

*Celebrating over 70 Years serving Parish and Town Councils  
in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin*

## ANNUAL REPORT AND AUDITED ACCOUNTS 2023-24

### **The President, Katrina Baker MBE**

It was an honour to have been re-elected as the Association's President - this generally means that I get the good jobs.

This year has been a little busier than last year and it has been a pleasure for me to attend more events and visit more Town & Parish Councils across the geographical Shropshire.



I am very grateful to the Vice Presidents and Chairman for representing me when, unfortunately, I have not been available to attend some meetings, especially those when the Association has been recognising outstanding achievements and long service awards.

During the year, I was invited to join the Working Groups to look at the Association's Constitution and Terms of Reference. These documents will assist us all in ensuring that SALC can represent its members and support Councils with the wide range of activities we now find ourselves involved in.

We are all very grateful to Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council, and although we realise that some difficult decisions are having to be considered, our organisation works closely with the officers and members for the benefit of our communities.

SALCs training programme has continued - in fact, we think that more Members and more Councils are attending sessions, either for the first time, or as refreshers. Thank you, also, to our team of trainers.

Please do pass on my thanks to everyone involved in your Parish or Town - your Clerk and Staff, volunteers and residents - we are fortunate to have such dedicated teams across the County.

Here at the Shropshire Association, work has continued, and I must thank Dianne and Gail for the excellent work they have done and what they have managed to achieve, on our behalf, throughout the year. The information, guidance and support have been invaluable, and we are all truly grateful. The office is much busier these days and I know just how much they both do (out of hours) to continue our support. Sadly, we will say a fond farewell to Dianne in the coming months as she takes a well-earned rest. May I take this opportunity to thank her for her years of outstanding service. She will be truly missed. Also, a thank you to our Chairman and Vice Chairmen, and all the members of the Executive - your strong leadership has been extremely effective and much appreciated.

At this point, I would like to record our thanks to David Beechey - David has been a lead member of SALC for many years and his support has been much appreciated across the County and Countrywide as he has represented SALC nationally, too.



I have been very proud to represent you throughout the year as your President. Thank you for the opportunity to attend events and meet amazing people across the County.

I hope you all remain well - with very best wishes to you all.

Katrina Baker

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## The Chairman, Ray Wickson

Ray Wickson



As 2024 ends, I want to take the opportunity to thank all those members who have participated in the Association's activities throughout the year. We have had a challenging time, not helped by the General Election held in July this year, which restricted our planned meetings and consultations in June and early July.

My year started off with the completion of our Emergency Planning/Community Resilience Programme and discussions concerning Martyn's Law and how that will affect Town & Parish Councils. I also had the privilege of representing our President in giving the Long Serving Clerk Award to Freda Morris of Stottesdon and Sidbury Parish Council. In February, again I represented the President at Welshampton & Lyneal to present the Jan Snell Award. Congratulations go to Oswestry Town Council for achieving Local Council Foundation Level Award.

In March, it was Astley Abbots turn to endure my presence where I presented a Long Service Clerk's Award to Jayne Madeley.

March was also the month we started to engage with Shropshire Council to see if Town & Parish Councils could assist in supporting those services under threat because of the considerable budget savings that have to be made by Shropshire Council. As a result of the survey sent out, sixty-eight town and parish councils responded. Of these twenty-two councils stated they would not or were not able to help. The remaining forty-six councils said they were willing, but it depended upon resources or needed a discussion. The remaining

councils had not responded but some have since engaged in dialogue with Shropshire Council. I want to thank all those Town and Parish Councils in participating in this exercise.

In the meantime, SALC has also contacted other County Associations to find out how they are addressing the same issues.

Our Youth Transport Programme has unfortunately not progressed since March due to other issues, however, it is my intention to move forward on this in the new year. I chaired several Hospital Transformation Presentations and have not only managed to attend all area committees at least once face to face this year but several individual Parish Councils as well.

There have been numerous online meetings i.e. Digital Inclusion, Social Task Force. SALC continues to meet with our local CALCs and of course National Assembly, either by zoom or face to face. We are represented on the Shropshire Economic Partnership Board and Shropshire Playing Fields Association.

The proposed Local Nature Recovery Strategy project, which of course includes the Conference in December is extremely exciting. My thanks go to Janet Cobb and her band of volunteers for promoting this in conjunction with both Unitary Authorities. Hopefully, this will lead onto involvement of Town and Parishes to create a better environment for our residents and help protect the countryside.

Our Chairmans' bi-monthly meetings are still a successful way of engaging with Parishes and I thank those Chairpersons and their representatives for their continued support and positive input.

We continue to work with Telford & Wrekin through the Area Committee, but as an Executive we are keen to strengthen ties with Councillors and Officers of the Authority. Probably, the most

notable achievement this year, was to encourage Telford to re-engage with Parishes in relation to the parish boundary review. But, as with Shropshire Council, there are challenges ahead concerning land allocation for housing, especially in the rural areas.

Our Constitution and Service Level Agreement have been reviewed, and I believe it is now time to review Area Committee Constitutions and how the Area Committees should progress in the future.

Finally, as I get out and about to visit individual Parish Councils, it is heartening to see how hard the councils work looking out for their parishioners and the amount of diverse involvement conducted within their communities and with their partners.

Thank you for your support, without which, my role would be so much harder. I look forward to collaborating with you all in the future.

Cllr Ray Wickson

Chairman

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### County Secretary's Report

It has always been a privilege and a pleasure to report to our members and to thank you for your support and for the many kind comments we receive. This year is no exception and is of particular significance being my last report to the AGM before finally retiring from SALC.



Looking back over my period in office, the Pandemic and having to adapt, and help our Members to adapt to new ways of working, has no doubt be the most challenging. The fallout is

still with us with the need for comprehensive long term recovery plans that promote resilience and community wellbeing. A major impact will be the accelerated pace of new technological and AI that poses both opportunities and challenges and it will be crucial for improving service delivery, communication and streamlined processes.

We have had some joyous and memorable occasions to celebrate with you over the years, the most recent being the Coronation of King Charles III covering a weekend of all kinds of activities you have held in your communities. Recent events in the middle east have been heart-breaking and we pray for those who have lost loved ones.

Our working relationships with organisations that include Parkinson Partnership (Finance), Breakthrough Communications (Freedom of Information and Data Protection), Parish On-Line (Websites), Worknest (HR and Health & Safety), Scribe (Accounting system) and 2DLaw (Legal Services) as well as NALC Legal, reinforce the reliable field of expert support we continue to provide. We will continue to work with our unitary partners during a period of financial challenge, helping, where we can, to preserve services for our communities.

It is also a privilege to work with those who care and help protect our wonderful rural environment as will be seen in our Conference on Nature Recovery on 6 December - [Local Nature Recovery Strategy Conference - 6th December 2024 | SALC \(alcshropshire.co.uk\)](#) A special thanks to Janet Cobb, Clerk, Edgton Parish Council and, Middle Marches Community Land Trust Board Member and to Allan Wilson our Vice Chair, Telford & Wrekin for their expertise in pulling this together.

## **Finance**

Using Scribe accounting software, our accounts are recorded on a Receipts and Payments basis. The Auditor quoted that the accounts were of a good standard. The statement of financial activities shows

that for the financial year 2023/24 total income was £148,624.93 and total expenditure was £146,220.26 resulting in a surplus for the year of £2,404.67.

The overall balance was £85,166.52 plus £25,000.00 Public Sector Deposit Fund Shares and £8,595.86 Reserve Account, mainly arising from less expenditure on training fees due to remote training, an increase in training income due to remote training and an increase in affiliation fees income due to the increase in fees per elector 2023-2024.

This money is kept as a contingency fund should this be required.

Our thanks again to Shropshire Council for their continued support in providing audit services, and serviced office accommodation.

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**SHROPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (SALC)  
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT  
FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL 2023 TO 31ST MARCH 2024**

	2023/24		2022/23	
	£	£	£	£
<u>Balances Brought Forward</u>				
Cash at Bank - Current Account	82,875.81		69,522.67	
Cash at Bank - Reserve Account	8,481.90		8,444.76	
Public Sector Deposit Fund	25,000.00		25,000.00	
		<u>116,357.71</u>		<u>102,967.43</u>
<u>Receipts</u>				
ALC Affiliation Fees	132,940.00		101,020.94	
Training	12,650.00		21,171.86	
Bank Interest - current/reserve	1,221.86		503.10	
Ad Hoc Services	930.41		220.00	
Publications	302.20		146.40	
Local Council Award Scheme	200.00		480.00	
Mailings	150.00		0.00	
AGM	116.50		0.00	
NALC Affiliation Fees	0.00		24,981.64	
Shropshire Council Support	0.00		5,000.00	
Area Committee Fees	0.00		1,920.00	
		<u>148,624.93</u>		<u>155,443.94</u>
<u>Payments</u>				
Salaries	102,049.56		98,785.45	
NALC Affiliation Fees	26,768.19		25,975.11	
Training	8,326.83		11,677.09	
Area Committee Fees	1,913.20		230.00	
AGM	1,667.47		72.92	
ALC Affiliation Fees	1,144.81		0.00	
Ad Hoc Services	930.41		125.00	
Office Expenses	779.69		802.60	
Insurance	530.14		495.74	
Chairman's Allowance	500.00		0.00	
Travel Expenses	377.52		178.88	
Executive Committee Meetings	306.00		0.00	
Bank Charges	254.10		316.40	
Staff Training	228.00		0.00	
Pension Fund Deficit	200.00		2,600.00	
Publications	196.40		0.00	
Website	47.94		228.00	
Regional Support	0.00		462.72	



Conferences	0.00	<u>146,220.26</u>	103.75	<u>142,053.66</u>
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>		<u><u>118,762.38</u></u>		<u><u>116,357.71</u></u>
Represented By :				
Cash at Bank - Current Account	85,166.52			
Cash at Bank - Reserve Account	8,595.86			
Public Sector Deposit Fund	25,000.00	<u>118,762.38</u>		
		<u><u>118,762.38</u></u>		

Signed: D Dorrell.....Manager

I have examined the receipts and payments account together with the books, vouchers and documents relating to the Association of Local Councils for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. In my opinion the books have been properly kept and the above account is in agreement with the books, vouchers

Signed: Katie Williams (Jul 17, 2024 08:38 GMT+1).....Auditor

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Our membership remains at 99%. I am confident that I am leaving SALC in a good place with a final thank you to everyone for your continued support, to our President, Vice Presidents, past and present, and Executive Members for their direct support and to all our Area Committee Chairs and Secretaries for their efforts to ensure local councils have a platform to share their concerns and their success stories. As ever, I thank my colleague, Gail Power, who I will miss very much, for her friendship and the support she has given me through the years. The tremendous amount of work she continues to provide in managing our finances, our training programme and much more is greatly appreciated.

**Dianne Dorrell**  
**County Secretary**

**October 2024**