

The Local Column

4th April 2005

The news publication from The Local Channel

FREE Easy-To-Manage Websites for Every Councillor

Actually The Local Channel and Test Valley Borough Council have been working on the project together delivering Councillor Websites **Free** to any City, Borough, District or County Councillor.

YES! Free Councillor Websites for all District, Borough, City and County Councils including Unitary Authorities.

A major development to The Local Channel providing a connection between the Local Authority and Parish or Community Councils, The Local Channel and Test Valley Borough Council are providing documentation and training to all Test Valley Councillors at a seminar on 11th April.

Together we have built a system that is easy to use, provides content guidance and telephone support for all Councillors free of charge.

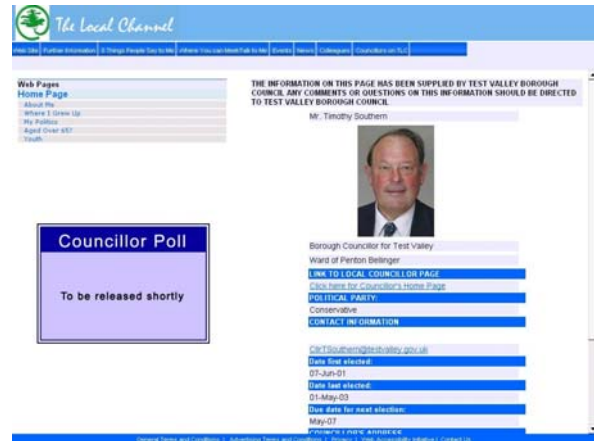
This is now available to any Local Authority in England, Scotland and Wales.

A white paper covering the use of website for Councillors, a content advisory, a Local Authority Adoption process and even a manual are available from www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/cpgs

While the pages are not yet visible on the site due to the need for sensitivity for Councillors information they will soon be available

Contents

Page 1	The Local Channel announce Councillor Pages TVBC partnership
Page 2	Becoming a "Quality Parish"
Page 4	Community news
Page 6	Site statistics
Page 7	Site Developments
Page 8	Forthcoming events
Page 9	Local Government Services Association Launch
Page 10	Website of the month
Page 11	Dispatches
Page 12	From the Editor



Thank you Councillor Southern, above an example Councillor Page

If you are a Local Authority you can start taking advantage of our free offer, simply call us on **0800 38 986 38**

Get on line and link to your people through The Local Channel Parish network.



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Quality Parish, The Whitehill and Bordon Experience

By Pat Newman
Deputy Town Clerk

Whitehill Town Council has just been awarded Quality Status, we are one of only 3 in East Hampshire and 8 altogether in Hampshire, Was it an onerous task obtaining this status. No, not really. When it was first put before Council as to whether or not we went for Quality Status, you could see Councillors minds churning with the following questions: how long will it take, do we fit the criteria in every respect? Take time and think about it, most of the building blocks should be in place already. Running quickly through the application form, this Council fulfilled most of the criteria. The electoral mandate was reached at the last election and both the Clerk and Deputy Clerk have obtained the Certificate of Higher Education in Local Policy from Cheltenham. The target number of meetings was easily reached with 37 during the year, all Mandatory Communications and 14 out of the Discretionary Communications were covered. Annual Reports, Accounts and Ethical Framework requirements were also met.

Next question, what are the benefits?

1. For 04/05 extra government funding was available for: IT equipment, web sites, hearing loops, notice boards, photocopiers, training software and courses.



Whitehill and Bordon Town Council

2. The Council's status in the eyes of District and County Councils should be raised and therefore, hopefully attract more favourable reactions to funding and support for projects.

3. With the production of a newsletter to every household hopefully the community will become better educated on what the Council does and is responsible for. It will enable major projects to be brought to the community's attention and also issues that cause great anxiety in the community, such as fly tipping and how to combat this. Who knows it might inspire someone to come forward and stand for Council or join in with something worthwhile to the community such as the Town Action Plan.



The Local Column

4th April 2005

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Quality Parish, The Whitehill and Bordon Experience (continued)

February 2005 saw us presented with our Certificate and we can now proudly display the Quality “Q” on our papers.

To anyone thinking of obtaining Quality Parish Status we say, march ahead. You must have the majority of building blocks in situ. It might take you a little time to obtain The Quality Clerk's Certificate (although it can take as little as 30 hours work). Bursaries may be available in some circumstances.

Local MP James Arbuthnot adds his congratulations, Well done Whitehill and Bordon Town Council

“Many congratulations to Whitehill and Bordon! You are using the internet to make local matters more accessible than ever before. The Local Channel is doing everyone a service by making it easy for anybody who can get on line – just click on www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/whitehillandbordon - to find out exactly what is going on in their local parish or Town Council, and Whitehill and Bordon have scored a first by posting a Freedom of Information Act publication scheme.



James Arbuthnot MP for East Hampshire. Thank you James!

So will Whitehill and Bordon be leading the way in North East Hampshire? On 1st March the Town Council became one of only eight in Hampshire to have been awarded Quality Status. It is now officially a “Quality Council”. Let's hope there are soon many more – because access to information on the internet about what's going on in our local area is exactly what we are now all beginning to expect.”

James Arbuthnot



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4th April 2005

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Community news

As always more and more new communities are joining The Local Channel, to make it easier for follow we have separated England, Wales and Scotland into different tables.

English Communities		Primary PA	Secondary PA	
Halford		Sharon	Alexander	
Staveley-In-Cartmel	Mr	P H	Day	
Hollowell	Mr	B R	Thorpe	Mr B Wenden
Kirton	Mr	Gregory	Sharp	Mr George T Davies (chair)
Chipping Norton	Mr	David	Williams	
Loose	Mrs	J	Capon	Mrs C Hollister
Eastcotts	Mr	Michael	Fahey	
Kimberley	Mr	Ivan Frank	Cutmore	D.M.Wheeldon (clerk)
Backwell	Mrs	Maureen	Sage	
Newenden	Miss	Gill	Adey	
Spaldwick	Mr	David	Stowell	
Etton	Mr	Alan	Smalldridge	
Beaford	Mr	James	Neville	
Lawley & Overdale		Sharon	Clayton	
Central Milton Keynes	Mr	Paul	Cranfield	

Welsh Communities		Primary PA	Secondary PA	
Llanafanfawr		Megan	Price	
Gladestry	Mrs	Heather	Carrington	
Nefyn		John	Griffiths	

Scottish Communities		Primary PA	Secondary PA	
Eastriggs, Dornock & Creca	Mr	Leonard	Moore	Jessie R Parry
Mid Atholl & Strathtay	Mr	Norman D	McCandlish	Muriel Simpson
Letham & District		Sheila M	Swan	Andrew Freeman
Isle of Arran		Alison	Prince	Howard Driver
Banknock, Haggs & Longcroft	Mr	Jim	Blackwood	
Tillicoultry	Mr	Ian	Millar	Paul McCormick
Manor, Stobo & Lyne	Dr	D G	Pyatt	
Firth	Mrs	Donna A	Flett	Mr John Ruscoe
Castle Douglas		Lilian S	Murray	Martin Fortnum (Treasurer)
Nairn Suburban	Mr	John A	Mackie	Michael Smerdon
Oban	Mr	Neil	Mac Kay	
Longside & District		Irene	Rowe	



The Local Column

4th April 2005

The news publication from The Local Channel

Howwood	Mr	David	Mikie	
Garrowhill		Katrina	Kirkpatrick	
Tarbat		Moira	Aitken	
Kiltarlity	Mr	Ronald D	Maclean	Hamish D MacLennan
Comrie	Mr	Tim	Lucas	
Peebles and District	Mr	Douglas	Wright	
Turriff & District	Mr	Dolina	Mackenzie	John D M Smith
Lochside & Woodlands	Mr	Robert	Shaw	Margaret Ellis
Silverton & Overton		Rose	Harvie	
Stonehouse	Mr	Robert	Freel	William Mackie
Keith	Mrs	Lorna	Mulligan	
Yell	Mrs	J	Smiles	
Bellshill	Mr	Thomas	Leggate	
Fairmilehead	Mr	Norman	Tinlin	

Total Adoptions for communities who have signed up with The Local Channel to date:

1062

Total in England: 952

Total in Wales: 76

Total in Scotland: 34

Certificates

Are you a Bronze Silver or Gold Parish?

If you think you have achieved a certificate status, please contact us on: 0800 38 986 38 and we will upgrade your status if required.

Congratulations to all who have achieved a certificate status:

Community	Parish Administrator	Certificate
Broadwoodkelly	Mr David R Lockyer	Bronze
Duston	Natalie Lane	Bronze
Driffield and Harnhill	Alex Whitaker	Bronze
Quedgeley	Mr Peter Richardson	Bronze
East Hanningfield	Karen Plumridge	Bronze
South Willingham	Mr K G L Webb	Bronze



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The Local Channel site statistics

This month the stats are a little down on previous months. Perhaps Easter drew people to other things. Still the numbers below are very encouraging and it's great to see that your efforts are appreciated by viewers to the site.

Report: Summary - www.thelocalchannel.co.uk	
Date Range: 28/02/2005 - 28/03/2005	
Total Sessions	9,037.00
Total Page Views	937,312.00
Total Hits	949,101.00
Total Bytes Transferred	10.51 GB
Average Sessions Per Day 311.62	
Average Page Views Per Day	32,321.10
Average Hits Per Day	32,727.62
Average Bytes Transferred Per Day	371.25 MB
Average Page views Per Session	103.72
Average Hits Per Session	105.02
Average Bytes Per Session	1.19 MB
Average Length of Session	00:10:42

Did You Know?

When you add a friendly URL for your website, The Local Channel system actually adds most of it for you. The system appends the www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/ so all you have to add is the last bit. For example for Whitehill and Bordon, all that was required was, "whitehillandbordon" The system then produced it as www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/whitehillandbordon So remember to put in just the last bit you want the address to be.



The Local Column

4th April 2005

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The Local Channel site update

Once again this month your Local Channel has been working to make improvements to the system. Below is a list of enhancements performed during March and planned improvements for April.

- Print Friendly buttons into Minutes and Agendas within Local Council
- Personal information can now be changed correctly
- Minutes and Agendas within Local Council are now sequenced via date order – with newest at the top and oldest at the bottom
- People can now be linked to a chosen community correctly
- Counties within Business Listings are now appearing correctly

New Improvements and Fixes being worked on over the month of April:

- Add Style sheet to the Agendas section of the Local Council
- Action Groups within Favourites to be displayed in alphabetical order
- Ability to add to the organisation news items
- Text wrapping under image within news for organisations
- Adding a catchment area for organisations / action groups etc via community name

Whilst all this has been going on The Local Channel has been working on a project with The Test Valley Borough Council as a pilot for a nationwide project to provide all Local Authority Councillors with FREE websites. This will be available on the system shortly. However why not get your District, Borough or City Councils involved and add value to your Parish site at the same time. Local Authorities can adopt The Local Channel Councillor web pages right now and it's free.

Ever wondered what the "*Representatives*" tab on the community screen was for? Well this is where the new councillor pages will appear. Click on this then select a ward for a list of Councillors. You will then be able to click through to the Councillor's website. Of course this will only be implemented when the Local Authority has adopted The Local Channel solution.

If you wish to encourage your Local Authority to join, we have produced a white paper on the benefits of Councillor Pages, a content advisory and an adoption process, all available from www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/cpgs. For further information you can call our usual number 0800 38 986 38

Councillor pages are rather a lot of work for us, so get in quick, we will have to process these requests on a first come first served basis. As you know we'll do our best to accommodate everyone, however there are limits. So it's the early Authority that catches The Local Channel!



The Local Column

4th April 2005

The news publication from The Local Channel

TLC Forthcoming Events

The Local Channel is constantly on the road, attending association events to encourage local councils to participate in the fastest growing local network. For the early part of 2005 we will be at the following events:

Date	Event	Location
6 th April	SLCC Regional One Day Conference	Gatwick Worth Hotel Crawley
28 th April	SLCC Regional One Day Conference	Beverley Yorkshire
3 rd May	SLCC Oxford Branch Re-Launch	Kiddlington, Oxon
24 th May	SLCC Regional Training Day	Plymouth, Devon

We look forward to meeting you at one of these events. In the meantime please contact Haydn Selwyn-Jones on 0800 38 986 38 for more information.

Around the Country with The Local Channel

March has seen us attend a formal event, being The Norfolk County Association of Parish and Town Councils, although we also had several visits to Parish and Town Councils to discuss The Local Channel on a one-to-one basis, which was well received and very encouraging.

Once again we were pleased to be able to support The Norfolk County Association of Parish and Town Councils at their Spring Seminar held in Swaffham on 8th March.

There was a full program for the day, ranging from a good presentation on The Freedom of Information Act, which gave clarification on a range of concerns and encouragement on the realities of the Act, through Partnership Working, Disability Discrimination, The New Model Contract and Community Safety. The day finished with a positive Open Forum.

We came back with a positive sense of partnership as well as some excellent Norfolk honey – a worthwhile day altogether.



The Local Column

4th April 2005

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Local Government Services Association launched to help you

Local Government Services Association is a self-regulating group of service providers who share a common purpose. The group exists to provide councils with risk-free suppliers they can trust. The local authority's guarantee of security and satisfaction lies in the many years of service the group has accumulated, and the fact that the group will accept nothing less than excellence from its members.

The association includes **Blachere Illumination UK, The Local Channel, RBS Software Solutions, Record Playground Equipment, Vaughtons Ltd, 247outdoor.com** and are all innovative leaders in their respective fields. Check out www.lgsa.co.uk for more details.

LGSA members are constantly working in partnership at strategic level with Local Government associations to develop solution-orientated services to meet the needs of their members and will attend local and national events to engage directly with exhibition attendees. The **LGSA** look forward to discussing some of their latest thinking with you at the next NALC & SLCC training days



RBS Software Solutions

Unit 5, Uffcott Rural Enterprise Centre, Uffcott, Swindon, Wilts. SN4 9NB
Telephone: 01793 731296 Facsimile: 01793 731938
E-Mail: enquiry@microshade.demon.co.uk Web: www.rbs-solutions.com



The Local Column

4th April 2005

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Website of the Month

We have a cracker of a website of the month in this issue and it goes to: -

Easington Village and Eileen Hopper

This is a great website Eileen has populated the lot, with no less than 12 pages!, plus news, 6 pages of local council information and nearly all councillors with photos! Well done Eileen. Eileen is actually the Chairman of the council and had this to say: -

“Just want to praise your staff especially Brad who deals with me most of the time. You say in your introduction that as long as you can use the PC and get on line you can manage. I took this with a big pinch of salt, how could you deal with a 70 year old who spent hours ringing her daughter when I first got the computer. But I must say it's true couldn't be easier though I haven't yet tried community and diary and very little on Council yet, but have only been doing it just over two weeks. I may be over egging the pudding but I am enjoying it always wanted to do a web site but was scared of all the funny language. Again thanks to you team a valuable site,

Eileen Hopper

Easington Village, Co. Durham”

Isn't that nice, Thank you Eileen. Since the mail Eileen has developed the site and you really should have a look at

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/easingtonvillage

But don't take my word for it; Local MP John Cummings has this to say

“Congratulations to Easington Village Parish Council and to the Local Channel for developing an excellent website which is increasingly important as a two way channel of communication for information and views. I warmly congratulate Eileen Hooper and all those involved in the



John Cummings MP

development of this website on their initiative - which I believe is first class.

*John Cummings
MP for Easington”*

Thank you John



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Dispatches

Blimey, this bit gets more and more difficult. There are now many really good sites. However this month we have chosen the following. Well done to all mentioned in dispatches.

Beal and Trevor Knight

We like this site because the new items contain real input from the local community and the Parish plan actually addresses real issues. Nice one Trevor.

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/beal

Tillicoultry and Ian Miller

Well dome Ian, this is a fabulous site, Ian is one of our Scottish heroes. Some good pictures and in no time at all Ian has put up 6 pages plus councillors, news and Council information pages. Just have a look at the news item... Thanks Ian. Visit Ian's site and see just what can be done: -

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/Tillicoultry

Thanington Without and Roger Cheeseworth

Even with an active website, Thanington Without shows how an existing website can benefit from The Local Channel. Roger has adopted The Local Channel and built a nice home page that's linked to an existing site. Have a visit, and pinch some ideas from: -

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/Thanington Without .

Nairn Suburban and John Mackie

Well done John, A mention in dispatches for Nairn Suburban this month reflects the speed at which a website can be built. Just what we want on the local channel real action in the community by making Nairn Suburban cleaner for all with a campaign against poo..

www.thelocalchannel.co.uk/nairnsuburban



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From the Editor

Spring at last! Warmer weather, daffs out and would you believe it the threat of a hose pipe ban already! Give me a break after all the rain we've had! My garden was water logged for at least a month and I've just had the landscapers in, new turf the lot. Well I guess I'll just have to use the watering can.

Still never mind the daffs I see that many websites on The Local Channel are blooming, great stuff! The site is growing in content a pace and is really drawing an audience. Well done to all, but especially to those mentioned in dispatches and our website of the month.

I see Doctor Who is back on the BBC, well I liked it, but they seem to have squeezed a 1960's 13 episode epic into 45 minutes. I for one will avoid wheelie bins for a while; the wife says it's just a ruse to avoid putting out the rubbish (Sigh)

I like to post emails and letters from people, here's a nice extract from one we received from Trevor Knight

"Just wanted to add my comments about your site. It is extremely easy and intuitive to use and it has cut down time 10 fold in preparing news items etc.

I used to hand draft all the pages in our old site which meant a lot of time and patience so I am really wanting to promote usage of this site to other members too.

So congratulations on the usability front...

Cheers,

Trevor."

Thanks Trevor glad you like it please keep the feedback coming and keep up the good work on Beal.

Thanks also to our contributors this month Pat Newman, James Arbuthnot MP and John Cumming MP. It's encouraging for the whole to receive your support

Ed



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Please remember that your feedback is important, so let us know: -

1. What would you like to see in the newsletter?
2. Do you find the articles relevant?
3. Does the style compliment the articles?
4. What would you change?

Please e-mail your suggestions to ed@thelocalchannel.co.uk.

If this communication has reached you in error please let me know at this address and we will remove you from our list.

The Local channel can be found on www.thelocalchannel.co.uk and contacted at

The Local Channel
Estate Office
Trafalgar Park
Downton
Salisbury
SP5 3QG

0800 38 986 38 (Normal office hours)

If your e-mail or address details have changed. Please remember to tell The Local Channel

E-mail info@thelocalchannel.co.uk

To find out more about The Local Channel please visit www.thelocalchannel.co.uk

The Local Channel Ltd

The Estate Office, Trafalgar Park, Downton, Salisbury, SP5 3QG

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