



Annual Report 2020 — 2021

Association Structure

President	John Parker
Vice Presidents	Cllr Janet Page Tony Gibb
Chairman	Cllr Jill Crouch
Vice Chairman	Cllr K D Johnson
Honorary Treasurer	Donna Yea
Auditor	Andrew Notley
Chief Executive	Neil Wedge
Executive Committee	
Central Area	Cllr Jill Crouch Cllr Debbie Wiltshire
Eastern Area	Cllr Steve Butler Cllr Janet Wallace
Northern Area	Cllr Stuart Waite
Purbeck Area	Cllr Peter Bowyer Cllr Sarah Jackson
Western Area	Cllr John Broom Cllr Peter Noel
Town & Larger Councils	Cllr Chris Turner Cllr Haydn White Cllr Lindsey Dedden Cllr K D Johnson

Our Aim:

To support local councils in Dorset in achieving excellence.

In doing this, DAPTC provides advice, support, training and assistance to its member councils, many of whom employ only one official, the Clerk, usually on a part-time basis.

The advice and support offered by DAPTC is backed-up by the Association's links with the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) to which it is affiliated.

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Acknowledgements:

Our thanks go to all who have helped the Association during the year, particularly:

- Dorset Council
- Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
- All members of the Executive Committee
- Councillors and Clerks of member councils who have contributed to the running of Area and Town and Larger Councils Committees.
- All Area Secretaries

DAPTC remembers the outstanding service of Cllr. Janet Page who sadly passed away early in 2021. Her service to the community and DAPTC was significant.

Joint Foreword from the President and Chair of DAPTC

Review of 2020/20221

To quote Bob Dylan, “the times they are a changin’”. Never more so than now for everyone but particularly our Local Council sector. We have all learned a lot from the Covid 19 pandemic and the disruption to our (normal) council procedures. We have got to grips with virtual meetings, using zoom or teams and have found ways of helping those in need within our communities.

Because of these enforced changes, new horizons have opened around how DAPTC might better operate and probably the most notable area is the delivery and administration of training. But this is by no means the only aspect of DAPTC’s work where new possibilities are revealing themselves.

We believe that now, as we start a return to some form of normal, is the right time to review and improve how DAPTC operates. Crucial to this review is a clarity about what we need to do to help you, our member councils, to be the best you can be and provide the best service you can provide to your communities.

As we embark on this review, we should all think about what we need to do to secure a better future for DAPTC. Of particular importance, we feel, are the issues of how we get our thoughts, wants, and needs communicated to the Executive Committee, particularly via our Area Committees, how we encourage and facilitate the development of parishes within the Bournemouth Christchurch and Poole unitary area, and how we are financed in the future. In the coming year we hope that you will all contribute your views to give the Executive Committee an indication of how you would like us to move forward towards a better future.

As an association we are not blessed with a wealth of resources either in personnel or finances. We are, however, blessed with a small but well led, hardworking and innovative team of individuals in the DAPTC office.

During the pandemic this team were not only at the forefront of helping many of our member councils deal with the technology required and keeping you all informed of national changes in legislation and guidance, but they also introduced new and cost-effective ways of delivering our service to you, the members. They continue to do this, and we should not underestimate the value of what they do.

In what will undoubtedly be another challenging year ahead we wish you good fortune and, as always, stand ready to advise, assist and enable you to achieve excellence.

John Parker
President

Jill Crouch
Chair

Chief Executive's Report

Introduction

Joining DAPTC at the start of a pandemic was an interesting introduction to a new role. The immediate challenges were to get what was like many other organisations an office based/paper orientated operation enabled to work from home. My thanks go to Dorset Council IT department whom made this transition very smooth for DAPTC and it then boiled down to how we as a small team would adapt. That adaption to a new working environment went better than expected and in fact some 18 months later, has resulted in permanent changes to how we function and operate.

My thanks go to our Executive Committee in moving quickly to take up virtual meetings and also my colleagues, Debbie and Lisa for the way they embraced the changes we needed to make. Some of these came thick and fast and were difficult. I think we've ended up in a better space and naturally learned a lot in the process.

National Association of Local Councils & COVID

The relationship with NALC also moved on to a different footing enabled and powered by Zoom with the instigation of weekly meetings online as advice and support was mobilised to take account of the COVID impact to our members in terms of governance and decision making, finances and how best to engage and support their communities.

As the first lockdown bit, we launched virtual meeting training for members and also started to gather information on the potential financial impacts, primarily from lost income. Sharing and hearing updates from around England through the weekly Zoom calls helped shape what we could do for members in Dorset. Whilst some parishes and towns took time to adjust to online meetings, there were many that seized the opportunity firmly and never looked back.

I was staggered how quickly our members rallied to deliver support to those most vulnerable in their communities just proving how in touch they are and resourceful.

Whilst a challenging period for all I believe we will reflect on the period in mid-2020 as a time when the parish and town council sector made a giant leap in embracing emerging technology.

Dorset and BCP Councils

The pandemic also impacted our unitary authorities who hurriedly moved resources off their normal day to day work to help manage and execute critical services.

The work pan-Dorset has been encouraging and productive over the course of the year. New forums and meetings emerged where there was a clear desire to co-ordinate activities in trying times. I've nothing but praise in the way not only our member councils rallied together, but also commitment from the two unitary authorities to engage and keep parishes and towns briefed on plans and issues.

It's important we don't lose sight of the collaborative wins experienced during COVID — without doubt parishes, towns and the unitary councils are far better and more effective when there is a high level of dialogue and cooperation.

The unitary changes have attracted a good deal of criticism and scorn before going live and since, however, we are where we are and it's now important we look to ways in which we can maintain a good dialogue for the benefit of communities across the county. Having been momentarily diverted from bedding in the unitary changes we need to relook at what mechanisms will ensure that collaborative working forced upon us during COVID, continues to develop post pandemic.

Chief Executive's Report

Relationship with NHS Dorset CCG

DAPTC continues to provide the CCG with communication channels for consultation on future NHS services. This gives our members greater opportunity to comment on plans for changes as well as providing the CCG with the views of local communities, often in sparsely populated areas.

2022 will see some significant changes as Dorset CCG is absorbed into a new NHS structure from April. We hope to continue our work with the new organisation and bring important news on health related matters to parishes and towns.

Training and Development 2020/21

This has been the most significant challenge faced in the year.

DAPTC has moved from exclusively a face to face trainer to one that offers a number of training delivery solutions. The pandemic prompted this change of direction and it's one that many delegates say has been a change for the good.

We have also streamlined our mechanism for evaluating feedback from courses by using Survey Monkey. This means we will increasingly share delegate feedback to help inform future participants if this course might be beneficial and suitable for them.

The main priority in April and May 2020 was to convert our existing courses to webinars and online formats which invariably meant a re-write for our courses and for those of retained trainers. This process has proved beneficial as we have reviewed content and brought it up to date as well as looking at pre and post course resources. Five major areas were looked at first:

1. **Planning Training.** This was often a difficult full days course so we split it down into bitesize chunks and re-ordered some of the sessions. We also include some practical tips for Clerks and elected members like focusing on the applications that matter most and improving the effectiveness of responses to really help planning officers with quality local input. These courses have grown in popularity and will be run throughout the year.
2. **Neighbourhood Planning.** This was separated out of the core planning training as it was clear we have members who were well on with 'made' plans and others thinking about making the leap. This course now focuses on those just starting or contemplating developing a plan. With so much activity around the Local Plan this too has proved highly popular.
3. **Communications and Social Media.** We partnered with Breakthrough Communications early in the refresh of our training programme primarily because of the increasing importance of engaging effectively with our communities. They have some innovative and fascinating courses from developing communications strategies to dealing with crisis situations. This type of content will increasingly become more relevant and important for councils of all sizes.
4. **What We Do.** Every month we implemented a one hour drop in session for new Clerks and Councillors to explain the support available through DAPTC. After an initial launch we then added a representative from The Society of Local Council Clerks to explain how they can provide support and professional development. These have proved popular and supplement our work on the induction programmes for Clerks and Councillors.
5. **E-Learning Modules.** We joined the NALC pilot early to understand what e-learning may support for members going forward. Lately we have an agreement with our colleagues in the South West and are now starting to develop our own e-learning content that will be available in early 2022. These modules will provide the most convenient, flexible and cost effective route to Clerk and Councillor training when fully operational.

Training topics and the availability of quality delivery is something we are constantly on the lookout for to share with our members. We hope to continue to innovate and tackle topics important to communities in Dorset.

Chief Executive's Report

Area Committees

These continue to work effectively in some locations and not much in others. I fully appreciate this is yet another time commitment for elected members on top of other parish or town meetings and committees.

To help members share best practice, come to together on common issues these forums have the potential to be an integral part of parish and town council life. This topic for DAPTC is a vital one to get right and one we will need member input from over the next 12 months from members. As it's a constitutional matter for us, membership engagement is important, so when the time is right your feedback will be vital.

Please take the opportunity to shape what the area committees might look like and how they might function. Above all encourage your representatives to attend.

Conduct & New Code of Conduct

I'm heartened by the revisions to the Local Government Association's model Code of Conduct which is now adopted by both BCP and Dorset Council. I know it falls short in certain respects, but it is progress. We have been working with Dorset Council to also modernise the Register of Interest process. This has been clunky as a process for Clerks and elected members, not meeting website accessibility regulations and in some cases with poor handwriting—not that transparent either!

Over the Summer months of 2021 we will running Code of Conduct refresher training. DAPTC has not undertaken this scale of training before and we are keen to get through as many elected members as possible. That's a tall ask as there are 1,500 of you!

I plan to ensure that conduct training is in our programme of courses every year from now on, not only to pick up new Clerks and councillors; simply to ensure it remains in everyone's consciousness.

Poor conduct is the root cause in many cases of the high level of turnover of Clerks and also elected members, some of whom have served their communities superbly. This is a national issue, but one too that is mirrored in Dorset. Please encourage all elected members to take part — DAPTC will ensure the training is always cost effective for members and not prohibitive.

Moving With The Times

As I close my first Annual Report, I have been reflecting on the last 12 months and what we can learn from it. I've often been heard to say that I wouldn't have risked any money in a bet if someone had said in January 2020; "by June this year councils would be meeting virtually".

As a sector we have rightfully clung on to procedures and traditions to preserve things we are proud of. What the first lockdown proved to me was that as a sector we really need to look at what can be done to 'modernise' our approach to governance, meetings and communications. Couple that with equipping our Clerks and officers with the technology that can balance up working hours and capacity to get stuff done.

I sincerely hope that the Government will revisit virtual meetings and give our members the choice of how best to conduct their business month to month and I'm certain that wouldn't necessarily mean everything online. Just the simple opportunity to make the right choices, depending on the type of meeting and best way of encouraging community participation. Despite the issues at Handforth Parish Council, public interest in meetings has grown and we have started to appeal more to the under 40s when it comes to casual vacancies.

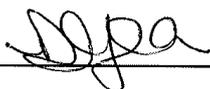
I'm keen to explore in my role at DAPTC how we can keep embracing new ways of working and making the most of what these bring to our members and importantly our hard working Clerks and their teams.

Neil Wedge

Chief Executive

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2021

2019/20 £		2020/21 £	£
	CURRENT ASSETS		
	Deposits with		
35,701.69	National Savings Bank	35,958.72	
56,741.41	Current Account (Unity)	<u>56,515.07</u>	92,473.79
5,000.00	Debtors		12,500.00 <i>see note 2 below</i>
0.00	Payments in Advance		0.00
	LESS		
	CURRENT LIABILITIES		
1,045.43	Sundry Creditors	7,482.78	<i>see note 1 below</i>
			<u>7,482.78</u>
			<u><u>97,491.01</u></u>
<u><u>96,397.67</u></u>	REPRESENTED BY RESERVES		
	DAPTC general reserve - opening balance	96,397.67	
	DAPTC Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year	1,093.34	
96,397.67	DAPTC general reserve - closing balance		97,491.01
<u><u>96,397.67</u></u>			<u><u>97,491.01</u></u>



Honorary Treasurer



Honorary Auditor

Note 1

Creditors

HMRC	Mar-21 Salaries	2,707.10
DCC Pension Fund	Mar-21 Salaries	2,580.92
Andrea Pellegram Ltd	364	600.00
NALC	401119	268.80
Breakthrough Comms	20200031	240.00
Eastern Area	2020/21 Honorarium	200.00
Western Area	2020/21 Honorarium	50.00
Central Area	2020/21 Honorarium	100.00
Towns & Larger Parishes Committee	2020/21 Honorarium	150.00
Purbeck Area	2020/21 Honorarium	250.00
Dorset Council	1801096059	283.94
Elite Telecom	Final 20-21	52.02

Note 2

Debtors

CCG	Grant 2020-21	12,500.00
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Income and Expenditure 2020/2021

Actuals 2019/20	BUDGET 2020/21		Actuals 2020/21	Variance (adverse) / favourable
		EXPENDITURE		
22,011	22,430	NALC Affiliation Fee	23,090	(660)
		Administration Costs :		
90,363	82,973	Salaries	87,663	(4,690)
0	0	Rents	0	0
3,416	4,200	Office service charge (facilities management)	2,809	1,391
218	500	Printing, Stationery, office expenses	0	500
249	500	Photocopier rental and charges	0	500
-18	100	Postages	-5	105
300	400	Telephone	52	348
35	650	Equipment	0	650
828	700	Insurance	616	84
726	1,500	Staff travelling & Expenses	558	942
		Other Costs :		
1,583	2,500	Meeting & Member Expenses	0	2,500
1,627	2,000	Area Admin Costs / Clerks Honorarium	1,650	350
730	830	Treasurer's & Auditor's Honorarium	830	0
4,881	1,410	Miscellaneous (incl. website)	965	445
NA	0	Digital Licences	755	(755)
NA	0	Contracted SLAs	1,024	(1,024)
4,133	4,500	Venue Hire	35	4,465
3,667	4,200	Training Course Expenses	6,309	(2,109)
825		Transparency Fund	0	0
400	400	SW Local Council Association	0	400
200	200	SLCC affiliation membership subscription	206	(6)
2,758	2,150	Purchase of Publications	1,111	1,039
719	700	National Conferences	0	700
139,652	132,843	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	127,669	5,174
		INCOME		
69,579	71,099	Subscriptions	71,049	(50)
1,583	1,700	Sales - LCR	1,617	(83)
264	260	- Other Publications	32	(228)
283		Investment Income	257	257
29,776	29,775	Grant - Dorset Council	29,775	0
12,500	12,500	Project funding - CCG	12,500	0
825		Transparency Fund	0	0
32,817	15,000	Training Income	13,149	(1,851)
62		Other income	383	383
3,890	2,000	Commercial Sponsorship	0	(2,000)
151,579	132,334	TOTAL INCOME	128,762	-3,572
11,927	(509)	SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	1,093	1,602

Treasurer's Report

The Income and Expenditure final position for 2020/21.

The budget for the year 2020/21 was agreed at the December 2019 Executive Committee. The budget was set with a deficit of £509 for the year.

The final position was £127,669 expenditure and £128,762 income, resulting in a surplus of £1,093.

The Balance Sheet

The Current Assets section of the DAPTC Balance Sheet is represented by the cash balances in the two active bank accounts, at £92,473.79, and Debtors of £12,500. Current Liabilities (amounts owed to others) were £7,482.78. A breakdown of the Creditors and Debtors is shown at the bottom of the Balance Sheet.

The reserves of the DAPTC now stand at £97,491.01.

Auditors recommendations

The accounts were audited by the DAPTC auditor Mr Notley.

No adjustments were required.

Conclusion

Following a very tough year due to COVID-19 restrictions and the associated additional work this entailed, ending the year with a small surplus was a great achievement.

Donna Yea
Honorary Treasurer
October 2021

End of Report