

First successful parish change under the Sustainable Communities Act

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) welcomes the Government's announcement that allows local (parish and town) councils to be able to send agendas electronically rather than in the post; ending a budgetary burden on councils and enabling them to benefit from 21st Century technology.

This change came about by using the Sustainable Communities Act which allows for parish and town councils to drive a new "bottom-up" process that allow local people to drive central government action to help their local communities. This change was called for by Bleadon Parish Council, Somerset.

Stephen Williams MP, minister for Communities and Local Government (CLG) said: "I am pleased to be able to confirm that this Department will soon be introducing secondary legislation that will allow all councils to circulate agendas electronically where the recipient has given permission for this. I am pleased that we have been able to accept your proposal, which was the first to be submitted by a parish council under the Act."

Cllr Ken Browse, chair of NALC said: "Local councils are the most local part of government and the body most closely connected to the community. Our connection with local people and our knowledge of the local area means we are ideally placed to make use of the Act. No one knows the local community like we do and this new change to an arcane law shows this in practice. This reform to rules, which are over forty years old, is long overdue but very welcome and will help parish and town councils operate more efficiently and effectively. I am grateful for the cross-party support on this issue and shows the voice of our important tier of local government is being heard and acted upon."