

MEETING OF BRAINTREE DISTRICT PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL CHAIRMEN (or their elected member representative)

Thursday 25th February 2021 at 7pm by Zoom.

This meeting was convened to consider re-forming the Braintree District Association of Local Councils (BALC)

In attendance:

Martin Lee (Chairman) Sible Hedingham; Margaret Barrett Earls Colne; John Bendall Earls Colne; Dorothy Griffin Gt Notley; India Jayatillake Kelvedon; Lucy Orrow Colne Engaine; Richard Shackell Bures Hamlet; Alan Collard Toppesfield; John Marks Gt Yeldham; Garry Southgate Castle Hedingham; Mike Crome Bulmer; Rachel Simnett Pentlow; Peter Haylock Gt Maplestead; Gary Morris Black Notley; Ann Hooks Rayne; John Gili-Ross EALC; Charlene Slade EALC; Peter Gentry Little Yeldham, Tibury, Juxta Clare & Ovington; Jane Taylor White Colne; Dave Gronland Halstead; Michael Lager Witham; Paul Lees Feering; Anthony Lister The Henneys', Middleton & Twinstead; David Smith no details; Petra Palfreyman Clerk.

Apologies:

Jean Dilworth, Panfield; Tim Nash Sible Hedingham

1. Welcome (Cllr. Martin Lee, Sible Hedingham)

Martin Lee welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed the proposal is to set up a new organisation of BALC. Martin thanked the working party for their contributions so far.

The idea of the new BALC is to set up a strategic group to assist individual parishes where support is needed. There will not be any involvement in the general day to day running of the Parishes. There will be a small subscription of between about £20 and £40 to cover the clerk and administration costs and this will be calculated according to the size of the Parish. Keeping the subscription low should not preclude any Parish from joining. The strength of the group will be in the numbers that join in and as part of the group all will be supported regardless of the size of your parish.

2. To receive a resume of outcomes from working party (Cllr. Paul Lees, Feering)

The interested parties held a meeting with the Essex Association of Local Council (EALC) on 9 December 2020 with an aim of reforming BALC. It was agreed in principle that BALC would be positive for the parishes of the Braintree district. A Task and Finish Group was put together to look at the feasibility of BALC, to see what remained of the former organisation and to put forward some recommendations for a framework of how it could work. On 7 January 2021, a meeting was held with CS & JGR from the EALC and the

working group including David Gronland and John Bendall, who were members of the former BALC.

The last subscriptions paid to the former BALC were in the week of 20 April 2017. There are two bank accounts with Barclays holding just over £800 which will help to start up the new group. Two of the previous members of BALC still sit on the Local Highways Panel.

A letter and agenda were sent out to all 52 parishes inviting feedback. A formal meeting will be needed to agree a constitution. Currently the Parishes do not have any representation on the EALC, other Braintree committees or the Standards committee and have no regular meetings with BDC. If it is agreed to reinstate the association, officers will need to be appointed and in place to constitute a bank account.

3. To discuss the aims of BALC - strategy, overview, and influence: issues for BALC to take forward.

Jane Taylor confirmed that general feedback had been positive, there was good interest and that parishes will be able to support each other and that it should go ahead. There was one comment that is seemed aggressive and another about the cost of the subscription being affordable. Regardless of size, all parishes have similar issues such as planning, highways and environmental issues and it is hoped that with this common ground and good networking we can support each other.

The plan is to have 4 meetings per year at different parishes with suitable venues so that everyone gets an opportunity to attend. It is also hoped the meetings can be hybrid with a Zoom link to involve as many people as possible.

Thanks were given to CS & JGR from the EALC for their help in setting the meeting up and their valuable guidance.

The following questions or comments were made:

- What level of response to the meeting was received?
There were 25 attending the meeting and 4 apologies which equates to approx. 50%.
A - It is hoped that membership will grow as it is seen to be effective.
- How many of the 52 parishes will be willing to join. It may be that only when it is known how much it will cost will you know how many will join the association? Will members get good value from their subscription?
A - The numbers attending the meeting are encouraging and it is felt that members will get good value for the small subscription.
- The action to set up BALC is fully supported and costs at that level should not be prohibitive. The smaller councils would welcome support and contact with BDC as there will be common issues among the parishes.
- It is difficult to get a point across as an individual small parish and would help to be a member of BALC which will be fully supported.
- The strength in numbers is welcomed.

- The initiative is supported but how effective was the former BALC? Why did it stop and is there a need to have a physical meeting when Zoom works to well?
A - The former BALC was successful and had the chair and chief executive of BDC attend but it needs to be supported and the Braintree District is a large area which makes attendance difficult, so virtual or hybrid meetings will help with this.
- Would national issues be addressed?
A - BALC would support any issues their members need support with

Meetings could include speakers such as the Police, planning officers and other similar topics where a speaker would be able to get the messages out to up to 52 parishes.

4. To agree to the formation of BALC, or otherwise

Martin Lee asked for a show of hands against the proposal and as there were none this was taken as agreement to go ahead and form the new Braintree Association of Local Councils.

5. If 4 is agreed, to ask the working party to organise an Inaugural General Meeting:

a) to adopt a Constitution and organise elections/appointments.

It was agreed to continue with the same working party Cllr John Bendall (Earls Colne) Cllr Dave Gronland (Halstead) Cllr Michael Lager (Witham) Cllr Martin Lee (Sible Hedingham) Cllr Paul Lees (Feering) Cllr Jane Taylor (White Colne) to organise the inaugural meeting, including administration and finances.

b) to consider administration of BALC including finances, banking, subscriptions, activities

It was agreed to move the funds from Barclays Banks and set up a new account in BALC's name and update the details once the officers are in place. Full accounts will be kept.

c) to prepare their final report for the Inaugural Meeting.

The working party agreed to prepare the report for the next meeting which will be by Zoom on 15 April 2020 at 7pm

With no further business, Martin Lee thanked all for attending and contributing.

The meeting closed at 19.45pm