

Minutes of the 4th meeting of ALERC Friday 15th January 2010 Room 5b, 5th Floor, Birmingham Central Library



Metadata

Addressee	Directors: ALERC cic U.K.
Coverage.spatial	
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Date.issued	March 2010
Format	Adobe portable document (pdf)
Identifier	ALERC 25.30.04
Mandate	Memorandum and Articles of Association: Association of Local Environmental Records Centres Community Interest Company. Incorporation number 06951023 13: Records to be kept, parts 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c 25: General Meetings 30: Minutes parts 1, 2
Publisher	Association of Local Environmental Records Centres cic
Rights.copyright	Association of Local Environmental Records Centres cic
Source	Association of Local Environmental Records Centres cic
Status	Version f
Subject	Minutes of General Meeting
Title	Minutes of the 4th Meeting of ALERC 15th January 2010
Type	Draft
Digital Signature	

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Association of Local Environmental Records Centres

Meeting of Directors

11.00 am – 3.30pm, Friday 15th January 2010

Room 5b, 5th Floor, Birmingham Central Library

AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes of 3rd Meeting**
3. **Matters arising – not dealt with on agenda**
4. **Chairman's Report (Adam Rowe)**
5. **Treasurer's Report (Nicky Court)**
 - **Membership update**
 - **Actions for further member recruitment**
 - **Financial report**
 - **Banking, accounting and accountants**

SHORT LUNCH BREAK (circa 12.30 pm)

6. **Issues for discussion and resolution**
 - a. **Accreditation project and working group**
 - b. **ALERC Conference**
 - c. **Logo and corporate identity**
 - d. **Working groups**
 - LRC Database
 - Website
 - Forum
 - e. **Establishing priorities and work programme**
 - f. **Company work**
7. **Any Other Business**
8. **Date(s) of next meeting(s)**

items in RED were prioritised for discussion by the Chairman on 14th January

Minutes of the 4th meeting of ALERC

Present: Darwyn Sumner, Mark Wills, Craig Slawson, Adam Rowe, Nicky Court, Eric Fletcher

The Chairman (Adam Rowe) declared the meeting open at 11.25

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Tim Corner (who urged us to "have fun")

2. Minutes of 3rd Meeting

Minutes from the last meeting were distributed some time ago (Chair requested a few small modifications and the structure of agenda was modified)

• Action points:

1. Unknown
2. DS produced an invoice (designed by Joyce Sumner) for work and expenses up to October 2009 but excluding web hosting.
3. Accountant - see below
4. see 6a below
5. see 6a below
6. Partially actioned but detailed discussion about actions deferred to next meeting
7. Partially actioned but detailed discussion about actions deferred to next meeting
8. Website problems detailed below
9. Website problems detailed below
10. Website problems detailed below
11. Forum: discharged, the action continues below
12. DS had worked on reconciling lists and distributed as a spreadsheet to Directors
13. MW provided details of venue and dates (below)
14. NC determined topics (action continued below)
15. AR to structure and lead (see below)
16. MW - detailed below
17. Unknown
18. Unknown
19. Companies House - filing of details - was no form received?
20. DPA registering - deferred - see AP 16
21. Discharged

3. Matters arising – not dealt with on agenda

Nothing

4. Chairman's Report (Adam Rowe)

Problems - we've taken people's money and not actually done anything to provide value for money. Unless we get something done in the next couple of months we shall have to send out apologetic letters.

If we don't get any more members then we are just treading water financially, we need the handful of well-established LRCs to join. The Bristol debt was considerable and hasn't helped with our finances. Workload problems seem to be a major issue - especially amongst those Directors who are managers. Perhaps some of the cash could best be used to invest in, say, a conference organiser.

5. Treasurer's Report (Nicky Court)

• Membership update

NC distributed a **spreadsheet list of membership** by LRC, this amounted to 28 LRCs + 2 individuals
 Recruiting is not satisfactory, for example there are no East Midlands LRCs signed up and there are other major gaps. AR indicated that NE had asked us to chase this up (after DS asked if NE could help us recruit!). A suggestion was made that the Forum be used to explain about joining ALERC and that errors with the ALERC website be fixed.

1. **AR - to make forum posting, DS - website fixes**

• Actions for further member recruitment

Proposal by AR that we all speak to our LRC people throughout January - not just email but actually

Speak to them and follow up with Email. NC will let us know when an LRC has responded.

2. Action all, NC - as & when

We can mention the common interest we have with NE when we ask about joining ALERC and the accreditation project - leverage.

Nicky Court came up with a phrase that could be useful in our communications with LRCs: "ALERC is involved in the accreditation project with NE and being involved with ALERC will give you a greater voice in the way that the accreditation scheme is developed"

Regarding the overall progress of ALERC, Adam Rowe stated "We don't give up on this year", like many LRCs themselves - we are in an establishment phase and require their support to become the professional organisation that fully represents their interests in the way that they would wish.

3. Repeat chasing of LRCs (all)

- **Financial report**

See NC's statement circulated at meeting

1. Web hosting costs are problematic - 123-reg have double charged twice - not been invoiced by DS until this has been properly resolved

- **Banking, accounting and accountants**

Financial accounts preparation has been arranged with an accountant company near NC - who will prepare company accounts for the end of the financial year

4. Action NC

- **General point**

NC informed us that ALGE is in receipt of £??k p.a. from country agencies - this is an aspirational figure for ALERC - and as the country agency for us, NE could perhaps offer the same support.

6. Issues for discussion and resolution

a. Accreditation project and working group

There is confusion over the process, NC will forward details that she has to AR and they will liaise.

5. AR & NC to liaise

Concern was expressed that LRCs who involved themselves in this process, by association with the too rapid & rushed consultation process that is going on with NE, might harm their own reputation.

6. AR to express concerns to Richard Alexander

b. Conference

Mark provided a summary of his research on 6 venues in the Birmingham area (previously circulated, a revised version is attached). Botanical Gardens was decided upon as the most appropriate and 100 delegates as the most likely number to cater for.

1. Target price seems to be about £35:£50:: member:non member

7. MW to further investigate prices to see if lesser prices can be obtained

2. Dates: 1st 2 weeks in May - preferably Wednesday or Thursday.
3. AGM should be held at that time and 14 days notice should be put on Forum
4. A committee meeting should be held a little beforehand (next ALERC meeting - see item 8)
5. Additional Directors are needed

8. DS to mention this in Doodle for next meeting

Based on a paper circulated by NC (ALERC Spring Conference: suggestions for discussion), ALERC Directors debated the programme of events in some detail. NC took away all these ideas and revised the programme (attached).

9. NC to send revised programme for inclusion in Minutes

c. Logo and corporate identity

Mark showed Directors the questionnaire that he had completed for **CrowdSpring**, who provide logo and custom graphic design for small businesses (<http://www.crowdspring.com/>), Charles Roper had come up with a colour palette based on the ALERC website.

10. Action MW

d. Other working groups

Please note that the headings have been retained, items without text were not discussed due to time constraints.

- **A. Technical and data management** (Mark, Craig)

LRC database

Deferred until the next meeting (although this item has arisen on the NFBR agenda and DS + CS have done some work)

11. Action - Craig Slawson and Darwyn Sumner to provide summary at next meeting

- **B. Training and skills** (Tim)
- **C. Accreditation** (Nicky)
- **D. Communications: Marketing and promotion** (Eric, Darwyn)

Website

DS briefly reported on problems that had been encountered in updating website via 123-reg. These were seen by Directors who examined some aspects of the website during the meeting. Suggested changes at the last meeting had been made but due to failures of the system to upload changes these could not be seen. DS had attempted to fix this by obtaining advice through the ALERC Forum but this has not been successful so far.

12. DS to attempt further to resolve issues

CS offered to host the website and Directors expressed their wish that our current contract with 123-reg should not extend beyond October this year (when the current contract expires)

13. Action all

Forum

DS had used a combination of a list sent to him by Charles Roper, the Access database which he had developed for ALERC use (see databases) and Nicky Court's list of signed up members to produce a single spreadsheet list of signatories to the ALERC Forum, thus reconciling the ALERC membership list of NC with that of CR.

Directors examined the topics on the Forum and desired that Charles Roper be asked to set up a secure, members-only area on the forum, comprising all the topics in the first section of the Forum (excluding the Jobs section). Nicky Court will send him a list of our 90 members and will keep Charles Roper updated as new members join. We also wished to know about the facilities available for Directors to act as moderators on the site.

14. Action DS

DS asked Directors to help keep the Forum alive and interesting by posting some item of interest periodically and contributing to discussion threads

15. Action all

e. Establishing priorities and work programme

f. Company work

AR reminded us of certain obligations as a Company - registering with the DPA being important

16. DS to investigate and register appropriately

7. Any Other Business

The following were mentioned but not dealt with in the meeting owing to time constraints:

Invitation to Darwyn Sumner to attend Defra funded regional review of local Biological / Biodiversity Record Centres being carried out by Natural England (East Midlands) [did not attend but has requested report and an invitation to the next meeting]

Minutes of NBN's Data Access Group were circulated to Directors by Nicky Court who had expressed concern to NBN "that no LRC was present despite there being many issues raised which concern LRCs"

8. Date(s) of next meeting(s)

17. DS to initiate a Doodle for a period for the month of last 2 weeks March, 1st 2 April 2010

18. (include a note about the need for new Directors)

Chairman