



**Essex Association of Local Councils  
Minutes of the Executive Meeting  
21<sup>st</sup> January 2016 held at  
42B High Street Great Dunmow CM6 1AH**

Present:

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 Peter Brown	Chelmsford
Cllr John Gili-Ross	Colchester	Brian Hindley	Colchester
Cllr Mick Page	Essex CC	Kathryn Richmond	Epping Forest
Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman	Epping Forest	Cllr Mandy Cohen	Rochford
Cllr Bryan Ledger	Maldon	Cllr Linda Belgrove	Tendring
Cllr Roy Martin	Rochford	Cllr Hamish McIlwrick	Uttlesford
Cllr Keith Miles	LLCF	Cllr Michael Talbot	Tendring
		Cllr Keith Artus	Uttlesford

Also Present:

Joy Darby  
Linda Golding  
Pearl Willcox  
Carol Hartley  
Sian Morris

Chief Executive Officer  
Assistant Chief Executive Officer  
Training Officer  
Finance Officer (Left after item 5)  
(left at start of the meeting)

## 1. Chairman's Welcome and Announcements

The meetings and events attended during the months November to December 2015 are shown below.

- ✓ Wickham Bishops PC Meeting – Presentation to Cllr Tilly Pink
- ✓ Sustainable Communities Event – Essex Cricket Showground
- ✓ Devolution initial discussions – Cllr Kevin Bentley Colchester
- ✓ Celebration of Christmas – Waltham Abbey
- ✓ Superfast Parish Engagement Event - Chelmsford Records Office
- ✓ EALC CEO and Chair Monthly update meetings

Other Work Undertaken

- ✓ PCC First Pass Budget Review – Chelmsford

Sustainability Meeting with ECC – Preliminary meeting before main meeting in February.

Cllr John Gili-Ross wishes to ensure that the EALC adds value to Local Councils.

Cllr Mrs Sheila Jackman would like the EALC to issue more press releases to the general public on the events that the EALC organises. Cllr Mrs Jackman asked for Executive Members to ensure that they encourage Councils will do this.

Cllr Miles said press releases are on the agenda at South Woodham Ferrers TC

Kathryn Richmond said Waltham Abbey TC sends out press releases to local paper and selective magazines

*(Cllr Mrs Belgrove arrived)*

Cllr John Gili-Ross spoke about adding the value.

Cllr Peter Davey said a press release went out when Ingatestone & Fryerning launched their new web site.

## 2. Apologies for Absence were read out by the CEO

Cllr Stuart Berlyn	Chelmsford
Cllr Richard Herbert	Southend
Cllr Colin Letchford	Canvey Island
Cllr Richard North	Brentwood

Absent

Cllr Ian McGregor                      Maldon

### **3. Minutes**

3.1 Minutes of the EALC Executive Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **4. Personnel**

The Chairman gave a brief overview of Personnel matters.

### **5. Finance**

The Treasurer announced that Carol Hartley had achieved her final qualification to ACCA.

Members congratulated her and gave a round of applause.

#### **5.1 Budget Report**

Cllr David McPherson-Davis gave members an update on the report provided.

Finance Committee are to meet and agree a budget ready for the Executive to approve in March.

So far the forecast figures indicate the Association may break even against a budget deficit.

Cllr Michael Talbot spoke about the budget sheet and explanation, thanking the Treasurer for the excellent information provided.

#### **5.2 Statement of Reserves**

The Treasurer announced that the reserves were at an appropriate level.

### **6. New Initiatives and Other Matters for Decision**

6.1 Report from Cllr Gili-Ross on the letter sent to the Essex Local Authority Leaders on Devolution

Cllr Gili-Ross took advice from leaders around the County, and wrote the official letter asking to be involved in the devolution process. A meeting has been called at Uttlesford DC on the 29<sup>th</sup> January when Cllr David Finch will be present and Cllr John Gili-Ross will be representing the EALC at the meeting.

## 6.2 Training Course Price list and Tutor Rates

Members discussed the rise and the training.

Cllr Miles proposed that the proposed list was agreed  
Seconded by Cllr Peter Davey.  
The motion was carried.

The Chairman spoke about the importance of Councils properly precepting for the future.

Localising of Council tax – only 5 responses from Executive

Others responded below:

Braintree – reducing over the next 3 years to 0  
Chelmsford – to respond  
Colchester – to respond  
Maldon – no grant  
Epping Forest – 16.6% going to 0 in 3 years  
Rochford – cutting  
Tendring – cut 5% this year  
Uttlesford – no response yet

## 7. Essex Matters

7.1 Essex County Council – Update Cllr Mick Page

- 2016/17 Revenue support grant cut by £57 million
- 2017/18 £99 million
- 2018/19 £127 million
- 2019/20 £155 million

This is on top of the cuts already implemented in the 5 previous years.

Living Wage – increases the budget  
Social care - £ 2 million deficit  
Council tax 1.99 % Essex, and 2% Social Care  
ECC has frozen for 5 years but cannot do this again, because of the other cuts.  
Rural Roads – ECC will be looking at the pothole program in more rural areas  
No library closures

Cllr Page stated that the next 2 years would be harder – especially in social care.

ECC will be looking at devolution to see how this may benefit

Police precept is up by 1.99% increase

CIF Fund safe for the next financial year

Cllr John Gili-Ross wrote to ECC Leader and thanked him for the CIF. Copy of letter to be sent to Members for their information.

Cllr Talbot - Currently the front line services are likely to be effected. The government have stated that the government grant will reduce to 0 in 10 years. However some of the business rate will be retained by the Principal Authorities.

EALC Grant for 2016/2017 was safe and Cllr Mick Page was thanked for ensuring the grant.

## 7.2 Staff Reports

- Training – Pearl Willcox

Mrs Willcox reported there had been a good take up of courses during the coming weeks. There will be an additional Social Media course and a playground safety course added at the request of delegates.

Course reductions for Executive Members – Office to send out the leaflet

- Social Media – Sian Morris

Cllr John Gili-Ross explained the report and thanked Cllr Linda Belgrove for initiating the subject and Sian for her good work collating the Council responses.

Web site – Cllr John Gili-Ross looked at the EALC Web site and into the essexinfo.net which is a free hosting. Essexinfo.net was considered as a good provider. A survey was undertaken by Sian Morris, and the report produced for the Executive.

The survey has resulted in Member Councils supporting the current process of communication and not the implementation of social media.

Cllr Mrs Belgrove said she was disappointed in the number of responses that were received; She believes that the reason why EALC should use social media is to reach the general public. Mrs Darby explained that we had received approx. 86 responses and the report included a very small sample of comments which were provided by clerks. Not every comment was included as we had tried to group them together to cover a number of points.

Kathryn Richmond explained about the work at Waltham Abbey and how helpful it is to reach the residents.

Cllr Mrs Jackman asked that the Executive Members encouraged Councils to issue press releases to get the work recognised more in the County.

The report was accepted and will be kept under review.

Reports were received on the following:-

- Police Conference – Kerry Wood accepted
- Transparency Fund - Amanda Brown and Kelly Holland report accepted
- Local Council Awards – Amanda Brown and Kelly Holland report accepted
- New Audit Regime – Kelly Holland – report accepted

### 7.3 Essex Rural Partnership

- November ERP Newsletter – Noted
- ERP Nov Steering Group - Noted

### 7.4 PCC Crime Forum Notes 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 – Noted

### 7.5 Community Agents

Community Agents Essex is now approaching the end of its second year. The work so far has been very focused on the implementation of a local resource to effectively support older people and their informal carers. They are now looking to increase their outreach activity to balance the number of referrals received from Social Care Teams. One of the priorities in this respect is to ensure that all Parish Councils and Councillors are aware of Community Agents Essex, what it has achieved and how to arrange an agent visit. The agents would welcome an opportunity to attend individual Council meetings or local events to provide more information. A short presentation to each District Association meeting would be a great place to start. An article will be sent to be included in the County Update. If EALC Executive Members would like to arrange a presentation for a District Association Meeting please contact

Brian Goodwin  
Community Services Manager  
Rural Community Council of Essex  
Telephone: 01376574341 or 08009775858  
Mobile: 07540720601

Information noted

## **8. Regional Matters**

None raised

## **9. National Matters**

## 9.1 NALC Draft Council Minutes November 2015 and Appointment to Finance Committee – Cllr Peter Davey

Congratulations to Peter Davey on the appointment to Finance Committee

Key points for noting

- Lord Matthew Taylor of Goss Moor appointed as the president of NALC who is a Liberal Democrat Peer.
- Sutton Coldfield in Birmingham is to become a local council with a population of around 95,000.

## 9.2/9.5 NALC Update

- Cllr Peter Davey has provided NALC with an initial detailed report to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the NALC Finance Committee expressing concerns in relation to the current financial model's sustainability and there have been subsequent dialogue between Cllr Peter Davey and both the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee.
- I sent a detailed letter as Vice-Chair of the EALC to both the Chairman and CEO of NALC expressing my concerns as to how the NALC Council Meeting and AGM were handled in October 2015 in relation to the affiliation Fee increase and there have been several discussions on the subject since and I included my own thoughts again in my finance report.
- Ken Browse the Chairman of NALC distributed a letter yesterday within the NALC Newsletter <http://www.nalc.gov.uk/news/entry/461-am-open-letter-to-all-parish-and-town-councillors-in-england> in which he reviewed the achievements last year and the initiatives this year however he also made reference to the fact that NALC was only 85% Affiliated with CALCs.
- The CEO arranged a meeting with Kent and Suffolk CALCs and in attendance were Cllr Richard Parry, Kent ALC with the CEO from Kent CALC, Terry Martin, the CEO from Suffolk CALC Shona Bendix, together with Cllr John Williams and Cllr Philip Hayes. Both CALCs are receptive and supportive to our own approach to NALC. They also supported the amended motion to reduce the Affiliation fees that I put forward at the AGM. It was a very constructive meeting and one of the outcomes was to agree that Terry Martin would draft a constructive letter to NALC, signed by the three CALCS, expressing our concerns about various issues/initiatives within NALC and recommendations as to the best way forward. This draft letter is included in your pack today. A lot of the

points that have been raised in this draft letter have already been addressed by Cllr Davey to both the chair and CEO of NALC and also to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee so although the concept is good the letter will require a few minor amendments.

## 10. Meeting Dates

Date	Venue	Time
17 <sup>th</sup> March 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon
12 <sup>th</sup> May 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon
21 <sup>st</sup> July 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon
8 <sup>th</sup> September 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon
EALC AGM – Noon – 5 30 pm 22 <sup>nd</sup> September 2016		
17 <sup>th</sup> November 2016	42b High Street Great Dunmow	10am – 12 noon

## 11. Feedback and Next Agenda

11.1 Feedback 15 minutes of open forum for members to raise issues of mutual interest

- Changes to bus services
- TDALC Meeting – dogs and disabled persons

Documentation on byelaws, a Council must be able to find their byelaws as there is no central register.

Assistance Dogs – also include guide dogs

- Role of the Council in defending a planning application – St Osyth employed a Barrister and the Council opposed and also opposed the appeal. The result of the 16 day appeal was that it was rejected. The case was then placed at the High Court. The High Court stated that the appeal was incorrect and St Osyth has been charged 57k and the community group has been charged £110k expenses by the applicant.

A costing Barrister is now challenging the costs.

The planning application will now go forward again, which will be an additional cost to the Parish Council.

- PCSO costs are now chargeable at full rate as the Police are no longer subsidising the roll.
- Issues of pot holes
- Housekeeping – Cllr Artus asked that there be one only one appendix to the agenda and not a number of appendices – a number of Members did not support this request.

The Chief Executive Officer explained that this would not be possible, due to administration arrangements, the collating of papers etc. Councillors asked the CEO to make sure printed copies now had the appendix number on the first page and the CEO agreed the request. The request by Cllr Artus was denied.

- Councils – Neighbourhood plan – South Woodham Ferrers TC are finding that there is apathy with not many people willing to assist with undertaking the plan. The Chairman Cllr Gili-Ross suggested that the Chairman of the West Bergholt be asked for advice.
- Cllr Peter Davey asked for the Members to note that his work with the NALC will be slow
- Parking issues – Considerate Parking Enforcement  
There are only a few parking enforcement officers  
Under new legislation there is a 10 minute slot on double yellow lines  
Seek an enforcement officer to speak to the EALC  
In Tendring the TDC have done a great deal of research  
The PCSOs were responsible for issuing consideration tickets  
The NEEP is self-funding.

## **12. Meeting Closure**

**The meeting closed at 12.08 pm**

**Signed.....**

**Date.....**