

**LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION WEST AREA
JUNE 2020**

**THE AREA MEETINGS WERE NOT HELD IN THE SUMMER TERM 2020
DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND LOCKDOWN.
THIS REPORT IS A RECORD OF THE INFORMATION SHARED WITH HEADTEACHERS BY EMAIL.
Agendas and minutes for these meetings available at www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk**

Attendance List

**DISTRICT AND EPHA MEETING
(Notes below)
Isobel Barron, Chair**

Welcome to the following Headteachers:

Renette Fourie Hereward Primary (now substantive headteacher)

Farewell to the following Headteachers:

Ann Grisley Limes Farm Infants (moving schools)
Bridget Hill Chipping Ongar Primary
Julie Witteridge White Bridge Primary

Chair's report

Isobel Barron

**WEPHA meeting and AGM
Election of Officers and Local Delivery
Group representatives**

Chair Isobel Barron (Roseacres Primary)
Vice-Chair George Athanasiou (Great Sampford Primary)
Treasurer Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Primary)
Harlow Jonathan Tye (Churchgate CE Primary)
Uttlesford North Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Primary)
Uttlesford South John Clements (Hatfield Heath Primary)
Epping Forest South Joanne Willcox (Hillhouse CE Primary)
Epping Forest Rural Julie Lorkins (St Andrew's, N Weald)

**Summer term newsletter and
information**

p 17 **Key dates**

WEST meetings with the Local Authority officers 2020/21 -at The Stansted Centre (Weston Homes Business Centre) Takeley

Wednesday 18 November 2020
Wednesday 10 March 2021
Wednesday 23 June 2021

Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2020

Friday 2 October 2020 Virtual event

Headteachers' Annual Conference 2021

Friday 19 March 2021 Stock Brook Country Club, Nr Billericay

WEST EPHA AREA SUMMARY June 2020

The termly headteacher meetings were not able to be held at the usual venues in June as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Primary schools have remained open during the lockdown, which started on 23rd March, and are beginning to increase their provision for pupils in various year groups. However, large gatherings are not yet allowed or advisable. We hope to return to normal for the meetings in November, but this term will conduct the business of the EPHA area meetings by email.

1. WELCOME AND FAREWELL – SUMMER 2020

Welcome to the following Headteachers:

Renette Fourie Hereward Primary (now substantive headteacher)

Farewell to the following Headteachers:

Ann Grisley Limes Farm Infants (moving schools)
Bridget Hill Chipping Ongar Primary
Julie Witteridge White Bridge Primary

If you are leaving please make use of the EPHA new heads' checklist, and complete it for your successor. This is available on the EPHA website at <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/good-practice/>

2. WEST EPHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

a) CHAIR'S REPORT

Isobel Barron, Chair of West EPHA, sent the following report.

Review of the year

Well, we were all looking forward with hope....2020 was going to be THE year... little did we know at the start of it that the new year and a new decade would be marked by such a monumental event that it will go down in the history books as one to remember!

This time last year we were dominated by the big 'O' with the new Ofsted framework; now it is the big 'C' with Coronavirus quite literally taking over our lives.

I could add to the list with a big "S" for stress and a big "RA" for risk assessment! We have all certainly done our own fair share of wading through the copious amounts of information, trying to make sense of it ourselves so that we can lead, cope and calm others through uncharted waters.

The primary education profession has once again shown itself to be extraordinary resilient, creative and solution-focused – getting a superb job done and in just two days rewriting the entire curriculum and educational landscape to make home learning a reality for the majority rather than the minority.

Little did I know that I would be having virtual staff meetings and learning how to host and zoom, but bit by bit I have learnt new things and found other ways of managing, as have most of the staff, who have just got on with it and made the best of what they can in the

circumstances.

School staff have been utterly amazing in adapting to the 'new normal' and there will be much more of that to come in the coming months. Quite when we can expect to be back to the normal that we know and, dare I say, love – who knows?

Clare Kershaw has shown great leadership and strength throughout and has worked very much in partnership with EPHA, fighting for what she felt was right for Essex schools and heads, championing our cause. She has continually recognised and understood the efforts, stresses and strains being placed on head teachers and has sought ways to support us through with daily updates, letters, model policies and the like.

The daily calls with Pam, and the regular meetings with the EPHA Executive have been helpful allowing us to share ideas, concerns and actions. Clare listened, responded and challenged those at the DfE, the Unions and others.

Pam has been amazing again this year- in all the conferences organised (though sadly not all were able to occur), training and head teacher briefings. Her constant presence and ability to listen, respond and take up the mantle on our behalf during the national crisis has been invaluable. Thank you Pam – we could not survive without you!

What is to come?

Who knows?! Who could ever have predicted this?! I would rather not have a crystal ball.

What I do know is that we are always stronger together. We need now, more than ever, to support one another. We must look after our own wellbeing and that of other headteachers as the demands of the last few months and this year are likely to take their toll, if they have not already done so.

We need to share and develop best practice... what have we learnt about home learning and VLE and our pastoral role during this time?

If it happens again and we go into a second lock down, what would we do the same or differently?

(Well at least I would have a head start with an 80 page Risk Assessment!)

Joking aside- wellbeing is the most important aspect that we need to take care of ... ourselves, our families (really our own families) and wider, our school families and our children. Who knows what damage this situation has created long term?

We need to be able to spot the signs of stress and distress early, be able to signpost to professional organisations and help, or have developed a range of strategies and solutions ourselves. We need to rest, recuperate and recharge our batteries over the summer to be able to cope with what happens next. And cope we will, as primary always does.

Primary school leaders and YOU should be holding your head up, proud.

Well done for all that you have achieved in very challenging and stressful circumstances, and you are still standing!

So, I am standing up to salute you all for your enormous energy, dedication and resilience. Well done!

We may not have completed 100 laps round our own garden and been publically recognised with a knighthood for our efforts BUT everyone has done their bit and we should all be justly proud of ourselves and each other. We did it for our children and our school communities.

Put your feet up, enjoy the sun and have a well-earned rest this summer. Cheers!

All four Chairs have agreed to continue in their posts, with the usual proviso that they will be happy to step aside if anyone else wants to take on the role!

On behalf of EPHA and headteachers in each area, I would like to thank the four Chairs for their continued commitment and contribution to the Association and their determination to represent and support their colleagues across the county. They have done an excellent job and have given their time freely and generously – thanks to them all.

b) ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND LOCAL DELIVERY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES

Chair	Isobel Barron (Roseacres Primary)
Vice-Chair	George Athanasiou (Great Sampford Primary)
Treasurer	Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Primary)
Harlow	Jonathan Tye (Churchgate CE Primary)
Uttlesford North	Mary Jo Hall (St Thomas More Catholic Primary)
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Epping Forest South	Joanne Willcox (Hillhouse CE Primary)
Epping Forest Rural	Julie Lorkins (St Andrew's, N Weald)

The officers and Local Delivery Group representatives were thanked for the hard work that they do on behalf of headteachers in the West Area and for agreeing to continue in their roles or taking on new positions.

c) EPHA Executive report

The EPHA Executive has met more frequently than usual to discuss the challenges and changes that are being experienced by primary-phase schools across the county. Minutes of the meetings are available on the EPHA website at <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/meetings/executive/>

d) The Summer term EPHA newsletter, including dates for the 2020/21 school year, was circulated to headteachers by email -these can also be found on the Newsletter page of the EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk.

e) EPHA Annual funding

EPHA continues to be funded by a top-slice from the DSG. The cost to each school is £320. Please see the article "What do headteachers get in return for their top-sliced contribution to EPHA?" available on the EPHA website.

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/what-headteachers-get-in-return-for-their-epha-contribution-2020-21.pdf>

Please remind your Finance Officer that the school does not have to pay a subscription for the financial year.

f) The EPHA county Annual General Meeting – Wednesday 7 October 2020

We plan to hold the AGM as usual at Chelmsford City Football Club. Michelle Winter, Senior HMI for the Eastern Region, will attend the meeting to talk about the future of Ofsted. You will receive the agenda and information about the AGM by email in advance of the meeting.

g) CONFERENCES

Deputy Headteachers' conference - Friday 2 October 2020

Unfortunately, as a result of the continued uncertainty around when large gatherings will be able to resume, the decision has been made not to hold the annual Deputy and Assistant Headteachers' conference this year. This would have been our 15th deputy conference, and we know that for many this is an annual date in the diary that senior leaders value and look forward to.

EPHA plans to hold an alternative, free, virtual event to celebrate and thank Deputy and Assistant heads for the amazing work they do in our schools, particularly in such challenging times. More information in the second half of the summer term.

Headteachers Conference – Friday 19 March 2021, Stock Brook Country Club

You will be aware that the headteacher conference in 2020 was cancelled as a result of the national lockdown. EPHA is holding bookings for headteachers and will contact you later in the year about the headteacher conference in 2021- we have great hopes that this will go ahead, just a year late!

h) Article in the newsletter - Headship in a time of uncertainty

Whether you are brand new to headship or have many years of experience, one thing is certain – you've never dealt with a global pandemic before! This is the most unprecedented event that school leaders have ever had to face, and the uncertainty stretches into the future, making this challenge even harder to manage. Here are my 5 top tips for you:

1. *Trust your intuition, as well as your experience.* You are not a headteacher for nothing – you are smart, experienced and have proved that you can lead a complex organisation.
2. *Access all the support you can get.* Both professional and personal – this is the time to ask for help and reassurance.
3. *Accept that not all of your decisions will be right.* This is a time of test and trial, and you will probably make the odd mistake.
4. *Give yourself permission to be flexible and change your mind.* Recognising the need to alter course is a strength, not a weakness.
5. *Take a break.* Your job is always too big – at the moment it can be overwhelming, so remember to rest and recuperate. The school will still be there when you return – and the DfE guidance will probably have changed!

Please do contact Pam Langmead if you have any questions or comments about the work of EPHA and the Executive in the last year.

pam@langmead.me.uk

3. FUTURE DATES

WEST meetings with the Local Authority officers 2020/21 -at The Stansted Centre (Weston Homes Business Centre) Takeley

Wednesday 18 November 2020

Wednesday 10 March 2021

Wednesday 23 June 2021

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