



**Essex Association of Local Councils
Executive Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting held on
19th March 2015 at
42B High Street Great Dunmow CM6 1AH**

Present

Name	District	Name	District
Cllr John Buchanan	Basildon	Cllr McPherson-Davis	Basildon
Cllr Peter Davey	Brentwood	Cllr Tony Hayward OBE	Braintree
Cllr Helen Edwards	Braintree	Cllr John Gili-Ross	Colchester
Cllr Stuart Berlyn	Chelmsford	Cllr Mrs Jackman MBE	Epping
Cllr Mick Page	ECC	Mrs Angela Balcombe	ECC
Cllr Mrs Tilly Pink CBE	Maldon	Cllr Alan Acott	Castle Point
Cllr Brian Hazlewood	Rochford	Cllr Peter Brown	Chelmsford
Cllr Michael Talbot	Tendring	Cllr Mrs Linda Belgrove	Tendring
Cllr Richard North	Brentwood	Cllr Hamish McIlwrick	Uttlesford
Kathryn Richmond	Epping Forest	Cllr Bryan Ledger	Maldon

Also Present

Joy Darby	Chief Executive Officer
Linda Golding	PA to the CEO & Committee Officer
Pearl Wilcox	Training Officer
Carol Hartley	Finance Officer

Present at start of meeting

Marisa Baltrock
Sian Morris

In the Chair

Cllr John Gili-Ross

Vice Chairman present

Cllr Peter Davey
Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman MBE

1. Chairman's Welcome and Announcements

Chairman's Meetings and Events

The Chairman made a report on his activities since the last meeting. He confirmed that his objectives were to continue the excellent work of Cllr Sheila Jackman and visit as many Councils and Associations as possible. He also confirmed his commitment to improve communications.

Cllr Gili-Ross told members the seating round the table would be re-arranged for the next meeting so Mrs Darby and himself would be sitting centrally along one of the sides and also as he would be out of the country for the next meeting date Cllr Peter Davey would be in the chair.

Specific meetings attended:

- Economic Rural Partnership meeting – Feering
- Two Superfast Essex meetings in Chelmsford
- Larger Local Council Forum in Halstead
- All Party Parliamentary Group in London - The meeting theme was Rural Broadband and Community Broadband Projects. He was a guest speaker and NALC members were in attendance
- Economic Action Group in Chelmsford - This meeting set out to redevelop the strategy of the group for the next five years
- Coffee Morning in Great Dunmow - The first of two events planned to meet Chairs and Clerks. A second takes place in April.
- Epping Forest Branch Meeting
- Gold Awards Evening at Waltham Abbey Town Council
- Maldon/Dengie District Association Meeting
- New Executive Member due to join representing Colchester District

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Keith Miles	LLCF
Cllr Roy Martin	Rochford
Cllr Mel Sullivan	Uttlesford
Cllr John Wren	Southend on Sea

To note:

Brian Hindley from Dedham will be joining the Executive representing Colchester from the next meeting.

3. Minutes

- 3.1 Minutes of the EALC Executive Meeting held on the Thursday January 22nd 2015 were agreed once two changes were made:-

To add Cllr Richard North to those present

7.6 Sentence change to read “Reports tabled by Marisa Baltrock, Sian Morris and Pearl Willcox. These were accepted”

- 3.2 Minutes of the Larger Local Councils Meeting on 12th February 2015 – noted

4. Personnel – Chairman of the Personnel Committee to report.

This was the first session of the Personnel Committee under the new Chairmanship. The Committee was happy with the current work and structure.

Sian Morris has now completed her apprenticeship. All Members present asked that she be congratulated on this achievement.

5. Finance

- 5.1 Minutes of the Finance Committee – due to holidays - were not yet available and would be presented at the next meeting.

Budget Report

The Treasurer went through the report and explained variances.

The following was reported.

- Trading downturn since January possibly due to the elections
- Extra grants

The Treasurer is now optimistic that the Association will break even at the end of the financial year. It was agreed that reserves still should not fall below £100,000.

Next year Budget

- Estimated that courses will improve in income
- Pay awards (cost of living) have increased pay roll costs
- Deficit Budget – approximately £12,000
- Grants from Essex County Council are confirmed by Cllr Page

Members were in agreement that the budget should go forward for the next financial year.

5.3 Buildings Management

- Thresholds – completed
- New computer for conference room – installed
- New Server – on order
- Pressure Release Valve – on order
- 1st Floor Emergency Exit – work to be carried out to remove emergency exit glass – further work has been agreed.
- PAT Testing – commissioned

Mrs Hartley left the meeting

6. New Initiatives and Other Matters for Decision

6.1 Members Expenses Openness – web site request – Decision Required

Cllr Mrs Linda Belgrove proposed that the EALC Executive Members expenses are posted on the EALC web site to show transparency and openness.

Cllr Mrs Belgrove explained the background by stating that there should be openness at the EALC and the EALC should be setting the standard.

Comments made by Members of the Executive

- This would cause additional work for the staff
- A Councillor asked for clarification as to whether it was a total figure for all Members or whether we include staff.

(Cllr Mrs Belgrove confirmed she would be happy if a global figure was disclosed for Members, reiterating that the Public have a right to know)

- A number of members stated that a number of Cllrs do not make a claim, and without greater clarification on what was being claimed the figures alone did not give any understanding to the claims, how much work was undertaken and how many meetings attended. The way they are published is important, the figure alone does not create a complete picture and do not relate to the budget.
- The amount of work involved is fairly comprehensive due to the numbers of the Executive Members involved, the amount of small claims and how often the EALC may wish to show them.
- A member asked for clarification on whether the annual accounts produce a global figure – this was confirmed.
- Some Members felt that disclosing this information was unnecessary.
- No Councillors had any issue with their expenses being disclosed however, they felt that just disclosure was not appropriate as it did not give a clear indication of the background etc.

Response from the proposer

Cllr Linda Belgrove responded that this is important and we must act in a transparent manner. She made the point that the EALC accounts were not on the web site when she looked last year, and this was not transparent.

(Mrs Darby made the point that this was rectified within a day, and the accounts were sent to Arlesford Parish Council immediately when requested. The Council would have received a hard copy and email copy when published.

They had been posted on the web site when published with the AGM information but had been inadvertently been removed after the event. The accounts had now been given a permanent page on the site, to address the matter and ensure transparency).

Cllr Mrs Belgrove said that she was aware that this happened.

- The Treasurer commented that the Auditor was not unhappy with the accounts, and levels of disclosure.
- A Councillor suggested that a global figure plus the expenses policy would be sufficient.
- Other Councillors felt that nothing needs to be changed.

Members voted that they accepted that Members Expenses were shown in the Annual Accounts as Committee expenses and this would be a permanent inclusion on the EALC website.

All members were in favour with one abstention.

Cllr Linda Belgrove abstained as this was not the proposal that she had asked to debate.

No further proposals were placed before the meeting to discuss.

Working Party

Cllr John Gili-Ross suggested that the matter of the EALC web site should be considered and it should be updated and improved. There would be a cost to for the improvements and a training cost for updating. He believed that we should not make this decision at this meeting, we should look at the web site first and make it fit for purpose and agree the content under that process. This matter may be considered during that process.

Cllr John Gili-Ross suggested a Working Party to work remotely by email – to look, consider, recommend and cost.

- Stuart Berlyn, Peter Davey and John Gili-Ross

Report back to Finance Officer in the Summer of 2015, after consultation with the County Office.

7. Essex Matters

7.1 Essex County Council – Update Cllr Mick Page

Essex are looking for devolved powers from Government for Essex

CIF Fund will be continuing with a quick response fund still available

Time scales similar to last year

- The Chairman of ECC presented the CIF cheque at an event in Chelmsford.
- Mistley opened its hall and Cllr Page had attended
- In Billericay the CIF funding (£19500) assisted the funding for the church and this enabled them to get further funding for this to the sum of £190,000

Inviting ECC to the celebration of events funded or partly funded by ECC is important, and Executive Members were asked to remind the local Councils to ensure this happens.

7.2 CIF Funding

- Letter to all Councils
- Letter to David Finch Leader ECC

Cllr Page thanked the EALC for their recent work on this matter.

7.3 Police Partnership Conference – Mrs Darby updated those present and again asked that Executive Members support the event – there are just a few tickets still available.

7.4 Essex Police and Crime Panel Report of the meeting held on 29 January 2015 – Noted

7.5 EALC President

Mrs Darby gave a short synopsis of the two candidates.

Cllr Berlyn proposed Cllr John Jowers as the name to go to the AGM for President, based on his commitment to the EALC and the Parish and Town Councils

Seconded Cllr Tony Hayward

15 votes in favour

2 against

2 abstentions

Cllr Jowers name will go forward to the Annual General Meeting in September 2015.

7.6 Staff Reports

- Sian Morris - noted
- Kerry Rolf - noted
- Marisa Baltrock - noted
- Pearl Willcox – verbal update received

7.7 Essex Rural Partnership

7.7.1 ERP Full Partnership Meeting Minutes of the Meeting held at 10:00am on 11th November 2014- noted

The Essex Rural Partnership met in January and Cllr Roger Hirst had become Chair and this was his second meeting.

7.7.2 ERP Steering Group Minutes 23rd January 2015 – noted

7.7.3 20/20 Vision for Rural Essex – noted

Strategic meeting for the future – looking at a new vision

7.7.4 Refresh Consultation – noted

8. Regional Matters – Update

None at time of print

9. National Matters

9.1 NALC Council member Update

- Star Councils
- Community Alliance on a Right of Appeal against planning – NALC with CPRE and Civic Voice are setting up a campaign giving the community a right to challenge a planning decision, where this is against planning policy set in a Neighborhood Plan
- NALC Post General Election Symposium – 15th July 2015

9.2 NALC Draft LLCF minutes 20th January 2015 - noted

9.3 Chris Hopkins MP – Letters to the Leaders of Principal Authorities – Council Tax noted

Council Tax Reduction Schemes – Mrs Darby to contact the Principal Authorities on this matter and report back.

9.4 NALC Draft Minutes – Executive Committee 18th November 2014 - Noted

9.5 NALC Chief Executives Report – March 2015 – noted

9.6 NALC Draft profile National Council Member – noted

9.7 NALC – CALC Benchmarking survey – survey analysis – noted

9.8 NALC –Sector Led Body and Transparency Fund – noted

9.9 NALC – Policy Committee February 2015 – noted

Cllr Mrs Edwards left the meeting

10. Meeting Dates 2015

Date	Venue	Time
14th May 2015	42B High Street Great Dunmow	2pm – 4pm
23rd July 2015	42B High Street Great Dunmow	2pm – 4pm
10th September 2015	42B High Street Great Dunmow	2pm – 4pm
19th November 2015 (Annual Meeting)	42B High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon
24 th September 2015 70 th Annual General Meeting	Foakes Hall	PM

11. Feedback and Next Agenda

11.2 Virus attacking computers – raised by Cllr Berlyn

Cllr Belgrove left the meeting

11.3 Cllr Tony Hayward told the meeting he would not be standing for election in May – so this was the last Executive meeting he would be attending. He was asked to attend the Annual Meeting in September.

All Members present thanked Cllr Hayward for all his hard work and gave him a round of applause.

12. Meeting Closure

The Meeting Closure – the meeting closed at 4.05 pm

Signature

Date