

# ANNUAL REPORT 22/23

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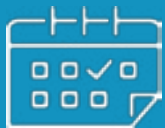
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# CONTENTS

<b>CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COUNTY OFFICER'S SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>VOICE AND REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>OUR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>YOUR STORIES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>OUR MEMBERS</b>	<b>30</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our thanks go to all who have helped the Association during the year, particularly:

- the National Association of Local Councils,
- Devon County Council,
- District and Borough Councils in Devon,
- councillors and clerks of member councils,
- MPs who have assisted the cause of parish and town councils,
- the officers of the Association, the County Committee and Board of Directors.
- Our partners and sponsors

We also acknowledge the valuable part played by television, radio and the press in communications with parish and town councils.

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# CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



**Welcome to the DALC Annual Report for 2022/23.**

**Some readers may be newly elected to the sector, or not even in the sector at all, but I hope that all readers will see how extensive the services provided by DALC are, and how we support councils of all sizes to optimise services to their communities.**

For the nation, it was an eventful year and towns and parishes across the county joined in, sometimes leading their communities in celebration and commemoration but also working with others and co-ordinating events to mark the Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, her death and the Succession. At the same time, parishes carried on with business as usual, achieving many different projects and services for their residents, as you will see from the last few pages in the report – always worth a read.

It was busy for DALC too, with the number of requests for advice remaining consistently high. On the one hand it's a good thing councillors and clerks are using the service, checking that they're doing things right or finding out what they need to do to put things right. On the other hand, the nature of some of the enquiries has become more complicated, requiring more time from DALC officers, more phone calls and discussion before they are resolved.

In April of 2023, the Board was able to hold its first face to face meeting for a very long time. It was proposed as an 'Away Day' (but was held at the DALC offices so not so far away for some) and focused on forward planning. The first business plan ends in 2023. The Board's aim was to review the organisation's purpose, operations and aspirations in order to create the outline of a new business plan to 2028.

In brief, DALC's advice, information and training work was still identified as the core purpose, although we recognised that to maintain the quality of these services, we would need to ensure adequate staffing. What was new was the aspiration to develop better partnership working. Councils of all sizes comment on the remoteness of the district councils. With cuts to higher authority budgets have come changing roles and responsibilities between districts and towns/parishes but also new opportunities. Partnership working enables more effective decision making, and allocation of new funding and resources. DALC is well-placed to foster such partnerships but can do it even better with input from members. Deeper engagement with member councils is another core aim for the Board over the coming year.

**Cllr Elizabeth Brookes-Hocking  
Chairman of the Board of Directors**



# OFFICER'S SUMMARY

*By Cara Stobart, County Officer*

**I'd like to begin my report this year by congratulating parish and town councils for their continued resilience, and incredible adaptability, to get through another challenging year.**

The year has been challenging for numerous reasons, with positive and negative outcomes for communities - and as we reflect, it's amazing to think how we could fit it all in!

## KEY EVENTS IN 2022/23

The year began with jubilant celebrations recognising the historic milestone reached by HM The Queen's length of service. Councils and communities of all sizes participated in four days of celebrations to mark **The Queen's Platinum Jubilee**, including lighting beacons, and street parties.

Just a few months later, our communities came together once more for the **State Funeral of HM The Queen Elizabeth II**. Councils supported their residents through a period of mourning by lowering flags, creating condolence books and laying flowers. But as we mourned one Head of State, we too recognised the accession of another, and numerous councils participated in the reading of the **Proclamation of King Charles III**. As the year progressed, preparations were being made for The Coronation of HM The King which took place May 2023.

The **cost of living crisis** was a dominant topic throughout the year. The impact of inflation not only had implications

for council budgets, but residents and community groups were also turning to councils for support. We have seen a significant rise in activities such as supporting food banks, offering warm spaces, grant giving and collaborations with the voluntary sector as a result. As we move into 2023/24, continued pressures on council budgets, in all tiers of local government, will no doubt give rise to discussions about the delivery of various discretionary services - we must be prepared to enter into collaborative discussion to ensure vital community services are maintained, and our communities continue to thrive.

Numerous environmental factors have also impacted the activities of councils. Extreme weather such as heatwaves and storms have resulted in localised flooding and wildfires. Those communities with emergency plans were able to respond promptly when incidents occurred. With the **Climate Emergency** continuing, more councils may wish to consider the need for plans in their community.

What has been positive this year is the growing number of councils now engaging in **biodiversity** projects. We have heard of numerous councils undertaking projects such as rewilding, tree and hedge planting, as well as considering how they can reduce any harmful impact on our environment.

As we drew towards the end of the year, councils were **preparing for the ordinary elections**. The elections are fundamental in ensuring that our communities have representative and accountable local governance. The individuals elected to represent their communities play a vital role in the

decision-making that affects daily lives.

The importance of elections goes beyond the act of casting votes; it fosters community engagement and participation. Elections encourage individuals to actively contribute to the betterment of their areas and promote the democratic values that underpin our society.

DALC is committed to supporting all our member councils throughout the election period, and beyond.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023/24

For local government in Devon, a significant event for 2023/24 may be the creation of a **Devolution Deal** for Devon's upper tier authorities.

DALC is supportive of initiatives which bring about more government funding and increased local decision-making. A Deal for Devon could enable economic growth, improved infrastructure and improved public services.

Whilst a Deal will not involve local government reorganisation, or devolve services directly to parish and town councils - DALC recognises the importance of parish and town councils having their views heard. We will be championing for greater collaboration and engagement between the government tiers to deliver better outcomes for communities.

We will also continue to engage in those topics our members find important. Read more on page 4.

## OUR GOVERNANCE

The Devon Association of Local Councils, as a company limited by guarantee, is managed by a board of up to nine non-executive directors. But as a member-led body, it is our member councils who are the sovereign body of our organisation, and their involvement in our governance is significant to our success. This largely takes place through our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)**.

It is at our AGM where our members can propose amendments to our company articles, appoint individuals to be directors, hear reports of our activities, and scrutinise our financial management.

We were delighted to welcome 63 councils to our AGM in October, and thank those councils who voted via proxy if they couldn't attend.

At this year's meeting, members supported increases to subscription fees in the face of rising costs to the Association. We are grateful for the support shown for ensuring a fair fee was applied to all councils receiving our services.

We held an open discussion on our approaches to member engagement on public policy matters. The meeting was supportive of proposals to adopt new approaches such as polling and open meetings. The Board will continue to review our practices to ensure we can represent our members' views effectively.

The meeting also proposed a motion to NALC to provide long service medals for councillors serving periods longer than 12 and 20 years.

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### SUBMIT A MOTION FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Any member parish or town council, or parish meeting, is able to submit motions for consideration at the Annual General Meeting.

Motions must be in regard to constitutional business i.e. to propose an amendment to our company articles, or in regard to how DALC operates. Motions must be submitted in advance of the meeting, to be included in the papers which shall be circulated no later than 14 days in advance.

To submit a motion, please [visit our website](#) for details.

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### CHANGES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We express our thanks to Mike Hocking who stood down from the Board after 2 years service. Mike has worked with the Association for some time, having served on various committees prior to becoming a non-executive director, and later becoming chairman of our HR Committee. We also said goodbye to Colin Trudgeon who stood down in December.

Unfortunately, we had no new candidates for appointment to the board at the AGM, and co-options were subsequently made by the board of directors. The Board appointed Phillip Dredge, Mike Joyce, and Ruth Pearson-Bunt, at meetings during the Autumn. You can read more about our newest members on [our website](#).

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 and interest in being a non-executive director to get in touch for an information pack.

Keep up-to-date with all our latest news: [register for our website](#), and [subscribe to our newsletters](#).

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## THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

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### OUR MEMBERSHIP

# 356

98% of town and parish councils, and 22.5% of parish meetings, were in membership during 2022/2023.

### ENGAGEMENT

# 88%

312 out of 356 member councils either attended an event or used our advice service during 2022/23.

### AGM & CONFERENCE

# 70

70 councils were represented our AGM in 2022, with a total of 165 participants in the whole conference.

### NON-EXEC DIRECTORS

# 8

After a couple of co-options, we managed to fill 8 out of 9 seats on the our Board of Directors.

# COUNTY OFFICER'S SUMMARY >>>

## OUR ANNUAL MEMBER SURVEY

In order to support Devon's 400+ parishes, it is important for DALC to understand its members, to keep abreast of current trends and identify any areas where our members may need additional support. Our annual survey helps us to:

- be informed and able to represent our members and their interests
- understand local priorities and spending, identifying trends and changes
- explore how local priorities/interests affects precept demands
- ensure DALC has appropriate resources in place to support its members where it is needed most.

## YOUR PRIORITIES FOR 2023/24

The highest priority topics for the year ahead included:

- Responding to planning applications
- Highways inc speed reduction initiatives
- Maintenance of footpaths
- Supporting community organisations e.g. via grant giving

Other priorities included: recreation, biodiversity initiatives, health and well-being, and emergency planning. Priorities also recognised key events such as the ordinary elections and HM The King's Coronation celebrations.

Councils told us about a range of projects they were looking to deliver including: improvements to community facilities, asset transfers and community initiatives.

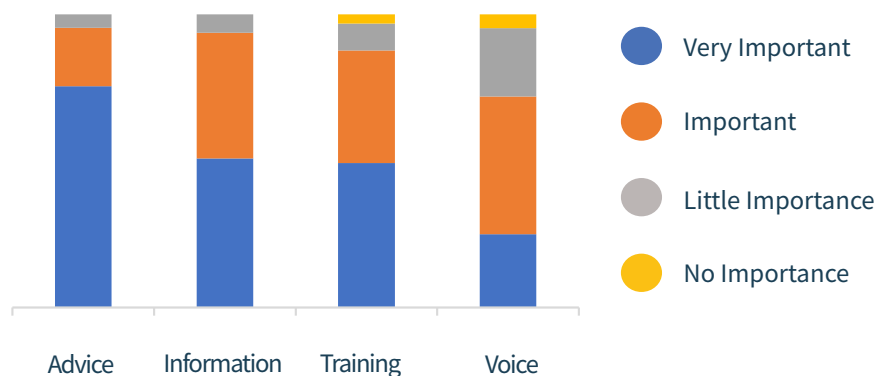
### What we have learnt:

- A return to 'business as usual' in 23/24 following the pandemic, national events and elections.
- Councils need further support to understand their role in the planning system.
- Highways matters, particularly around maintenance and speeding, continue to be areas of concern.
- Collaborative working is taking place, with a range of stakeholders.

## WHICH OF OUR WORK AREAS ARE MOST IMPORTANT?

We asked you which of our services were most important to your council. This helps us to balance our organisational objectives with our members' needs, ensuring our resources are allocated in the right areas.

Your feedback has shown us that our advice service is of significant importance to you. Shortly followed by information and training. Our voice and representation work is still considered important, but not to the same degree.



## COULD OUR SERVICES BE IMPROVED?

We always welcome feedback about our services, and any constructive criticism will always be considered. However, the overwhelming response to this question was of positive sentiment and reflected an overall satisfaction with our work. There were a couple of suggestions about further training and resources for planning. As this was also a high priority area for councils, we will explore what further support we are able to offer over the coming year.

We asked about any new services we could offer. Internal Audit continues to be an area of need amongst our members, and we will continue to explore options to address the shortage of auditors, working within the resources we have available.



## REPRESENTING LOCAL COUNCILS

We asked you what topics we should prioritise when representing parish and town councils, and parish meetings, in 2023/24. The top topics were:

- Lobbying for legislation change to enable remotely held meetings.
- Lobbying for greater sanctions for breaches to the Code of Conduct, and continued promotion of the objectives of the national civility & respect project.
- Greater influence of parish councils in the planning system.
- Increasing the threshold for AGAR exemptions from £25k, recognising inflation
- Greater influence of parish councils in highways matters i.e. speeding and highways maintenance.
- Lobbying for greater local powers to tackle the housing crisis, including availability of affordable housing, greater diversity of housing stock, and greater controls over short term lets.

### HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

We will continue to debate these important topics through our Annual General Meetings, Forums and any thematic meetings we convene, gathering views and opinions to help shape our understanding so we can share your views with others. We will also use ad-hoc polls and surveys to capture data to help develop our thinking.

We will prioritise officer attendance at strategic partnerships and meetings which support the topics raised ensuring parish and town councils are represented, and views heard by local decision makers. Through our NALC Representative we will share your views nationally, adding our voice to our collective national body. We will also engage with local MPs and civil servants, and any other external agencies as required. You can see examples of existing strategic representation on page 15.

## YOUR ACTIVITIES IN 2022/23

Once again we were blown away by the diverse range of activities parish and town councils were doing to improve quality of life in their communities, Councils should be proud of their achievements, especially in such a challenging year.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of what our members have been up to. You can read a selection of member stories from page 18:

- Facilitating HM The Queen's Jubilee celebrations
- Installation of defibrillators, often along with training provision
- Creation of a youth service
- Refurbishment and installation of play parks, MUGAs and outdoor gyms
- Celebrations of local heritage
- Maintenance of footpaths
- Introduced warm spaces and supporting foodbanks in response to cost of living crisis.
- Grant support for village halls and other community groups
- Expansion of a boat park, including refurbished facilities
- Adoption of a railway platform
- Refurbishment of old telephone kiosks into new community assets
- Installation of dog waste bins
- Planting community orchards
- Supporting emergency planning initiatives such as volunteer training and equipment
- Co-ordinating community activities such as litter picks and social events.



### SHARE YOUR VIEWS

We welcome the views of our members at any time during the year. Please do not wait until next year's survey if you feel there is something we should be taking action on now.

So if you have an idea for a new project or service, would like to contribute content for our website and e-bulletins, or would like to suggest a topic we where we could provide representation - then please get in touch.

Email [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk) or call 01392 241131.

We look forward to hearing from you.

## ADVISORY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

We pride ourselves on providing a high-quality advice service to our members. Our members can expect to have their queries answered by a skilled and knowledgeable staff team. We also subscribe to reputable external advisory services (i.e. NALC legal advice; finance and VAT; GDPR and communications) where this adds value to our offering.

In 2022/23, 311 councils reached out to us. In total, the DALC team processed over 2,000 queries during the year, with the majority managed in-house. A small number of complex queries were referred to our external advisors.

In our member service level agreement, we aim to provide responses to queries within 3 working days. We are pleased to report that 54% received a same day response and over 86% received a response within 3 days (*including weekends and bank holidays!*).

In addition, we provide timely information for councils via our website and e-bulletins; and provide opportunities for sharing information via committees, open meetings and conferences.

In 2022/23 we published 58 e-bulletins. These are usually weekly, with the occasional extras published when required. Our e-bulletins include: DALC updates; timely information applicable to councils; updates on law, procedures and best practice; upcoming events and much more. We recommend all clerks and councillors [subscribe to our e-bulletins](#).

## POPULAR QUERY TOPICS

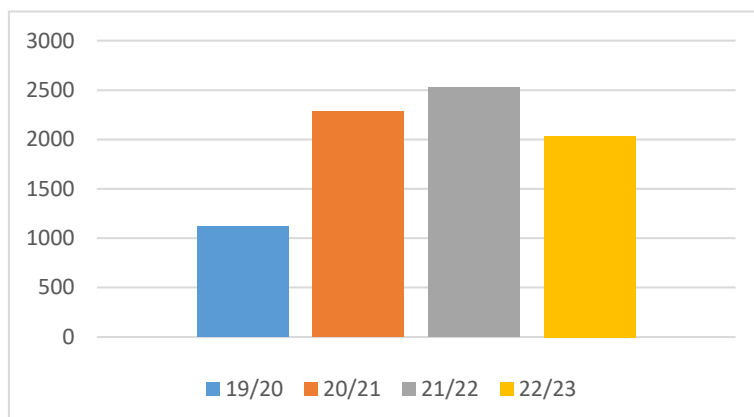
The most popular topic was regarding council meetings and procedures, accounting for approximately 1/4 of all queries received. Common queries were in relation to the council's powers to act, and procedural guidance for handling business in council meetings. A large proportion of queries related to council documents and records, such as minutes and policies.

Other popular topics included: training and development (23%), councillor conduct, vacancies and elections (10%), finance, vat and audit (7%), and employment matters (7%).

## AN INCREASINGLY POPULAR SERVICE

The number of queries received by DALC has increased substantially in recent years.

We saw a drastic change in 2020 when covid-19 hit our communities, and have had significant events which have influenced demand since then (such as HM The Queen's funeral and accession of HM The King). However, the demand for our services remains consistently higher than our previous 'normal range'.



## ENQUIRIES

# 2,035

311 member councils, almost 90% of membership, contacted us in 2022/23.

## REFERRALS

# 88

Of 2,035 queries, we referred 88 (4%) to one of our external advisors for specialist support i.e. VAT or GDPR.

## RESPONSE TIMES

# 86%

54% of queries received a same day response. 86% met our 3 day response target.



## TRAINING SERVICES

In a year prior to the ordinary elections, it is normal for us to see a slight drop in training demand. However, we were pleased to provide a range of training and development opportunities, and see many of our member councils attend.

We spent time this year creating our ‘Councillor Development Framework’ which provides a variety of learning opportunities (suggested reading, e-learning, webinars and training courses) to support councillors from newly elected, to confident and effective community leaders.

This work enabled us to identify the opportunities already available to councillors, but also identify gaps in our provision. We were delighted to expand our programme by introducing new employment courses this year, including:

- Being a Good Employer - an introduction to the council’s role as an employer
- When things go wrong (disciplinary and grievances)
- Managing employees (appraisals and supervision)

We will continue to develop our framework further, and introduce more courses in the year ahead.

Recognising the approach of the ordinary elections, we held a number of ‘Preparing for elections’ events to support clerks to understand timeframes, rules and best practices. We also added to our e-learning offer, introducing ‘Standards in Public Life’, a self-learning option for both clerks and councillors.

In 2022/23, we were invited to deliver 13 in-house training sessions for councils. For more information about our bespoke training packages for councils, please contact us at [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk).

### WHAT HAVE PARTICIPANTS SAID ABOUT OUR TRAINING?

Our members speak very highly of our training, a testament to our knowledgeable and experienced staff team.

**70% RATED OUR TRAINING COURSES AS ‘EXCELLENT’**

*out of 256 responses.*

**84% RATED OUR TRAINERS AS ‘EXCELLENT’**

*out of 257 responses.*

### COUNCILS ENGAGED

**149**

41% of member councils attended a DALC training course, (or one of its partners courses) in 2022/23

### EVENT BOOKINGS

**717**

Approx 300 unique individuals attended a DALC event, meaning many attended multiple events.

### EVENTS HELD

**91**

This figure includes: 72 training courses, 1 conference, 1 induction and 2 commercial webinars.

# IMPROVEMENT & DEVELOPMENT



## THE COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - A BRIEF OVERVIEW

**Councillors play an important role in local communities.** Parish and town councils are responsible for delivering a wide range of services and projects that directly impact the lives of residents, and we believe that every councillor wants to perform their duties well.

We recognise the responsibilities associated with this role can be daunting. There are rules, procedures and legislation to understand, as well as managing community expectations and your own aspirations.

But where do you start? What support, guidance and training is available to help you to be a good councillor?

We've created our Councillor Development Framework to help meet this need. With four developmental levels, our framework can support councillors from newly elected, to effective community leaders.



### 1 FOUNDATION

The foundation stage introduces the essential knowledge needed by all councillors such as: roles and responsibilities, powers and duties, meeting procedures, community representation, and how to conduct yourself.

### 2 CORE

The core stage develops the essential knowledge further, to better understand how the council operates and the councillors role within. This level introduces: finance, employment, planning and information law.

### 3 ADVANCED

The advanced level is for councillors keen to develop specialist knowledge in certain areas of council business, namely finance, planning or employment. Excellent for committee members.

### 4 LEADER

The leader level is for councillors either in leadership positions, or looking to develop their leadership skills i.e. chairmanship, team leadership, community leadership.

## POPULAR COURSES FOR COUNCILLORS

### BEING A GOOD COUNCILLOR

Available as either a 4 part webinar or face-to-face short course, our Being a Good Councillor Course offers a solid foundation for any new councillor, or a refresher for those with some experience.

### CODE OF CONDUCT

As holders of public office, councillors are subject to public scrutiny. Our webinar provides an overview of the ethical standards and expectations that govern parish councillors conduct and interests.

### CHAIRING LOCAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

The chairman plays a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of council meetings. Our webinar guides newly appointed chairmen through their role and to develop deeper understanding of meeting procedures.

### RESPONDING TO PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Councils are statutory consultees on planning applications and play an important role in the planning system. Our webinar explains the council's role in the planning system, and how to respond effectively.

## RECOMMENDED READING FOR COUNCILLORS



**Download all guides from our website, for FREE!**

Some guides are available to purchase in hard copy, prices start from £3.49 plus P&P. Contact us for details at [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk).

## SPECIALIST COURSES

We work with a range of partners to ensure our members can access training on specialist subjects. By working in partnership we can provide a variety of subjects and dates, and keep costs down. Check out the courses at [www.devonalc.org.uk/events](http://www.devonalc.org.uk/events).

### E-LEARNING (VARIOUS TOPICS)



### COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND DATA PROTECTION



### FINANCE, AUDIT AND VAT



## LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

The Award Scheme celebrates the successes of town and parish councils, and provides a framework to support local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. The scheme has been designed to provide tools and encouragement to those councils beginning their improvement journey, as well as recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector.



The **Foundation Award** is for councils who want to show they meet a set of minimum standards to deliver effectively for their communities. These councils have the required documentation and information in place, and training policies for councillors and officers.



The **Quality Award** demonstrates that a council achieved good practice in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Quality councils go beyond their legal obligations leading their communities and seek opportunities to improve further.



The **Quality Gold Award** demonstrates that a council is at the forefront of best practice and achieves excellence in governance, community leadership and council development. They highlight the very best we, as a sector, can achieve for our communities.

## WHY SHOULD YOUR COUNCIL APPLY?

There is a range of reasons why a council could benefit from taking part in the award scheme. For those councils who are already confident that they perform to a high standard the scheme provides assurance to the council that it is up-to-date and progressive by the standards set by the sector. For those who wish to improve, it provides a framework to plan and make the first steps. Helping the council improve performance and confidence, with policies in place for continuous development. And for all councils winning the award should be a celebration for councillors and officers, as their commitment and hard work are recognised and respected.

An award is a tool that councils can use when working with the local community or other local partners. Giving them confidence that the council is delivering to a national professional standard.

And finally, the scheme will contribute to the national reputation of local councils demonstrating achievements and a commitment to improvement.

**Does your council deserve an award?** For more information about the Local Council Award Scheme, and details on how to register, please [visit the NALC website](#).



# CERTIFICATE IN LOCAL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

The Certificate in Local Council Administration, more commonly known as CiLCA, is the foundation qualification for local council officers. The nationally recognised Level 3 qualification (equivalent to an A-Level) is administered through the Society of Local Council Clerks.

CiLCA helps officers to become more aware of the law and procedures for local councils, and is applicable for councils of all sizes. It checks that officers can manage the council's activities, finances and community engagement. A CiLCA qualified officer can help your council to achieve standards of good practice and builds the reputation of local councils in a fast changing world.

DALC is passionate about providing the highest quality training for local learners. Our CiLCA Support Programme offers regular training at monthly intervals, taking learners step-by-step through the portfolio. It also offers 12 months mentoring support and access to our small online learning community.

If you are thinking about undertaking CiLCA please visit our website further for details about our programme, or contact us for an expression of interest pack. We will help you determine whether you are ready to get started and help you plan your learning.

Our support programme is essential for any council officer looking to gain their CiLCA, and do so with continuous support throughout.

If you are interested in starting your CiLCA journey, please contact [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk).



## NEW LEARNERS

**10 officers began their CiLCA** journey and/or participated in our CiLCA Support Programme.

## REGISTRATIONS

**8 individuals registered** and began compiling their portfolios for assessment.

## PASSES

**8 officers have successfully completed their CiLCA portfolios** and passed during 2022/23.

### **Karan Bennett joined our CiLCA Support Programme and achieved CiLCA during 2022/23. Karen shares her experience for fellow officers ...**



*My career as a Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer for Bishops Clyst Parish began in August 2020 and having had no experience in the sector it has been a very steep learning curve! After experiencing a full 12 month cycle of Council activities I felt ready to embark on the CiLCA qualification. I found it challenging but the course is very well-structured and with self-discipline and the support of the Parish Council and DALC, I was able to complete it within six months. CiLCA provides a comprehensive background to the local council sector and covers all aspects of the Clerk and RFO role, and I feel much more confident having completed it. That said, I'm still learning!*

*The DALC CiLCA support programme was invaluable. The trainer, Rebecca, was very knowledgeable and approachable, and the monthly tutorials and mentoring sessions were a great opportunity to meet (virtually) and work with others undertaking the qualification.*

### **Being CiLCA qualified doesn't just benefit the officer; the council benefits enormously too. Ron Hatton, Chair to Bishops Clyst Parish Council shares his views on the change they have experienced ...**

When Karan joined us in 2020 she had no previous experience of parish council work. She needed support with a considerable amount of councillor time and help from a locum Clerk, but she was keen to undertake the CiLCA qualification.

Since completing the qualification she has become, in a short space of time, an invaluable asset to the Council. She is now completely confident undertaking all aspects of the work of a Clerk and RFO and we are very pleased with her performance.

**Congratulations to all learners who have achieved CiLCA this year:**

Karan Bennett  
Jane Clark  
Jakki Henderson  
Abi Horn  
Samantha Parkin  
Annette Thom  
Juliette Thompson  
Amii Shelley

## DALC'S CiLCA TRAINERS



Cara Stobart



Rebecca Walker

DALC's CiLCA Support Programme is delivered by recognised [CiLCA Trainers](#).

DALC adheres to a strict service level agreement. Our trainers attend national CiLCA Trainers Forums and are subject to Peer Reviews. These activities ensure we are able to maintain our knowledge and skills, and provide a high standard of service to our learners.

# VOICE AND REPRESENTATION

*Mark Clapham, Policy Officer, reports on the policy issues DALC has worked on in 2022/23.*



This last year has seen DALC continue to evolve how it develops policy, represents its members and acts as the voice of parish and town councils in Devon. DALC's members represent the full breadth of local councils, from the large towns to the smallest parishes. Not every policy issue DALC engages with will be of concern to every council, but our voice and representation work is about communicating with the councils affected by an issue, and making their voices heard where it counts most.

This year has seen DALC surveying its members on a number of issues, considering what members have told us, and using what we have learned to contribute to papers, consultation responses and our work with partner organisations. These issues have mostly fallen into policy areas such as housing and highways, areas of concern that are of perennial interest to local councils.

## **HIGHWAYS AND SPEEDING**

Speeding, and other issues related to the use, misuse and maintenance of highways are of particular concern in Devon due to the unique characteristics of its road network, which is one of the largest in the country and includes a very large number of narrow rural roads.

DALC's main thread of policy work in this area has been an ongoing

project regarding speeding on rural, single-track roads, a concern for many communities represented by DALC member councils. This year we held a member survey, the responses to which showed the depth and consistency of feeling from members around this issue, with the vast majority of respondents supporting a 30mph speed limit on all single-track rural roads. As speed limit policy is decided at the national level, DALC submitted a policy motion to our national body, NALC, asking them to support a reduction in speed limits on single-track rural roads and lobby government accordingly. NALC's policy committee decided not to support the motion but provided a helpful and nuanced response advising DALC to seek solutions to these problems locally.

On the related issue of speed limits within communities, this year DALC endorsed the 20's Plenty campaign, which supports communities being able to choose to have a 20mph speed limit on their roads if they wish.

## **HOUSING EMERGENCY**

Housing issues, whether it be regarding planning issues surrounding new construction, or the ability of local residents to own or rent in their communities, are a regular topic of interest to our members. Last year DALC began to consider a specific housing emergency in coastal and other

tourist and leisure intensive areas hit by a severe shortage of private rental properties, a shortage exacerbated by growth in second homes and short-term holiday lets, and that work continued this year, with DALC responding to a government call for evidence on the impact of short-term holiday lets.

DALC formulated its response to this call for evidence after surveying our members on the issue, with members expressing a strong preference for a registration scheme for short-term holiday lets and citing the negative consequences that an excess of short-term holiday lets had on their area and community. Not only was our response to the government call for evidence last year informed by these consultation responses, but the clarity of member opinion on this issue provides a clear message that DALC will continue to communicate at every opportunity.

## **ECONOMY**

DALC's County Committee developed and adopted a position paper looking at the economic issues which impact the quality of life in the communities across rural Devon represented by DALC's member councils. The position paper laid out potential solutions to the challenges facing these communities, suggested initiatives to alleviate these issues, and expressed DALC's belief in the benefits of a sustainable, green economy in terms of not just boosting





## SUBMIT A MOTION FOR DEBATE

It is important that DALC is informed of issues that are affecting councils' ability to support their communities so we can take appropriate action. These issues may be identified by a council or a group of councils, and be referred to DALC for consideration. To submit a motion for debate, please complete the form on our [website](#).

the local economy but in creating self-reliant communities.

### CLIMATE EMERGENCY

DALC continues to attend monthly meetings of the Devon Climate Emergency Response Group, and this year endorsed the Devon Carbon Plan, the roadmap for how the county will reach net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest. DALC also sent a representative to Exeter Science Park's First Net Zero Carbon Regional Conference.

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT RESOURCES

DALC collaborated with Devon Communities Together on a project commissioned by the Devon Recovery Co-ordination Group to develop a new version of the Community Support Plan (originally developed during the emergency response phase of the COVID-19 pandemic). DALC's main contribution to the project was to provide insights into parish and town council experiences of accessing

community support resources during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, insights which could shape new community support resources. As well as providing strategic insights from that time, DALC also surveyed members on their experiences and what they would wish for in terms of community support resources. This work will result in a report and recommendation to Team Devon next year.

### MOVING ON

I joined DALC for a two-year term as policy officer in September 2021, which is now coming to an end. I would like to thank all the DALC members who have contributed to and been supportive of our policy work over this period, whether that be through attending meetings, responding to surveys, or contacting me directly to raise an issue. As I hope is clear from this report the views and feedback of members are central to DALC's policy work – and will continue to be so.

## COUNTY COMMITTEE MEMBERS\*

### EAST DEVON

T Dumper	D Stewart
R Eastley	C Trudgeon
E Rylance	1 x Vacancy

### MID DEVON

E Brookes-Hocking	G Guest
K Browne	A Perris
1 x Vacancy	

### NORTH DEVON

I Cowling	H Walker
G Bell	I Roome
1 x Vacancy	

### SOUTH HAMS

P Dredge	J Hodgson
L Granados	P Simon
L Hitchins	1x Vacancies

### TEIGNBRIDGE

M Hocking	M Wrigley
J Farrand-Rogers	1 x Vacancy
M Retallick	

### TORBAY

1 x Vacancy

### TORRIDGE

R Craigie	D Watson
S Middleton	2 x Vacancies

### WEST DEVON

J Goffey	P Ward
G Hill	B Wood

\*all names correct as at 31 March 2023.

## LARGER COUNCILS FORUM

This Forum is open to approximately 30 councils in Devon, and attendance includes both clerks and councillors. A wide range of topics are discussed and it is often useful to have the knowledge and perspective of both professional officers and elected councillors.

During 2022/23 the cost-of-living crisis was a dominant subject which has become a standing item on our agendas. The majority of larger towns were working with community organisations and others, to support local food banks and provide warm spaces during the Winter months. Councils are having to turn their hands to providing services that only a few years ago would have seemed unnecessary or out of place. In addition, larger councils were facing significant pressures on their own budgets due to inflation. The Forum provided a valuable space to compare the budgetary impact, share ideas for cost-efficiencies and explore collaborations.

The Covid-19 pandemic may not be the crisis it once was, but it has left a legacy of stronger collaboration and co-operation within and between communities. During the year there

was opportunity for reflection on the community support frameworks in place and how these could be improved for future events. DALC was delighted to contribute to this work (see page 13), and include perspectives of its members, including larger councils.

The legacy of closer working continues also between the principal authorities, via an informal partnership called Team Devon (made up of leaders and CEO's). As a member of Team Devon, DALC were able to provide updates to larger councils such as progress towards a Devolution Deal for Devon, the establishment of a Devon Housing Taskforce and opportunities for towns within the Shared Prosperity Fund and place-based approaches.

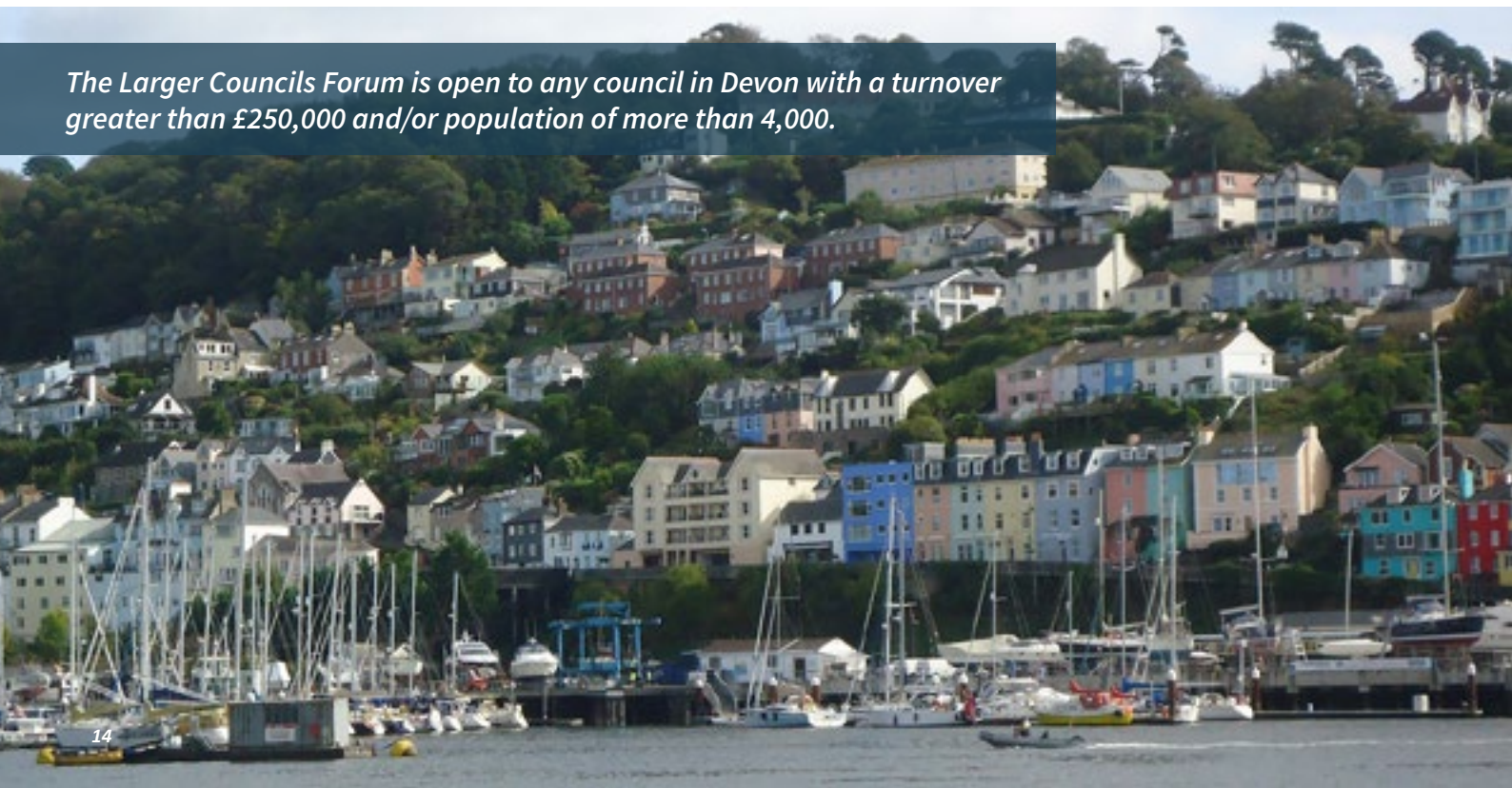
The economy and urban regeneration are popular topics for our larger councils. During the last year, five market towns were included in a Devon County County commissioned pilot project looking at town centre regeneration and the Forum received regular updates from those participating. Towns experienced mixed fortunes in these projects with some quick wins for small amounts of funding but major proposals that would make a significant difference either had no identified funding or

made unsuccessful bids. Several of the larger projects, however, had feasibility studies and business cases to support them. If funding is ever available, at least they have a plan. Again, there was great value in coming together to share experiences.

Climate change is another standing item. Most councils report their frustration at the poor energy efficiency standards of applications for large housing developments and the lack of investment in preparing for the further effects of climate change. As ever, councils reported a reduction in or loss of bus services and slow progress in achieving cycle routes. At least railway travel in the southwest is being developed and some Devon towns will benefit. However, by far the greatest sums are spent on roads so it's not surprising that councils report increased traffic and vehicle speeds as a major concern. They aim to keep their town centres uncongested and unpolluted but attractive and well-used. Maintaining local services and creating alternatives to travel by car help to reduce a community's carbon footprint, which, without taking action, is only going to increase.

**Cllr Liz Brookes-Hocking**  
**Chair of the Larger Councils Forum**

*The Larger Councils Forum is open to any council in Devon with a turnover greater than £250,000 and/or population of more than 4,000.*



## REPRESENTING PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

DALC is invited to represent its members at a variety of strategic meetings and partnerships to provide a parish level perspective on strategic matters. The following are brief reports from some of the meetings we have attended.

### HEART OF THE SOUTH WEST JOINT COMMITTEE

*The Heart of the South West Joint Committee is a strategic public sector partnership working together to strengthen devolution discussions in the region through a productivity strategy.*

The Heart of the South West Joint Committee is comprised of the principal authorities in Devon and Somerset, the district councils and national parks. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has observer status on the committee as does DALC, also on behalf of the Somerset Association of Local Councils.

During the year, Somerset County Council was preparing for unitary status, which was operative from April 23. The committee was regularly updated on progress. Devon County Council gave regular updates on discussions with government officers on a possible devolution deal.

The LEP gave updates on sites of economic opportunities and growth in the two counties, including Hinkley Point, Yeovil, Exeter Science Park and Plymouth Freeport. The LEP also reported the difficulty of attracting government investment to the region as the south west is not recognised as having the economic growth potential that other areas of the country have. To remedy this, stakeholders across the south west peninsula have been working together.

The Great South West [www.greatsouthwest.co.uk](http://www.greatsouthwest.co.uk) is a coalition of business, education and local authorities that is putting forward a united voice to government on behalf of all the counties west of Bristol, presenting the region's potential for clean energy growth and innovation.

### TEAM DEVON

*Team Devon is an informal partnership of all of Devon's Local Authorities, working together on topics affecting Devon and local government.*

Whilst Team Devon itself does not make any decisions, it facilitates the sharing of information, co-operation and collaboration between the principal authorities. DALC's membership means we can hear the latest developments and ensure a parish view can be represented when needed. This year's discussions have included: a devolution deal for Devon, resettlement of refugees, public health, supporting households facing financial hardship, housing and funding, and more.

### DEVON HOUSING TASK FORCE

*The Task Force was formed to help respond to Devon's housing crisis, by aligning and adding value to the Heart of the South West Joint Committee's work, and to inform major programmes which may come through a Devolution Deal for Devon.*

A significant piece of work in 2022/23 was preparing to establish a Devon Housing Commission - which will conduct an in-depth analysis across housing markets, related socio-economic factors and demographic changes, to make a case for change for social and housing policy.

DALC recognises the importance of housing as a topic for local councils, and is delighted to be involved with the Task Force on behalf of our members.

## MEETINGS AND PARTNERSHIPS WE HAVE BEEN PART OF IN 2022/23

**Team Devon  
(Leaders and CEOs)**

**Team Devon Housing Taskforce**

**Local Outbreak Engagement Board**

**Team Devon VCSE Response and Recovery Task & Finish Group**

**Devon County HATOC and Locality meetings**

**Devon County Council  
Communities Team**

**Devon Community Resilience Board, and Forum**

**Devon Climate Emergency Response Group**

**Devon Local Nature Partnership**

**Heart of the South West Joint Committee**

**NALC National Assembly and County Officers Forum**

**South West Conference of Local Council Associations**

**Area Committee Meetings**

**Representations to MPs**

**Meetings with district council leaders and officers**

**Clean Devon Partnership**

**East Devon AONB**

**Travel Watch South West**

**Devon Bus Forum**

**GWR Community Railway Stakeholder Conference**

**Primary Care Network**

**Local Care Partnerships**

# OUR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



*NALC represents the interests of parish and town councils across England. Dr Jonathan Owen, NALC's Chief Executive, shares their highlights and key events from 2022/23*



**Firstly, can I thank you for the work that you do for your councils, communities, and county association. It makes the job of NALC much easier and more pleasurable when it is supported by a brilliant network of councillors, clerks, and county officer colleagues.**

A priority for NALC, county associations and the society of local council clerks (SLCC) over the last year was to promote civility and respect within the sector. Much has been achieved working together, with pooled resources and a joint project officer.

- Over 1200 local councils have signed up to the civility and respect pledge committing to training programmes, adopting the code of conduct, dignity at work policies, seeking professional help at early stages, calling out bullying & harassment, and supporting lobbying for legislation to strengthen standards.
- Resources have been developed and made available to local councils including a bullying and

harassment statement, code of conduct guidance, and roles and responsibilities guidance.

- In the coming year we will continue this work together increasing take-up of the Pledge, putting civility and respect at the centre of the sector's improvement work, and reviewing and producing other supporting material. We will also be developing a mechanism to intervene where councils are at risk of significant problems.

We continue to look to improve our services to member councils complementing the work of your county association.

- Legal services – our team of solicitors are available to answer council queries via your county association and for larger councils, directly. They also maintain a suite of legal topic notes providing information on often tricky procedural and legal matters. County association colleagues are also regularly briefed on topical matters. Our plans for this year include a thorough review of standing orders and a rewrite of the very popular publication “Local

Councils Explained.”

- HR services. As well as a plethora of HR templates covering every aspect, we offer an employment law and HR advisory service through our partners at worknest. County association colleagues can also avail themselves of access to our employee assistance programme. This year we reviewed and republished the “Good Councillors Guide to Employment.” Over the coming year we will be keeping these resources up to date and publishing a new template contract of employment. With the SLCC we will be providing advice to councils on clerks' hours and job evaluation.
- Enhanced finance and audit service. Our professional advisors at DCK accountancy can help county associations with finance queries and we will be updating a range of supporting guidance this year including a rewrite of the financial regulations, with the help of the Parkinson Partnership. Our Joint Panel on Accountability and Guidance produces the annual “Practitioners Guide” and through the company we set up – SAAA (Smaller Authorities' Audit

Appointments) – we have procured external audit services for the next five years with only a small increase in fees. Internal audit is key to sound finances, and we are developing a partnership with the Internal Auditors Forum.

- Sector improvement service. The local council award scheme provides assurance to residents that your council is well run, and NALC encourages all to consider this accreditation. We have agreed with the Local Government Association to hold a number of peer challenges for our largest councils, looking at Morecombe and Cirencester Town Councils last year. Do get in touch if you would like to be included in future years' programmes. NALC hosts an e-learning platform that county associations can access and provide to their members. These courses cover a range of subjects with new content being regularly added. Hundreds of councillors have already used this e-learning opportunity. Many of our resources especially the Good Councillor Guides help local councils to improve too.
- Communications. NALC's new partnership with Breakthrough Communications means that we will be providing an increasing range of advice and guidance relating to local council communication. Currently we have a GDPR toolkit, and we will soon be updating our good councillors guide to communication. Work has commenced to provide advice on e-mails and .gov domain names. Through your county association we can also provide advice on crisis communications with the help of the Local Government Association.

A large part of our work is to promote the role and potential of local councils with government, upper tier councils, including a presence at the annual LGA conference, and other national organisations. Each year we collect case studies of good practice through our Points of Light publication and Star Council Awards. So do please tell us about the brilliant work you do. Our website has sections identifying how councils can realise their potential to tackle some of the biggest challenges

facing the country including climate change, health and well-being, and engaging young people. A new section looking at Planning and Housing is being developed this year.

Our Policy Committee considers policy motions from you and shapes our manifesto setting out the changes we would like the government to make to legislation to make your lives easier. A key focus this year has been to press for the sector to be able to access national grants and the government's community ownership fund was opened to applications from our sector. Through the help of our President, Baroness Ros Scott we have pressed a number of issues through the passage of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill including enabling councils to hold remote meetings, allowances for caring responsibilities and clarification of the sector's funding of church buildings. A focus for the year ahead will be influencing the manifestos of the political parties as we approach the general election.

Engaging with you. We are very dependent on your input to get our work right, especially by proposing policy motions to make your lives easier. So please do look at our website (a new one will be launched next year), sign up for our newsletters and join one of our monthly on-line events (the programme is set for the rest of the year). We have several national networks which you can join such as climate emergency, women councillors and young councillors. County colleagues can, and do, give us their views at the fortnightly county officers call. And of course, do get involved in the work of your county and national association and consider standing for election to one of their governing bodies.

You can find full information on all this work through our website [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) and you can get details of how to log-on from your county association.

Thanks for your support!

**Dr Jonathan Owen, Chief Executive  
National Association of Local Councils**

## ABOUT NALC

NALC works with 43 county associations to represent the interests of 10,000 local councils and 100,000 local councillors.

## 6 NATIONAL NETWORKS

Connect with others on common interest topics such as: climate emergency, coastal communities, super councils, and young cllrs.

## MONTHLY EVENTS

Online events which bring together national influencers, policy makers and decision-makers from across the local council sector.

## GOOD PRACTICE

NALC's website boasts collections of case studies and guidance on some of our communities biggest challenges e.g health and wellbeing.

## RESOURCES

A suite of Legal Topic Notes, briefings and guides, all free to download from NALC's website.

## DON'T MISS OUT!

You can sign up for NALC's e-bulletins and receive regular updates on NALC's work here: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/nalc-newsletter>

You can also follow NALC through social media channels. Find them on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).

## FIRST PHASE COMPLETED TO REGENERATE GREEN SPACE IN UPLYME

The Stafford Mount park is a green space at the very heart of Uplyme Village. It is already a public space, but is currently under-utilised. The Council recently decided to regenerate the space to mitigate against climate change, to make the area more bio-diverse and to improve public involvement and use of the space.

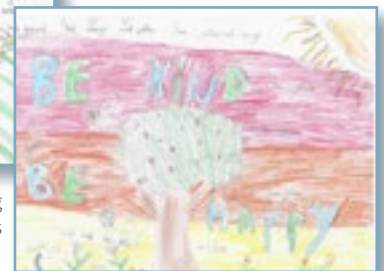
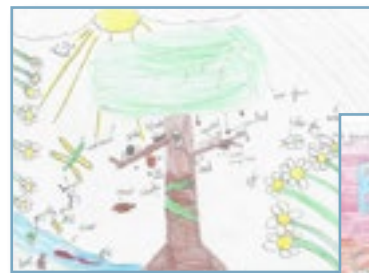
As the first phase of the regeneration of the Stafford Mount greenspace, the Council invited the primary school children to submit designs to be installed within the garden. There were four categories: an entrance sign, three mosaic panels, a hedgehog habitat and an insect habitat. Councillors judged the designs and were extremely impressed with the huge number of designs submitted.

In November, the Chair of the Parish Council and the judges handed out a certificate and prize to each of the winning entrants. Well done everyone!

The next phase will be for all the children to make the winning mosaic panel designs become a reality during after-school clubs, collection and donation of materials to make the habitats and creation of a seasonal and pollinator-friendly planting design



Stafford Mount Park, Uplyme



Two of the winning mosaic designs

## CRUWYS MORCHARD INSTALLS NEW COMMUNITY DEFIBRILLATORS

In April 2022 Cruwys Morchard Parish Council organised a meeting to discuss the need for another defibrillator in the parish. It was determined that three defibrillators were needed in the parish.

Through fundraising efforts, donations and grants, the funds were acquired, and installation was achieved within the same year. The parish council will fund any future replacement batteries and pads.

By joining up with other local organisations who had also installed defibrillators, the community was able to access free defibrillator training via the Devon Air Ambulance this summer.



Pictures show defibrillators as Cruwys Arms phone box, Way Village Congregational Chapel, and Mount Pleasant Inn, Nomansland.

## HORRABRIDGE WELCOMES ITS YOUNGEST COUNCILLOR AT JUST 18 YEARS OLD!

Every council strives to have a diverse membership. Diversity brings a range of perspectives to the table and enables all members of the community to feel represented in council decision making. Attracting younger people to become councillors in particular has always been challenging.

Horrabridge Parish Council were delighted when they were able to co-opt Harley Carpenter in Spring 2022, shortly after her 18th birthday.

Harley is an active volunteer working with local youth organisations, and wanted to become a councillor so other young people felt able to express their concerns and feel involved in the community.

Best of luck Harley!



New councillor Harley Carpenter shaking hands with the Parish Council Chairman.

## DARTMOOR ANIMALS GIVEN REFLECTIVE NECKBANDS TO PREVENT CAR COLLISIONS

More than 200 animals on Dartmoor were given reflective neckbands to make them more visible to vehicles and help prevent road traffic collisions.

The bands were issued to farmers of 80 Dartmoor Ponies and 150 cattle following a successful funding bid to the Vision Zero South West Road Safety partnership.

The idea came from Dartmoor Forest Parish Council who say collisions and animal deaths have been a major concern for several years.

Cllr Mark Williams of Dartmoor Forest Parish Council said: “The B3212 is the busiest of the two main roads across Dartmoor and is the arterial route from Plymouth onto the moor and to Princetown and HM Prison Dartmoor.

The 3.5 mile stretch between Peek Hill and Princetown is unfenced, with a speed limit of 40mph and runs across Walkhampton Common where cattle and ponies run freely.

Collisions involving vehicles hitting animals are unfortunately frequent. There were 117 collisions involving animals on Dartmoor in 2021 recorded by the Dartmoor Livestock Protection Society. Most result in the death of the animal and heavy damage to the vehicle involved. Some also result in injury to drivers and passengers.”

This innovative idea has proven successful in parts of the New Forest, and hopefully will result in significantly less traffic collisions and avoid the untimely deaths of Dartmoor animals.



## ITS ALL SYSTEMS GO WHEN BUILDING A NEW TOWN (CRANBROOK)

Cranbrook Town Council was created as a new local council in May 2015 and has been experiencing levels of growth which are unusual for any local authority. The Council has been experiencing a 24-fold increase in its income since 2015. Since then, the Council assumed ownership and responsibilities for multi-purpose buildings which house commercial tenants, a 35-hectare Country Park and nature reserve and other large areas of public open space, car parks, sports pitches, play areas, a multi-use games area, allotments, grounds maintenance services covering all areas of public open space in the town, litter picking, bin emptying, community development work and a youth service.

The Council is currently delivering a sports pavilion and multi-use games area, a wheeled sports facility (a.k.a. skatepark), several additional play areas, a bicycle pump track and an outdoor gym – all of which were progressed during 2022-23 and awaiting completion.



In August 2022 and in March 2023, the Council opened two new play areas, much to our younger residents' delight.

Our absolute highlight was when in September 2022 the 35-hectare Country Park and nature reserve won the largest landscaping awards in Europe, the BALI National Landscape Awards, in the category Grounds Maintenance – Free Public Access. Open space maintenance is managed by a knowledgeable, diligent and reliable grounds maintenance contractor.

The Council is very lucky to benefit from a team of councillors who look after the town professionally and passionately. The Council currently employs less than four full-time equivalent staff and this list of achievements is a real credit to everyone's hard work and dedication.



## BEATING THE BOUNDS IN SOUTH TAWTON

Beating the parish boundary dates right back to Anglo Saxon times, right back to Alfred the Great (848 to 899), and happens every 7 years.

In 2022 it was the 160th Beating the Dartmoor Boundary for the Parish of South Tawton and South Zeal.

The idea of parish boundaries being “checked out” was to confirm the boundary markers had not been moved or disturbed by neighbours and to enable the young members of the parish to learn from their elders where the boundary lies.

2022 saw a tremendous turnout of approximately 200 walkers and South Tawton Parish Council were supported by Dartmoor Rescue.





## A GREENER FUTURE FOR NEWTON POPPLEFORD & HARPFORD



With the support of the Woodland Trust and Devon County Council's Emergency Tree Fund the residents of Newton Poppleford & Harpford are to benefit from the planting of over 150 trees and 1,000 hedging 'whips' which has taken place throughout January and February.

Volunteers from the parish's Climate Change Group, the primary school, Bicton College, RSPB and local residents have planted native hedging and trees in the playing field, the two cemeteries and other green spaces around the parish.

Trees include Rowan, Crab Apple, Juniper, Hornbeam, Whitebeam and Flowering Cherries. Not only will they look beautiful in the years to come but the new trees and hedges will be great for bio-diversity and the local wildlife.

## NEW FINGERPOSTS IN EAST BUDLEIGH

East Budleigh Parish Council received a grant from the Highway Maintenance Community Enhancement Fund (HMCEF) of £250.00 to repair an ancient fingerpost. Work was carried out by local resident Sam Storey of Millin Metalcraft.



Before: The ancient fingerpost was in a poor state



After: The refurbished fingerpost is now clear for all to read

## KINGSTEIGNTON WILD

The Kingsteignton Wild group of volunteers held a competition for children to design a sticker for the Kingsteignton Nature Trail.

Mayor Councillor Ron Peart and Councillor Martin Field presented prizes to children who received a certificate, a mug with their own sticker design on, and a DIY bird house kit.

Kingsteignton Wild has also been promoting the need to help swifts to nest. The Town Council installed six new swift nesting boxes to the council's office building.



We like to share council's projects in our e-bulletins, on our website, and on our social media channels throughout the year. Visit our [website](#). | Sign up for our [e-bulletins](#). | Find us on Instagram, [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

## CREDITON YOUTH SERVICE - INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

In July 2021, Crediton Town Council employed a new youth worker, following on from a positive partnership developing a provision of detached youth work with Crediton Methodist Church. Detached youth work operates without the use of a building and takes place where young people 'are at' both geographically and developmentally. It delivers informal and social education and addresses whatever needs are presented to or perceived by the youth worker. As detached youth workers have no physical building over which they have power or control, the relationship between young person and youth worker is entirely voluntary and constantly up for negotiation. This was an excellent foundation to use, enabling Crediton's youth worker to start understanding the issues and needs of some of our young people.

In late 2021, the town council employed a second youth worker, recognising the importance of building on this foundation with the view to creating a much more comprehensive youth service for Crediton. This involved discussions with two local primary schools and the secondary school, to gain further knowledge about priorities for the town and young people's identified needs.

In March 2022, a soft opening of the youth club (based in the Crediton Town Council-owned Old Lansdown School building) with a graffiti artist to help



Graffiti wall art in the new youth club premises

young people create wall art for the space, took place. Since then, the youth team (now incorporating additional sessional youth workers on contracts of between 8 and 12 hours, alongside one 22 hour per week lead youth worker) deliver regular open sessions for juniors (years 6-8) and seniors (years 9-11). Alongside the regular youth club sessions, the youth service has been able to provide additional outreach support, including:

- Summer transition project, aimed at supporting year 6's moving on to secondary school by building resilience using the NHS '5 ways to wellbeing'
- HAF (Holiday Activities and Food Programme) partnership project – delivering a programme of

activities, aimed at low-income families, to provide consistent enrichment activities during school holidays, alongside a healthy hot meal

- School outreach – visiting the secondary school to build connections with young people within an educational environment
- School Holiday Projects – including graffiti days, day trips, cooking, and gardening
- Attending community events such as Diversity Festival and Christmas in Crediton, running stalls and fundraising
- Peer Mentoring Scheme – employment of A level students to act as mentors to youth club users, providing experience and skills to those interested in developing within the sector.

With a huge amount of work, it has been amazing to watch the fantastic youth team bring together such a comprehensive scheme. The town council's commitment to delivering provision for young people is something they are very proud of.

Crediton Town Council intends to secure additional external funding to ensure the continued development of youth work in Crediton, ensuring sustained delivery.



## BUCKFASTLEIGH HOLD A GREEN FAIR

Buckfastleigh lies within Dartmoor National Park and is a significant habitat for wildlife, such as the protected greater horseshoe bat and the rare deptford pink. Naturally, the Town Council is committed to supporting and enhancing the local environment and its diverse ecology.

In October, the Council facilitated a Green Fair to provide information and participatory networking opportunities for local groups, organisations, residents and visitors.

The event hosted a wide variety of stalls, childrens activities, free raffles showcasing locally produced products and childrens activities. Visitors also enjoyed complementary refreshments and cake.

The purpose of the day was to raise



awareness of environmental issues in the community, to find out what is going on locally and to spread knowledge on the small changes people can make in their lives e.g. recycling, climate change and biodiversity.

Many organisations were involved on the day including: Dartmoor National

Park, Action on Climate in Teignbridge, Buckfastleigh Action for Nature Group, the Environment Agency, and Teign Energy Communities to name but a few.

Excellent feedback was received from those involved and the public who attended.

## A BUSY YEAR OF CAPITAL WORKS FOR BERE FERRERS

For the last couple of years, Bere Ferrers Parish Council has completed its largest volume of capital projects since the 1990's. Each project had its own unique challenges and many required assistance from the wider community, and funding from external partners.

**Sarah Park Playground** - required replacement equipment and new surfacing. Unforeseen groundwork requirements resulted in a call for help to remove clay material. Tractors and trailers from local farmers were on hand to help, and also helped with some repairs.

**Village Hall lift** - late one evening after a council meeting, the village hall lift broke. This led to a year long challenge involving manufacturers and insurers to attempt repairs. In the end , a new lift was installed for £18,000, with funding support from grants.

**Bus Shelters** - two new bus shelters were installed costing £8,000, with support from Devon County Council funding.

**Cemetary extension** - in order to expand the cemetary a new road and

gateway was required. The Council had been budgeting over several years to acquires the funds for the work. The new road was named in honor of the former Clerk 'Mary Taylor' in recognition of her long service.

**Toilet refurbishments** - the parish council manages five public toilets, and have repainted the facilities.

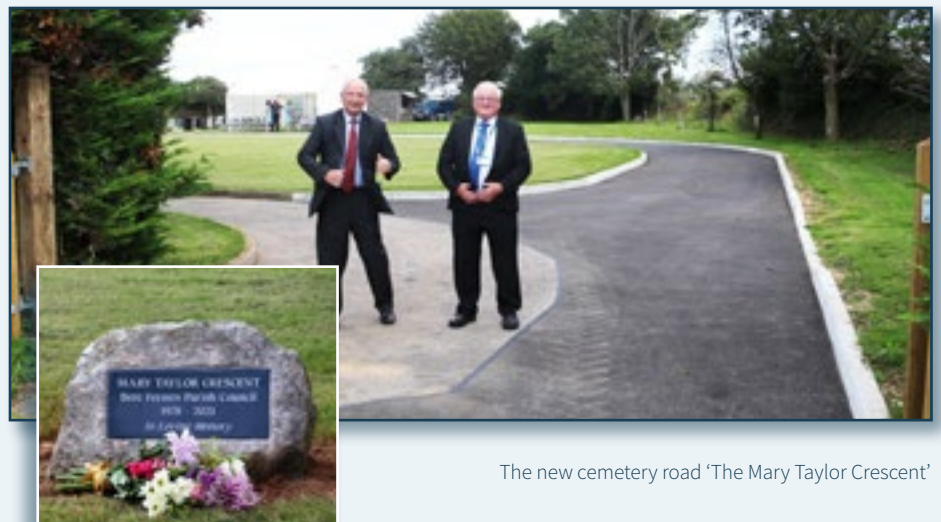
**A new zip wire** - equipment at the recreation field required replacement. Again a community effort to secure funding and complete groundworks helped the project succeed.

**New cycle racks** - 12 cycle racks were installed with DCC funding.

**CCTV** - 8 new CCTV cameras were installed around the parish hall to try and combat vandalism and other anti-social behaviour.

In addition, the council has also invested in a new IT system with modern software to support the effective management of its business.

Bere Ferrers story helps demonstrate how collaboration and partnership can help acheive a range of outcomes for communities.



The new cemetery road 'The Mary Taylor Crescent'

## BUCKLAND BREWER REBRANDS TO RAISE THEIR PROFILE

Sometimes it can be difficult to have the work of the council recognised in the community. Buckland Brewer faced these challenges and saw the need for stronger visual brand to raise their profile.

In 2022/23, the council worked with their website developer with the goal to make the parish council more visible.

They set out to make communication compelling for their parishioners, creating an eye-catching logo making their work instantly recognisable in any medium.

They undertook a bespoke branding exercise inspired by Buckland Brewers heritage. Features such as local landmarks, the natural landscape and

farming industry were all factored into the design.

This branding exercise has provided a great opportunity for creativity and a fresh start for the council. Feedback from parishioners has been very positive, and their new branding is raising the profile of the council and its work as desired.



Local landmarks provided inspiration for the new logo

Buckland Brewer's new logo

## CHUDLEIGH PROVIDES A WARM, SAFE SPACE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE

During winter 2022/23, many people were facing significant financial challenges. Chudleigh Town Council responded by opening up their town hall as a rest centre, proving a warm, safe space for those that needed it.

The rest centre was open between 6pm and 9pm on most evenings. As a drop in facility, people could stay for as little or as long as they liked. They supplied hot beverages free of charge and callers were able to use the attached kitchen. The hall was open to anyone who wanted to use the facilities, but under 18s needed to be part of a family group.

Ahead of its opening, the Mayor, Victoria Hadley, explained *"We are doing this because councillors are very aware that the increase in utility prices, coupled with a high rate of inflation will leave many families under severe financial pressure. Whilst the government is taking some action to mitigate this the truth is that residents are going to face electricity and gas prices double what they were last winter"*

*Initially, the drop in will provide warmth, drinks and company. However, over time it will develop and change. We've never done anything like this before so, beyond the basics, we don't know what residents will want and need. How the warm space develops will be very much in the hands of the people using it. So if you need us, we are here."*



## A SUCCESSFUL FAIR FOR SOUTH BRENT

Over 1,000 visitors thronged to the Fair for South Brent in July, for the 50+ stalls, activities, great food and entertainment. From the many compliments received and calls to ‘please do it again next year’, people really had a great time.

Sustainable South Brent (SSB) Chair Andy Harker says: ‘We are delighted that the main aims of the Fair were achieved. We came together as a community and had a lovely, fun-filled afternoon, whilst also thinking about changes we can all make to help nature and respond positively to climate change. Great conversations and discussions were ‘sparked’ across the Fair and lots of really useful information and advice shared in a range of areas, including nature, energy, waste, transport, food and community support.

The Fair raised around £2,500 to put into SSB’s fund which helps any local group with a good idea around sustainability. We couldn’t have achieved any of this without the support of many wonderful volunteers, far too many to mention by name, but all very much appreciated”.

The initiative of Sustainable South Brent, the Fair was staged in collaboration with South Brent Parish Council and other local community groups, organisations and businesses. It was made possible due to funding from various sources, including South Brent’s Community Energy Society, Parish Council, District and County Councillors, as well as Sustainable South Brent.



## GETTING INTO THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Parish and town councils, of all shapes and sizes, play a crucial role in fostering the holiday spirit by facilitating various Christmas activities.

At DALC we love hearing about festive events like tree-lighting ceremonies, Christmas markets, and community carol singing, which bring neighbours together to celebrate the season.

Additionally, these councils are allocating resources and support to decorate public spaces with twinkling lights and festive displays, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Through their efforts, councils are strengthening community bonds, spreading joy, and making the holiday season memorable and inclusive for all to enjoy.

Enjoy some snaps of Christmas 2022.



## SHARE YOUR STORY

We love to hear stories about our member councils’ projects and activities, and to celebrate your achievements.

You can tell us your stories anytime by emailing [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk), and we’ll share your activities with our network.

You never know - you might just find your council featured in next year’s annual report!

## CELEBRATING HM THE QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

In June 2022, communities across the Country enjoyed jubilant celebrations recognising the historic milestone reached by HM The Queen's length of service. Councils and communities of all sizes participated in four days of celebrations to mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

For many communities, it was the parish and town council at the heart of the planning of these celebrations, which included, but was not limited to, lighting the beacons, street parties, commemorative mugs, tree planting, and more! The photos below show only a sample of the activities undertaken by councils. Congratulations to all involved in marking this historic occasion.



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# ACCOUNTS

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

INCOME	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
Advertising	825	620
AGM, Conference and Exhibition	8,055	2,615
Bank Interest	596	242
Grants	12,000	12,000
Investment Interest	1,347	1,302
Member Services	959	1,232
Subscriptions	97,061	93,537
Training and Events	19,081	21,583
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>139,924</b>	<b>133,131</b>

EXPENDITURE	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
Staff Costs	76,281	64,372
Other Staff Costs	842	2,170
Premises Expenses	4,617	4,089
Office Expenses	5,798	10,058
Governance Costs	4,684	3,090
Subscriptions	40,907	40,257
AGM, Conference and Exhibition	6,856	477
Training and Events	1,632	3,960
Grants	0	200
Depreciation	692	864
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>142,309</b>	<b>129,537</b>

Net Income/(Expenditure)	(2,388)	3,594
Unrealised Gain/(Loss) on Investment	(6,142)	4,183
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>(8,530)</b>	<b>7,777</b>

## COMPANY TREASURER'S COMMENTARY

In the Financial year 2022/23 our income was higher by £6,793 but our total expenses (costs) rose by £12,772. The main factor was a significant increase in staff costs with a full year for the Policy Officer and significant pay awards.

However, we only had a small deficit of £2,388, mainly due to lower equipment costs for the office. Although we had budgeted for a deficit of about £11,000, we did not need to draw on our reserve investments.

We show a loss on our investment in the CCLA Property fund of £6,142. At the balance sheet date the previous year the fund had peaked and then fell back by March 2023. The fund values are now similar to the level as they were two years ago. We continue to receive investment dividends from the property fund.

The operating deficit and the fall in value of the property investment account for the change of £8,530 in the Total Assets less Current liabilities.

I would like to thank our staff, especially the County Officer, and our accounts support from Merlin Accountancy Services Ltd, who carry out all the work to keep our accounting records in order.

**Cllr Ian Cowling**  
Company Treasurer



## BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2023

FIXED ASSETS	31/03/2023	31/03/2022
Tangible Assets	2,769	3,461
Investments	31,116	37,258
CURRENT ASSETS		
Debtors	6,998	6,914
Cash at bank and in hand	72,817	76,320
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors	7,494	9,217
NET CURRENT LIABILITIES	72,321	74,017
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES	106,206	114,736
RESERVES		
General Fund		
Balance at 1 April	114,736	106,959
Surplus/(deficit)	(8,530)	7,777
Balance at 31 March	106,206	114,736
County Training Partnership Fund		
Balance at 1 April	1,516	1,516
Surplus/(deficit)	0	0
Balance at 31 March	1,516	1,516
BALANCE AT 31 MARCH 2020	106,206	114,736

## GOVERNANCE

The directors present this report of the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2023.

### Directors:

The directors shown below have held office during the whole of the period from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

Elizabeth Brookes-Hocking  
Ian Cowling  
Elizabeth Hitchins  
Glyn Richards

Other changes in directors holding office are as follows:

Resigned during the year:

David Chalmers  
Philip Dredge  
Mike Hocking  
Colin Trudgeon

Appointed during the year:

Philip Dredge  
Mike Joyce  
Ruth Pearson-Bunt

### Registered Office:

Amory Building  
Cheriton Bishop  
Exeter, Devon  
EX6 6JH

### Registered Number:

12545316 (England and Wales)

### Accountants:

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

# OUR MEMBERS

## EAST DEVON

All Saints  
Awliscombe  
Axminster  
Axmouth  
Aylesbeare  
Beer  
Bishops Clyst  
Brampford Speke  
Branscombe  
Broadclyst  
Broadhembury

Buckerell  
Budleigh Salterton  
Chardstock  
Clyst Honiton  
Clyst St George  
Colaton Raleigh  
Colyton  
Combe Raleigh  
Combpyne Rousdon  
Cotleigh  
Cranbrook

Dalwood  
Dunkeswell  
East Budleigh  
Exmouth  
Farringdon  
Farway  
Feniton  
Gittisham  
Hawkchurch  
Honiton  
Kilmington

Luppitt  
Lypmstone  
Membury  
Monkton  
Musbury  
Newton Poppleford  
Northleigh  
Offwell  
Ottery St Mary  
Payhembury  
Plymtree

Poltimore  
Rewe  
Rockbeare  
Seaton  
Sheldon  
Shute  
Sidmouth  
Southleigh  
Stockland  
Stoke Canon  
Talatton

Uplyme  
Upton Pyne  
West Hill  
Whimble  
Widworthy  
Woodbury  
Yarcombe

## MID DEVON

Bampton  
Bickleigh  
Borden Gate  
Bow  
Bradninch  
Burllescombe  
Cadbury  
Cadeleigh

Chawleigh  
Cheriton Bishop  
Cheriton Fitzpaine  
Clayhidon  
Coldridge  
Colebrooke  
Copplestone  
Credition Hamlets

Credition  
Cruyws Morchard  
Cullompton  
Culmstock  
Down St Mary  
Halberton  
Hemyock  
Hittisleigh

Holcombe Rogus  
Kentisbeare  
Lapford  
Morchard Bishop  
Morebath  
Newton St Cyres  
Nymet Rowland  
Oakford

Poughill  
Puddington  
Sampford Peverell  
Sandford  
Shobrooke  
Stoodleigh  
Templeton  
Thelbridge

Thorverton  
Tiverton  
Uffculme  
Updownham  
Wembworthy  
Willand  
Zeal Monachorum

## NORTH DEVON

Ashford  
Barnstaple  
Berryarbor  
Bishops Nympton  
Bishops Tawton  
Bratton Fleming  
Braunton  
Brayford  
Brendon & Countisbury

Burrington  
Chittlehamholt,  
Warkleigh & Satterleigh  
Chittlehampton  
Chulmleigh  
Combe Martin  
East Anstey  
East Down  
East & West Buckland

East Worlington  
Filleigh  
Fremington  
Georgeham  
Georgenympton &  
Queensnympton  
Goodleigh  
Heanton Punchard  
Horwood, Lovacott

& Newton Tracey  
Ilfracombe  
Instow  
Kentisbury & Trentishoe  
Kings Nympton  
Knowstone  
Landkey  
Loxhore  
Lynton & Lynmouth

Marwood  
Meshaw  
Mortehoe  
North Molton  
Parracombe  
Pilton West  
Rackenford  
Romansleigh  
Rose Ash

Shirwell  
South Molton  
Swimbridge  
Tawstock  
West Down  
Westleigh  
Witheridge

## SOUTH HAMS

Ashprington  
Aveton Gifford  
Berry Pomeroy  
Bickleigh  
Bigbury  
Blackawton  
Brixton  
Buckfastleigh West  
Buckland-tout-saints  
Charleton

Chivelstone  
Churchstow  
Cornwood  
Cornworthy  
Dartington  
Dartmouth  
Dean Prior  
Diptford  
Dittisham  
East Allington

Ermington  
Frogmore & Sherford  
Halwell & Moreleigh  
Harbeton  
Hardtong PM  
Holbeton  
Holne  
Ivybridge  
Kingsbridge  
Kingston

Kingswear  
Littlehempston  
Loddiswell  
Malborough  
Marldon  
Modbury  
Newton & Noss  
North Huish  
Rattery  
Ringmore

Salcombe  
Shaugh Prior  
Slapton  
South Brent  
South Huish  
South Milton  
South Pool  
Sparkwell  
Staverton  
Stoke Fleming

Stoke Gabriel  
Stokenham  
Strete  
Thurlestone  
Totnes  
Ugborough  
Wembury  
West Alvington  
Yealmpton

## TEIGNBRIDGE

Abbotskerswell  
Ashburton  
Bickington  
Bishopsteignton  
Bovey Tracey  
Bridford  
Broadhempston  
Buckfastleigh

Buckland-in-the-Moor  
Christow  
Chudleigh  
Coffinswell  
Dawlish  
Denbury & Torbryan  
Doddiscumbesleigh  
Dunsford

Exminster  
Haccombe with Combe  
Henock  
Holcombe Burnell  
Ide  
Ideford  
Ilsington  
Ipplepen

Kenn  
Kenton  
Kingskerswell  
Kingsteignton  
Lustleigh  
Mamhead  
Manaton  
Moretonhampstead

Newton Abbot  
North Bovey  
Ogwell  
Shaldon  
Shillingford St George  
Starcross  
Stokeinteignhead  
Tedburn St Mary

Teigngrace  
Teignmouth  
Trusham  
Whitstone  
Widcombe-in-the-moor

## TORRIDGE

Abbotsham  
Alverdiscott &  
Huntshaw  
Alwington  
Ashreigney  
Ashwater  
Beaford  
Bideford

Black Torrington  
Bradford & Cookbury  
Bradworthy  
Bridgerule  
Broadwoodwidge  
Buckland Brewer  
Buckland Filleigh  
Clawton

Clovelly  
Dolton  
East & West Putford  
Fritelstock  
Great Torrington  
Halwill  
Hartland  
High Bickington

Holsworthy Hamlets  
Holsworthy  
Langtree  
Little Torrington  
Littleham & Landcross  
Luffincott & Tetcott  
Merton  
Milton Damerel

Monkleigh  
Northam  
Pancrasweek  
Parkham  
Peters Marland  
Roborough  
Shebbear  
Sheepwash

St-Giles-in-the-Wood  
St-Giles-on-the-Heath  
Sutcombe  
Thornbury  
Woolsery  
Yarnscombe

## WEST DEVON

Beaworthy  
Belstone  
Bere Ferrers  
Bratton Clovelly  
Brentor  
Bridestowe  
Broadwoodkelly  
Buckland Monachorum

Burrator Group  
Chagford  
Dartmoor Forest  
Drewsteignton  
Exbourne & Jacobstowe  
Germansweek  
Gulworthy  
Hatherleigh

Highampton  
Horrabridge  
Iddesleigh  
Inwardleigh  
Lamerton  
Lewdown Group  
Lifton  
Lydford

Mary Tavy  
Meeth  
Milton Abbot Group  
Monkokehampton  
North Tawton  
Northlew  
Okehampton  
Okehampton Hamlets

Peter Tavy  
Plasterdown Group  
Sampford Courtney  
Sourton  
South Tawton  
Spreyton  
Sticklepath  
Stowford

Sydenham Damerel  
Tavistock  
Throwleigh

## TORBAY

Brixham

## NON MEMBERS

**East Devon**  
Clyst Hydon  
Otterton

**Mid Devon**  
Kennerleigh  
Loxbeare  
Silverton  
Washfield  
Washford Pyne

**North Devon**  
Arlington  
Atherington  
Molland

**Torrige**  
Petrockstowe  
Pyworthy  
Weare Giffard  
Winkleigh

**Teignbridge**  
Dunchideock

**South Hams**  
East Portlemouth

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