



# Northants CALC

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MEMBER SERVICES AND BENEFITS (2024)

[www.northantscalc.com](http://www.northantscalc.com)

## INTRODUCTION

The Northamptonshire County Association of Local Councils (Northants CALC) was created in 1947 and belongs to the parish and town councils and parish meetings in Northamptonshire. This booklet intends to inform you about our work, the services we provide and the benefits that membership of the Association brings.

The Association supports member councils to provide positive outcomes for the people of Northamptonshire in partnership with North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council, and other public and third sector organisations.

Northants CALC provides member councils with advice, training, information, advocacy, and member services. We do this by understanding the needs of member councils and developing resources locally and nationally to meet those needs. Unlike other organisations, we work exclusively with parish and town councils and parish meetings in Northamptonshire and, after more than seventy-five years in operation, membership rate is over 97%.

Member councils turn to Northants CALC for support, advice, and representation whether it is in developing a community project or finding a way through a local difficulty. Northants CALC provides a friendly, professional, and supportive service at all times.

Membership of Northants CALC is like membership of the AA or RAC; a council may not need us every day, but when it does need us, we are there to help get the council back on the road quickly.

## OUR MEMBERS

Our members are the parish and town councils and parish meetings in the county of Northamptonshire. There is a county association in each English county, with each one independent from but affiliated to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) based in London.

Our members range from the smallest parish meetings with less than one hundred electors to the biggest town councils with more than ninety thousand electors.

The diversity of the sector is its greatest strength because parish and town councils are the level of local government closest to the people they serve.

## THE ORGANISATION

Northants CALC is a not-for-profit membership organisation for parish and town councils and parish meetings in Northamptonshire. It is a company limited by guarantee and through the Articles of Association is owned by its members, who exercise control through the Annual General Meeting. Northants CALC is run by and for its member councils.

Northants CALC has a board of eight directors who are appointed at the Annual General Meeting to run the organisation in the best interests of member councils, who are the first tier of local government. Every director is a councillor or clerk from a council in membership of the Association.

Funding is obtained through annual membership subscriptions, grant funding, and through our own earned income streams, notably the Training & Development Service (TDS) and the Internal Audit Service (IAS).

## DECISION MAKING

The sovereign body of the Association is the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The AGM appoints the board of directors who are responsible for the governance of the Association. The AGM also appoints a President, which is an honorary position. The board appoints a CEO who is responsible for the management of the Association.

The board holds six business meetings per year, three topic focus sessions and a board away day. The CEO is accountable to the board and the board is accountable to the membership via the AGM. The Association is “owned” by member councils and operates in their interests.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Northants CALC will empower Local Councils in Northamptonshire to be at the heart of community leadership and development, providing them with information and services and enabling them to promote the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of their communities.

Northants CALC will be the voice of the first tier of local government in Northamptonshire and will understand and represent locally, regionally, and nationally the views of the 220 parish and town councils and 51 parish meetings in the county.

## MEET THE TEAM

### **Danny Moody, Chief Executive**

Joined in 2007, 37 hours per week

Danny reports to the board of directors and is responsible for ensuring the smooth and effective management of the organisation. Danny is a parish councillor in Helmdon, and he holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration and is a Principal Member of the Society of Local Council Clerks. Danny likes nothing better than being able to help a member council in need and he approaches any situation with calm objectivity.



### **Lesley Sambrook Smith, Deputy Chief Executive**

Joined in 2017, 32 hours per week

Before joining Northants CALC, Lesley was Clerk to Syresham Parish Council for 6 years. Lesley holds the Certificate in Local Council Administration. Lesley led on the New Councils Project which achieved universal parishing in Northamptonshire from 1 April 2021.



### **Marie Reilly, Training Manager**

Joined in 2019, 37 hours per week

Marie came to Northants CALC from Milton Keynes Council. Marie is also Vice Chairman of Roade Parish Council. Marie is a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and leads the Association's Learning & Development Programme. Marie gained the Certificate in Local Council Administration in 2020.



**Sophie Harding, Business Support Manager**

Joined in 2021, 37 hours per week

Sophie has lived in Northamptonshire all her life and, before joining Northants CALC, had worked in the charity sector for seven years – most recently as a Business Manager for a Northamptonshire charity.

Sophie has a MSc in Counselling and a BA in Psychology with Criminology from the University of Northampton.



# SERVICES & BENEFITS

## Advice and Support

Being a member of Northants CALC is like having an extra person on your council team. Knowledgeable and experienced, there isn't much that we haven't seen before. And on the rare occasions that we cannot help we'll know someone that can.

We offer face to face, telephone and e-mail support to all member councils through:

- The Member Enquiry Service (MES) for straightforward, generic queries.
- Free at the point of use advisory service for complex or council-specific enquiries.
- "Quick Response" Legal Service, delivered through our partners, Wellers Hedley Solicitors.
- Human Resources advice, from recruitment through personnel management to handling the end of the employment relationship.
- Financial advice, including audit, governance, and accountability.
- Funding advice, including how to access external grant funding and administration of borrowing approval applications.
- Access to the Legal Team at the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

## Training & Development Service (TDS)

Membership allows access to events, briefings, and seminars at member rates (doubled for non-members or those from outside Northamptonshire):

- Basic training courses for clerks and councillors.
- Advanced training for those wanting to push their skills or develop specialist knowledge.
- The Councillor Development Framework (CDF) to guide councillors on their learning journey.
- The Officer Development Framework (CDF) to guide clerks and other senior council officers on their learning journey.
- Formal qualifications, including the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA).
- Bespoke in-house training sessions so that the whole council learns together.
- One-off briefings and seminars on topics of particular interest.

<https://www.northantscalc.com/training-and-events>

## Information

Member councils rely on Northants CALC to keep them abreast of all the issues, legislation and developments affecting the sector so that they don't have to spend their own valuable time and resources doing so. The information service includes:

- A weekly e-mail bulletin on topical issues (the Friday mini *eUpdate*).
- Timely e-mail alerts on significant developments.
- The bi-monthly *eUpdate*, containing timely and relevant features and articles.
- The Association's web site ([www.northantscalc.com](http://www.northantscalc.com)).
- Access to NALC bulletins, Legal Topic Notes and Legal Briefings.

## Voice & Representation

We work to maintain relationships with local government and community organisations in the county as well as building links at regional, national, and even international level. We do this through:

- Regular meetings with unitary council officers and elected members.
- Representing parish and town councils on boards and panels whose work impacts on our member councils.
- Electing directors as representatives to various outside bodies.
- Responding to local, regional, and national consultations that affect member councils.
- Gathering member councils' views through surveys, seminars, and conferences.
- Consulting the Northants CALC Councillor Panel, giving a direct voice to parish and town councillors and ensuring that the diverse nature of member councils is represented.
- Understanding and responding to the issues that affect larger councils through the Northamptonshire Larger Councils Partnership (NLCP), a grouping of the thirty largest parish and town councils in the county.
- Representing parish and town councils in Northamptonshire at the Federation of East Midlands Associations of Local Councils (FEMALC).
- Lobbying the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) for policy and legislative changes to benefit member councils.

## **Internal Audit Service (IAS)**

All councils must appoint an internal auditor who is independent and competent. Since 2000 Northants CALC has managed a panel of auditors on behalf of member councils that:

- Provides independent auditors, most of whom are practitioners in the county.
- Offers affordable rates for internal audit (doubled for non-member councils).
- Ensures auditors are competent through quarterly briefing meetings.
- Supports councils to improve governance and accountability standards and avoid expensive fines and penalties.

## **Police Liaison Representative (PLR)**

Northants CALC manages and administers the PLR Scheme where every parish and town council and parish meeting appoints a person (who could be a councillor, officer, or member of the public) to act as a single point of contact for the police. It is the same principle as the Parish Paths Warden Scheme for rights of way and the Highways Representative Scheme for highways.

<https://www.northantscalc.com/plr>

## **Data Protection Officer (DPO) Service**

The Association acts as the named Data Protection Officer (DPO) for 190 of the county's 220 councils. The DPO Service:

- Provides a dedicated email address and named officers for the Service.
- Informs and advises the Council and its employees about their obligations to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and other data protection laws.
- Monitors compliance with the GDPR and other data protection laws, including managing internal data protection activities, advise on data protection impact assessments; train staff and conduct internal audits.
- Is the first point of contact for supervisory authorities and for individuals whose data is processed (employees, customers etc).

Councils are not required by law to appoint a DPO, but it is a very useful facility to have.



## Energy Buying Partnership

Northants CALC partnered with Weedon-based Clear Utility Solutions (CUS) in 2020 to provide a solution for member councils in Northamptonshire who wished to save money on electricity costs and reduce their carbon footprint. As a broker with access to green energy suppliers, CUS offered a solution for both. CUS has taken the time and trouble to understand the parish and town council market and the customer service ethos that CUS has fits very well with the parish sector. Following the successful implementation in Northamptonshire, CUS now provides the services to nearly twenty County Association's in England.

The partnership with CUS has saved over £1.2 million of public money since September 2020 and 900,000 kilograms of CO2 emissions has been prevented by recommending 100% green suppliers.

<https://www.clearutilityolutions.com/ncalc-partnership>

## WORKING WITH THE UNITARIES

Northants CALC has a very close working relationship with North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) and West Northamptonshire Council (WNC). Chief Executive, Danny Moody, is responsible for the relationship with WNC, and Deputy Chief Executive, Lesley Sambrook Smith, is responsible for the relationship with NNC. Relationship management includes:

- Attending meetings of full council and Executive (NNC) or Cabinet (WNC).
- Attending committee meetings as appropriate.
- Monitoring all meeting agendas and papers for items of interest to member councils.
- Engaging with the Local Area Partnerships (LAPs)
- Regular meetings with relevant officers, including communities, planning, highways, legal, elections, and finance.
- Ad hoc topic-specific meetings with officers and members.
- Advising on the development of policies and procedures that affect parish and town councils.
- Disseminating information to member councils on behalf of the unitaries.
- Helping design parish forums, conferences, and seminars.

The unitary councils recognise Northants CALC as the trusted and respected voice of the parish and town council sector.

## REGIONAL & NATIONAL NETWORK

Northants CALC is a member of the Federation of East Midlands Associations of Local Councils (FEMALC). We work closely with colleagues at the Leicestershire & Rutland, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, and Lincolnshire Associations. Officers of the five CALCs meet monthly, and representatives of the boards of directors meeting biannually.

Northants CALC works closely with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), which is based in London. Northants CALC appoints one of its directors to represent the Association on the NALC National Assembly, which meets four times a year. A parish or town council is a member of the national association by virtue of its membership of its county association.

The fees for NALC and Northants CALC are charged separately but collected in one invoice. Northants CALC collects the NALC fee and passes it on to NALC.

NALC web site: <https://www.nalc.gov.uk>

## OUR FUNDING & RESOURCES

The Association has income from two main sources:

- Membership subscriptions – 60%
- Earned income (training, IAS etc.) – 37%

The three largest elements of expenditure are:

- Staff costs – 62%
- Direct Service Costs – 16%
- NALC Affiliation Fee – 10%

The Association has four members of staff representing 3.9 Full Time Equivalents. The Association does not have a permanent office but has bases throughout the county for meetings and training. The staff work from home and are connected remotely through Microsoft Teams.

Subscription fees are average to high when compared to other County Associations whilst services are ranked at the highest end. Northants CALC consistently “bats above its weight” at national level. The smallest member councils currently pay in the order of £120 per annum, whereas the largest councils pay up to £5,611 (figures exclude NALC element).

Prior to 2008 the Association existed as a very small organisation reliant on other organisations for its survival. The organisation has grown markedly over the past sixteen years and has become independent, autonomous, and fit for purpose.

The Association survives and thrives through parish and town councils and parish meetings joining as members. Membership of the county association is not mandatory for parish and town councils, but all councils in Northamptonshire benefit from there being a county association and so there is a moral argument for joining. Councils who are not in membership benefit from the presence of the county association, but the cost is borne by those in membership.

Where a county association has full membership, its voice is stronger, and the sector is better represented. Where all councils are contributing to the costs of a county association it will be strong and well resourced.

This leaflet sets out some of the key benefits of membership.

Northants CALC belongs to its member councils who shape its services and activities.

Parish and town councils are stronger together, and by collectively supporting Northants CALC, they are assured of quality services, value for money and a strong voice.

## CONTACTS

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Northants CALC is open five days a week and we are here ready to take your call. Being a small team, you may occasionally need to leave a message, but you can be sure that we will respond at the earliest opportunity.



[www.northantscalc.com](http://www.northantscalc.com)

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