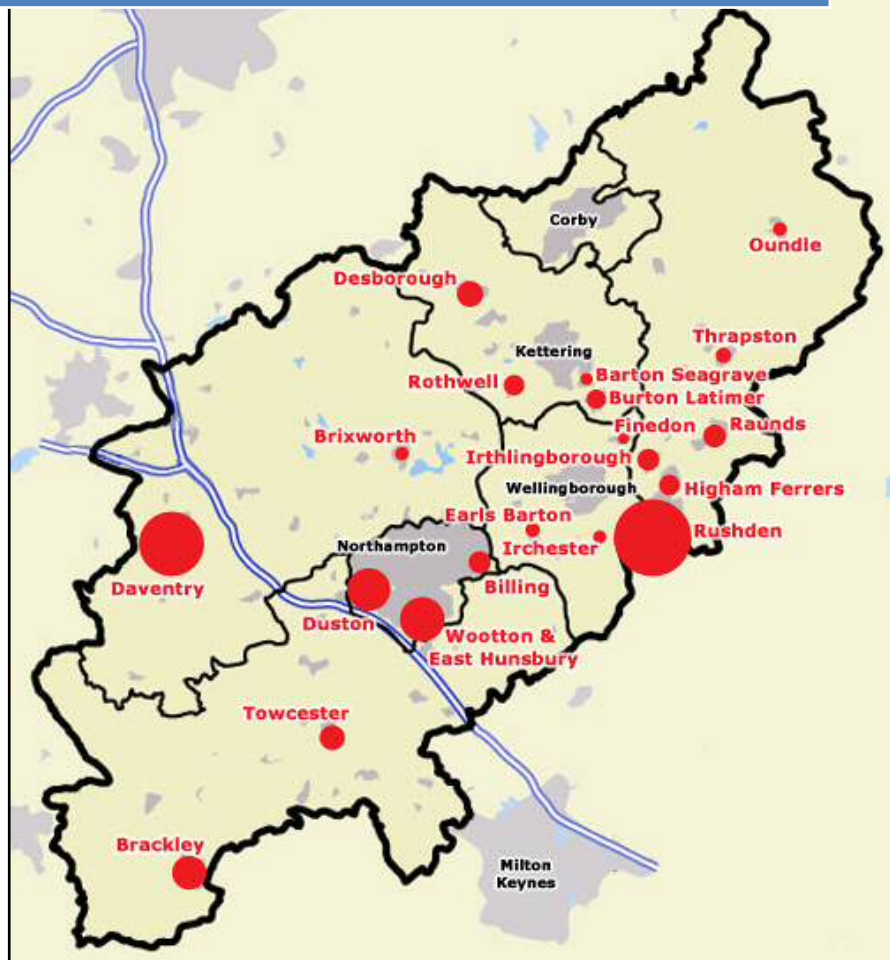


Year ending
31 March 2017

Annual Report of the Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils



Empowering Parish
& Town Councils

Chairman's Report

The chairman's report would normally have been written by the chairman who was in post on 31 March 2017. Sadly, Peter Byng passed away on 17 June 2017 and therefore the duty falls to me as vice chairman at 31 March and now chairman. Peter's passing was not unexpected and he had carried on courageously in his role as chairman, sometimes attending meetings for the Association when he was not really well enough to do so. His fortitude was a good example to us and we all miss him. His legacy will live on for years and we shall continue several of the practices he started as chairman, not least the introduction of homemade cakes at board meetings!

In April 2016 we welcomed Sara Homer to the board of directors, filling a vacancy left by the resignation of John Marshall. Sara is chairman of Wootton Parish Council and Executive Director of Brackmills Industrial Estate Limited and brings a wealth of business experience. In September 2016 Linda Carter resigned from the board and in November we welcomed Fiona Baker. Coincidentally, Linda is Clerk to Brackley Town Council and Fiona was the then Mayor. Fiona is also the current chairman of South Northants Council (SNC) so helps bring a principal council perspective to board considerations.

All the directors, as well as the vice presidents, are unpaid and work very hard on behalf of the Association. Meetings are held more or less monthly and attendance is always very good. The work of the board is mostly "behind the scenes" but it is important for member parish and town councils to know that there is a strong and effective board of directors setting the strategy for the Association and making sure the ship stays on course. I would like to thank all the directors and other office holders for their hard work and for their support in what has been a difficult year at times.

In April the board received the draft Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019. With minor amendments the plan was signed off at the May board meeting. A copy is available on the Association's web site: <http://www.northantscalc.com/uploads/ncalc-strategic-plan-2016-2019.pdf> and I urge all member councils to read it. The Strategic Plan sets out what the board wants to achieve over the plan period and how it intends to do that. The Association is run for member councils so please do contact me if you have any comments.

In June 2016 we held our second annual board focus day, kindly hosted by Duston Parish Council. It was a very useful opportunity for the board to see the wood, not the trees. The main focus was on determining what success looks like, or in other words, how do we know if we're doing a good job. The discussion generated a list of "Key Performance Indicators" which can now be used to influence and measure the success of the Strategic Plan.

I was disappointed that in October 2016 we lost our long struggle with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) regarding membership structure. Northants CALC has always worked on the basis that parish councils are members of the CALC, and then the CALCs are members of NALC. Unfortunately this view was defeated at the NALC AGM in October and it has been agreed nationally that parish councils are directly members of NALC, so they hold two memberships, one of the CALC and one of NALC. Although it is not the outcome we wanted we have to take a philosophical view and work with the system as it is now. As always, our goal is to do the best for parish and town councils in Northamptonshire, and that is what we will continue to do despite the nuances of the constitutional arrangements.

In March 2017 I was delighted that the board approved a budget for 2017/18 that will allow for the recruitment of a Deputy CEO. The Association is busier than ever and it is important that we

have the staff resources to cope, and we also want to see the creation of new councils in the urban areas of Northampton, Wellingborough, Corby and Kettering that currently don't enjoy the most local level of democracy and representation that a parish or town council provides. It will take a huge effort to create new councils, but the Association is committed to parish and town councils as the best form of community governance. It will be a big change for the Association, but having two trained officers providing advice and guidance to member councils will take the pressure off the CEO and ensure that member services are as excellent as always.

The Association continues to grow and prosper thanks to the vision and efforts of the directors, the hard work of staff and the support of member councils. As a membership organisation we always strive to do our best for member councils and I am delighted that virtually all councils in Northamptonshire are in membership. Together we are stronger.

Lynne Taylor
Chairman, Northants CALC
ltaylor@northantscalc.com

Balance Sheet

Northants CALC Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2017:

	£	£
	2016	2017
Fixed assets	674	2,828
Debtors	5,790	1,549
Cash at bank	84,685	119,931
Total Assets	91,149	124,308

	£	£
	2016	2017
Creditors	(29,321)	(33,619)
Receipts in advance	-	-
Current Liabilities	(29,321)	(33,619)

	£	£
	2016	2017
Assets less liabilities	61,828	90,687

Finance Report

A summary of the accounts for the year ending 31 March 2017 is appended to the Annual Report. The accounts are independently inspected by Kate Brown Accountants, Chartered Accountants, and submitted to Companies House under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

Northants CALC Limited is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 7335699.

The Association maintains a system of internal controls to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities and operating procedures. A director is appointed with responsibility to scrutinise the internal controls and working practices, which has proved to be a very useful governance tool that helps improve risk identification and mitigation. The Internal Controls Director (ICD) carries out a minimum of three on-site checks per year and may check any system or procedure at will.

The Association ended the financial year with a surplus of £28,860.

The Association's turnover is somewhat artificially inflated currently because of the Transparency Fund, which operates from 2015/16 to 2017/18. Northants CALC is the accountable body in Northamptonshire for the Fund, so the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) sends the money that it has awarded to individual councils to Northants CALC for onward distribution. In the year to 31 March 2017 the amount transferred to parish councils was £50,409.

A series of surplus years has resulted in general reserves of £90k.

The Association's financial position is sound and stable and it is well placed to cope with the short and medium term financial outlook.

Corporate Governance

The board operates according to the following principles:

The board should be independent of the staff:

The board has determined that each director is independent in character and judgement and that there are no relationships or circumstances which are likely to affect their judgement or impair their independence.

Directors should be submitted for re-appointment annually:

Recommendations for re-appointment should not be assumed but be based on disclosed procedures and continued satisfactory performance.

There should be full disclosure of the board's membership:

A list of directors with biographies is available on the Association's web site.

The board should aim to have a balance of skills, experience, and knowledge:

The board operates a Composition & Diversity Policy that ensures that the board contains a good mix of clerks and councillors from small and large councils.

The board should undertake an annual review of its own performance:

All directors complete self-assessment forms that help identify strengths and weaknesses of the board.

The board should give attention to overall strategy:

The board monitors performance against its agreed strategy on an ongoing basis and reviews its overall strategy, including the viability of the Association in its current form.



Chief Executive's Report

Emma Morehen, erstwhile clerk to Titchmarsh Parish Council, once said "*Going backwards is not the way forward*". I have the quote on the wall opposite my desk. It is a reminder that for the Association to prosper and remain relevant to its members we always need to be changing and developing. Even if we stand still we will be going backwards, so there is a constant drive to develop new practices, improve processes and try new things. It is a demanding but exciting environment to work in.

In April 2016 we were joined on a fixed term contract by Liz Hart as our New Councils Project Manager working one day per week. Her job was to scope out the project, put together a feasibility study and write a grant application to the Reaching Communities Fund of the Big Lottery for £130k. Having completed her task, Liz left in November just before the grant application was submitted. Unfortunately the application was unsuccessful because there were over 850 applications for a pot that was only £2 million for the whole of the financial year. It was a blow but we weren't defeated. The organisation is committed to the project and will continue to look for ways to fund it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Liz publicly for all her hard work during her short tenure.

An issue that has been on the agenda all year is Local Government Reorganisation and the possible creation of one or more unitary authorities in Northamptonshire. The accepted wisdom is that nothing is likely to happen very quickly but unitary councils, or at least some form of consolidated principal council structure is an inevitability. Whatever happens, parish and town councils will be a vital part of the picture and so we are keeping on top of developments and trying to keep member councils informed.

One area that parish and town councils are starting to get more involved in is

health and wellbeing. Councils can be the link between public sector organisations trying to deliver health and wellbeing services and the community and individuals that the services are aimed at. As a result Northants CALC has been attending the various district-based Health & Wellbeing Forums around the county to represent parish and town councils and ensure they are included in service design. It's a developing area and the board keeps the engagement activity under review.

In July 2016 we held a big event with Northampton University. In fact it was called "Think Big" and over forty delegates from parish and town councils were challenged to open their minds and consider what role councils can play in the social, environmental and economic development of Northamptonshire. The event was so successful and the input from delegates so enthusiastic that the University has asked for further events to take place in the future.

In the summer of 2016 we conducted our biennial Member Satisfaction Survey and I was pleased that the results were very encouraging with 96% of councils rating the quality of advice and guidance as good or very good. Of course, we will never rest on our laurels and we know that the demands and expectations of member councils are increasing all the time. The survey provides us with an incredible amount of information that helps shape our services and strategy, so thank you very much to all the councils that responded (80% response rate).

96%
Good or very good.

In February 2016 we signed a strategic partnership with LGSS Law Ltd to deliver legal advice to the Association and be Northants CALC's preferred partner for providing parish council legal advice in Northamptonshire. Northants CALC provides a desktop legal enquiry service to member parish and town

councils by phone and e-mail, but because Northants CALC staff are not legally trained that sometimes requires the support of qualified, experienced lawyers. Northants CALC has access to the legal team at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and will continue to do so but this new partnership with LGSS Law will help ensure that every enquiry is dealt with authoritatively and in a timely manner. Parish and town councils will continue to submit their enquiries in the usual way to Northants CALC but where necessary Northants CALC will seek assistance from the team at LGSS Law.

Our excellent training programme, one of the best in the country, is ably managed by Anne Kirkland who has also helped dozens and dozens of councils with the Transparency Fund applications this year. Linda Bain continues to ensure that the office administration, finances and internal audit service are all running smoothly. Thanks to both of them, because without them I couldn't do my job.

I would also like to take the opportunity to put on record my thanks to Richard Lewis, who was chairman until his three-year term of office came to an end in November 2016 and then Peter Byng who was Richard's vice chairman and who was elected chairman in November 2016. Both have given me excellent personal and professional support and I am very grateful.

The board of directors is very strong currently and it makes the job of CEO so much easier when there is clear direction and clarity of purpose.

And finally, thank you to all the clerks and councillors I work with day in, day out. If only members of the public knew what hard work clerks and councillors put in on behalf of their communities!

Danny Moody
Chief Executive
dmoody@northantscalc.com

Association Staff

Position	Name
Chief Executive	Danny Moody
Training & Development Manager	Anne Kirkland
Administration Manager	Linda Bain
New Councils Project*	Liz Hart

*April to November 2016

Honorary Officers & Auditor

The following were elected at the AGM on 7 October 2016 to serve for one year:

Name	Title
Paul Blantern	President
Jeffery Greenwell	Vice President
Catherine Lomax	Vice President
Gwen Radcliffe	Vice President
Gordon Shorley	Vice President
Kate Brown Accountants	Auditors

Board of Directors

The following were elected at the AGM on 8 October 2016 to serve for one year:

Name	Current Role
Peter Allen	Director
Peter Byng	Vice Chairman
Sara Homer	Director
Lynn Lavender	Director
Richard Lewis	Chairman
Mike Scott	Director
Lynne Taylor	Director
Vacancy*	Director

*This vacancy was filled by Fiona Baker, who was appointed on 10 November 2016.

Membership Fee

In Northamptonshire there are 200 parish councils, 12 town councils and 51 parish meetings (civil parishes without a parish council). The largest council is Rushden Town Council (electorate 23,112) and the smallest council is Brampton Ash Parish Council (electorate 59). The smallest parish meeting is Althorp Parish Meeting (electorate 13).

The highest precepting council is Rushden Town Council (£809,802) and the lowest (of the ones that precept at all) is Catesby Parish Meeting (£90). Together, councils in Northamptonshire raised £9.42 million in precept in 2016/17.

98% of the councils in the county are in membership of the Association. The membership fees are set by the AGM each October.

	£	£
Year Ending 31 st March	2017	2018
Base rate (per council)	150.00	150.90
County Association (per elector)	0.2250	0.2264
NALC affiliation (per elector)	0.0660	0.0673

Nb: The Northants CALC fee for councils with more than 10,000 electors is capped at £2,414.40.

Internal Audit Service

178 of the 212 parish and town councils in Northamptonshire used the Internal Audit Service from Northants CALC for the year ending 31 March 2017.

A team of specialist auditors are contracted by the Association to provide the service to parish and town councils, ranging from the smallest with annual expenditure of less than £1,000 to the largest with annual expenditure in excess of £800,000.

Internal Audit is a key component of the system of internal control. The purpose of internal audit is to review whether the systems of financial and other controls over a council's activities and operating procedures are effective.

It is essential that the internal audit function is sufficiently independent of the other financial controls and procedures of the council which are the subject of review.

The person or persons carrying out internal audit must also be competent to

carry out the role in a way that will meet the business needs of each local council.

Member Enquiry Service (MES)

The Member Enquiry Service (MES) is now five years old! It is an email-based enquiry service for member councils that provides a timely response to non-complex, generic enquiries.

MES is operated on a volunteer basis by a team of four knowledgeable and dedicated clerks all of whom are CiLCA trained. My continued thanks go to Nikki Daft, Erica Fothergill, Helen Hoier and Rosie Smart for their support and hard work over the year.

Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS)

Two councils achieved accreditation under LCAS in the year to 31 March 2017: Hardingstone Parish Council (Quality) and Raunds Town Council (Quality Gold). Congratulations to both. Raunds is the first council in Northamptonshire to achieve the Quality Gold award.

All councils are encouraged to consider going for accreditation. There's a level for everyone: Foundation recognises sound standard practice, Quality recognises good practice and Quality Gold recognises best practice in all aspects. Councils can accredit at one level and then work towards a higher level if they choose.

Printed or electronic copies of this Annual Report and further details are available on request. Please e-mail info@northantscalc.com.

**Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils Ltd
Company limited by guarantee**

Accounts for year ending 31 March 2017

Company information

Directors	Peter Malcolm Byng Lynne Jane Taylor Lynn Lavender Richard Lewis Peter Robert Allen Michael John Scott Sara Marie Homer Fiona Elizabeth Baker
Secretary	Daniel Moody
Company number	07335699
Registered office	6 Litchborough Business Park Northampton Road Litchborough Northamptonshire NN12 8JB

NORTHANTS CALC

Profit & Loss for 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

Note	Income	01/04/16-31/03/17	01/04/15-31/01/16
		£	£
	Membership Subscriptions	111,332	107,471
1	Training	26,044	29,018
	IAS Council Income	29,794	26,855
2	Grants	21,206	12,000
3	Transparency Fund Grant	50,409	24,266
	Other Income	2,534	2,481
		241,319	202,091
	Expenditure		
4	NALC Affiliation Fee	19,373	16,220
	Internal Auditor Fees	19,245	18,620
5	Training Costs	8,769	4,900
6	Transparency Fund	50,409	24,266
7	Conference and Meeting Costs	2,177	859
8	Board Expenses	33	439
	Insurance inc Professional Indemnity	723	712
		100,729	66,016
	Gross Profit/(Loss):	140,590	136,075
	Overheads		
9	Staff Costs	80,389	75,241
	Rent	7,271	7,258
	Water Rates	136	100
10	Service charges	494	65
	Insurance	265	266
11	Light and Heat	2,538	1,917
12	Repairs and Maintenance	528	96
	Printing Posting and Stationery	3,137	2,766
	Telephone	3,073	2,789
	Travel - Staff	2,168	3,063
	Travel - Members	787	1,119
	Accountancy	120	120
13	Bank Charges	134	4
14	Subscription, Membership and Professional Fees	4,848	2,336
15	General Expenses	2,464	2,798
16	Increased Internal Audit Creditor	2,939	0
17	Office Equipment & Fixtures & Fittings Depreciation	1,247	2,104
		112,538	102,041
	Bank Deposit Interest	808	645
	Net Profit/(Loss):	28,860	34,679

NORTHANTS CALC

Balance Sheet as of 31 March 2017

Note	Fixed Assets	01/04/16 - 31/03/17	01/04/15 - 31/03/16
		£	£
18	Office Equipment	4,075	2,778
	Depreciation	1,247	2,104
		2,828	674
	Current Assets		
	Current Account	56,953	22,257
	Savings Account	62,960	62,183
	Petty Cash and Altocards	16	245
19	Debtors	1,549	5,790
		121,478	90,475
	Current Liabilities		
20	Creditors	3,627	2,269
21	IAS - Council Fees	29,794	26,855
	Members' Liability Funds	198	198
		33,619	29,322
	Current Assets less Current Liabilities	87,859	61,154
	Total Assets less Current Liabilities	90,687	61,827
	Capital & Reserves		
	General Fund (Includes County Training Partners)	61,828	27,148
	Profit & Loss Account	28,859	34,679
		90,687	61,826

At a meeting of the board of directors held on 20 May 2017 it was agreed to send these accounts for independent inspection.

Signed by (Person presiding at meeting)



Date: 20 May 2017

NORTHANTS CALC

Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss - Explanatory Notes Year Ending 31 March 2017

- Note 1 CiLCA 2016 invoiced March 2016 (£3,960)
- Note 2 Northants County Council £10,000, NALC £11,206 (administration of Transparency Fund)
- Note 3 Transparency Fund monies received from NALC (see also Note 6)
- Note 4 Increase in NALC affiliation fee from 5.6p to 6.6p per elector
- Note 5 Ran additional CiLCA cohort. Ran more courses in outside venues.
- Note 6 Transparency Fund monies paid out to councils (see also Note 3)
- Note 7 Includes 7MG & COF (£358), FEMALC (£66), SLCC Practitioners Conference (£204) and AGM 2016 refreshments (£525)
- Note 8 2015/16 included venue hire and refreshments (£197) and one-off materials purchase (£250)
- Note 9 Includes £5,345 Local Councils Advisor salary
- Note 10 Increased service charges due to the installation by landlord of lockable gates and CCTV
- Note 11 Running costs for electric radiators
- Note 12 Includes cost of recovery from IT breakdown
- Note 13 Unity Trust Bank introduced bank charges (£37 per quarter) in 2016
- Note 14 Pension set up costs of £350 and professional advice on auto enrolment
- Note 15 Includes removal of gas central heating system
- Note 16 Increase in fees and sales of Internal Audit Service
- Note 17 Air con units and computers now fully depreciated
- Note 18 Purchase of new computer, laptop and electric heating system
- Note 19 2015-16 debtor included CiLCA as per Note 1 (£3,960) and other February and March training courses
- Note 20 Includes March payment to HMRC (£1,692), staff pension (£354), training (£512.50) and electricity (£1,022)
- Note 21 Increase in fees and sales of Internal Audit Service