

Minutes of the 437th meeting of the County Executive Committee of Lancashire Association of Local Councils held virtually on 13th December 2025 at 10am.

Members present:

Pat Hastings, Broughton Parish Council	Mary Thomas, Colne Town Council
Keith Martin, Penwortham Town Council	Maggy Howell, Salesbury Parish Council
Eileen Smith, Pleasington Parish Council	Alan Yates, Great Eccleston Parish Council
Phil Orme, Preesall Town Council	Jacqueline Hampson, Simonstone Parish Council
Darren Cranshaw, Brindle Parish Council	Andrew Bell, Colne Town Council
Gordon Smith, Treales, Rosearce & Wharles Parish Council	Greera Stevenson, Mellor Parish Council
Glyn Stead, Little Eccleston w Larbreck Parish Council	Andrew Bell, Colne Town Council
Jack Speight, Westhoughton Town Council	Iain Hamilton, MALC
	Stephen Houghton, Wiswell Parish Council
	Jan Finch, Catterall Parish Council

Officers present:

Debra Platt, LALC Chief Officer	Jessica Dibble, LALC Secretary
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1. Welcome and Apologies

The President, Cllr. Alan Neal, opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. He also welcomed new members attending the Executive Committee for the first time.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Peter Collins.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The president welcomed nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

Cllr. Pat Hastings was nominated as Chair of LALC and Cllr. Keith Martin was nominated as Vice Chair of LALC.

Proposed by: Cllr. Gordon Smith

Seconded by: Cllr. Darren Cranshaw

Committee agreed unanimously and in favour of both the chair and vice chair appointments.

Cllr. Hastings assumed the Chair.

3. Election of Representatives to Outside Organisations

It was agreed that, where possible, existing representatives would continue in order to maintain continuity.

It was also noted that the MALC representative would be selected at the January 2026 meeting.

Committee ratified the following memberships:

Outside Body	LALC Representative(s)	Information / Notes
Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)	Cllr. Keith Martin	Only one representative permitted
Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition Committee	Cllr. Phil Orme	Only one representative permitted
Northern Regional Group of Parish Councils	Cllr. Pat Hastings (Chair) Cllr. Keith Martin (Vice Chair) Cllr. Alan Neal Cllr. Phil Orme	As previously agreed
Merseyside Association of Local Councils (MALC)	Representative to be selected	Appointment to be agreed January 2026
Forest of Bowland Joint Advisory Committee	Cllr. Stephen Houghton	Only one representative permitted
NALC Council Members	LALC: Cllr. Pat Hastings (Deputy: Cllr. Keith Martin) MALC: Cllr. Iain Hamilton (Deputy: Cllr. B. Arnold)	As previously agreed
Lancashire Strategic Hate, Crime and Social Cohesion Partnership	-	No longer operates
Environment Agency Panel – West Lancashire Flooding	-	No longer operates; formerly linked to Ormskirk Flood Group
Public Rights of Way & Lancashire Local Access Forum	-	No longer operates

It was noted that several external bodies no longer appeared to be active, including the Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime and Social Cohesion Partnership and the Lancashire Local Access Forum. It was agreed that the status of these groups would be investigated with Lancashire County Council to establish whether they could be reactivated.

Members were also advised that Lancashire County Council was undertaking a review of the Parish Charter and that individual parish representatives had been approached to participate in the associated steering group. The Committee noted the importance of ensuring appropriate representation and coordination, given the significance of the Parish Charter to town and parish councils across Lancashire.

It was agreed that Cllr Hampson should make contact with her contact at Lancashire County Council to seek clarification on the review process and to request that LALC be included in discussions as an appropriate representative body.

Actions agreed:

- The Chief Officer to update the representatives' list following amendments agreed at the meeting.
- Members to report any additional external forums or partnerships requiring representation, particularly in relation to flooding and resilience.
- Request that LALC are included on the Parish Charter Review Group.

4. Election of Representatives to Finance and Management Committee

The Committee reviewed the current membership of the Finance and Management Committee.

Discussion took place regarding committee size, geographic balance, and constitutional arrangements.

Cllr Alan Neal advised that he would sit on the committee as an overview role and not an active decision making member.

Committee felt satisfied that the existing members of Finance and management remain appointed.

All members present agreed unanimously.

5. Minutes of the meeting to consider

5.1 436th Executive Committee Meeting held on 30th August 2025.

The minutes, having been previously circulated, were approved as a correct record.

Proposed by: Cllr. Alan Neal
Seconded by: Cllr. Pat Hastings

5.2 AGM Meeting - 1st November 2025

Noted. These minutes will be presented for approval at the next AGM.

5.3 Amendments to AGM Minutes - 2nd November 2024

The amendments correcting the minutes identified at the-AGM were approved.

5.4 Finance & Management Committee - 3rd December 2025

The minutes were received and noted.

6. Comments on reports received

6.1 Presidents Report and Framework

Cllr. Alan Neal presented a brief report in which he outlined his attendance at the NALC National Assembly, his ongoing engagement with parish and town councils across Lancashire, and the importance of encouraging parish representation in areas that are currently unparished.

The report was noted by members.

6.2 LALC Reinvented

The Chair introduced the paper, which had been circulated to members in advance with the agenda pack, and which consolidated feedback received following the AGM and through subsequent correspondence. The Chair advised that the report was intended to inform members of the development of Task and Finish Groups focusing on governance, communications, organisational structure and external engagement. Members were invited to submit any further comments for consideration.

6.3 Cllr. Hampson on Area Committee Webpage

Cllr. Hampson presented a discussion paper proposing improved access to information for members when visiting the Area Committee page via the LALC website. It was noted that discussions were ongoing with the website developer to explore potential costs and website mapping of how the page will look.

Actions:

- The Secretary to report back to the Executive Committee with indicative costings.
- Cllr. Hampson to liaise with the Secretary on development options.

6.4 LALC Governance and Legal Risk

The Committee considered the Governance and Legal Risk report. The report outlined potential risks relating to the Association's current legal status, governance arrangements and organisational liability, and drew on comparative information from other county associations.

Members expressed concern regarding the potential personal and organisational liabilities identified and emphasised the importance of ensuring that the Association's governance structure remains robust, transparent and fit for purpose. The Committee acknowledged that while appropriate insurance arrangements were in place, there was a need to review the wider legal framework.

It was agreed that this matter should be treated as a priority and that further investigation and advice would be required. The Committee confirmed that the issues raised should be progressed through a dedicated Task and Finish Group, with a view to bringing forward recommendations for consideration by the Executive Committee at its next meeting.

7. Matters of update

None received.

8. Officer updates to be received

8.1 Finance Report

The Committee received and considered the Finance Report, together with the accompanying financial statements and commentary, which had been circulated to members in advance of the meeting. The Chief Officer presented the report and provided a detailed explanation of the Association's current financial position, including income and expenditure against budget, membership levels, reserves and projected commitments.

Members noted that the financial position of the Association had continued to strengthen and that overall balances were healthier than in previous years. It was reported that membership income had shown a modest increase and that expenditure was being carefully managed, with several budget headings underspent due to the timing of appointments and the phasing of agreed projects. The Committee also noted the financial outcomes of recent conferences and training activity, acknowledging the need to continue improving training participation and cost recovery.

The Chief Officer explained the position regarding the use of reserves, including the decision agreed at the AGM to draw down reserves to support priority projects, additional officer capacity and enhanced support for Area Committees. It was reported that, due to the timing of implementation, not all planned expenditure had yet been incurred and that further updates would be provided as projects progressed. The Committee also noted the positive impact of external grant funding, including support received through service level agreements, which had helped offset certain operational costs.

The Committee thanked the Chief Officer for the clarity and thoroughness of the report and recorded its appreciation for the work undertaken to improve financial transparency and reporting.

Whilst discussing financial matters, Cllr. Phil Orme referred to the future of the Lancashire Best Kept Village Competition and the challenges facing its continuation. The Committee agreed that any potential involvement by LALC would require a full brief, and Cllr. Orme was invited to submit a proposal outlining the scope of work, associated costs and anticipated officer time for consideration by the Executive Committee.

The report was noted and received by all present.

8.2 Area Support Officer Report

The Committee received the Area Support Officer report, which provided an overview of engagement with Area Committees, attendance at meetings where requested, and support provided to clerks and members across the county.

Members discussed the importance of ensuring that the report clearly reflected progress against agreed priorities and expectations for the role. It was noted that levels of activity and engagement varied between Area Committees, with some operating effectively and others experiencing reduced participation or periods of inactivity.

The Committee requested greater clarity between tasks assigned to the role and outcomes reported, in order to assist members in understanding how officer time was being deployed and to support ongoing review of the role.

Action:

- The Chief Officer to circulate the Area Support Officer work plan alongside future reports.

8.3 Chief Officer Report

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chief Officer, which covered operational, staffing and organisational matters. The Chief Officer updated members on the ongoing transition of responsibilities following changes to officer roles, noting that some functions were in the process of being formally transferred and that arrangements would continue to be refined to ensure clarity and continuity.

Members were informed of progress on website development, including work to improve member access to information and support future projects, as well as ongoing discussions regarding training provision and service delivery.

The update was noted.

9. Membership of Task and Finish Group

The Committee considered the proposed formation of Task and Finish Groups to progress priority areas of work arising from the AGM. The Chair outlined the initial themes identified, including;

- Governance and legal structure
- Communications and profile-raising
- Organisational structure alignment with Local Government Reorganisation
- Area Committee development
- Ecology
- Highways
- Asset Management

Members discussed the importance of clearly defining the purpose, objectives and timescales of each Task and Finish Group before inviting participation, noting that this would help ensure effective use of member expertise and officer capacity. It was recognised that some workstreams would be time-critical, while others would need to remain flexible pending further national or regional developments, particularly in relation to Local Government Reorganisation.

The Committee agreed that further work was required to refine the proposed groups. It was confirmed that once this work had been completed, members would be invited to express interest in participating in the Task and Finish Groups.

10. Budget Planning 26-27

During discussion of the budget and future projects, the Committee considered the provision of support for smaller councils. The Chief Officer advised that she was exploring a potential membership model for councils with a very small precept or no precept at all.

Members expressed caution regarding this approach, noting that any such arrangement would involve a direct agreement between LALC and individual parish meetings and could undermine the established relationship with the National Association of Local Councils. It was further noted that this could result in inconsistencies and give rise to potential issues with other member councils.

The Committee also considered the introduction of reduced subscription rates for councils with very small precepts. Members did not favour this option, expressing concern that it could create a perception that councils paying higher subscriptions were subsidising others, which could lead to dissatisfaction across the wider membership.

11. Lancashire Offshore Wind Energy Motion

The Committee received an update on the Lancashire Offshore Wind Energy Motion, which had previously been submitted for consideration at national level. Members were informed that the motion had been referred to the appropriate NALC policy committee for further consideration and that discussions were ongoing regarding its progression within national policy frameworks.

The Committee noted the extensive work undertaken in preparing the supporting briefing material. Members commended the documentation produced and recognised the significant contribution made by those involved in its development. It was acknowledged that the briefing provided a valuable evidence base for parish and town councils seeking to understand and respond to offshore wind energy proposals and associated infrastructure impacts.

Members discussed the importance of ensuring that the work undertaken continued to be actively used and circulated. It was agreed that the Association should consider how best to support member councils in accessing the information and using it to inform local engagement, consultation responses and policy discussions as appropriate.

The Committee agreed that the matter should remain under active review and that further updates would be provided as developments progressed at both national and regional levels.

12. NALC matters – updates from Cllr. Alan Neal & Cllr. Iain Hamilton

The Committee received updates on matters arising from the National Association of Local Councils.

Particular reference was made to the role of national policy committees and the importance of ensuring that the views and experiences of Lancashire councils were effectively represented within those forums.

Members noted the value of maintaining strong links with NALC, particularly during a period of significant change affecting local government and the parish sector.

13. Reports from Representatives on Outside Bodies

An update was received from Cllr. Martin, LALCs representative for 'Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)'. It was noted that engagement over the previous month had been limited due to work commitments. Members were advised that CPRE will mark its 100th anniversary next year and that a number of celebratory

projects are being developed, including the creation of a garden at the Chelsea Flower Show.

It was reported that the Greater Manchester Ringway project had been a significant success, delivering approximately 300 kilometres of linked footpaths, and that work was currently underway to scope a similar initiative within the Liverpool City Region. Members were also informed that the CPRE solar rooftop campaign remained ongoing and that CPRE continued to monitor fracking-related activities in Lancashire.

It was noted that the next CPRE meeting would take place in January, at which time a further and more detailed update would be provided.

14. Future Meeting Dates

The Committee considered arrangements for future meetings of the Executive Committee. It was confirmed that holding three virtual meetings and one in-person meeting each year would continue.

Members discussed the importance of providing sufficient notice of meeting dates to support attendance and forward planning. It was agreed that proposed dates, together with details of the in-person meeting and the annual conference, would be circulated to members following the Christmas period.

11. Close

The meeting closed at 12:06

Minutes drafted by: Jessica Dibble
LALC Secretary
15/12/2025

Finance & Management Committee Wednesdays at 5pm (Virtual)	LALC Executive Committee Saturday at 10am Virtual unless indicated
Dates to be agreed	

Ref	Action	Responsibility	Timescale / Status
1	Update the list of representatives on outside bodies to reflect changes agreed, including Northern Regional Group and MALC vacancy	Chief Officer	Post-meeting

Ref	Action	Responsibility	Timescale / Status
2	Circulate updated representatives list to Executive Committee members	Chief Officer	Post-meeting
3	Investigate Lancashire-wide flooding and resilience forums and monitor any re-establishment of county-level groups	Chief Officer	Ongoing
4	Coordinate information sharing on flood resilience and explore formation of an informal LALC resilience network	Cllr. Keith Martin	Ongoing
5	Publish relevant external updates (e.g. flood resilience, winter maintenance information) on the LALC website where appropriate	Secretary	Ongoing
6	Make contact with Lancashire County Council regarding Parish Charter review and request LALC representation	Chief Officer	January 2026
7	Contact Alison Wilkins to confirm current lead officer for Parish Charter review and request update	Cllr. Jacqueline Hampson	Post-meeting
8	Provide contact details and feedback from Parish Charter discussions to the Chief Officer	Cllr. Jacqueline Hampson	Post-meeting
9	Explore opportunities to re-establish regular liaison meetings with Lancashire County Council leadership	Chair & Vice Chair	Ongoing
10	Confirm and circulate Area Support Officer work plan to provide context for future reports	Chief Officer	Next Executive meeting
11	Review training provision and bring forward proposals to improve uptake and income generation	Chief Officer & Chair	Early 2026
12	Obtain costings for member-only access to Area Committee pages on the LALC website	Secretary	January 2026
13	Liaise with website developer regarding Area Committee pages and access controls	Secretary & Cllr. J. Hampson	January 2026
14	Develop clear titles, objectives and timescales for proposed Task and Finish Groups	Chair & Chief Officer	January 2026
15	Circulate Task and Finish Group proposals and invite member volunteers	Chair	January 2026
16	Provide links on the LALC website for major policy projects (e.g. Offshore Wind briefing)	Secretary	Ongoing

Ref	Action	Responsibility	Timescale / Status
17	Maintain oversight of Lancashire Offshore Wind Energy developments and update Executive Committee as appropriate	Cllr. Gordon Smith	Ongoing
18	Circulate future Executive Committee meeting dates (3 virtual, 1 in-person)	Chair, Chief Officer & Secretary	After Christmas
19	Add MALC representative selection to January 2026 Executive Committee agenda	Secretary	January 2026