

# Mini *eUpdate* from Northants CALC

To Member Councils in Northamptonshire:

[Please circulate]

## Many Happy Returns

It's that time of year again when **every** parish and town council and parish meeting in Northamptonshire must, by law, complete an Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) and submit it to the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn, by Wednesday 1 July 2026. There are **no exceptions**; even a tiny parish meeting with no precept is required to complete a nil return. 95% of councils will have the AGAR process down pat, but if you are in the 5% and are befuddled and bemused by the whole thing, please get in touch with us and we will be pleased to help.

## Branching Out with The Tree Council

Many parish and town councils have availed themselves over the years of the free tree packs available from the Woodland Trust (<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>), but it has sometimes been harder to find funding for larger trees, specimen trees, and tree after care. **Grants of £250 to £2,500 are now available from The Tree Council** for community tree planting projects across the UK. Eligible applicants, including parish and town councils, must have written permission for the planting site. Funding can cover trees, hedging, hedgerow trees, orchards, and establishment items, but not normally professional labour, heavy equipment hire, or peat-based products. Applications should demonstrate community involvement, value, local knowledge, and aftercare plans by **midnight on 19 July 2026**. To find out more, please visit <https://treecouncil.org.uk/grants-and-guidance/our-grants/branching-out-fund/>.

## Project Keystone

Project Keystone is a strategic review of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and its relationships with County Associations. This work will clarify the **future direction, role, and strategic priorities** of sector support for parish and town councils, including yours. The first Project Keystone survey is now live. It's a chance to help shape the future direction of sector support for parish and town councils and your experience, insight, and perspective can directly influence the decisions that follow. I would be very grateful if clerks and councillors could complete the survey. It can take up to 35 minutes depending on the length of your answers, but it is important that we take this opportunity to provide thoughtful, honest input. The survey, which is by the consultancy Shared Intelligence, is at: <https://tinyurl.com/3zy3uxwx>. Responses are from you as an individual and you can answer wearing whatever hat you wish. The closing date for responses is **5 June 2026**.

## Local Council Vacancies

Stanion is a medium village a few miles southeast of Corby. There are 802 electors. **Stanion Parish Council** has a vacancy for a Clerk/RFO working 10 hours per week. There are 9 councillors and the precept for 2026/27 is £30,800. The deadline for applications is 5pm on **22 May 2026**.

Rushton is a village between Kettering and Corby in north Northamptonshire. There are 468 electors and a ten-seat council. The precept for 2026/27 is £9,730. **Rushton Parish Council** has a vacancy for a Clerk/RFO working 6 hours per week. The deadline for applications is 5pm on **12 June 2026**.

**Hackleton Parish Council** has a vacancy for a Clerk/RFO working 25 hours per week. Hackleton is a parish with 1,558 electors approximately 6 miles southeast of Northampton. There are 11 councillors and the precept for 2026/27 is £146,456. The deadline for applications is 4pm on **16 June 2026**.

Lutton is a tiny village and one of the most easterly parishes in Northamptonshire, being 10 miles southwest of Peterborough. **Lutton Parish Council** has a vacancy for a Clerk/RFO working just 8 hours per month (which is below the recommended minimum of 19.5 hours per month). There are 116 electors and 5 councillors. The deadline for applications is **31 July 2026** but shortlisting and interviews may take place prior to the closing date.

Full details of all the above vacancies are at <https://northantscalc.gov.uk/council-vacancies>.

I hope you have a good weekend.

Best regards,

Danny.