



## Annual Report 2017-2018

### Introduction

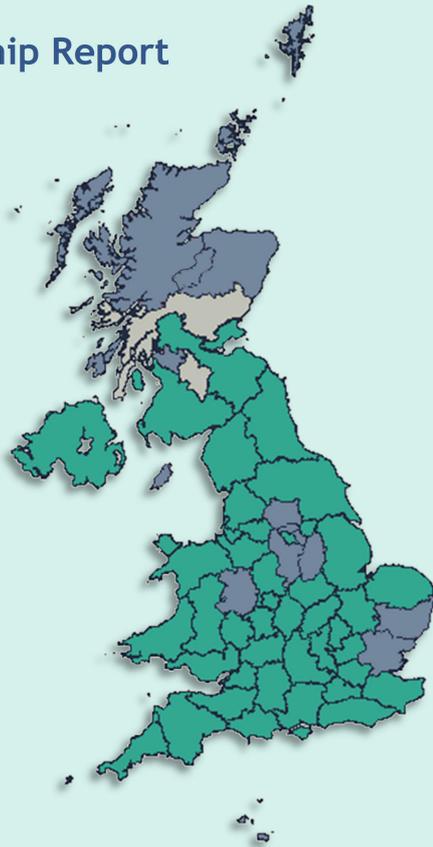
Formed in 2009, ALERC is an association between Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs) in Great Britain. The Association aims to provide a central voice for the views and concerns of the Records Centre community, whilst building a support-based network of knowledge and advice to meet the needs of its members.

Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs) are not-for-profit organisations that collect, collate and manage information on the natural environment for a defined geographic area. LERCs support and collaborate with a network of experts to ensure information is robust, and make information products and services accessible to a range of audiences including decision-makers, the public, and researchers.

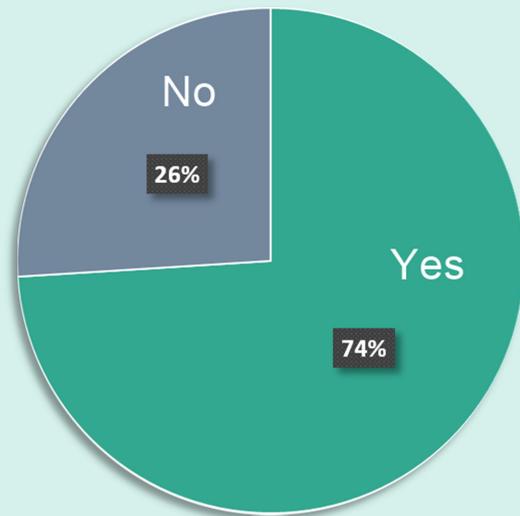
### Association Objectives

- To promote and encourage the completion of a UK-wide network of Local Environmental Records Centres (LERCs).
- To promote and develop good standards of practice in the collation, management, dissemination and analysis of biological and geological records.
- To promote LERCs regionally, nationally and at a UK level to potential users and suppliers of data.
- To provide full representation of the UK with country specific solutions and equal emphasis on the individual countries requirements.
- To develop and promote accreditation schemes for LERCs and their staff.
- To encourage and facilitate networking between LERCs to enable exchange of ideas, collaborative working, developing joint tools and sharing good practice.

## Membership Report



### LERCs as members of ALERC



## Chair's Report

The year 2017-18 was another busy one for ALERC, with several important achievements, milestones and areas of work. In short:

- The conference in October was themed on Natural Capital, providing lots of ideas and inspiration for how LERCs can develop their services to meet new agendas.



- Our work on promoting LERC services included written submissions to various consultations; notably the House of Lords inquiry into the NERC Act and Natural England where our points were picked up by the Lords in oral evidence.

- ALERC represented LERCs in many different forums, such as the NBN Atlas Steering Group and NBN working group meetings, the national Biodiversity Data Users Group and the Partnership for Biodiversity in Planning.

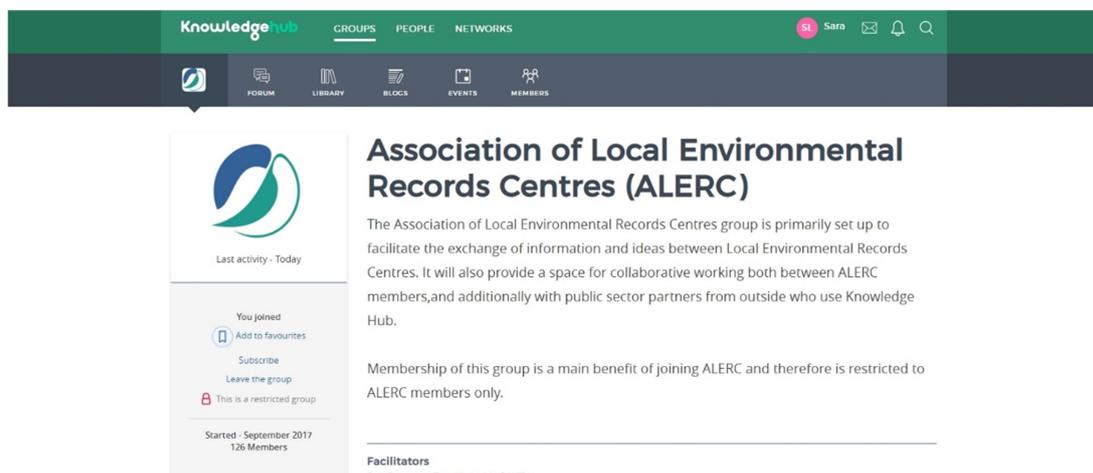


- In England, ALERC has been taking active steps aimed at securing renewal of Environment Agency agreements.
- In Northern Ireland, we gained a member, The Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR). A contract for CEDaR on GDPR compliance enabled us to share practical compliance guidance with our members.
- In Scotland, the SBIF (Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum) review has been a major focus. ALERC contributed to this process through attendance at two of the two-day workshops, written comments, several telecons and ongoing one-to-one dialogue with Ellen Wilson – to ensure the views and practical experience of LERCs are well represented.



- In Wales, ALERC Director Adam Rowe highlighted the value of LERC services through his excellent presentation at the NBN conference.
- Strong ALERC representation at the NBN conference meant we were able to make headway on a number of issues, notably data exchange. There is now a programme of work with national schemes and societies to pilot and trial data exchange agreements and methodologies.

- The launch of ALERC's Knowledge Hub platform in October has facilitated greater communication and collaboration among ALERC members. Knowledge Hub has also proved to be a useful facility for sharing documents and updates on the Recorder 6 consultation, following the Life After Recorder 6 meeting in Bedford last May, which ALERC was heavily involved in delivering.



- Moving forward, we want to focus on redeveloping our website to better showcase LERCs and the work that we do.

Further to this, at an extended board meeting in January, a new clearer and simpler structure for ALERC was drawn up. There are now three main work areas, which are each led by a Director. These are:

- Business development & accreditation
- Technical development & data standards
- Communications & influencing

This structure is working well and stands ALERC in a good position for 2018-19 and beyond.

There will be plenty of challenges and opportunities ahead, as the SBIF review moves forward and we get stuck into planning for our sector's future data infrastructure needs, and sorting out national data-exchange arrangements in our post-Gateway world.

**I hope we can continue to count on your support throughout 2018/19 and beyond. We're particularly looking for willing LERC-based volunteers to get involved with the new ALERC working groups so please get in touch.**

## ALERC National Coordinator Report

The year to March 2018 has been an interesting and varied one with highlights including May's event to discuss LERC databases, and the subsequent work from that, working with the NBN verification and dataflow group, the SBIF review as well as several external projects which are of use to LERCs generally even though they were commissioned from other organisations. All this was backed up and supported by the move to Knowledge Hub.

Early in the year, a total of twenty-one people from thirteen different LERCs went to Bedford to discuss the alternatives for future LERC databases. Out of this discussion came the formation of

an ALERC databases group as well as work to discuss Recorder 6 with a wide range of users and the current funding partnership. There is no doubt that this will run into through the current financial year and beyond as it is such a fundamental part of LERC operations and affects all ALERC members.

By the autumn, the SBIF review workshops were in progress. ALERC members were at all of them, with my support also at the services and governance sessions. At the time of writing, it is unknown what the recommendations and business case will contain, but there can be no doubt that the benefits currently provided by LERCs got a good hearing and must be retained in any future model.

Working with the NBN verification and data flow group has been interesting and useful. Discussion so far has been about how verified and unverified data can be displayed on the NBN Atlas, as well as the adoption of the standardised verification terminology. This provides greater clarity and transparency over what verification actually means. The next steps will be to increase the transparency of the process as a whole to fully explain to recorders and data users how verification decisions are arrived at and by whom, and to increase verification capacity and reduce the backlog of unverified records.

Externally commissioned projects have played an important part in 2017-18. The [BID-REX](#) has continued and the opportunity to discuss how data is managed in different regions of Europe has been helpful. It has also been beneficial to have the importance of LERCs written in a document that will influence the deployment of the European Regional Development Fund. Following on from CEDaR joining ALERC, they commissioned two projects that not only held significance for them, but will also for the ALERC membership as a whole. The first was to look at data searches, the different ways in which they are done at different LERCs and how the results are presented differently. This was quite revealing as even within the sample reported on, there was a lot of variation, although that was often variation along similar themes. The final report is not currently available to the wider membership, but it is hoped it will be soon. The second project was a detailed investigation into GDPR compliance for LERCs and I was pleased to be able to place some documents on Knowledge Hub that several LERCs reported as being useful.



**BID-REX**  
Interreg Europe

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Creating the link between biodiversity data and conservation decision-making processes

ALERC NC Retweeted

**InterregBIDREX** @interregbidrex · Aug 6

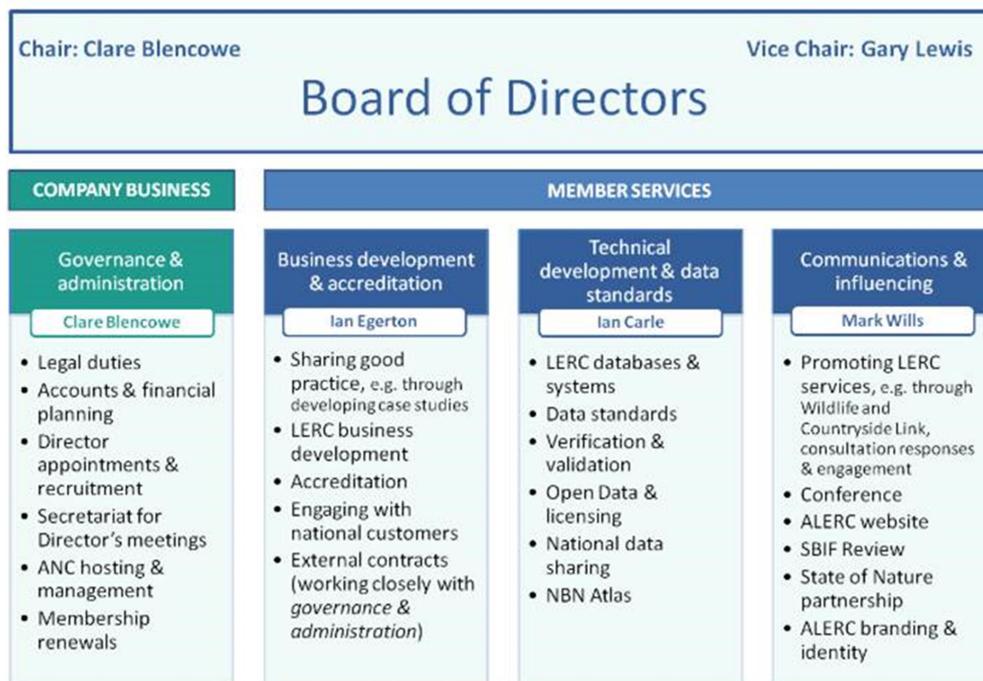
To help decision makers consider #biodiversity #data in their decisions, we need to consider what their needs are at every stage of the process - from data collection, to analysis #interreg @interregeurope #BIDREX wcmc.io/BIDREX\_KLB1/



Work in 2018-19, in addition to annual tasks and events, will include working on the facilitation of data exchange between LERCs and NSSs.

## ALERC Member Services Work Area Reports

In January 2018, an extended meeting of the ALERC directors analysed ALERC's current work and opportunities for the future, including who the major stakeholders are and how best to engage these. As a result, the ALERC working groups were reorganised into work areas reflecting the need to focus on different member services.



DRAFT | Feb 2018

Progress made in each of the work areas is reported below.

### LERC Business Development and Accreditation

Group members: Ian Egerton, Mandy Rudd, Eric Fletcher, Adam Rowe, Simon Pickles, Camilla Burrow and Tom Hunt.

There have been two large and important business areas that this group has been involved in since it was created in January. The first is to advise and influence the NBN Trust with regard to enforcement of the non-commercial licence used on the NBN Atlas. The second is to provide oversight on externally funded projects, several of which were completed in 2017-18, to great success and providing very welcome income.

In terms of accreditation, reassessments (of LERCs accredited for five years) are now in full swing and two were completed. National coordinator work on the accreditation submission for Staffordshire Ecological Record was completed and we are now looking for an assessor. This work will provide a very useful template for future National Coordinator facilitated accreditation submissions.

Work for 2018-19 is continuing along similar lines, with liaison over the EA agreement renewal being an important additional strand.

## Communications & Influencing

Group members: Clare Blencowe, Katharine Davies, Mark Wills, Pauline Campbell, Steve Whitbread and Tom Hunt.

This is a completely new group created from scratch to direct and execute ALERC's communication work, both internal and external.

As of 2017-18 it has developed the ideas for the conference later in 2018. It has planned a range of works for 2018-19, including delivery of the conference, review and revamp of the ALERC website and development of a communications and influencing strategy.

## Technical Development & Data Standards

This is also a new group and its main work to date has been to oversee and comment on work to secure the future Recorder 6. This has meant collating responses from the consultation and communicating the messages from it and liaising the JNCC and country agencies. Going forward, the work will involve securing a future for Recorder in light of the fact that the agencies will no longer support it.

 **ALERC** @\_ALERC\_ · 10 Dec 2017

A last reminder (or 3) re the Recorder 6 consultation, particularly for National & Local Recording Schemes. Check out the info here [nbn.org.uk/news/recorder-...](http://nbn.org.uk/news/recorder-...) and share your views.

@SilphidaeUk @iSpotnature @OPALnature @NHM\_ID @\_BTO @BDSdragonflies  
@BLSlichens @BBSbryology



The poster features the text 'Recorder 6' in a large, stylized font. Below it, the logo for the 'JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE' is displayed, along with the 'National Biodiversity Network' logo. At the bottom, it states 'Built to NBN standards by Dorset Software Services Ltd'. The background includes a photograph of yellow flowers and a map.

BMIG, British Plant Galls, BritishFungi and 5 others

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## ALERC Board of Directors and Officers (serving during 2017/18)

Name	LERC	Officer Position	Main Work Area and Responsibilities
Martin Horlock (resigned 11/10/2017)	Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service	Chair (until resignation)	Data Management and Data Systems
Clare Blencowe	Sussex Biodiversity Record Centres	Chair (From 11/10/2017)	Governance and Administration (group chair)
Nicky Court	Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre	Treasurer	Governance and Administration (treasurer, consultations)
Mark Wills	North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre	Vice-Chair (until 24/01/2018)	Communications and Influencing (group chair)
Mandy Rudd (resigned 11/10/2017)	Greenspace Information for Greater London		Business Development NBN Data Access Group NBN Atlas Steering Group
Ian Egerton	Devon Biodiversity Records Centre		Business Development and Accreditation (group chair)  ALERC Strategy & Policy
Gary Lewis	Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	Vice-Chair (From 24/01/2018)	Governance and Administration
Adam Rowe	South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre		Technical Developments and Data Standards  NBN Atlas Steering Group ALERC board recruitment
Steve Whitbread	Harrow Council (previously of Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre)		Technical Developments and Data Standards
Sara Lovell	EcoRecord	Secretary (From 11/07/2017)	Governance and Administration (Secretariat)
Pauline Campbell (joined 10/05/2018)	Centre for Environmental Data and Recording		Communications and Influencing
Ian Carle (joined 08/05/2018)	Herts Environmental Records Centre		Technical Developments and Data Standards (group chair)
Hannah Cook (joined 03/07/2018)	Kent and Medway Biological Records Centre		Technical Developments and Data Standards (Accreditation chair)
Tom Hunt		National Coordinator	ALERC Work programme including conference, membership and accreditation

## Treasurer's Report 2017/18

Expenditure		Income	
National Coordinator	£23,183	Membership	£25,990
Room bookings	£272	Conference fees	£1980
	£324	Contracts	£2500
NBN Trust membership	£350		£3,183
Corporation tax	£367.44		
Wildlife Link (crossed 2 years)	£418 and £686		
Conference expenses	£2,205.94		
Accountants	£235		
NBN Conference – ANC -	£95		
Contract payments to SEWBREC and DBRC	£2134.57		
Companies House fees	£28		
Speakerphone	£150		
<b>Total</b>	<b>£30,424</b>		<b>£33,653</b>

A full set of accounts will be available for inspection and will be filed at Companies House by 31 December 2018.

### Funding of the ALERC National Coordinator Post for financial year 2017-2018

Costs	Amount	Funding source	Amount
Employment costs – incl. salary, NI, pension, redundancy provision	£26,869.75	Carry forward from 2016-2017	£6,922.95
Travel & subsistence	£4,101.51	ALERC – from membership fees	£20,000.00
IT Equipment & phone	£239.24	Contract work	£3,326.25
Hosting	£2,100.00		
<b>Total</b>	<b>£33,310.50</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>£30,249.20</b>
		Balance carried forward to 2018-2019*	-£3061.30

\*Several pieces of contract work were completed in 2017-2018 that were invoiced & paid in 2018-19

Header image © Tom Hunt/RECORD

With thanks to all those whose Tweets we've used in this report.

Thanks to Andy Slater of EcoRecord for helping with the design of the report.

