provide loans of up to £130,000 to develop planning applications and a robust business case to attract further investment. This is intended to help projects become ‘investment ready’, that is, at the right stage to secure a bank loan or another form of investment.

The first application deadline was 22 December 2014 with further deadlines at the end of January, February and March 2015. From April 2015 application deadlines will be on the last Friday of every second month beginning on 24 May.

More information is available [here](#)

856/39 – Third Sector Loan Fund aims to help charities and social enterprises

This fund, announced in November 2014, is managed by Social and Sustainable Capital and seeks to invest between £250,000 and £3m in charities and social enterprises across the UK.

The fund can support organisations across all social sectors, focused on improving the economic and social wellbeing of individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

To be eligible for investment, organisations must demonstrate the following:

- Be a registered charity or social enterprise
- Be based and have operations in the UK
- Have a clear social mission with significant, measurable, direct outcomes
- Be led by a strong management with proven capability to deliver
- Have a robust business plan and financial projections
- A clear demonstration of how investment repayment will be made
- Have good corporate governance.

More information is available [here](#)

856/40 – Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive – Ofgem

The Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (Domestic RHI) is a government financial incentive to promote the use of renewable heat. Switching to heating systems that use

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naturally replenished energy can help the UK reduce its carbon emissions. People who join the scheme and stick to its rules, receive quarterly payments for seven years for the amount of clean, green renewable heat their system produces.

The scheme is open to anyone who can meet the joining requirements. It’s for households both off and on the gas grid. People off mains gas are stated to have the most potential to save on fuel bills and reduce carbon emissions.

The Renewable Heat Incentive has two schemes – Domestic and Non-Domestic. They have separate tariffs, joining conditions, rules and application processes.

More information is available [here](#)

856/41 – Big Potential – Big Lottery Fund

Big Potential, a BIG Lottery Fund grant fund, will deliver approximately £10m of grant funding over three years to eligible VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) organisations with the aim of improving the sustainability, capacity and scale of VCSE organisations so that they may deliver greater social impact.

The programme aims to raise awareness of the social investment market and support VCSEs that want to prepare themselves for social investment. Big Potential’s new website is now live and can be accessed here.

Eligible VCSE organisations will be able to access specialist one to one support from the Big Potential programme partners before making an application for grants between £20,000 and £75,000 to undertake more in-depth investment readiness work with one of Big Potential’s approved providers.

More information is available [here](#)

856/42 – Premier League and The FA Facilities Fund – Football Foundation

The Premier League and The FA Facilities Fund provides grants for building or refurbishing grassroots facilities, such as changing pavilions and playing surfaces for community benefit, with money provided by the Premier League, The FA and the government (via Sport England) and delivered by the Foundation. The fund is available to football clubs, schools, councils and local sports associations and gives grants for projects that:

- improve facilities for football and other sport in local communities
- sustain or increase participation amongst children and adults, regardless of background age, or ability
- help children and adults to develop their physical, mental, social and moral capacities through regular participation in sport.

Grants are available for between £10,000 and £500,000.

More information is available [here](#)

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856/43 – Heritage Project Grants – Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funds projects which focus on heritage. HLF offer a range of different grant programmes with grants from £3,000 to over £5m. In assessing applications, HLF take account of the broad range of outcomes for heritage, people and communities that projects will achieve.

HLF programmes include:

- Start Up Grants – grants of between £3,000 and £10,000 to help create a new organisation to look after heritage or engage people with it. This grant can also support existing groups taking on new responsibilities for heritage.
- Grants for Places of Worship – historic places of worship are often at the heart of communities. Grants from £10,000 to £250,000 can fund urgent structural repairs and help to make them better places for everyone to visit.
- Parks for People – for projects related to historic parks and cemeteries in the UK. You can apply for a grant from £100,000 to £5m. Applications go through a two-round process and must be submitted by either 28 February for a decision in June or by 31 August for a decision in December.
- Transition Funding – available to organisations in the UK that want to achieve significant strategic change (through acquiring new skills or knowledge, or new models of governance, leadership, business and income) in order to become more resilient and sustain improved management of heritage for the long term. To apply you must be a previous recipient of an HLF grant. You can apply for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £100,000.
- Heritage Enterprise – supports enterprising community organisations across the UK to rescue neglected historic buildings and sites and unlock their economic potential. You can apply for a grant from £100,000 to £5m.
- Sharing Heritage – for any type of project related to national, regional or local heritage in the UK. Applications can be made for a grant from £3,000 to £10,000. The fund is available to not-for-profit organisations or partnerships led by not-for-profit organisations wanting to explore, share and celebrate their community’s heritage. This is a rolling programme and applications can be submitted at any time.
- Our Heritage – for any type of project related to national, regional or local heritage in the UK. Applications can be made for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £100,000. HLF fund applications from not-for-profit organisations, private owners of heritage (including individuals and for-profit organisations) and partnerships. This is a rolling programme and applications can be made at any time.
- Heritage Grants – HLF’s open programme for any type of project related to the national, regional, or local heritage in the UK. You can apply for a grant of over £100,000. Heritage Grants applications go through a two-round process. This is so that you can apply at an early stage of planning your project and get an idea of whether you have a good chance of getting a grant before you submit your proposals in greater detail.
- Young Roots – for projects that engage young people with heritage in the UK. Applications can be made for a grant of more than £10,000 and up to £50,000. Under this programme, HLF fund partnerships of heritage and youth organisations to help young people shape and deliver their own projects in safe environments. This is a rolling programme and applications can be made at any time.

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For information on all HLF programmes visit the [website](#).

856/44 – Commissioning Better Outcomes and the Social Outcomes Fund – BIG Lottery Fund and the Cabinet Office

BIG is focusing on approaches that use payment by results (PbR) mechanisms, particularly those which involve social investment such as Social Impact Bonds (SIBs). To achieve this two funds have been set up – the Cabinet Office’s Social Outcomes Fund and the Big Lottery Fund’s Commissioning Better Outcomes – with a joint mission to support the development of more SIBs. Between them these funds are making up to £60m available to pay for a proportion of outcomes payments for these types of models in complex policy areas, as well as support to develop robust proposals.

The shared overarching aim is to grow the market in SIBs, while each fund has a specific focus that reflects the missions of the Big Lottery Fund and Cabinet Office. For the Big Lottery Fund, this is to enable more people, particularly those most in need, to lead fulfilling lives, in enriching places and as part of successful communities. For the Cabinet Office, this is to catalyse and test innovative approaches to tackling complex issues using outcomes based commissioning. For more information see the website. The deadline is 31 July 2016.

More information is available [here](#)

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