

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS PRESENTS

**STAR COUNCILS 2016**  
WINNERS BROCHURE

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# Thank you

For the past ten years NALC has provided a platform to celebrate the most pioneering work by local councils.

This year we have had near record levels of entries and the judges have been hugely impressed with the quality of work being done in local councils across the country. The standard of entries is a testament to councils' dedication to improvement.

The winners over this period have inspired councils, councillors, county associations and clerks to make changes that have led to improved service and greater efficiency. Learning from the work of others is one of the main means by which local councils can improve their performance to support their communities.

Many things unite the winners of the Star Councils 2016 Awards. Effectiveness, creativity, insight and intelligence, as one would expect, but just as importantly the ability to think outside the box and make a special difference to their communities.

Many of the award winners have achieved remarkable results through being bold. And by being bold they have demonstrated the power local councils can have. Some have faced up to what they feel are fundamental flaws and have done something radical about it. Some have combined with third parties with impressive results. The winners have ingenuity in spades.

NALC has many people to thank for making these awards possible. Firstly, we would like to extend our thanks to the judging panel made up of Paulette Romain, Department for Communities and Local Government; Rebecca Cox, Local Government Association; Steve Parkinson, Society of Local Council Clerks; and our own chief executive, Jonathan Owen. Secondly, we would like to thank our long-term partners and the Star Councils 2016 Award headline sponsor Aon, as well as all our individual award sponsors Vaughtons, Blachere Illumination, CCLA, Vision ICT and Came & Company. Final thanks go to our president Lord Matthew Taylor of Goss Moor for hosting the awards ceremony.

Big congratulations to all the winners. There are many great reasons to be happy about the future of local councils.

**Cllr Ken Browse**  
Chair of NALC

# The insurance Aon arrange for councils has significantly improved!

We wanted to bring to your attention the improvements we have made to the insurance product we arrange for Local Councils. Shown below are our standard levels of cover which sit on top of a further 46 improvements we have made to the policy we arrange compared to 2014!

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## Aon and NALC

Aon's long standing relationship with NALC has the interests of Councils in the UK at its heart and we draw upon their knowledge to review what we are offering as an Insurance Broker. On top of this any policy taken out through Aon will directly benefit NALC as each year we pay a % of revenue earned to the body to assist with running costs, events etc. We believe that the relationship is a positive one and we are delighted that it is to continue for at least the next 3 years.

## How can I get a quote?

If you would like to get a quote for your Councils insurance, or would simply like to talk to a member of the team about our offering, please call **0845 564 9255**. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

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# Message from Aon

Aon has enjoyed a long-standing relationship as the principal insurance partner of NALC. For over 60 years Aon have worked closely with NALC to ensure that insurance solutions truly meet the needs of the local council sector. Aon are proud to once again headline sponsor the Star Councils 2016 Awards.

Working with NALC helps forge closer relationships with local councils and remain up-to-date with the changing pressures facing local councils and the people who devote their time serving their local community. Through periodic surveys of NALC members, Aon has gained deeper insight into the problems and issues councillors and clerks face and to look for ways to help through the insurance services Aon offers. Getting to see both existing and prospective customers face-to-face at NALC events and conferences has further enhanced being able to engage with NALC's members.

NALC have provided invaluable support to local councils since 1947 and the knowledge and experience at NALC helps Aon to provide the best possible service to the sector. NALC were instrumental in the redesign of Aon's local councils' insurance policy,

which was launched in June 2015. NALC's on-going feedback remains a critical part of Aon's commitment to provide market leading coverage and innovative new ideas on how local councils can manage risks they face day-to-day.

Aon for a number of years have been proud to contribute to NALC for every local council insurance policy sold. This is a core part of Aon's commitment as a business to put back into communities. Having worked with NALC for as long as we have Aon have been able to develop an appreciation and affinity for the people who serve their communities and have a strong desire to support the sector.

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# Young Councillor of the Year (18-30)

## Sponsored by Vaughtons

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### Winner

Cllr Sarah Cursons, Leighton-Linslade Town Council, Bedfordshire

### Runners up

Cllr Daniel Dunbar, Polegate Town Council, East Sussex

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#### **Cllr Sarah Cursons, Leighton-Linslade Town Council, Bedfordshire**

The local council sector is not inundated with younger councillors and this is something NALC will be working on more closely via a type of diversity commission. We understandably want councils to be reflective of their communities.

To counter certain stereotypes the panel thought that Sarah best illustrates what a younger councillor can bring to a council and community.

Since her election in May 2015 Sarah has been an active member of several committees and sub-committees, attending a significant number of meetings despite also working full-time. Despite being a young female councillor in a council predominantly comprised of older men, many of whom have extensive experience as councillors, Sarah has demonstrated a willingness to ask questions, research the topic and give opinions on a range of projects and ideas, providing valuable insight into an often unheard of demographic group. Sarah also developed and launched a Facebook page for her local community.

As part of the leisure and community committee, Sarah has been part of a number of improvements to local services, particularly in relation to grounds and environmental services.

Initiatives have included the installation of a beach facility in a town centre park, the complete refurbishment of the toilet facilities in the same park and the purchase or hire of new equipment to ensure graffiti can be removed, waste can be more effectively dealt with through solar compacting bins and the grassed areas in the town can be effectively maintained despite the unprecedented levels of growth recently.

#### **Cllr Daniel Dunbar, Polegate Town Council, East Sussex**

The panel likes the approach Daniel takes within the community. Since only being elected last year he has already formed productive and positive relationships with fellow councillors from all political parties.

The panel thought he was very strong on maintaining a two-way communication with the community and this is exemplified by his commitment to road safety. He has undertaken speed awareness training and liaised with the local police and as a result he worked with the Mayor in carrying out a speed watch activity. This was done along a local road, which is notorious for speeding and naturally the ensuing conversations with motorists and residents had to be handled with care and skill.

**FACT**

Bees are incredibly industrious creatures. They pollinate a third of our food and have a vital role in sustaining the planet's ecosystem.

**FACT**

Swans naturally establish strong partnerships between one another and often form life-long relationships.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Our hive is fuelled by a genuine passion for community spirit. Ethics are at the heart of what we do and we work hard to help pollinate good things in our local area.

We are delighted to sponsor the Clerk of the Year Award again this year. We are continually impressed by the level of commitment, breadth of work and ingenuity shown by Clerks as they cope with ever increasing workloads and changing legislation that they have to deal with.

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# Clerk of the Year

## Sponsored by Vision ICT

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### Winner

Susan Wilthew, Chippenham Town Council, Wiltshire

### Runners up

Georgina Lowe, Kineton Parish Council, Warwickshire

Karen Kuderovitch, Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre Parish Council, Essex

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#### **Susan Wilthew, Chippenham Town Council, Wiltshire**

A win for Susan Wilthew in this category further underlines the ever-emerging role of how clerks need to be multi-faceted. She was heavily involved for three years on the delivery of the towns centre Business Improvement District.

This year she led in a bid for the town to win the hard to get national Purple Flag status. This recognises excellence in the management of Chippenham town at night. It has created entertainment areas that have improved the night time environment and a reputation that offers 'a better night out' to visitors. No more is this illustrated by the sell out shows at The Need Community and Arts Centre.

Away from this, Susan and her colleagues are looking at onward devolution and innovatively involving neighbouring local councils and gaining agreement for future collaborative working.

A panel member commented that Susan is a perfect illustration of how far the profession has come and the direction it needs to head towards.

#### **Georgina Lowe, Kineton Parish Council, Warwickshire**

The panel liked Georgina's achievements in being instrumental in successfully taking a neighbourhood plan to referendum. She used her previously acquired event management and marketing skills to increase public awareness of the plan. This resulted in a 46.8% turnout on referendum day, which is one of the highest for this type of democratic poll in England.

#### **Karen Kuderovitch, Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre Parish Council, Essex**

Judges were impressed that Karen led in the raising of over £60k worth of funding for the council. Relationships between local developers and councils can be a complicated one but in this area Karen has sought to find solutions by introducing open and transparent question and answer sessions with potential builders, which has resulted in positive solutions for the council.

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# Councillor of the Year

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### **Winner**

Cllr Helen Ogden, Westerham Town Council, Kent

### **Runners up**

Cllr Carole Cockburn, Farnham Town Council, Surrey

Cllr Brian Bath, Holmes Chapel Parish Council, Cheshire

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### **Cllr Helen Ogden, Westerham Town Council, Kent**

Helen has been a town councillor since 2010 and has packed in a lot in this time. She has worked very closely with fellow councillors and officers to raise the profile, achievements and competence of the council.

She has been a keen supporter of the council funded youth club, as well lobbying the county council to maintain youth services in the town and was key to successfully opposing the proposed closure of the children's centre.

The judging panel admired the way that Helen puts consultation, communication and engagement with the community at the very heart of her councillor activities. This ranged from detailed consultations with allotment holders on how to improve the site to a community wide consultation, which shaped the current four-year council corporate strategy.

But perhaps the most rewarding according to the panel was her engagement with local primary school children whose views on the future of their town which were factored into the council's strategy.

### **Cllr Carole Cockburn, Farnham Town Council, Surrey**

Judges saw Carole as the very epitome of a dynamic and hardworking councillor valued by constituents and colleagues alike and has earned a well deserved reputation for getting much done to improve the town for its residents. One minute Carole is championing development via a local design statement or neighbourhood plan then the next minute you could see her painting railings or planting flower beds.

### **Cllr Brian Bath, Holmes Chapel Parish Council, Cheshire**

The judging panel loved his vision for new community facilities: comprising a newly equipped gym, outdoor pitches, catering provision and bar services; and this was down to his commitment to improving the well being of local people. Furthermore he took on the team leader role for the neighbourhood plan project from initial community consultation via the steering group to produce the plan policies.

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# CALC Outstanding Project of the Year

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### **Winner**

Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils

### **Runners up**

Kent Association of Local Councils

Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils

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### **Dorset Association of Parish and Town Council**

All county associations up and down the country support, represent member local councils in their local geographical area. They all do this by taking on a variety of project activities in areas such as legal, employment, policy, community rights, planning, financial, health and safety, and creating new councils.

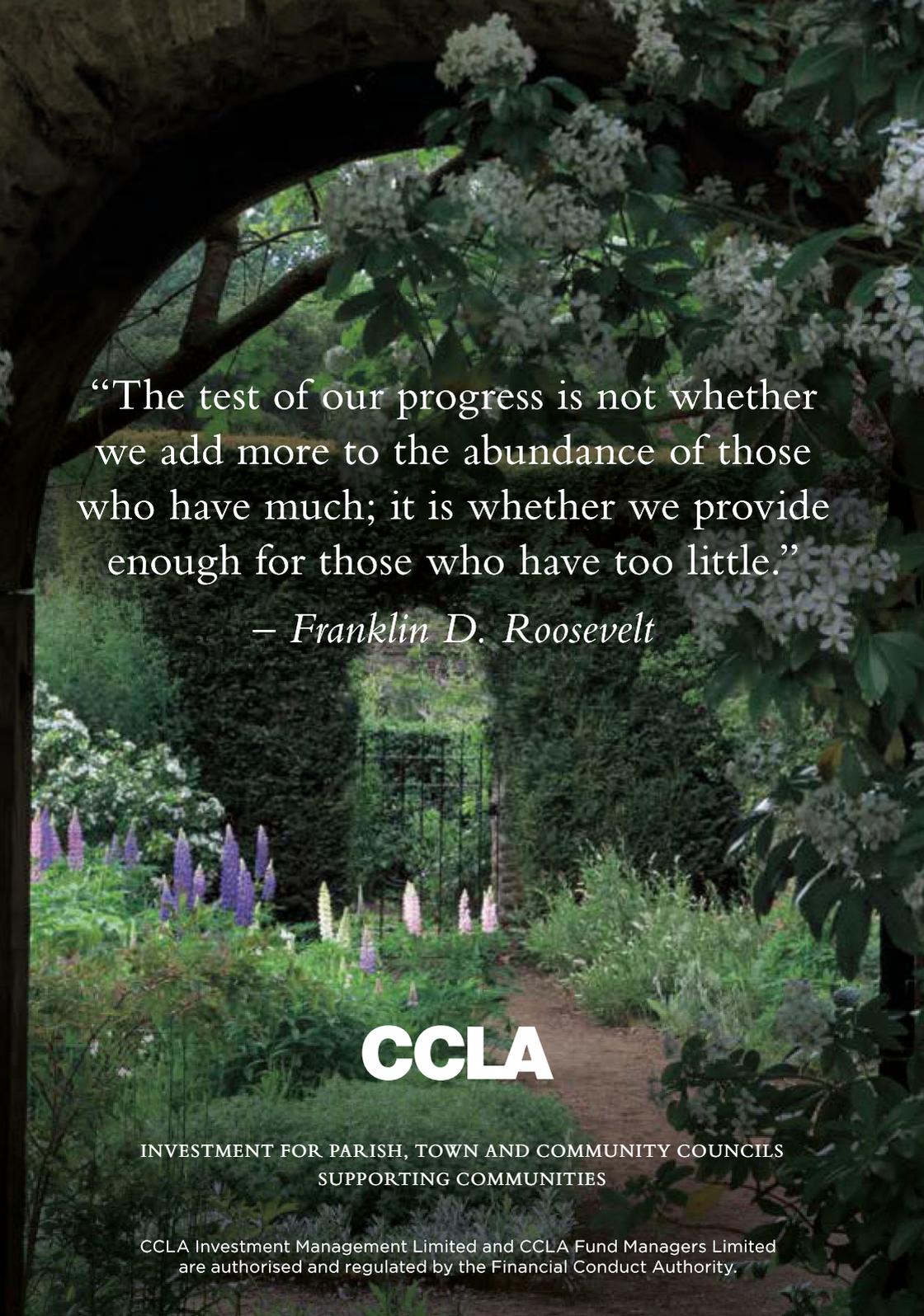
Judging panel felt that the Dorset Association stood out as a winner because of their innovative engagement and communications support for the NHS Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for its clinical services review. The Dorset Association acts as a gateway for local councils and local councillors to feed in their views into the CCG to help improve health and care services in the county, which reflects the changing economy and society. The county association was particularly proactive in helping to obtain feedback from certain hard to reach groups such as councils and communities in more remote areas.

### **Kent Association of Local Councils**

The Kent Association of Local Councils worked imaginatively on the fire hydrant inspection initiative with Kent Fire and Rescue Service and local councils. The judges noted that over 180 local councils are now taking part in this inspection on a monthly basis that ensures repairs are more speedily dealt with and so when fires do occur they can be dealt with effectively.

### **Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Local Councils**

Neighbourhood planning was a common thread through a number of nominations to this year's Star Councils 2016 awards. To the judges' minds the Leicestershire and Rutland Association project stood out because they gained funding from a district council to run a series of workshops and it was open not just to councillors and clerks but also to members of the community.



“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.”

– *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

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# Local Council Outstanding Project of the Year

## Sponsored by CCLA

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### Winner

Condover Parish Council, Shropshire – Winner

### Runners up

Newport Pagnell Town Council, Buckinghamshire  
Helston Town Council, Cornwall

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#### Condover Parish Council, Shropshire

The judging panel was joyfully overwhelmed by this relatively smaller local council inspired community housing project. The aim of the project was to provide a mix of family and older people's housing.

There was clear lack of affordable housing for the residents of Condover. So the aim was to provide new social housing for local people driven forward in partnership between local residents, local council, local councillors, the social housing provider, the architect and construction firm.

The panel thought it was innovative in that where many rural housing schemes include share ownership, the partnership recognised the need for good quality affordable rented housing. It was enterprising in that Condover Parish Council helped the community to meet demand for their own housing needs themselves.

Further the project improved the integration between families and older residents and supports the diverse use of meetings spaces and woodland park.

#### Newport Pagnell Town Council, Buckinghamshire

While the judging panel saw many entries around neighbourhood planning, they felt the one from Newport Pagnell was one of the most risk-taking in that in the proposals it added 25% to the town's population and wanted residents to vote for it. And they got an 83% yes vote on a 34% turnout. So making it the first neighbourhood plan to propose substantially more homes than the core strategy required.

#### Helston Town Council, Cornwall

The judging panel thought that Helston Town Council's activities were a shining example of the direction taken by many local councils in looking to move beyond their traditional service delivery boundaries. Helston is the first local council in the country that has worked closely with Jobcentre Plus to support unemployed people in their community.



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# Council of the Year

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### **Winner**

Oswestry Town Council, Shropshire

### **Runners up**

Sevenoaks Town Council, Kent

Falmouth Town Council, Cornwall

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### **Oswestry Town Council, Shropshire**

Oswestry has had an outstanding council for many years now. And judges felt it was right to recognise its achievements so making it our Council of the Year.

Its nationally famous award winning CCTV scheme is an extraordinary example of partnership working with 30 volunteers monitoring the 25 cameras with the scheme grant funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The council has expanded this service and now monitors cameras for a neighbouring local council.

It has help set up and created a local health forum which brings together in one place all the major health providers in the county to Oswestry on a quarterly basis. No mean feat.

It remains the only local council for a decade or so in the country to have a service level agreement with the National Association of British Market Authorities.

### **Sevenoaks Town Council, Kent**

The scale of ambitions for this town council holds no bounds according to the judging panel. It successfully runs a well renowned theatre and cinema in a complex. The venue now underwrites the local economy with 300,000 visitors per year. That venture gave the council confidence to expand further and run bus services, markets and new community facilities.

### **Falmouth Town Council, Cornwall**

Falmouth was voted The Sunday Times 4th best place to live in the south west of England for 2016 and this was in part down to the efforts of the town team and the council's economic plan.

They have taken on the management of services like the library. Also they have saved services such as CCTV and youth services. The judges regarded the town council as a beacon of excellence in joined up service delivery.





