

**From:** Sam <sam@somerset-alc.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 09 May 2025 12:38  
**To:** clerk@sheptonmontagueparish.gov.uk  
**Subject:** Newsletter May 2025



**SAI**  
**SOMERSET ASSOCIATION OF I**

**Clerks and chairs - please share this newsletter  
with your councillor colleagues**

## **2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide is published**

The Smaller Authorities Proper Practices Panel (SAPP, formally known as the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance) has published the 2025 edition of the Practitioners' guide, which applies to Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) for the financial years commencing on or after 1st April 2025.

The most notable changes to the Practitioners' Guide this year are:

- **A new assertion 10** has been added to the AGAR to clarify data compliance, previously covered under assertion 3 (please note: the published guide includes some errors, which are addressed in the addendum available for download on the SALC website).
- **Email management** - to warrant a positive response to assertion 10, every authority must now have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com.
- **Guidance on assertion 9** (trust funds) has been updated to reflect changes to the AGAR for 2025-26 when cells 11a and 11b will be replaced with a single cell 11.

Members can download the guide and a Domains Helper Advice Service briefing note about gov.uk domains from the knowledge hub of the SALC website (Council finance page) and from the NALC website.

---

## Model Standing Orders 2025 published

Model Standing Orders have been updated, with further amendment to SO18 to comply with the recent changes to procurement legislation and to ensure consistency with the Model Financial Regulations. The changes are to 18.a.v, 18.c, 18.d and 18.f of the 2022 revision.

Model Standing Order 14 has been updated to better reflect code of conduct requirements and SO14.a-c have been removed.

The language in the document has been updated to use gender-neutral terms in line with NALC policy and the civility and respect programme.

The model is available to NALC/SALC members only and can be downloaded from the Legal Topic Notes & Guidance page of the SALC website.

---

## **Benefits of SALC/ NALC affiliation**

All invoices have now been issued in respect of councils' SALC and NALC membership. Thank you to all the councils who have already paid.

As detailed in our April letter emailed to clerks, the board agreed to apply the following fee structure based on bands of electorate within a parish:

	Up to 1000 electors	1001 -1500 electors	1501 - 2500 electors	2501 – 5000+ electors
Pence per elector	0.49	0.38	0.16	0.018

The NALC affiliation fees for 2025/26, which SALC collects on behalf of NALC, are charged at 8.337 pence per elector, capped at £2,137 for

our largest councils.

SALC/NALC council members benefit from updated template and model documents, guidance notes and national publications on laws and procedure, employment, finance, and more. Along with free or discounted training and swift bespoke guidance or legal advice on the ever-expanding range of council business.

*NALC, with its affiliated county associations, is the only recognised membership organisation for city, parish, and town councils.*

When assisting with enquiries from the council, we prefer to deal directly with the clerk, but will respond to the chair, other lead officer, or other councillor when it's requested or when we are responding to matters relating to the clerk's employment.

SALC is always happy to offer general one-to-one advice to officers to help them carry out their day to day roles. However, it is the council that is the member of SALC and NALC, so please can we remind everyone that, to aid transparency and openness, if we are asked to provide an opinion on a question of the council (or committee) we ask that our response is shared with the council (or committee) even if the clerk decides to offer alternative advice.

---

## **New fully funded support service available to SALC member councils**

SALC frequently receives requests for support relating to data

protection, freedom of information, and subject access requests.

For the more complex and involved enquires where standard guidance is not appropriate, we are now able to refer member councils to a specialist one-to-one service provided by Breakthrough Communications.

*This new confidential service is fully funded through your membership to SALC/NALC.*

Breakthrough Communications brings extensive experience and sector-specific knowledge supporting parish, city, and town councils and understanding their unique challenges. The team works with county associations and a wide range of parish and town councils, delivering tailored support that includes developing communication strategies, running consultations and surveys, and advising on data protection and governance.

For more information, email [info@somerset-alc.org.uk](mailto:info@somerset-alc.org.uk)

Breakthrough Communications is also running a series of [free lunchtime webinars](#) on council communications and information compliance. The webinars cover how to reduce the stress of data protection and FOI compliance and make more meaningful connections through best-practice community engagement. You'll leave each 45-minute session with practical resources, advice, and actionable steps to use immediately.

---

## Somerset Parishes Conference 2025

Save the date for SALC's "*Somerset Parishes Conference 2025*", on **Friday 3rd October** at the Canalside Conference Centre, North Petherton, TA6 6LQ.

Thanks to the positive and constructive feedback from many councils that attended the Somerset Parishes Conference 2024 in November, we are working to make this year's conference even more valuable to Somerset's parishes, towns, and city.

SALC is leading the organisation of this year's conference, with welcome support from Somerset Council, as we all continue to work through the impact of unitarisation on Somerset's parish sector.

The day will begin with SALC's AGM, and we welcome recommendations from our members for workshops that you would find most beneficial.

We are keen to showcase the good works of member councils - is your council running a project this is improving lives in your community? Would your council like to share details about the project with fellow councillors and council officers?

---

## SALC chairs' forum and clerks' market town forum

We announced in our January newsletter that Ewan, SALC's CEO, is launching a Chair's Forum to facilitate support, networking, and sharing of good ideas across our c.270 city, town, and parish council chairs.

Ewan has now held two fora, settling on a regular time of 6pm to 7pm of the last Monday of every month. As the last Monday of May is the Whitsun Bank

Holiday, the next forum will be 6 pm on Monday 2 June. Please [get in touch with Ewan](#) if you would like to join the Teams invite list, and let him know about any topics that you would particularly like to talk through with fellow chairs.

In addition, Ewan is scheduling a new forum for the clerks in Somerset's market towns to share learnings on the ongoing localisation of services, and the greater role of town and city councils in improving lives and local economic prosperity. Ewan will contact clerks next week with potential dates. Simon has also offered to convene a forum for clerks to discuss the challenges facing smaller councils – please [get in touch with Simon](#) if you would like to join this conversation.

---

## **Trull Parish Council awarded under the Local Council Award Scheme**

Congratulations to Trull Parish Council on achieving the LCAS Foundation Award.

The award is an excellent achievement showing that Trull Parish Council achieves good practices in governance, community engagement, and council improvement. It shows that the council has gone above and beyond the legal obligations; leading the community and continuously seeking opportunities to improve and develop even further.

If your council has what it takes to be recognised by the Local Council Award Scheme, you can find out more information and apply via the NALC website, [here](#).

---

## **FREE training: How to evaluate your health & wellbeing projects**

The FREE training will focus on how to measure the impact of projects and will look at putting ideas into practice. It will be an opportunity to hear about the grants SALC has already funded and discuss your ideas.

Booking is essential as places limited, all sessions will be identical so please book just one:

- Thursday 15th May - Roadwater Village Hall 10:00-16:00
- Friday 16th May - Friends Meeting House Taunton 10:00-16:00 (limited spaces remaining)
- Saturday 17th May - The Shambles, The Market House, Castle Cary 10:00-16:00

Open to city, town, and parish council officers or councillors. Also open to people from local organisations with a connection to their local council and with a leaning towards health & wellbeing programmes.

Refreshments & light lunch will be provided.

Please contact [HWBAdmin@somerset-alc.org.uk](mailto:HWBAdmin@somerset-alc.org.uk) to book a place or with any further questions.

---

## **FREE training: Getting the Best from your Council's Website**



This engaging webinar is FREE to SALC member councils and is perfect for parish and town councils looking to maximise the potential of their website for both functionality and community engagement.

You'll discover how to make your website a dynamic tool that not only provides essential information but also fosters a sense of connection and involvement with your local community. Learn strategies and practical tips for boosting interaction, improving communication and messaging, and using your website as a platform for meaningful engagement.

The webinar is delivered by Mark Tomkins, Founder of Aubergine, and takes place on 30th June. Book your place via the SALC website training pages.

---

## **Help improve the accessibility of play areas for children with SEND**

Somerset Council's SEND Inclusion team is embarking on a project to improve the accessibility of local communities for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

During initial investigations, the team heard from parents that, if the local park was more accessible, in that it was fenced in to stop the child running away, then the parent might not need a formal short break because they would be able to get some rest by taking the child

to the park.

The team is looking for recommendations and feedback from parent carers in Somerset on which play parks they find most accessible and inclusive for children with additional needs and/or disabilities, and they would like to work with city, town, and parish councils to create a checklist for accessible parks, and to promote a list of great accessible parks across Somerset.

If your council can help with the creation of an accessibility checklist, please contact either [Ewan](#) or [Fodo](#).

---

## **Taking an age friendly approach to services**

The Centre for Ageing Better, ARUP, and Housing LIN are working together to develop practical tools and resources to help councils take an age-friendly approach to planning, policy, and service delivery.

The group is inviting people working in all kinds of councils in the UK to complete an online survey to help the project understand what would help them to better meet the needs of their older residents now and in the future.

You can access the survey and find out more about how to get involved in this piece of work [here](#).

The survey closes at **23:45 on 13/05/2025**.

---

## **Simpler Recycling waste duties**

From 31 March 2025, all workplaces (businesses and non-domestic premises) have a legal duty to separate recycling and food waste from their non-recyclable waste. Offices and premises used only or mainly for public meetings are included within the relevant non-domestic premises to which the rules apply.

“Micro-firms”, defined as workplaces with fewer than 10 full-time employees in total, have until 31st March 2027 to comply. It is believed that most small parish councils will meet this definition.

Councils that are within the scope of Simpler Recycling should seek advice from Somerset Council for guidance on the practical implications of the duties. Information is available on Gov.UK, [here](#).

---

## **Legal advice on asset & service devolution**

As first reported in our [September 2024 newsletter](#), SALC has identified two sector-specialist firms of solicitors that can support city, town, and parish councils with the formalities of devolution of assets & services from Somerset Council.

If your council would like further information, please email [info@somerset-alc.org.uk](mailto:info@somerset-alc.org.uk)

---

## Job Vacancies



Right now, the following councils/ bodies have active vacancies:

[Priddy Parish Council seeks p/t Clerk/ RFO at LC1 SCP 7-12](#)

[Lopen Parish Council seeks p/t clerk/RFO at £14.60-15.58 ph](#)

[Stogursey Parish Council seeks p/t clerk/ RFO at £14.60 to £15.58ph](#)



### Sector Specific Training

SALC continues to offer training designed for parish & town councils at preferential member rates. See the [SALC website](#) for full details.

If your council needs something a little more bespoke, we will be pleased to hear your requirements, so just get in contact to let us know: [simon@somerset-alc.org.uk](mailto:simon@somerset-alc.org.uk)



---

*Copyright © 2022 Somerset Association of Local Councils Ltd, All rights reserved.*

You are a member of SALC or have subscribed to our newsletter

**Our registered address is:**

Somerset Association of Local Councils Limited,  
**Edgar Hall, Somerton Business Park, 8 Cary Court, Somerton, Somerset TA11 6SB**

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).