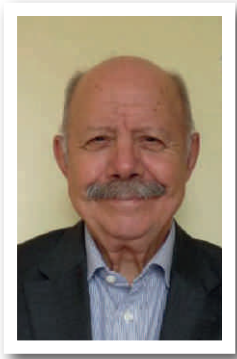


Cumbria Association of Local Councils

2018 Annual Report



Cumbria Association of Local Councils



Chairman's Report

The continuing change in the way services are being delivered by district and county councils is driving our members to take on more roles. This in turn makes us want to make sure that we have the capacity needed in terms of skills and support. Some parish and town councils are taking on these new roles willingly and with enthusiasm, some less so, but one thing is surely happening. More services are being provided locally, paid for locally and better fulfilling local needs because of local involvement and commitment.

Our officers continue to do a great job and I would like to thank them on behalf of all of us for achieving so much with such a small team.

The availability of the right members of staff among the principal authorities is still an issue, with frequent staff changes causing problems to our Clerks with continuity and the relevance of the current system of district association and three tier meetings. We are engaging with the other tiers of local government to see how we can work more closely together on more of the strategic issues facing our communities and seeing if we can do some things more effectively, given the restrictions of decreasing district and council budgets.

Barrow's confirmation on our Executive means that all six districts of Cumbria are represented and we look forward to working more closely with them all.

I would like to thank our executive for the time and effort they give voluntarily in representing their districts and communities so that CALC truly represents communities right across Cumbria.

It is with a great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Jill Hay in August. Jill was a Culgaith Councillor for 24 years and its first female chair. She was on the Executive from 2003 where she was a passionate advocate on behalf of rural communities. We will miss her and the contributions she made.

I would also like to thank Councillor David Huxley for chairing Eden District Association. His efforts were much appreciated.

Your Association also works with other partners across all the areas of community service such as health, rural policing, flood resilience, national parks, provision of broadband, and others as well as representing parishes at the Cumbria Leaders Board and Cumbria at the national level with NALC. We will always trying to put forward the interests of our member organisations and the communities they represent.

We have established contact with some of our MPs and it is our intention to lobby them regularly with things which concern our communities and the county as a whole. Too frequently the direct views of our parish and town Councils were not sought on local issues, which directly affect these communities.

CALC now works much more closely with principal authorities, often at early stages, to involve communities in constructive partnerships, some of which are highlighted in our Chief Officer's Report.

The setting of parish council precepts, increasing again for 2018/19 to £6.52m, reflects the continued growth in devolved services. It is an issue for us all that this money is spent wisely in providing better value for money for the taxpayer overall than the saving it shows in someone else's budget.

There is an optimism and enthusiasm at the parish and town council level which should be encouraged and we are effectively engaging with our members and partners and achieving good outcomes.

CALC has provided training opportunities which have been well attended in these areas showing that the need for advice and support is increasing to the extent where our capacity to deliver a meaningful service with such a small part-time team is being challenged.

Talking of challenges, we have had a few with more to come. There is again talk of Local Government Reorganisation to streamline and improve the delivery of services, but as yet, no agreement as to how to move forward: unitary, binary, combined authority are some of the ideas being considered. All will need a close participation of CALC.

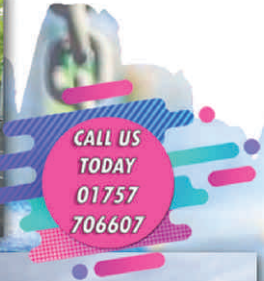
We are reviewing an out-dated fee model, in order to make our contribution to NALC on behalf of our members and the fees to CALC more representative.

I hope you will support us in this and may I thank you on behalf of the officers, the Executive, and me personally for all the help and encouragement we have received in the last year.

Councillor Rick Petecki
Chairman, CALC

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Chief Officer's Report

2018 was never going to be a quiet year! To start with, there was a flood of small councils coming to CALC to ensure that they received their share of NALC's grant funding to help with the challenges of the Transparency Code. CALC officers Sonia Hutchinson and Karen Wood played a key role in the administration of the fund and worked with councils to help with all aspects of the process.

Whilst this was going on, the enactment of the General Data Protection Regulation was coming ever nearer. Unfortunately there were some significant, and legitimate, concerns over how parish councils would be able to comply with requirements – especially relating to the role of the Data Protection Officer (DPO). CALC was one of the county associations that lobbied our national organisation's Chief Executive, Jonathan Owen of NALC, to put pressure on government to clarify the position regarding DPOs. It was with great relief that we heard that an amendment would exempt parish and town councils from the duty to appoint a DPO. A good decision, but still May 25th came around and with it renewed responsibilities for all councils and parish meetings to ensure that personal data is handled transparently and securely.

But it wasn't only GDPR that made the start of 2018 a challenging year. There was the issue of a completely new approach to the annual return, or the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to give it's full name. Parish councils with less than £25,000 turnover per annum, could apply for exemption for external audit for the first time but with a requirement to post their AGAR online and with no hard copies of the annual return forms available, CALC was busy assisting members with a range of queries on the new, digital returns.

In February/March the 'Beast from the East' hit. The severe snow storms that particularly affected the hillier parts of the county looked pretty at times, but some communities were cut off for days, causing great hardship. This was followed by a number of storms that brought disruption up and down the county. It was a stark reminder of the unpredictability of today's climate, it's impact on Cumbria and of the importance of communities, helped enormously by dedicated local councillors, when these severe weather events hit.

CALC continues to be the only organisation giving full-time support to parish councils in Cumbria. Our office in Penrith is open five days a week, 9am – 5pm to respond to telephone calls and emails from councillors and clerks.

We answer questions on procedural, HR, planning and financial matters and send legal queries on to the solicitors at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). At any given time there is only one staff member in the office so it sometimes isn't possible to respond immediately, but we do our best to reply within a couple of days.

We keep on looking for ways to improve our service to you and this has included constantly reviewing and amending our training programme to meet your needs and trying to improve our systems for example refreshing our newsletter by altering the format and producing a new mast-head.



CALC Executive

A key issue for the CALC Executive this year has been the membership fee. Membership is at an all-time high with only two parish councils now not in membership (230 out of 232). The Executive Committee has given a great deal of thought and consideration to the matter and there is more information later in the report.

CALC's Executive Members and officers work hard making sure parish and town councils' concerns are represented by attending a range of county-wide meetings including Nugen's Moorside project, Cumbria Strategic Flood Board, meetings of the Government's NHS Success Regime and the Lake District National Park Partnership.

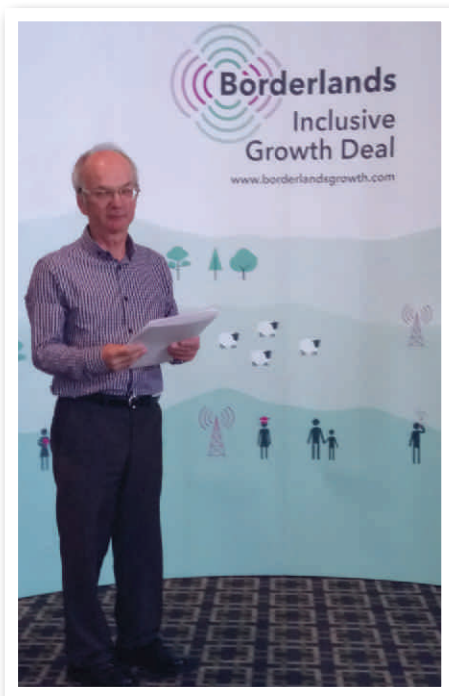
The Carlisle District Association Chairman also attended the Borderlands Conference in Dumfries, which is focusing on growth in Cumbria, especially in the north of the county.

Representing Local Councils

During the year members of the Executive Committee and the six district associations represented local councils' interests on many county and local committees on such topics as housing, transport, planning and broadband.

In June 2018, CALC Chairman, Rick Petecki was elected Chairman of the Cumbria Leaders' Board, where he will continue to highlight the priorities for local councils across Cumbria.

The Chief Officer continues to sit on the Cumbria Chief Executives Group, covering issues such as policing, housing strategies, community resilience, social capital (health and well-being) and the NHS success regime over the year.



CALC Finance Report

CALC ended the financial year 2017/18 showing a small surplus of £250.00. In a period of continuing financial constraint and increasing inflationary pressure on our budget, this is a very satisfactory outcome.

CALC continues to operate on a sound financial footing and has reasonable reserves to ensure that it is able to withstand any sudden crises.

2017/18 was the last year in which we will show transparency grant monies coming in and out of CALC's current account. In total CALC distributed over £55,000 to smaller parish councils over the three years of the programme.

CALC Subscription Fee Proposals

The CALC AGM in November 2017 was informed that the Executive would review the membership fee structure with a view to presenting a report to the AGM in 2018. The existing system used by CALC relies on a range of pricing bands based on the electorate number. This set fee incorporates a proportion of money that is collected by CALC on behalf of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). The current 2018 NALC fee is set at 6.86p per elector. Local Councils cannot be a member of one and not the other.

It was felt that the existing fee structure was in need of review to assess if it was still appropriate in light of some recent changes, the most significant being the steady rise in the NALC element of the fees.

Seven different approaches to calculating the subscription fees were considered. At the June meeting of the Executive, the following approaches were agreed:

- a) that the CALC and NALC portions of the subscription fees are displayed separately on the annual membership invoice to members.
- b) that the CALC portion of the subscription fee should be based on the electorate of each parish.

All the approaches that were considered were based on generating the same amount of subscription fee income as for 2018/19.

If members approve the recommendations put before them at the 2018 Annual General Meeting, then the letter your council receives regarding fees for 2019/20 will identify the amount of money being collected on behalf of NALC and the portion that will be kept to support CALC. The total amount payable will be the sum of the two figures.

We asked members to comment on the proposals we made and we received valuable feedback, the proposals being put forward to the AGM in November reflect these comments.

Developing Your Skills 2018

During the financial year 2017/2018, CALC delivered 28 development sessions including six in house bespoke courses requested by individual parish councils and six more specialist events delivered by external facilitators. The courses delivered by external facilitators covered the following areas Common Land & Village Greens, Value Added Tax, Finance and the new General Data Protection Regulations. In total 287 delegates comprising clerks and councillors have attended courses and fora organised by CALC.

CiLCA – The Certificate in Local Council Administration

The Certificate in Local Council Administration, CiLCA, is a foundation qualification for Clerks administered by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC). It is suitable for all clerks working with local councils and is flexible enough to suit candidates from small parish councils to large town councils.

CALC provides clerks who want to undertake this qualification with support through four training sessions and one to one mentoring. Currently five delegates are in the process of completing the qualification with CALC support and during the last 12 months three Clerks have successfully obtained the qualification. Well done Claire, Rachael and Sonia!

Having a CiLCA-qualified clerk should be the aim of all councils, as it provides the council with the opportunity to apply for the Local Council Award Scheme at quality and quality gold levels. It also enables a council with two thirds of their members elected to use the General Power of Competence (GPC).

The GPC is important legislation as it gives councils the power to do anything an individual may do, unless specifically prohibited. Councils use the GPC to work in new ways, and develop new services and partnerships. In these times of change with more council's being asked to consider delivering new services having this power can be a real asset for a council.

The Local Council Award Scheme

The Local Council Award Scheme was launched in January 2015 and is available at three levels:

- Foundation
- Quality
- Quality Gold

The scheme is built on three themes:

1. Good governance
2. Community leadership
3. Council development

The tests for each level of the award look for evidence of achievements in these three areas. Evidence is then examined by an Independent Accreditation Panel.

Councils often ask what is the point of applying for the awards but in fact the benefits of the scheme are at least threefold:

1. The council itself will have an independent assessment and evidence of improved performance with policies in place for development;
2. It will have independent recognition of commitment and hard work and an assurance that it is up-to-date and progressive and;
3. The community and partners will have evidence to inspire confidence that the council is delivering to a national standard.

Often councils will consider applying for an Award at the same time or shortly after the Clerk has obtained the CiLCA qualification as the evidence accumulated by the Clerk for the qualification provide the council with the majority of evidence needed to apply for an award at Foundation or Quality level.

National Association of Local Councils (NALC)

All councils that subscribe to CALC automatically become members of our national association – the National Association of Local Councils (NALC). NALC represents the interests of local councils at the national level and continues to be very active in influencing Government thinking about a range of topics – including General Data Protection Regulation and setting up the SAAA to oversee the changes to external audit for local councils.

CALC continues to contribute to the policies and priorities of NALC through CALC's Chairman, Rick Petecki who is also our representative on the NALC National Assembly.

This year NALC Chief Executive, Jonathan Owen, has been focusing on reviewing the focus of NALC's services to its members and as a result has been holding discussions with members and county officers. We await NALC's findings.

Precepts

The precepts that parish councils set for 2018/19 continued to reflect the recent trend towards significant growth in the sector. This is due, in part, to the continued devolution of assets and services to the first tier of local government in Cumbria.

The total amount raised by local councils in Cumbria by way of precepts in 2018/19 is £6.52 million, up from £6.1m the previous year, an overall increase of £353,000.

In addition to precept, most parishes receive a council tax reduction support grant (CTRSG). Since CTRSG was introduced in 2013/14 total payments made by district councils have continued to reduce overall. In total this year, £149,000 was passed to parish councils.

CALC District Associations

There are six district associations in Cumbria, with Barrow creating an association last year. Each district has a small amount of officer support (five hours a week) from the parish liaison officers. District associations are the key to members' engagement with CALC and it is through your local association that matters of concern or interest should be addressed.

This year the Eden district association has tried different ways of holding their meetings, in response to feedback requests from members, trialling a more informal, workshop approach. Please feel free to discuss how your district association meetings run with your Parish Liaison Officer.

Lake District Parish Forum: Meet the Planners

In March 2018, the Lake District National Park Development Management team decamped to Theatre by the Lake in Keswick for a session they called 'Meet the Planners'.

This was arranged in response to requests by parish councillors for an opportunity to talk to the Development Management team about planning issues. Most of the development control team were there giving members opportunities to ask questions about issues that concerned them or just to chat about general planning issues. The event was well attended and lots of councillors got the chance to speak to the members of the team during the course of the afternoon.



Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Due to the considerable extension of the Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNP), back in August 2016, there are now 29 Cumbrian parishes that are wholly or partly in the National Park, whereas there were only three before. CALC now works more closely with the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and its partners, just like it does with the Lake District National Park Authority. This year, CALC has been involved in drafting of the YDNP's next management plan (a statutory document for all National Parks). CALC contributed to an economy and community working group and then commented on any draft policies, stressing issues such as affordable housing, broadband and public transport. CALC has also attended the parish forum for western parishes where National Park officers and local members update parish councillors on future park priorities and any upcoming projects.

Geological Disposal Facility Consultations

In January 2018 the government sponsoring department Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) opened a consultation which ran until the 19th April 2018. This consultation sought views on how communities should be engaged in a siting process for a Geological Disposal Facility for higher activity radioactive waste. CALC submitted a response. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) is still considering the responses.

There was, during the same period, a second consultation. The purpose of this consultation was to gather views on whether the draft National Policy Statement (NPS) for Geological Disposal Infrastructure (GDI) provides an appropriate and effective framework for the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State to examine and make decisions on development consent applications for geological disposal infrastructure in England. This draft policy includes proposals that nuclear waste should be allowed to be buried under national parks. Both the chairman and the liaison officer for Allerdale and Copeland attended engagement events before framing their response on behalf of CALC. Further information is available from the CALC office.

Financial Support

Our audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 are set out later in this annual report. We would like to thank our member councils for their continuing financial support for the Association's work through their membership subscriptions. We are also grateful to the following local authorities for their financial support which is greatly appreciated.

- Cumbria County Council
- Allerdale Borough Council
- Carlisle City Council
- Copeland Borough Council
- Eden District Council
- South Lakeland District Council
- Lake District National Park Authority

Who's who in CALC 2018?

CALC Officers (2017 – 2018)

President	Mr Bob Mather
Vice President:	Mr Stan Simpson
Chairman	Cllr Rick Petecki
Hon. Treasurer	Ms J Hartley (formally Wright)
Allerdale District Chairman	Cllr Rick Petecki
Carlisle District Chairman	Cllr Mike Higginbotham
Copeland District Chairman	Cllr Keith Hitchen
Eden District Chairman	Cllr David Huxley (resigned March)
South Lakeland District Chairman	Cllr David Peters
Barrow District Chairman	Cllr Mike Cumming

CALC STAFF

(All CALC staff are employed part-time)

Chief Officer	Samantha Bagshaw
Parish Development Officer	Sonia Hutchinson
Parish Liaison Officer (Carlisle/Eden)	Sonia Hutchinson
Parish Liaison Officer (South Lakeland/Barrow)	Amanda McCleery
Parish Liaison Officer (Allerdale/Copeland)	Chris Shaw

Executive Committee (2017 – 2018)

In addition to Chairman, President, Vice Presidents, Honorary Treasurer and District Association Chairs, there are the following Vice Chairs and directly elected members:

Cllr Peter Bales	Workington TC
Cllr Ann Byers	Dalston PC
Cllr Sue Castle-Clarke	Ousby PC
Cllr Bryan Craig	Dalston PC
Cllr Roger Hart	Allonby PC
Cllr Jill Hay	Culgaith PC (to August 2018)
Cllr Leith Hallatsch	Windermere TC
Cllr Leslie Johnson	Lakes PC
Cllr Brian Kennish	Muncaster PC
Cllr Craig Nicholson	Stanwix Rural PC
Cllr Margaret Throp	Above Derwent PC

Accounts 2017 – 2018

Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2018

	2018		2017
	£		£
Receipts			
Affiliation Fees	50,840		48,671
Sale of Publications	800		406
Sale of Local Council Review	323		437
Local Authority Grants	44,885		44,885
Training	9,672		8,088
NuGen INWCC	466		3,850
Deposit Account Interest	440		950
HR Support	715		-
Transparency Fund (CALC)	3,300		5,120
Sundry Income	-		204
Transparency Fund (Parishes)	47,719		19,984
Transparency Website fees including website development	2,964		1,905
EDC SLA	7,00		6,000
Meetings and Officer Expenses	56		-
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	169,180		140,500
Balances at 1 April 2017			
Deposit Account	32,707		32,689
Current Account	45,720		97,286
Cumberland Building Society	50,932	129,359	- 129,975
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	298,539		270,475
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Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2018

	2018	2017	
Payments			
NALC – Affiliation Fees	19,826	19,159	
Publications	783	389	
NALC Local Council Review	231	370	
Printing and Stationery	841	541	
Travel and Subsistence	2,514	1,837	
Meetings	3,364	4,367	
Bank Charges	66	66	
Salaries and Expenses	61,438	64,009	
Accountancy Fees	714	714	
Honoraria	500	500	
Training	6,888	4,537	
Sundries	798	187	
Insurance	708	690	
Fingertips – Agency Costs	8,076	6,479	
Conference	1,404	773	
HR Support	78	-	
Transparency Fund (CALC)	5,429	1,617	
Transparency Website fees	-	278	
NuGen/North West Connections	438	2,934	
Transparency Fund (Parishes)	48,069	29,744	
EDC SLA	6,765	1,925	
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	168,930	141,116	
Balances at 31 March 2018			
Deposit Account	32,723	32,707	
Current Account	45,530	45,720	
Cumberland Building Society	51,356	50,932	129,359
	<hr/>	<hr/>	
	298,539	270,475	
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We certify that the following Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31 March 2018 is correct and in accordance with the best of our information given to us and as shown by the books.

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Cumbria Association of Local Councils (CALC) is run by local councils for the benefit of local councils. It assists councils in their day-to-day work and represents their interests.

CALC's aims are:

- Encouraging and advising good practice in local council management
- Increasing the contribution of local councils to community life
- Training and developing councillors and clerks
- Encouraging greater public awareness of the work of local councils

CALC's work is paid for by the subscriptions of its member councils and grants from the principal authorities of Cumbria and the Lake District National Park Authority.



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T: 01768 864214

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W: hhreedsprinters.co.uk

Cumbria Association of Local Councils

Fire & Rescue Service Headquarters

Carleton Avenue, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2FA

T: 01768 812663

E: office@calc.org.uk

W: www.calc.org.uk