

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Your Council is invited to attend the **GENERAL MEETING** of the New Forest Association of Local Councils to be held on **Thursday 2 February 2023** at **6.00pm on-line via Zoom**.

Graham Flexman
Co-ordinator

19 January 2023

AGENDA

Apologies

1. Chairman's Announcements

2. Minutes

To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 20 October 2022 (**Appendix 1**)

3. Matters Arising

To consider any matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

4. New Forest District Council

Update on district-wide matters of interest, including New Forest Shop Doctor Programme for Independent retail and hospitality businesses within Hythe, Lyndhurst, New Milton, Barton on Sea, as well as Milford on Sea and Brockenhurst. The programme helps identify individual areas of strength and weakness, through a series of Shop Doctor (Mystery Shopper) visits resulting in a higher quality standard of retail and hospitality. (**Appendix 2**).

5. Safer New Forest

Update on Safer New Forest Partnership list of priorities for next municipal year 2023-2024

6. Elections 2023

Update on forthcoming local elections due on Thursday 4 May 2023, together with advice about the pre-election period previously referred to as the "Purdah" period. (**Appendix 3**).

7. New Forest National Park

Update from Steve Avery on matters of interest within the New Forest National Park area. NFNPA has recently uploaded onto their website a [Guide to Viewing](#) planning applications on their new Citizen Portal. A Word copy of the same is attached, and NFNPA would value any suggested improvements to this Guide to make it easier for users. (**Appendix 4**).

8. Hampshire Association of Local Councils

Dawn Hamblet, Chief Executive of HALC will update members on the forthcoming EGM / special resolution to remove existing HALC Articles of Association in their entirety to be substituted with new Articles of Association. See summary of changes. (**Appendix 5**). The new version of proposed Articles of Association being put forward at the EGM has a slight variance to those put forward at the AGM, and that is the removal of defined classes of membership at 31.4, which has been replaced by the original wording around Membership.

9. Cycling Events

To receive an update from Richard Taylor, NFALC Cycling Rep on upcoming events.

10. Any other business

Opportunity for members to raise any other items of interest or urgent business.

Next meeting – Thursday 25 April 2023 at 6.00pm in the NFDC Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst SO43 7P.

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NFALC)**Minutes of the General Meeting of the New Forest Association of Local Councils held at ATC Lyndhurst 20 October 2022 at 6.00pm**

<u>Parish/Town Council</u>	<u>Name</u>
Ashurst & Colbury	Karen Cramoysan
Brockenhurst	John Korbey – Vice Chairman
Copythorne	Graham Chillcott
Hordle	Maggie Hill
Fawley	Paul Saunders
Landford	Mary Davies
Lyndhurst	George Bisson – Chairman
Minstead	Bill Andrews
	Richard Taylor
Netley Marsh	Mike Welbourn
New Milton	Graham Flexman-Coordinator
Sway	Peter Dance
Wellow	Charles Payne
New Forest District Council	Michael Harris, Portfolio Holder – Business, Tourism & High Streets
Apologies:	
New Forest National Park Authority	Steve Avery
Ashurst & Colbury	Sue Bennison
East Boldre	Michael Husband
Hordle	Sarah Pitt
Ringwood	John Haywood

1. Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman welcomed 13 attendees from 14 councils, including Michael Harris, NFDC.

Earlier in the day, the Chairman attended the HALC AGM and was pleased to award two Runner Up prizes to Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council for their entries under Best Outdoor Space and Best Newsletter. Chairman made the award to Karen Cramoysan of Ashurst & Colbury. A great result. Members expressed their appreciation in the normal way.

The Chairman also mentioned Fawley Parish Council was Winner under the Best Outdoor Space (for their Jubilee Hall Community Garden) and were Runners Up under Best Community Event (Armed Services Day). They received their awards at the HALC AGM.

2. Minutes

The Chairman referred to Appendix 1 being Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022. The minutes were approved by those present and agreed as a true record. The minutes were duly signed by the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Cycling Representative

Richard Taylor as NFALC Cycling Representative said there were no upcoming cycling events at this time. (**Post Meeting Note:** NF Classic 15 April 2023; NF Tour 16 Sept 2023)

5. New Forest District Council

Cllr Michael Harris, Portfolio Holder for Business, Tourism & High Streets referred to several new initiatives by NFDC in support of the local economy and its high streets.

NFDC recently purchased a purpose-built supermarket in New Milton town centre (M&S) as part of its approach to investment in the local economy. The newly refurbished store is leased to and occupied by Marks and Spencer Food. Having been empty for many years since it was a Co-Op, NFDC were extremely keen to see this site be brought back into use. The purchase secures an opportunity to support the local economy & local employment

NFDC want to promote thriving town centres across the district and the introduction of this supermarket in the town encourages a higher footfall, adding to the vitality of the town centre. NFDC has also started the marketing of its development at Platinum Jubilee Business Park Ringwood, expected to be available early in 2023. The site will provide seven buildings with up to 16 light industrial units, and up to eight office units.

This development, set to support around 150-200 jobs once completed and fully let, is well advanced and will undoubtedly create strong benefits for the local supply chain and play a part in promoting economic growth, not only in Ringwood, but across the district.

Parking costs in the New Forest district car parks will not rise in 2023. The New Forest District Council short stay annual 'parking clock' will remain at £30, long stay annual clock at £140, and long stay quarterly clock at £40. Car park charges in the New Forest District towns and villages has not changed since January 2018 and so these will stay the same, and coastal car park charges will be held at the current price.

This decision supports highstreets, local businesses, communities, and residents in the current cost of living situation by continuing to provide exceptional value parking in car parks across the district. In recent years, there has been considerable investment to improve car parking infrastructures and technology, as well as maintenance and landscaping. The council has invested in Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) and now has 29 fast chargers (22Kwh) in 10 of our town and village car parks.

Looking to the future, the council plans to have a mixture of fast and rapid chargers in 5 additional car parks in the district. Charging points will be provided in 3 coastal car parks at Milford and Barton on Sea and aim to be available by summer 2023. Additional rapid chargers will be installed at Ringwood Furlong to provide a charging 'hub' which will support the town and local economy.

New Forest District Council leader, Cllr Edward Heron has written to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, in response to the call for expressions of interest to become an Investment Zone which was announced by government on 24 September 2022. The letter reiterates that as a partner in the Solent Freeport, New Forest District Council is keen to secure the greatest benefits for their residents, as well as the local area. **Further details are attached to these minutes, including copy of letter.**

6. Safer New Forest Partnership

Chairman referred to Appendix 2, a Survey NFDC asked towns and parishes to complete.

The Safer New Forest Partnership is required to undertake annual community consultation regarding crime and disorder. The Community Safety Team have completed their annual community engagement events across the New Forest, engaging with local residents regarding crime and anti-social behaviour.

Following the success of the events, at the beginning of September they asked for feedback from Town & Parish Councils seeking their views and thoughts on their local areas. That will help inform the Safety Partnership on their annual strategic assessment. To date, they have only received 5 responses from local councils.

The Chairman asked that this matter be brought to the attention of local clerks.

7. Cost of Living

Chairman referred to Appendix 3, that NFDC asked towns & parishes to complete.

Further to an email at the end of September, NFDC are keen to get a conversation started about the impact of cost of living and are keen to hear from councils on what they're doing, what support is available locally and how NFDC can assist.

The Chairman asked members to assist, as NFDC had only received 3 responses.

The Co-ordinator said New Milton is working closely with Citizens Advice – New Forest (CANF) and Ryan Stevens at NFDC who is coordinating various initiatives. Michael Harris suggested local councils contact Ryan Stevens to discuss options...

District Council provides funding for warm spaces



New Forest District Council (NFDC) has set up a specific grant scheme where local groups and organisations can apply for one-off funding to offer a warm welcoming space this winter.

Ryan Stevens, service manager at NFDC, said “These are being referred to nationally as ‘warm spaces’ or ‘warm banks’, and we know that there are already places in our community who run sessions and activities. The idea of our funding is to support a safe place where people can go to get warm, access food, chat over a hot drink, or learn about support available to them. If local groups want to set up sessions or activities, or want to put on existing activities for longer, or more frequently, then we want to hear from them as this funding could help them do that. Services across the council are working with our many partners as part of a cost-of-living group to build on the range of support available. This includes promoting what we are doing, what help there is from other organisations we are working with and providing advice and information on a variety of topics such as food, claiming benefits and energy.”

Grants of between £200 - £1,000 are available by completing an online form available at www.newforest.gov.uk/warmspacesgrant . Applications will be assessed taking into account the community reach and impact and will also consider the spaces already identified by our partner organisations to ensure we support a spread of warm spaces across the district. **The council’s website has information on cost of living support at www.nfdc.gov.uk/costofliving**

The CANF New Forest **Cost of Living report** highlights the issues facing low-income households living in the New Forest. **Please see copy of report attached to the minutes.** The Co-ordinator explained a multi-agency approach is being adopted, with HCC also providing support. If advice is needed, Hampshire residents can call **0800 804 8601**

Services include:

- assistance to switch energy provider or tariff to help save money on your fuel bills
- signposting and referrals to other organisations, such as: benefits and debt advice
- safe and well visits by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service
- eligibility check for the Warm Home Discount and local energy efficiency schemes
- home visits from our Advisors offering advice and practical support
- support with temporary heating measures if you are without heating
- help to access funding, where available, for boiler repairs and replacements
- Delivered through trusted 'Buy with Confidence' contractors.

8. New Forest National Park

It is interesting to note from the Chief Executive's latest report for 20 October NPA meeting that at a time of uncertainty for individuals, businesses and communities in the New Forest, the full NPA staff team received a presentation from Citizens Advice on the New Forest 'Cost of Living Campaign' which is partly funded by HCC.

A report on the review of the adopted Hampshire Minerals & Waste Plan was considered at the Authority's Planning Committee in October, following an earlier report endorsed at the July full Authority meeting, which set out the timetable for the review of the Plan. Two new sites in Hordle (Yeatton Farm) and New Milton (Ashley Manor Farm) have been listed as potential quarries in a proposed strategy for sand and gravel digging.

The joint 'Care for the Forest, Care for Each Other' campaign was run again this year. NPA have continued to work closely with NFDC in considering the feasibility of a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to address persistent 'anti-social' behaviour (ASB) and misuse of the Forest. This has involved collating and submitting evidence to NFDC to support a PSPO to address fires / BBQs plus feeding and petting livestock.

With the launch of the new Partnership Plan 2022–2027, the NPA have set up new programme steering groups comprising officers from across the relevant teams within the Authority to help progress work on the Partnership Plan priorities. The first meeting of the new Leaders' Panel was due to take place in the New Forest in September but is being rescheduled because of the Mourning Period following The Queen's death.

9. Hampshire Association of Local Councils

The Chairman referred to Appendix 4 and **HALC Newsletter** for further details of Village of the Year Winners (Odiham) & Best Small Village Winner (Longparish) - **copy attached**. The Chairman related his experience of reporting a rural crime to the local PCSO & online <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/rc/rural-crime/>

10. AOB - Various items were discussed, including NPA & HALC meetings held earlier today.

Next Meeting – On-line via Zoom Communications, Thursday 2 February 2023 from 6.00pm.

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman closed the Meeting just after 6.45 pm.

Chairman

Date

The New Forest Shop Doctor Programme

Independent retail and hospitality businesses in **Hythe, Lyndhurst, New Milton and Barton, as well as Milford on Sea and Brockenhurst** are welcome to register for the 2023 Shop Doctor Programme.

The programme will help businesses to identify individual areas of strength and weakness, through a series of Shop Doctor (Mystery Shopper) visits resulting in a higher quality standard of retail and hospitality provision in town and village centres. This in turn will boost confidence and provide a source of publicity.

Participating businesses receive a confidential report from the Shop Doctor, a certificate of participation and the opportunity to attend an event where they and stakeholders will receive collective feedback on the customer experience in the shopping area.

Places are limited so interested businesses should register as soon as possible.

The purpose of the Shop Doctor programme

The New Forest Shop Doctor programme aims to improve the customer experience in identified town centres throughout the New Forest through a series of Shop Doctor (Mystery Shopper) visits to participating high street businesses.

The programme helps businesses to identify individual areas of strength and weakness, resulting in a higher quality standard of retail and hospitality provision. This in turn will boost confidence and the award of certificates at the end of the programme provides a source of publicity.

The 2023 programme will be available to independent retail and hospitality businesses in Hythe, Lyndhurst, New Milton and Barton, as well as Milford on Sea and Brockenhurst.

What is the Shop Doctor programme

The Shop Doctor programme will be delivered by customer experience firm, Insight6, who have previously run the Shop Doctor programmes on behalf of the Council.

Eighty-two businesses from Fordingbridge, Lymington & Pennington, Ringwood & Totton participated in the 2022 New Forest Shop Doctor programme.

There is no cost to businesses to participate in the programme as this is a New Forest District Council sponsored business support initiative.

PURDAH PERIOD FOR 2023

It is important to note that pre-election rules restrict activity wider than just publicity. Use of council facilities and resources; the member's code of conduct, developing new policies and holding of events (including some meetings) featuring elected officials should all be carefully considered during a period of heightened sensitivity.

The previously used term 'purdah' came into popular use across central and local government to describe the period of time immediately before elections or referendums when specific restrictions on communications activity are in place. The terms 'pre-election period' and 'heightened sensitivity' are now used instead.

2023 local elections

A number of local councils across the United Kingdom will have elections on **Thursday 4 May 2023**.

The latest date the pre-election period can start for the local elections is Monday 20 March 2023.

Local government sometimes views this period as a time when communications have to shut down completely. This is not the case, and the ordinary functions of councils can continue, but some restrictions may be imposed by law.

The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity is based around seven principles to ensure that all communications activity:

- is lawful
- is cost effective
- is objective
- is even-handed
- is appropriate
- has regard to equality and diversity
- is issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity.

In general, authorities should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters, ensure that publicity relating to policies/proposals from central government is balanced and factually accurate, and comply with laws which prohibit political advertising on television or radio.

- In general, you should not issue any publicity which seeks to influence voters (an exception being situations covered by legislation or regulations directing publication of information for explanatory purposes).
- Particular care should be taken between the time of publication of a notice of an election and polling day.
- Consider suspending the hosting of third-party material or closing public forums if these are likely to breach the code of practice.
- Do not publish any publicity on controversial issues or report views on proposals in a way which identifies them with candidates or parties.
- Publicity relating to individuals involved directly in the election should not be published unless expressly authorised by statute.
- You are allowed to publish factual information which identifies the names, constituencies and parties of candidates at elections.

Using the Citizen Portal

About the Citizen Portal planning system

The Citizen Portal planning system allows members of the public to search for and view planning applications in the New Forest National Park.

If you know the address or case number, you can use the quick search feature. You can also quickly view applications that were received in the last week, or determined in the last week. Otherwise you can use the advanced search to locate a specific application or applications.

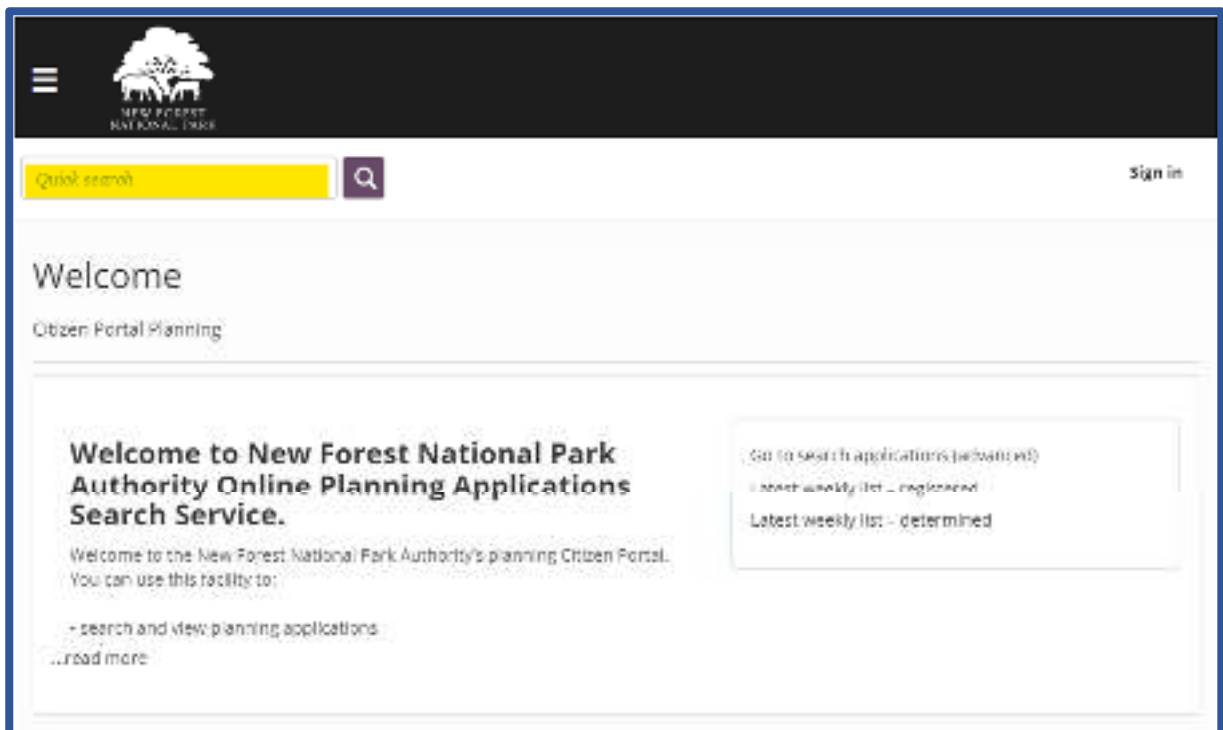
If you create an account and sign in, you can also comment on applications and register to be notified when a planning application of interest is updated.

Using the Citizen Portal

You can find our Citizen Portal here [Citizen Portal Planning \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](https://agileapplications.co.uk). The Portal should work for all browsers but it seems to work best when using Microsoft Edge. We are aware too that some users experience difficulties accessing historic documents online when using certain devices. We are trying to resolve these issues with our supplier.

Searching for a planning application – quick search

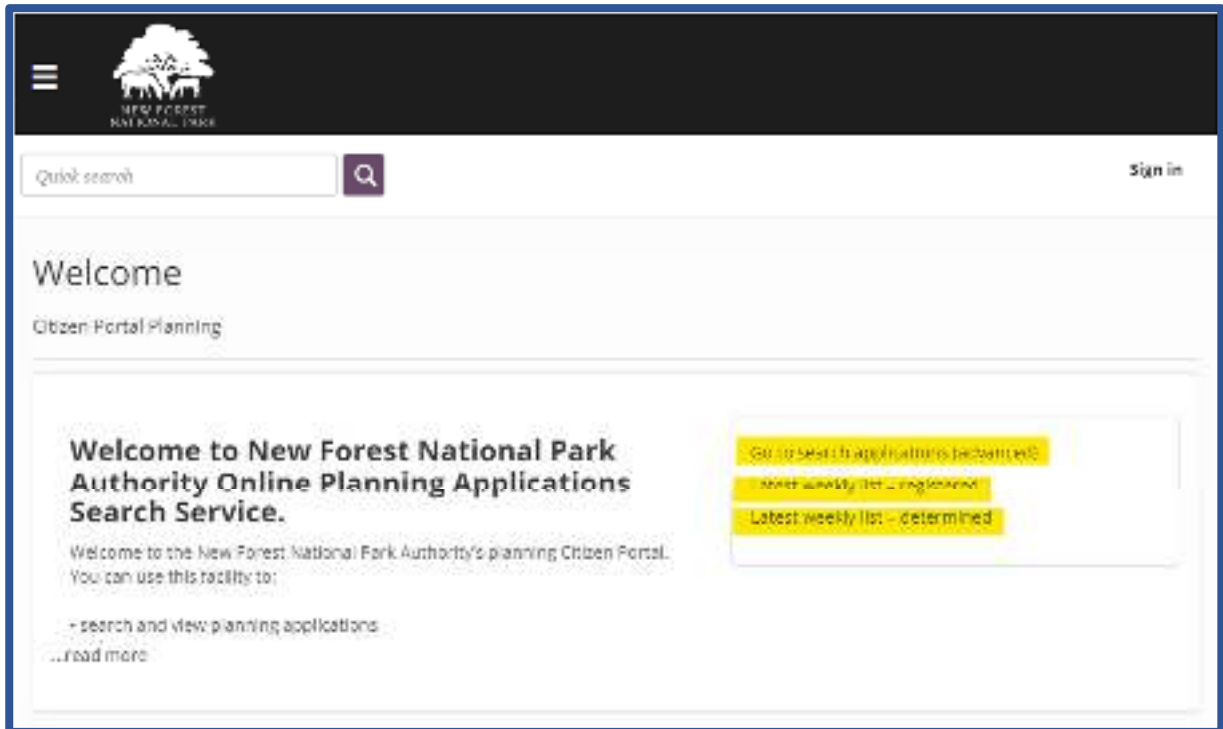
If you know a full or partial case number or address you can enter it in the **Quick Search** box at the top of the page, then click the **Search** icon to see a list of matching cases.



You can also:

- click **Go to search applications (Advanced)** to use the general search facilities, including the advanced search (see Searching for a planning application - general search)

- click **Latest weekly list – registered** to see a list of planning applications registered in the last week
- click **Latest weekly list – determined** to see a list of planning applications registered in the last week.



Searching for a planning application - general search

On the Citizen Portal home page [Citizen Portal Planning \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](http://agileapplications.co.uk) click **Go to search applications (advanced)** on the right hand side of the screen.

Here, you can enter a full or partial application reference if you know it, or a full or partial address to see a list of matching planning applications. Then click on an individual application to see the application details.

More advanced search options on the general search page:

- By default, **Standard** is selected, so you will search all matching applications. You can also select **Determined or Registered** to choose to see only matching applications that have been determined (select the **Determined** radio button on the next screen), or only matching applications that have been registered (select the **Registered** radio button on the next screen). In these cases, you can specify a date range to limit the search too.
- If you want more control over the search, on the general search page, select the **Advanced search** check box. Here you can filter by various dates, application status, parish, development type etc.

Searching for a planning application – latest registered search

To quickly see a list of all the planning applications registered in the last week, on the Citizen Portal home page [Citizen Portal Planning \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](http://agileapplications.co.uk) click **Latest weekly list – registered** on the right hand side of the screen.

Searching for a planning application – latest determined search

To quickly see a list of all the planning applications determined in the last week, on the Citizen Portal home page [Citizen Portal Planning \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](https://agileapplications.co.uk) click **Latest weekly list – determined** on the right hand side of the screen.

Searching by date range

On the Citizen Portal home page [Citizen Portal Planning \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](https://agileapplications.co.uk) click **Go to search applications (advanced)** on the right hand side of the screen.

On the general search page, select the **Advanced search** check box. Now you can specify a date range for any or all of:

- Application date
- Decision date
- Validation date
- Decision due date

You can use the date filters together with other filters if you want (for example, parish, application status).

Searching by parish

On the Citizen Portal home page [Citizen Portal Planning \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](https://agileapplications.co.uk) click **Go to search applications (advanced)** on the right hand side of the screen.

On the general search page, select the **Advanced search** check box. Scroll down the page and you'll see the option to select the parish from the drop-down list of parishes.

You can use the parish filter together with other filters if you want (for example, dates, application status).

Viewing a planning application


A planning application registered after 1 October 2022 has the following sections (click on the section to expand it):

- **Summary** – a summary of the application details. This includes the application status, the named planning officer and the decision if applicable.
- **Consultations** – a list of the consultees, interested parties and neighbours that have been notified about the application.
- **Responses** – a list of the responses (comments, objections, support) that have been received for this application. Click on a response to see the response. Depending on the response, you may see the response text directly, or you may see a link to a response document which you can download to view.
- **Constraints/policies**
- **Documents** – the planning application, plans, reports etc
- **Conditions**
- **Dates**

When viewing applications registered before 1 October 2022 you may not see anything in the consultations and responses' sections. This is because when our supplier migrated all the data

across from our 'old system' it transferred all the records into the Documents section. We are looking to get this rectified if we can.

Another frustration is that some of the records shown in the Documents section for applications registered before 1 October 2022 include erroneous and nonsensical 'suffixes' such as 'performance bond' and 'batch'. Again we have asked our supplier to fix this problem and hope it can be resolved soon.

When viewing documents it is best to use the 'eye' icon  on the left hand side of the screen. The document should not download to your computer. Alternatively if you do want to download/save a copy of a document, then click on either the name or description of the document.

Creating an account on the Citizen Portal

You can view planning applications and documents without creating an account on the Citizen Portal. But to track a planning application or to comment on it, you need to be signed in to your account.

To create an account:

1. Click **Sign in** in the top right of the page, then select the **Sign up** option at the bottom right of the form.
2. Complete the required fields and sign up.
3. Now complete your account profile as you will not be able to track planning applications or comment on them until you do this. Click the "Hamburger" icon at the top left of the screen to show the left-hand navigation menu
4. From the left-hand navigation pane, select **My account**, complete the required information and click **Save**.

Now you will be able to track planning applications and comment on them.

Commenting on a planning application

To comment on a planning application:

1. Make sure you are signed in to the Citizen Portal, locate to the application you want to comment on, and go to the application details.
2. Click **Please click here to comment on the application** (at the start of the **Summary** section). If you have not yet completed your account profile, you will be asked to do that first. If the consultation period for that planning application has ended, you won't be able to select this option.
3. Complete the form to make your comments, then **Submit** it.

Tracking a planning application

You can track a planning application to be notified of changes and updates to the application. To do this:

1. Make sure you are signed in to the Citizen Portal, locate to the application you want to track, and go to the application details.
2. Click **Track**. If you have not yet completed your account profile, you will be asked to do that first.

Updating this Guide

We shall update this Guide as and when we receive updates/upgrades from our supplier and also as we all gain more experience and insights into using the new system. In the meantime, we would value your feedback on using the Portal – good or bad – and any suggested improvements to this Guide to make it easier for users.

We are very aware that it has not been a smooth transfer to the new system and we can only apologise for any inconvenience and frustration caused. We are working hard with our supplier to get the system performing to the standards we all rightly expect.

Last updated – 10 January 2023



Hampshire Association of Local Councils

President: Professor John Denham FRSA

Chief Executive: Dawn Hamblet MSc, FICPD

Summary of changes proposed in the new Articles of Association (“**New Articles**”) of Hampshire Association of Local Councils Limited (the “**Company**”)

Overview

Hampshire ALC is a member owned not for profit limited company and exists to provide support, guidance and a collective voice for Parish and Town Councils and Parish meetings. Although we are a not for profit organisation, we are still a registered limited company and so covered by the Companies Act. We are therefore required to have Articles of Association. These are the governing document of our Limited Company (in a similar way to the standing orders within a parish council) and they must reflect the requirements of the companies Act.

The articles currently in use at Hampshire ALC are the same ones that were adopted when the Limited Company was set up 13 years ago. These do not fully reflect recent changes in legislation or in the way organisations now operate in terms of electronic payments etc. and therefore need to be updated. In order to do this, we commissioned a specialist in company law solicitor to draft recommended amendments that will bring practices up to date and futureproof any more changes.

These have been fully debated by the Chairmen of the District Associations (DAs) in their capacity as Directors of the Limited Company. However, they do need to be voted on by the membership at the AGM being held on 20th October 2022. We have outlined below a summary of the key changes, so that member councils can be familiar with them prior to the AGM.

Explanations are noted in italics

Key Changes

1. Membership

Membership is now divided into Four classes:

- Full Members (*pay Hampshire fees and chose to also pay NALC affiliation fees*)
- Hampshire Members (*pay Hampshire affiliation fees only*)
- Non-Hampshire Members (*located outside of Hampshire and pay Hampshire affiliation fees only*)
- Associate Members (*typically individuals, such as Internal Auditors, or Interim Clerks*)

All Members, with the exception Associate Members, can attend and vote at general meetings. Associate Members have the right to attend general meetings, but cannot vote on shareholder resolutions.

The Company proposes to update its byelaws to impose further restrictions on which members can vote on specific matters. At this stage, the following restrictions are proposed:

- Both Full and Hampshire Members can each propose the appointment of a non-executive director to the board to represent the district that their Council operates within. For the avoidance of doubt, Non-Hampshire Members and Associate Members cannot individually propose non-executive directors in this manner.
- If a resolution relates to an issue geographically centred on Hampshire then only the Full Members and Hampshire Members shall be entitled to vote on that resolution.

Under the existing Articles, membership would automatically terminate if a member did not pay their annual membership fee. This has been amended in the New Articles so that members who have not paid their fees by 31 July each year are not automatically removed as members but instead cannot vote on shareholder resolutions, or access any Hampshire ALC services until their membership fees are paid in full.

The power of the directors to remove members, where it is determined to be in the best interests of the Company remains, however this now requires a simple majority (>50%) to vote in favour, rather than a two-thirds majority under the existing Articles.

2. Directorship

The New Articles reduce the minimum number of directors from seven to three. The maximum number of directors has been increased from nine to ten. *Whilst it is always the intention of Hampshire ALC to have a director from each DA, Hampshire ALC were advised that the current articles were too restrictive and were a risk to the operation of the company going forward.*

Non-executive directors serve for a term of four years. They may be reappointed by the other directors for a further term of four years. A non-executive director can serve for more than eight consecutive years only if it would be in the best interests of the Company. The absolute maximum total term for which a non-executive director can serve is twelve years.

The byelaws will state that a non-executive director appointed following a proposal from a Full or a Hampshire Member can be removed by that Member council by giving the Company notice, or upon the Company determining that the director is no longer an employee or officer of the Member council who proposed their appointment. *This is to ensure the DA retain influence over the director appointed to represent them.*

Quorum

The quorum for general meetings of the Company has been reduced from 20% to 10% of the total membership that are eligible to vote. *This has been changed to be in line with other similar organisations and also to ensure the AGMs remain viable as it has often been challenging to achieve 20% attendance. This futureproofs allowance of hybrid meetings, requiring the quorum to be physically present in the room, those over and above may attend remotely.*

The quorum for board meetings has been changed from one-third of the total board to three eligible directors. This compliments the minimum number of directors being reduced from seven to three.

3. Virtual and hybrid general meetings

The New Articles include wording which will allow virtual general meetings as well as 'hybrid' virtual meetings (where there is a physical meeting, but people can also connect digitally).

The solicitors have therefore recommended the wording so if the law is changed to allow fully virtual meetings in the future the wording of the New Articles would allow the Company to transition to virtual meetings without needing to make further amendments to the Articles.