

Quarterly activity report

January to March 2025

Introduction

The quarterly activity report shows progress in delivering NALC's strategic plan, including information on internal issues, parliamentary and government affairs, events, media coverage, publications and advisory services.

NALC's mission and strategic objectives:

- Strong national and county voices promoting the sector and our manifesto for building stronger communities across England
- Creating more local councils in England
- Supporting councils and councillors
- Effective national and county associations working together to deliver our vision

Chief executive

- Open letter — NALC chair Cllr Keith Stevens wrote a [New Year open letter](#) to welcome the English Devolution White Paper, which recognised NALC's call for devolution to go beyond mayors and strategic authorities to communities and neighbourhoods. Devolution and local government reorganisation have dominated NALC, parish and town councils, and county associations deliberations this quarter and will continue to do so.
- Devolution — The English Devolution White Paper included many long-lobbied proposals by NALC and county associations. These include resetting central and local government relations and rewiring parish relationships with principal authorities. Financial reforms include multi-year settlements and more straightforward, less competitive grant funding. Strengthening the standards regime with sanctions to suspend or disqualify councillors, allowing remote attendance at council meetings, uplifting audit thresholds, and improving support and development for councillors.
- Representation — NALC represents the sector's interests in many national partnerships, including the Rural Coalition, stakeholder meetings with government officials, including the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs's Rural Insight Forum and the Rural Flood Resilience Forum, and a ministerial task force looking at delivering the government's missions in rural areas. NALC was added as a nominating organisation to the Canal & River Trust's Council to represent the interests of local government and task force studying how to deliver the government's missions in rural areas.

Policy and communication

- Engaging with the government and parliament — NALC responded to consultations on burials and cremations, the [provisional local government finance settlement](#), [local audit reform](#), [local authority funding reform](#), the [compulsory purchase order process](#), [strengthening standards](#), and [local government financial sustainability](#). NALC was cited in the Committee on Standards in Public Life report on [Recognising and Responding to Early Warning Signs in Public Sector Bodies](#). NALC met with Lord Moylan on community transport and planning. NALC sent letters to [Jim McMahon MP on allowances](#) and Yvette Cooper MP on Martyn's Law.
- Events — 202 people attended NALC's online events on [navigating rural realities](#), [the battle for standards](#) and [breaking the mould of parish and town councils](#), with an average of 87% saying the events met their expectations. NALC sold out its [study tour to Braunstone Town Council](#). NALC held [national network](#) meetings for climate emergency, coastal communities, LGBT+ councillors, micro councils, super councils and women councillors.
- Resources — NALC published a headline analysis of the May 2024 [parish and town council elections](#), a presentation on the [English Devolution White Paper proposals](#), an [advice note on understanding and preparing to move to a .gov.uk domain](#), and further information on [devolution](#) and [local government reorganisation](#).
- [Star Council Awards](#) — NALC held its Parliamentary Reception on 25 February 2025, at which the [Star Council Awards 2024 winners were announced](#). NALC secured media coverage on outlets such as [BBC Radio Sussex](#), [Maldon & Burnham Standard](#), [Nantwich News](#), [Cornish Stuff](#), [Milton Keynes Citizen](#), [MSN](#), [Sussex Express](#), and [Voice Newspapers](#). NALC has begun drafting proposals to hold the awards next year.

Member services

- Advisory services — NALC responded to 50 formal requests and 95 informal requests for legal advice from parish and town councils and county associations. NALC's financial advisor, DCK Accounting Solutions, advised eight financial enquiries. Breakthrough Communications provided 51 pieces of advice on communications and compliance with data protection and freedom of information. WorkNest, NALC's HR advisors, advised 109 calls on their advice line. NALC also issued two legal bulletins to county associations in January and March 2025.
- Civility and respect — 1,743 parish and town councils have signed up for the [Civility and Respect Pledge](#).
- Improvement — 20 parish and town councils were accredited under the [Local Council Award Scheme](#) (LCAS) this quarter (five gold, five silver, and 10 bronze). We also attended LCAS training sessions in Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and Peterborough. NALC, along with the Local Government Association, completed a [Corporate Peer Challenge](#) of Chippenham Town Council and a one-year review of Taunton Town Council.
- Resources — NALC published [The Good Councillor's Guide to Finance](#), the [Practitioners' Guide 2025](#), the [Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy](#), the [Model Financial Regulations \(England\)](#), the [Model Standing Orders \(England\)](#) and the [Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity and publicity during the pre-election period \(England\)](#).
- Website — 6,561 users registered from parish and town councils in membership since the launch on 7 October 2024. This comprises of 2,149 councillors, 3,794 clerks and 618 council staff. 53% of parish and town councils in membership (4,181) have at least one registered user.

Finance and administration

- Affiliation fees — NALC issued affiliation fee invoices for the new financial year. 89% of local parish and town councils were members of NALC and their county association last year, representing around 16 million electors.
- Job advertisements — NALC has advertised 53 job vacancies for parish and town councils and county associations this quarter on NALC's website, social media channels and the jobs bulletin.
- Royal Garden Parties — NALC received an allocation of 100 tickets for Royal Garden Parties taking place on 7 and 20 May 2025. These much sought-after tickets were allocated to county associations and distributed to parish and town councils nationwide.
- Cybersecurity — NALC has successfully achieved Cyber Essentials accreditation for the third consecutive year. Cyber Essentials is a government-backed certification that helps organisations guard against the most common cyber threats and demonstrate their dedication to cybersecurity.
- Support — NALC has responded to 52 formal requests for support from parish and town councils and county associations.

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