

NACTSEW Chair's AGM Report Lichfield 2025

INTRODUCTION

Not since Newcastle 2011 had we seen such a change amongst the Chair and Officers, as we did in Haverfordwest. It did create more representational across the Cities and Towns than in recent years.

This has been the busiest year that I can remember since I became Treasurer in 2011.

My report will cover the following areas:

- Internal Housekeeping
- Introducing New initiatives
- Forging External partnerships

Immediately started with the creation of an Executives Officers WhatsApp Group and Microsoft Teams File for ease of communication and access of Documents respectively.

This was joined by online team meetings for the officers and I and work was conducted

via regular Business Review Meetings, and of course the Half Yearly Meeting where we were joined by

- President Andrew Gravells
- Robert Yardley
- Michael Mullarkey
- Jo Rimmer
- Melanie Tointon

HOUSKEEPING

NACTSEW Timeline of Communication

Originally created by Sue Blakey this has been restored to its original full capacity as promised in my first newsletter as communication with our members is key, importantly by newsletter supported admirably via our website, which has been excellently administrated by Xena and is also of course accessible for members of the public.

MEMBERSHIP & GDPR

A review of Membership Database and the GDPR policy and statement necessitated a compulsory requirement for all members to complete a new membership form and

GDPR consent form to enable NACTSEW to have timely and accurate records, and function effectively and legally under GDPR regulations.

After some apathy from members and repeated requests I am pleased to say we now have 100 % compliance from paid members for 25/26. The residue of about 61 members in arrears will be contacted again to verify their wish to retain membership or be recorded as lapse. This includes 37 members who are only 27 days in arrears, and we will track them down!!

Suzie has also created a new membership and GDPR database, thank you Suzie.

TREASURY

The NACTSEW Banking was changed from HSBC to Lloyds in November 2024 which allowed online banking for the first time, supported by business debits cards for Suzie and I.

The transfer of funds from HSBC was completed in February 2025 with a Lloyds Community Account and Savings Account being set up, and HSBC accounts closed.

The receipt of our NACTSEW Accounts Administrative papers from 2021 onwards and Stock were finally received in April 2025.

This enabled Suzie to familiarise herself with the accounts and prepare them for examination by our new independent examiner Robbie Dalglish

I am very pleased to say that the last four years since April 2021 have been examined and the summary and certificate circulated to all members

Not since my time as Treasurer ceased in 2020 have, we been in this position and compliant with our Constitution

Suzie Mercer will provide her report next when she speaks to the Accounts

Historic Records have been handed from Jan Lugg to David Brown and are being transferred in Lichfield this weekend to myself.

A review will take place to weed out non-compliant GDPR material and then a further review to assess storage options such as inhouse or a national archive. This is an item later in the agenda.

NEW INITIATIVES

AGM Motion & Report

This was by far the largest piece of new work undertaken after the proposal at Haverfordwest by John Butler (Chester) regarding perceived threats to Civic office

In addition to suggestions at the AGM each City and Town appointed SPOCS who responded to a questionnaire drawn by me.

The replies were collected by our Secretary Xena and consolidated into a formal report which was unanimously accepted along with the observations and recommendations within, at the NACTSEW half yearly meeting in February.

The report was then circulated to the SPOCS and all NACTSEW members circulated to all members.

The 12 observations listed were relevant to all Cities and Towns, and to be noted and acted upon by all members, both individually and as Shrievalty Associations.

The six recommendations at National level were adopted by me as Chair on behalf of the executive officers and the Association

It was noted that some were already in situ, and some would be introduced in due course in proportion to the timeline of necessity

RECOMMENDATIONS

1 - That letter be sent to the Chief Executives, Council Leaders and Town Clerks of our associated Cities and Towns regarding the importance of civic office and Shrievalty both locally and nationally. I drafted a letter, and Xena sent 37 letters in total.

We have had supportive and encouraging replies from 8

- Berwick upon Tweed Town Council
- Carmarthen Town Council
- Canterbury **(Added post AGM)**
- Cheshire West & Chester Council
- Gloucester City Council
- Poole BCP Council
- Southampton City Council
- York City Council

The most responsive was in fact Carmarthen who remembered with fondness our last visit, clearly support civic office and their sheriff, and are already looking forward to our return.

2 - That Incoming Sheriffs are written to congratulate and welcome them to their role, with an introduction to NACTSEW and our AGM. This was already in hand, but the letter was reviewed by Xena and me and posted to the recipients.

3 - Guidance and Training

NACTSEW Officers have investigated the possibility of professional training via Link Support Services UK Ltd, whom I met at the NACO training day.

This is a separate item on the agenda (14) and will cover it there.

4 - That time should be protected at the AGM for President, Chair and Executive Officers to meet the Current Sheriffs.

This has been done and a meeting today in the Guildhall will take place 12-12.30pm, and I look forward to welcoming you all there.

5 - Online Meetings

The inaugural online Teams Meeting with new Sheriffs and Chair and Executive Officers took place in July.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Highlight role of NACTSEW (Power point presentation)
- Role of Sheriff
- Discussion on challenges faced
- Words of Wisdom

Present were the Sheriffs of:

- Berwick
- Lichfield
- Lincoln
- Norwich
- Poole

Apologies received from:

- Chester
- Gloucester
- York

This was a very successful evening now in calendar with half yearly repeat envisaged too.

6 - That all outgoing Sheriffs are written to and thanked for their year in office.

This was new initiative, and all 15 Sheriffs were written to and thanks, with two versions according to whether they had joined and attended Haverfordwest or simply performed their role in isolation away from our membership. All were encouraged to join or remain with NACTSEW and reminded of the AGM weekend and 40th Anniversary here in Lichfield.

I would like to thank Xena for all her work on this excellent result but would like to end with feedback received from John Butler, who put forward the motion once it had been published.

- As the member of the Association who put forward the motion at the AGM; I could not have imagined a more successful and comprehensive result. I am delighted at the seriousness and depth of interest that has been taken over the perceived threats to the Office of Sheriff. I have rarely seen such an in-depth analysis of a motion that has been put forward. Thank you all very much.

40th ANNIVERSARY BOOKLET

This has been revised and is up to date with 2025 Sheriffs and Officers since the 2024 revised edition and now has photos of our past conference weekends.

I have added a new foreword, and my thanks go to the editor David Brown, Robert Yardley for the many images and Suzie Mercer for proof reading.

You received your free membership copy last night and the feedback has been wonderful

Thank you.

EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

National Association Civic Officers

The National Association Civic Officers (NACO) are committed to supporting their Members in their Civic role and promoting the role within the community

I am delighted that their Chair, Tracy Frisby will be joining us for the weekend from lunchtime today as my guest and I am sure you will all make her very welcome, as they did when I attended their training day in London, in March this year.

Their Annual Training Day identified common areas of interest and concern regarding threats to civic life, budget cuts and unitary authorities - not least in the workshop entitled "Relevance of the Civic office in the 21st Century"

This was presented by Phil O'Brien NACO Communications Officer and consultant to NACO training provider Link Support Services

The afternoon Plenary session on "Uniting for excellence: A collaborative Journey" reinforced the common theme

I joined a panel of experts who took questions from the floor, where there were over 90 civic offices represented across the whole of the UK.

Within NACTSEW, the following City and Towns were present:

- Chester
- Norwich
- Newcastle (Only part time Civic Officer Brenda Joyce)

I will speak about Newcastle later in my report, but the day was inspiring.

INVITATIONS

I attended the York Sheriffs Dinner hosted by Councillor Fiona Fitzpatrick in April - and met many good friends including our Honorary Vice-President, former Chair Barrie Ferguson

This was followed a week later by the Berwick Sheriffs Dinner hosted by Sheriff Jo Lang who is here today in his second year in Office.

Unfortunately, I had to decline a late invitation from Chester as it clashed with Yorks Dinner. Perhaps next year?

NEWCASTLE 2027

I have written a letter to Leader of the City Council to seek meeting this Autumn to engage regarding support and participation in 2027.

I shall await a reply and if no reply is received, I propose to send a recorded delivery letter so if they fail to negotiate or support the weekend, we have formal proof of or reach out. We may decide if there is no support to hold the weekend ourselves as we did in Oxford.

I will keep you all informed.t

SUMMARY

This has been a very busy year as mentioned at the beginning of my report and I would like to thank our President and Executive Officers for their support and work this year.

I would like to thank our outgoing Vic Chair Bob Rudd for his ever-constant support and advice and look forward to welcoming our new Vice Chair shortly

Congratulations to all of us on our 40th Year, particularly Andrew Gravells our founder, and I look forward to the rest of the weekend here in Lichfield, and leading the team in 25/26