

# Northumberland Association of Local Councils

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

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# Northumberland Association of Local Councils

**2017-2018**

**PRESIDENT**

Cllr David Woodard

**Vice Presidents**

Cllr David Francis

Cllr Alex Wallace

Mr Ray Butler

**Hon Treasurer**

Miss Gillian Turner

**Hon Auditor**

Mr Peter Basnett

**County Committee**

Cllr Agnew -Widdrington Station & Stobswood	Cllr Peden - Newbiggin
Mrs Anderton -East Tynedale	Cllr Phillips - Longhoughton
Cllr Barrell - East Tynedale	Cllr Potts (Vice Chair) - Blyth
Cllr Collins - Choppington	Cllr Pringle - Wooler
Cllr Dawson - Rothbury	Cllr Rook – Blakelaw & North Fenham
Cllr Dunn - Ellington	Cllr Roughead - Berwick
Cllr Fenwick - Ashington	Cllr Sambrook – Pegswood
Cllr Gillanders - Hexham	Cllr Stanners – Seaton Valley
Cllr Gilmore - Prudhoe	Cllr Tebbutt - Morpeth
Cllr Hedley - Glanton	Cllr Thompson - Dinnington
Cllr Hood (Vice Chair)- Felton	Cllr Trobe - Wylam
Cllr Hogg- West Bedlington	Cllr Varley- Ponteland
Cllr Parks – Amble	Cllr Wallace (Chair)– East Bedlington
	Cllr Wood (Vice Chair) - Greenhead

**Chief Officer** Stephen Rickitt

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018

## **What we offer**

We are an association of local (i.e. parish, town and community) councils, which draws membership from Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland. Our overriding 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, mostly 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 to the Transparency Fund (National ALC) and for loan consent (MHCLG)
- 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 National Park governance bodies.

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**

I am pleased to be able to report a successful year for the Association. A number of Councils have re-joined us although two left. There has been a good programme of events for members.

Although political allegiances rightly play a part in some of our Member Councils, it remains pleasing that partisan issues are left at the door when considering NALC matters. There has been a change of administration at County Hall and again I am grateful that our links remain as strong as ever.

Our Chief Officer is contacting the staff of the six local MPs who have Local Councils in their constituencies to highlight not only the work done by our Members, but also to draw attention to the opportunities for work to benefit constituents.

The pace of change from Whitehall has continued although the three-year moratorium on potentially introducing council tax referendums is very welcome. The new external audit arrangements have been a source of much work in the later part of this term, as is the uncertainty over the need for a data protection officer.

The County Committee has considered and responded to a range of national consultations on issues affecting Member Councils.

Stephen Rickitt has set out a summary of the work in his report. There has been a change of style in some areas but the aim of supporting our members continues.

I'd like to thank Stephen, Margaret Tweddell (who keeps the financial records in order) and the other colleagues at CAN for their work, together with Gillian Turner and Peter Basnett (the Honorary Treasurer and Auditor respectively).

David Woodard (President), David Francis & Ray Butler (Vice-Presidents) together with the Vice-Chairmen, Tony Hood, John Potts & Mike Wood are a continuing source of advice and guidance for which I remain very grateful. David Francis also deserves our thanks for his continued service as our representative on the national NALC.

Finally, can I thank my fellow members of the County Committee for their work and forbearance.

With best wishes for the future

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. 'Local council' includes parish, town, neighbourhood, community and village councils of which there are 162 in our area (Northumberland and Newcastle), although some do not have a functioning local council. There are currently no local councils in North Tyneside.

As at 31 March 2018, all but six of the functioning councils are members of our Association. NALC was formed in the 1940s and for many years received administrative and professional support from CAN (Community Action Northumberland), thus saving on 'overhead' costs, and reducing duplication in the provision of our seamless advisory work to support local communities.

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 three-year memorandum of understanding (2016-2019)

NALC is governed by a County Committee composed of representatives appointed by our member-councils. The chairman this year was Alex Wallace (East Bedlington) supported by Tony Hood (Felton) John Potts (Blyth), and Mike Wood (Greenhead) as Vice-Chairmen

## **Supporting individual councils**

This is the core function of the association. Advice has been given on a wide range of topics such as

- Codes of Conduct
- Procedure at Meetings
- Village Greens and Common Land
- Property Issues
- Finance and Audit
- Freedom of Information, and particularly individuals making a large number of requests
- Powers

## **Employment support**

Providing Member Councils with support regarding employment issues is a significant role. Whilst in the vast majority of Councils there are no employment problems, there are a small number where the employer/employee relationship runs into difficulties. Details of individual cases must remain confidential but Councils and their Clerks are encouraged to seek assistance at an early stage.

## **Transparency**

The changes in the method for auditing the smaller councils has enabled the Association to obtain grant funding for the Parish Portal and over fifty Councils had enrolled by 31 March 2018 with more following.

The Association revised its website and continues to add resources for our members.

## **Training**

During 2017-2018, we held 13 training events attended by 111 Councillors and Clerks. We endeavour to hold training across all parts of the area.

## **NALC Enews,**

The NALC Enews is a weekly email giving brief descriptions of items of interest, with links to more information. At 31 March 2018 there were 481 individual subscribers and we know that many clerks automatically forward copies to all their Councillors.

## **Working with the City and County Councils**

The Association's relationships with the two principal councils have been re-invigorated during the year. Meetings have been held with City Council officers and work is on-going to assist the four member Councils in Newcastle.

The Chief Officer now attends the County Council's Town & Parish Liaison Working Group as an adviser, together with representatives of the Northumberland Branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks.

## **North of Tyne Devolution**

The County Committee welcomed the proposed "minded to" devolution agreement between the Government and Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Councils. We are pressing for there to be a local council representative, as of right, on the new authority's overview and scrutiny committee.

## **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 council and serves on both the Policy and Smaller Councils Committees.

## **Planning Matters**

Commenting on Development Control issues is regarded by Local Councils as one of their most important functions. Liaison is in hand with both principal councils' planning officers to enhance the training given for Local Councillors. In addition, the NALC Enews draws attention to planning matters on a regular basis.

## **Localisation of Council Tax Benefits**

The County Council continues to exercise its power not to pass any of this through to Northumberland's Local Council. Representations continue to be made as does the issue of the retention of the national New Homes Bonus.

## **Business Plan**

Last year's AGM agreed an ambitious business plan for the Association during 2018/2023. It has provided difficult targets to achieve and thus demonstrate value for money to the local council tax payers.

## **NALC's finances**

The audited accounts are attached to the report. Although there is a deficit, the trend is for a modest surplus in 2018/2019. The position was assisted by grants from the national Transparency Fund but these ceased at the end of 2017-2018. Training events are producing a small surplus but other sources of income are always under active investigation.

The Association has recognised the financial pressures on member councils and is keeping subscription increases to the minimum necessary. The proposal is for subscriptions to rise by 2.00% for 2019-2020.

## **A Personal Note**

I'd like to thank all who have meant my second year as the NALC Chief Officer has passed far quicker than I would have hoped, given my age. Naming individuals is always difficult but I'd like to pay special thanks to Cllr Alex Wallace as the Chair of the County Committee and David Woodard as President. Their assistance has been invaluable.

My colleagues in the CAN Office continue to provide support and assistance, as well as acting as good sounding boards for which I am very grateful.

Stephen Rickitt  
NALC Chief Officer  
31 March 2018

**Statement of Income & Expenditure**  
**1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018**

<b><u>2016-2017</u></b>		<b><u>2017-2018</u></b>	<b><u>2016-2017</u></b>		<b><u>2017-2018</u></b>
£	<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>	£	£	<b><u>Income</u></b>	£
14,875.36	National Association - Membership Fee	16,559.97	43,896.63	Membership Subscriptions	47,867.29
30,000.00	Community Action - Agency Fee	30,000.00	-	-	-
1,001.00	Local Council Review	913.00	1,368.50	Local Council Review	1,179.50
74.45	Publications & Printing	480.12	-	Publications	412.24
45.00	Meetings & Events	472.50	130.52	Training Events	1,039.00
3,368.75	General Activities	350.00	100.00	General Activities	220.00
15,685.49	Transparency Fund - Grants	23,337.02	36,155.49	Transparency Fund	26,670.35
10,000.00	- Website Portal	119.99	-	-	-
355.50	- Room Hire	50.00	-	-	-
301.95	- Travel Expenses	-	-	-	-
-	- Work done by CAN	10,618.04	-		
-		-	3.08	Bank Interest	3.09
5,946.72	Excess of Income over Expenditure	-	-	Excess of Expenditure over Income	5,509.17
<b><u>81,654.22</u></b>		<b><u>82,900.64</u></b>	<b><u>81,654.22</u></b>		<b><u>82,900.64</u></b>

1. Publications - Good Cllr Guides
2. General Activities - Website Support
3. Transparency - Work done by CAN includes previous year

1. General Activities - NNPA Election Process £175; Berwick TC Expenses £45
2. Transparency Fund - Grants £23,337.02; Enablement £3,333.33

# NORTHUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

## Balance Sheet at 31 March 2018

<u>2016/2017</u>		<u>2017/2018</u>	
£		£	£
	<b><u>CURRENT ASSETS</u></b>		
135.21	Sundry Debtors	219.09	
13,675.21	Cash on Deposit	<u>8,083.11</u>	8,302.20
	<b><u>LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</u></b>		
-	Sundry Creditors	-	
-	Receipts in Advance	<u>0.95</u>	<u>0.95</u>
<b>13,810.42</b>			<b>8,301.25</b>
	<b><u>FINANCED BY</u></b>		
7,863.70	General Reserve - Accumulated Surplus	13,810.42	
5,946.72	- Surplus for Year	-	
-	- Deficit for Year	<u>5,509.17</u>	
<b>13,810.42</b>			<b>8,301.25</b>

## MEMBER COUNCILS 2017-2018

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

## CONSTITUENCIES FOR THE COUNTY COMMITTEE

The following Councils each have a seat on the Committee

*Ashington, Blyth, Choppington, Cramlington, East Bedlington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Seaton Delaval and West Bedlington.*

Three seats are allocated for the Newcastle Councils

The remaining seats are allocated as follows using non-single Council constituencies

### Allendale

*Allendale, West Allen*

### Alnwick

*Edlingham, Eglingham, Longframlington, Felton, Newton-on-the-Moor and Swarland, Shilbottle, Alnwick, Hedgeley, Denwick, Rennington, Acklington, Warkworth, Longhoughton, Craster, Embleton, Newton-by-the-Sea, Alnmouth, Lesbury, Glanton*

### Amble

*Togston, Hauxley, Amble by the Sea*

### Berwick & Islandshire

*Duddo, Kyloe, Ancroft, Lowick, Horncliffe, Ord, Holy Island, Norham, Shoreswood, Berwick upon Tweed*

### Ellington

*Ellington and Linton, Cresswell, Lynemouth*

### Glendale

*Carham, Ingram, Ilderton, Kirknewton, Chatton, Ford, Kilham, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Earle, Roddam, Bewick, Chillingham, Wooler, Ewart, Doddington, Bowsden, Milfield, Branxton, Lilburn, Akeld*

### Haltwhistle and West Tyne

*Coanwood, Plenmeller with Whitfield, Thirlwall, Horsley, Henshaw, Knaresdale with Kirkhaugh, Hartleyburn, Featherstone, Greenhead, Melkridge, Bardon Mill, Haltwhistle*

### Hexham and Hexhamshire

*Hexhamshire, Haydon, Hexhamshire Low Quarter, Corbridge, Blanchland, Slaley, Hexham, Acomb, Sandhoe, Broomhaugh & Riding*

### Mid Tyne

*Simonburn, Wark, Chollerton, Newbrough, Birtley, Humshaugh, Wall, Whittington, Warden*

Morpeth

*Stannington, Mitford, Hebron, Hepscott, Morpeth, Pegswood, Longhirst*

North Tyne & Redesdale

*Kielder, Greystead, Falstone, Bellingham, Tarsset, Kirkwhelpington, Corsenside, Otterburn, Rochester, Bavington*

Ponteland and Rural West (South)

*Stamfordham; Ponteland; Capheaton; Belsay; Whalton.*

Prudhoe and East Tynedale

*Shotley Low Quarter, Healey, Broomley & Stocksfield, Bywell, Hedley, Prudhoe, Horsley, Henshaw, Ovington, Ovingham, Wylam*

Rothbury & Coquetdale

*Alwinton, Cartington, Alnham, Elsdon, Rothley, Hollinghill, Nunnykirk, Hesleyhurst, Hepple, Harbottle, Whitton and Tosson, Biddlestone, Snitter, Nethererton, Callaly, Brinkburn, Whittingham, Thropton, Rothbury*

Rural West (North)

*Tritlington and West Chevington, Heddon-on-the-Wall, Matfen, Capheaton, Stamfordham, Belsay, Whalton Wallington Demesne, Meldon, Netherwitton, Longhorsley, Thirston, Hartburn*

Seahouses and Belford

*Belford, Ellingham, Adderstone with Lucker, Middleton, Easington, Bamburgh, Beadnell, North Sunderland*

Widdrington

*East Chevington, Widdrington Village, Ulgham, Widdrington Station and Stobswood*