



ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

The Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS)

“The Local Council Award Scheme exists to celebrate the successes of the very best of local councils and to provide a framework to support all local councils to meet their full potential” [NALC]

“The Local Council Award Scheme has been designed to both provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promoting and recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is only through the sector working together to share best practice, drive up standards and supporting those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach its full potential.” [NALC]

LCAS offers local councils the opportunity to show they meet the standards set by the sector, applications are assessed by experienced peers through the work of a local accreditation panel.

Aspley Guise Parish Council previously held the Foundation award, this naturally expired in February 2020 as the award last 4 years.

Levels of LCAS

Councils can apply for an award at one of three levels:

1. **Foundation Ward:** this demonstrates a council meets the requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practise.
2. **Quality Award:** this demonstrates that a council achieves good practise in governance, community engagement and council improvement.
3. **Quality Gold Award:** this demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practise and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development.

Councils do not have to apply for the Awards in order, if they meet the criteria they can apply straight for Quality Gold.

For each level of award there is a list of criteria that must be met. In order to achieve the Quality Award, Councils must be able to meet the criteria for the Foundation Award plus additional criteria for the Quality Award. In order to achieve Quality Gold Award Councils must be able to meet the criteria for both Foundation and Quality plus additional criteria for Gold.

Criteria (Appendix 1)

The criteria required for each level is set out in a series of tables, the criteria were set in 2016 and updated only last year in 2020. To support transparency part of the criteria must be accessible and published online whilst others must be in existence with evidence provided. I have replicated the tables for the Foundation and Quality levels in appendix 1 and colour coded the criteria to show the following:

- Green shading denotes where I believe the PC can already demonstrate it meets the required criteria
- Amber shading denotes criteria that needs checking to ensure the PC meets the required criteria / and producing evidence



ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

- Red shading denotes where the PC doesn't yet meet the required criteria

I have focused on the Foundation and Quality Awards for now. You will see in the tables that AGPC already meet most of the criteria for the Foundation Award and with a little work can apply for this level.

They also meet a lot of the criteria for the Quality Award and with a bit more work could have applied for this level but unfortunately the one criterion they cannot currently meet is that 2/3rds of its Councillors must have been elected (8 Councillors out of 12 for AGPC).

Process for applying

Step 1: Register with NALC (not all criteria must be in place at this time)

Step 2: Once the criteria is in place and met, confirm this by resolution at a Council meeting.

Step 3: Submit the application form to the local accreditation panel

Cost

The registration fee payable to NALC is £50 and the application fee is currently £80 for the Foundation Award payable to our county association (BATPC).

Summary & Recommendation

Achievement of the Local Council Award Scheme demonstrates that a council meets the standards set by the sector and ultimately when Quality Gold is achieved shows that a Council is at the forefront of best practise.

AGPC can apply for the Foundation Award with only a small amount of work to complete at a cost of £130

AGPC are not able to apply for the Quality Award at this stage because 2/3rd of its Councillors were not elected. At the next election a minimum of 8 Councillors are required to achieve this, which will also allow the Council to resolve to use the General Power of Competence.

I recommend AGPC apply for the Foundation Award in 2021 and work towards meeting the criteria for the Quality Award ready for the next election year in 2023.

Lynne Simons
Parish Clerk & RFO
17th February 2021



ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

Appendix 1

The table below shows the criteria that is required to apply for the Foundation Level and the Quality Level of the Local Council Award Scheme, extracted from the 2016 NALC guide and updated with the 2020 updates. At this stage I have not included the Quality Gold Level.

Green shading denotes where I believe the PC can already demonstrate it meets the required criteria

Amber shading denotes criteria that needs checking to ensure the PC meets the required criteria /producing evidence

Red shading denotes criteria that doesn't yet meet the required criteria

Level:	Governance	Community	Development
	Criteria demonstrating good governance in managing the business and finances of a council	Criteria representing a council's role in the community and how it engages with the community	Criteria representing council improvement through the management and development of staff and councillors
Foundation – The Council confirms by resolution at a Full Council meeting that it publishes online:	Its standing orders and its financial Regulations <i>(NB 2 small updates on the Financial regs are required)</i>	Council contact details and councillor information in line with the Transparency Code	
	Its Code of Conduct and a link to councillors' registers of interests	Its action plan for the current year	
	Its publication scheme	Evidence of consulting the community	
	Its last annual return	Publicity advertising council activities	
	Transparent information about council payments	Evidence of participating in town and country planning	



ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

	A calendar of all meetings including the annual meeting of electors		
	Minutes for at least one year of full council meetings and (if relevant) all committee and sub-committee meetings		
	Current agendas		
	The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year		
	Its complaints procedure		
	Accessibility Statement		
	Privacy Notice		
Foundation – The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it recognises its duties in relation to bio-diversity and crime and disorder, and that it has:	A risk management policy		Disciplinary and grievance procedures
	A register of assets		A policy for training and development of staff and councillors
	Contracts for all members of staff		A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year
	Up-to-date insurance policies that		A clerk who has achieved 12



ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

	mitigate risks to public money		Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points in the last year <i>(NB 20 gained from completing CiLCA 3rd June)</i>
Quality - The council confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it meets all requirements for the Foundation Award and that it also publishes on its website:	Draft minutes of all council and committee meetings within four weeks of the last meeting	A community engagement policy involving two-way communication between council and community	
	A Health and Safety policy	Councillor profiles	
	Its policy on equality	A grant awarding policy	
		Evidence showing how electors contribute to the Annual Parish or Town Meeting	
		An action plan and related budget responding to community engagement and setting out a timetable for action and review	
		Evidence of community engagement, council activities and the promotion of democratic processes in an annual report, online material and regular news bulletins	
		Evidence of helping the community plan for its future	



ASPLEY GUISE PARISH COUNCIL

Quality - The council also confirms by resolution at a full council meeting that it has:	A scheme of delegation (where relevant)	At least two-thirds of its councillors who stood for election	A qualified clerk
		A printed annual report that is actively shared with the community	A formal appraisal process for all staff
		Evidence of a customer service in how the council handles correspondence with the public	A training policy and record for all staff and councillors