

Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils

(Affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils)



Representing and Advising
Town and Parish Councils

**25, Stoneleigh Deer Park Business Centre, Abbey Park Stareton,
Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 2LY Telephone: 02476 217349
Fax: 02476 419959 Email: walc@walc.org.uk Website: www.walc.org.uk**

PRESS RELEASE

CLERK AND COUNCILLOR FROM WARWICKSHIRE PARISH COUNCILS EXCEL

Two Warwickshire parish councils shone in the National Association of Local Councils' Awards for Local Councils. Warwickshire Parish Councillor, Graham Leeke, Chair Bishops Tachbrook Parish Council has been awarded Councillor of the Year. Alison Biddle, Clerk to Bishops Itchington Parish Council was placed second in the Clerk of the Year competition.

Councillors are in a great position to help identify needs of the community and deliver projects and initiatives that will help to make the local community a great place to live. They are supported by hard working, often part time clerks.

The judges were looking for good practice from councils regardless of size or location. They were looking for councils, councillors, clerks and workers who are really making a difference, Cllr Michael Chater, chairman of NALC, said: "The National Association is very proud of the achievements of all our local councils and this came through loud and clear in the applications for all the awards. Indeed I found the standard of applications quite staggeringly high and being on the judging panel was quite a humbling experience."

Councillors give their time voluntarily and so it is in honour of this that the National Association of Local Councils runs a competition for its Local Council Awards. Cllr Graham Leeke said: "I am very humbled and honoured to be the winner of the Councillor of the Year considering all the great work that councillors are doing up and down the country. This award would not be possible without the great support of my fellow councillors in Bishops Tachbrook. They do a great job." The parish council is supporting the proposed St Chad's community centre as it firmly believes it will improve community life in the future.

Dr Stuart Burgess, rural advocate and chairman of the Commission for Rural Communities (sponsor of the award), said: "It's not always easy to pin down what makes one person stand out, you might call it the "x" factor! Nevertheless, whatever it is, it can be measured in the visible difference that they make and the legacy that they leave behind."

A council relies on its clerk and Alison Biddle has worked tirelessly to put new projects in place for the benefit of the village of Bishops Itchington. Not least the new Bishops Itchington Community and Blue Butterfly Café which the

parish council made possible by obtaining the lease for the old British Legion Clubhouse after many months of negotiations.

Ed Houston, from Aon Insurance, sponsors of the Clerk of the Year Award, said: "Aon are pleased with the continued success of these awards. The purpose of the awards is to recognise the outstanding work that clerks and councils undertake on a daily basis in their local communities."

It is widely recognised that parish and town councils are delivering great services and acting as a voice for their local communities on a day-to-day basis. If anyone is interested in becoming a councillor or applying for the rewarding and very varied job of clerk, please contact Alison Hodge at the Warwickshire Association of Local Councils Tel 02476 217349 or visit our website www.walc.org.uk

17 May 2010

-ENDS-

Notes for Editors

1. The Warwickshire and West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC) is the locally recognised membership body representing and advising parish and town councils in Warwickshire and is affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils.

2. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is the nationally recognised body representing the interests of around 9,000 local councils and their 80,000 local councillors in England.

3. Local councils serve electorates ranging from small rural communities to major cities, all are independently elected and raise a precept from the local community. Together, they can be identified as among the nation's most influential grouping of grassroots opinion-formers. Over 15 million people live in communities served by local councils, around 35% of the population, whilst over 200 new local councils have been created in the last 10 years.

4. Local councils work towards improving community well-being and providing better services at a local level. Their work falls into three main categories: representing the local community; delivering services to meet local needs; striving to improve quality of life and community wellbeing.

5. Through a range of powers local councils provide and maintain a variety of important and visible local services including allotments, bridleways, burial grounds, bus shelters, car parks, commons, community transport schemes, crime reduction measures, footpaths, leisure facilities, local youth projects, open spaces, public lavatories, planning, street cleaning, street lighting, tourism activities, traffic calming measures, village greens and litter bins. These existing powers were recently strengthened by the extension of the well being power to eligible local councils.

The photo courtesy of NALC, shows Alison and Graham at the award ceremony held on Thursday 13 May in London.

For more information about WALC contact Alison Hodge on 02476 217349 walc@walc.org.uk

For more information on the Awards contact Alan Jones at NALC on 020 7290 0316 or alan.jones@nalc.gov.uk