

# BRAINTREE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

*Supporting Parish and Town Councils in the District of Braintree*

*Chair Cllr Martin Lee*

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON THURSDAY 1 JULY 2021 by Zoom**

In attendance: Martin Lee (Chairman) Sible Hedingham; Paul Lees Feering; Michael Lager Witham; Dave Gronland Halstead; Peter Gentry Little Yeldham, Tilbury, Juxta Clare & Ovington; Jane Taylor White Colne; Dorothy Griffin Gt Notley; Mike Eldred Rayne; Jenny Wright Clerk Bures; Rachel Simnett Pentlow; Mike Crome Bulmer; Lynsi Haywood-Smith; Richard Shackell Bures; Roger Duffin Finchingfield; Tony Clayton Foxearth and Liston; Mike Radley Halstead; Kerry Barnes Steeple Bumpstead; Margaret Barrett Earls Colne; Robert Waters; Petra Palfreyman Clerk

### **1. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies were given from:

Phillip Rawlinson – Gt Yeldham PC

Ann Hooks – Rayne PC

Lucy Orow – Colne Engaine PC

Mark Weal - Hatfield Peverel PC

### **2. Welcome from the chairman and executive committee.**

The chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting on behalf of the executive committee.

### **3. Meeting topic and guest speaker: Sonia Church, High Liaison Manager, Essex County Council**

#### **A tour of the Local Highways Panel website and Q & A afterwards**

Sonia gave an informative talk about the LHP website and answered the following questions:

Q. Why are the schemes so expensive?

A. The costs included are the entire cost of the scheme and would include wages, administration, design, legal costs and the physical items including labour.

Q. Are the costs for design and traffic surveys paid to ECC or BDC or are they paid to outside organisations

A. ECC fund them LHP from their budget and pay for it all. BDC do not contribute at the moment. For example, for a zebra crossing, there would be 3 quotes from contractors which are reviewed by the commercial team in ECC and then a contractor would be chosen to do the work. An external company does all the speed surveys but an ECC employee manages it all.

Q. If you are waiting for funding for a scheme, could other applications that come in get priority and is there a way to ensure that a longstanding application will be dealt with.

A. The LHP make all the decisions on behalf of all the towns and parishes. It is a democratic process and ECC officers cannot influence it other than to say whether it is in policy or not. Schemes are dealt with in the order that the LHP agree are the best which means some schemes do get pushed down the waiting list.

Q, Do you have to apply for each stage of the scheme.

A. After the feasibility study it is sent back to the county member who discusses it with the requester. At the next panel meeting it goes forward for funding. Once money has started to be invested the LHP like to decide to continue with the scheme or say that it is not feasible.

ML said that BALC Has 4 members on the LHP to represent the membership of BALC. They are Dave Gronland, Susan Simpson, Philip Rawlinson and John Bendall.

DG – has not known a county member to reject any schemes and the LHP members to decide on the schemes.

Q. What is the budget for 2021/22

A. Braintree budget is £407789 + £200000 from the ECC budget this financial year. Over the county there is £6.4M. This has fluctuated over the years but will be £6.4M for the next 3 years. The ECC LHP department is generally funded from this budget.

Q. Have any of the Quiet Lanes been implemented.

A. They were trialled 2 years ago and monitored for 1 year. With parish involvement there was an increase in walking, cycling and horse riding and a decrease in speed. They involve a lot of staff time to put them in place as there is a legal process and public consultation etc. There will another 2 or 3 this year and then 2 per year going forward.

Q. What was the LHP spend this year and will they be applying for any of the leader of the Councils £25M fund.

A. Possibly LHP were under spent as COVID affected delivery and SC will find out. In the past Braintree either spent or overspent their budget.

Q. Why is the sign at the start of the Quiet Lane double the size of the one at the end and can public awareness of Quiet Lanes be raised.

A. Public awareness can be raised by the Comms department at ECC.

Sonia was thanked for her time and informative presentation.

**4. To receive reports:**

**(a) Finance report**

To authorise:

**Clerk fees of £240.00 to Petra Palfreyman (20 hours to 28 June 2020) – Agreed by PG. 2<sup>nd</sup> by ML**

**(b) Local Highways Panel** – the new LHP ECC member is Chris Siddall. All clerks should receive a copy of the minutes of the meetings and the Highways Highlights. It was confirmed that the 4 BALC members on the LHP are working for all the members of BALC and members should be aware that schemes can take several years to get started. All the schemes are dealt with in order so smaller schemes do not get priority but safety issues do. Councils do not have to be in BALC to make a request to the LHP. The makeup of the LHP committee is 4 from ECC, 4 from BDC, 4 from BALC and a chairman.

**(c) BDC Standards Sub Committee** – nothing to report

**(d) EALC executive** – ML & PL will attend the meeting next week.

Subscriptions will be £40 per parish in the first year to secure finances and cover clerks' fees, room hire and guest speakers. BALC is here to help all towns and parishes regardless on the size and issues.

**5. Information sharing. An opportunity for Councils to ask questions and share their experiences**

Some parishes have issues getting the S106 money derived from local developments as the money is going to the local towns. It was recommended to have regular meetings with Neil Jones the S106 officer. Cllr Gabrielle Spray has previously advised that S106 will be reviewed. It was agreed that it would be useful to have a S106 presentation for BALC in the future. Parishes should ensure their Open Spaces Action plans are up to date.

What is parishes reactions to grass verges only being cut once per year? It was confirmed that a 2<sup>nd</sup> cut would be made of there were safety issues. White Colne Parish Council had a similar issue that was rectified by asking for a second cut.

**6. Date of next meeting:**

**Thursday 7 October 2021 at Steeple Bumpstead Village Hall and by Zoom for members that are unable to attend face to face**

**Guest speaker – to be decided**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

*Email - [balc.clerk@outlook.com](mailto:balc.clerk@outlook.com)*

