

Conference notes and presentations

This document includes copies of the presentations from the day, the key issues from each of our workshops, and a summary of the conference debate.

Key Note Speaker: Sasha Morgan, DCLG

Download the [presentation](#).

Legal Workshop - Download the [presentation](#) and [handout](#).



Key issues raised:

- Parish councils can provide services more effectively and efficiently
- Latest thinking on the (lack of) powers to support churches.
- Concern about the transfer of assets without sufficient resources or prior legal agreements
- Current issues delegates were: defamation of councillors, harassment, the General Power of Competence, VAT and assets, safeguarding, Devolution, Boundary Reviews, procurement, volunteers and insurance.

IT workshop

Download the [presentation](#).



Key issues raised:

- Cyber security is a real issue – the feedback was “we are never going to turn a computer on or answer an email again!”
- There are many things organisations can do and all organisations need to think about cyber security.

Award Scheme workshop - Download [presentation 1](#) and [presentation 2](#).



Key issues raised:

- There is real value in the process of taking the Award. The value might be in thinking more deeply about a training plan or policy for councillors and staff.
- We always have to answer the question “whats in it for us” – but that question can be answered.

Planning workshop

Download the [presentation](#).



Key issues raised:

- Planning creates passionate opinions – as people care deeply about the future of their local areas.
- Neighbourhood planning is technical work, and once complete is adopted as part of the Local Plan.
- Parish planning has its own merits, but is not part of the planning system.
- A strategic vision is the best starting point – don't get bogged down in the detail too soon

Health workshop

Download the [presentation](#).



Key issues raised:

- Admiration for the work Dorset APTC has done liaising between their local CCG and local councils.
- Noted a new project launched by Ivybridge TC for a local social prescribing scheme.
- There is a far bigger debate to be had on whether local people should accept the way health care is being delivered, or lobby for more funding for health services.

Broadband Workshop - Key issues raised:

- Ability to measure the level of broadband coverage on an individual premises level on Openreach website.
- A member of the BT team can visit parish councils (across Devon and Somerset) to explain options for better coverage.



Employment workshop

Download the [presentation](#).



Key issues raised:

- The need for policies and boundaries
- General anxiety about getting employment right!

Conference Debate

The subject of the debate was:

How can town and parish councils prove they get excellent value for their communities from the precept they raise?

Here are some points that were raised (loosely grouped into themes):

Communication

Parishioners need to know what you are doing
Work on different ways to getting the news out
Share successful projects
You can take a picture of everything you do

New projects and service delivery

Parish councils are trying to do things – if they don't they would be challenged
Councils have had demands for more services
People want more services – and are happy to pay via the precept

Public Participation

You need to make sure projects are needed in your village
Public question time is a way of knowing public opinion
Use participatory budgeting – ask the community what it wants to spend money on
Use the annual parish meeting to get people to say if they are happy or not.

Issues with the precept process

Measuring precept increases on a percentage basis is not helpful – it still relates to a small cash amount.
Councils have to budget before knowing the local authority's plans. You have to allow for services ending well after the parish council has submitted its precept demand.
We wouldn't need to put up the precept if we could share in the business rates

Collaboration and partnership working

Working together makes a huge difference to reputation and good work

Could you spare a few minutes to give us some feedback?

Your views are important to us and will be used to help shape future events organised SWLCA. If you haven't already done so, please take part in our short [survey](#).

