



CHAIR'S REPORT March 2010 – March 2011

Introduction

This is my third report to the Essex Clerks' Association Annual General Meeting, and we are about to enter our fourth year. The Executive will discuss the strategic direction for the coming year at the meeting later in the morning and we would welcome input from all clerks about what they want the association to offer. We are obviously part of a changing educational landscape and the ECA needs to be able to respond to the needs of all clerks, whatever category or type of school they work in.

Support for clerks

I believe that clerks across Essex do now feel better supported and continue to appreciate having their own association. I have certainly been asked for direct advice by many clerks over the year, as have other colleagues on the ECA, and several clerks have used the contact facility on the website to ask for advice. During the year we continued to work in partnership with Governor Services who generously gave us £5,000 to support the work that we do. This money has been used to pay for the clerks' briefings, the continuation of refresher training for established clerks and the re-instatement of introductory/expectations meetings for new agency clerks. As a result of a discussion on the ECA Executive about support for new clerks, we now offer a follow up meeting to schools after two to three terms, giving them and their clerk the opportunity to discuss any issues that might have come up in the early days. I have been commissioned by a school to write and deliver a minute-writing course and this will be available to deliver to other clerks in the future. The ECA is also helping once again to plan the clerks' annual conference with Governor Services/Schools Learning and Development; we paid for the closing speaker last year and have agreed to do so again, to ensure that we get an excellent presenter for the event.

Website

The website continues to be our easiest and most effective communications tool, and I have had many positive comments from headteachers and governors about the site, as well as clerks. A database for the association should be in operation soon and we hope that will improve our record keeping and communication systems.

Briefing papers

In the last three years the ECA has produced fourteen briefing papers, a number of guidance documents and articles for the website. We have used the expertise of staff in the Local Authorities as well as experts at the DfE to ensure that we get our advice right, and I'd like to thank those colleagues for giving their time and knowledge generously.

Clerks' briefings

The clerks' briefings are now well established and are very well attended across the county – we are now running five briefings and deliver to around 110 clerks each term. The evaluations that we see as a result of these sessions are really positive, and it is clear that clerks appreciate the opportunity to get together and update their knowledge on a regular basis.

Thank you

I'd like to thank the Executive committee for their work and commitment to the ECA in the last three years. It has been fantastic to work with such dedicated, experienced and knowledgeable clerks, and they are all extremely generous giving up their time voluntarily to support clerks across the county.

In addition I want to thank colleagues in Essex and Thurrock governor services for their support and for working in partnership with the ECA in the last year.

**Pam Langmead
ECA Chair**