



Essex Association of Local Councils

42B High Street, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1AH Tel: 01371 879722 Website: www.ealc.gov.uk

Minutes

Executive Committee

Wednesday 6th September 2023, 10 am at 42B High Street, Great Dunmow, Essex, CM6 1AH

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Executive Committee Members Present:

Cllr David McPherson-Davis	Basildon		Basildon
Cllr Peter Davey	Brentwood	Cllr Richard North	Brentwood
	Braintree	Cllr Martin Lee	Braintree
	Chelmsford		Chelmsford
	Colchester	Cllr John Gili-Ross	Colchester
	Epping Forest	Beverley Rumsey (online)	Epping Forest
Cllr Mike Eldred	Local Council Forum Representative		Maldon
	Essex County Council		Maldon

Cllr Sue Martin	Rochford	Cllr Angelina Marriott	Rochford
	Canvey Island		Southend
	Tendring		Tendring
Cllr Alan Townsend	Uttlesford	Cllr Stephanie Gill	Uttlesford

Agenda

1. **Welcome from the Chair.** Welcome to Cllr Mark Platt, the representative from Essex County Council on behalf of Cllr Louise McKinlay.

2. **Apologies for Absence,** please email charlene.slade@ealc.gov.uk

Cllr Jim Devlin

Cllr Brian Butcher

Cllr Paul Lees

Cllr Sheila Jackman

Cllr Abdul Hafiz (no apologies received).

3. **Declarations of interest**

Cllr. Stephanie Gill declared an interest as a part time tutor for the EALC.

4. **Minutes**

- 4.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 13th July 2023.

A proposal to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

Proposed by: Cllr Martin Lee.

Seconded by: Cllr. Alan Townsend.

One abstention. The majority vote is carried.

- 4.2 Actions report.

A report has been provided in your pack from Cllr John Gili Ross on Olivia's Story. The meeting of the working group will be taking place on 3rd October, the meetings will take place on the same day for the Business Plan, Marketing Group and Councilors Training Bursary Group the timings will be confirmed and the meeting link will be shared. The meetings will be online.

5. **Personnel – The Personnel Sub-Committee update.**

5.1 Update from CEO. It's a busy time of the year with preparations for the AGM along with staff annual leave. This means some tasks have to be prioritised over others, and some work streams have to be pushed back. The staff handbook has been reviewed by the personnel committee and now includes a policy on menopause, a policy on flexible retirement and a review of the document in general. The personnel committee have agreed and signed off a Tutor agreement with terms of reference which is now ready to be implemented. There has been no update regarding the national pay scales. We have received feedback from members wishing WorkNest courses to be delivered separately for Clerks and Councillors. Concerns have been raised nationally regarding the number of job vacancies across the sector, in particular the Clerk role. NALC have reviewed their risk assessment at a recent COF meeting, the general view of county officers, is the potential lack of clerks is a high risk factor for the running of Councils.

5.2 Update on Clerk vacancies.

There are concerns across the Country about the lack of Clerks and amount of job vacancies EALC advertise on a weekly basis. There is a potential lack of experience in carrying out the interviews with members, this is a potential service that EALC could support members with. To support with the parish councils on providing training support for carrying out interviews.

Proposal for implementing an EALC topline syllabus for a training program from the Executive Committee to potentially deliver training for members in interviewing Clerks. Proposal to form a working group from the Executive Committee.

Proposed by: Cllr. John Gili-Ross

Seconded by: Cllr. Martin Lee

The vote was carried.

Members to form the working group will be as follows:

Cllr. Alan Townsend

Cllr. John Gili-Ross

Cllr. Martin Lee

Action: CEO to contact WorkNest to see if there is already a package for training members on the recruitment process.

Reach out to members to encourage the advertising in areas other than the EALC and LGA.

Beverley Rumsey joined the meeting 10:25 am

6 Finance, welcome from the Chair of Finance. Welcome to Cllr Martin Lee to the Finance Sub-Committee.

6.1 Finance Sub-committee draft minutes from the meeting of 10th August 2023. Noted.

- 6.2 Budget Report for July 2023, updated 8th August. Training is forecast lower than expected. The bookings are expected to pick up after the holiday season. The Cllr. Training is fully booked, another 4 sets of councilor training, Advanced CT and Chair Training in the autumn. course is being offered in person and online. The Budget report will be updated at the next meeting. There is a new course 'for a Clerks refresher course' a course on Finance for larger councils, definition on an income and expenditure basis, based on a precept of £200k the existing training is very basic.

The budget reflects the true costs of the expenses.

The foodbank fund will run on 11th September and the commission will be £37,500 this will improve the bottom

- 6.3 Bank Balances to 30th August.

The funds are being transferred from the Barclays account to NS&I. this taking some time as the new accounts are being opened first.

- 6.4 Affiliation Update.

Chigwell Parish Council have not paid their affiliation fee but are attending training and will receive a large bill for double the amount of the training cost. Deden have also attended training.

- 6.5 CIF application summary shows total application received of 120 at a total value of £997,502.84 this is three times the value of the fund available. There is 90% of the applications received without all the documentation, applicants are unable to follow a check list. There is a course by EALC and RCCE on how to complete a grant application. There are less applications from parish and town councils this is due to most projects being playgrounds and previous applications have not been successful as so parish councils are reluctant to apply.

Cllr John Gili Ross left the meeting 10:54 am

Charlene Slade left the meeting 10:55 am

The chair of the CIF panel has challenged ECC on the criteria with parish council projects. The projects still need to be match funded.

Charlene Slade rejoined the meeting at 10:57am

The criteria needs to be fine-tuned.

- 6.5 Grant Overview 2023.

There funds being transferred. The emergency CIF may be transferred, this is being agreed with ECC to transfer funds

to the Microgrant fund. The fund value left from previous years is a total of £129,092.00 some applications received under the CIF have been pulled out if they are determined to be emergency and meet the criteria.

Clarity is needed to understand why and how the CIF can fund Churches and not the parish councils.

6.6 Food Support Grant fund to be launched 11th September 2023.

The criteria is slightly different £4,000 available and £1,000.00

6.7 ECC Grant projections 2023/24 from Charlotte Brittan. Noted.

6.8 EALC Business Forward Plan 2 update.

The business plan is simply an update and working group has been formed to re write the strategy for the EALC for the next 4 years.

7. Chair and Vice-Chair reports to the Executive

7.1 Chair, Cllr Peter Davey: Feedback

The Chair gave an update to members on the meetings attended on behalf of the EALC. The meeting with Cllr. Louise McKinlay was very positive as this was the first time Cllr. McKinlay had seen the HQ of EALC.

NALC CVC meetings discussed the role of the Clerk and the vacancy of Clerks in the sector.

A meeting with Cllr. Mark Platt was very positive, Cllr Platt is a parish councilor, the meeting fully informed and provided information about the EALC and the work of the membership. This was a very positive meeting.

An update was given about the accounts and the auditor of the NALC. The accounts when they are signed off will be shared with the Executive committee.

Courses with NALC are popular and are some courses are full with 200 delegates in attendance.

There is an opportunity for EALC to follow the initiatives of the NALC with training online.

7.2 Vice Chairman, Cllr John Gili-Ross: Feedback (Appendix 8b)

Oliva's Story at the AGM a question could be asked of the Commissioner at the AGM to bring it forward.

7.3 Vice Chairman, Cllr Mike Eldred: Feedback

Cllr Mike Eldred, Vice-Chair gave an update on meetings attended. Attending the Essex Heritage Annual Meeting.

Supporting the work in preparation of the AGM and Conference in September.

Comfort Break 11:16 am

Meeting reconvened 11:34 am

8. Essex Matters

8.1 Essex County Council Report, Cllr Mark Platt. Initiatives with SLC on CC. An initial acknowledgement from government option 3 with a Mayoral role. This does not automatically end up unitary authorities. ECC ensure they will provide support to the EALC once the devolution expressions of interest has been finalized.

8.2 ECC Initiatives update.

Waste Management initiatives.

The lack of disabled access for the EALC in the training room. ECC are in support of this initiative there is potential funding opportunities for the property to be accessible. The CEO could seek professional companies to carry out a review, however the EALC are being proactive and are aware of the lease renewal in 2025 and the landlord will need to approve any work in implemented in the project.

The value for money with the office being in Great Dunmow needs to be considered, the business working group will need to look at the possibilities to look at a feasibility study taking the view of the staff, ECC, parking costs, travel for members. There is a 6 months' notice period on the lease. There needs to be a feasibility study driven by the CEO with the staff as a start. There may be a possibility to enter into a short term lease.

Beverley Rumsey left the meeting at 11:52am

8.3 ECC/EALC Meeting updates.

9. New Initiatives and other matters for discussion

9.1 Update from CEO and Vice-Chair, Cllr Mike Eldred- AGM & Conferences at Colchester Stadium 21st September 2023.

CEO gave an update with the AGM preparation. The order of the day sets out the overview and timings. There has been a lot of organizing from the staff with the support of the vice chair and a member of the executive committee

Cllr John Gili Ross rejoined the meeting 12:03 am

9.2 Executive Committee Member participation in the AGM. Jobs will be allocated to members,

9.3 Order of the Day. Noted. The business agenda needs to be updated with various changes need to be made following recent meetings, the wording will be checked with members before it is a live document.

9.4 EALC 4 year Business Plan inclusive of Marketing Strategy, update on task and finish groups. The first meeting of the working groups will be on 3rd October the timings will be confirmed. All the meetings will be online.

9.5 Partner reports as received. Noted.

9.6 EALC Structure and Executive Committee Member Roles January 2022. To be reviewed after the AGM as there will be constitutional changes made that may or may not be voted on and approved. Following the AGM a track change document will be prepared and brought back to the committee at the next meeting in November.

Executive Members must book their ticket for the event themselves as this captures the numbers and your dietary requirements for the day.

10. District Association Representatives Feedback –

10.1 Basildon. Thank you to the Vice-Chair and the CEO for attending the meeting in July.

10.2 Braintree – Neighborhood Plans in Brentwood was out of date in 2002 they did not have a saved local plan. There must be 4 criteria met before it is saved. Before the NHP is approved. Section 14 was not engaged for those reasons. The interested parties for the parish council and not the residents. There were 9 residents in Uttlesford.

There is no local plans in place in Braintree. If there is one in place then the NHP. There is an issue across the county which needs to be addressed. 19 parishes do have NHP.

10.2.1 Email to Sir William Cash. The documents have been put forward as an example of the implications.

10.2.2 Open letter to Sire William Cash. Noted.

10.2.3 Appeal Decision. Noted.

10.3 Brentwood. There were discussions about the NHP taking so long to complete then they can fall on their face as they have not been approved. There has not been a meeting of the BBPCA recently, however there are concerns about the Pylons upgrade. The parishes are responding to the consultation.

10.4 Colchester. Next meeting is taking place this week. Pylons will be on the agenda. Cllr. Lee Scott has attended meetings, there is a good relationship with the councilors in Colchester.

10.5 Epping Forest. No report.

10.6 Maldon. No report.

10.7 Rochford. No report.

10.8 Tendring. No report.

10.9 Uttlesford. There is a meeting tomorrow evening. A thank you to the secretary. The neighborhood plan in Uttlesford is dated 2005. There was a discussion about Wren kitchens and the well informed meeting. Wren confirmed that the NHP did not count but the DP still counts. It is important to see that the section 137 reflect what the NPPF reflects. Uttlesford will be able to inform at the next meeting the outcome of the next plan. UDC are currently in special measures.

11. Staff Overview

11.1 Chief Executive Report. Noted.

11.3 MIB – Members Information Book. Other useful information will be saved to this file.

12. Items for the next Agenda

13. Date of Next Meetings for 2023

AGM Thursday 21st September 2023

Annual Meeting of the Executive 23rd November 2023

14. Meeting Closed at 13:05 hours.