



## COLCHESTER ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the Remote Zoom Meeting Held On: Thursday 18th March 2021 at 7.00pm

Present: John Gili-Ross (Chairman), Robert Johnstone (Vice Chairman), Petra Palfreyman (CALC Clerk), George Branagh, Mick Mead, Roger Mannion, Karen Thompson, Dan Jordan, Carol Harbach, Nicola Baker, Donna Tristram, Maggie Holmes, Simon Dougherty, Catherine Sprott, Julie Baker, Alan Frost, Monica Taylor, Shelia Beeton, Chris Stevenson, Simon

### 1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Copford with Easthorpe Parish Council

### 2. TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON: Thursday 3rd December 2020.

All agreed.

### 3. MEETING TOPICS AND GUEST SPEAKER

Permitted development for Town and Parish Councils

Speaker – James Ryan CBC, Principal Planning Officer

James presented the PowerPoint below and then took questions relating to the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO).



Microsoft  
PowerPoint 97-2003

- Land held in trust by a Town or Parish Council – usually eligible but check with LPA (Local Planning Authority)
- Change of Use – is there a list of land categories and how does a Council find which category a piece of land falls into. This is a very broad topic and there are some simple guides available on line. There are now some changes accepted as permitted development that would not be expected. Planners are interested in the current use of land, how long it has been in use and what the planned change of use is.
- Signage – this is a different set of regulations as they are technically adverts (even if not advertising anything).
- Electric charging points – included in PD together with associated infrastructure. May also need signage of which some will be 'deemed consent' but each application is looked at case by case.
- Are there many applications for EV charging points from Councils – some from hotels, supermarkets, garages but not from Councils
- Are there any grants for installing EV charging points – There is a scheme called the OZEV scheme <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-grants-for-low-emission-vehicles>
- The structure size for permitted development is 200 cubic meters.
- If an application is within PD can the LPA reject it?– No

- Are bylaws part of planning (for example excluding dogs)? – No
- Will new housing developments be required to include EV charging points – This is an aim for CBC but is not set out in the NPPF yet. There are difficulties for blocks of flats or off plot parking. The aim is to make the infrastructure of new developments suitable for future installation of EV charging points if they are not included when built, so they can easily be added in future.
- Are road side charging points funded by Highways – none installed so far as they are all at private or commercial properties.

The Chairman thanked James for his presentation and answering the questions.

#### 4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

##### a) TREASURERS REPORT

The Clerk confirmed that all 29 subscriptions had been paid at £35 per Council, totalling £1015. After the clerks fees of £218.00 per quarter, the balance in the bank account will be £1008.50 (March bank statement outstanding). There is also a credit of £174.00 against hall hire costs at Marks Tey Village Hall. The Chairman proposed that as the bank balance was healthy, the subscription for the coming year could remain at £35 per Council. The clerks fee of £218 for March 2021 was agreed.

##### b) LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL

At the recent meeting many applications were considered and there are always too many for the funds available. In the new financial year there will be another £200 000 available. The funds were mostly allocated against school orientated projects, especially if they were environmentally friendly based. Three schemes were passed for the School Street Initiatives which is where traffic calming measures are introduced at certain times of the day. This is believed to encourage more walking and cycling to schools and gives priority to pedestrians and cyclists.

<http://schoolstreets.org.uk/>

The Chairman and Cllr Stevenson confirmed that Councils should get their LHP applications acknowledged but when a scheme is agreed it can often be a year before it is implemented.

The Devolution Scheme was only adopted by West Bergholt Parish Council and West Mersea Town Council. It is not known if it will be rolled out to other Towns and Parishes at this stage.

##### c) GOVERNANCE REPORT

The Governance Board have not met since the last report

##### d) EALC EXECUTIVE

The Board are currently preparing motions for the AGM later in the year. There are approximately 7 changes proposed. The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner Jane Gardner, gave a quick review of current Police issues. The Police have requested more volunteers to become Specials. Essex has the most Specials in the country and would like to increase the numbers by a further 200. Police numbers are going to increase by 700 and all crime has reduced by 10%.

## 5. OPEN DISCUSSION

### a) The future of holding Council meetings, remote and hybrid working

The Clerk advised that some Councils are struggling to fit in their Annual Council Meeting which must be held in May. As the legislation for remote meetings runs out on 7th May and there is no prospect of it being extended after that, the virtual meetings must be held in the first 7 days of May, which include a weekend, a bank holiday and the local elections. The rule of 6 to meet inside is not until 17th May but as most Councils have more than 6 members, and the public can attend these meetings, this would not be allowable. The full restrictions are due to be lifted in June which is too late for the Annual Meeting. The Annual Parish or Town Meetings must be held between 1 March and 31 May so most Councils are able to fit these in before 7<sup>th</sup> May. The Chairman reminded Councils to lobby their MP, and Cllr Stevenson shared a copy of his letter sent from West Bergholt Parish Council. It was generally agreed that the virtual meetings had been successful and would be useful if they could continue.

### b) An open discussion about how volunteers are being used to assist the vaccination programme

The Chairman said that the volunteer effort had been incredible everywhere and asked if or how Councils are rewarding their volunteers. Ideas varied from an afternoon tea, summer buffet or gift vouchers. Volunteers have helped at surgeries for the vaccinations, house to house volunteer schemes, Good Neighbour schemes and during the last year, Abberton & Langenhoe Parish Council has set up a community shop, opened every day and entirely manned by volunteers.

## 6. INFORMATION SHARING

Cllr Baker advised that some of the elderly might need help with completing the census forms on line.

The Chairman asked if any Councils have installed an environmental toilet he would be interested to hear about it.

## 7. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on Thursday 24th June 2021 at 7.00pm by Zoom

Ideas for future meetings were:

LHP strategic planning

ECC Hopper bus scheme

Devolution

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.00pm and thanked everyone for attending and providing valuable feedback.