

YORKSHIRE LOCAL COUNCILS ASSOCIATIONS



Benefits of Membership

YLCA will only give advice to parish and town councils and parish meetings in membership of the Associations. Membership is vital to a local council that is taking its duties and responsibilities as a local authority seriously. Benefits of membership are:

- Access to an adviser for procedural, technical and legal queries by telephone, e-mail or letter at any time during normal working hours. (The Associations have a policy that advice will be given to the Proper Officer of the council (clerk) and to the chairman of the council if the query concerns the clerk or in exceptional circumstances where the clerk is not available and by prior arrangement). It is YLCA policy that wherever possible a response to any enquiry will be sent within 15 working days of its receipt; although in reality, members will find that the response time is usually very efficient and usually within a couple of days.
- An element of the membership fee affiliates councils to the National Association of Local Councils. This enables YLCA to access the services of a solicitor within the NALC legal team on behalf of the member council/parish meeting – this service is included in the membership fee. NALC also lobby government on wide and varying issues that affect the parish sector. The Branch system (see below) gives opportunity to councils to influence government decisions via NALC.

Councils who leave membership are informed that the authority will need to undertake a financial risk assessment for advice that will no longer be available from YLCA and may have to be bought in. Similarly, councils that are not in membership should be undertaking this type of assessment as part of their financial risk regime.

- A regular news sheet, 'White Rose Update' is sent to all members, which contains advice and information relevant to all parishes.
- The YLCA website contains a wealth of information and is only accessible to member councils by password. Councils may give the password to their councillors, giving greater accessibility to information. The website also provides information from the National Association of Local Councils, ie Legal Topic Notes that are only available to member councils.
- Advice and Briefing notes are prepared on specific topics and issues. They are available from the YLCA website and cover a wide range of topics/issues.
- A regular schedule of training and information events, including sessions for new councillors and training in chairmanship, local council finance and audits, meeting procedures, standing orders, agendas and minutes, employment, code of conduct and ethical framework, planning, cemeteries and allotments, are available for councillors and clerks. We are now providing training via webinars which means that people do not have to travel to training. Weekly webinars are provided on a wide range of topics.
- YLCA operates a system of Branch meetings that allow councillors, clerks and parish meeting chairmen to come together three times per year to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. The Branches are also used to elect the Associations Joint Executive Board. There are 12 Branches: Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Leeds, Richmondshire, Ryedale, Scarborough, Selby, South Pennine, South Yorkshire, Wakefield and York. Branches invite speakers, typically from the principal authority to speak on issues such as planning and highways, but speakers from other organisations are also invited where there is a parish interest.

- The Joint Executive electoral system ensures that the Associations are led and directed by representatives of member councils and parish meetings.
- We run an annual conference. This event is for both councillors and clerks.
- As the Lead Partner of the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Training Partnership, YLCA is a keen promoter and leader in the training of council clerks and takes a key role in delivery of training in the Certificate in Local Council Administration.
- An internal audit service for councils and parish meetings with turnover below £25,000 per annum. YLCA's internal audit scheme ensures that smaller councils have a robust audit of their accounts. It provides councils with confidence that they are meeting the requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations in appointing a 'competent' independent internal auditor.

Membership of YLCA is calculated on a formula using electorate numbers. Information about the subscription fee for your council is available from Sheena Spence, Chief Officer of YLCA on 01904 436622, or e-mail: admin@yorkshirelca.gov.uk.

Updated January 2020.