



National Association of City and Town Sheriffs of
England and Wales
Cymdeithas Cenedlaethol Siryfion Dinas a
Thref Lloegr a Cymru



Spring Newsletter 2026



Dear Fellow NACTSEW Members

Welcome to the Spring Newsletter 2026 as I reach already the half way mark of my tenure as Chair of the Association!

NACTSEW BUSINESS

As always I would like to start with an overview of NACTSEW business, including the recent NACTSEW half yearly committee meeting last month, followed by our progress with new stock, initiatives and the forthcoming AGM weekends in Lincoln and Newcastle.

Half-Yearly Meeting

This year's meeting on Wednesday 25th of February 2026 I am very pleased to say took place in York at the Priory Street Centre, a venue we last used in 2020 just prior to the pandemic.

It was great to return to an in-person meeting and I was joined at York by Colin Greatorex, Suzi Mercer, and from Lincoln, Melanie Tointon and Jo Rimmer.

Xena joined us on Teams and unfortunately Andrew, our President was unable to attend on Teams due to a previous engagement over running.

The meeting was very successful and the itinerary is really covered as we progress through this newsletter.

Excitingly we did manage to sell some of our newly acquired NACTSEW pens to Jo and Mel 😊



I certainly hope next year's meeting will be in person again but perhaps a little nearer to Gloucester who host in 2028.

Executive Officers

Alongside myself as Chair, the Executive Officer team comprises:

*Colin Greateorex,
Vice-Chair
(Lichfield)*



*Suzie Mercer
Treasurer (York)*

*Xena Dion, Secretary
and Website
Administrator
(Poole)*



Membership and Finances

Membership, Finances and GDPR remain in good hands with Suzi with over 100 members paid up to date.

However, despite reminders, about 50 remain in arrears and we would welcome those members to bring their membership up to date.

This will enable the Association to function financially at its maximum level to allow comfortable expenditure in areas of stock acquisition and contractual deposits for Newcastle in 2027.

If you are in doubt as to your current membership status please do email Suzi to verify. She is always happy to accept money of course !

Historic Records

Having received several boxes of historical records in Lichfield as alluded to in my Winter newsletter, the findings were reported to the NACTSEW committee in York and it was unanimously agreed to minimise these records to retain only historical articles and a skeleton set of journalistic records.

This will reduce the contents to one manageable box and keep the Association compliant with Data Protection and GDPR.

Material outside of this with more detailed information will be destroyed. A job in hand for me on a very rainy day I think?

We of course retain the 30th and 40th anniversary booklets as a marvellous records of NACTSEW.

NACTSEW Website

During the Half-Yearly meeting in York as we were discussing this year's AGM weekend in Lincoln, the Lincoln committee members noted that information on the website needed updating in relation to details of the weekend. I would ask that all members use the AGM weekend pages on the website to keep informed as new details will be added as plans are finalised. New information has been added about booking accommodation.

We have also renewed our subscription to the website server in order to secure the website for another three years. As always, members are encouraged to submit updates and amendments and news of events which they think may be of

interest to others. Sadly, it is also a place to learn of the loss of any of our current or previous members.

New Initiatives

New Stock

There has been much progress since December, expertly handled by our Vice-Chair Colin Greateorex, and I am pleased to report a number of developments:

A new NACTSEW roll up banner has been acquired which clearly details what's NACTSEW is about, listing our associated Towns and Cities, our year of foundation and a mission statement of "Protecting and promoting the Ancient office of City and Towns Sheriffs".

This will be accompanied by two full 6ft table cloths which have been ordered and at the Friday reception or the AGM, will really showcase ourselves to the host City or Town, their Civic Office, dignitaries and special guests.

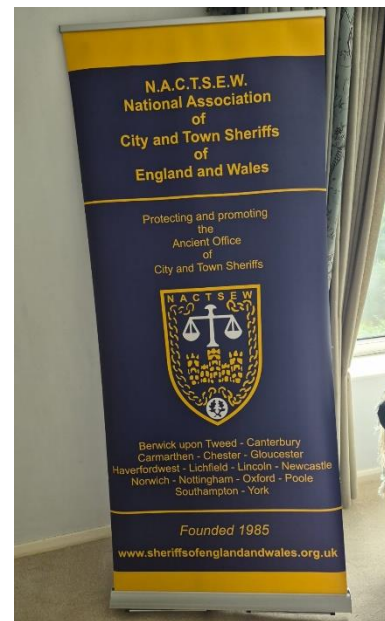
There is the new NACTSEW pen which will be available at Lincoln and we are currently analysing the viability of A5 notebooks, cuff links and even earrings too!

Importantly Colin has acquired the first ever high resolution images of the NACTSEW badges and colours and identified a number of suppliers who are able to deliver our badges and ties as stock levels diminish in the future.

However at York it was agreed not to pursue, at this time, the re-introduction of the Ladies scarf.

I cannot thank Colin enough for steering this project so efficiently and quickly, and I am excited

to showcase the products this year in Lincoln



Training

In my previous newsletter I mentioned that a proposed training package for new sheriffs had been put on hold due to the envisaged cost with Link Services.

However, in an unexpected twist I am very pleased to report this is now well on the way with draft templates in motion.

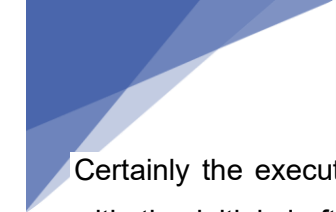
Very kindly Kevin Frisby, a retired Training and Development Manager and the husband of the National Association of Civic Officers Chair, Tracy Frisby, kindly offered to develop a programme for us free of charge.

This very kind offer and generous gesture was of course warmly accepted and at present the following is nearing completion:

Power point Presentation

MP4 Version

PDF Training notes



Certainly the executive team are very impressed with the initial drafts and I hope this will all be available in time for the newly elected Sheriffs who Join our Association later this year.

I hope this will form part of a new welcome package to entice the newly elected sheriffs in office to join and thereafter enhance their membership retention.

I shall be raising my proposed welcome package at our next BRM in April and will report back in my summer newsletter.

Haverfordwest

Following on from John Butler's AGM motion in Haverfordwest and my letter to the CEOs and Council Leaders of our associated cities and towns last year, the civic office in Haverfordwest have further responded very encouragingly this month with their own proposal to strengthen the role of Sheriff and their connectivity with other civic offices.

They have prepared a paper for the town council's Personnel, Policy and Finance Committee and thereafter the full town council, to outline a proposal for the preservation and enhancement of the civic office and the role of Sheriff's, with suggested implementation of its aims starting in the forthcoming civic year 2026-27.

Additionally as part of a wider action they are proposing to send a questionnaire to all civic offices regarding the role in each of their cities and towns and NACTSEW are fully supporting this proactive initiative and have offered full support too.

I await the next feedback on this marvellous development from Haverfordwest.

NACTSEW Hymn

At York, Lincoln declared they had unearthed from the records of hosting our AGM weekend in 2010, a long lost proposal that NACTSEW adopt a Hymn - namely "Ye That Know the Lord is Gracious"

This was news to us all and consulting Andrew Gravells subsequently, he recalled this proposal which had never come to fruition.

Personally, I think it's an excellent idea which should be brought back to the table at the AGM in Lincoln and hopefully adopted in plenty of time for Newcastle.

Of course Lincoln may yet test run the Hymn too. Should we all start rehearsing ?

Invitations

Canterbury Shrievalty

On Friday 20th of February I was very pleased to attend the Canterbury Shrievalty Dinner at the Marine Hotel, Whitstable by kind invitation of their Chair Tom Mellish and their honorary Secretary Jeanette Stockley.

The visit brought back memories of my last visit to Canterbury and Whitstable in 2014 when they last hosted our AGM weekend and indeed it was lovely to catch up with some of our former members and a key organiser of 2014, Irish Law.

The evening was attended by nine former Sheriffs, the current Sheriff of Canterbury Steph Jupe, along with the Lord Mayor, three Mayors from surrounding districts and the leader of the council, councillor Alan Baldock.

Alan Baldock with his joint CEOs' had responded very positively to the AGM motion letter on the

importance of civic office and the threats faced, and was personally thanked by myself.

Perhaps the most poignant moment was meeting Sheila Gomm, the widow of our late Chair Douglas Gomm who served as NACTSEW Chair between 2001 and 2011, and was Sheiff of Canterbury in 1987.

I was very pleased to spend some time reminiscing with Sheila and was delighted to present to her, a copy of our 40th anniversary booklet.

I later received a very kind email from her thanking me and fully supportive of our progress and plans.

I was honoured to be asked to give an after Dinner talk, where I talked about NACTSEW, its history, presence and aims for the future and civic life.

Thank you to Tom and Jeanette for making me so welcome and a lovely meal and good company.

Myself with Sheila Gomm



Tom Mellish, Steph Jupe, myself and Jeanette Stockley

NACO Training Day

This years' invitation to the National Association of Civic Officers Training day by their Chair Tracy Frisby took me to the City of Sheffield and their magnificent Town Hall.



What a fantastic building and it was lovely to see a City Council still embedded in the original building, rather than a more contemporary modern venue!

The plenary sessions and break out workshops included the topics of "Application of Risk Management within the Civic Function", and "Harnessing Artificial intelligence and Social Media for Civic Engagement".

Both of these were very interesting and thought provoking in themselves!

However, the most relevant and keynote delivery was the first plenary session entitled "Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)" presented by Phil O'Brien, the NACO Facilitator and assisted with the case study from officers from Cumberland Council and its formation as one of two unitary authorities, which replaced Cumbria County Council in 2023.



1. The creation of “Neighbourhood Panels” as a default position but ill-advised option.

Some, such as Cumberland Council, Surrey and Dorset have already undergone the process and “Poole and Bournemouth” will become Town Councils on the 31st of March.

The LGR taking place sees most of us facing a transfer to unitary authorities and vestment by April 2028, was described as the largest existential threat to Civic office in 50 years under the English Devolution & community empowerment bill 2025

It was clear that Civic Offices and the senior leadership teams have time to act to protect civic life, the office of Mayors and Sheriffs, to the chains and market charters, but must now be proactive in their intentions as the change period to protect civic life prior to April 2028 can be up to 20months, from the experience of those who have already taken the step.

There appears to be three options to consider:

1. The creation of a Charter of Trustees under the “Local Government Act England - Charter Trustee Regulations 2009”, which protects civic office and traditions but appears to come with restrictions thereafter.
2. The creation of new Parish or City Town councils utilising the powers under the “Local Government and Involvement in Health Act 2007” which is a community governance review and not under central Government control, which although involves more work appears to be the preferred option.

My key message is to reach out through your contacts with your own civic office and Senior Leadership Teams to make sure they are actively looking at this topic now, not to be afraid to consult those who have undergone the process or importantly attend this year, one of NACOs’ roadshows on this topic as a priority.

Details of the roadshows are on their website:

WWW.NACO.UK.COM

I cannot underestimate the importance of reaching out as mentioned.

Concluding on a positive note I briefly met Kate Fenn, the Civic and Internationals Partnership Manager from Lincoln, who is looking forward to our visit this year, and also the new civic support officer from Nottingham City Council, Rachel Broughton.

Rachel was very open to contact and I will be contacting Rachel to start and address the Nottingham void and plant the seed of them hosting in 2029.

Sheriffs Breakfast

The new WhatsApp Group for the executive team and current sheriffs is proving its worth and since the last newsletter has seen Christmas cards sent, and an interesting invite from the Sheriff of Chester, Simon Eardley to the whole group to his Sheriffs Breakfast in March.

Unfortunately I was had to decline but it again demonstrated the key communication bond in the creation of this new WhatsApp Group.

Future AGM's

Lincoln

Melanie and Jo at York clearly demonstrated how well preparations are coming along and attached is the most up to date informative paper on the weekend.

It promises to be another superb event with the Bomber Command tour a priority for me having a family RAF background, and of course a return to Lincoln where I was in office as Sheriff of Berwick upon Tweed in 2010.

It was such a memorable weekend and has built up an affinity and love of Lincoln ever since .



An early word of warning!! - that when the bookings form comes out with the summer newsletter, the

closure date for bookings this year due to local logistics has been brought forward to Sunday 23rd of August. A clear reminder will be on the booking form!

Newcastle

I am pleased to say plans for our AGM conference weekend are starting to take a firm hold.

After sending a recorded delivery letter to the CEO of Newcastle City Council to outline again our weekend in September 2027 and a need to make contact prior to the NACTSEW half yearly committee meeting in York, it resulted in a very positive Teams meeting with their CEO Pam Smith and their civic officer Brenda Joyce, who were most welcoming. I was joined in the online meeting by Colin Greatorex.

Newcastle are now awaiting the outcome of the local elections and boundary changes in May, but the CEO is committed to a second meeting in July.

In the meantime they were happy for NACTSEW to make plans regarding venues and I have every confidence they will come on board later.

Therefore being a Geordie from Tyneside I set about this task with some determination and knowledge of our last visit in 2011.

I am pleased to say the following has been booked:

Saturday AGM , lunch and Dinner in The Vermont Hotel

Sunday service in the Cathedral nearby to The Vermont

The gap is the Friday reception with negotiations ongoing with the Freeman of Newcastle and the

use of the Guildhall, or a reception in the Cathedral itself.



Dinner will be at the Vermont Hotel

It's happening! And at York there was unanimous applaud for the work so far which was very welcoming.

Watch this space Wye Aye man



Before I conclude I wish to sadly report the passing of our member and former Shetiff of York Jonathan Tyler. Jonathan was a good supporter of NACTSEW and I am pleased that Suzi Mercer represented NACTSEW at his funeral this month.

A detailed obituary is on the website.

<https://www.sheriffsofenglandandwales.org/news>

It leaves me to as always thank my executive team for their work, to wish you all a very happy Easter, and to leave the last word to our president Andrew Gravells

Thank you

Andy Swinburne

Chair - NACTSEW

A Message from our President



I'm pleased to have this opportunity to thank the the Executive Committee headed up by Andy, our Chair, for the great work that they do behind the scenes, in between our AGMs. Their ideas and new ways of looking at things are really welcome and ensure that the NACTSEW remains relevant and professional.

Looking ahead, Lincoln are looking forward to hosting our AGM weekend this year and I look forward to meeting friends ,old and new there, during the weekend.

Best wishes everyone and thank you for supporting NACTSEW

Andrew Gravells