

Essex Association of Local Councils

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LARGER LOCAL COUNCIL FORUM

25th February 2016

10.00 am – 12.30 noon

hosted by

**Great Dunmow Town Council at Foakes Hall,
Gt Dunmow CM6 1BG**

Present:

Cllr Keith Miles	S.W.Ferrers TC	Jannetta Sosin	Gt Baddow PC
Cllr Vivien Chapman	Brightlingsea TC	Kelly Holland	Canewdon PC
Cllr David Wixley	Loughton TC	Enid Walsh Clerk	Loughton TC
Cllr Jannetta Sosin	Gt Baddow PC	Cllr David Stevenson	Galleywood PC
Cllr Abdul Hiafiz	Maldon	Aimi Middlehurst	Ongar TC Clerk
Kay White	Chigwell PC	Cllr Stuart Berlyn	Danbury PC
Barbara Larkin	Springfield PC	Cllr Sheila Jackman	North Weald PC/EALC
Cllr Lew Schnurr	Heybridge PC	Kathryn Richmond Clerk	Waltham Abbey TC
Amanda Hilton	Heybridge PC	Suzanne Walker	Gt Notley PC
Cllr Doug Perry	Saffron Walden PC	Cllr Patrick Horner	Witham TC
Kathryn Richmond	Waltham Abbey TC	Sue Deluca	North Weald PC
Cllr John Gili-Ross	West Bergholt PC/EALC	Cllr Brian Rolfe	Lawford PC
Cllr Peter Davey	Ingatstone & Fryerning PC/EALC	Cllr Danny Spillman	Epping TC
Mark Squire	Witham TC	Kerry Cumberland	Rayleigh TC
Cllr Vic Leach	Hawkwell PC	Cllr Phil Milne	Dunmow TC
Cllr Roy Patient	Hawkwell PC	Cllr Carol Seaforth	Dunmow TC
Cllr Martin Strubel	Hawkwell PC	Cllr Danielle Frost	Dunmow TC
Cllr Eileen Gadsdon	Hawkwell PC	Mayor Barrie Easter	Dunmow TC

Cllr John Davey	Gt Dunmow TC	Angie Balcombe	ECC
Cllr Jerry Gibson	Rochford PC	Cllr Gill Gibson	Rochford PC
Cllr Sue Sullivan	Springfield PC	Caroline Fuller	Gt Dunmow TC
Pearl Willcox	EALC	Joy Darby	EALC
Linda Golding	EALC		

In the Chair: Cllr Keith Miles – Chairman of the LLCF

Also Present:

Speakers

Cllr Rodney Bass – Essex County Council Cabinet Member
Emma Callaghan – Police and Crime Commissioner Office

Opening Introductions by the Chairman Cllr Keith Miles

The Chairman welcomed everyone and said it was good to see such a large number here this morning. He was pleased to report there were 26 councils due to attend with 46 delegates and this keeps the attendance numbers well up to record levels again! These numbers have been helped by Hawkwell Parish Council and Gt Dunmow Town Council sending 5 delegates each.

He went on to offer a special welcome back to Mark Squire Clerk from Witham TC and to Cllr Peter Davey who is the new NALC representative, replacing Cllr John Buchanan. He told delegates that Peter will give the regular update in the future. He would be reporting for the first time this morning and because of this we have given him a little extra time on this occasion!!

He expressed a warm welcome back to Cllr Rodney Bass, to Emma Callaghan from the Police and Commissioners Office and Cllr John Davey from Gt Dunmow Town Council who are our speakers for this morning and many thanks to them for giving up their time to come along and join us today.

Election of the Chairman and Vice Chair

The Chairman told the meeting the re-election for these posts was advertised with the notice of the meeting and no one had come forward. He asked if anyone wished to stand for one of these positions to indicate to him now. No one put themselves forward so he advised the meeting we was happy to stand for another year as Chairman.

Proposed by Cllr Stuart Berlyn from Danbury PC
Seconded by Cllr Patrick Horner from Witham TC

The motion was carried and Cllr Keith Miles from South Woodham Ferrers was duly elected Chairman for another year.

The Chairman told the meeting the Vice Chairman Post was formerly held by Cllr Tony Shrimpton from Maldon Town Council who had not attended a meeting for a long time and has not indicated he wants to stand again.

Cllr Abdul Hiafaz from Maldon TC told the meeting that Cllr Shrimpton was unwell and the Chairman asked him to take back the best wishes of the meeting to him.

The Chairman told the meeting Cllr Stuart Berlyn from Danbury Parish Council had kindly agreed to stand as Vice Chair and as there were no other nominations he asked for a proposer and seconder.

Proposed by Barbara Larkin Clerk to Springfield Parish Council
Seconded by Cllr Hiafaz from Maldon Town Council

The motion was carried and Cllr Stuart Berlyn was duly elected Vice Chairman.

Cllr Keith Miles went on to welcome the speakers for the morning and thanked Dunmow Town Council for hosting the meeting.

Apologies for absence

Margaret Saunders	Danbury PC	Kevin O'Brien	Buckhurst Hill PC
Mike Murkin	Halstead TC	Tory Melhuish	Sth Woodham Ferrers TC
Billericay TC	Frinton & Walton TC	Leigh-on-Sea TC	St Lawrence PC
Gt Notley PC	Cllr Philip Heady	Epping TC	Beverley Rumsey

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on the 20th October 2015 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Welcome from Great Dunmow Town Council by the Mayor Cllr Barrie Easter

Cllr Easter welcomed everyone to the meeting at Foakes Hall and the ancient market town of Gt. Dunmow. He told the meeting this was the 80th birthday year of the hall. The Flich Trials would be taking place this year and he hoped delegates would have time to look around the Town which Dunmow Town Council was very proud of.

Presentation by Cllr Rodney Bass

Councillor Bass said Essex was a very large County and one of the Top 5 largest in the Country. He gave the statistics of the miles of road, the number of street lights, etc. It also had the longest coastline.

He knew that Highways were on everyone's mind as it was the service we all use and rely on. It was like no other service. The road conditions are now 98% OK. In 2013 we had £16m of reactive maintenance - in 2016 we have £14m. He went on to give an overview of the future investment by ECC on the roads, bridges, signage and traffic lights and agreed many of the local roads were not in good condition at present. Massive housing growth in Essex, particularly around Colchester, would put added strain on the current roads and some improvements and new infrastructure, along with new railway links would have to be implemented to cope with this.

Essex County Council received good support from Suffolk, Cambridge and Herefordshire County Councils.

The proposed Lower Thames Crossing would be the largest piece of infrastructure in this neck of the woods and was definitely a much needed project and should be supported by us all.

The Coastal Path around England was being developed and Essex had the majority of its coastline able to be walked but there was still some more to be completed.

Cllr Bass proceeded to take a large number of questions from delegates to which he gave detailed answers.

(Some points spoken about by Cllr Bass can be found on the following websites)

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads.aspx>

<http://www.lower-thames-crossing.co.uk/>

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bass for attending the meeting and for his informative presentation. Cllr Bass then left the meeting at 11.20am

EALC Update by Joy Darby (Moved to later on Agenda)

Presentation by Cllr John Davey – Gt Dunmow TC on the Flich Trials

Cllr Davey gave details of this year's Flich Trials which will be held on the 9th July. He told delegates these Trials happen every 4 years and are a really good day out. The jury is made up from young people who know if the couples are telling the truth. The prize for the winning pair is a side of bacon.

Update from the SLCC Secretary – Enid Walsh Town Clerk at Loughton

Enid told the meeting there are 4500 parish clerks throughout England of which Essex has good membership of the SLCC and had an active branch.

On the 17th March there is a training day to be held at Springfield Parish Council
Topics for the day are:-

- Management of Trees
- Session on Accounts and VAT
- Presentation on Insurance and Playground Safety

Forthcoming proposed trips to:- Chelmsford Race Course, The House of Commons, and Copped Hall in Epping.

Presentation by Emma Callaghan from The Police and Crime Commissions Office on Restorative Justice

The Chairman welcomed Emma to the meeting

Emma gave an interesting power point presentation on Restorative Justice and its benefits for those concerned. Some points were:-

What is it used for?

- Anti Social Behaviour
- Criminal Offences (such as criminal damage, burglary and assault)

What is the Essex Restorative Justice Hub?

- Partnership made up of agencies across Essex who work to support victims of crime, reduce offending, support communities.

What is restorative justice?

- A process allowing those involved in come or conflict to have communications in a safe way.
- It allows victims to explain the impact the conflict has had on them, ask questions and seek an apology.
- It encourages offenders to take responsibility for their actions and make amends
- It can be direct or indirect
- Those involved can create a mutually agreed plan for how to move forward.

How does the Process Work?

- After you are referred someone will contact you to discuss the process and ensure that the case is suitable.
- The facilities will meet with everyone involved and a decision of how to proceed with me made. Then the facilitator will then arrange for the communication to happen, ensuring that everyone is comfortable with the process.

What are the benefits?

- 85% victims are satisfied following the RJ process
- Re-offending is reduced by as much as 27%
- 98% direct RJ end in mutually agreed outcomes
- RJ decreases post-traumatic stress and allows victims of crime to return to work more quickly
- In neighbour disputes, RJ can help to avoid evictions and help neighbours live in peace.

www.restorativejustice.org.uk

The Chairman thanked Emma for her presentation. She then left the meeting.

NALC Update by Cllr Peter Davey the new EALC NALC representative

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Peter Davey to the meeting as the new NALC representative who would be reporting to meetings in the future.

Cllr Davey reported the following points to delegates:-

- Appointed to the NALC National Council in November 2015
- Acknowledged John Buchanan's past 4 year term as the NALC representative
- Appointed to the NALC - Finance Committee – Dec 2015
- A detailed report had been sent to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the NALC Finance Committee over the Christmas period covering all the key issues as he saw them and subsequent dialogue had taken place culminating in an action plan being agreed at the first NALC Finance Meeting that took place on Wednesday.
- Joy arranged a meeting with Kent and Suffolk CALCs in December and Both CALCs are receptive and supportive to our own approach to NALC. It was a very constructive meeting and one of the outcomes was to agree that a letter would be sent to NALC, signed by the three CALCS, expressing concerns about various issues/initiatives within NALC and recommendations as to the best way forward.
- The message is simple – what the CALCs want is what NALC must deliver
- In NALC's 2016 programme is a continuation of engagement with Local Government Authorities and its interest groups will include promoting and sharing good practice, developing the leadership capacity of councillors with significant investment by LGA in a series of events and attending their annual conference.
- NALC is maintaining their influence with government, civil servants and Parliamentarians

- NALC held a Local Democracy reception in February and our Star Councils winners and finalists took centre stage at a parliamentary reception hosted by the All Party Parliamentary Group on local democracy. This was NALC's first parliamentary event of this kind for several years celebrating and recognising the work of our Councils.
- NALC have met all of the new Ministerial team and they have been most supportive of the role and importance of local Councils. NALC have been awarded £3.7m to set up a Transparency Fund to help smaller Councils buy computer equipment and set up websites to make financial and other information more readily available to their residents and to date 272 applications to the Transparency Fund have been approved, a total of £234,000; this takes the overall amount awarded to smaller parish councils to just over £748,000 since its conception
- NALC will continue to lobby on your behalf and build on previous successes including winning the argument about Council Tax referenda principles, slowing the withdrawal of Council Tax support funding, making it easier to set up new Councils and reforms to parish polls.
- Currently only a third of the population is represented by local Councils and NALC has been at the forefront of calls for a fundamental shift of stronger local democracy and power to local people known as devolution.
- Over 200 local Councils have been created over the last decade and NALC has been leading a national programme providing help and advice to local communities, as well as grant funding.
- Eleven new local Councils have been established in recent years as direct result of support provided by NALC and its County Associations.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Peter Davey for his informative briefing.

ECC Update by Angie Balcombe

Angie apologised for having not attended the last couple of meetings due to the busiest year of her life at ECC! She updated the meeting:-

- CIF Fund will continue again this year similar to last round and deadlines
- New grant of £400 will be coming for village halls to obtain Wi FI – Superfast Broadband.
- Clerks Bursary will continue for training
- CiLCA Registration: £150 towards fee for clerks

The Chairman thanked Angie for the update.

A Question about Devolution was raised to which Cllr John Gili-Ross replied that the Sector needs to be involved and the EALC had already had meeting with Mark Carroll from ECC.

Update from CEO Joy Darby

Joy gave the following update:-

- The EALC had taken on 2 members of staff at no additional cost as they were being funded by NALC to organize the Local Council Award Scheme and the Transparency Code applications. These are temporary appointments reliant on the funding continuing.
- The second Police Conference would take place on the 15th March. A good chance to come along and put your questions forward to the right people. The Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Alston would be attending.

The Chairman thanked Joy

Open Forum Time

Cllr Stuart Berlyn brought up the subject to Support Grants being reduced by 16% and in 2017/18 no support grant at all. Local Authorities keep all their business rate income. We need to talk to Local Authorities about implications this will have to Parish and Town Councils.

Cllr John Gili-Ross brought to the forum the subject of Inconsiderate Parking and how we can deal with the problem.

Subjects suggested for future meetings: Devolution and Parking Problems.

The next meeting of the Larger Local Councils

Next meeting will be hosted by Epping Town Council on the 7th July 2016

Thank you to Gt Dunmow Town Council for hosting the meeting.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 12.30

Signed..... Date