

Provisional until confirmed at the next meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Essex Clerks' Association

31 March 2011, 10.10am, Chelmsford City Football Club, Chelmsford

Present: Peter Acton; Peter Bates; Julia Harvey; Sue Julian-Ottie (Secretary);
Chris Kitchin; Pam Langmead (Chair); Sue Leek; Sandra Mullane; Chris
Orme; Paul Orton; Maggie Parmenter; Rosemary Waddell; Tina Wing

Also in attendance: Rosemarie Lunn (Governor Services Manager, Essex
Governor Services); Iwona Bainbridge (Governor Services
Officer, Essex Governor Services)

Apologies: Hazel Bailey; Julie Barwick; Julie Kerry Clark; Pauline Eager; Sue
Goodwin; Glynis Haigh; Marian Hawkins; Rachel Hipperson; Heather
Hughes; Steve Islip; John Kingsbury; Steve Marshall; Katie Parker;
Winifred Simmonds; Tina Weaver; Valerie Young

1. Welcome and Apologies for absence

Pam welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Apologies were accepted (see above).

2. Notification of any other business

The following items were accepted:

2.1. To consider proposal from Stephen Adamson that the Essex Clerks' Association (ECA) should enter into a financial arrangement with Clerkwise (tabled)

2.2. To receive the Communications Officer's report (tabled)

3. Chair's Report on the Year's Progress

Pam tabled '*Chair's Report March 2010 – March 2011*'. Delegates were given a short time in which to read the report. Pam invited questions. There were none. Pam highlighted the following points:

3.1. The Clerks' Briefings were very successful and well attended. It was noted that Essex Governor Services required Agency Clerks to attend a minimum of 2 out of 3 Clerks' Briefings each year.

3.2. Pam thanked Essex Governor Services for their continued support and Rosemarie Lunn thanked the ECA for its valuable input.

3.3. Pam reported that the ECA website was continuing to be well received. Pam appealed to clerks to send her documents for the website and to notify her of any errors on the website **(ACTION: All)**.

- 3.4. Pam reported that clerks found the e-mails distributed to ECA members via the Secretary useful. Pam appealed to clerks to send Sue any information that they felt might be helpful to distribute to all clerks **(ACTION: All)**.
- 3.5. The ECA thanked the Executive Committee members for their work during the last year, especially Pam as Chair of the ECA. It was noted that only positive feedback had been received about the ECA.
- 3.6. Delegates discussed what the ECA's strategy should be for 2011-2012 within small groups for 10 minutes. The following suggestions were made:
- 3.6.1. ECA to offer guidance for Academy clerks. This was discussed and agreed. It was noted that the Executive Committee was currently seeking Academy training to enable it to support Academy clerks and that a workshop on clerking Academies would be on offer at the 2011 Clerks' Conference.
- 3.6.2. ECA to offer an informal mentoring scheme for new clerks. This was agreed. It was noted that this service had been offered before but that it would be re-instated. Pam to re-instate the website page about the mentoring scheme and to ask experienced clerks to volunteer to be mentors. All those present at the AGM agreed to serve as mentors **(ACTION: All)**. Pam to inform new clerks of the service at Clerk Induction Training and at Expectations Meetings **(ACTION: Pam Langmead)**.
- 3.7. Pam reported that she had written and would be delivering a Minute Writing Course for 3 clerks at the request of their school. If the course proved successful, Pam could offer the course to other clerks. It was agreed that Pam should advertize the course on the ECA website **(ACTION: Pam Langmead)**.

4. Communications Officer's report

- 4.1. Peter explained that the Communications Officer's remit was to answer queries received through the website. He reported that he had received and answered approximately 16 questions throughout the year. He had received other e-mails that had been erroneously sent to him (eg queries about course applications; the Clerking Agency or subscriptions) which he had forwarded to the appropriate people. It was agreed that Pam would use some of the questions/answers listed in his report in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the website **(ACTION: Pam Langmead)**. Peter to e-mail his report to Pam **(ACTION: Peter Bates)**.
- 4.2. The ECA thanked Peter for his work as the Communications Officer.

5. Funding

Rosemary Waddell, the ECA Treasurer, presented the 'Financial Report for the

Year End 31 March 2011'. The following was noted:

- 5.1. Income had been received from Thurrock Governor Services (for all Thurrock schools' subscription to the ECA) for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. Rosemary advised that this income would not be received in 2011-2012 because Thurrock Governor Training Service would cease to exist at the beginning of that financial year. Ruth Brock had agreed to distribute ECA flyers to Thurrock schools so it was possible that individual schools might choose to subscribe. Pam to e-mail Ruth at the appropriate time **(ACTION: Pam Langmead)**.
- 5.2. Rosemary reported that 1/3 (ie 204) Essex schools subscribed to the ECA. It was noted that this was a similar figure to that of last year.
- 5.3. Rosemary reported that £5,000 income had been received from Essex Governor Services.
- 5.4. In response to a query from the floor, Rosemary explained that Southend-on-sea Borough Council did not contribute any income to the ECA. The Southend-on-sea Department of Children and Learning had declined invitations to work with the ECA as they supplied their own clerks' briefings and support. A few clerks from Southend schools were members of the ECA. This was discussed. It was acknowledged that the ECA had no intention of encroaching on Southend's domain. It was agreed that Pam would ask the ECA Southend Representative to re-distribute ECA flyers in Southend to give individual clerks the opportunity to join if they wished **(ACTION: Pam Langmead)**.
- 5.5. Delegates queried the level of funding that the ECA could expect to receive in the future. The following was noted:
 - 5.5.1. Rosemarie Lunn reported that Essex Local Authority (LA) budgets were being cut by 10%, therefore, it was likely that the funding from Essex Governor Services would be reduced by 10% to £4,500 pa.
 - 5.5.2. The ECA discussed whether to raise the subscription rate. Pam reported that the Executive Committee recommended that, in view of the financial difficulties schools were experiencing and the ECA's current positive balance, the subscription rate be maintained at £15 per school for 2011-2012. This was discussed and unanimously approved.
 - 5.5.3. The ECA discussed the method for subscription requests. It was agreed that the current method of sending to Essex schools should be continued but that clerks would be asked to remind their schools and Governing Bodies of the need to subscribe **(ACTION: Sue Julian-Ottie)**.
- 5.6. It was agreed that ECA members could continue to attend training sessions and Clerks' Briefings free of charge. It was noted that Essex Governor Services was currently reviewing whether this could continue to be offered to clerks of Academies which did not subscribe to Essex Governor Training Services. Rosemarie reported that over 90% of schools currently subscribed to Essex Governor Training Services but that this was expected to fall in 2011-

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2012 because of the number of schools converting to Academy status. It was agreed that this would be discussed further at the Executive Committee Summer 2011 term meeting **(ACTION: Executive Committee)**.

6. Minutes of last year's annual general meeting (31 March 2010)

The minutes of the previous year's AGM (31 March 2010) were agreed as a true record. The following was noted from the action points:

6.1. Iwona reported that the Clerking Agency Survey had been re-instated and distributed to Chairs of Governors. 40% of schools (132 of 326) had responded to date. The majority had provided positive feedback about their clerks. It was suggested and agreed that Iwona would encourage Chairs of Governors to share the feedback (negative and positive) with their own clerk **(ACTION: Iwona Bainbridge)**.

6.2. It was agreed that Iwona would submit a summary of the Clerking Agency Survey to the ECA Executive Committee meeting in the Summer 2011 term meeting **(ACTION: Iwona Bainbridge)**.

7. Election of the Executive Committee

Sue explained the election process. All posts were filled by unanimous approval. The following clerks were elected to the Executive Committee for a one year term:

7.1.	Pam Langmead	Chair	langmead@tesco.net
7.2.	Chris Orme	Vice Chair	candjorme@tiscali.co.uk
7.3.	Tina Weavers	Communications Officer	tinaweavers@gmail.com
7.4.	Sue Julian-Ottie	Secretary	s.julianottie@btopenworld.com
7.5.	Rosemary Waddell	Treasurer	rosemary-waddell@tiscali.co.uk
7.6.	Sue Leek	Area Rep, N East	sue@pultrex.com
7.7.	Sandra Mullane	Area Rep, N East	sandramullane@hotmail.co.uk
7.8.	Tina Wing	Area Rep, South	tinawing@btinternet.com
7.9.	Chris Kitchin	Area Rep, West	c.e.kitchin@btinternet.com
7.10.	Paul Orton	Area Rep, West	paul@orton.com
7.11.	Julia Harvey	Area Rep, Mid	r26harvey@aol.com
7.12.	Steve Islip	Area Rep, Southend	sislip_clerk@blueyonder.co.uk

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7.13. Peter Bates Area Rep, Thurrock pbates@tinyworld.co.uk

In response to a query, Pam described which part of Essex was represented by each Area as follows:

- North East Colchester; Tendering
- West Harlow; Uttlesford; Epping
- Mid Braintree; Maldon; Chelmsford; South Woodham Ferrers; Dengie
- South Basildon; Billericay; Brentwood; Wickford; Castle Point; Rochford; Canvey Island

8. Changes to the Constitution

The Constitution was approved subject to 1 amendment:

10.iv to read '... next AGM' instead of '...AGM next'.

Pam to update the Constitution and upload it onto the website (**ACTION: Pam Langmead**).

9. Feedback from Clerks' Briefings Meetings

9.1. Pam reported that the feedback from the Clerks' Briefings had been excellent. It was noted that there had been both positive and negative feedback on the Governors' Communications Meetings. The ECA discussed whether Governors should be allowed to attend the Clerks' Briefings. It was agreed that the Clerks' Briefings should be restricted to clerks to maintain its clerk-focus and to ensure that there were sufficient places for clerks.

9.2. It was suggested that since North West Essex clerks had to travel a long way to attend any of the Clerks' Briefings an additional Briefing might be held at a more convenient location for them (eg Thaxted or Braintree). This was discussed. It was agreed that this would be considered and that if a LA venue was not available the ECA would consider paying for an alternative venue (**ACTION: Executive Committee; Rosemarie Lunn**).

10. Any other Business

10.1. **To consider proposal from Stephen Adamson as follows:**
Any ECA member to obtain an overall 20% discount for subscription to Clerkwise if registered via link on ECA website of which a per centage would be retained by the ECA.

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10.1.1. The proposal was discussed. A Clerk reported that she has subscribed to Clerkwise for a few years but had stopped once the ECA was formed as she felt that there was not a need for both. Rosemarie stated that Essex Governor Services invested in the expertise that existed in the ECA and could not duplicate this with Clerkwise. It was agreed that Clerkwise did not offer anything beyond that currently offered by the ECA. It was agreed that if the ECA were to enter into a financial arrangement with Clerkwise it would be tantamount to endorsing their service. It was noted that a conflict of interest might arise if the 2 organization ever gave contrary advice. Clerks expressed the opinion that as a non-profit making organization, it would be inappropriate for the ECA to endorse commercial organizations. The ECA felt that the proposal would not offer a significant income stream. The ECA voted on the following proposal: ECA to suggest to Stephen Adamson that he should offer 20% discount to ECA members who registered via the ECA website in exchange for the ECA posting an article about and link to Clerkwise on its website. This was unanimously agreed **(ACTION: Peter Bates)**.

10.1.2. It was agreed that Pam would ask the new Communications Officer to subscribe to Clerkwise on behalf of the ECA Executive Committee **(ACTION: Pam Langmead)**.

11. Date & Time of next meeting

It was agreed that the next AGM would be held on 29 March 2012, 10am, Chelmsford City Football Club, Salerno Way, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 2EH. Pam to confirm venue **(ACTION: All; Pam Langmead)**.

(The meeting ended at 11.50am).

Summary of decisions

- ECA to provide guidance and support to Academy clerks (see 3.6.1).
- ECA to provide informal mentoring scheme for new clerks (see 3.6.2).
- Minute Writing Course to be offered to clerks (see 3.7).
- ECA subscription rate for 2011/2012 to remain at £15 per school (see 5.5.2).
- Executive Committee was elected (see 7).
- ECA Constitution was approved (see 8).
- Clerks' Briefings restricted to clerks only (see 9.1).
- Not to enter into financial agreement with Clerkwise but to seek discount for ECA members in exchange for link/article on ECA website (see 10.1.1).

Summary of Action Points

All

- To send documents for website to Pam & notify Pam of website errors (see 3.3).
- To send Sue any information appropriate for distribution to membership (see 3.4).
- To serve as mentor to new clerks (see 3.6.2).
- To attend next ECA AGM, 29 March 2012, 10am, Chelmsford FC [venue tbc] (see 11).

Executive Committee

- To discuss provision to non-subscribing Academy clerks at summer 2011 term meeting (see 5.6).
- To consider paying for venue for Clerks' Briefings in location convenient for NW Essex in future (see 9.2).

Iwona Bainbridge

- To ask Chairs of Govs to share Agency Survey feedback with own clerks (see 6.1).
- To submit summary of Agency Survey at Summer 2011 term Exec Comm meeting (see 6.2).

Peter Bates

- To send Pam the Communications Officer report (see 4.1).
- To suggest ECA proposal to Stephen Adamson re Clerkwise (see 10.1.1).

Sue Julian-Ottie

- To ask clerks to remind schools to pay ECA subs (at appropriate time) (see 5.5.3).

Pam Langmead

- To reinstate mentor webpage; call for mentor volunteers & promote mentor service to new clerks (see 3.6.2).
- To advertize Minute Writing Course on website (see 3.7).
- To upload some of Peter's queries/answers onto FAQ on website (see 4.1).
- To e-mail ECA flyers to Ruth Brock at appropriate time (see 5.1).
- To ask Steve Islip to distribute ECA flyers in Southend (see 5.4).
- To update/upload Constitution (see 8).
- To ask Tina Weavers to subscribe to Clerkwise (see 10.1.2).
- To confirm venue for 2012 AGM (see 11).

Rosemarie Lunn

- To consider holding Clerks' Briefings in location convenient for NW Essex in future (see 9.2).