

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 OF THE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17th. APRIL 2024 VIA ZOOM AND IN PERSON AT WITHAM TOWN HALL AT 7pm

In attendance: Martin Lee (Chairman), J. Taylor, K. Barnes, Mike Eldred, A. Wood, K. MacDonald, M. Burgess, R. Duffin, R. Turner, J. Coleman, D. Griffin & Kevin B. Money (BALC Clerk)

- 1. Welcome from the Chairman.** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting
- 2. Apologies for absence** were received from Paul Lees, Derek Hambling, Jill Boot, Sue Pedder, A. Hull
- 3. To approve the Minutes of the last meeting of BALC Representatives** on 17th. January 2024.
All Agreed

4. To discuss Guest speakers for the remainder of the year
It was suggested to invite the following to future meetings:
BDC CEO Dan Gascoigne, Chief Fire Officer Rick Halton, Daniel McClean Essex LHP Officer, Charlene Slade CEO EALC.

- 5. Finance report:**
 - To receive the Bank reconciliation as at 31st. March 2024
Members noted the Bank reconciliation as at 31st. March 2024
 - To receive the BALC accounts to 31st. March 2024
Members noted the BALC accounts to 31st. March 2024
 - To agree the 2024/2025 subscription
Cllr J. Taylor proposed keeping the 2024/2025 subscription level at £48.00p per Council. Cllr K. Barnes seconded. **All Agreed**

6. Local Highways Panel
Braintree Local Highways Panel - Next Meeting - 24th April 2024 at 5.00pm via 'Teams'
A consultation was commissioned and as a result the LHP was restructured slightly.
Daniel McClean, Essex County Highways LHP Officer, gave a presentation.
The last LHP meeting was cancelled. At last financial year all money has been allocated.
K. McDonald asked why there a few drop kerbs in the area? It is a legal requirement to have drop kerbs for the disabled. K. Barnes to ask this question at the next LHP meeting.
Key comments that came out of the survey was lack of communication and the progress of the projects on the list. Many projects have disappeared from the outstanding list without informing the respective Council/s
Can disabled parking spaces be enlarged due to larger vehicles now using the roads?
A LHP application has been submitted from Finchingfield PC regarding the historic bridge in Finchingfield.
Cllr Tom Cunningham is supporting the project.
The secretary to the LHP panel has changed.

- 7. BDC Standards Sub Committee.** No meeting has taken place. Nothing to report
- 8. EALC Executive report**
Nothing to add from the last meeting as half the County is in Election mode. Courses are still being pushed. EALC are not supporting Parish/Town Councils
EALC is progressing through a business plan regarding finance income and EALC marketing. They are promoting their 80th. year with an Annual meeting at 2pm at Colchester Football Club on 26th. September 2024. Awards to be presented in the evening. Legal department is busy and thanks to Ann Wood.
A "Roadshow" will be trialled later in the year around the County to increase the number of attendees.

Who can attend the AGM? M. Lees stated that all is welcomed but only 2 representatives from each Council can vote.

Mike Eldred left the meeting at 7.40pm

9. Information Sharing – an opportunity for Councils to ask questions and share their experiences

Solar Panels project is going well and a “pay as you go” will be going live soon. Contracts by end of September '24. Jane Taylor is happy to attend any Council meeting.

The Asylum Centre. 70 people have been pulled out of the centre due to pollution. A pollution check has not been carried out so the numbers have been reduced to 800 and no more. Problems have been reported with seekers walking around local villages.

A SDO (Special Development Order) is going through the process. The cost of housing the Asylum seekers is coming out more than placing them in hotels etc. The cost is escalating week on week.

The prison is on the back burner. 6 sites have been nominated with 5 being approved. 1 is being appealed. If all 6 sites are approved then Weathersfield will not be needed but will be kept on the list. However, prisons have been recorded as being overcrowded

Traffic issues around Weathersfield are increasing dramatically.

Witham Town Council ask about s106 money from BDC. WTC now have a comprehensive list which has not been circulated to Parish Councils. The process is complicated and obtaining money is also difficult. At the last financial year BDC held over £8m in their fund.

A Council had to submit a FOI request to get documentation out of BDC on s106 money held.

1,700 houses being built in Black Notley and officers from BDC s106 department attend a PC meeting.

The Clerk was asked to ask members if any Parish Councils are due/waiting for s106 money

Letter to Chairman of BDC Scrutiny committee asking about s106 monies

It appears all other County Councils make getting s106 to Parish Councils easier. It is BDC that makes this process difficult.

Black bin refuse collections – if a black bin is overfilled then BDC refuse collectors will not take the bin and place a note on the bin.

Green bin left grass cuttings on the grass verge resulting in fly-tipping.

Parking charge in Braintree Town Centre – Does this cause a problem and will it pass the consumers to retail parks.

10. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 17th. July 2024 at 7pm via Zoom and in person and at Witham Town Hall

The Chairman then closed the meeting at 8.15pm and thanked everyone for attending

Signed

17th. July 2024

**Martin Lee
Chairman**