

Mini *eUpdate* from Northants CALC

To Member Councils in Northamptonshire:

[Please read and circulate to all councillors]

Election Results

A week is a long time in politics, and this week has felt like a very long time indeed. However, democracy has spoken and **Reform UK has control of both unitary councils in the county**. At North Northamptonshire Council (NNC), Reform has 39 of the 68 seats, whilst at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) Reform has 42 of the 76 seats. With one or two notable exceptions, the Reform councillors have little or no experience of running unitary councils, so there are interesting times ahead. A week after the elections, neither NNC nor WNC's Reform group has yet appointed a Leader, although frontrunners are beginning to emerge. More will be revealed at next week's annual meeting of West Northamptonshire Council (WNC), which you can watch live at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDyc2cNcl19OvcGOCuZDTBQ>

from 1700 on **Thursday 15 May 2025**. NNC's annual council meeting is not until the following Thursday, **22 May 2025**, and will be available to watch on <https://www.youtube.com/@NNCDemServices> from 1800. Northants CALC has kept in touch with the unitary councils since the results were announced and we are working hard to understand the impact that the change of administration will have on parish and town councils. For the moment, the only thing that is certain is that we don't know what will happen next. Reform UK's manifesto, ***Our Contract With You*** (<https://www.reformparty.uk/policies>) sets out national policies but it is not immediately obvious how they would apply to local government. We will keep member councils updated as things develop.

Thank You for Your Service

One of the immediate consequences of the political upheaval was the loss of dozens and dozens of very experienced, knowledgeable, and long-serving councillors in Northamptonshire. Politics can be a brutal game, but when a local councillor is unseated by a very narrow margin to someone with no political experience or track record of public service, it must be a real kick in the teeth. There are too many to mention, but the list included some very senior members from both unitary councils and from across the political spectrum. A few might bounce back in the future but for others it is the end of the game. **Thank you** to all for your public service, in whatever guise you served.

Signing Off

With parish and town council annual meetings underway, one of the questions we get regularly is whether brand new councillors (i.e. ones that weren't councillors in the previous term) can vote to sign off the minutes of the last meeting and the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). The answer is yes! Brand new councillors can base their votes on the information and evidence provided to them by the clerk, the evidence provided by any councillors who were on the council in the previous term, and a "sense check" of the minutes and AGAR, i.e. do they look correct and proper? I understand brand new councillors saying, "I can't vote, I wasn't here then", but the law doesn't work that way. **All councillors**, including brand new ones, should vote on the adoption of those documents.

Copyright Infringement

County Association colleagues nationally have alerted us to several enquiries this week from councils who have been contacted by email from **PA Media Group Infringements Team**, asserting that the council has used a copyrighted image on its website or social media channels. It may be tempting for councils to use images found, for example, through a Google search to illustrate webpages and news stories on social media, but some images are copyrighted and using them without the appropriate licence could be an infringement. The emails ask the council to prove that it purchased a licence to use the image or to login into a portal and purchase a licence (one email requested £800) that would cover past use. The email states that "*...removal alone does not resolve the matter.*" If you receive such an email, **please contact Northants CALC**

in the first instance to discuss your council's options. Note that there are various sources that include royalty free images that can be used on websites and social media such as Microsoft, Canva, and Unsplash. Or better still, create your own!

Local Council Vacancies

East Farndon is a small, vibrant village just two miles southwest of Market Harborough. **East Farndon Parish Council** has 258 electors and seven seats. The precept for 2025/26 is £13,516. The council has a vacancy for a Clerk/RFO working 25 hours per month. The deadline for applications is **31 July 2025** but the council has said it may make an offer of employment for the right candidate before the deadline, so if you are interested, get your application in soon!

Details of all vacancies are at <https://northantscalc.gov.uk/council-vacancies>.

I hope you have a good weekend.

Best regards,

Danny.

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******Have you tried the Member Enquiry Service (MES) yet? If your enquiry is not complex or specific to your council e-mail it**

to mes@northantscalc.gov.uk and get an answer from an experienced, qualified and Northants-based local council clerk. ****

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