



Annual Parishes Liaison Conference Event Summary Report

Event Date 10/07/2017

On July 10th 2017 Leicestershire County Council in partnership with LRALC hosted the 2017 Annual Parishes Liaison conference at County Hall. The event was attended by 89 representatives of Parish and Town Councils.

The conference's presentations focused on the enhanced community leadership roles of Parish and Town Councils within the theme of building Great Communities in Leicestershire. The event also featured workshop discussions on how Leicestershire's Parish and Town councils could help shape and contribute to the delivery of Leicestershire County Council's Communities Strategy for 2017-2021. Attendees shared opinions, thoughts and suggestions of how their current work is addressing and meeting recommendations from the draft Communities Strategy, and the possibilities of taking on and delivering more services within their communities.

The event's key note speakers were Jonathan Owen Chief Executive of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) who gave a national perspective of how Parish and Town Councils across the country are taking opportunities to deliver new services and work with principal Councils on decentralisation and Devolution. Jonathan also made reference to resources such as 'Devo +' and 'Power to the people' which have been developed by NALC. Parish and Town Councils can refer to this for information and case studies.

The second key speaker was Tom Purnell, Assistant Chief Executive of Leicestershire County Council, who provided a local picture of current developments with regards to financial pressures, planning and economic development, outcomes –based working. Tom asked attendees to consider how Leicestershire County Council can support local councils and vice versa. He suggested that by working together, we can make a compelling case that investing in building the capacity of communities and Parish and Town councils to enable local leadership and services that could lead to longer term savings, as well as effective service delivery. He encouraged Parish & Town Councils to get involved in the Communities Strategy development and help shape a practical programme of action to boost local councils and community managed service delivery.

Jake Atkinson, LRALC Chief Executive provided an overview of the LRALC strategic plan, which aims to raise the profile and build the capacity of the sector.

During the Communities Strategy workshops discussions focused on the 4 draft Priorities set out in the Strategy and how Local Councils can work together with Leicestershire County Council to deliver these.



The draft Priorities are:

1. Confident Communities- Where Communities support themselves, individuals and families.
2. Cohesive Communities – Where in collaboration with public services, communities are supported to design and deliver better outcomes.
3. Empowered Communities- Where the Voluntary and Community Sector in Leicestershire is an effective provider of services that meets everyone’s needs.
4. Supported Communities- Where the Council continues to be outward focussed, and open to new ways of working.

Participants were signposted to www.leicestercommunities.org.uk for an opportunity to feed in any further comments on the Draft Communities Strategy. There will also be a series of ‘Big Discussions about Great Communities’ events for Parish & Town Councils in the early autumn. (Please see below for more details)

The event concluded with group work and feedback from attendees on the below workshop questions. An overview of the feedback provided is presented below:

What do you currently do to make your community a great one?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver Youth Clubs• Light Switch on/Christmas events• Drop in centres for the elderly• Community Library• Host Sport clubs, run village hall and fetes.• Develop neighbourhood Plans• Maintain cemeteries, sport grounds and other community open spaces• Grass Cutting• Host a Cinema once a month• Host an over 65’s club	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have news feeds on local activities on the Parish website and in local Newsletter• Host street market events• Use social media for communication with local residents• Have a welcome pack for new residents in new developments(with local information)• Alleviation of flooding by adopting resilient community plans• Have a good neighbours scheme which started by Parish Councils and run by Volunteers• Support in Bloom schemes



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver local music evenings for all age groups• Host informal drop in coffee mornings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide free community facilities for local charities• Fund and maintain re-creation activities in the community.
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Question 2

What would enable you to do even more?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More volunteers and leaders• Money• Volunteers• Space/more facilities• Ideas from Community regulations /Health and Safety/DBS• More Community Support• Celebrating achievements• Community Age profile• More information on grant funding• Promotion and toolkits• Recruit skilled people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a full complement of Councillors• Consistent and reliable funding• Put up precepts• We need more community engagement• Knowledge of contract monitoring• Sharing skills



Question 3

How do we work together to ensure our communities are supported to flourish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater sharing of experiences, issues and successes• Better member forum on LRALC Website to offer advice and best practice• Approved contractor list• Better knowledge sharing by clerks• Have drainage charts/Gas mains accessible in the public domain• More visibility• Contact with neighbouring Parishes• Having one body to contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mentorship for new Parish councils and members• Not overusing the help of volunteers• Have joint Parish and town council liaison meetings• Have a better understanding of each other's roles• Facilitate relationships• LRALC have data base of services and resources• Communication with local groups

Question 4

Do you have access to the tools, support and information you need to shape your local area and support vulnerable/local people?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have access to some tools• Need to know how to fund• We need access to template contracts• More guidance• We need improved communication with Leicestershire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We need more training tools to understand the expectation on us• We need community development workers to help kick start community development projects• We need representation from all sectors of the community on our Parish Councils• We need training on leadership and facilitation of activities



Question 5

1. Where can we (LCC) help?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fair Funding• Leadership and facilitation between departments and local councils• Produce or signpost to how to guides• Facilitate relationships with schools• Have LCC departments communicate more with each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have joint working on supporting local assets and services• Share LCC skills, knowledge and resources with Parish and Town Councils.• Listen to Parish Councils more• Don't focus too much on internal processes when immediate advice is needed.• Facilitate access to resources from the voluntary and community sector

Brief Analysis

It is clear from table discussions and feedback that Leicestershire's Parish and Town Councils are already delivering valuable services locally. There is a reasonable appetite from attendees to develop services and do more to benefit their communities. Attendees made it clear that support to help them do that will be important. Some attendees made references to the support packages that were provided to support the devolution of libraries to be community managed, as a good model that encouraged local communities to take on more services.

There were also some good examples of forward thinking and innovation by Local Councils for example East Goscote Parish Council has a Parish app' which residents can access via their smart phones and tablets. Houghton on the Hill is involved in a grass cutting consortium with neighbouring councils. Whitwick Parish Council has taken to social media to reach out and communicate with their residents. Other Parish Councils are communicating information about activities in their Parishes via welcome packs to residents on new developments and through Parish/community newsletters.

Continued Conversations.....We would like to continue having these conversations with you to shape how Leicestershire County Council works together with and supports Parish & Town Councils and local communities. These conversations will continue at the Big Discussion events on 28th September, 2nd October and 5th October 2017. In the meantime please continue to give your feedback through www.leicestercommunities.org.uk