



**Northumberland Association  
Of Local Councils**

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

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# Northumberland Association of Local Councils

**2022-2023**

**PRESIDENT**

Mr David Woodard

**Vice Presidents**

Cllr David Francis

Cllr Alex Wallace

**Hon Treasurer**

Gillian Turner

**Hon Auditor**

Mr Peter Basnett

**County Committee**

Mrs M Anderton – East Tynedale Forum	Cllr K Overbury - Ponteland
Cllr A Bowlas – Berwick	Cllr S Phelps – Dinnington
Cllr P Claridge – East Chevington	Cllr J Potts (Vice-Chair) - Blyth
Cllr G Curry - Corbridge	Cllr V Rook – Blakelaw & North Fenham
Cllr C Cuthbert – Prudhoe	Cllr A Sambrook – Pegswood
Cllr P Dancer – Amble	Cllr A Taylor – Meldon
Cllr M Dickson-Green - Bellingham	Cllr S Taylor - Alwinton
Cllr L Dunn – Ellington	Cllr J Tulley - Ashington
Cllr G Eastwood – Seaton Valley	Cllr P Vaughan - Choppington
Cllr D Francis - Alnwick	Cllr C Wakeling – Norham & Islandshire Assoc.
Cllr K Grimes – East Bedlington	Cllr A Wallace (Chair)
Cllr D Henderson - Allendale	Cllr D Wilson - Ulgham
Cllr S Hillan – North Sunderland	Cllr M Wood (Vice Chair) – Greenhead
Cllr A Hogg – West Bedlington	Cllr G Woodman - Newbiggin
Cllr D Hughes - Milfield	

**Chief Officer Graeme Popay**

Membership shown as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

## **What we offer**

We are an association of parish, town and community councils (often called “local councils”), which draws membership from Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland. Our over-riding aim is to develop and support active and effective local councils. This requires local councils to be aware of local needs and concerns, and to find a way of addressing them, whether by taking direct action themselves or by encouraging others to take the lead. Local councils have unlimited powers to raise money by precepting on the Council Tax, and this is an opportunity which can be used enthusiastically but prudently to support local initiatives and services.

To support local councils, we provide or arrange:

- A regular distribution of topical information by email
- Advice to clerks and councillors, on a wide range of topics: legal, managerial, financial, etc.
- Training: mostly short events, but also support for the CiLCA qualification (Certificate in Local Council Administration)
- Accreditation of applicants for the national Local Council Award scheme
- Initial processing of applications for loan consent from the DLUHC
- Access to new opportunities, ranging from insurance policies, equipment schemes, IT solutions
- Advice to community groups on forming new councils
- Assisting in arranging representation on bodies such as the Standards Committees, and the Northumberland National Park Authority.

In addition to providing this direct help, we also undertake policy and partnership work, on behalf of the local councils’ sector. This involves monitoring changes, policies and proposals which may impact on local councils, and working to influence the decisions which are made by local government, agencies, and public utility providers. It also means working with other bodies to develop opportunities which can benefit local councils and their communities.

We are willing to assist the formation of new local councils in Newcastle and North Tyneside if local communities so wish.

Although we are an independent body, we also form part of the National Association of Local Councils, from whom we draw specialist support on legal and policy topics, and to whom we pay an annual financial levy.

## Chairman's Foreword

2022-23 was the year Our Association had 2 Chief Officers. Stephen Rickitt who left us very eagerly, as retirement and pursuit of his interests couldn't come quick enough. We will always be grateful for all the good work and the extra mile Stephen did on our behalf on many occasions. His successor was new but welcomed and as chairman working with Graeme Popay I know we made the right choice. Graeme has embraced the challenge and is helping steer NALC forward with professional training for members amongst other actions. To date the take up has been very good. He has also initiated himself meeting the many new faces at County Hall which is no mean feat in itself.

As the pandemic became a "thing of the past" many members were keen to return to face to face meetings. It always amazes me to meet colleagues who have travelled from such places as North Sunderland, Alwinton and Bellingham, to name but a few to attend our Council Committee meetings. This wasn't always possible for everyone so we are now learning how to handle hybrid meetings. It will prove interesting as we progress in this direction.

I could not perform as well as I hope I have without the invaluable assistance of colleagues and friends from Member Councils. As mentioned above I must thank my 2 chief officers over this past year. Both have assisted me in various ways. Our vice chairs John Potts and Mike Wood for standing in for me so admirably and of course the inimitable Tony Hood. Like our former chief officer he thought "I've given many years to the community. It's now time for myself and my family". Thank you Tony for all your help and friendship even after my calling you Ron Todd, repeatedly.

Without doubt NALC could not function without the assistance we get from CAN. I thank Andy Dean who has been an invaluable help to Graeme and me, when needed. To Margaret Tweddell who keeps our financial records in order, thank you. Likewise to Gillian Turner for her excellent treasurer's work and Peter Basnett our external auditor. Replacing either when the time comes will prove a difficult task.

I would also like to thank the many County officers who have taken time out to bring important issues to members via numerous Teams and Zoom meetings. I feel it has gone a long way in making sure we are "trusted partners". It has made us better prepared to deliver enhanced services to our Communities. I also include Iain Hedley in my gratitude who has been a big help in helping Graeme and therefore all of us in the preparation of our Conferences.

Finally, I'd like to place on record my gratitude to all the many members who attend the County Committee meetings. Your willingness to participate and make my job easier. I include in my thanks my friends of some years now Dave Francis and David Woodard. The latter as President shares his experiences with great effect when required and officiates at the AGM with enthusiasm. Dave represents us nationally and brings reports back to us in a manner which makes it easy to understand and to help us improve.

Outside of meetings they are convivial companions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

**Cllr Alex Wallace**  
**Chairman of the County Committee**

## **Introduction and Summary**

NALC is one of the county associations of local councils in England, which together form the National Association. There are 161 local councils in Northumberland and Newcastle, with a further nine Northumberland parishes who do not have a functioning local council at the present time. There are currently no local councils in North Tyneside.

We are delighted to report that all bar two of the active Parish, Town and Community Councils in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Northumberland are members of our Association.

NALC was formed in 1946 and for many years received administrative and professional support from CAN (Community Action Northumberland). In 2015 a more formal separation of the two organisations occurred, although CAN still hosts the NALC Chief Officer and provides administrative support under a memorandum of understanding.

NALC is governed by a County Committee composed of representatives appointed by our member-councils. The chairman this year was Alex Wallace supported by John Potts (Blyth) and Mike Wood (Greenhead) as Vice-Chairmen and Gillian Turner as Hon Treasurer.

## **A year of Royal Occasions**

In May 2022, Parish, Town & Community Councils up and down Northumberland celebrated and marked the Platinum Jubilee of HM Queen Elizabeth II. NALC played its part by circulating guidance and information from the Royal Pageant master Bruno Peek and answered numerous questions relating to funding of benches, trees, beacons and parties!

On a more sombre note NALC continued to keep Clerks and Councillors up to date throughout 2022 with briefings on the latest version of "London Bridge".

Whilst the Jubilee was a very happy occasion, the mood of the County and the Nation changed dramatically in early September 2022 following the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

NALC worked tirelessly to keep our Parish, Town & Community Councils up to date on the process, protocols of flags and tolling of bells associated with the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II and the ascession of King Charles III.

It was a great honour to be involved in these historical occasions and my thanks go to my predecessor Stephen for navigating us all through this sensitive time and keeping me right. I played my own small part in this sad but momentous occasion by tolling the bells at my Parish Church and I even managed to make it to London to queue for 13 hours to pay my respects at Westminster Hall and then stand with 1,000,000 other people along the route of the state funeral.

## **Briefings**

The Association ran a range of monthly briefings during the year and we are once again very grateful to Rob Murfin and Paul Jones from Northumberland County Council and their teams for their presentations. Over the year we have had over 160 members join in our briefings, with topics covering:

- Planning & bio-diversity net gain.
- Planning a briefing covering monitoring & enforcement.
- Neighbourhood planning
- Local plan
- Fix my Street
- Local services
- Climate change workshop
- Public rights of way
- Finance for Parish, Town and Community Councils
- General introduction to Parish, Town & Community Councils
- Preparing for Audit

## **Assistance to member councils**

As this is my first year it is difficult to quantify the volume and variation of requests compared to previous years, suffice to say I have been extremely busy and have used the National Association's legal and support and advice services to its full potential to ensure my responses are qualified. As one Chairman recently put it, just being able to talk to someone external to the Parish is worth every penny of our membership. Questions have ranged from: freedom of information, financial issues, employment, website, HR, legal, Code of Conduct, planning, highways and standards.

The Association continues to retain the Parkinson Partnership who has assisted Member Councils with a range of VAT issues. Although outside of the remit of this year's annual report it is worth noting that in June 2023 we extended our relationship with the Parkinson Partnership who are now providing a range of professionally led finance courses.

The ENews had a makeover and is now in a monthly newsletter format covering articles relevant to Parish Town and Community Councils as well as information from the National Association. The change has been well received and the circulation is growing, the receipt statistics from mailchimp report an increased circulation and a high % clicks to links in our articles too!

## **Working with the National NALC**

Our liaison with the national NALC continues, Cllr David Francis (Newton on the Moor and Swarland) is the Association's representative on the National Assembly and chairs their Policy Committee and is on the Management Committee

## **NALC's finances**

The accounts are in this report. We are pleased to report there was another modest surplus in 2022/2023.

The Association has recognised the financial pressures on member councils and at the 2023 AGM agreed to keep membership subscription increases to the minimum necessary, mirroring the increases in the national levy.

### **A Personal Note**

I'd like to thank all who have made my first year an enjoyable and rewarding experience. Naming individuals is always difficult but I'd like to pay special thanks to Cllr Alex Wallace, Chair of the County Committee, who's assistance (and humour) has been invaluable and to colleagues and friends from Member Councils, the County Committee, national NALC, Northumberland County Council Officers, Newcastle City Council Officers and other County Associations who have supported me and made me feel very welcome.

I would also like to thank my colleagues in the CAN Office who have made me feel so welcome and a special thank you to Margaret Tweddell who keeps the finances, figures and me in order!

Graeme Popay  
NALC Chief Officer  
14 September 2023

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**NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

**Statement of Income & Expenditure**  
**1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023**

<b><u>2021-2022</u></b>		<b><u>2022-2023</u></b>		<b><u>2021-2022</u></b>		<b><u>2022-2023</u></b>	
<b>£</b>	<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	<b>£</b>		<b>£</b>	<b><u>Income</u></b>	<b>£</b>	
19,238.91	National Association - Membership Fee	18,538.07		57,064.20	Membership Subscriptions	58,459.98	
30,000.00	Community Action - Agency Fee	30,000.00		-	-	-	
682.00	Local Council Review	-		970.00	Local Council Review	-	
301.38	Meetings & Events	338.88		1,777.80	Training Events	542.60	
400.00	Miscellaneous	415.00		50.00	Miscellaneous	-	
280.00	NALC Website	280.00		-	-	-	
2,459.87	Parishes Website Portal	1,484.99		5,400.00	Parishes Website Subscriptions	5,550.00	
-	-	-		0.60	Bank Interest	77.61	
-	Publications	164.99		-	-	-	
11,900.44	Surplus	13,408.26		-	Deficit	-	
<b><u>65,262.60</u></b>		<b><u>64,630.19</u></b>		<b><u>65,262.60</u></b>		<b><u>64,630.19</u></b>	

1. Meetings & Events - AGM Expenses £50; Room Hire £45; Zoom £143.88; Online Training £100

2. Miscellaneous - External Consultants (Advice Service)

## NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

### Balance Sheet at 31 March 2023

<u>2021/2022</u>		<u>2022/2023</u>		
£		£	£	£
	<b><u>CURRENT ASSETS</u></b>			
330.41	Sundry Debtors	1,965.62		
41,203.02	Cash on Deposit	52,976.97	54,942.59	
	<b><u>LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</u></b>			
-	Sundry Creditors	-		
-	Receipts in Advance	0.90	0.90	
<b><u>41,533.43</u></b>				<b><u>54,941.69</u></b>
	<b><u>FINANCED BY</u></b>			
29,632.99	General Reserve - Accumulated Surplus		41,533.43	
11,900.44	- Surplus for Year		13,408.26	
-	- Deficit for Year		-	
<b><u>41,533.43</u></b>				<b><u>54,941.69</u></b>

## MEMBER COUNCILS 2022-2023

Acklington	Featherstone	North Gosforth
Acomb	Felton	North Sunderland & Seahouses
Adderstone with Lucker	Ford	Nunykirk
Allendale	Glanton	Otterburn
Alnmouth	Greenhead	Ovingham
Alnwick	Haltwhistle	Ovington
Alwinton	Harbottle	Pegswood
Amble	Hartburn	Plenmeller with Whitfield
Ancroft	Hartleyburn	Ponteland
Ashington	Hauxley	Prudhoe
Bamburgh	Haydon	Rennington
Bardon Mill	Hazlerigg	Rochester & Byrness
Bavington	Healey	Rothbury
Beadnell	Hebron	Rothley and Hollinghill
Belford with Middleton	Heddon on the Wall	Sandhoe
Bellingham	Hedgeley	Seaton Valley
Belsay	Hedley on the Hill	Shilbottle
Berwick upon Tweed	Henshaw	Shoreswood
Birtley	Hepple	Shotley Low Quarter
Blakelaw & North Fenham	Hepscott	Simonburn
Blanchland	Hexham	Slaley
Blyth	Hexhamshire	Stamfordham
Bowsden	Holy Island	Stannington
Branxton	Horncliffe	Stocksfield
Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst	Horsley	Tarset & Greystead
Broomhaugh & Riding	Humshaugh	Thirlwall
Brunswick	Ingram	Thropton
Bywell	Kielder	Tillside
Capheaton	Kirknewton	Togston
Carham	Kirkwhelpington	Tritlington & West
Chollerton	Knarsdale with Kirkhaugh	Chevington
Choppington	Kyloe	Ulgham
Coanwood	Lesbury	Wall
Corbridge	Longframlington	Wallington Demesne
Cornhill	Longhirst	Warden
Corsenside	Longhorsley	Wark
Cramlington	Longhoughton	Warkworth
Craster	Lowick	West Allen
Cresswell	Lynemouth	West Bedlington
Denwick	Matfen	Whalton
Dinnington	Meldon	Whittingham, Callaly & Alnham
Doddington	Melkridge	Whittington
Duddo	Milfield	Whitton & Tosson
East Bedlington	Mitford	Widdrington Station & Stobswood
East Chevington	Morpeth	Widdrington Village
Edlingham	Netherton with Biddlestone	Wooler
Eglingham	Netherwitton	Woolsington
Ellingham	Newbiggin by the Sea	Wylam
Ellington & Linton	Newbrough	
Elsdon	Newton by the Sea	
Embleton	Newton on the Moor & Swarland	
Falstone	Norham	

There are eight parishes in Northumberland without a functioning parish council.

Akeld, Bewick, Earle, Ewart, Ilderton, Kilham, Roddam and Snitter.

Easington is now part of Belford and Cartington has been divided between Rothbury and Whitton & Tosson.