



COLCHESTER ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE ZOOM MEETING HELD: 3rd December 2020 at 7pm

PRESENT: John Gili-Ross (Chairman), R Johnstone (Vice Chairman), Petra Palfreyman (CALC Clerk), Julie Baker, John Akker, Brian Butcher, Maggie Holmes, Simon Dougherty, Dan Jordan, Alan Frost, Mick Mead, Chris Boyce, James Parrish, Gerald Wells

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Clerks – Carol Harbach Langham, Karen Thompson Boxted

Councillors – Langham Parish Council, Boxted Parish Council, Roger Manion - Tiptree, Chris Stephenson - West Bergholt,

2. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON: Thursday 27th August 2020

All agreed

3. MEETING TOPICS & GUEST SPEAKERS

Charlene Slade, CEO and Peter Davey, Chairman of the Essex Association of Local Councils (EALC).

EALC update, including ECC grant funding, Training, Visions and Partnership collaborative work.

The EALC have continued 'business as usual' since the first lockdown. Training and conferences have been set up by Zoom and are going well. The next conference for Climate Change is 27 January 2021. The EALC now administers a number of ECC grant schemes including - £25000 for Micro Grants, £40000+ for food banks, £43000 to date relating to the Winter Support Fund, £87000 for the October half term food bank support scheme and £279,000 for the CIF Fund.

The EALC continue to work closely with Essex County Council, Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, NALC, RCCE and the Essex Rural Partnership on a number of initiatives and programmes ensuring the collective voice of the P&TC sector remains heard and appreciated. Working virtually has made meetings much more accessible and regular. The next EALC AGM will be held at Highlands House, Chelmsford in September 2021. The EALC welcome any feedback for improvements.

There is currently a winter fund provision of hampers with funding administered by the EALC and made available by ECC. The fund is to focus on the most vulnerable across Essex and offers a prompt turnaround of applications. Requests for further information, or completed applications should be sent to:

louise.gambardella@ealc.gov.uk

<http://www.ealc.gov.uk/christmas-support-fund/>

CALC clerk – Petra Palfreyman Telephone – **07876198748** e-mail – **calc.clerk@gmail.com**

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Chairman - John Gili-Ross Telephone - 07957804621 e-mail – john.giliross@gmail.co.uk

COVID-19 Update as a Member of the Essex Health and Wellbeing Board and Chairman of the EALC Health and Wellbeing Board, PD is on both committees so that information can be shared. Basildon are having a spike in COVID 19 and they are considering closing schools early for the Christmas break.

The EALC and ECC are providing as much information as possible on changes to the tier levels when and if they occur.

Working with NALC as a Management Board Member and Chairman of Finance and Scrutiny committee. PD is chair of the Finance & Scrutiny Committee. The next meeting is 10 December 2020 to look at the half-year results and the headline numbers for Q3, to more accurately forecast the likely year-end position whilst looking forward to next year and beyond. The finances are strong although income was lost due to cancelling the Spring conference. The NALC are generating income through on line conferences with key speakers. There is a weekly update of the cash flow and where it is held to reduce risks. The committee monitors all aspects of GDPR and does a Risk Management review. The latest forecast has allowed the NALC to make predictions going forward several years to plan where they want to be. PD is also a member of the management board where staff activity is reviewed together with all collaborative work and strategic decisions. The NALC are looking at their property at 109 Great Russell Street. This is a freehold asset which has been empty since the first lockdown as all staff live in the suburbs. All aspects of its future viability will be considered in liaison with the staff.

Working with ECC Climate Change Commission Chaired by Lord Randall and Collaborative work with the NALC. This committee was set up to address the climate issues in the County. The interim report of the Climate Commission has already been circulated. The NALC are also doing a Climate Commission initiative and they have a bespoke web page for this for all parish and town councils to follow which will also be added to the EALC website. Claire Goldfinch, the Project Officer for the NALC is also in collaboration with the Climate Commission. Community engagement is important to help put the thoughts into action and PD is one of the working group members for this particular aspect of Climate Change to ensure that this happens.

The EALC are having a complete review of their communications to parish and town councils in order to improve the quality of the communications content whilst where appropriate, decreasing the quantity and frequency of such updates.

PD wished everyone a happy but cautious Christmas.

JGR reported on outcomes of the EALC Annual Meeting:
Peter Davey was re-elected as Chairman for another year
Wendy Stamp was elected as a new Vice Chair
John Gili-Ross – re-elected as Vice Chair

JGR advised that he will be writing a report on the structure of Policing governance with respect to Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, the Police and the Police Fire & Crime Panel to show the scrutiny functions of these areas and how they are interlinked. JGR is a member of the Essex PFCP and is the Chairman of the National Association of Police Fire & Crime Panels.

The EALC ran some informal sessions for Clerks and Councillors during the first lockdown. It was agreed they were useful and should perhaps continue, with some structure and allowing an opportunity for general discussions.

4. TO RECEIVE REPORTS

a) TREASURES REPORT

The bank balance as at 15/10/20 is £1269.50. One subscription is outstanding and will be paid in January 2021. JGR has contacted Barclays to update the signatories. The Clerk agreed to look in to changing the account to Unity Bank to make signing and administration easier. There is a credit at Marks Tey Village Hall of £174.00 which was agreed to leave as a credit against future meetings.

Salary invoice to Petra Palfreyman for December 2020 - £218.00 – All agreed

b) LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL

JGR attended the last meeting. Councils have been offered a LHP toolkit walk through from Sonia Church. The Clerk will send out an email with the dates. A note about bus shelters has recently been sent out by Cllr Bentley to all parishes and towns. RJ wanted to raise a point for the LHP to discuss. There is a contradiction between the Department for Transport publications called Gear Change and Essex Highways – Transforming Active Travel in Essex. RJ would like clarity on which should be adopted within Essex. The contradictions include cycling on pavements, inaccurate, inappropriate or missing signposts, cyclists being treated the same as vehicles and having clear and understandable routes. JGR has requested a report on E Scooters from the Police as most are illegal to use on public paths and highways.

c) GOVERNANCE REPORT

Nothing to report

d) EALC EXECUTIVE

The Committee continue to review the processes and documentation.

5. INFORMATION SHARING

When a councillor retires after serving for a number of years, what do Councils do? Suggestions were made for a certificate, presentation or a small gift relating to the locality. Wakes Colne have an awards scheme for local volunteers and gift champagne and a certificate. West Bergholt presented blue plaques to local residents for community work during the first lockdown.

JGR gave reminder for all Councils to include a training sum in the budget, which amongst other things should help with succession planning training needs.

What can be done to encourage younger and unrepresented groups to come forward for Council work for specific programmes in the community.

Suggestions were a targeted invitation to a number of meetings to observe and engage in the meetings. Wakes Colne PC has piloted a new initiative called AIM – All Ideas Matter. This to capture all the ideas and then make decisions about each point and decide what to do with the idea, see where it fits for the community, track the decisions and engage the residents.

West Bergholt PC update their communications using social media which has led to items being picked up and presented on TV, radio and in the newspapers.

Also to consider engagement with the school council. Myland CC is considering a Youth Shadow Council and West Mersea TC has liaised with the local school and church. Also mentioned was the YMCA, church organisations and the British Council for youth which has local sub groups. The NALC has a national drive asking how local councils use social media and although there are some good Council websites, certain age groups prefer the use of Apps or propriety social media platforms such as Nextdoor.

DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS:

Thursday 18th March 2020 at 7pm

Venue will be Marks Tey Village Hall or by Zoom - to be confirmed when agenda is issued

Guest speaker – to be advised

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm and thanked everyone for attending and providing valuable feedback.

Signed..... Date