

## LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION WEST AREA

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2026

### MEETING SUMMARY: ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Agendas and minutes for these meetings available at [www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk](http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk)

| Attendance List                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>DISTRICT AND EPHA AGENDA (a.m.)</b><br><b>(Notes below)</b><br><b>Chris Jarman, Chair</b>                                             | <b>Welcome to the following Headteachers:</b><br>Nicky Butcher                      Wimbish Primary Academy<br>Josh Chesterman                  Manuden CE Primary<br><b>Farewell to the following headteachers:</b><br>Dean Beaumont                  Tanys Dell Primary<br>Vicky Early                          Harlowbury Primary<br>Sophia Ovenlon                  Fawbert and Barnard Primary<br>Nicola Pickford                  Wimbish Primary Academy<br>Linda Todd                          Elsenham CE Primary<br><br><b>Emotionally Healthy Minds</b><br><b>Managing parental complaints</b><br><b>WEPHA meeting and AGM</b><br><br><b>Election of Officers and Local Delivery</b><br><b>Group representatives</b><br><b>EPHA updates</b> |
|                                                                                                                                          | James Hancock and Sarah Petherick<br>Iain Grafton – podcast<br>Chris Jarman<br><br><b>Chair</b> Chris Jarman (St Mary's CE Primary)<br><b>Vice-Chair</b> Marne Reynecke-Raybould (Ashdon Primary)<br><b>Harlow</b> Ian Kendal (Our lady of Fatima Trust)<br><b>Uttlesford North</b> Marne Reynecke-Raybould (Ashdon Primary)<br><b>Uttlesford South</b><br><b>Epping Forest South</b> Joanne Willcox (Hillhouse Primary)<br><b>Epping Forest Rural</b> Dale Bateman (Coopersale and Theydon Primary)<br><br><b>West Partnership Lead head</b> Colin Raraty (Rodings Primary)                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>AREA AGENDA</b><br>LA updates on current priorities including:                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| p 1-10      • Director's update                                                                                                          | Clare Kershaw                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| p 10-13    • New TPP quality assurance and impact measures launch                                                                        | Lianne Canning and Beth Brown                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| p 14-17    • Ofsted strategic update                                                                                                     | Peter Stonier, Senior HMI                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| p 18 <b>Key dates</b>                                                                                                                    | <b>WEST headteacher meetings 2026/27 Weston Business Centre, Takeley</b><br>Wednesday 4 November 2026<br>Wednesday 10 March 2027<br>Wednesday 23 June 2027<br><br><b>WEPHA conferences</b><br>Friday 25 September 2026<br>Friday 29 January 2027<br>Friday 14 May 2027<br>The WEPHA conferences continue to be at the Manor of Groves, in the Colonnade Suite.<br><br><b>Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2026</b><br>Friday 9 October 2026    Colchester Football Stadium<br><br><b>Headteachers' Annual Conference 2027</b><br>Friday 19 March 2027    Chelmsford City Race Course<br><br><b>Small School Headteachers' conference</b><br>Wednesday 14 October 2026    The Lion Inn, Boreham                                                   |
| *Page numbers refer to the full minutes (posted on the EPHA website) of the Summer term Area meetings with LA Officers and Headteachers. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

**LA /ESSEX PRIMARY HEADS' ASSOCIATION WEST AREA**  
**DISTRICT AND AREA MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2026**  
**ATTENDANCE**

**Present**

|                   |                                           |                             |                                |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dale Bateman      | Coopersale & Theydon Garnon<br>CE Primary | Lucy Hays                   | Stebbing Primary               |
| Nikki Batt        | Moreton CE Primary                        | Sophia Pardalis             | Limes Farm Juniors             |
| Joshua Chesterman | Manuden Primary                           | Teresa Phillips             | Thomas Willingale School       |
| Sarah Cowley      | Henry Moore Primary                       | Colin Raraty                | Rodings Primary                |
| Michael Doughty   | Milwards Primary                          | Marne Reynecke-<br>Raybould | Ashdon Primary                 |
| Lisa Gibbs        | Leverton Primary                          | David Rogers                | Bentfield Primary              |
| Claire Jackman    | Great Easton Primary                      | Linda Todd                  | Elsenham CE Primary            |
| Chris Jarman      | St Mary's CE Primary/West<br>Chair        | Emma Vincent                | R A Butler Infants and Juniors |
| Chris Jarvis      | Churchgate CE Primary                     | Amy Wareham                 | Newport Primary                |
| Claire Kearney    | Dunmow St Mary's Primary                  | Kevin Watts                 | Great Dunmow Primary           |
| Anne-Marie Kendal | St Luke's Catholic Primary                |                             |                                |

**LA Officers**

|                 |                          |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Clare Kershaw   | Director of Education    |
| Nicola Woolf    | Assistant Director West  |
| Emma Jordan     | Education Manager - West |
| Jo Barclay      | Education Safeguarding   |
| Sarah Foster    | ECC SEP                  |
| PJ Prince       | ECC SEP                  |
| Sally Allan     | ECC                      |
| Jim Fotopoulou  | ECC                      |
| Lianne Canning  | ECC                      |
| Beth Brown      | ECC                      |
| Beate Hallawell | ECC                      |

**In Attendance**

|                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Pam Langmead    | EPHA Professional Officer |
| Anthony Hull    | Katherine Semar Schools   |
| James Hancock   | Emotionally Healthy Minds |
| Sarah Petherick | Emotionally Healthy Minds |
| Peter Stonier   | Ofsted HMI                |

**Apologies**

|              |                         |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Katie Henson | St Andrew's North Weald |
|--------------|-------------------------|

Note: If your attendance or apologies have not been noted please contact the EPHA Professional Officer at [pam@langmead.me.uk](mailto:pam@langmead.me.uk) for amendment.

## WEST EPHA AREA MEETING MINUTES 24 JUNE 2026

### 1. WELCOME

Chris Jarmain, the West Area Chair welcomed headteachers to the meeting.

**Welcome to the following Headteachers:**

|                 |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Nicky Butcher   | Wimbish Primary Academy |
| Josh Chesterman | Manuden CE Primary      |

**Farewell to the following headteachers:**

|                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Dean Beaumont   | Tany's Dell Primary         |
| Vicky Early     | Harlowbury Primary          |
| Sophia Ovenlon  | Fawbert and Barnard Primary |
| Nicola Pickford | Wimbish Primary Academy     |
| Linda Todd      | Elsenham CE 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. EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY MINDS

James Hancock and Sarah Petherick were welcomed to the meeting.

Emotionally Healthy Minds supports schools through staff training, student workshops, and parent sessions that build understanding of emotions and develop practical strategies for managing them, helping to strengthen emotional wellbeing across the school community.

James explained that they are currently a team of 15 (but growing rapidly) who support children whose emotions are stopping them from accessing school. He and Sarah gave an example of an 11 year old pupil, who they call Jade, who is finding it difficult to access school; they stressed that every school will be familiar with a "Jade".

The statistics about the mental health problems in school are worrying.

Nearly 9 out of 10 teachers and support staff in a National Education Union survey report that they have noticed an increase in prevalence of emotional and mental health issues in students in their setting. 1 in 5 children aged 8-16 years old have a probable mental health problem.

In 2022/23, 949,200 young people with active referrals to CAMHS:

- 32% received support
- 28% are still waiting for support
- 40% have seen their referral closed without any support

Emotionally Healthy Minds offers staff training, pupil workshops, parent workshops and targeted student support, focusing on a range of activities including

- Regulating Emotions
- Managing Anxiety
- Building Resilience
- Increasing Self-Esteem
- Getting Ready for Year 7
- Starting Primary School

At the core of Emotionally Healthy Minds' training and workshops:

- Emotional education and emotional literacy

- Informative and practical
- Based on tried and tested strategies and neuroscientific research (Emotion Coaching)
- Not about a quick fix
- Addresses issues common to schools right now

The aim is to build emotionally stronger and healthier children

- Supporting neurotypical children, not just neurodiverse
- Equips children with skills for life, not just for now
- Complimentary to TPP and Thrive
- Supports the objectives of the updated primary Health Education curriculum being introduced in September 2026

However, Emotionally Healthy Minds is not about pathologising anxiety or other perceived negative emotions, and rather than asking 'What is wrong?' , ask 'What's going on?'

Contact James Hancock at james@emotionallyhealthyminds.com  
emotionallyhealthyminds.com

### 3. **MANAGING PARENTAL COMPLAINTS**

The Professional Officer explained that she had recently come across a podcast featuring Iain Grafton MBE, focused on understanding and managing complaints, an increasingly stressful problem for schools.

From the reasonable parent who simply wants an apology, to the rare but highly challenging querulous complainant, school governance specialist and former Detective Superintendent Iain Grafton MBE breaks down the characteristics of six different types of complainant and offered tailored response strategies for school leaders. The video can be accessed at <https://www.brownejacobson.com/products/parental-behaviour-support-pack> and the following is part of the transcript of the recording:

The video explained that the framework comes originally from a piece of academic work conducted by the University of Victoria in Australia, probably about 30 years ago now. They were leading the world in trying to better understand why some really serious atrocities committed by people against often multiple victims of homicide took place. What was it about the person that ended up being responsible for those acts that took them from where they started as potentially ordinary, reasonable, normal people, and drove them into a position where they found that the only way they felt they could be heard was to carry out something atrocious in the community.

And as a result of that academic work being shared with law enforcement agencies around the world, the piece of work in question made its way to the United Kingdom in the early 2000s and became the basis for a nationwide rethink by the police forces in England and Wales of the way in which they handle, understand, and support people who make complaints about the police — in order to ensure that the police didn't overlook somebody who may be suffering from a state of mind that could take them from being an ordinary, reasonable person into a state where they could commit something atrocious, as had been the case around the world.

Iain explained that, as a person whose responsibility it is to try and resolve this complaint, headteachers need to be aware that the person you are dealing with who has raised a complaint will probably fit into one of six different categories. And until you understand which of the six categories that person is in, when they have that first interaction with you, you won't have a great chance of resolving the complaint — because for each of the six different types, there are six different approaches to managing that person and their complaint. And the six responses don't mix well with the six types. So the key to this is, firstly, understand why it is someone's complaining and what their complaint is about and where they are on their journey with that complaint. And then select the best approach to dealing with them, focusing all

the time on trying to get a pragmatic, settled resolution and an outcome within the policy that you have for dealing with complaints.

So Type 1 we would refer to as normal, reasonable, ordinary people — the vast majority. Type 2 are difficult or awkward people. Type 3 are those who are either acting through a degree of dishonesty or they're motivated by compensation — litigious people. Type 4 are altruistic complainants who are genuine people, but just act on behalf of others and feel they need to do that. Type 5 are people who make complaints for hobbies, because they do exist. And then Type 6 are the tiniest proportion of all the complainants but they present the biggest challenge to organisations, because they are the querulous, the vexatious, the unreasonably difficult, the rude, the irrational, the intolerant. I could go on. People will have an understanding of that sort of category, I'm sure — what we're trying to describe as Type 6, the most difficult and the most challenging.

Type 6 — the querulous complainant — in some ways the most problematic complainant. What are the key warning signs that you might be dealing with a querulous Type 6 complainant?

They'll very quickly be easily identified, but we need to stress that they're very rare. The behaviours that you will get from the outset will be wholly unreasonable. And we've been asked in the past what's unreasonable? What's unreasonable is whatever you think unreasonable is. Forty phone calls to the school in a day is unreasonable.

Sending in a lever arch folder of 275 pages of A4 and expecting the school head to read that because that's the complaint is unreasonable. And those are both true examples of unreasonable behaviour that I've been involved in advising a school about.

Then there is the rudeness, the threats, the extreme threats, the irrational behaviour, the illogical behaviour, the intimidation, the threats on social media. If you can get into a logical conversation with somebody who is in this state of mind, it will be very difficult for them to explain to you what their complaint is. And it will be very difficult for you to understand that complaint, because what you have to know about somebody who's in Type 6 is they're actually talking to you not because they want you to help resolve their complaint. They're talking to you because they have another problem which you're never going to resolve, and they don't want you to resolve the complaint because having a complaint gives them a sense of purpose.

And therein is the first issue we have to remember with Type 5 people who are hobby complainants, because a hobby complainant likes to make complaints. Somebody in Type 6 may well persist with one complaint over years and never want it resolved. They want you to indulge them in their complaint, and they'll go out of their way to ensure that you do that. So if you start to get close to possibly resolving the complaint, they'll reframe it, they'll withdraw it and substitute it with a new complaint. And this is all about preventing you from getting a successful outcome. So you need to understand with Type 6 people it's unlikely they'll ever get a resolution — they don't want it. If you get too close to it, they'll stop you getting it. So you need a different set of tactics to work with someone who's in a Type 6 state of mind.

#### A Case Example of Type 6 Querulous Behaviour

I was asked to assist a head teacher who felt they were dealing with somebody who was being unreasonable and presenting them with a complaint which was disproportionate to what had happened, and the outcomes they were seeking were frankly undeliverable. I met with the head teacher and we went through how we had got to this position where the relationship between a family member for a child in the school was so polarised from the school.

It began quite simply — the individual in question wanted to have his mobile phone number added to his granddaughter's school record of people to contact in a case of emergency. The wider family didn't want that to happen, and the focus for this man became on the school and why they wouldn't do what he wanted them to do, and he became fixated with school policy. He could not see why it wasn't a reasonable request. He didn't accept that the family wouldn't support it. He didn't ultimately accept the head teacher's decision that they were not going to do that.

One of the things that does work well with dealing with people who are in the querulous state of mind is to be really clear and really firm about policy and process and what you can and what you can't do. Because if you don't, they'll exploit you and take it into another, potentially another complaint. And that's what happened in this particular case. The head teacher did the right thing, but by this time the gentleman's fixation was so dangerous that he went into a psychotic episode, his behaviour degenerated and ultimately — having found no other way, in his view, of getting his wishes to have the telephone number included on the school record — he waited until the school was being opened in the morning by the caretaker. He waited in his car outside the school grounds, and as he saw the caretaker open the gates and walk through the school car park, he drove at speed at the school caretaker, knocked him down and injured him, which resulted in a criminal investigation, a conviction, and a term of imprisonment. Thankfully a rare case, but a real case of somebody fitting Type 6.

In terms of strategies, what is the best approach to employ with Type 6 complainants?

Type 6 don't want a resolution, but their behaviours might mirror some of Type 2. And the same with dishonesty — Type 6 people can be dishonest, so can Type 3, but not unreasonably so, not to the point where they're threatening and abusive. So understanding and recognising the different types, particularly Type 6, is key. The strategies to deal with them are to be really clear and really firm.

Taking the example of the 275 pages of A4 submitted to a head teacher as a letter of complaint — I worked with that head teacher and we went through very quickly and recognised that page after page was copy-and-paste material from the internet, irrelevant material. What we decided to do was to construct a letter to send back to the complainant and say: "What you have submitted is unreasonable, and we are not prepared to read it. Please condense your 275 pages into no more than one side of A4 and please return it to school within seven days. If you don't, we will consider the matter closed." And you have to be that blunt and that direct with people who are being wholly unreasonable.

We do not employ head teachers and senior leaders — we don't even require governors as volunteers — to engage in dialogue or in correspondence with intemperate, rude, threatening, or aggressive letters or phone calls. It's not what they're there to do.

Type 6 complainants will often go off to other third-party agencies too — so in the school context, to Ofsted, the Department for Education and others, particularly where they face robust pushback from the school. Is there anything that schools and trusts can do to help them respond effectively to DfE or Ofsted challenges of that nature?

Record keeping is critical. It's critical in any case, and schools are good at keeping records. We keep good records about safeguarding issues, and we're used to keeping logs about incidents in school. The same must apply to dealing with a complaint — keep a log, a register, or however you wish to record it, of your interaction with that person, particularly if they're Type 6, and stick rigidly to policy. A deviation from policy will simply give that complainant another complaint to raise and another investigation, and therefore give more life to the complaint that they don't want the resolution to anyway. And they will then use that as an example to show why they were right to complain — because you can't even follow your own policy properly.

It's sad to say it, but you need to expect, if you're corresponding with people in this state of mind, to have your most recent email or letter sent back to you and annotated — potentially with your grammar corrected, potentially with your spelling picked up. And that's not because they feel that's helpful, but because they want to show that they are in control and that you are nowhere near resolving their complaint. So these are tangents that arise from the process of trying to deal with this. Stick rigidly to policy, and keep a written record of all that you do, such that if Ofsted or the Department for Education do respond to what they'll also be receiving from the same person, you can demonstrate that you have done everything that was reasonable and proportionate to deal with this particular person.

Are there any key characteristics of Type 6 correspondence to be aware of?

There are. I think the first thing is the volume. Be prepared, if they do resort to writing to you, to receive significant amounts of paperwork. The lever arch folder example I gave earlier is not unusual. However,



within that correspondence, there are also some key features that might be more obvious in the initial emails you first receive from the complainant. What we would expect to find — and I have an example of a letter from a case, one page of a nine-page letter, one of many, many letters — is that on page one of the letter you'll see the use of threatening language, of aggressive language, of some irrational behaviours. Some use of very bold print, lots of underlining, different font sizes, different text sizes, excessive use of quotation marks. And as you read through this one page, you begin to get a feel for what this person's state of mind might be. And page one is page one of nine — page nine doesn't end with anything that says what the complaint is. So there's a nine-page letter that doesn't actually tell you what the complaint is. And it's that sort of tone, content, and particular way in which the keyboard is used that are a good indicator that you are dealing with somebody who's in Type 6.

What are the common mistakes that schools make in handling complaints?

I think probably the way to answer that is to say: what are the three top things to do when dealing with a complaint?

Number one — you have to make dealing with that complaint your priority on that day. We know full well that the speed of response and the authenticity of that speed of response is the greatest chance you have of resolving the complaint. So number one, deal with it quickly.

Number two — if you have to resort to policy, and you don't always have to because you can deal with these things at a lower, more informal level, but if you do have to resort to policy, please stick to your school's policy and follow it, because that will be tested, potentially, by the DfE later on if the parent or person is not content with the outcome.

And the third thing — please make a written record of what you've done. Keep a written record so that in the future you can demonstrate what your response was to that particular complaint. And of course, if in doubt, please do come and seek some advice from governance professionals who can support you with this piece of work.

We talk a lot in our training about aiming for resolution, but planning for escalation. How does that fit in with all we've talked about today in terms of the profiles of the complainants and the ways of responding to them?

It fits really well. I would say similarly: begin with the end in mind. What do you want out of this? What does the complainant want out of this? Do you have any common ground on day one that you can both agree on, or are you going to have to escalate this through a policy? And if you go through the policy, what's really important is that you make it clear to the person complaining what that policy allows you to do and not to do, because their expectations need to be managed through that process.

My final recommendation is this: most of the people that you deal with who make a complaint will be normal, ordinary, reasonable people. Deal with them as quickly as you can and respond to their complaint with a view to resolving it. We've talked a lot today about people who are in Type 6 — they are the rarest. I wouldn't want anyone to leave today thinking that the Type 6 complainant is going to be something they've got to deal with regularly. It isn't. The majority of people — 95% of people — will be ordinary, reasonable people that you can deal with, but you need to deal with them quickly in order to get the best chance of an outcome.

Iain Grafton can be contacted at [foveoltd@mail.com](mailto:foveoltd@mail.com) if you want support or advice about complaints.

#### **4. WEST EPHA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

##### **a) CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chris Jarman, Chair of West EPHA, gave the following report.

##### **Reflection on the Year – June 2026**

Where does the year go? It is hard to believe that we are already in the summer term once again. During the school year, it can often feel like an endless cycle of challenges, deadlines, unexpected crises and competing priorities. There are moments when the end of the year seems a very long way off. Then

suddenly, we find ourselves in the final weeks of term, juggling assessments, report writing, staffing decisions, transition arrangements and all the countless tasks that accompany the end of another academic year.

Many of the issues we face now are not new. In fact, the longer you work in education, the more you realise that every 'new' idea has usually been tried before – just with a different name."

SEND continues to challenge schools across the country, funding pressures remain a constant concern, and school leaders are still being asked to achieve more with increasingly limited resources. Yet despite these challenges, headteachers, school staff and governors continue to show remarkable commitment and resilience. Every day, colleagues across our schools turn up determined to provide the very best opportunities for the children, families and communities they serve.

This year has also seen the introduction of Ofsted's revised inspection framework. Early experiences across the county have been mixed, and there is understandably a degree of uncertainty as schools become familiar with the new process. While inspection will always bring challenge and scrutiny, it is important that we continue to support one another professionally and personally. The strength of our network has always been one of our greatest assets, and it will remain so as we navigate future changes together.

The local election results have brought significant changes to the County Council and, with them, uncertainty around Local Government Reorganisation. While many details are still emerging, one thing remains certain: the relationships we have built across our schools and communities are far more important than any organisational structure. The willingness to pick up the phone, seek advice, share expertise and support one another will continue to be at the heart of what makes our partnership successful.

Throughout the year, EPHA has continued to work tirelessly on behalf of headteachers at both local and national levels. Our key priorities have included engagement with Local Government Reorganisation, Early Years provision, Ofsted developments, SEND reform and headteacher wellbeing. Through our meetings, consultations and working groups, we have continued to challenge, influence and advocate on behalf of school leaders across Essex. While progress is not always as rapid as we would like, it is vital that the voice of headteachers continues to be heard.

At this point, I would like to recognise the commitment of the EPHA Executive team. These colleagues represent your views in numerous meetings, forums and working groups throughout the year, ensuring that every area of the county has a strong voice in discussions and decision-making. Their contribution often takes place behind the scenes, but it is invaluable. Please join me in thanking them for their dedication and service over the past year.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Pam for another exceptional year. Her termly briefings remain an essential source of information, guidance and interpretation in an increasingly complex educational landscape. While the content can occasionally be sobering, it helps us make sense of the challenges we face and keeps us informed of the latest developments. The governor briefings have also helped broaden understanding of the realities of school leadership, while the Seven-Minute Staff Meetings continue to be a hugely popular and practical resource. The quality of the EPHA conferences for headteachers and deputy headteachers consistently rivals national events and reflects the strength of professional learning across Essex. We are incredibly fortunate to benefit from Pam's expertise, leadership and commitment.

### **Looking Ahead**

As we move into the next academic year, Local Government Reorganisation is likely to occupy much of our attention. The prospect of working across five unitary authorities represents one of the most significant structural changes we have seen in recent years. At present, many questions remain unanswered regarding how services will be organised and how schools will be supported.



One of the greatest risks during this period of change is the potential fragmentation of the strong county-wide networks that have been built over many years. We should never underestimate the value of coming together each term, sharing experiences and speaking collectively on behalf of schools. The strength of EPHA lies in its ability to unite school leaders around common priorities, regardless of geography or context. Preserving that collective voice will be a key focus for Harriet, Pam and myself over the coming year, and we will work hard to ensure that the collaboration and influence we currently enjoy are not lost.

SEND will undoubtedly remain a significant challenge. Schools continue to support increasing numbers of children with increasingly complex needs, often without the resources, specialist provision or funding required. While this is not a new issue, it remains one of the most pressing concerns facing school leaders, and we will continue to advocate strongly for the support that children and schools deserve.

We are also awaiting the outcomes of the national Curriculum and Assessment Review. Although there has been relatively little communication in recent months, it seems likely that further changes will emerge during the coming year. As always, schools will need to adapt and respond to evolving expectations while maintaining a relentless focus on delivering the best possible education for our pupils.

Despite the challenges ahead, there is much to be optimistic about. The professionalism, dedication and adaptability demonstrated by school leaders across Essex continue to be extraordinary. Time and again, our schools rise to meet new challenges while maintaining a steadfast commitment to children and families.

It has been a privilege to serve as Chair of West EPHA once again this year. Thank you for your support, your contributions and your continued commitment to our schools and communities. If anyone feels inspired to take on the role of Chair in the future, please do speak to either Pam or me. New voices and fresh perspectives are always welcome.

I wish you all a successful end to the academic year and, most importantly, an opportunity to enjoy a well-earned break over the summer.

**b) ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND LOCAL DELIVERY GROUP REPRESENTATIVES**

|                                   |                                               |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Chair</b>                      | Chris Jarman (St Mary's CE Primary)           |
| <b>Vice-Chair</b>                 | Marne Reynecke-Raybould (Ashdon Primary)      |
| <b>Harlow</b>                     | Ian Kendal (Our lady of Fatima Trust)         |
| <b>Uttlesford North</b>           | Marne Reynecke-Raybould (Ashdon Primary)      |
| <b>Uttlesford South</b>           |                                               |
| <b>Epping Forest South</b>        | Joanne Willcox (Hillhouse Primary)            |
| <b>Epping Forest Rural</b>        | Dale Bateman (Coopersale and Theydon Primary) |
| <b>West Partnership Lead head</b> | Colin Raraty (Rodings Primary)                |

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.

**4. EPHA UPDATES**

- a) The Summer term EPHA newsletter**, including dates for the 2026/27 school year, was circulated to headteachers in advance of the meeting -these can also be found on the EPHA website [www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk](http://www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk).

**b) EPHA County Annual General Meeting**

The EPHA county AGM will be held on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October at the Lion Inn, Boreham.

**c) Conferences**

Headteachers were reminded that the Deputy Headteachers' conference will be held on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2026, at the Colchester Football Stadium and next year's annual Headteachers' conference will be held on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2027 at Chelmsford City Race Course.

The programme and booking form for the Deputy Conference will be emailed to schools at the end of June.

There will be a conference for the Small Schools Headteacher group on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at the Lion Inn, Boreham.

**d) How can governors support their headteacher**

Headteachers were reminded that the Professional Officer will be running training for governors, online, on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July, focused on how they can support their headteacher.

Headteachers at the meeting were asked to share their views on what their governors do well, and what they would like them to do better, so that these ideas could be included in the training.

**6. FUTURE DATES**

**WEST headteacher meetings 2026/27**

Wednesday 4 November 2026

Wednesday 10 March 2027

Wednesday 23 June 2027

The West Chair reminded headteachers that we are shifting the meeting venue for the termly headteacher meetings to the Weston Business Centre, Takeley.

**WEPHA conferences**

Friday 25 September 2026

Friday 29 January 2027

Friday 14 May 2027

The WEPHA conferences continue to be at the Manor of Groves, in the Colonnade Suite.

**Deputy Headteachers' Annual Conference 2026**

Friday 9 October 2026 Colchester Football Stadium

**Small Schools headteacher conference**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2026 The Lion Inn, Boreham

**Headteachers' Annual Conference 2027**

Friday 19 March 2027 Chelmsford City Race Course