

ACDPC

Association of Chelmsford District Parish Councils

MINUTES

‘Of the **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of
The Association of Chelmsford District Parish Councils
And the Annual District Meeting of the Essex Association of Local Councils
held on **Thursday 20th. May 2004** in the Council Chamber,
Springfield Parish Centre, North Springfield, Chelmsford at 7.45 pm.

GUEST SPEAKER

Anthony Sach Chelmsford Borough Council Cabinet Member for Information Technology and Kathy Day, Essex Online Portal Manager, spoke about Parish Councils and E-Government.

Tony Sach

CBC’s vision is to fully engage with partners in sharing information and improving the quality and speed of service provided to customers, seeking to encourage participation from the community using modern technologies.

What has CBC done?

- Implemented Document Management System (DMS)
- Implemented National land & Property Gazetteer (NLPG)
- Implemented New Financial System
- Implemented New Revenues & Benefits system
- Worked with other local authorities in Essex in an online partnership
- Implemented an E-government infrastructure
- Starting to exploit that infrastructure –
 - All property & land has unique reference number.
 - Increasingly all correspondence is scanned & stored electronically.
 - All information indexed to property.

Where Next?

- Want to communicate electronically with partners including parish councils.
- Will redevelop website to make more user friendly.
- Will provide more interactive services.
- Will make more information more readily available.
- Will answer more queries at first point of contact.
- Will look to webcast council meetings.
- Will implement a contact management system.
- Will implement a new phone system.

Opportunities for Parish Councils

- Planning – plans will be available to parish councils electronically. More use of internet to provide facilities to enable access to information and plans.
- Consultation – sending documents with GIS type information. Information available via internet. Secure information available to parish clerks. Ability for councillors /clerks to answer more questions.
- Web Site – County portal for information on parish council & local events.

The Way Forward

- Parish councils to be provided with hardware eg laptop & projector.
- Broadband connectors made available to all parish councils.
- Parish council websites hosted.
- Parish councils provided with secure access to CBC information.
- Parish councils to be fully integrated into e-government.

Answers to questions from the floor

- In three months the report on projectors & laptops is to go to Cabinet.
- A new telephone directory is to be sent to Clerks.
- Councillors with personal computers are already linked via intranet.
- As broadband could not be taken to meetings, plans would have to be copied to disc.
- Planning applications will be kept on the website for about six months so will need to be copied to disc for longer term reference.
- Parish councils will need firewall to prevent viruses.
- CBC will consult parish councils before any implementation

Kathy Day

The Essex Portal Partnership is a grouping of all district councils, fire service etc in Essex and includes over 40 partners. The Essex Online Portal, part of the ECC Web Strategy, is a major delivery channel for joined-up information, both local and national, in a single search.

Essex Online Portal Parish Web Site Pilot

- The pilot was limited to three councils and tested whether it was feasible to provide websites for communities. It used templates to create websites (Content Management System). The template conforms to good practice usability and accessibility criteria.
- Most parish councils in Essex are on the Essex Life Database. The pilot websites provide more information which is put up by the parish councils. Parish councils are responsible for maintenance.
- Potentially the system could be rolled out to all parish councils in Essex a feasibility study is underway.

Feasibility Issues

Support of members important.

Use of Email/internet – cultural issues – issue of security of local systems.

Maintenance – time available to parish staff.

Technical considerations – compatibility of software – v=need up to date version of word.

It was noted that NALC is in discussion with ODPM and DEFRA about funding for parish council e-government.

Present

Fred Anelli	Writtle PC
Peter Applegate	East Hanningfield PC
Peter Baggott	EALC
Tania Bundock	Springfield PC
Theresa Byles	Danbury PC
Pauline Carr	Springfield PC
Kathy Day	Essex County Council
Chris Hibbitt	Writtle PC
Miles Howarth	Little Waltham PC
Derek W. Johnson	Broomfield PC
Bill Lansdale	Runwell PC
Karen Plumridge	East Hanningfield PC
Linda Rowe	Boreham PC
Tony Sach	Writtle PC
Joy Sheppard	EALC
Andrew Sosin	Great Baddow PC
Malcolm H. Taylor	Broomfield PC
Jonathan Thompson	Springfield PC

1. Apologies for Absence

Marie Brown (Boreham PC), Ann O’Riordan (Boreham PC), Ann Wood (Great Baddow PC) and Peter Wyatt (South Woodham Ferrers TC).

2. The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 20th. May, 2003 were signed as a true record.

3. Chairman’s Report

Fred recalled that due to various reasons there had not been a speaker at the previous AGM. Due to Alayne’s indisposition with a broken leg, there had not been an Executive meeting since July but Chairman and Vice Chairman had taken executive decisions to arrange the autumn and spring meetings, and Karen had minuted those meetings. At the meeting in December Malcolm Bartlett had spoken about parish councillors’ allowances and as a follow up sent out a model scheme for the Chelmsford parishes to adopt. At the meeting in March, Peter Gown of Stop Stansted Expansion explained the extent of the expansion proposals. Peter Wyatt began representing ACDPC on the Mid Essex Area Forum in November.

Fred described the changes that were taking place and highlighted the need for a closer working relationship with CBC in the interests of all parties.

4. Accounts 2003/4

The accounts were approved.

It was noted that the subscription renewals had not been sent out due to the Secretary's incapacity.

The Association is looking for an Auditor who is independent of the Executive Committee.

It was agreed that subscriptions for 2004/5 should remain at the same level as 2003/4.

5. Election of Officers

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| a. Chairman | Fred Anelli (Fred indicated that this would be his last year) |
| b. Vice Chairman | Karen Plumridge |
| c. EALC representatives | Fred Anelli & Karen Plumridge |
| d. Executive Committee | Malcom Taylor, Tania Bundock & Derek Johnson |
| e. Police Forum | Andrew Sosin & Fred Anelli (format changing) |
| f. Standards Committee | Julian Brooks, Danbury & Margaret Martin, Little Baddow
(replacements to be found if change required) |
| g. Mid Essex Area Forum | Peter Wyatt. |

6. EALC Chairman's Report- Peter Baggott

It had been a year of great activity. EALC's role supporting local councils and promoting their cause continued to develop. This had included working with the County Council to promote better communication. A better financial settlement had been reached with the County Council but finances remained a concern. Much effort had been put into providing training by EALC and by the Training Partnership. Six Essex councils had achieved Quality Status. There were three new local councils in the county. EALC has been working with other Eastern Region ALCs as BENSCH, which is represented on the Regional Assembly. Baroness Platt had resigned as President and was to be replaced by Lord Dixon-Smith. The Association's Treasurer had left and a replacement was sought. The auditor had also left but had been replaced by Maurice Howard.

Peter thanked officers and members of EALC for all their efforts over the past year.

Peter said that he and the County Secretary attended 10 district AGMs within a period of 5 weeks and proposed that the load should be spread so that they attended a meeting other than the AGM at some other time of the year, perhaps attending one district a month..

Those present agreed that this would be acceptable.

County Secretary's Report – Joy Sheppard

Avril Hancock the Conference manager had organised 5 major conferences over the year at which 280 councillors and 35 officers had received training. Funding had been secured from Essex Equals, Rural Renaissance Fund & Awards for All and the Countryside Agency. EALC had been working with ECC to look at the ways ECC communicates with the parishes. ECC is funding Pat Roberts as E-governance Officer. EALC had assisted with the creation of new councils at Herongate & Ingrave, West Horndon and Swards

End. The Essex Training Partnership, County Training Officer Alison East, has run 11 courses attended by 252 people. These are designed to assist with the Certificate of Local Council Administration. There are currently 15 people registered for the Certificate. All clerks have been provided with a training pack. The Essex Training Partnership is managed as a committee of EALC. The following Councils have achieved Quality Status: Loughton, Witham, Great Baddow, St.Osyth, Wivenhoe and Maldon. A further 6 might achieve it by September.

The staff at the County Office had worked hard to ensure that members' needs had been met. Legal enquiries were being dealt with , normally within 5 days, enquiries referred to NALC were normally answered within 15 working days, and the service was generally running well.

It was noted that the Broomfield parish Clerk had been very appreciative of assistance provided by EALC.

7. Reducing Speed Limits on Rural Roads

It was noted that the County Council's policy was to apply 30mph speed limits in villages should the parish and district councils so request.

8. There being no further business the meeting closed.