

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



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introduction

Welcome to all our member councils. The 2021/22 year has certainly been an interesting one. We kicked-off where we'd left off, back in lockdown and the second year of the pandemic. Throughout this time the team worked hard to keep the office open and ensure we were available to respond to the range of new queries that the situation highlighted. We were there to guide our members back to face-to-face meetings last May and kept the website updated on regulations as they became available. We all weathered the storm well and are now meeting confidently again. However, holding hybrid meetings remains an important lobbying point.

After successfully moving all our training online in 2020, we continued in this vein until it was safe to meet up again, after which we trialled a few in-person sessions with councils and our CiLCA mentoring programme. It wasn't

only the training that went virtual, our Internal Audit Service also had to be conducted virtually and was, as with all things GAPTC, seamlessly done. This year we had the best of both worlds, with most of our final sessions taking place in person, yet maintaining the flexibility to conduct sessions virtually if necessary.

While we held the fort to ensure all our members had access to these services and training we continued to work with councils to resolve challenges and promote and share good practice.

It has been a year of change and strategic thinking, looking at the bigger picture and how we can better support our members at a time when climate change tops the agenda, food and fuel poverty are very real issues your communities face and most members are only a year away from elections.

We hope our members draw confidence from this report and the plans we have for the coming months.

**the year that
stayed the same
while constantly
changing**

strategy

In September 2021 a Strategic Support Officer was appointed to our team to help realise the CEO's vision of expanding the member offer and building a positive sector image while affecting positive change in our communities.

This kicked off with a new look for the organisation, which was rebranded with the brand launch taking place at our Christmas Clerks' Networking event.

At a strategic planning day in February this year the organisation's Executive Committee and staff team got together to discuss our main drivers for the coming five years. It quickly became apparent that five key themes required consideration as they would likely have the greatest impact on our sector.

Professionalism

Accountability

Leadership

Communications

Community Engagement

These, along with a need to promote Health & Wellbeing, the Climate Agenda and the upcoming Elections, resulted in the development of a strategy that would provide services to our members so that GAPTC's parish and town councils can lead their communities to a sustainable, healthy future.

The Strategic Plan will be launched within the next month and highlights our commitment to our members and their communities, as well as the sector as a whole. A sector we believe passionately in. Through an expanded training programme, more effective communications and a sharing of knowledge through networking and the provision of council-friendly toolkits we believe we are well on our way to becoming a highly respected sector of local government.





WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED:

Membership renewal

New-look newsletter, filled with sector news and useful tips and guidance for councils

Extended database to include councillors building our 2-way conversation

An informative social media presence on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn

Opened a daily line of communications to clerks and councillors to share challenges and learning through Council CONTACT

Rebranded organisation

click

WHAT WE AIM TO ACHIEVE:

New website with better access to information and expanded knowledge base

Podcasts featuring interviews that facilitate shared learning

YouTube channel with how-tos and videos that unpick the everyday issues councils face

Toolkits on Climate Action & Biodiversity, Health & Wellness and Elections: Step-by-step guides with 100% user-friendly content for councils and committees

Mobile app for training and on-the-spot advice

membership

Year-on-year our membership has grown, with 97% of the county's parish and town councils reaping the benefits of belonging to GAPTC. Our commitment to promoting professionalism in the sector was again reflected in our subscription fees with discounts offered to councils with qualified clerks and those that have achieved the Local Council Award Scheme, at any level.

This year Alkington, Hinton and Southam Parish Councils (PC) attained Foundation status for the second time, successfully reapplying four years on from the original award. Whiteshill & Ruscombe PC achieved Quality and Charlton Kings PC and Cirencester TC achieved Quality Gold. Several other councils are currently working towards achieving this award.

To further assist councils we offer an intensive mentoring programme for clerks wanting to become CiLCA qualified. Over twenty clerks have registered for the sessions this year alone with more interest expressed all the time. Training goes right to the heart of professionalism. Clerks and Councillors wishing to better serve their communities have committed to the extensive training we offer. Being a Better Councillor continues to be



popular and is regularly fully-booked. This year saw the introduction of a new training offer: The New Councillor Toolkit is aimed at helping new Councillors find their feet and includes virtual sessions, e-learning and a practical component.

Key to our members is the representation they receive via GAPTC at a national level. The model policies, legal topic notes and lobbying of central government is all done by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) with whom we are in regular communication.

97%

representation

TRAINING OFFERED TO COUNCILLORS AND CLERKS

we partner with external training providers to bring our members the widest range of training available

GAPTC:

- Clerks' the Knowledge
- Being a Better Councillor
- New Councillor Toolkit
- Chairmanship Skills
- Planning in Plain English
- Report Writing

E-Learning:

- Introduction to Local Councils
- Data Protection Essentials
- Freedom of Information Essentials
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Health & Safety Essentials
- Screen Display Equipment (SDE) Workstation Assessment
- Fire Safety Essentials
- Time Management Essentials
- Personal Safety
- and more

Communications:


- Building an Effective Council Communication Strategy
- Improving Internal Council Communications
- Managing Difficult People and Conversations
- Strategies to Identify and Recruit Councillors
- Public Speaking Skills for Councillors
- Social Media Skills for Councillors
- and more

Finance & Governance:

- Finance for Councillors
- Internal Controls
- The role of Internal Audit
- VAT for unregistered councils
- Budget and precept setting

Engagement

- Dealing with Local and Regional Media
- How to Engage with Young People in your Community
- Building a 2-way Conversation with your Community
- Creating an Effective Social Media Strategy for your Council
- Using Facebook to Enhance your Council's Communications with the Community
- Beyond Facebook: How Councils can make use of a Range of Social Media Platforms

 this page is interactive, select any course for more information

In an effort to promote professionalism in the sector GAPTC runs mentoring sessions for the CiLCA qualification. These are delivered by CiLCA-recognised trainer Jules Owen. A third cohort will start in autumn on which there is still availability. GAPTC offers membership discounts to councils with qualified clerks.





services

GAPTC offers its members a diverse range of services. We believe training spearheads this service and, as you will have seen, we offer a host of specialist sessions that cover a wide variety of topics. The self-guided e-learning caters for busy professionals, and for those who can spare a few hours, and learn best with a trainer, we have virtual, in-person courses.

One of the most popular services, due to our meticulousness is the Internal Audit Service with eighty-five audits undertaken for 2021/2022, an increase of ten on the previous year. We have ten auditors on our books who are all CiLCA qualified.

We also make a list of qualified locum clerks available for those councils who find themselves without a clerk.

Two staff-related services have proved useful to councils over the year: 1) the Staff Review Service and 2) the HR Service. The former appoints a team to review council structures and make recommendations on future staffing arrangements. The latter provides councils with two free hours of HR consultation. In addition to this we have an extensive HR Toolkit on our website that covers all aspects of council recruitment.

But the most popular when it comes to service engagement is our Advice Line. Year on year the queries become more complex and varied. The workload increased dramatically during the height of the pandemic and the office continued to provide comprehensive advice to members. As we update and rethink our systems and services this one will always be a priority as we strive to make information access quick and effective.

the team

Two long-serving members of the GAPTC staff team recently retired and will be missed.

Anita Sach

Anita, the Training and Communications officer, left in June 2022 to a marvellous send-off. Anita was with the organisation for eleven years and brought a wealth of experience, particularly for clerks, with her. She will continue to offer some of our training while we adjust to GAPTC life without her and to avoid

throwing our new Deputy County Officer into the deep end.

Sue Creswick

Sue needs no introduction and retired a month later. As a clerk for ten years and a councillor in her own parish, Sue has reserves of knowledge we know we only ever skimmed the surface of. Regardless of the question asked, she was always able to find a response or a way forward.



Alison Robinson CEO

Alison grew up in Anglesey where she gazed out over the Snowdonia mountains fomenting her love of wild places and the outdoors. She holds

an MSc in Urban Policy and Regeneration, a Post Graduate Certificate in Urban Design, several Leadership qualifications and in 2021 a Certificate in Procurement and Supply. She holds the sector FiLCA and CiLCA qualifications and has led GAPTC as CEO since 2015. She represents the organisation at regional and national level and is the chairman of UNISON local branch.



Dawn Laird DEPUTY CEO

Dawn grew up in Lancashire but has lived in the Cotswolds so long that she now considers this home. She has a long-standing association

with this sector in that she has served as a parish councillor, and has had to stand in as clerk several times. She learnt to keep her head while having difficult conversations and understands the benefit of effective communication within local councils. Dawn is CiLCA qualified, passing some units with commendation. She practises yoga and enjoys gardening.



Kerrin Cocks STRATEGIC SUPPORT OFFICER

Kerrin grew up in South Africa and studied Communications at the University of Johannesburg. After a brief career in journalism she found her passion in marketing and publicity, working predominantly in the book publishing industry. Since relocating to the UK with her family in 2015 she has wanted to work in the public sector where she can be instrumental in making positive change. She undertook her CiLCA qualification this year and sees her role at GAPTC as one of encouraging councils beyond their traditional responsibilities to create sustainable, healthy communities.

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VACANCIES COTSWOLD AND TEWKESBURY DISTRICTS



our executive



[click to read more](#)

The GAPTC Executive Committee (EC) is made up of parish and town councillors from the four districts in Gloucestershire, together with a Clerk Representative.

The committee considers the governance of the organisation and oversees its strategic direction, reviewing the ongoing work of the team and providing support to the CEO.

The 2021 GAPTC AGM went ahead in person in July last year. There was a great turn out with over forty people attending and a guest speaker, Ashley Jones, from the South West Regional Organised Crime Unit talking about fraud. His session was so informative we invited him back to talk to the Clerks at the December Networking session.

The Executive Committee has its own NALC representative, recently appointed was Richard Page who takes the reins from Peter Richmond who sadly passed away earlier this year. Peter brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the association. He was a great friend to the

GAPTC team members and his stories and positive energy are missed.

Two EC representatives attend the South West Local Council Association meetings which meets across the region to share good practice and partnership working.

Liz Hodges (Chipping Campden TC)

Nick Penny (Coleford TC)

Alan Porter (Churchdown PC)

Isaac Bamfield (Berkley TC)

Jim Harmsworth Cowles

(Dumbleton PC)

Muriel Bullock (Eastington PC)

Ray Cotton (Awre PC)

Richard Page (Norton PC)

Steve Ponting (Rodborough PC)

Jacquie Webster (Clerk Rep)

Richard Crighton (non-voting Clerk Rep)

projects

GAPTC is committed to providing effective support to its members. We understand the challenges our councils face better than anyone and have embarked on a campaign to lighten the load on our clerks and councillors in this climate of change.

Over the coming months we will be updating our internal systems to automate processes in order to commit more time to providing that support.

Let's say your council has declared a climate emergency, it understands the need to build healthy communities and is concerned about the forthcoming elections because you already have unfilled vacancies. Through partnership working we are distilling the vast amount of information available to councils on these issues and placing it into toolkits: user-friendly guides. Armed with one of these your council will have all the information, and all the resources it needs to navigate its way through these complex issues.

We see our role, and yours, as two fold: 1) Guide you seamlessly through the work you're obligated to do so that 2) you have time to do the work you became a councillor to do. We know you want to make a difference



and with our toolkits, podcasts, video advice and roadshows you'll be equipped to do just that.

The toolkits are step-by-step guides with articles, flyers, posters and suggested campaigns that can be used off-the-shelf in your communications with residents.

We are also re-examining how we present training and how we can accommodate different learning styles and schedules as we are mindful of the variety of lifestyles our councillors inhabit.

To keep up to date with all this don't miss our newsletters and follow us on your preferred social media platform.



Financial Statements

for the year ended 31 March 2022

Income and Expenditure

	2022 £	2021 £
Income	155,084	152,785
Subscriptions	105,595	108,935
Course Fees	22,795	12,142
IAS	11,766	17,255
Other Income	14,928	14,453
	155,084	152,499
Expenditure		
Publications	–	286
Wages and Salaries	91,161	80,203
Pension	4,372	3,819
Rent and Service Charges	9,120	9,120
Insurance	654	646
Travel and Subsistence	226	54
Telephone	922	958
Postage	–	6
Printing and Stationery	1,050	1,000
Website and Computer	2,746	5,551
Sundry Expenses	3,294	2,704
Affiliation Fees	25,424	24,858
Catering	974	–
Training and Hall Hire	10,516	2,954
Conferences and Meetings	90	–
Consultancy	10,943	790
Accountancy and Payroll	754	594
Depreciation	54	67
Bank Charges	–	–
	162,300	133,610
Operating Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(7,216)	19,175
Bank Interest	40	139
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	(7,176)	19,314