

Chairman, Karen Plumridge's Report to the ACDPC AGM 2007

Although we might have been fairly quiet we have not been inactive since the last AGM.

A subject which has been paid much attention was the preparation of the Borough Charter. One after the other three Borough Council officers were given the task of constructing the Charter. I have held meetings with them all, as have some Association member councils. Each time we seemed to have been getting somewhere, the officer was removed from post, so the whole process had to begin again. The last time the process came to a halt, the Borough Council said that it was too close to the election and the Local Government Bill to take it any further. Clearly, now that we are through the elections we must press for the matter to be reopened. Personally, I am unclear why the Borough Council has been trying to create a Charter from scratch when there is a model charter that has been found perfectly acceptable by other districts either in its entirety or slightly modified.

One of the Committees of the EALC Executive is the Local Government and Consultative Committee, and one of its responsibilities is to produce responses to consultation documents. Each district has a representative on that Committee who is charged with responding on behalf of their district. With a view to discharging this duty in as open a way as possible I have been emailing the Chelmsford Clerks with details of each consultation being considered by the Committee and asking them to feed back any comments that their councils might have made. As a clerk I am acutely aware of the consultation overload that we are presently suffering, so I haven't asked for a specially prepared response, just the one you were going to make anyway. BUT, I hope that my emails have had the added bonus of flagging up potentially significant documents that you might have missed in the deluge.

In her email inviting your councils to this AGM, Ann mentioned that we had gained a seat on the Chelmsford Partnership back in March of this year. We had hoped to have a speaker from the Partnership to speak to you this evening, but they are going to be announcing changes to the Partnership at their forthcoming meeting next week and didn't want to make them public beforehand. Steve Packham has offered to come along to speak to us, to explain what is happening, at a future meeting.

For those of you who are not clear on what the Chelmsford Partnership is, it is the Local Strategic Partnership, with a membership from the public sector, private sector and community and voluntary sectors, that is working towards fulfilling the priorities of the Local Community Plan. I'll give you an example of a partnership activity that is to be considered for funding at the meeting next week. There is to be a family fun day for North-West Chelmsford on 15th. July. It is being organised by a working group which includes Chelmer Housing Partnership, Chelmsford Borough Council, Mid Essex PCT and NACRO. Its purpose is to encourage and support improved lifestyles amongst local residents through information, "come and try" events etc. This will be working towards the Plan priorities of Enhancing Healthy Living, Providing the Best Opportunities for Personal Development and Maintaining a Safe Community.

What the Partnership is looking for from the parishes is to feed the aspirations from their community led plans into the Local Community Plan. They are asking for these aspirations to be grouped into the categories provided by the priorities in the Local Plan. I understand that a good many of the Chelmsford parishes have village plans underway, and this is an added incentive for the others to start thinking about it, because this is going to be the source of funding and action. So, keep an eye open for the meeting with Steve Packham so that you can come along and find out more about it.

At the end of January I received a letter from Fred Anelli explaining that due to rapidly declining health he would be leaving the Association's Executive. Fred was on our Executive for 18 years, and only retired as Chairman at the last AGM. He expressed a wish that the parishes would be able to work together to make the Association a more active voice within the Borough of Chelmsford and was sorry that he would not be here to play a part in this. He sent his best regards to all members of the Association.

Finally, I'd like to thank those members who have continued to represent the Chelmsford parish and town councils at the various fora and committees where we have representation; I'd like to thank Ann Wood who has taken on the role of Acting Secretary while Alayne Smith is concentrating on the treatment for her injury which is proving much more difficult than anticipated, and to thank Great Baddow Parish Council for their hospitality this evening.