

**Jonathan Parsons**

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**From:** Cara Stobart <cara@devonalc.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 March 2023 13:04  
**To:** Jonathan Parsons  
**Subject:** DALC Membership 2023/24



Dear Ivybridge Town Council

## MEMBERSHIP TO THE DEVON ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS 2023/2024

The Devon Association of Local Councils Ltd is a not-for-profit membership organisation, providing a wide range of support for parish and town councils in Devon including:

- **Up-to-date advice and guidance** by email and phone through our dedicated and highly experienced team, with access to further finance, HR and general legal advice via the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).
- **Regular updates and information** on local government matters via our website and weekly e-bulletins. Including access to legal briefings, publications, and toolkits on a wide range of topics.
- **Training and development** for councillors and clerks to grow their knowledge and skills, including support for achieving the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA). We also support the improvement and development of councils via the Local Council Award Scheme.
- Access to, and influence over, a national family of county associations and a national body, working together with a **strong voice raising the profile of local councils** to vocalise and progress matters of interest to our sector.
- **Being part of an organisation of mutually supportive councils**, able to help one another, share issues and inspire each other, with regular opportunities to network and discuss topics of interest locally, and nationally (via NALC's network groups).

Full details of our services to member councils can be viewed in our [Member Service Level Agreement](#).

### How to renew your membership for 2023/24

Your membership fee for 2023/24 will be £1,422.54. An invoice for this fee will be sent separately and can be expected in early April. Please do not pay your fee until you have received the invoice. *Please note that invoices will still be generated for those paying via their district council (only applicable to Mid Devon and Teignbridge areas) but will be marked as paid once the district payment is received.*

**To confirm your membership for the coming year, please complete our [membership renewal form](#) to update your council's details and confirm method of payment.**

It will be helpful to us if you could **return this form by Friday 26 May 2023** to confirm that you would like to continue your membership. Please note, if this form and payment has not been received by 31 July 2023 your membership will automatically cease and you will no longer be able to access our services.

### Ways to get involved with DALC in 2023/24

- [Sign up for our e-bulletins/register for our website](#) – available to both councillors and officers so you can keep informed on matters effecting local government, as well as news, events and surveys.
- [Share stories of your activities](#) with us so we can celebrate the incredible work of local councils.
- Respond to consultations and surveys, and/or send representatives to thematic meetings, to support DALC to be a strong voice for its member councils.
- [Book onto our training courses](#) and continue your personal/professional development
- [Help shape DALC's governance](#). Attend our AGM and use your vote, or consider nominating someone for the Board of Directors to be part of the strategic management of DALC.

## A note about the ordinary elections

Councillors across the County are directly subscribed to our website and e-bulletin services. With the ordinary elections taking place this year and the potential for a high number of changes to council's members, and the work involved for the DALC team in maintaining our records, we have decided to delete all councillor subscriptions to our services on Thursday 4 May. Clerks will not be affected and will continue to have access.

After the elections, councillors will be welcome to (re)subscribe for our website and e-bulletins from Tuesday 9 May, subject to the councils membership being renewed.

## Take part in our Annual Survey 2023

To support Devon's 400+ parishes, it is important that we understand our members, keep abreast of current trends, and identify any areas of support our members may need for the year ahead.

Please can you spare 5 mins to [complete our mini-survey](#) and help us capture useful information about your council, and your thoughts on DALC's services.

If you have any queries about the contents of this letter, please call 01392 241131 or email [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk)

Kind regards



**Cara Stobart**, County Officer

**Devon Association of Local Councils Ltd**

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# SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES TO MEMBER COUNCILS 2023/24



## Aims and objectives

This Service Delivery Agreement sets out the arrangements for the servicing, promotion and representation of member councils by Devon Association of Local Councils Ltd. Trading as Devon Association of Local Councils (DALC). It also defines the working relationship between DALC and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in providing services to member councils.

The aim of the Association is to take all such steps as may be necessary or desirable in the interests of member councils consistent with the objectives of the National Association of Local Councils:

1. to represent and promote the interests, the rights and functions of member councils
2. to support member councils in the performance of their roles
3. to give this support through provision of information, advice and training
4. to promote a widespread and well-informed interest in good local government.

DALC's role is to represent the interests of local councils and to provide opportunities for local councils to express their views; it will not attempt to represent the interests of an individual council.

It is generally expected that both the county and national associations will comply with the terms of the agreement, however, owing to resource constraints, it is recognised that in some cases the targets set out will not always be met in the first instance. Nevertheless, we are committed to complying with the Agreement in full wherever possible on three key objectives:

1. Ensuring the highest standards of service to member councils
2. Effective promotion and representation of the town and parish council sector in Devon
3. Effective partnership with other bodies including principal councils, government agencies, VCS organisations and others, to deliver information and training in a variety of formats.

The Agreement recognises the distinct and complementary roles of the Devon Association of Local Councils and the National Association of Local Councils.

## Glossary of terms

### Defined Terms

### Meaning

AGM

Annual General Meeting

DALC, the Association, the County Association

Devon Association of Local Councils

NALC, the National Association

National Association of Local Councils

## Service provision

DALC will:

1. Provide a well-resourced office and trained staff able to address and support member councils. The normal office hours are 9am to 2pm Mondays to Thursdays. At the discretion of the County Officer, the Association may provide additional out of hours emergency service to support member councils via telephone and email.
2. Provide guidance, information and support to member councils, through regular e-newsletters, its website and advisory services.
3. Deliver legal and procedural advice in a variety of formats including publications and training on changing legislation affecting town and parish councils
4. Provide a framework for consultation and develop suitable arrangements for the effective representation and promotion of local councils at the county, regional and national level.

The Association recognises the benefits of the use of email, its website and remote meetings, to provide a faster and more effective service and broad engagement with its membership.

## Legal Service

1. In the first instance, legal queries from member councils should be addressed to the County Association. We will provide a telephone and email service to give basic legal advice and interpretation. Queries should be sent by either the Clerk or the Chairman of the Council (or Chairman of a committee where relevant), and advice given shall be intended for the council as a whole, and not intended for individual use. Where other council members use the service, responses may be copied to the clerk/chairman for information.
2. We will acknowledge receipt of queries within 3 working days. Whilst we make every effort to provide a quick response to all legal queries, member councils are encouraged to make the earliest possible contact to help avoid delays in meeting your response times.
3. In the case of more complex queries, DALC may consult NALC's Legal Team. You will be asked to submit your query in writing with any supporting documents. Responses are normally returned to the County Association within 15 working days and forwarded to the member council within 3 working days. We will make every effort to forward responses on the same day.
4. NALC Updates and legal briefings will be circulated to member councils as appropriate. They will also be available on the membership restricted part of our website. Town and parish clerks are encouraged to circulate important information to their councillors.

## Policy development and support

DALC will:

1. Consult with member councils as appropriate on issues of national concern and on government consultative documents by circulating papers and initiating discussions through its membership and committees.
2. Take an active part in the development of county, regional and national policy, to represent the interests of town and parish councils in Devon

3. Take an active role in the lobbying of, and partnership with, principle authorities, other local government bodies, VCS organisations, partner stakeholders and other agencies, to enhance the role of town and parish councils and their ability to deliver services to their communities.

## Employment support

DALC will:

1. Offer support and guidance on matters relating to the recruitment and employment of staff.
2. Distribute national advice and guidance on employment issues
3. Refer particular issues, where appropriate, for further advice, guidance and support

## Finance Support

DALC will:

1. Provide member councils with local support and guidance on accounting and audit requirements.
2. Distribute national advice and guidance
3. Organise appropriate briefings and training
4. Refer any VAT queries to the Parkinson Partnership Ltd, whom which we have an SLA for professional advice.

## Borrowing approval Process

DALC is the body responsible for the checking and submission of Borrowing Approvals by town and parish councils.

DALC will:

1. Advise town and parish councils on the submission of loan sanction applications, providing the current criteria and implementation information is available to member councils.
2. Check applications for compliance with government requirements
3. Submit applications directly to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities for approval.

## Council development

DALC will:

1. Offer guidance and support to member councils to develop their role in the community
2. Offer support and guidance on the implementation of the Local Council Awards Scheme
3. Produce updates and publications to support member councils
4. Organise and participate in development, briefing and training at county, regional and national level for the better delivery of information and training for member councils.

## Planning support

DALC will ensure that national information and guidance on planning matters is conveyed to member councils in accordance with that guidance and local knowledge.

## Training development and support

DALC will:

1. Organise a comprehensive programme of training provision for member councils including both staff and members
2. Deliver tailor-made training events to individual member councils to address local needs. (There will be a charge for this service, which will be agreed in advance.)
3. Work with outside partners to develop training packages for delivery to town and parish councils.
4. Provide comprehensive support to clerks undertaking the CiLCA qualification. (There will be a charge for this service, which will be agreed in advance.)

## Officer support and attendance

Officers are available, by invitation, to attend area meetings of local councils to advise on and discuss topics of concern. DALC will also ensure that, where appropriate, its officers participate fully in the work of the National Association of Local Councils for the benefit of DALC member councils.

The Chairman of the County Committee may be invited to attend a ceremonial occasion, or other events, to further the profile of the parish and towns in Devon.

### Attendance at National, Regional and County events

DALC will ensure that, wherever possible, it is represented at all national, regional and county conferences, seminars and information events in order to represent the views of member councils and to inform member councils of the outcomes of such events. The Association also undertakes to deliver similar briefings and seminars at county and/or regional level to ensure the full participation and involvement of member councils. These may be either physical or remote events.

DALC is committed to representing member councils at NALC Conferences where appropriate, and for its appointed NALC representatives to attend the AGM.

The Association will, hold an AGM each year normally in October and this will be combined with an annual conference and a trader's exhibition, unless exceptional circumstances beyond DALC's control render it impossible. The event will deliver briefings and information, training sessions and other activities designed to inform member councils.

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DALC will always endeavour to provide a correct and timely response to its members and welcomes comments from its members and suggestions on how it can improve its service.

Email: [enquiries@devonalc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@devonalc.org.uk) | Telephone: 01392 241131

Address: DALC, The Devon Rural Hub, Amory Building, Cheriton Bishop, Exeter EX6 6JH.

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**Approved:** 23 March 2022

**To be reviewed:** March 2023