



CHAIR'S REPORT MARCH 2016 – MAY 2017

Introduction

And so I come to the end of my third year as Chair of the Essex Clerks' Association; how time has flown and times have changed – yet again. The Association is now into its tenth year and this could be its most exciting. I am going to keep this Report really short as we are here for two very important reasons: to be part of our very first ECA Networking event but, more importantly, for us to bring to you our very first (and hopefully not the last) Clerks' Information Update briefing.

As many of you know, for fiscal reasons, the Essex Clerking Agency can no longer provide briefings for any other clerks except for those employed by them. When our Executive first heard this, we were extremely concerned that this would mean that very many clerks in Essex would then have no access to any form of training or briefings irrespective of whether they were prepared to pay or not.

Having spoken at length to the Clerking Service and to Clare Kershaw herself, I can confirm that our decision to support Essex clerks through our own briefing sessions (and potentially training sessions in the future) will be greeted very well and we were given their blessing.

These will be YOUR briefings – we want input from you so please do not hesitate to let us know what you need and we will do our utmost to provide it. For the time being, the briefings will be free of charge. We hope that, through our subscription of £15 a year, we will be able to continue to deliver them for free for as long as we possibly can.

I am also happy to report that, after a nightmare situation with our website, we have launched the new ECA site. It is still not completely up to date but we are doing our best and certainly by the beginning of next term, it will be fully functioning on all cylinders. Notes from these briefings with loads of attachments should be available in the next week or so.

We continue to have an excellent relationship with Essex Education Services, Governor Services and the Clerking Agency. However, the funding has finished and we have to stand on our two feet now. This means, for this year at least, there will be no Clerks Conference. We do have other plans for networking



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events and we are creating a great database of names so that we can regularly keep you up to date with what we will be doing to support you.

This past year, like so many before, has been a challenge to clerks with so many new edicts and initiatives being introduced by the DfE, EFSA, Ofsted etc. And, for those who have now taken on academies, the landscape remains a minefield with more and more red tape and less and less direction. We will continue to do our best to give advice and guidance but there are times when we just have to admit defeat and say that we don't know! With more and more schools converting to academy status, there will come a time when clerking in a mainstream school will be the oddity – when did we ever see that happening?

Finally, I really need to thank the Executive Committee for their support and commitment both to me, as the Chair, and the ECA. The Executive Committee is been made up of dedicated and experienced clerks who generously given up their time voluntarily. I very much hope that this continues as without them, Essex clerks would lose the ECA and, without the ECA, they would lose a truly first-class support mechanism.

Tina Weavers

ECA Chair

15 May 2017