

**DALC**  
Devon Association  
of Local Councils

SUPPORTING  
**VIBRANT LOCAL GOVERNANCE**  
IN **DEVON**

*ANNUAL*  
**REPORT**

**23/24**



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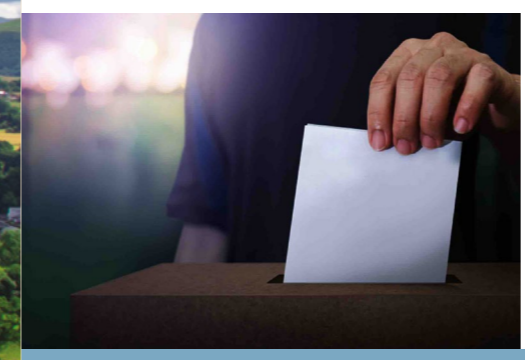
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# CONTENTS

<b>CHAIRMAN’S FOREWORD</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COUNTY OFFICER’S SUMMARY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>VOICE AND REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>OUR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>YOUR STORIES</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>ACCOUNTS</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>OUR MEMBERS</b>	<b>35</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 Board of Directors
- officers of the Association
- Our partners and sponsors

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

## CONTACT US

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# CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD



Welcome to the Devon Association of Local Councils' annual report. Whether you are a local councillor, a clerk, a member or officer of another authority, an MP, another stakeholder or a resident, I hope you will find this report of DALC's activities in support of parish and town councils, and the communities they represent, informative and interesting.

Local councils are exactly that: on the ground, the first port of call, accessible and available. Most councils take great pride in communicating with their residents and in being open and accommodating to approaches from the general public. It's our USP. Being there for our communities isn't necessarily enough, however. Being effective is just as important.

DALC is nothing if not aspirational in its vision for its members. As you will see from the following page, our aim is to help councils become the best they can be, and to do the best they can for their communities. Our member services aim to strengthen councils by all means we offer – from basic information and straightforward advice to complex advocacy and representation in a fast-changing context.

At our 2023 AGM we asked delegates about their councils' priorities and challenges. We used the information to guide our service development. The challenges for larger councils were discussed in detail at a well-attended spring workshop (see pages 21-22). DALC has a clear picture of the support that those councils want. We would like to offer the same kind of event to smaller councils in the next year.

Although there are hundreds of smaller councils in membership, meetings dedicated to their priorities ceased around a decade ago when interest in attending fell too low to make it worthwhile continuing. Since then, things have changed and the concerns of the villages and rural areas are reflected in national policies. Many parishes are not the sleepy backwaters they have been reputed to be. Their issues are current and appear in emerging legislation.

During the year, bulletins have kept councils informed of the steady progress of establishing the Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, with devolved powers covering housing (especially affordability); local transport; skills and education; support for local business; meeting net zero; sustainable local economy.

These functions may seem strategic and distant but communities of all sizes will be affected by decisions made locally in respect of them (I have yet to meet a parish indifferent to housing development, roads and traffic). It is important that DALC understands and represents all members' views as plans and policies are put into place. For that reason we welcome all member councils to take part in our consultations and on-line events, and to contact us at any time with issues of importance to them and their communities.

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

## OUR PLAN FOR VIBRANT LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN DEVON

Parish and town councils are the first tier of local government and the closest to communities, providing our towns and villages with a democratically accountable voice, with structure to deliver local services and champion what matters to local people.

There are 410 parishes in Devon, of which there are 359 parish or town councils representing approximately 550,000 electors.

As a member based organisation for local councils in Devon, our purpose is to support councils to serve their communities effectively, promoting good governance and leadership, community engagement, and partnership working. Through our services, we aim to strengthen the capacity and impact of local councils whilst promoting the principles of democracy, transparency, inclusivity, and continuous improvement.

*In our vision of vibrant and empowered local councils, robust leadership, decisive action, and effective partnerships flourish. Our communities actively engage, ensuring high levels of civic involvement, while local councils serve as esteemed pillars of the community, earning trust and respect from the residents they represent.*

### PROVIDING LEADERSHIP

**Local councils respected as a cornerstone of local democracy, giving a voice to Devon's communities, and providing leadership on those matters of most importance.**

We believe in the fundamental importance of democracy and the essential role of local councils to deliver representation, decision-making and outcomes for communities.

### TAKING ACTION

**Local councils being at the forefront of public activity, prioritising community needs and well-being while delivering relevant and effective services, and driving community action.**

We believe in the transformative power of local councils as place shapers and agents of change. Empowered councils take decisive action, and nurture vibrant, resilient, and inclusive communities.

### WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

**Local councils recognised as valued and trusted partners, proactively engaged in building strong alliances and meaningful relationships with stakeholders and communities.**

We believe that collaboration and partnership are key drivers of success. There is power in working with stakeholders, to achieve common goals, share resources and maximise impact.

### OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

- **Supporting our member councils**
- **Foster knowledge sharing and support among our membership**
- **Encourage meaningful engagement between councils and communities**
- **Proactively represent and advocate for the interests of the local council sector**
- **Build strategic partnerships and alliances**

### THE VALUES WE WILL WORK TO

-  **Leadership**
-  **Collaboration**
-  **Inclusivity**
-  **Excellence**
-  **Agility**

# OFFICER'S SUMMARY

By Cara Stobart, County Officer

As we reflect on the work of 2023/24, I want to extend my appreciation to all our parish and town councils for the dedication, leadership, and service you provide to your communities.

Together, we are building a vision of vibrant and empowered councils that not only offer local leadership but also take decisive action and work in partnership to address the challenges and opportunities that face Devon.

At DALC, we remain committed to supporting our members through a comprehensive range of services. In the past year, we handled 1,976 advice queries, with 50% receiving a same-day response, ensuring councils had timely guidance to make informed decisions. Our training service saw 1,006 bookings across 170 councils, covering over 50 course types, helping 549 individuals grow their skills and knowledge. By participating in vital advocacy work—such as engaging in the Devon Devolution Deal, contributing to the Devon Housing Taskforce, and facilitating highways discussions—DALC has ensured that your collective voice has been heard and represented.

As the challenges facing our communities continue to grow and evolve with issues such as climate change, rural isolation, funding pressures, and more! - DALC is focussed on positioning itself to help councils navigate these challenges effectively. By being part of the DALC network, member councils have gained access to a wealth of shared knowledge, best practices, and the collective strength

of working together, ensuring that no council stands alone in its efforts.

We are incredibly grateful to all the individuals who have taken the time to engage with DALC by sharing their views, experiences, and insights. Whether through surveys, events, or direct conversations, your contributions are helping us refine our services and advocate more effectively on your behalf. Your feedback has been invaluable in shaping our strategic planning, ensuring that our priorities align with the real needs of Devon's parish and town councils.

During 2023/24, DALC undertook a staffing review to ensure we are well positioned to meet the growing demands on our services. Recognising the increasing complexity of local governance and the rising number of councils seeking advice, training and representation, we made the decision to expand our staff team. This strategic move will not only enhance the resilience and sustainability of the organisation but also enable us to continue providing high-quality support to our members. By investing in our team, we are reinforcing DALC's capacity to grow alongside the sector and respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

We acknowledge that the expansion of the staff team will come with an increase in subscription fees in 2024/25, and we are grateful for the support shown at our AGM in ensuring DALC is properly resourced to continue

delivering the high level of support and services our members rely on.

In addition to subscription increases, DALC is committed to diversifying its income by actively seeking opportunities for paid work and securing grants, ensuring greater financial sustainability while continuing to provide valuable services to our member councils.

One area of focus for 2024/25 will be to work closely with our principal councils on collaborative projects that strengthen relationships with parish and town councils, improve communication, and foster more effective joint working for the benefit of all our communities. We have already begun collaborative work with the highways department, a key area identified by our members as particularly challenging, and we are focused on improving communication and fostering more productive relationships to address ongoing concerns.

We continue to work closely with our valued partners, including the Devon branch of the Society of Local Council Clerks, with whom we jointly hosted 'summer socials' for local council officers - fostering peer support and professional development. We held a joint board 'Away Day' with Devon Communities Together to explore ways our organisations can collaborate more effectively. We also remain aligned with NALC, who advocate nationally for the local council sector, ensuring our collective voice is heard at the

## OUR MEMBERSHIP

# 348

97% of town and parish councils, and 25% of parish meetings, were in membership during 2023/2024.

## INDIVIDUALS

# 588+

Hundreds of individuals from member councils have interacted with DALC this year.

## ENGAGEMENT

# 86%

300 out of 348 member councils engaged with our services in 2023/24.

highest levels of government. This year their attention has been focussed on the government's Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, as well as continued lobbying for councils to be able to meet remotely. Read more on page 25.

Our flagship event, the Annual Conference and Exhibition, once again attracted great attendance from our membership, and provided valuable opportunities for networking. This year's event boasted over 160 attendees, 15 exhibitor stands, a dynamic networking zone, as well as a jam-packed programme with something for everyone. Delegates heard the inspiring story of Seaton Town Council's dramatic transformation into the effective council it is today, and were motivated by Broadclyst Parish Council's examples of collaborative working. Attendees also received an update from Devon County Council, NALC, and could choose from a selection of workshops to enhance knowledge and skills. If you missed this year's event, be sure to add 2 October 2024 to your diary!

DALC continues to explore new ways of working and being responsive to its members evolving needs. This year we introduced our 'Connect Events' as a new tool to enable councils to come together on topics of mutual interest. Early feedback suggests these have been well received. We look forward to developing a programme of events for 2024/25, and to supporting councils to connect in the year ahead.

I would also like to express my deepest thanks to all councillors, council officers, and staff who work tirelessly to improve the lives of their communities. Your dedication is the backbone of local democracy. To our external partners, principal authorities and other organisations which DALC has collaborated with, for supporting our network. To DALC's board of directors, your vision and leadership have guided us through another successful year. And finally, to our incredible staff team at DALC, your hard work and commitment to serving our members is at the core of everything we do.

Looking ahead, DALC will continue to be a steadfast partner, helping you navigate the complexities of local governance while ensuring your voice is heard at every level. With significant events expected in the year ahead, such as the finalisation of a devolution deal for Devon and the creation of a Devon and Torbay Combined County Authority, as well as a General Election expected - there will be much to navigate in a changing political and governance landscape. As always, DALC will help ensure our members are informed, prepared, and engaged with these changes, while continuing to advocate for the interests of parish and town councils.

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

## OUR STAFF TEAM



Rebecca Walker  
Member Services Officer



Elise Callaghan  
Training Officer



Mark Clapham  
Temp Policy Officer (till July 2023)



Rachel Townsend  
Temp Admin Assistant (July - March)

# COUNTY OFFICER'S SUMMARY >>>



## 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. As a member-led body, it is our member councils who remain 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, scrutinise our financial management, hear reports of our activities, and engage with us to identify new priority areas.

We were delighted to welcome 65 councils to our AGM on 27 September and thank you to those councils who voted via proxy when they couldn't attend.

At this year's meeting, we undertook an engagement exercise to better understand matters of importance to our membership. See next page for details.

Most importantly, this year saw our members affirm the importance of DALC being a resilient and sustainable organisation, and the need to continue delivering services to parish and town councils. With our members' support and encouragement, the Board of Directors had a mandate to revisit subscription fee proposals, and ensure we had sufficient income to meet our growing needs.

[Read the AGM minutes on our website: devonalc.org.uk/about-us/governance](https://devonalc.org.uk/about-us/governance)

## CHANGES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We express our thanks to Elizabeth Hitchins who stood down from the Board after 3 years service. During her time on the Board, Liz served on our HR Committee including being the committee chair, and championed the Board's adoption of NALC's Civility and Respect Pledge.

There were four Board vacancies to be filled at the AGM. Members re-elected Elizabeth Brookes-Hocking and Ian Cowling to serve another term, and elected new directors John Heath and Joanna Rice.

In the Spring, Brian Bailey and John Heath resigned from the Board, creating two new vacancies which shall be filled at our next AGM.

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](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk).

## SUBMITTING MOTIONS

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.

## ELECTED AT THE AGM



Liz Brookes-Hocking



Ian Cowling



John Heath



Joanna Rice

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

## AGM ENGAGEMENT INSIGHTS

At the AGM, we conducted an engagement exercise. We aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the key issues facing our member councils and identify areas where DALC can provide more effective support. Participants were invited to share their thoughts on five pivotal questions through an interactive exercise. Here are the headline findings:



### KEY ISSUES FACING DEVON'S PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

#### People

Challenges included poor council culture, recruitment and retention difficulties, capacity issues, and training needs

#### Place

Topics from anti-social behaviour to asset maintenance reflected the local issues councils are working to resolve

#### Community

Struggles with engaging with the public and increasing their understanding of local government often arose

#### Housing

The lack of housing, especially affordable housing, is an area of concern for many councils and their communities

#### Highways

There were varying concerns about speeding, roadworks, potholes, and highways infrastructure

### WHAT DO COUNCILS FIND MOST REWARDING OR CHALLENGING ABOUT THEIR ROLE?

#### Most rewarding

**Making a difference to communities**, seeing tangible improvements through local projects.

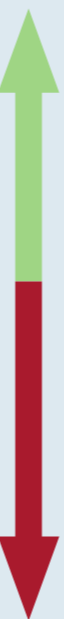
**Engaging with the public**, being accessible to the community and serving as a public figure.

#### Most challenging

**Councillor/staff issues**, such as poor behaviour, recruitment challenges, and training engagement.

**Public understanding of local government**, and the roles and responsibilities of parish councils.

**Workload**, issues with capacity, time management, and prioritising community matters.



### HOW DO COUNCILS PERCEIVE THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER AUTHORITIES?

There are good relationships with specific officers, councillors, and departments, though effort and budget limitations were noted.

A significant number of councils perceived distance and lack of communication from county and district councils, and a strong desire for cooperation and collaboration was expressed.



### WHAT CAN DALC DO TO SUPPORT COUNCILS?

**1. Training:** We received requests for new councillor training, induction support, and ongoing development, indicating a need for greater awareness and enhancement of our Councillor Development Framework.

**2. Networking:** Suggestions for thematic discussion events, connecting councils to share advice and experiences, with emphasis on face-to-face engagement and help connecting with principal councils.

#### TOPICS FOR NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES:

**1. Local council administration/governance:** Interest in council policies and practices, recruitment, succession planning, and strategic planning.

**2. Facilitation and engagement:** Working together and with others, on issues of common interest, for peer support, inspiration, and relationship building.

Themes included climate change, housing, planning, funding, highways, and community well-being.

### MOVING FORWARD

These insights underscore DALC's commitment to listening to our member councils and addressing their concerns. We are dedicated to taking actionable steps that will benefit our organisation and its members. We will enhance training programmes, facilitate better networking opportunities, and improve communication with principal councils to support our members in achieving their goals.

# YOU SAID, WE DID

## RESPONDING TO OUR MEMBERS COUNCILS

DALC is committed to supporting its member councils by actively listening to your needs and responding with appropriate solutions. In recent years we have been collating council feedback and working to address key issues which have been raised, ensuring our services are aligned with your priorities. Here are just some examples:

### CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

**You said:** You wanted more opportunities to connect with other councils, to learn, share views, and collaborate.

**We did:** We launched 'Connect Events' to foster relationship building and collaboration, giving councils access to information and opportunities to discuss issues together and with other important stakeholders.

### WORKING WITH PRINCIPAL COUNCILS

**You said:** Closer working with principal councils was important to you.

**We did:** We are working towards a Civic Agreement to formalise collaboration with Devon County Council, and continue to support district councils in developing projects that foster stronger relationships with parishes.

### HIGHWAYS MATTERS

**You said:** You voiced highways concerns, including your challenges with working with the highways team

**We did:** We are delivering a series of highways themed Connect Events to help you to understand the department and its functions, to remove barriers to cooperative working, and to build stronger relationships.

### DEVOLUTION

**You said:** You wanted to stay informed and engaged with Devon's devolution plans.

**We did:** We remain an active participant in Team Devon discussions concerning a new Combined County Authority, championing direct engagement with parishes, and providing regular updates as the deal progresses.

### HOUSING

**You said:** Affordable housing remains a critical concern in your communities.

**We did:** DALC is an active member of the Devon Housing Task Force, providing a sector voice in its discussions. In addition, we held a Connect Event featuring the Devon Housing Commission in October 2023.

### ENGAGING IN THE PLANNING SYSTEM

**You said:** You needed more support navigating the complex planning system.

**We did:** We have identified a new planning trainer to enhance our existing 'Responding to planning applications' course, and have introduced a new course on 'Planning enforcement, appeals and obligations'.

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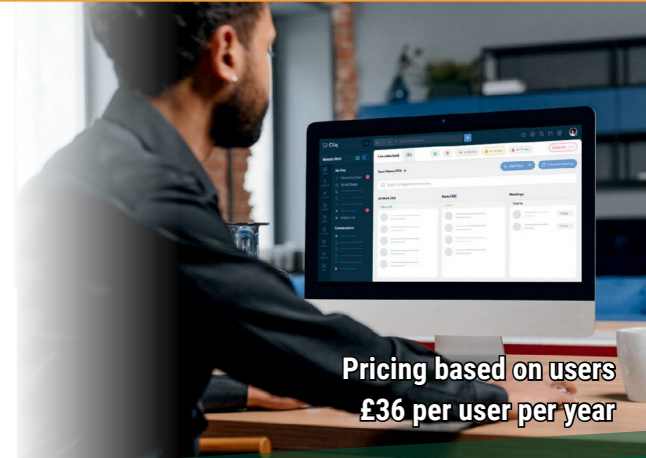
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## ADVISORY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

In our Annual Member Survey, 70% of respondents indicated that our advice was a ‘very important’ part of our service. We pride ourselves in providing a high-quality advice service to our member councils, handled by a skilled and knowledgeable staff team.

In 2023/24, 297 councils (85% of membership) engaged with our service and the team handled 1,976 queries in total.

The majority of queries are quick and easy to resolve; 50% received a same-day response and 81% were resolved within 3 days (including weekends and bank holidays!). Prompt and reliable support ensures councils can make informed decisions and navigate challenges efficiently. Our advice service helps councils avoid costly legal or consultancy fees, maximising value for our members.

A number of queries can be complex and/or needed specialist support. DALC subscribes to reputable external advisory services (i.e. legal; finance and VAT; employment, GDPR/FOI) and referred 73 queries in 2023/24 (<4%).

Queries covered a broad range of topics, highlighting the depth of knowledge and expertise within our team and of our partners. Popular topics included:

1. Council governance, including meeting procedures, and powers (23%)
2. Training and development (13%)
3. Councillor matters, including elections, vacancies, and conduct (11%)
4. HR and other employment matters (9%)
5. Financial management (9%)
6. Community assets, services, and activities (5%)

In an election year, topics relating to council governance tend to be popular due to the influx of new councillors and changes in leadership. New councillors often need guidance on proper meeting procedures and decision-making processes, whilst experienced councillors often benefit from a refresher on local council law and regulations. A new council will often review many of its policies and procedures in the process as well.

Ordinary elections can also bring about vacancies, so timely advice on how to handle cooption processes was important. With 20% of council seats being unfilled in 2023, DALC was able to offer support to many of its members - some of which had to co-opt for the first time in living memory with no procedures in place.

Additionally, councillor conduct and development were key as councils aimed to maintain high standards of governance and professionalism. Whilst our advice service offered a range of guidance, many councils made use of our post election training programmes for a fast track development experience.

As well as an on demand advice service, DALC also provides a range of timely information via its weekly e-bulletin, website and open meetings.

In 2023/24, DALC published 55 e-bulletins. Our e-bulletins contain: timely information applicable to local councils; updates on law and best practice; training and development opportunities; and highlight events to engage with other councils on topics of common interest. Anyone from a member council can [subscribe for our e-bulletins](#) for weekly content in your inbox.

### ENQUIRIES

**1,976 enquiries were made in 2023/24, from 297 councils.**  
85% of members used the service.

### RESPONSE TIMES

**50% of queries received a same-day response,** and 81% were resolved within 3 days (inc weekends)

### REFERRALS

**73 queries were complex and/or required specialist support.**  
Less than 4% required a referral.

### TOPICS

**Queries relating to decision making, policies, and meeting procedures, were most common.**

### E-BULLETINS

**We published 55 e-bulletins in 2023/24,** these are published weekly with additional bulletins as needed.

### WEBSITE

**Our website features, current news, a knowledge bank, free guides, training opportunities, and more!**

### CONNECT EVENTS

**We introduced ‘Connect Events’ in Autumn 2023,** helping councils to keep up-to-date and informed.

## INTRODUCING CONNECT EVENTS

Our Connect Events are instrumental in bringing councils together; to connect with DALC, to connect with each other, and to connect with other agencies whose work impacts our communities.

A primary goal of these events is to foster information sharing and collaboration. We have aimed to create a space where councils can engage in open and constructive discussions, receive timely information, and to pool our collective wisdom so DALC can effectively represent its membership, and help shape local policy which supports our communities.

Our Connect Events aim to provide a valuable source of knowledge and updates for councils. In a frequently changing world, access to information is important for councils to make informed decisions. We want our connect events to provide a direct channel for councils to stay up to date with the latest developments.

The Connect Events are also about building relationships. Councils, with their own unique experiences, can learn from one another, share insights, and build connections – with each other and hopefully other agencies.

As we embark on this journey, we invite all councils to participate actively in these events – where collaboration flourishes, engagement thrives, information flows, and our network strengthens.

**Did you know?** Our Connect Events are FREE to attend, held online, and are open to both councillors and officers.

#### 23/24 CONNECT EVENTS

##### Tackling Devon’s Housing Crisis

In October 2023, we welcomed Lord Richard Best and Matthew Dodd who were heading up the Devon Housing Commission. They explained the work of the commission and the housing issues faced in our County. There was broad discussion with participants sharing their views on the housing challenges in their communities including practical challenges around community land trusts and neighbourhood planning policies.

##### A Devolution Deal for Devon

In November 2023, and February 2024, we explored the Devon Devolution Deal, and how a deal with government could benefit Devon’s communities. Devon was one of nine areas invited to take part in the government’s ‘Levelling Up’ programme. The later event supported councils to engage in the six-week public consultation on proposals.

##### Supporting nature recovery

In December 2023 we welcomed representatives working on Devon’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Participants engaged in breakout sessions to explore the greenspaces they managed and what opportunities there were for delivering greater nature benefits.

**Watch recordings of all past events on our website.**

#### COMING IN 24/25

Working closely with the Highways Team at Devon County Council, we are delighted to be hosting a series of highways themed Connect Events in 2024/25, aimed to specifically to address the challenges our members have expressed.

Each event will help you to better understand the service, its functions and responsibilities, and clarify how your council can engage with the team effectively. Tune in for timely information, get your questions answered, provide constructive feedback, and engage with your peers.

You can look forward to:

Month	Topic
April	An introduction to Devon Highways
August	An introduction to self-help schemes
October	Understanding road maintenance
December	An insight into roadworks
February	Highways investment unveiled
April 2025	Highways and the planning system

[Visit our website for details and book your place.](#)

More dates and topics will be added throughout the year, and will be promoted via our website and e-bulletins.

**Got a topic you would like to discuss?** Contact us at [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk) and let us know!

## TRAINING SERVICES

Training is crucial for councils as it ensures that both councillors and clerks are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively govern and serve their communities. Training helps councils stay up-to-date with changing legislation and best practices, supports compliance, and reduces the risk of costly mistakes. It also promotes good governance, informed decision-making, and professionalism, particularly after elections when new councillors need guidance. In addition, ongoing development builds confidence, fosters collaboration, and enhances the overall effectiveness of councils in addressing local issues and engaging with residents.

As the second most important service to our members (as ranked by member councils), DALC demonstrated its commitment to council development through the provision of a diverse and impactful range of training opportunities in 2023/24.

With 1,006 bookings from 549 unique individuals across 170 member councils, the service reached nearly half of DALC's membership. A total of 135 separate sessions were accessed, including 63 DALC-led courses, 40 partner courses, 1 annual conference, 2 inductions, and 3 commercial webinars.

Over 50 distinct course types were available, providing comprehensive training that did not even include our e-learning or in-house tailored course options.

In addition to a wide range of interactive courses, delivered in-person or online, DALC provides a suite of e-learning modules - perfect for busy individuals who can learn in their own time and at their own pace. There are 40 modules available covering a broad range of subjects. [See our website for details.](#)

See our website for a full list of training opportunities: [devonalc.org.uk/events](https://devonalc.org.uk/events).

## LOOKING TO BOOST YOUR COUNCIL'S EFFECTIVENESS?

**Did you know DALC offers tailored training solutions for member councils?**

DALC is here to help empower your council with skills, knowledge, and the confidence needed to navigate local governance, offering valuable insights and fostering effective team working.

Whether your council is newly formed or well established, or if training is for the whole council or just a committee, there are significant benefits in having tailored training to enhance effectiveness and bring overall harmony within the council team.

In 2023/24, DALC delivered 25 tailored courses, supporting up to 30 councils and approximately 340 individuals. Courses covered a range of content but often combined basic council training along with team building exercises, focussing on the areas which would have the greatest impact for the council.

In-house courses can also be a cost effective option if there is high training need within the council, and can be delivered at a time and location to suit you.

If you would like to discuss your councils training needs, please contact us at [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk)

### NO. OF BOOKINGS

1,006

### NO. OF COUNCILS

170

### UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS

549

### EVENTS ACCESSED

135

### COURSES AVAILABLE

50

### E-LEARNING COURSES

40

### TAILORED COURSE DELIVERY

25

## WHAT DO PARTICIPANTS SAY ABOUT OUR TRAINING?

A measure of our success in delivering training and development opportunities to councils is how our members rate the quality of the content and delivery of our courses.

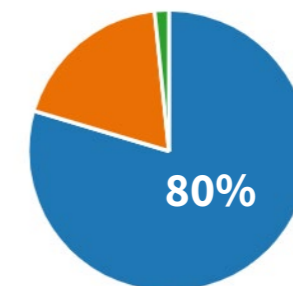
In 2023/24, 80% of participants ranked DALC led courses as 'excellent' and a further 87% ranked the trainer's delivery as 'excellent'.

It is a testament to our experienced staff team that 97% of participants would recommend our courses to others.

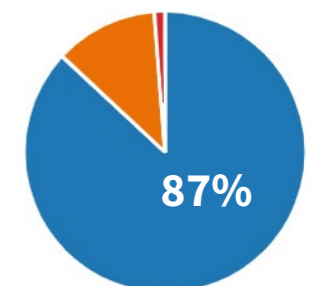
Additionally, engagement with DALC led courses has also demonstrated a lasting impact for participants.

A few months after their training course, participants were asked what difference it had made - 90% reported training had a positive impact for their councils and all participants were making use of their new knowledge and skills.

COURSE RATING



TRAINER RATING



- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor

### ATTENDEES REPORTED THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF DALC TRAINING

**INCREASED KNOWLEDGE**  
70%

**IMPROVED SKILLS**  
70%

**GREATER CONFIDENCE**  
62%

**ENHANCED PERFORMANCE**  
70%

### QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS

*Wish I had done this 4 years ago!*

*The trainer made everyone feel welcome and relaxed.*

*Well prepared, clear and confident delivery.*

*I really enjoyed the activities ... it was nice to be at a training event that wasn't dull.*

*It was thought provoking and energising.*

*Covered a huge range of content, without feeling bogged down.*

*Extensive content - and well structured.*

*It has given me the confidence to speak with authority in meetings.*

*The training gave me a grounding so I have a good idea where I need to look for further information.*





# IMPROVEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

## COUNCILLOR DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Our framework is an invaluable tool for ensuring that councillors are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to serve their communities effectively.

By providing clear pathways for ongoing learning and growth, this framework helps councillors stay informed on governance matters, whilst fostering a culture of accountability and best practice. It also enhances their ability to respond to the evolving needs of residents, strengthens decision-making processes, and ultimately leads to more resilient and well-governed councils.

We believe that every councillor wants to perform their duties well. With our Councillor Development Framework, and its four development levels, we can help support councillors from newly elected to confident community leaders.

Furthermore, there is a variety of development opportunities, providing flexible and accessible choices to meet councillors individual needs.



## OUR FRAMEWORK

### 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 councillor's 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.

## DALC LED COURSES

No matter whether you are new to your role, or seeking a refresher, our courses are designed to support councillors and officers to perform their roles effectively and provide a solid foundation from which to grow.

For Councillors	For Clerks	Employment
Being a good councillor	Clerks essentials	Being a good employer
Code of conduct	CILCA support	Managing employees
Chairing local council meetings		When things go wrong

## PLANNING COURSES

We're glad to be working with Andrew Towler Associates to deliver a range of planning themed courses to support local councils to better understand and engage in the planning system. Courses include:

- An introduction to planning
- Planning enforcement, appeals and obligations

## FINANCE COURSES

We are delighted to be working with the Parkinson Partnership to provide a range of courses for councillors, clerks and RFOs to support the effective management of local council finances. Courses include:

- Finance for councillors
- New clerk's finance
- Budgeting for officers
- Budgeting for councillors
- Procurement
- Transparency for small councils
- Internal controls
- The role of internal audit
- Year-end accounts and audit
- VAT



## COMMUNICATION COURSES

Working in partnership with Breakthrough Communications, we provide courses related to communication, engagement, social media, and information law. Courses include topics such as:

- Creating a communications strategy
- Engaging with your community
- How to recruit and retain councillors
- How councils can effectively engage with young people
- Crisis communications
- Social media for councils
- Dealing with difficult people and conversations
- Freedom of information for councils
- Data protection for councils



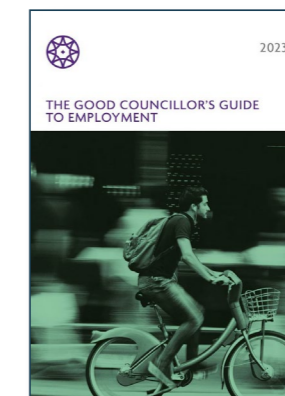
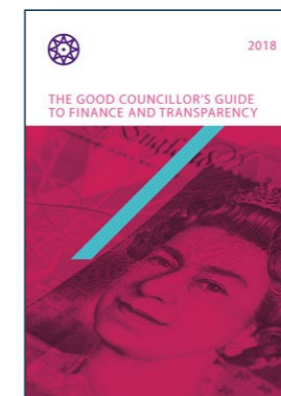
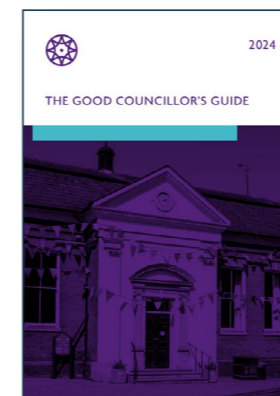
## E-LEARNING MODULES

Learn in your own time, and at your own pace, with our huge range of short study e-learning modules, delivered in partnership with South West county associations. Some courses available are:

- An introduction to local councils
- Standards in public life
- Leadership in challenging situations
- An introduction to emotional intelligence and personal resilience
- Respectful and positive social media
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Time management
- Stress management
- And many, many more!!



## RECOMMENDED READING FOR COUNCILLORS



Our members can download all guides from our website, for FREE!

## 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.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S AWARDEES

### FOUNDATION AWARD



### QUALITY AWARD



We extend our congratulations to the Devon councils who achieved awards in 2023/24.

These achievements are a testament to the dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence in serving their communities.

By meeting these standards, they not only demonstrate strong governance, transparency, and community engagement, but also inspire others to strive for the same level of excellence. Their efforts make a significant difference in the lives of residents and contribute to building thriving, and forward-thinking communities.

We applaud their success, and wish these councils continued success in the future.

We would like to see more councils in Devon applying for awards. For more information see our website for details: [devonalc.org.uk/local-council-award-scheme](https://devonalc.org.uk/local-council-award-scheme)



## NEW LEARNERS

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

## REGISTRATIONS

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

## PASSES

**5 officers successfully completed their CiLCA portfolios** and passed during 2023/24. Congratulations to:

Cathy Auberton  
Michelle Lewis-Clarke  
Richard Crowley  
Ross Green  
Heloise Marlow

## 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. To ensure a high standard of service to our learners, all trainers are required to attend national CiLCA Trainers Forums and are subject to annual Peer Reviews.

## CERTIFICATE IN LOCAL COUNCIL ADMINISTRATION

The Certificate in Local Council Administration, more commonly known as CiLCA, is the entry-level 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 checks an individual's knowledge of all aspects of the clerk's role including roles and responsibilities, local council law and procedures, finance, planning 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.

Thinking about undertaking CiLCA? Unsure if you are ready? Get in touch for an informal chat or an Expression of Interest Pack. Email: [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk).

### Tamerlaine Gambie achieved CiLCA in Spring 2024 and shares her experience ...



*As soon as I started as Clerk to Newton and Noss Parish Council, I was keen to embark on the CiLCA training but waited until I was in my second year so I had experience to build upon. After a career change, working as Clerk has been a very steep learning curve but achieving CiLCA and the support I received from DALC has been invaluable at building my confidence and knowledge.*

*I found the portfolio guide and dates of training and mentoring sessions provided at the start really helpful so I could plan my time with the support of my council.*

*I decided to challenge myself by drafting my learning outcomes before each training session and then used the training to fine tune my answers. Each session was extremely useful, highlighting key elements to include in the learning outcomes and pitfalls to avoid. They also provided an opportunity to talk with the other participants to share knowledge, ideas and experiences.*

*My trainer, Rebecca, was a thoroughly supportive and hugely knowledgeable mentor, and I valued her feedback as I prepared my learning outcomes.*

*CiLCA was an enormous amount of work but with the brilliant training and mentoring from DALC I managed to pass in six months. I definitely wouldn't have wanted to do CiLCA without their support. I would recommend CiLCA as I have learnt so much and feel much more confident in my role.*

### Tamerlaine received the full support of her council to undertake CiLCA, says Newton and Noss Chairman ...

*The parish council fully supported the Clerk's enthusiasm to complete CiLCA. We made space for her study as we understood the commitment she was taking on and we congratulate her success.*

*This is an important step for the parish council. The Clerk is equipped to advise on policies and procedures and to ensure that the council acts with propriety. It set us on track to adopt the General Power of Competence in May, and to act effectively and in a legally confident manner in support of the local community.*

# VOICE & REPRESENTATION

*DALC has continued to be a strong and active voice for Devon's parish and town councils, ensuring your views are heard across a wide range of forums.*

Councils continue to tell us that they feel disconnected from policy and decision makers at county and district levels. Many have expressed a sense of being distant from key conversations and feel excluded from important decisions that affect their communities.

DALC is committed to addressing these concerns by strengthening communication channels, advocating for more meaningful engagement, and ensuring the voice of parish and town councils is not only heard, but acted upon.

During 2023/24, our role in representing member councils has felt particularly important as a number of key strategic developments have been evolving, and we have worked to highlight parish and town council priorities.

## A DEVOLUTION DEAL FOR DEVON

Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay, were one of nine areas invited by Government to agree a devolution deal, as part of the February 2022 Levelling Up White Paper.

The White Paper outlined three possible tiers of devolution to local areas, offering opportunities to deliver a wide range of services which varied according to local governance arrangements.

In Devon, joint working arrangements were favoured over introducing an elected mayor, and a level 2 deal was

pursued by Devon County Council and Torbay Council. *Plymouth City Council chose to withdraw from negotiations in November 2023.*

By January 2024, a devolution deal proposal was announced by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The deal would transfer powers and government funding to a newly formed Combined County Authority, enabling greater control and influence over local priorities such as training, public transport, affordable housing, business support and more.

A six-week public consultation was launched seeking feedback on the proposals. DALC facilitated a Connect Event to help member councils understand the proposals and discuss their views. Subsequently, DALC, along with numerous councils, responded to the consultation.

In our response we advocated for greater local autonomy of government powers, funding and functions, stressing that local decision-making achieves better outcomes for communities. We highlighted the importance of wider democratic involvement in the delivery and oversight of government functions - with all tiers of local government working collaboratively, fostering greater trust and confidence in each others respective roles. And we further championed for greater engagement with town and parish councils, particularly on locality/place-based

matters, with a desire for local councils to be seen as equal partners and valued stakeholders. We asked for an engagement framework to facilitate wider democratic involvement in the CCA's decision making processes.

In early 2024/25, the constituent councils were due to agree proposals for a new Combined Authority. It was hoped that the authority would be created in Autumn 2024, but this will be subject to Government priorities.

DALC will continue to pursue opportunities to ensure local councils views are heard, and they are kept informed as developments evolve.

## TACKLING DEVON'S HOUSING CRISIS

DALC recognises that (affordable) housing for local people remains a top priority for many Devon communities, particularly in light of the ongoing housing crisis. The shortage of homes affects the fabric of rural life, making it harder for local residents to live and work in the areas they call home.

To help our member councils, DALC has been actively involved in the Devon Housing Taskforce, a collaboration of Devon's local authorities looking to enhance strategic delivery of housing in Devon.

In 2023/24, the Task Force launched an independent Housing Commission, led by the University of Exeter, to conduct an in-depth analysis of Devon's housing markets, and identify

recommendations to address local challenges. The final report is expected in 2024/25.

DALC hosted a Connect Event introducing the work of the Devon Housing Commission to member councils in October 2023, facilitating dialogue and contributing to the research and recommendations aimed at tackling the crisis. Members were able to share their unique perspectives on housing challenges in their areas.

DALC will continue to provide updates to member councils on strategic priorities emerging from this task force.

## HIGHWAYS MATTERS

As also reflected elsewhere in this report, DALC acknowledges the significant frustrations many councils have expressed regarding highways matters in Devon. In particular, concerns for the poor conditions of some roads, the lack of timely communication about when issues will be addressed, and the challenges of working effectively with the highways department.

These long-standing concerns were brought into sharp focus at our AGM, prompting a renewed commitment to tackle the issue.

In response, DALC initiated further discussions with senior team members at Devon County Council, aimed at enhancing relationships between parish councils and the highways

authority, removing barriers to effective collaboration, and fostering mutual understanding. As a result, we have developed a year-long schedule of Connect Events for 2024/25, designed to facilitate dialogue, and improve the working relationships between councils and the highways department.

We look forward to reflecting on the progress made in next year's report!

## CALL TO ACTION: WHAT OTHER TOPICS SHOULD DALC PRIORITISE?

As we continue to represent and advocate for Devon's parish and town councils, DALC calls on all our member councils to engage with us in identifying new and emerging priorities.

We recognise not every topic DALC engages in will affect, or be of interest to, all our member councils. But it is vital that we hear what the pressing issues are for your communities. By working together we can strengthen our collective voice and ensure our resources are channelled towards those areas which will have the greatest impact.

We encourage you to share your insights, challenges, and opportunities regularly with DALC so we can continue to shape a future that supports and empowers local councils.

## MEETINGS AND PARTNERSHIPS IN 2023/24

The Association represents its membership at a variety of strategic meetings and events, working with a range of partners to ensure the voice of parishes is heard by key decision makers. Here are some examples:

### Team Devon

**Devon Housing Taskforce, and Housing Commission**

**Devon Community Resilience Board, and Forum**

**Devon Climate Emergency Response Group**

**Devon Local Nature Partnership**

**Clean Devon Partnership**

**Internal Auditors Forum**

**One Eastern Devon Partnership**

**Northern Devon Futures**

**Torridge Place Board**

**Devon Solicitors Group**

**NALC inc National Assembly**

**County Officers Forum**

**County Officers Training Forum**

**South West Conference of Local Council Associations**

**Devon County Council**

**District Councils**

**Devon Districts Forum**

**Dartmoor National Park Authority**

**Devon MPs**

**Society of Local Council Clerks**

**Devon Communities Together**

**CiLCA Ops Group**

**Wild About Devon**

**Area Group Meetings**

**Travel Watch South West**

**Devon Bus Forum**

## ENGAGING WITH PRINCIPAL AUTHORITIES: EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK IN 2023/24

As a trusted asset to the local council sector, DALC serves as a critical friend and effective facilitator, acting as a bridge between parish/town councils and principal authorities. We offer a supportive hand and constructive voice, which allows us to bring together diverse perspectives to find common ground and drive solutions.

In 2023/24, DALC continued to pursue opportunities for collaborative efforts which enhance relationships in local government. Here are some examples:

### FACILITATING ENGAGEMENT IN TEIGNBRIDGE

Following feedback from member councils, DALC had recognised growing tensions between parish councils and Teignbridge Council. With the collapse of a local forum adding to communication challenges, DALC initiated conversations with Teignbridge officers to address the issue.

DALC was delighted to host two events in 2023/24 aiming to 'reset' the relationship. The first meeting in October 2023 invited frank discussion on the current state of the relationship whilst inviting participants to share their aspirations for the future. A further conference in March 2024 highlighted the challenges facing the district area and began exploring where and how councils could work together.

The journey towards a stronger, collaborative working relationship between Teignbridge Council and parish councils continues, and DALC looks forward to further joint working in the year ahead.

### PLANNING TRAINING IN NORTH DEVON, SOUTH HAMS AND WEST DEVON

Member councils told us they wanted more support navigating the planning system. We worked in collaboration with South Hams, West Devon, and North Devon district councils to deliver FREE training for parish councils in their areas. By bringing together our collective knowledge and expertise, we were able to deliver an overview of the planning system with a focus on responding to planning applications, and highlight proper practices regarding council meetings and procedures, including ethical standards in decision-making.

### SUPPORTING ENGAGEMENT WITH ON-STREET PARKING PROPOSALS

While DALC cannot act on behalf of individual councils in local policy matters, we are committed to stepping in when a group of councils faces a common challenge, offering collective support and advocacy to address issues.

An example this year involved on-street parking proposals where multiple councils expressed concern about communication challenges and a lack of clear information regarding the scope/nature of the changes. In this instance, DALC stepped in as a facilitator, bringing council and highways representatives together, ensuring that the concerns of local councils were heard, and that clearer information was provided. This collective approach helped bridge the communications gap and empowered councils to engage effectively with officers, and the proposals.

## LARGER COUNCILS FORUM

A long time back, clerks were not invited to meetings of the Larger Councils Sub-Committee (as it was then known). They were open just to councillors and only a few towns were represented. Excluding clerks seemed to me a bad idea and when I took over as Chair, I suggested that we start inviting clerks to attend alongside councillors. In my view, councils large or small need to be a team and it works better if no one is left on the side lines.

Clerks started attending and meetings benefitted from their knowledge of the sector and comments from their perspective as skilled and informed administrators – at least, that's my experience of the ones that turn up to what is now the Larger Councils Forum. The Forum meetings usually include representation from more than half the eligible councils so the group is a useful one for giving feedback on current issues affecting our larger towns and predicting what DALC should be paying attention to as policies and regulations change.

There has been a gradual development of the role of larger councils, which are now doing more for their communities by taking on new responsibilities and services. They are increasingly affected by outside influences, some outside their control – like climate change and the national economy. The developing role now seems a lot less gradual as new challenges come along at what sometimes seems like breakneck speed.

To be really successful, a council needs a highly trained clerk, engaged and informed councillors all working together. As the pages in this report demonstrate, DALC has the training programmes, advice and other resources to help councils achieve this magical equilibrium, which doesn't have to be a fantasy, it can be done!

For DALC, it's all about collaboration (see DALC's values, page 2). Fractured councils don't work (if that's a problem you recognise, see training help, page 11). Divided communities aren't good places to be either – as expressed by larger councils' concerns for the lack of affordable housing, the need for community resilience and well-being, and the cost of living. Some of the answers lie in partnerships with community groups to deliver local services like warm spaces, food banks, youth activities, play areas and open spaces, as well as funding groups to deliver community activities and services directly.

The reduction in central government funding to the county and district councils and the impact on local councils has been mentioned in previous Annual Reports. The loss of services and closure of loss-making assets is nothing new, but neither is the determination of DALC to represent the views of councils taking on these liabilities and to advocate for a more mature partnership between the different council sectors. We think we do serious work and we want local councils to be taken seriously.

The following pages report the outcomes of the Larger Councils Spring workshop 2024 when thoughtful and considered contributions were made by all participants. Their views have helped to shape DALC's work going forwards and give us a solid platform on which to continue to advocate for better recognition of the breadth of work carried out by our sector

**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.*



## LARGER COUNCILS FORUM - SPRING WORKSHOP 2023

In Spring 2024 it was becoming clear that the challenges of navigating a changing local government landscape was being acutely felt by the larger councils in Devon. With so much uncertainty, it was timely for councils to come together and explore the challenges and opportunities which lay ahead.

DALC facilitated an open and constructive dialogue where councils identified factors which could impact the sector, how resilient they were to meeting new challenges, what support might be needed in future, and reflected how they could help themselves.

### IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING HIGH IMPACTING FACTORS ON THE LOCAL COUNCIL SECTOR

This PESTLE analysis highlights the major areas of concern for larger councils. High priority areas reflect urgent concerns around funding, public engagement, mental health, and cyber security, while lower priority areas indicated underlying systemic challenges.

Here we highlight the factors which larger councils have recognised as having the greatest impact on them.

#### Politics

Factors included uncertainty about the general election, and the impact of devolution. There was widespread concern about services transferring to local councils without corresponding funding.

#### Technology

A growing reliance on technology means councils are concerned about cyber security and the risk of hacking. Balancing an online presence with social media abuse was also highlighted.

#### Economy

Local government funding cuts, inflation, and public perceptions of the precept, dominated economic concerns. Concern for investment in local infrastructure was also highlighted.

#### Legal

Navigating legal complexities highlighted the burdens on local councils, in particular around employment and procurement law. Regulatory challenges re planning and protecting historical assets was also raised.

#### Social

Analysis reflects concerns with community engagement and the challenges of recruiting and retaining councillors and officers. Supporting recovery from COVID-19 and cost of living challenges remain priorities.

#### Environment

Climate change, extreme weather, and sea quality, were seen as pressing environmental issues. Financial impact and sustainability challenges significantly affect council operations.

### A SELF ASSESSMENT

The group undertook a SWOT analysis which highlighted several key factors related to their resilience in facing future challenges. When cross referenced with the earlier PESTLE analysis, the following observations emerged.

#### Strengths

**Community engagement and local knowledge:** Councils feel strongly connected to their local communities, with knowledgeable councillors and staff.

**Non-political, local focus:** Their non-political stance and focus on placemaking helps maintain public trust.

**Lean and agile:** They are responsive and well-positioned to address local emergencies/challenges quickly.

#### Weaknesses

**Capacity/skills gaps:** Councils recognise weaknesses in capacity, specialist skills, and succession planning, threatening future compliance with law and regulations.

**Funding gaps:** Adopting services without proper funding is seen as an ongoing threat to resilience.

**Public perception and apathy:** Challenges with lack of public participation and disconnect are significant.

#### Opportunities

**Devolution and income generation:** Councils see opportunities in devolution and managing services locally, despite the economic risk. They hope to capitalise on natural assets and adapt to residents' needs.

**Partnerships and innovation:** Opportunities for partnership working where councils can enhance digital and operational capabilities by working with others.

#### Threats

**Political and economic uncertainty:** Political indecision and the passing down of responsibilities without sufficient funding are critical threats. General election outcomes and changes in legislation create significant uncertainty.

**Communication gaps:** The lack of communication and respect from higher local authorities, along with poor public understanding, are seen as significant threats. Councils feel unheard and ignored in decision-making.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** By working together, DALC and larger councils can build a resilient framework that addressed future challenges.

#### What can DALC do for larger councils?

DALC should focus on **advocacy and training**. It can enhance resilience by lobbying for **more funding and legislative changes** that better support councils, particularly in areas like devolution and responsibilities that are passed down without proper resources. DALC should also continue **providing training and networking opportunities**, ensuring councillors and clerks are up to date with best practices and regulations. **Facilitating two-way engagement** between councils and upper-tier authorities will improve collaboration and communication, while **promoting knowledge sharing** through case studies and templates for key governance documents.

#### What can larger councils do for themselves?

Local councils should prioritise **capacity building and strategic planning**. This includes **upskilling staff and councillors**, ensuring they have the necessary skills to meet new challenges, and focusing on **succession planning** to maintain continuity in leadership. Councils should also aim to strengthen their **relationships with upper-tier authorities and other local councils**, fostering joint working arrangements like cluster groups to pool resources and achieve economies of scale. Developing a strong **local voice** and improving **community engagement** will also help councils advocate more effectively for their needs.

### KEY FINDINGS ON RESILIENCE

1. Larger councils' agility and strong ties to their communities are significant resilience factors, enabling them to respond quickly to local needs despite external uncertainties.
2. Gaps in staff skills, succession planning, and chronic underfunding are major threats. Councils feel vulnerable to shifts in political and economic landscapes, particularly around devolution and inflation.
3. Devolution, if supported with proper funding, represents an opportunity for councils to take control of local services and improve public engagement, enhancing their long-term resilience.
4. Political indecision, coupled with rising environmental risks, suggests councils are aware of substantial future challenges but remain unsure if they have the resources or influence to mitigate them effectively.

Overall, while larger councils exhibit a strong local foundation, their resilience to future challenges is hampered by external economic, political, and environmental pressures, particularly in funding and communication.



Representatives from Devon's larger councils at the workshop in March 2024

# VOICE AND REPRESENTATION

## ORDINARY ELECTIONS 2023 AN OVERVIEW

Ordinary elections in parish councils are crucial for maintaining democratic accountability and ensuring that local residents have a direct voice in the governance of their community.

These elections, which take place every 4 years, allow parishioners to choose representatives who will make decisions on their behalf, reflecting the needs and aspirations of the local population. By participating in ordinary elections, communities have the opportunity to influence important local issues such as providing public spaces and delivering public services. This fosters a sense of ownership and engagement in the parish council's work, strengthening the connection



between local governance and the community it serves.

Regular elections also promote transparency and encourage a healthy turnover of council members, which can bring fresh perspectives and new ideas to the table. They ensure that the council remains responsive to changing circumstances and public

opinion, preventing stagnation and complacency. Without the mechanism of ordinary elections, parish councils could risk becoming disconnected from the communities they represent, which would undermine their ability to effectively serve the public. The integrity of local democracy hinges on parish council elections.

### KEY STATS FROM THE ORDINARY ELECTIONS 2023

**20%** PARISH COUNCIL SEATS WERE UNFILLED

**9** COUNCILS WERE INQUORATE AND UNABLE TO CONVENE MEETINGS

**69** COUNCILS MANAGED TO FILL ALL THEIR SEATS

**40** COUNCILS HAD CONTESTED ELECTIONS IN ALL/SOME WARDS

**309** COUNCILS WITH UNCONTESTED ELECTIONS

District	Total Councils	Contested / Uncontested Councils		Inquorate Councils	Total Seats	Vacant Seats
East Devon	64	7	54	3	572	113
Mid Devon	48	6	41	0	435	106
North Devon	51	4	45	2	470	99
Teignbridge	43	6	36	1	413	85
Torbay	1	0	1	0	12	6
Torridge	50	2	46	2	453	95
South Hams	59	9	50	0	538	105
West Devon	43	6	36	1	384	68
<b>Totals</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3,277</b>	<b>677</b>

### POTENTIAL IMPACT OF ELECTION RESULTS

The fact that one-fifth of parish council seats remained vacant can have significant consequences for both the councils and the communities they serve. Firstly, vacancies can place an **added burden on the existing council members**, as fewer individuals are left to manage the responsibilities and decision-making processes. This could lead to **slower responses** and potentially hinder the council's ability to meet the needs of the community effectively in some areas.

For the community, vacant seats might lead to a reduction in representation, with certain areas or groups within the parish underrepresented in council decisions. This **could result in a diminished sense of local democracy**, with fewer voices contributing to discussions on important local issues. Over time, this **may lead to a disconnect between the council and the wider community**, weakening public trust and participation in local governance. **Encouraging engagement and finding ways to fill these vacancies, either through co-option or promoting greater awareness of the role of parish councils, is essential to maintaining effective local governance.**



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# 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 2023/24*

# nalc

National Association  
of Local Councils

**2024 is the biggest election year in history, with some four billion people going to the polls – half the world! Our sector is a vital part of that, and NALC's chair Keith Stevens stressed in his new year message how our hyper local democracy has so much to contribute to making local communities stronger and able to address so many of the challenges we face today. It's exciting to be part of that worldwide movement.**

After the UK's own general election was announced NALC wrote on your behalf to all the main political party leaders outlining our manifesto for building stronger communities, highlighting the critical areas where any new government can support England's 10,000 local (parish and town) councils. These include empowering our local councils, giving them more autonomy through better funding opportunities, strengthening their role in building stronger, sustainable, and resilient communities, enhancing community engagement, and addressing housing and planning issues. We also urged them to put better standards in public life and civility and respect at the heart

of their work, including strengthening the standards regime introducing sanctions for poor behaviour.

We will continue to promote the sector and our manifesto with the new government through a programme of engagement with Members of Parliament, ministers and shadow ministers, civil servants, and other policy makers. It is vital that we highlight the role of our sector, its potential to help address many of the problems the nation faces and that it is not overlooked in new legislation and other initiatives. Can I encourage councils and councillors to play their part too and contact new MPs.

NALC has had a good year raising your good work and concerns nationally. In Parliament during the passage of the Levelling up and Regeneration Act and with the support of our president, Baroness Scott of Needham Market, we secured cross party support for allowing councils to decide whether they wanted to hold meetings remotely or face to face. The Government clarified the position on funding for places of worship during the passage of the Act. We registered the implications of the current crisis in local government

finance during parliamentary debates. And a notable success was persuading the government to extend its £150m Community Ownership Fund to allow direct applications from our councils. The undoubted highlight was NALC's parliamentary reception and presentation of NALC's Star Councils Awards 2023 in the House of Lords which was well attended and showcased the work of local councils, clerks, and councillors across the country. We received good coverage of our work in many national newspapers, websites, journals, and reports including the BBC and Financial Times. The sector has been referenced in important research and thinktank reports such as IPPR and Jo Cox Foundation. Our monthly blogs attract contributors from highly respected and influential national organisations.

We have continued to develop the services we provide to county associations and councils through direct legal, financial, HR and communications support. In a bumper year, we published a new model and template employment contract, re-wrote our model financial regulations, and updated the practitioners' guide and the good councillors guide. There

## ABOUT NALC

### REPRESENTATION

NALC represents 85% of local councils nationally including 10,000 local councils, 100,000 councillors and 43 county associations.

### NATIONAL NETWORKS

In 2024 NALC launched a new national network for micro councils, in addition to existing networks designed to connect councils & cllrs

### CIVILITY AND RESPECT

Over 1500 councils signed the civility and respect pledge, and are standing up to poor behaviour across our sector and creating positive change.

### SERVICES

NALC supports councils to become better, by providing legal, HR and financial support, accessed via county associations.

### ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

A suite of legal topic notes, briefings, model documents, and guides, which councils can download free of charge from NALC's website.

### MONTHLY EVENTS

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

is a wealth of other advice, guidance and other resources on our, soon to be re-developed, website including help for you to get involved in our campaigns on encouraging people to make a change and stand for election, health and well-being, climate change, young people, housing and planning and access to banking. Working with the Cabinet Office we are making it easier for councils to use .gov domains and helped councils access a free portrait of the His Majesty the King. Our remote events continue to be well attended with over one hundred attendees at each session and 90% recommending their value. Our national networks reach out to and engage with increasing numbers of councils and councillors across our themes of coastal communities, climate change, larger and smaller sized councils, and women, young, and LGBT+ councillors.

NALC is continuing to progress its modernisation project in our new office with better IT systems and support. Our new committee work programmes are well developed and digital first approach reducing our carbon footprint. NALC has been re-accredited by Cyber Essentials demonstrating our commitment to cyber security. I am

particularly pleased that this year we achieved White Ribbon accreditation for our commitment to the part our sector can play in the campaign to end men's violence against women. NALC participated in its first ever Pride event held by Corby Town Council. Our finances are in good shape and our accounts unqualified.

Finally, some thanks. To all the councillors from across England who serve on NALC's committees and county associations for their outstanding support and contributions this year. To county association colleagues who provide such expert day to day support to local councils and who guide NALC's work. And to all councils, councillors, clerks, and other staff for the tremendous job they do for their communities which makes NALC's job so much easier.

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

## VISION

Local (parish and town) councils across the whole country will be the centre of community effort, the natural focus of a range of public activity and service delivery, giving a democratic voice to those communities in other agencies' deliberations working in partnership with them. Vibrant, dynamic and effective local councils will help communities help themselves build strength and resilience and improve residents' quality of life.

## STRATEGIC AIMS

- Strong national and county voices promoting the sector and our prospectus for ultra-localism
- Creating more local councils in England
- Supporting councils and councillors
- Effective and county associations working together to deliver our vision

Read NALC's Manifesto at [nalc.gov.uk/about/our-mission](https://www.nalc.gov.uk/about/our-mission).

## 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 [X \(Twitter\)](#).

# YOUR STORIES

Examples of the incredible work of parish and town councils in Devon

## OUTDOOR PING PONG ARRIVES IN GITTISHAM

A new sport and leisure facility was unveiled in Gittisham's play area this year, and extends the range of facilities on offer for community members

The village play area has been the focus of several fund-raising applications over the last 15 years, in an effort to cater for different age groups and encourage wildlife.

This project was identified through a community consultation exercise which asked parishioners what they wanted to see added to the play area - of which outdoor table tennis was the most popular suggestion.

The purchase was made possible by S106 developer contributions, via East Devon District Council.



L-R: Bill Griffiths, Nick Chapman, Alasdair Bruce and Hamish Hall.

Carol Hall, Chair of Gittisham Parish Council, said:

*"It's great to see the ping pong table finally in place - another piece of equipment that residents and visitors can enjoy. We hope that it will encourage people to keep fit, socialise and enjoy our beautiful parish."*

## ILFRACOMBE'S INITIATIVE FOR CLEANER STREETS

Amid mounting frustrations regarding its streets and pathways, Ilfracombe Town Council embarked on a proactive initiative to take control of the town's upkeep.

A primary step was to deploy their existing staff to assist local authority teams in addressing neglected areas in the town. This allowed them to mobilise resources effectively and tackle what local people referred to as 'grot spots'.

The Town Council organised a Spring Clean campaign, to prepare the town for the upcoming season. Collaborating with local groups was instrumental in targeting specific areas for improvement. Additionally, council staff participated in the effort, even taking on tasks such as painting railings along the seafront. Such tasks have seen a significant impact on the town's overall aesthetics and appeal.

Boyed by the visible improvements resulting from these efforts, it is proposed to allocate one morning per month for staff to engage in community improvement activities. The initiative not only fosters team building among staff but also promotes positive mental health by stepping away from routine tasks and engaging in meaningful outdoor work.

The town council has demonstrated a proactive approach to addressing community concerns and improving quality of life of residents. Their hands-on involvement not only enhances the physical environment but also fosters a sense of pride and ownership among citizens. With continued dedication and collaboration, Ilfracombe can look forward to cleaner, more vibrant streets for all to enjoy.



## MARLDON'S GROWN UP, TONE UP!

The Parish of Marldon, Compton & Westerland has taken huge strides to help the fitness and wellbeing of its residents by having installed a superb set of adult fitness apparatus, fully funded by the Marldon Lands Charity.

This equipment is ideally positioned in a parish owned field and is situated near to the Marldon parish playpark, enabling both parents and children to participate in healthy outdoor recreation.

On taking receipt of the equipment from the Lands Charity, Parish Council Chair Derek Hore said: *"This is a wonderful gesture by our local charity and shows how the Parish Council and outside parties are working together to enhance the quality of life within our Parish. I would like to thank them for their generosity, and I know this is only the beginning of some exciting projects planned for the coming months, so watch this space!"*



## MORETONHAMPSTEAD EMPLOYS A LENGTHSMAN

In response to residents concerns, Moretonhampstead Town Council made the decision to contract a lengthsman to spruce up the town.

The part-time lengthsman works closely with the clerk, and has been financed through an increase to the precept.

The council is already seeing remarkable progress, as shown in these before and after photos of the Square and Court Street.

Before



After



## SOUTH BRENT HELPS LOCAL SCOUT GROUP

South Brent Scout Group were in urgent need of a new set of tents, as their previous set was ruined by the bad weather last year. Following an unsuccessful application to the National Lottery Awards for All fund, they applied to South Brent Parish Council for help.

The type of Bell Tents required are very expensive, costing approximately £1,100 for a complete package, and the Group were in need of 5, given the numbers of Scouts, Cubs, and Beavers, in the Group.

At the end of the financial year, there was an underspend in the Parish Council's budget, so they were able to offer a significant grant to purchase three Bell Tents.

Initially, the group have purchased two tents, one 4 metre and the other a 5 metre to evaluate which best suits their needs.



L-R: South Brent Scout Group Leader, Tim Haley, Scout Seb Jamin, and Parish Council Chairman, Cllr Glyn Richards



## AN INCLUSIVE SWING SET FOR SAMPFORD PEVERELL

Sampford Peverell Parish Council are pleased to have recently commissioned an inclusive swing in its play park.

A parishioner had notified the Parish Council that the lovely children play park wasn't actually inclusive. That kicked off a project to rectify this issue.

The newly installed double swing frame includes an inclusive Mirage and a Flat swing seat. The Mirage swing also has a detachable harness.

The project was made possible through S106 funding, and the support of Devon County Councillor Ray Radford, and Mid Devon District Councillors, Jane Lock, and Gill Westcott.



## MORETONHAMSTEAD VISITS LOCAL SCHOOL

Moretonhampstead Parish Council Chair, Cllr Catherine Fileman-Wright, and Clerk, Sam Parkin, visited Moreton Primary School to explain the role of the council to local children.

Children learnt about council's work including looking after the play park, biodiversity projects, restoring the churchyard paths, and organising community events such as the King's Coronation celebrations and the Christmas lights switch on. The children were very excited to learn that the Clerk has Father Christmas's phone number!

The Chair explained how councils make decisions for the benefit of the community. The Clerk told the children about her role which includes everything from looking after the council's money to managing projects.

The children engaged in an interactive session learning facts about the parish council, its activities, and the role of councillors. The council took time to listen to the children's views of the parish, hearing about issues such as litter,



dog fouling, and speeding cars. In turn, the children asked questions such as 'what is your favourite part of being a councillor?' and 'what are you wearing around your neck?' (referring to the Chain of Office).

It is hoped the council and the school can work together to deliver some of the children's suggestions for the parish.

## BAMPTON CHARTER FAIR

The Bampton Charter Fair is always held on the last Thursday of October, and dates back to 1258. All roads are closed throughout the town for the day.

This year, numerous pitches were set up on closed roads selling a myriad of different things from engraved glass, to welly boots and hats. Crafts stalls abound within the church and local producers sited in a marquee, offering a variety of foods and drinks - and there was a fairground too. What was not to like and the weather was kind too. The Mummers performed their play, the wizarding workshop was a huge success, Punch and Judy worked their magic on the young, all ages made use of the climbing wall, music rebounded through the streets - all in all a great success!

The highlight was Titan the Robot who wowed the crowds with three performances. What a wonderful day.



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## MAINTAINING FOOTPATHS IN STOKENHAM

Footpaths are a community asset that can be taken for granted but stir up huge emotion if lost, diverted or unkempt. With walking, running and cycling on the increase they are being used more so the wear and tear is increasing but they remain the focal point for day trips, holidays and local usage alike.

Many records of historic paths places them on the Definitive Footpath map keeping them safe and maintained by the public purse. Then there are others that are remembered but long lost, whether changes in habits meant they fell into disuse or for some reason a permitted closure or development over them. Added to these are privately owned ones where people are allowed to walk. This is why it is important to know where parish paths are, talk to people about ones that used to exist and see if work can be done to reinstate and of course maintain what you have.

Stokenham Parish Council see their whole footpath, bridleway, permissive paths or any connecting accessways as one of the main parish assets. The reason for this is that these natural corridors provide access to many parish venues without using a vehicle and give real enjoyment to those walking, sightseeing, connecting and learning about nature, travelling to the beaches and using community facilities. This Parish has a long section of coastal footpath, some 13 miles, which comes under the care of Nature England, along with many inland paths that come under the care of Devon County Council. These are linked and complimented by Permissive Paths over which access is allowed due to agreements having been arranged between the landowners and Parish Council, who carry out maintenance on them.

As with any well used business or facility it is important that regular checks are carried out to ensure

they are safe to use and cared for. This is why Stokenham Parish Council see their parish footpaths as an asset that needs checking and reports received of fallen trees, overgrown undergrowth or even flooded areas and erosion are highlighted at meetings. With so many involved in the care of this network it is not always possible to do something immediately but most matters can be dealt with either by a few volunteers or liaising with the Footpath Officer.

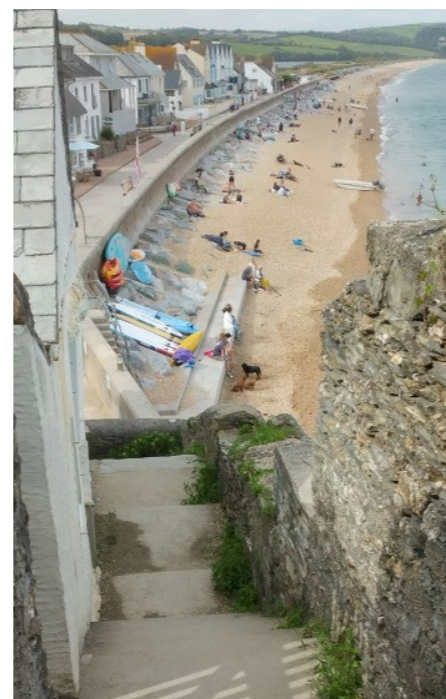
Having a good community understanding of how much revenue locals and visitors bring to the area by being able to walk these paths makes approaching landowners better through a friendly phone call rather than formal letters that can often be taken the wrong way! Whilst major enhancement works need planning and funding, day to day awareness and care can make all the difference with very little cost. In the hectic world we live in some property owners do not know that at the end of their garden or their field just a little bit of maintenance will make a huge difference and often welcome suggestions. So one simple task to do is identify the contact details of all adjacent landowners to footpaths and bridleways making a quick call much easier.

Stokenham over the years have put together additional projects to enhance the links where possible and drawn in many grants. One permissive path takes people off the main road and goes across seven landowners land and took inviting all those landowners into one room to discuss a solution. Another is only about 20 feet long but



takes walkers safely along pavements and then through the link to a park without going on the main road, that has no pedestrian provision. Ensuring that locals and visitors can walk around safely means vehicles can be left behind and people will walk to local facilities rather than taking their money outside the parish. It also gives the community a chance to meet and chat whilst encouraging healthy exercise.

Another important part of footpaths is the natural wild flowers and vegetation so leaving the sides just a bit more overgrown and rural can provide an important haven as a wildlife corridor!



james hallam

Council Guard

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**[jameshallam.co.uk/town-council](http://jameshallam.co.uk/town-council)**



# ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

INCOME	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
Advertising	600	825
AGM, Conference and Exhibition	9,852	8,055
Bank Interest	1,085	596
Grants	9,000	12,000
Investment Interest	1,572	1,347
Member Services	2,314	959
Subscriptions	110,033	97,061
Training and Events	38,670	19,081
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>173,126</b>	<b>139,924</b>

EXPENDITURE	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
Staff Costs	84,834	76,281
Other Staff Costs	3,074	842
Premises Expenses	5,067	4,617
Office Expenses	6,419	5,798
Governance Costs	7,141	4,684
Subscriptions	41,519	40,907
AGM, Conference and Exhibition	9,110	6,856
Training and Events	8,573	1,632
Grants	200	0
Depreciation	674	692
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>166,610</b>	<b>142,309</b>

Net Income/(Expenditure)	6,516	(2,388)
Gain/(Loss) on investments	(1,214)	(6,142)
<b>NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>5,302</b>	<b>(8,530)</b>

## COMPANY TREASURER'S COMMENTARY

In the financial year 2023/24 our income was higher by £33,202 and our total expenses (costs) rose by £24,301. We benefited from the revised subscription model approved by the 2022 AGM (+£12,972) and a significant increase in training income (+£19,589). Our staff should be thanked for encouraging continued membership levels and the efforts put in to expand our training offerings. This extra effort is reflected in the increased staff and training (delivery) costs. Otherwise our costs are relatively stable after allowing for inflationary increases.

We had a small surplus on our operations of £6,516 reduced slightly to £5,302 by our CCLA property investment. Deposit interest rates recovered during the year to improve our overall interest received. We had budgeted for a small surplus (£2,818) and we did not need to draw on our reserve investments.

We have been able to increase staff time allocated to the support for members' enquiries and assistance. We have also been able to allocate more time to represent members at local, regional and national level. The 'voice of DALC' is often sought after.

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**

## BALANCE SHEET FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2024

FIXED ASSETS	31/03/2024	31/03/2023
Tangible Assets	2,695	2,769
Investments	29,902	31,116
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	8,404	6,998
Cash at bank and in hand	78,470	72,817
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors	7,963	7,494
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>78,911</b>	<b>72,321</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>111,508</b>	<b>106,206</b>
<b>RESERVES</b>		
<b>General Fund</b>		
Balance at 1 April	106,206	114,736
Surplus/(deficit)	5,302	(8,530)
Balance at 31 March	111,508	106,206
<i>Included in the reserves is £1,516 (2003) relating to the County Training Partnership.</i>		
<b>BALANCE AT 31 MARCH</b>	<b>111,508</b>	<b>106,206</b>

## GOVERNANCE

The directors present this report of the financial statements of the company for the year ended 31 March 2024.

### Directors:

The directors shown below have held office during the whole of the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

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

Other changes in directors holding office are as follows:

Resigned during the year:

B Bailey - 26 Mar 24  
E Hitchins - 27 Sept 23  
J Heath - 26 Mar 24

Appointed during the year:

J Heath - 27 Sept 23  
J Rice - 27 Sept 23

### Registered Office:

2 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  
Compyne Rousdon  
Cotleigh  
Cranbrook

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

Luppitt  
Lymptone  
Membury  
Monkton  
Musbury  
Newton Poppleford  
Northleigh  
Offwell  
Otterton  
Ottery St Mary  
Payhembury

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

Talaton  
Uplyme  
Upton Pyne  
West Hill  
Whimble  
Widworthy  
Woodbury  
Yarcombe

MID DEVON

Bampton  
Bickleigh  
Borden Gate  
Bow  
Bradninch  
Burlescombe  
Cadbury  
Cadeleigh

Chawleigh  
Cheriton Bishop  
Cheriton Fitzpaine  
Clayhidon  
Coldridge  
Colebrooke  
Copplestone  
Crediton Hamlets

Crediton  
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  
Thebridge

Thorverton  
Tiverton  
Uffculme  
Uplowman  
Wembworthy  
Willand  
Zeal Monachorum

NORTH DEVON

Ashford  
Barnstaple  
Berrynarbor  
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  
Hardford 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  
Hacombe with Combe  
Hennock  
Holcombe Burnell  
Ide  
Ideford  
Ilsington  
Ippepen

Kenn  
Kenton  
Kingskerswell  
Kingsteignton  
Lustleigh  
Mamhead  
Manaton  
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Newton Abbot  
North Bovey  
Ogwell  
Shaldon  
Shillingford St George  
Starcross  
Stokeinteignhead  
Tedburn St Mary

Teigngrace  
Teignmouth  
Trusham  
Whitestone  
Widecombe-in-the-moor

TORRIDGE

Abbotsham  
Alverdiscott &  
Huntshaw  
Alwington  
Ashreigney  
Ashwater  
Beaford  
Bideford

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

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  
Winkleigh  
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  
Monkokehampston  
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

South Hams  
East Portlemouth

Mid Devon  
Loxbear  
Silverton  
Washfield  
Washford Pyne

Teignbridge  
Dunchideock

North Devon  
Arlington  
Atherington

West Devon  
Highampton

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