



**Essex Association of Local Councils
Minutes Executive Meeting
23rd July 2015
42B High Street Great Dunmow CM6 1AH**

Name	District	Name	District
Cllr John Buchanan	Basildon	Cllr McPherson-Davis	Basildon
Cllr Don Smith	Braintree	Cllr Helen Edwards	Braintree
Cllr Peter Davey	Brentwood	Cllr Richard North	Brentwood
Cllr Stuart Berlyn	Chelmsford	Cllr Peter Brown	Chelmsford
Cllr John Gili-Ross	Colchester	Brian Hindley	Colchester
Cllr Mick Page	Essex CC	(Support Officer) Angela Balcombe	Essex CC
Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman	Epping Forest	Cllr Keith Miles	LLCF
Cllr Roy Martin	Rochford	Vacant Seat	Rochford
Cllr Michael Talbot	Tendring	Cllr Linda Belgrove	Tendring
Vacant Seat	Uttlesford	Cllr Hamish McIlwrick	Uttlesford

Chairman
Vice Chairman
Vice Chairman
Treasurer

Cllr John Gili-Ross
Cllr Peter Davey
Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman
Cllr David McPherson-Davis

Also Present
Chief Executive Officer
Committee Officer and PA to the CEO
Training Officer
Finance Officer
Office Liaison Coordinator
Junior Office and Training Liaison

Mrs Joy Darby
Mrs Linda Golding
Mrs Pearl Willcox
Mrs Carol Hartley (until item 6)
Mrs Marisa Baltrock (until item 1)
Miss Sian Morris

1. Chairman's Welcome and Announcements

The Chairman welcomed all those present.

Housekeeping – Pearl Willcox

Announcements

Cllr John Gili-Ross announced Marisa Baltrock will be leaving the association on 26th July. Executive Members wished her well.

Chairman's Meetings and Events

The Chairman spoke about the excellent meeting he attended of the Tendring District Association of Local Councils. The meeting was very well attended, lively and interesting. He said he was really pleased to attend these meetings which help bring about change and development.

The July NALC Conference was attended by Cllr Peter Davey and the EALC Chairman, and both commented on the time was worth attending.

The meetings and events attended or to be attended during the months May to July are shown below.

- ✓ Frost Estate Thurrock Public Meeting Panel Member – June
- ✓ Braintree District Association Annual Meeting – Presentation
- ✓ Parish Councils Bill T&F Consultation Submission – Dunmow
- ✓ RCCE AGM – Writtle College
- ✓ ECC Annual Chairman's reception – Stow Maris
- ✓ Basildon Association Meeting – Little Burstead Billericay
- ✓ Essex Rural Partnership – Foakes Hall Gt Dunmow
- ✓ Tendering District Association Meeting
- ✓ What Next For Local Councils seminar – NALC Session London
- ✓ Superfast Essex Community Engagement Meeting - Chelmsford
- ✓ EALC CEO and Chair Monthly update meetings
- ✓ Equalities in Recruitment Course – Vine HR Dunmow
- ✓ General Power of Competence – Training Course
- ✓ CILCA Training and Work Preparation – 1 Day revised scheme
- ✓ Essex County Council Chairmans Reception

Other Work Undertaken

The article written for the NALC NCR magazine summer edition entitled "Superfast Broadband Top Tips" was published and is available.

He told the meeting he was asked to form a three member PCC Complaints Board to hear complaint appeals against the PCC and/or his office. First meeting was attended in June

New Executive Membership

The Chairman of the EALC welcomed the following new Executive Members

Braintree Association of Local Councils – Cllr Don Smith (Present)

Canvey Island – Cllr Colin Letchford (Absent)

Leigh on Sea TC – Cllr Richard Herbert (Apologies received)

Rochford – to be appointed

Uttlesford – To be appointed

Colchester – Brian Hindley (Present)

2. Apologies for Absence

Cllr Colin Letchford	Castlepoint
Kathryn Richmond	Epping
Cllr Mrs Tilly Pink CBE	Maldon
Cllr Bryan Ledger	Maldon
Cllr Richard Herbert	Southend

3. Minutes

3.1 Minutes of the EALC Executive Meeting held on the Thursday 14TH May 2015

Cllr Peter Davey proposed acceptance of the minutes, seconded by Cllr Stuart Berlyn.

The Executive unanimously accepted the minutes and the EALC Chairman signed them as a true account of the proceedings of the Executive Meeting held on 14th May 2015.

3.2 Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 10th July 2015 – noted

4. Personnel

Cllr John Gili-Ross informed Members regarding the last meeting of the Personnel Committee and will report further when an agreement on the recruitment programme and process.

Mrs Darby explained how the office would cope with a staff member down during August and further on as required, however no new work would commence, and some work may be delayed or compromised. The staff would, where possible, cover the work undertaken by Marisa Baltrock in the interim period.

5. Finance

5.1 Auditors Report, Response and actions undertaken

The response to the Auditor's report was agreed by the Finance Committee, with the Risk Assessment of Fidelity Guarantee undertaken by the Finance Committee as follows.

Fidelity Cover:

The Finance Committee considered the risks posed by staff embezzlement and what the level of cover is required to ensure that the EALC funds are safe. The Finance Committee agreed that there was no requirement to raise the Fidelity Cover, due to the processes and procedures already in place, and the minimal risk of embezzlement due to the separation of duties.

Budgets – the EALC prepares the best budgets possible and the Finance Committee was satisfied that the budget setting was cautious and would continue to be so. No changes would be made to the process.

5.2 Annual Accounts – Members of the Finance Committee proposed that the Executive Committee approve the EALC Annual Accounts and the EALC(2013)LTD.

EALC Annual Accounts 2014/2015

Cllr Sheila Jackman proposed the accounts should be accepted and forwarded to the Annual General Meeting 2015.

Cllr Peter Davey seconded the proposal

All Executive Members present voted in favour of the motion.

EALC(2013)Ltd (This is the company that rents the building for the EALC)

It was proposed by Cllr Stuart Berlyn to accept the accounts and forward these to the AGM for approval.

This was seconded by Cllr Mick Page.

The motion was carried unanimously.

5.3 Appointment of Auditor 2015/2016 Accounts

The Finance Committee proposed that Mr Howard to undertake the 2015/2016 Audit. Members noted the Finance Committee agreed scope of works for the audit year 2015/2016.

Cllr Peter Davey proposed the appointment of the Auditor, Maurice Howard and the scope of works; this was seconded by Cllr David McPherson-Davis.

The motion was carried unanimously.

A discussion was held on the reports processed for the Executive Committee. Members felt year to date should be shown as “actual” not “estimated”. The Finance Officer to amend this procedure. Grants are shown correctly, Affiliation Fees are not shown correctly and will be adjusted in future.

Improvements can be made to the 2015/2016 plan and this should be realistic, and the plan will be updated during the year.

Cllr Don Smith suggested that there should be a 5 year plan.

5.4 Budget Report

It was suggested this should be a “Plan” not a “Budget”

5.5 Affiliation Fee – Finance Committee Proposal

After discussion and debate it was agreed at the Finance Committee to set an increase for the year 2016/2017 of 2%.

Member's discussion

- Cllr Buchanan explained the way NALC charges the Parish Councils.
- Cllr Berlyn asked the affect if NALC equally increased the fee by 2%
- Cllr Miles asked what effect this had on the banding
- Cllr Miles asked for a ½% escalator on the affiliation fees yearly (next Finance Committee) and commented a % increase was not good news. An escalator allows Councils to budget more easily.

- Cllr Richard North – the reasons for the increase must be made clear.
- Cllr Peter Brown – agreed with Cllr Miles that the 0 % is not a good way forward and suggested a % of less than 2 % may be better proposition.
- Cllr Mrs Linda Belgrove apologised for being late (arrived at 2.25 pm) and asked if the fees go up by 2% this year will there be an increase next year and if so how much – the question could not be answered.

An increase of 2% was proposed Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman and seconded by Cllr John Buchanan.

15 in favour
1 against
No abstentions

The motion was carried

Comments will be considered by the Finance Committee and the Treasurer will be prepared to explain the reasons for the increase.

5.6 Buildings Management – the following works have been planned or undertaken

Internal Decoration – planned
Fire Safety – 6 monthly assessments carried out
Toilet – toilet repaired
Gate Sign erected
Sign for building – refurbished
Finance Office – remedial works to be undertaken

6. New Initiatives and Other Matters for Decision

6.1 Appointment of Executive Members to Committees (for those Committees with changes in Membership).

Finance Committee

Following the retirement of Cllr Tony Hayward (Braintree Association) there is a vacancy on the Finance Committee.

Cllr Stuart Berlyn was appointed

(Carol Hartley left the meeting at 2.45pm)

6.2 EALC Annual General Meeting and Conference update

Mrs Darby gave a brief run through on the proposed arrangements for the Annual General Meeting, times, speakers etc. Cllr David Finch to be asked to come and speak at the Conference. It is proposed that as we are celebrating our 70 year anniversary an “afternoon tea” will be served.

6.3 Staff and Member AGM Raffle

Cllr Mrs Jackman requested members to bring a raffle prize to the next Executive Meeting.

7. Essex Matters

7.1 Essex County Council – Update Cllr Mick Page

- New CEO
- Devolved powers debate with EC and central government
- LEP has not worked successfully and Essex is now looking at a Great Essex LEP
- Highways Panels – Parish Councils need to update ECC Members on projects for the Highways panels. Parish Councils should submit projects to their County Councillor to feed in.

CIF – Update by Mrs Angela Balcombe

Expressions of interests in by end of August (28th) full applications end of September. Panel throughout November

- £1.5Million
- There is likely to be £120,000 per district
- Panel Membership – No elected Members are able to sit on the panel, it is normally only officers
- Each District Panel is chaired by the Chairman/Mayor of the District Council

Cllr John Gili-Ross asked that Executive Members promote the CIF

7.2 Staff Reports

- Sian Morris – noted
- Kerry Rolf - noted
- Marisa Baltrock – noted
- Mrs Pearl Willcox have a verbal update on the courses being delivered.

Mrs Darby explained the Transparency fund to those present.

- Affects Councils under £25 k
- Requirements for a web site with financial information
- EALC to get NALC funding to work with the Councils
- EALC to receive grant fund for the parishes
- EALC will be looking to work with Angela Balcombe at essex info.net

EALC Trainers Bank

Mrs Darby told members that an advert had been sent out requesting anyone wishing to tutor training courses should contact her. So far no one had come forward.

7.3 Essex Superfast Broadband

ECC recently announced the award of a contract to a company called Gigaclear relating to the rural challenge project. The project will provide fibre broadband to homes and businesses within a defined area of Epping Forest district. The project will lay fibre to an estimated 4,500 premises and will provide broadband delivery completely independently of BT's local loop broadband cable network. The project will begin implementation from November 2015 and is expected to largely complete by the end of 2016

7.4 Essex Rural Crime Forum Meeting – 27th May 2015

Cllr Peter Davey attended this meeting in the absence of the CEO.

- Action plan presented
- The Commissioner has announced he will not stand again next year
- Modern day slavery
- Domestic violence and crime
- Rural Specials recruitment drive
- Contact Management System
- Police Accountable in the rural areas

PCSOs – issue raised by Cllr Don Smith

Alresford fully funded a PCSO – an issue over the policy on the attendance of the police on all and any anti-social behaviour.

Linda Belgrove - as an ex member of the Police Authority she declared an interest and stated that the Police Authority was always stopped from raising the precept and this is why the authority has a low tax base.

The subject of PCSO's was raised at the last Larger Local Council Forum meeting in June and was to be a topic on the next LLCF agenda in October.

- 7.5 Essex Rural Crime Action List- noted
- 7.6 Essex Rural Partnership – June Newsletter - noted
- 7.7 Essex Rural Partnership Steering Group Meeting - noted

8. Regional Matters – Update

- 8.1 SELEP Rural Strategy Launch – Cllr Davey made a short report on the Growth programme, detailing how they could apply for fund to develop growth.

9. National Matters

- 9.1 NALC Council Member Update

Morning meeting only and business was transacted before the afternoon lobbying event.

- 9.2 NALC Letter on 2 Tier Local Government

- Letter sent to the NALC CEO - noted
- Response from the NALC CEO – noted

The NALC Policy decision on this matter has been “parked” and is no longer relevant. Cllr Buchanan spoke about this at the NALC Council and was supported by Hampshire and Kent

- 9.3 NALC Larger Local Councils Committee – noted

- 9.4 NALC Bulletin 30th April, 5th June and 3rd July – noted

- 9.7 Lobby Government Day 30th June 2015

Cllr Buchanan along with the CEO and the NALC CEO met with the RT Hon Mark Francois MP for Rayleigh and Wickford on the 30th June 2015. Mark Francois gave an audience of 40 minutes, during which time he commented on some of our excellent work undertaken and was pleased that Rayleigh TC had won Council of the Year in 2014. Cllr Buchanan briefed the MP on the work of the Essex Parishes, and what was important for the sector.

Cllr Gili-Ross and Joy met with Mark Francois following the Lobby Day at an informal event at ECC.

- 9.8 DCLG Cross-Department Parish Councils Partners Round Table – noted
- 9.9 NALC Policy – EALC Submission – Noted

10. Future Meeting Dates 2015

Date	Venue	Time
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	12 – 5pm

11. Feedback and Next Agenda

- Planning Conference – NALC
- Twitter Feed/ Social Media – EALC has nothing currently. Issue to be discussed in the future raised by Cllr Linda Belgrove (strategic plan)
- Media – raising the profile of the EALC (strategic plan)

12. Meeting Closure

13. Closed at 4.12 pm

Signature.....

Date.....