



COLCHESTER ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the Colchester Association of Local Councils meeting held on Thursday 3rd September 2015 at 7pm in the Marks Tey Village Hall

Present: Cllr John Gili-Ross (JGR) (Chairman), Robert Johnston Vice-Chairman (Myland), Carole Sutton (Stanway), Chris Stevenson & Laura Walkingshaw (West Bergholt), Juliet English (Marks Tey), Brian Hindley (Dedham), Steve Bay (Tiptree), Lawrence Alexander (Fordham), Neil Lodge (Wivenhoe), Mick Mead & Lance Williams (Gt. Horkesley), Simon Dougherty & Alan Frost (Abberton & Langenhoe).

1. Apologies for absence were received from

Alan Walker (Marks Tey), Sheila Beeton (Dedham), Malcolm Bartier (Copford), Shaun Boughton (Wivenhoe), Stephen Scrase (Wakes Colne), Steve Clark (Lt. Horkesley), David Smith (Messingcum-Inworth), Mark Graham (Mount Bures), Margaret Lawford (East Mersea).

2. The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th June 2015 were agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

3. Local Council Award Scheme

JGR welcomed Peter Davey Vice Chairman of EALC and Chairman of the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS).

Peter Davey (PD) thanked JGR for the invitation to present the award to West Bergholt Parish Council.

PD went on to say that both the NALC and EALC recognise the Loyalty and devotion to duty of all the Clerks and voluntary Town and Parish Councillors in Essex. EALC is proud of the individual and collective achievements, and also recognise the amount of work that was put into the previous Quality Council Award Scheme. It is now time to re-visit the scheme and the EALC were proud to lead the successful National pilot scheme.

The NALC introduced the LCAS in January 2015. NALC represents 9,000 local Councils and 80,000 local Councillors and in partnership with EALC are committed to developing the role of Town and Parish Councils and with this in mind they have introduced a 3 tier approach to excellence. There are 3 levels to the scheme – namely Foundation : Quality : Quality Gold levels.

- ❖ The Foundation level is a benchmark on which to build further success and demonstrates a minimum standard for Local Councils to be operating lawfully with all relevant policies in place for training both Councillors and Officers.
- ❖ The Quality level is awarded to a Local Council that demonstrates good practice in governance, community engagement and Council improvement whilst going above and beyond their legal obligations and seeking opportunities to improve. Quality Councils should be eligible to use the General Power of Competence.
- ❖ The Quality gold level is awarded to a Local Council where it is at the forefront of best practice achieving excellence in governance, community leadership and Council development whilst having in place an excellent business plan, sharing the future aspirations of the Parish with its residents.

There are 3 Parish Quality Gold Award winners. Danbury Loughton and Waltham Abbey.

There are also 7 Foundation Level Award winners who are West Bergholt, Wakes Colne, Canvey Island, Woodham Ferrers and Bicknacre, Great Maplestead, Little Braxted and Ongar.

The panel were impressed by West Bergholt Parish council's website which provides excellent information and is well organised and easy to navigate. They also commented that the news bulletin was excellent and gives up-to-dated information.

PD went on to say that he was very proud, on behalf of both NALC and EALC, to present to the West Bergholt chairman, Cllr Chris Stephenson, with the Foundation Level Award certificate.

Chris Stephenson then thanked, on behalf of all the West Bergholt Parish Council and staff, PD for the certificate.

JGR then talked about the award scheme and levels. He encouraged all Councils to look at the Quality Levels and to take advantage of what the scheme offers. Its an ideal opportunity for all

Councils to look closely at their processes procedures and how these are made available to residents through the community website. This will be particularly important for Councils when the transparency programme is implemented and all Councils will need to be compliant. There was then a discussion between PD and attendees at the meeting regarding quality status levels.

4. To receive reports:

- a. Kevin Money gave the treasurers report.

The bank balance as at 03.09.15 was £1661.30p

All Councils EXCEPT for East Mersea have paid their subscription monies.

- b. LHP report. As there has been no meeting since before June there is nothing to report. However there is a meeting in September but no information has as yet been sent out to either JGR or RJ. The cycle scheme is not high on the agenda but money has already been spent for this financial year.

- c. Governance Board. As Malcolm Bartier had given his apologies there was nothing to Report. MB is to give the clerk the details of the upcoming meeting in September and the clerk to circulate this to members to see if anyone can attend in MB place.

- d. EALC – Brian Hindley.

A meeting was held on 23.07.15 at EALC. There were a number of important issues, which I will report upon.

Accounts for the Association were approved and will go forward to the 70th AGM to be held on 24.09.2015, to which all Member Councils are entitled to send as many non-voting delegates as they may wish.

There will be an increase of 2% in fees for the period 2016/2017.

Local Highway panel requires Councils to submit projects to be included in their considerations through their County Councillors.

Angela Balcombe of ECC reminded delegates that expressions of interest for CIF applications must be submitted by the 28.08.2015 and subsequently those approved for consideration must be submitted by 25.09.2015 and the judging panel's decisions will be made throughout November 2015. Each district has a budget of 120K.

Angela also reminded Councils that the ECC offer free assistance to set up a website.

The number of training days offered by the EALC has increased considerably and Councils should take full advantage of these. Of particular interest is the course for playground inspection run by ROSPA, A member from Tendring raised the point that Tendring now have responsibility for their playground equipment and have a better criteria and cheaper than ROSPA. Uttlesford said that they have an independent inspector. These latter points prompted me to perhaps enquire of all Local Councils the need to establish best practice for the inspection of playgrounds. Broadband is still a topical subject amongst rural communities and BT has introduced a street cabinet, unfortunately named as a 'onesie', to combine both elements of broadband distribution of fibre and copper wire. Up to now Broadband has been delivered in two cabinets which increases street furniture. The first onesie has been installed in Dedham. Superfast broadband installation is ahead of schedule and Superfast Essex is the most successful broadband project in the UK. There is to be a motion for the EALC AGM from St Osyth PC. Seeking support that 'Unelected (co-opted) Councillors be entitled to receive allowances, whether they choose to accept or not'. In addition the AGM will include addresses by Cllr David Finch leader of ECC. The Essex Police & Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable.

5. Information Sharing

JGR report on the boundary changes that have been announced in the area and some wards will merge. Myland may have boundary changes with 3 wards and 3 sets of Councillors.

JGR pointed out that there was 60 Borough Councillors this is now going down to 51. Tiptree, for example, is going from 5 down to 3. Election in all 51 wards are being held next year.

Tiptree TC raised the issue of Policing in the area. They have sent a complaint to the Commissioner and Borough commanders regarding the lack of police response to incidents reported. The police response was that they will not be attending "Low Level" incidents.

"Low level" incidents include Anti-social behaviour, parking but would not elaborate anyone on what else is "Low level".

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Fordham PC praised the quickness of the police responding to an incident involving Travellers at Eight Ash Green.

Wivenhoe is set to buy their TC offices off of CBC which also includes the car park and toilets.. Myland informed the meeting of a feasibility study for a bridge over the A12 for cyclists and ramblers. RJ showed the meeting the map of the area.

6. The next CALC meeting is Thursday 3rd. December 2015 at Marks Tey Village Hall at 7pm

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 8.50pm

Signed.....Chairman : Dated 3rd. December 2015
John Gili-Ross

DRAFT