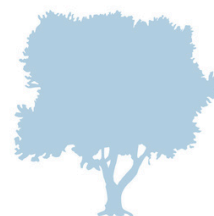


ANNUAL REPORT 24/25



DALC
Devon Association
of Local Councils



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LOCAL
COUNCILS IN
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CHAIR'S FOREWORD



LIZ BROOKES-HOCKING

Spring, 2024: Devolution for Devon is gliding smoothly towards its conclusion (appearances can be deceptive and there was undoubtedly a huge amount of work going on in the background). DALC had always had a place in Team Devon, which heard about Devolution progress, and DALC was included as an associate member of the proposed Joint Committee of the Combined County Authority. So far, so good.

Internally, DALC was focused on expanding the staffing of member services and improving relationships between local councils and the county and district councils. We were working towards a Civic Agreement with the county council and had projects in hand with several district councils. It seemed that all parts of local government were willing to work better together. What could possibly go wrong?

The White Paper, English Devolution, published on 16th December, had massive implications for Devon, it being one of the 21 counties invited to submit proposals for unitarisation. With two aspirational cities, big, but not big enough, a huge rural area served by seven district councils, another unitary and a county authority already in place, there was never going to be an easy or obvious answer.

One thing was clear for DALC. If the districts were going to go, our sector would be even more important to every community in the county: unitary councils are not set up to work at the local level. Towns and parishes got a bit of a mention in the White Paper with the Minister following it up later with a statement affirming their importance.

Our membership had questions and concerns. Our series of online meetings for small and larger councils addressed members' issues with as much information as we had from local and national sources.

What also became clear was that some of those putting forward unitary proposals were not thinking about our sector at all. DALC needed evidence of what parish and town councils already contribute to their communities and the difference they can make to residents. Councils were asked to send in pen portraits of their communities, the work they do for them and what they could do in the future, given the chance.

More than seventy were sent in and were both enlightening and impressive. Enlightening, because they showed how even the smallest councils can encapsulate the pride the community has in itself and reinforce its sense of place. Impressive, because, alongside a commitment to fulfilling their role as a council, they showed consistent support for community groups and local projects, and for bringing residents together for all kinds of local and national celebrations and activities. This social focus creates a sense of community well-being and makes a real difference to people's lives. Most councils were keen to do more for their communities because they recognised their potential as a local council to respond to local need. This is the story of local councils. We may know it but it still needs telling.

When proposals were sent to the Minister for the DHLG in late March 2025, there had been no discussion with our sector. The communication message from DALC was and remains the same: local councils are essential to the success of unitarisation. As unitarisation is the government's preferred method of achieving success for the Combined Authorities, our sector's significance is plain to see.

OFFICER'S REPORT



DALC STAFF TEAM

DALC remains affiliated with our national body, the National Association of Local Councils, who represent the local council sector on a national level, ensuring our voice is heard. All members of DALC are also members of NALC, and can access a wide range of resources accordingly. Our officers work alongside NALC, submitting requests for legal advice and attending regular meetings.

We would like, as always, to thank all our member councils for everything that you do for your communities. We recognise your dedication, and enjoy working with you, particularly during this time of change.

It is difficult to talk about the 2024/25 year without reference to the Devolution White Paper. We are working hard to ensure that we can guide our member councils through any changes. The Knowledge Bank on our website has a section on Devolution and LGR to keep you up-to-date, and we are working on providing a series of training courses to cover the skills your council may need to meet the challenges ahead.

Alongside our work on LGR, DALC remains committed to providing high quality core services to our members. Through our Advice Service in 2024/25, we handled 1590 queries, with 52% receiving a same day response and 94% receiving a response within 3 working days.

During 2024/25, DALC took on more staff to help with the delivery of our member services by appointing Karen Chapman as Member Services Assistant. Karen has been an invaluable asset to the team, and will be familiar to many members through our Advice Service. We will continue to review the needs of our members and ensure that we can meet those needs through our small but dedicated staff team.

This year also saw the Combined County Authority for Devon and Torbay come into existence, marking a significant milestone in Devon's journey towards accelerating economic growth and improving social inclusion.

We also work in partnership with our county association colleagues; and enjoy a particularly close relationship with other county associations in the South West (Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Avon). Staff attended an Away Day with those county officers in March to explore the challenges faced by our areas and to identify opportunities for working together.

The Annual Conference and Exhibition is our flagship event, held every October, and the 2024 conference once again attracted great attendance from our membership with plenty of valuable opportunities for networking. This year, we heard an update from Devon County Council, had a session from a Monitoring Officer on their role, and heard from Brixham Town Council's experience with a water contamination issue.

We are grateful to all our external partners, principal authorities, and other organisations with whom DALC has collaborated, for supporting our work. Thank you also to DALC's board of directors who have guided the organisation through another busy and successful year, providing clear leadership through changing times.

Whatever is coming up in the times ahead, DALC will continue to ensure our members are informed and prepared for changes, and will continue to advocate for the interests of our member councils.

You can stay up-to-date on all our work by [registering for our website](#) and [subscribing to our e-bulletins](#).



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TRAINING REPORT 24/25

Training and Development Highlights – 2024/25

In 2024–25, DALC continued to support our members with a wide range of training and development opportunities delivered through:

- In-house training – both online and face-to-face, including both core and bespoke training courses
- Partner training – in collaboration with The Parkinson Partnership and Breakthrough Communications
- E-learning modules – provided via the South West Local Councils Association
- Our Annual Conference – offering high-quality speakers, workshop sessions and networking opportunities

We also promoted our Councillor Development Framework, designed to help councillors and officers easily identify suitable training at every stage of their journey. The framework includes four levels: Foundation, Core, Specialist, and Advanced, and offers a variety of learning formats including e-learning, webinars, face-to-face events, and self-directed reading.

Bespoke Training – Tailored to You

This year, we delivered more bespoke training sessions than ever before. Bespoke courses are designed around your needs and delivered at a time and place that suits you. Popular topics have included:

- Being a Good Councillor
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict Management
- Team Development
- Being a Good Employer

If you're unsure whether we can offer the training you're looking for – just ask! We're happy to work with you to create something that fits your requirements.

Training Impact and Feedback

Our training continues to receive excellent feedback. In post-course evaluations:

- 100% of respondents rated the course as Excellent or Good
- 100% of respondents rated the trainer as Excellent or Good

Some of the feedback we received includes:

“The trainer was amazingly well prepared.”

“Excellent audience engagement.”

“It was engaging, interesting, and helpful!”

“Absolutely recommend this course to others!”

In response to member requests, we also delivered new training – including a popular session on the role of the Monitoring Officer at our 2024 Conference, presented by a district council Monitoring Officer who shared valuable insights into their role and responsibilities.

By the Numbers

- 584 bookings for DALC core and partnership courses
- 91 enrolments in e-learning modules
- 120 delegates attended our Annual Conference

Keeping Members Informed

To keep members up to date with upcoming opportunities, we've launched a quarterly Training Bulletin, highlighting both core and bespoke training. This is an easy way to stay informed and make the most of what's on offer. To receive the training bulletin, [subscribe to our e-bulletins!](#)

PLANNING TRAINING

This year, we engaged Andrew Towlerton (MRTPI) to deliver planning training for councillors and clerks. This included introductory training on planning applications, which was positively received. Following feedback, we offered more in-depth and specialist planning training through 2 new webinars:

- Planning - enforcement, appeals, and s.106/CIL obligations
- Heritage Issues

58 delegates had received this training by the end of March 2025, with very positive feedback. More sessions have been booked for the 25/26 year!

Fixed Fee Legal Advice Service

Our fixed-fee Legal Advice Service provides your council with expert legal guidance on any and all legal issues which you may encounter.

Whether you need advice on planning and housing, employment and contracts, or governance and policies, our fixed fee service is a genuinely innovative way to deliver fast, cost-effective and practical legal advice to you, on retainer.

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CONNECT EVENTS

Launched in 2023/24, our Connect Events have quickly become a key platform for building relationships, sharing knowledge, and fostering collaboration among our member councils and local stakeholders. These free, online sessions are open to both councillors and officers, offering valuable opportunities to explore common issues and stay informed. With 537 bookings in their first year alone, Connect Events are now a core part of how we keep members connected and engaged.

We're excited to continue these events into 2025/26 and beyond. If you have a topic or idea you'd like to see featured, we'd love to hear from you at enquiries@devonalc.org.uk

24/25 CONNECT EVENTS

- AN INTRODUCTION TO DEVON HIGHWAYS
- AN INTRODUCTION TO SELF-HELP HIGHWAYS
- PROPOSED REFORMS TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY
- UNDERSTANDING ROAD MAINTENANCE
- DALC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COMING IN 25/26

- 11 APR - HIGHWAYS AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM
- 3 JUN - UNDERSTANDING ROADWORKS
- 10 SEP - LGR AND WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW
- 11 NOV - ALL THINGS TRAFFIC
- 2 DECEMBER - INSURANCE AND RISK
- TBC - HIGHWAYS INVESTMENT UNVEILED
- TBC - LGR AND WHAT I WISH I'D KNOWN



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DALC GOVERNANCE

AGM

The Devon Association of Local Councils is a company limited by guarantee, and is managed by a board of 9 non-executive directors. Our member councils remain the sovereign body of our organisation, and their involvement in our governance is significant to our success.

This involvement is largely through our Annual General Meeting (AGM) where our members can propose amendments to our company articles, appoint individuals to be directors, scrutinise our financial management, hear reports about our activities, and engage with us to identify priorities.

We welcomed 61 councils to our AGM on 2nd October 2024 and a number of other member councils voted via proxy.

[You can read the AGM minutes on our website: devonalc.org.uk/about-dalc/governance/](https://devonalc.org.uk/about-dalc/governance/)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

At the AGM on the 2nd October 2024, Lance Kennedy was appointed as a Director. To fill the remaining 3 vacancies, the board used their power to co-opt directors and in November 2024, they co-opted Colin Trudgeon, Glyn Richards, and Paul Hayward to serve as directors.

As a reminder, any serving councillor of a member council, or chairperson of a parish meeting, is able to put themselves forward for election to the Board. We encourage anyone who has the skills, time, and interest in being a non-executive director to contact us for an informal chat. Email: enquiries@devonalc.org.uk.

Read all about the board and our [directors on our website: devonalc.org.uk/about-us/governance](https://devonalc.org.uk/about-us/governance)

ELECTED AT THE AGM



LANCE KENNEDY

CO-OPTED BY THE BOARD



GLYN RICHARDS



COLIN TRUDGEON



PAUL HAYWARD

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME



NALC's Local Council Award Scheme exists to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils, and to provide a framework to support all local councils to meet their full potential; giving them the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and have put in place the conditions for continued improvement.

During the year, the Local Council Award Scheme was reviewed. The previous award levels of Foundation, Quality and Quality Gold were replaced with Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S AWARDEES!

DEVON COUNCILS THAT RECEIVED AN AWARD IN 2024/25 WERE:

FOUNDATION AWARD

SAMPFORD COURTENAY PC
SOURTON PC

QUALITY AWARD

WOODBURY PC

SILVER AWARD

NEWTON AND NOSS PC

Congratulations to these councils! These awards demonstrate the high level of excellence in serving their communities and are a testament to all their hard work.

The standards involved in achieving an award demonstrate the high standards of governance, transparency, and community engagement.

Under the new scheme, an award also shows a commitment to Civility and Respect including signing up to the pledge and adopting a dignity at work policy, and at a gold level, how the council supports a culture of civility and respect.

If your council is interested in applying for an award, then there's [more information on NALC's website](#)

The Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) is the professional qualification for clerks and council officers. Congratulations to the 5 officers who successfully completed their CiLCA and passed during 2024/25: Laura Donovan, Ruth Wright, Catherine Marlton, Anna Clarke, and Nicky Ingarfield.



LAURA DONOVAN, ILFRACOMBE TOWN COUNCIL

When I first began my role as Proper Officer, I had little understanding of how the public sector – and in particular, local government – operated. While I had confidence in the management experience and business acumen I had developed through running our family business, I quickly discovered that navigating the legislative and procedural landscape of local government presented a steep learning curve.

Although I had to wait a year before starting my CiLCA qualification, once I began, it became clear just how much there was still to learn. The support I received from DALC throughout the process was invaluable. Their guidance in interpreting legislation, clarifying complex procedures, and directing me to the right resources greatly enhanced my learning experience.

Thanks to the support of my council, I was fortunate to complete the qualification swiftly. The knowledge I gained has significantly improved my ability to manage the day-to-day responsibilities of my role and has deepened my overall understanding of local government operations. It has also enabled our council to adopt the General Power of Competence – a vital step that allowed us to purchase our high street car park when it came up for sale, securing an important asset for the benefit of our community.

In summary, I would highly recommend undertaking the CiLCA qualification to any clerk or officer looking to build confidence, competence, and credibility in their role. It provides a strong foundation in the essential aspects of local governance and equips you with the tools to better serve your council and your community.

MARK FAY, CHAIR OF ILFRACOMBE TOWN COUNCIL SAYS:

When we hired Laura for the position of proper officer, she had no previous experience with local government. We did this intentionally because she came with no preconceived ideas. Instead she demonstrated excellent management skills and a willingness to learn and adapt. We felt that the CiLCA qualification would allow her to learn the correct way and take a fresh approach to the role.

Laura completed the training in well under the one year target we set and we are extremely happy with the results. The CiLCA training has taught Laura to take on her role with confidence and professionalism and the net result is that we have an extremely competent proper officer.

Ultimately the CiLCA qualification that Laura obtained gave the town council back its General Power of Competence. This in turn has allowed the town council to purchase assets for the benefit of the community without having to seek separate powers to do so.

So all in all I cannot recommend the CiLCA qualification highly enough. A great investment!

GATHERING PEN PORTRAITS

Reflecting on Local Government Reform: Our Sector's Voice Takes Shape

The publication of the White Paper on 16 December 2024, outlining radical plans to reform Local Government, now feels like a distant memory. The Paper proposed sweeping changes—abolishing existing district and county councils and introducing a single-tier Unitary model. It also set out plans for new Mayoral arrangements.

In early January, following the Christmas break, DALC Chair Liz Brookes-Hocking wrote an open letter to all member councils. She acknowledged that the local government reorganisation (LGR) proposals appeared far more wide-ranging—and were moving more quickly—than many had anticipated. Liz reassured members that DALC was committed to ensuring that the voice of our sector is both heard and respected.

To represent our members effectively, we needed to hear directly from you. In January, DALC hosted two virtual meetings—one for our larger councils and one for our smaller councils. During these meetings, and through our e-bulletin, we invited every member council to submit a “Pen Portrait” answering three key questions:

- What is important to your community—what makes it tick?
- What do you currently do for your community?
- What would you like to do for your community, given the chance?

These insights were vital to help shape DALC's views, ensuring that our representation is accurate, purposeful, and grounded in real evidence from our members.

Over the following weeks, we were delighted to receive a flood of responses. We read every submission with care and took time to summarise the common themes. In doing so, not only were we able to build a collective portrait of our sector, but we were also moved and inspired by your stories. It has been an insightful process, and we thank you for your thoughtful contributions.

What Matters to Your Community?

One of the clearest and most powerful messages to emerge from your responses was the shared understanding that a parish is far more than just a geographical boundary. It is a community where people live, work, and actively engage with one another to build inclusive, supportive places that reflect and celebrate their unique cultural and historical identity.

A strong theme of activity, engagement, and collaboration ran throughout your Pen Portraits. Many councils highlighted the invaluable work of local organisations, businesses, volunteers, and partner agencies who, either directly or indirectly, contribute to the wellbeing, safety, and resilience of people and places. Your reflections painted a picture of communities that are vibrant and deeply connected—where partnership and participation are key.

Given this, it is perhaps unsurprising that a major concern expressed was the need to ensure communities retain a clear and influential voice—particularly as the local government reorganisation plans unfold. Your responses underline the importance of local representation at every level of decision-making, so that what truly matters to your communities is not lost in the process of change.

GATHERING PEN PORTRAITS

What Do You Currently Do for Your Community?

The responses we received added up to an impressive and diverse list of activities being carried out at ground level. From this snapshot of our member councils, we identified approximately 170 different types of work being undertaken by parish and town councils, and we know there's much more work going on that wasn't covered!

It's truly remarkable to see just how much is being done at the local level—ranging from community events and environmental initiatives to youth engagement and support for vulnerable residents to name a few! All parishes are working to deliver what matters to their unique community.

What Would You Like to Do for Your Community, Given the Chance?

Unsurprisingly, many councils viewed local government reorganisation as an opportunity—a chance to grow, evolve, and deliver even more meaningful services.

A common theme that emerged was the desire for additional powers, enabling councils to operate with greater freedom and flexibility in response to local needs. In the face of ongoing challenges, there was a strong recognition of the importance of collaborative working—whether that's within the community, with neighbouring parish and town councils, or in partnership with upper-tier authorities and other key stakeholders.

This forward-thinking mindset reflects a shared commitment to building resilient, empowered local communities. The exercise reaffirmed what we already suspected about our local town and parish councils: they are the level of government closest to their communities. The dedication and commitment of local councils has a tremendous impact, and they play a vital role in shaping their communities.

Discover the Inspiring Work of Our Member Councils in 2024/25

Over the next few pages, you'll find just a snapshot of the great work our member councils have been doing throughout 2024/25. These stories highlight the creativity, dedication, and impact local councils have in their communities.

From enhancing parish facilities and preserving local traditions, to engaging with residents and celebrating community spirit, our member councils are delivering meaningful change in many different ways. With their unique position and broad range of powers, local councils are perfectly placed to respond to the needs of their communities—and these stories truly bring that to life.

We're always keen to hear more, so if your council has a story to share, please get in touch at enquiries@devonalc.org.uk. We'd love to hear what you've been up to!

MEMBER STORIES

ALL SAINTS PC BATTLE THE WEATHER TO MEET WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS!

On a very rainy Saturday morning in November 2024, All Saints Parish Council held their very first “Meet the Council” event at the Village Hall—and what a fantastic turnout it was!

With a brand-new Clerk and a refreshed team of Councillors, the Parish Council is eager to boost communication, strengthen engagement, and get the whole community more involved. Despite the soggy weather, lots of residents came along to meet their council and share their thoughts.

Each of the five councillors had a focus area, and the event gave people a chance to chat informally, ask questions, and learn more about what’s happening in their parish. The Clerk was also there to help with general queries about how the council works.



To get people thinking, the Council posed two simple but meaningful questions:

- “All Saints is a great place to live because...”
- “All Saints would be even better if...”

The responses came pouring in (just like the rain!) and gave the Council some really valuable insight. The most common reason people love All Saints? “The community and the range of activities and events happening locally.”

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Tackling speeding
- More dog bins
- Better broadband coverage
- More community events like coffee mornings

Residents called the event a great success—and there’s already talk of making it an annual tradition.

MEMBER STORIES

NEWTON ABBOT INVESTS IN A CLEANER, GREENER TOWN!



Newton Abbot Town Council has responded to local feedback with a fresh commitment to keeping the town clean, tidy, and welcoming. The latest addition to their street cleaning team? A brand new Citymaster 1650!

This smart little machine joins the council's small fleet of vehicles, helping tackle street cleaning and weed removal more efficiently than ever before.

Residents have made it clear: a well-maintained town matters. That message came through loud and clear during consultations for the Newton Abbot and District Community Plan 2022–2032, especially under the “Greening the Town” focus in the Environment and Climate Change section.

With budget pressures hitting services at both district and county level, the Town Council decided to step up and invest directly in the community.

“Band D households in our town were asked to contribute an additional 61p per week in their 2024/2025 precept and they know the extra income will help us to maintain a clean and pleasant place in which to live”, said Clerk Phil Rowe.

Pictured above: Steve and Dave from the Facilities Maintenance team putting the Citymaster to work!

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS IN SOUTH BRENT

South Brent Parish Council proudly presented its annual Community Champion Awards at the Annual Parish Meeting. The awards, which recognize outstanding contributions to the local community, were handed out by Council Chair Glyn Richards.

Each year, the council honours both an adult and a junior Community Champion, while also acknowledging the efforts of all nominees. It's a fantastic way to celebrate the individuals who make South Brent such a vibrant and caring place to live



MEMBER STORIES

A NEW LOOK FOR PLASTERDOWN'S BUS SHELTER!



The bus shelter in Grenofen—the Parish Council's only major asset—has had a lovely makeover thanks to the hard work of local councillors.

With paint generously donated by Jewson and wood kindly donated by one of the councillors, a group of councillors and community volunteers came together to repaint the shelter and install a brand-new wooden bench.

It's wonderful to see everyone pitching in to brighten up this important spot for the community!

SHILLINGFORD PARISH COUNCIL LISTENED – TAKING ACTION ON TRAFFIC SPEED!

Shillingford St George Parish Council asked the wonderful people of Shillingford, what matters most—and speeding traffic came out loud and clear as the top concern.

At first, the council explored the idea of introducing a 20 mph speed limit with help from Devon Highways. However, this turned out to be a longer-term project. The council looked for quicker solutions and decided to install Vehicle Activation Signs (VAS) at both ends of Shillingford St George.

It's still early days, but so far, these signs seem to be helping slow things down. The council will be keeping a close eye on the data and sharing updates with everyone soon.

Most importantly, this isn't just about road safety—it's about showing how the parish council can make a difference. They hope more villagers feel inspired to get involved and help shape the future of the community!



MEMBER STORIES

NEW INFORMATION BOARDS AND SIGNAGE ENHANCE AWARD-WINNING SIMMONS PARK!

Okehampton Town Council has been working hard to make it easier and more enjoyable for visitors and residents to explore the town—and especially Simmons Park—on foot.

Thanks to a successful grant application to GWR's Platform to Park and Town scheme, the Council received £2,913 to improve signage around town. The goal? To encourage people to walk more and drive less, linking the town and Simmons Park with the passenger rail service that reopened in 2021.

Here's what's been done so far:

- Twelve new directional signs were added to existing posts, pointing visitors from the station to key spots like the Castle, Simmons Park, and Fatherford Woods. These new signs include distances and accessibility details, making it easier to plan a walk. Devon County Council's footpaths team kindly helped supply and install the posts.
- A brand-new map was created to greet visitors arriving by train from Exeter. Since the station is a little way from the town centre, the map shows where shops, toilets, the museum, open spaces, and other attractions are—and how to reach them on foot.
- The park now has two new information boards featuring a detailed map. These show footpaths linking the park to the station and other areas, step-free routes, and highlight the different parts of Simmons Park and what you can find there.

Before the maps were designed, the Council held a brainstorming session with the local community to make sure all the important places and useful details were included. They also worked with a local designer familiar with the area to create maps that are clear and welcoming.

With these improvements, exploring Okehampton and Simmons Park on foot has never been easier or more enjoyable!

Simmons Park was also the source of another success for Okehampton Town Council this year as Park Keeper James McGahey and his team **earned the prestigious Green Flag (Community) Award!**

This award recognises not only the park's excellent maintenance and natural beauty but also its vital role in community life—supporting health, wellbeing, and local events.

It's a well-deserved achievement, and one that reflects the dedication of everyone involved.



MEMBER STORIES

AWARDS GALORE FOR EXMOUTH!

Exmouth Tourist Information Wins Bronze at Devon Tourism Awards

Exmouth Tourist Information, run by Exmouth Town Council, is proud to have won Bronze at the 2024 Devon Tourism Awards, a celebration of excellence across the county's tourism sector.



Lisa Bowman, Town Clerk for Exmouth Town Council, said, *"This recognition is a great achievement for Exmouth and highlights the invaluable role of our volunteers in ensuring the Tourist Information Centre continues to deliver exceptional service to visitors. We are delighted that their efforts have been acknowledged, and this award is a fantastic endorsement of the work Exmouth Town Council and our team do to promote the town."*



Star Council Award for Climate Action!

Exmouth Town Council has been named Climate Response of the Year 2024 in NALC's prestigious Star Council Awards!

The award was presented at the House of Lords on 25th February 2025 to Zoey Cooper. It recognises Exmouth's outstanding commitment and innovative local strategies in addressing climate change.

The win was based on a strong submission showcasing the Council's forward-thinking climate and nature initiatives, as outlined in its comprehensive Climate Change Action Plan. Just some of the fantastic work of the council includes:

- Waste reduction - including the Exmouth Reusable Cup Scheme, and cigarette butt ballot bins
- Biodiversity - sedum bus shelter roofs, tree planting, rainwater collection and wildflower areas
- Energy - solar panel installations on public buildings and sponsored retrofit audits
- Education and engagement - raising awareness at events, workshops and through school partnership
- Food - support for the Exmouth version of the Plant Based Treaty with film events and vegan bring & shares

Exmouth Officer Named Resource Hot 100 Newcomer of the Year

Zoey was also named Newcomer of the Year and ranked #9 in the prestigious Resource Hot 100.

As you can see above, her swift, impactful work has made a significant mark both locally and in the wider sector, showing the powerful difference a committed newcomer can make.



MEMBER STORIES

COLEBROOKE'S NEW PLAYGROUND IS OPEN!



There was plenty of excitement in Colebrooke at the end of August 2024 as local families came together to celebrate the grand opening of the newly revamped play park!

This much-loved project began with a community coffee morning, where families shared their ideas about what they'd love to see in the space. A slide and roundabout topped the wish list—but as plans developed, even more fantastic equipment and features were added.

To help fund the improvements, Colebrooke Parish Council raised its precept and successfully secured additional funding from Section 106 contributions and a generous grant from the SUEZ Community Fund. Altogether, the total project cost was £39,874.

Penny Clapham, Parish Clerk said, *"This is a huge achievement for Colebrooke; one which the Parish Council, working with other partners and parishioners has worked tirelessly for years to bring to fruition."*

MORETONHAMPSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL IS SPRUCING UP THE TOWN

Thanks to feedback from local residents, Moretonhampstead Town Council has taken action to keep the town looking its best. A lengthsman—someone who helps maintain public spaces—has been brought in and is already making a noticeable difference.

To help fund this initiative, the council introduced a small increase to the precept (a portion of council tax), and they believe it has been money well spent. The lengthsman works one day a week in coordination with the town clerk, and the positive results are already evident.

The council is proud of the progress made so far—and there is more to come.



MEMBER STORIES

A SPECIAL TRADITION AT THE HEART OF GREAT TORRINGTON

The annual Mayfair celebrations are the highlight of the year in Great Torrington, bringing together friends, families, and neighbours in a tradition that fosters pride and community spirit.

At the centre are the children of Bluecoat C of E Primary School, who perform songs and traditional dances. The May Queen and her entourage — including heralds, a crowner, and attendants — represent the town's younger generation with pride.

Local businesses and residents join in by decorating windows and gardens, and groups like the Cavaliers provide entertainment. The event is made possible by dedicated Mayfair and Carnival Committee volunteers, with support from Great Torrington Town Council, which also handles the day's civic aspects.

Civic dignitaries are welcomed to a ceremony in the Town Hall, featuring speeches and the distribution of traditional sweet treats. A colourful procession follows, including councillors, the Town Crier, and the Silver Band, culminating in the historic Mayfair Proclamation, read in old English by the Town Clerk.

Thousands gather for the crowning of the May Queen, followed by maypole dances performed by the children. The Town Council also hosts a special lunch for the May Queen's party and guests.

The celebrations continue with a week-long funfair, the Friday 'Round-the-Tree Race', and the Walking Carnival and music festival on Saturday. Mayfair remains a cherished part of Great Torrington's identity — a celebration of heritage, community, and togetherness.



Photo credit: Amanda McCormack



MEMBER STORIES

BUZZING WITH LIFE: A NEW BUG HOTEL IN CHUDLEIGH KNIGHTON!



An exciting new addition has popped up in the garden of Chudleigh Knighton Village Hall—a brilliant Bug Hotel, built with love by local children!

With helping hands from members of Hennock Parish Council's Climate and Sustainability Group, the young builders created a fantastic haven for all sorts of mini beasts. It's a great way to support local wildlife and learn more about the importance of caring for our environment.

What a fun and meaningful project for the whole community!

HENNOCK BEAR'S DECEMBER ADVENTURES!

Throughout December, Hennock Bear took over the Hennock Parish Council Facebook Page—sharing fun updates about his travels around the parish!

With each stop, he highlighted places the Parish Council owns, maintains, or supports. It was a brilliant way to showcase the council's work and get people thinking about all the little things that help keep the community running smoothly.

Even better, it was a fun and creative way to engage with local children (and grown-ups too!). A big paws-up for Hennock Bear—here's hoping for more adventures soon!



BUCKFASTLEIGH SPREADS JOY WITH CHRISTMAS MEALS FOR THE ISOLATED



During 2023/24 Buckfastleigh Parish Council provided Christmas meals and “Treat Bags” to residents who would have otherwise, struggled to provide a meal for themselves. The council arranged for meal delivery to 60-70 residents' homes along with a bag full of locally sourced goodies. This was very well received by local residents.

This theme was continued and at Easter, thanks to a district councillor donation, meals were delivered again and were again gladly received by the recipients.

MEMBER STORIES

PARISH COUNCIL GRANT GIVES SOUTH BRENT SCOUT GROUP A BIG BOOST!

Last year, South Brent Scout Group's tents were badly damaged by the weather, and they urgently needed new ones to keep their adventures going. After a tough time securing funding from the National Lottery Awards for All, they turned to South Brent Parish Council for a helping hand.

The Bell Tents they need aren't cheap (each complete set costs around £1,100) and with Scouts, Cubs, and Beavers in the Group, five were needed in total.



Luckily, the Parish Council had some leftover funds in their Local Projects budget at the end of the financial year, which meant they could step in and offer a generous grant to help buy three of these tents.

To start, the Group has purchased two tents—a 4-metre and a 5-metre—to see which one works best for their needs.

In the attached photo, you'll see from left to right: South Brent Scout Group Leader Tim Haley, Scout Seb Jamin (who kindly wrote a thank-you letter to the Parish Council on behalf of the Group), and Councillor Glyn Richards, South Brent Parish Council Chair.

NORTHAM TOWN COUNCIL TRANSFORMS OLD TOILET BLOCK INTO ACCESSIBLE CHANGING PLACES FACILITY



Right next to the tennis courts at Westward Ho!, Northam Town Council has given new life to an old, unused toilet block by converting it into a fully accessible Changing Places Toilet (CPT).

The project benefited from generous grant funding—including £25,000 from Muscular Dystrophy UK—and an incredible local community crowdfunding effort that raised about £8,750. It was also supported by Sport England, Devon County Council, the Rotary Club, and Northam Relief Charities.



The CPT had to meet very specific requirements to ensure it's truly accessible and user-friendly, and it was officially opened in July 2024. Now it's proudly listed on the national map of Changing Places facilities, making it easier for everyone to find and use.

MEMBER STORIES

EXCITING UPDATES AT ANCHOR PARK IN NORTHAM!

There's something new at Anchor Park in Northam where the town council has recently installed a fantastic new multiplay unit—great news for local families and young adventurers!

But that's not all. As part of its ongoing commitment to boosting local biodiversity, the Council also carried out traditional Devon-style hedge laying on the hedge it planted at Anchor Park eight years ago. This special technique supports both the health of the hedge and the wildlife that calls it home.



Children from the local school came along to watch the process and learn about why we manage hedges this way. They discovered how traditional hedge laying helps support birds, insects, and small mammals while keeping the hedge strong and thriving.

Northam Town Council plans to lay one of its traditional or newly planted hedges each year, as part of a wider biodiversity plan to keep our green spaces healthy and wildlife-friendly. A brilliant combination of play and nature—well done, Northam!



NORTHAM'S WESTWARD HO! TENNIS COURTS ACE RENOVATION AND AWARDS

Thanks to an £85,000 grant from the Lawn Tennis Association, Northam Town Council renovated three tennis courts at Westward Ho!, officially reopened on May 1, 2024. By March 2025, the courts had generated over £5,400 in bookings.

Last summer, the Council partnered with Atlantic Racquets Centre to run four popular kids' camps, with two more weeks added for this year.

In January 2025, the courts were named Community Venue of the Year at the Devon LTA Awards — a fantastic achievement!



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ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

CHAIR OF FINANCE COMMENTARY

Income	31/03/2025	31/03/2024
Advertising	790	600
AGM and Conference	9,760	9,852
Bank interest	189	1,085
Grants	26,412	9,000
Investment Interest	2,523	1,572
Member Services	210	2,314
Subscriptions	140,775	110,033
Training and events	19,465	38,670
Total	200,124	173,126
Expenditure	31/03/2025	31/03/2024
Staff costs	103,058	84,834
Other costs	1,511	3,074
Premises expenses	5,522	5,067
Office expenses	6,714	6,419
Governance costs	4,878	7,141
Subscriptions	42,874	41,519
AGM and Conference	9,259	9,110
Training and events	4,241	8,573
Grants	110	200
Depreciation	640	674
Total	178,807	166,610
Net income/(expenditure)	21,317	6,516
Gain/(loss) on investment	576	(1,214)
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	21,893	5,302

In the 24/25 year our overall income increased by £27K. It was boosted by significant grant income which included special projects carried out for district and county councils. Our training income was almost halved at £19K compared to the previous year. This was largely due to the high level of training requests in the previous year following local elections which were held in May 2023. Higher subscription levels compensated for the lower training income.

We managed to 'break even' on the AGM and Conference activity and other income from advertising and interest was similar to the previous year. Our Member Services income was lower as many publications are now available electronically on-line.

Total expenditure increased by £12K. The increase in overall staff costs was £18K which reflected our expanded member services and operating hours.

Other costs were contained with a reduction of £6K versus the previous year.

Our net income for the year was £21,317 and with a small gain in our investment in the CCLA Property Fund the overall surplus for the year was £21,893.

We had budgeted for a web-site upgrade project (£10K) which we did not have the capacity to carry out and this contributed to the overall higher surplus amount.

DALC continues to represent our membership at various County, Regional and National levels and we are currently surveying our membership to help us structure the demand for support and representative services. The ongoing Local Government Re-organisation (LGR) for Devon will continue to create demand for advice and support.

Thanks are due to our staff and Merlin Accountancy Services who carry out the work to keep our accounting records in order.

CLLR IAN COWLING

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2025

Fixed Assets	31/03/2025	31/03/2024
Tangible Assets	2, 557	2695
Investments	30, 477	29, 902
Current Assets		
Debtors	12, 534	8404
Cash at bank and in hand	99, 429	78, 840
Current Liabilities		
Creditors	11, 596	7963
NET current assets	100, 367	78, 911
Total assets less current liabilities	133, 401	111, 508
Reserves	31/03/2025	31/03/2024
Balance at 1 April	111, 508	106, 206
Surplus/deficit	21, 893	5302
Balance at 31 March	133, 401	111, 508
Included in the reserves is £1516 (2003) relating to the County Training Partnership		
Balance at 31 March	133, 401	111, 508

GOVERNANCE

The directors present this report of the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Directors:

The directors listed below have held office during the whole of the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025:

E. Brookes-Hocking
I. Cowling
P. Dredge
M. Joyce
R. Pearson-Bunt

Other changes in directors holding office are as follows:

Appointed during the year:

L. Kennedy 2 Oct 2024

Co-opted during the year:

G.Richards 26 Nov 2024

P. Hayward 26 Nov 2024

C. Trudgeon 26 Nov 2024

Registered office:

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Devon
EX6 6JH

Registered number:

12545316 (England and Wales)

Accountants:

Merlin Accountancy Services Ltd.
2nd Floor
33 Longbrook Street
Exeter
Devon
EX4 6AW



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Data correct as at April 2025.

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