



Stepping Stones Conference, York

Saturday 21 February 2009

Introduction and Keynote Address: The Role of Neighbourhood, Parish and Town Councils in Community Empowerment

Cllr Hazel Williams, NALC Vice Chairman

- 'Communities in Control' set out Government's commitment to strengthen neighbourhoods
 - Encourage the creation of more parish councils
 - Quality status
 - Parish polls
 - By-laws
 - Participatory budgeting
 - Census of local councils
(currently 8,500 parish/town councils and 80,000 parish/town councillors)
 - Promote democracy
 - Petitions
- Not accepted by Government
 - Proposal that cost of parish/town council elections should be borne by principal authority

Sam Shippen, Society of Local Council Clerks

- Power of Well-being
 - Quality status not linked to power of well-being
 - Clerk with CilCA will need to take an additional module and details can be found on NALC website (Section 7 – 200 words £15)
 - 80% of councillors will need to be trained if to use power (2hour training course)
 - Eligibility criteria can be found on DCLG or NALC website

Workshop 1 – Working with Principal Authorities

Ann Armstrong, Durham Council

- Commitment in Durham's Charter to work towards full parishing
- Durham council provide funding to small councils to help them achieve Quality Status
- Developed number of protocols which sit behind Charter

Workshop 2 – Promoting the Quality Parish Scheme

Sheena Spence, YLCA and Elaine Pearson, NALC

- Accreditation Panels for QS – appointed by Government
- Cost of accreditation increases with size
- New Scheme
 - FAQs and guidance book for applicants on NALC website
 - Test 1 – now $\frac{2}{3}$ election requirement
 - Test 2 – Clerk's training and well being (see above)
 - Test 4 – Mandatory and discretionary sections – could principal authority help with this test? Community Engagement Strategy model strategy document available from YCLA – need this for power of well-being
 - Test 6 – new evidence required
 - Test 8 – guidance on website
 - Test 10 – Model documents available from YCLA

Lunchtime Fringe Event – Participation Inquiry

Richard Burge, CRC

- Strengthening the role of rural councillors – one year on: publication available from JA
- Bradford – Beacon status for working with rural communities
- Mention also made of Stratford and Donnington
- Provision of work space for those clerks currently working at home – could principal authority facilitate?

Workshop 3 – Code of Conduct

Shirley Flint, Independent Board Member and Anne Rehill, Advice and Guidance Manager, Standards Board for England

- Number of allegations against parish/town councillors not increased since system went local
- Number of allegations fallen since system went local
- Handout available

Keynote Address: How Principal Authorities and Town and Parish Councils Can Work in Partnership

Cllr Keith Ross, LGA Independent Group

A personal reflection

Other Resources available from JA:

- **LCR January 2009 – The Official Journal of NALC**
- **How to subscribe to DIS or DIS extra (Direct Information Service)**
- **All about local councils – NALC and Electoral Commission publication**
- **Fitzpatrick Woolmer – creative design solutions www.fwdp.co.uk**
- **Blachere illumination – www.blachere-illumination.co.uk**
- **NALC Annual Report and Accounts 2007-2008**

**Jane Austen
28 February 2009**