

BRAINTREE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Supporting Parish and Town Councils in the District of Braintree

Chair: Cllr Martin Lee

*Association Clerk: Kevin B. Money
7 Roach Vale, Colchester, Essex. CO4 3YN
email: balc.clerk@gmail.com
website: <https://e-voice.org.uk/balc/>*

MINUTES FOR BALC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

held on Wednesday 4th. January 2023 at 7pm by Zoom.

Present: Cllrs Martin Lee (Chairman), Paul Lees (Vice-Chairman), Ann Hooks, Peter Gentry, Jane Taylor & Kevin B. Money BALC Clerk

- 1. Apologies for absence** were received from Cllr M. Lager, Philip Rawlinson, Kerry Barnes
- 2. To confirm and agree the Minutes of the BALC meeting held on 7th. September 2022.**
Proposed A. Hooks, Seconded P. Lees **All Agreed**
- 3. To accept the resignation of David Gronland from BALC Executive** and as LHP representative.
The Chairman accepted, with regret, the resignation of David Gronland
- 4. Meeting topic and guest speaker for next BALC Representatives Meeting** on 19th. April 2023 at Feering Parish Council. (18th. January 2023 Representative meeting is Chief Constable of Essex Police)

Members suggested Sonia Church from ECC Highways Liaison Manager or Senior Planner at BDC
Cllr M. Lee asked if the Clerk could request the Police Chief Constable attend in person

- 5. To receive reports:**

a) Finance report – To retrospectively agree the payment to Kevin B. Money of £350.00p (Representing payment for the months of August to December 2022). Proposed Ann Hooks, Seconded P. Lees **All Agreed**

To retrospectively agree the payment to Grahame Walkingshaw of £28.78p (representing Zoom licence payment of November & December 2022). Proposed Ann Hooks, Seconded P. Lees **All Agreed**

To receive the Bank Reconciliation to 31st. December 2022.

Councillors noted the Bank Reconciliation to 31st. December 2022

Cllr P. Lees spoke about BALC Insurance

- Spoke about liability as an organisation
- Association has no legal standing and individuals and may be liable
- Insurance policy is required to protect whole of the membership
- Raised with EALC – NALC states up to individual organisations
- The cost is about £300 per year
- Would EALC and NALC assist with this cost?
- Cllr M. Lee asked the Clerk to send the insurance invoice to EALC to pay
- Cllr P. Lees to ask the insurance company for a 3-month policy until end of financial year

b) Local Highways Panel

To replace David Gronland on the LHP panel

Cllr M. Lee proposed to add this to the Representative agenda. **All Agreed**

c) BDC Standards Sub Committee

Nothing to report

d) EALC Executive

Cllr P. Lees informed the meeting that EALC held the annual CIF meeting in November on behalf of the ECC Applications totalled £749,000 against a budget of £300,000. Many applications were rejected due to

incorrect information. All applications will be notified of the decision of the panel/ECC. If they are unsuccessful and there is an alternative fund available, they will be notified accordingly. ECC have launched their Food Support and Winter Warm Essentials Fund which the EALC will be administering. Applicants can apply for up to £3,000 for food and up to a further £1,000 for the winter warmth essentials.

At the EALC Annual meeting held on the 24th. November Cllr Peter. Davey was re-elected unopposed as Chair of the EALC for the 6th year running. Cllr John Gili-Ross was also re-elected unopposed as Vice-Chair with Mike Eldridge elected to the other position of Vice-Chair for the first time EALC have successfully appointed a trained qualified Clerk (Ann Wood) as the Head of Member Enquiries and will be able to answer Clerk's question on legal issues. The training programme "hyperlink" initiative is well underway and is anticipated to go live in the spring of 2023 the cost being borne out of the restructuring reserve.

The EALC training programme for 2023 has already been circulated to all Cllrs and Clerks

- The PFCC has given grant money to EALC for 2023/2024
- EALC looking for a grant funding officer
- ECC bailing out Thurrock Council
- Great Dunmow not affiliating to EALC + 7 other Councils

NALC

The quarterly National Assembly took place and the Finance and Scrutiny committee meeting held on the 1st confirmed that NALC will break even this year which is in line with budget

- The building in London known as 109 Tottenham Court Road, which NALC owns the freehold, is being marketed early this year. An estimated value of £2.5m+ is anticipated to be realised. After the sale NALC will provide office space in London for their staff as required.
- The joint Civility and Respect initiative with the SLCC is in its second year and all Town and Parish Councils in the country are being encouraged to sign up.
- There are numerous online events in 2023 following the outstanding success of previous conferences.

NALC/EALC

Both EALC and NALC organisations are well-funded through a combination of member affiliation fees and third-party funding. NALC & EALC websites will be encrypted for members only in 2023. Each paid up member will receive a dedicated password allowing only them to gain access to the websites.

Good Councillors guide has been re-written and will hopefully be on sale before May 2023 local elections

e) Update on New website for BALC - <https://e-voice.org.uk/balc/>

No further update

6. To discuss BDC proposal to cutting the street cleaning agreements by 33% for 2023-2024 effecting all our Town and Parish Councils.

Ann Hooks said it will affect Rayne by over £1300pa. She informed the meeting that she had attended Causeway House to watch the first budget scrutiny meeting. There was full attendance from the panel and other councillors not on the panel were invited to attend and could ask questions too and she was the only member of the true public there.

BDC needs to save to £2m+ and there are many ways there are proposing to save money, increase in car parking charges, charging for green bin collections etc.

When presented, the reduction to TC's & PCs in the street cleaning agreement was almost glossed over, until during question time when Cllr James Abbott raised it. He virtually asked and queried the same things that she had emailed to BDC earlier in the day.

Cllr Butland's response was - Savings of £22K or 29K (can't remember the exact number) is shared across all parishes. Only a few will lose out in four figure sums. (Which we are one of!)

- If parishes want the same level of service, they will have to fund the extra.
- TC's & PCs have the ability to raise precepts more than District Councils (who have been allowed to raise at a maximum of 3% this year)
- BDC have looked at what reserves TC's & PCs are holding and say the TC's & PCs are sitting on lots of money. Most TC's & PC's have legitimate earmarked funds and have the amount of reserves required for six month running costs

Although there are more of these scrutiny meetings over the next months and Full Council will approve the budget in February, she can't see this saving will be thrown out.

Therefore, we need to prepare to have 33% reduction on the street cleaning agreement.

Cllr J. Taylor said it is a done deal!!

7. Date of next executive meeting **WEDNESDAY 5th. APRIL 2023** at 7pm via Zoom
8. Future Executive 2023 meeting dates: 5th. July 2023: 4th. October 2023 at 7pm via Zoom

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.10pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed



5th. April 2023

Martin Lee
Chairman