

# Councillor Representation Reporting Form

**Councillor: Neil Coleby**

**Body: SLAC National Conference 2018, Milton Keynes**

**Report Date: 11/11/2018**

**Meetings  
attended and  
dates**

30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

**Key issues  
discussed at  
the  
meeting(s)  
(relevant to  
LTC and its  
constituents)**

I attended the conference including four workshops and the majority of the exhibitors. The event was a mix of good and bad sessions, several of the seminars were useful as was meeting with the exhibitors. I came away from the conference under the impression that, as a new council, we were already out performing many established ones.

The first seminar that I attended was from the Energy Saving Trust. This had a poor attendance but I'm not sure if this was due to lack of interest or the fact that they changed the session location without telling anyone even the SALC reception team. It was a useful session looking at energy savings in particular in the area of lighting. This included street lighting and internal lighting but could also be applied to heating etc. The presenter took my details and put me in touch with the organisation which does zero interest grants/loans to change lighting as they realise that it is often the cost of changing which prevents many authorities from switching to more energy efficient equipment. They have contacted me since the conference and I have passed all the details to Shona.

The second seminar I attended was with Amanda and was about Partnership Working. There were some interesting items about sharing services between neighbouring parishes and the passing over of responsibilities and budgets/funding from principal authorities to parish councils but, on the whole, I felt that we are already reaching out and doing more partnership working than more established councils.


The third seminar that I attended was on Communication and there were some interesting tips, information and advice provided as well as some

interesting speakers. One of the key messages was don't try to use too many social media sites, pick one or two and use them well rather than over-reaching yourself. There were also interesting tips on building your presence on social media. One issue that did come up in this session is that the advice was provided mainly by staff from the LGA who deal with Principle Authorities, almost all of who have communication officers and teams whereas most town/parish councils have limited staff support and rarely dedicated comms officers. Another interesting tip was to always use the same "branding" across communications and platforms so that it is instantly recognisable. I can give a full briefing to the Communications and Events Sub-Committee.

The final seminar that I attended was for the Charter Tree. The presenter was from the Woodland Trust and was a fellow Suffolk resident and very knowledgeable. She wasn't able to finish her presentation due to interruptions unfortunately nor were we able to move onto the workshop session that she planned which was a shame. It was the only one of the "workshops" that would have truly been a workshop. What did come across was really positive and, if there hadn't been the interruptions and monologues, most questions would have been answered via the presentation. One thing that did come out of it was the Charter Tree Day on the 24<sup>th</sup> November each year. This is something which, with everything else going on, I owe the Council an apology for not coming up with an event. I would recommend that this is something that the Communications and Events Sub-Committee build into the calendar moving forward. One good/bad point coming out of the workshop was that we were the only council attending the workshop that were actually a Charter Tree Branch and there were at least 40 councils in the room. A lot of councils are Charter Tree Branches but a lot are larger councils. Despite not having a celebration event organised for this year, we are actually one of only a quarter of councils who have tree policies.

There were a number of very interesting stalls at conference, many of whom we may work with in the future. CCLA would be a very positive investment opportunity for us and F&G have already discussed Pear which is a mapping/aerial photography link up which could provide us with useful tools for planning, neighbourhood planning and recording our information. There was a company which does hanging baskets/tubs and supplies them fully planted and for £35 per item waters them all year round. Their information and costings give us a benchmark by which to judge any local service. There were companies which we already work with such as Blachere and David Ogilvy, we discussed with them costs of benches and larger orders along with costs for custom designed benches. If sometime in the future we were to take on cemeteries, there was a stall advertising software and services to enable us to manage them. There were also lots of stalls for software and computing options for local government which could bear further investigation but which at present are included in our ECCH IT agreement or which could be included.

For a conference which had sessions on Male, Pale and Stale and was introducing a diversity report and encouraging councils to become more diverse, it was very patriarchic in organisation, style and presenters. The "workshops" were really seminars with guest speakers rather than discussion groups and most of the plenary sessions were top down and people speaking at delegates rather than interactive. There were slots for

	<p>questions at the ends of speeches but even the panel session was more a conversation between the panellists with a few questions from the delegates. NALC still has a Chairman, even though it's a woman!</p> <p>There was a lot of talk about how local councils need to change, become more professional, business-like, have more officers and take on more responsibilities from principle authorities but little actual talk about how that would work in practise or where the money was coming from. One panellist advised that principle authorities work well together because officers communicate to officers and that was the failing of the system with town and parish councils, as if it was actually our fault that the system did not work. Surely the onus should fall on officers, as professions, to be able to work with parishes rather than parishes taking on officers so that the principle authorities can work with them? There was also mention of compulsory training for elected members.</p>
<p><b>Any actions required by LTC?</b></p>	<p>Look into lighting/energy saving in our premises and consider options for updating where appropriate (The Marina as a theatre is exempt from certain lighting regulations at the moment). Speak to Salix about funding options should we decide to do any improvements.</p> <p>Consider comms best practice and strategy once the Communications and Events Committee is set up.</p> <p>Organise an annual Charter Tree Day as well as looking at whether there are any other days which would be important for the council.</p> <p>Investigate software options to benefit council such as Pear and mapping.</p> <p>Investigate costs of baskets and tubs against the costs of the planter stall at the conference. Would this be beneficial and where? Could we interest Vision?</p> <p>Look to set up a CCLA Account. With the bulk of our reserves and precept going into it and earning interest. This could potentially add tens of thousands to our income over a year. Looking at the Housing Account (which is long term fixed) could have even better income results once we have a good reserve behind us.</p>
<p><b>Signed:</b> </p>	<p><b>Date: 18/11/2018</b></p>