

**Essex Association of Local Councils**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LARGER**  
**LOCAL COUNCIL FORUM**

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 10.00 am – 12.30 noon**

hosted by  
**DUNMOW TOWN COUNCIL**

**Present:**

<b>Cllr Peter Davey</b>	<b>Ingatestone &amp; Fryerning PC Chair EALC</b>	<b>Cllr Phil Milne</b>	<b>Gt Dunmow TC</b>
<b>Cllr Vivien Chapman</b>	<b>Brightlingsea TC</b>	<b>Deborah Tonkiss</b>	<b>Billericay TC</b>
<b>Cllr Barrie Easter</b>	<b>Gt Dunmow TC Mayor</b>	<b>Cllr Danielle Frost</b>	<b>Gt Dunmow TC</b>
<b>Cllr Jim Devlin</b>	<b>Billericay TC</b>	<b>Jo Clark</b>	<b>Billericay TC</b>
<b>Mark Squire</b>	<b>Loughton TC/SLCC</b>	<b>Cllr Ron Ramage</b>	<b>Witham TC</b>
<b>Cllr Terry Moore</b>	<b>Gt Dunmow TC</b>	<b>Cllr Jannetta Sosin</b>	<b>Gt Baddow PC</b>
<b>Petra Palfreyman</b>	<b>West Mersea TC Clerk</b>	<b>Clare Milligan Clerk</b>	<b>Gt Baddow PC</b>
<b>Kathryn Richmond</b>	<b>Waltham Abbey</b>	<b>Cllr Veronica Randall</b>	<b>Hockley PC</b>
<b>Cllr Shirley Kirton</b>	<b>Canewdon PC</b>	<b>Beverley Rumsey Clerk</b>	<b>Epping TC</b>
<b>Cllr Patrick Horner</b>	<b>Witham TC</b>	<b>Cllr Peter May</b>	<b>Canvey Island TC</b>
<b>Tracey Millard</b>	<b>Marks Tey PC</b>	<b>Cllr Alan Acott</b>	<b>Canvey Island TC</b>
<b>Cllr David Wixley</b>	<b>Loughton TC</b>	<b>Cllr Barbara Scruton</b>	<b>Epping Town Council</b>
<b>Michelle Harper</b>	<b>Danbury PC</b>	<b>Tory Melhuish Clerk</b>	<b>Galleywood PC</b>
<b>Helen Symmons</b>	<b>Leigh on Sea TC/Exec</b>	<b>Cllr Peter Greig</b>	<b>Canvey Island TC</b>
<b>Cllr Roy Martin</b>	<b>Hockley PC/Exec</b>	<b>Cllr Stuart Berlyn</b>	<b>EALC EXEC /Danbury PC</b>
<b>Cllr Sue Martin</b>	<b>Hockley PC</b>	<b>Kevin O'Brien Clerk</b>	<b>Buckhurst Hill</b>
<b>Cllr Sue Sullivan</b>	<b>Springfield PC</b>	<b>Jane Coleman Clerk</b>	<b>Maldon TC</b>
<b>Cllr John Harrison</b>	<b>Heybridge PC</b>	<b>Amanda Hilton</b>	<b>Heybridge PC</b>

<b>Cllr Ashley Jones</b>	<b>Heybridge PC</b>	<b>Cathryn Carlisle Clerk</b>	<b>Shalford PC</b>
<b>Kelly Holland</b>	<b>Hockley PC Clerk</b>	<b>Cllr Colin Golding</b>	<b>Shalford PC</b>
<b>Aimi Middlehurst</b>	<b>North Weald PC</b>	<b>Cllr Mandy Cohen</b>	<b>Barling Magna PC</b>
<b>Joy Darby CEO</b>	<b>EALC</b>	<b>Linda Golding</b>	<b>EALC Asst. CEO</b>
<b>Rebecca Sheppard</b>	<b>EALC</b>	<b>Charlene Slade</b>	<b>EALC</b>
<b>Amanda Brown</b>	<b>EALC</b>	<b>Kerry Wood</b>	<b>EALC</b>
<b>Pearl Willcox</b>	<b>EALC</b>		

Also present :

Speakers: Graeme Richardson & John Huggett RNLI  
Sally Utting & James Golding Adnams

In the Chair: Cllr Jim Devlin from Billericay Town Council

### **Opening Introductions by the Chairman**

The Chairman welcomed everyone present telling delegates there should be 26 councils present with around 42 delegates if everyone who said they would be attending were present.

The Chairman told delegates this was Linda Golding's last Larger Local Council Forum Meeting as she would be retiring at the end of March.

A special mention was given to Cllr Vivien Chapman (Brightlingsea TC) and Cllr Patrick Horner (Witham TC) who were also attending their last meeting this morning as they would not be standing again at the next Council elections. Both had been regular attendees over the past few years.

### **Welcome to our speakers this morning:**

Our speakers for this morning are Graeme Richardson from the RNLI and Sally Utting from Adnams will be speaking about Gin making.

**Minutes:** The minutes from the last meeting held at South Woodham Ferrers Town Council were agreed and signed by the Chairman

### **The list of apologies received was read out by Linda Golding**

Barbara Larkin Springfield PC, Cllr Wendy Stamp Burnham-on-Crouch TC, and Halstead Town Council

## **Welcome from Gt Dunmow TC by the Mayor of Dunmow Cllr Barrie Easter.**

Cllr Barrie Easter welcomed everyone to Gt Dunmow going on to tell delegates that Gt Dunmow had a lot of new development scheduled over the next few years but supporting infrastructure was still needed at the moment. He went on to say the Flitch Trails would be taking place this year. Gt Dunmow is famous for the trials when married couples take part to win a flitch of bacon if they prove they have not had a cross word during the year.

## **RNLI Presentation**

Graeme Richardson spoke for 45 minutes delivering a very interesting and informative illustrated presentation. Delegates were shown a short film about the different types of Lifeboats and rescues around the Country and the preventative work that is being carried out in order to reduce the number of lifesaving calls that are attended during the year and ultimately to reduce the number of drownings. Some of these include children being taught how to float like starfish at swimming lessons, life jackets being installed in areas close to the waters edge which can be used and returned to their lockers. These lifejackets are serviced by the RNLI every six months. He spoke of how the RNLI are trained at a purpose built centre in Poole Dorset and showed pictures of the training taking place. It is a known fact that most people who fall into the water do not intend to do so. A number of delegates were interested in taking information back to their Councils.

Graeme took some questions from the floor and it was agreed Linda would circulate his email address so Councils could make contact with him.

The Chairman thanked Graeme for his very interesting and very well presented presentation.

Graeme's email address is [Graeme\\_Richardson@rnli.org.uk](mailto:Graeme_Richardson@rnli.org.uk)

## **NALC UPDATE – Cllr Peter Davey**

*A copy of the Update was placed on all delegate's chairs so they could take it back with them to their Councils. Anyone wishing for a full copy please contact the EALC*

## **Important Staffing changes**

Charlotte Eisenhart has been appointed as our new head of member services This post was created as a result of our recent strategic review and is crucial to continuing our closer work together

Farhana Miah has moved to acting executive officer on taking over responsibility for supporting NALC's committees as well as continuing to provide assistance with NALC conferences, LCR and helping the smooth running of the office.

## **NALC Meetings with the EALC**

The EALC hosted a visit by one of NALC's solicitors, Gurvynda Paddan-White, when she attended a roundtable on the Voice of The Councillor report, hosted by the Essex Association of Local Councils. Among the issues discussed were relationships with principal authorities, role of chairman and mayor, and onward devolution of services. A further meeting also took place with the NALC Head of Finance and Administration, Steve Walker

## **NALC Spring Conference**

Around 180 people attended the Spring Conference at the Royal National Hotel in London. Our keynote speaker, Tracey Crouch MP, the former Government minister for loneliness, called on local parish and town councils to help tackle loneliness, praising and thanking our sector for "what you are already doing."

## **Rural England 'State of Rural Services' Report**

Rural England has published a report on the state of rural services in England, drawing attention to the difficulties rural households face in accessing services such as broadband, public transport and healthcare.

## **Final local government finance settlement**

The secretary of state for Housing, Communities and Local Government, James Brokenshire MP, published the final local government finance settlement 2019/20 and as expected council tax referendum principles have not been extended to local (parish and town) councils. The government have also allocated £56.5m to help principal authorities prepare for Brexit, and I would encourage you to liaise with them about this new funding so they are aware of any particular issues you may be facing.

## **NALC Management Board**

NALC's Management Board brings together 11 councillors elected from the National Assembly to oversee the work of NALC and we met on Tuesday 29 January and here is a brief summary of what key issues were discussed:

- The board noted we are set to achieve a surplus against the budget this year and that NALC had applied for cyber essentials accreditation to demonstrate that we handled data securely and an update on proposals regarding the annual conference
- A report on performance over the last two months was considered, with councillors noting the legal team had dealt with 127 written queries and 34 telephone queries over the last quarter
- The publication of our new range of materials to encourage more people to stand for election in May's local elections was welcomed
- Welcomed progress on the development of our new strategic plan, agreeing four new strategy aims to take forward our new vision for the sector and NALC; strong national and county voices promoting the sector, promoting and creating local councils in England, supporting councils and councillors, effective national and county associations working together.

## **SLCC**

NALC met with colleagues from the Society of Local Council Clerks to consider joint work to update the governance toolkit and other template policies

## **Lobby Day**

This year's annual parliamentary Lobby Day will take place on 9 July, again coinciding with a meeting of National Assembly

## **Committee on Standards in Public Life report**

The recent launch in Parliament of the Committee on Standards in Public Life report on local government ethical standards, backs NALC's longstanding calls for reforms to the current regime including the re-introduction of sanctions. The report does however fail to recommend and promote more councillor training.

NALC will be partnering with Local Government Resource Centre Associates to stage the 2019 Local Council Expo on 21 June at Chateau Impney, Droitwich in Worcestershire.

## **Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA)**

The SAAA board met and began considering how the first year of the challenging new arrangements had gone and what improvements could be made for next year including further simplifying the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

## **Youth Politics UK London**

Colleagues from the policy and communications were at the launch of Youth Politics UK London to develop links with a range of national youth organisations to raise awareness and get more young people involved in the sector

## **NALC Smaller Councils Committee**

The Smaller Councils Committee met on 12 February, in advance of the draft minutes being available, here are a few highlights:

- Alison Stevens was elected committee chairman, and Cllr David Francis was elected committee vice chairman
- The Committee held extensive discussion sessions on the development of the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government new Communities Framework; the Committee on Standards in Public Life report on ethical standards; and use of social media including how to respond to comments from residents
- Agreement to produce a research report on the role of smaller local councils in tackling rural issues, comprising case studies, good practice and policy recommendations

## **NALC Larger Councils Committee**

Our Larger Councils Committee met on 22 January at **CCLA** in London, here's a brief summary:

- Colleagues from CCLA welcomed the Committee to their offices and gave a brief overview of their work with the charities, churches and local authorities sectors. The CCLA recognised that in more established unitary areas, local councils are delivering an increasing number of devolved services paid for by generating additional income through increasing precepts, which is resulting in more use of

CCLA's funds, seeing this as something that will continue as the restructuring of local government continues and greater demands are placed on local councils

- Cllrs Paul Harvey, West Bletchley Council in Milton Keynes, and Iain Hamilton, Halewood Town Council in Merseyside, were elected chairman and vice chairman
- The Committee held an extensive policy discussion session to consider council leadership, in particular, the role of council leaders, including current practice; and NALC's longstanding policy objective on business rate reform to inform
- Progress on the Committee's work programme.
- Items raised by the Committee included prudential borrowing, the impact of the Ledbury case, boundary and community governance reviews, powers regarding council housing, and council tax support funding
- The Committee was pleased the study tour to Bishop's Stortford had sold out.

### **Our Policy Committee met on Tuesday 15 January, here are a few brief highlights:**

- Cllrs David Francis and Peter Wilkinson were elected as chairman and vice chairman
- The committee welcomed Carole Burslem, county officer, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes county association, as the new representative from the County Officers Forum
- While strongly welcoming the success of NALC's 'toilet tax' campaign, the Committee agreed to press the government to bring forward the Budget commitment to exempt public toilets from business rates sooner than April 2020
- Motions from the Northamptonshire county association on planning consent to convert agricultural buildings to housing, and the Yorkshire county associations on 'parish proofing' government policy and legislation and pressing for associated support, were adopted
- The committee is setting up a small task and finish group to review the process and guidance for submitting and considering motions from county associations.

As you can see from this report the NALC together with the EALC and other CALCs and Associations is being extremely proactive in its mission to support the important work of Town and Parish Councils at national level through the continual lobbying of key ministers in order to not only make your voices heard on key issues directly affecting your communities but also to influence the decision making process prior to them becoming statute.

### **SLCC UPDATE by Mark Squire**

Mark told delegates

- SLCC AGM/training is to be held at Little Channels on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2019
- 1 social event coming up – Visit to the Air Ambulance at Earls Colne on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2019
- Executive AGM 14<sup>th</sup> March at Springfield
- The Essex Branch of the SLCC offers support to new Clerks - this is via the Clerk mentoring scheme administered by Suzanne Walker Clerk at Great Notley and

Abigail Wood the Clerk at Ingatestone & Fryerning and this is available to all new Clerks regardless of whether they are members of the SLCC or not.

- Essex SLCC Chairman or Secretary (or both) will attend New Clerks Day Training Day at the EALC 4<sup>th</sup> April 2019

### **Presentation: Sally Utting from Adnams Brewery - The History of Gin Making**

Sally came down from Adnams Southwold Brewery to give an interesting presentation on the history of gin making, its ingredients, and the process of distilling the gin at Adnams. She showed some slides to accompany her talk and brought along some of the examples of the botanicals used - Juniper Berries, Orris Root, Coriander Seed, Cardamom Pod, Sweet Orange Peel and Hibiscus Flower. Delegates were interested to hear how Gin had evolved over the centuries and how its popularity had become fashionable once again.

The Chairman thanked Sally for her interesting presentation.

### **LINDA – THANK YOU TO EVERYONE**

Linda thanked everyone who had come to the meeting to say goodbye to her.

She told everyone she had attended her first meeting with Joy back in 2008 when she said very few people were present, they sat round a table and the networking was nothing like the meetings today. She took over the LLCF meetings back in 2011, changed the format, arranged speakers away from the Council World and used theatre style seating, still keeping the regular updates which is what the meeting is really about and the formula worked as numbers increased dramatically.

Over the 8 years she has organised these meetings there have been 24 meetings covering 54 different topics. Linda went on to name a few memorable ones. She thanked all the Clerks who had helped her with free hall hire and refreshments and the speakers who all gave their time free as the EALC does not have a budget for the LLCF.

She mentioned the late Keith Miles who had worked with her to bring the meetings up to what they are today. His sudden death was a great shock and sad time, and she would have liked him to be here today but instead she had unknowingly shared his last meeting at West Mersea along with some of those present today. Keith was very good at Chairing the meetings and keeping them running to time so the formula between them worked and the meetings went from strength to strength.

On a personal note she said she would miss the EALC, Joy and the staff and the Executive members who she looked after, and everyone present who she had got to know over the years but said it was the right time for her to leave now and spend more time with her family and enjoy more holiday time. She sent her best wishes to everyone and thanks for making the meeting so special for her.

## **EALC UPDATE – Joy Darby**

Joy used the update time to speak about Linda and her time at the EALC. She started from the time Linda applied for the job of Committee Assistant leaving Buckhurst Hill Parish Council over 12 years ago to becoming her Asst. CEO.

Linda has worked hard and really is part of the EALC Office and Executive that turned this Association from a small advisory body to the support organisation it is today. As Assist CEO over the last few years she managed within the team ensuring service to the membership was the very best. The catering changed at the AGM between Linda and Pearl and this is now our flagship event with the most delightful buffets and funds were saved as caterers were not brought in.

The Association has changed over the years and Linda has been very active in making these changes happen. One of her greatest achievements must be the development of this LLCF. It has grown over the years to become one of the best forums in the County bringing together Clerks and Councillors to share good practice and develop new ideas.

During Linda's service there have been highs and lows. We have grieved together and celebrated together. I am very pleased to see that all the members of staff are here today including some of our Tutors. This is an opportunity to say publicly that Linda you will be missed, thank you for all the support over many years. You have brought great fun to those you worked with, your work ethic has been fantastic, you have helped and supported and on occasions you have been tough. It has been great to work with you over the years, so on behalf of the EALC Membership and the Executive the LLCF and the Staff – thank you for everything.

**The Chairman then presented Linda with a large bouquet of flowers, a Radley Handbag and a signed card from the Larger Local Council Members.**

**Linda thanked everyone for her gifts.**

**Gift presentations were also made by the Chairman to Cllr Vivien Chapman and Cllr Patrick Horner.**

**Cllr Peter Davey thanked Linda's husband Colin for all the support he had given Linda in her role and the help he had personally given to the EALC.**

**OPEN FORUM TIME** – No subjects were raised.

**Next meeting will be at Marks Tey on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.15

**Signed..... Date .....**