



**ACES COUNCIL 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025**  
**Branch Liaison Officer's Report**

**Overview**

Since the beginning of the year much of my time spent on ACES matters has been taken up by work on the ACES new publicity / recruitment tri-fold handout. My thanks go to Betty Albon for editing my text and dodgy grammar, and for her photograph selection, and to Marcus Macaulay for his top-quality design work. I am very pleased with the final, printed pamphlets – their design and appearance – and for the on-line pamphlet, which Marcus Mac has very cleverly designed to “open up’ on screen. A final thank you is extended to all in ACES who commented on the design and helped us come up with the final product. I hope the tri-folds help us sell ACES to those authorities and public sector organisations up and down the country who do not have an ACES member on strength. Boxes of the pamphlets have now been hand delivered or sent to all bar one of the ACES Branches to get going with publicity and recruitment – good luck with this to you all !

**ACES South East Branch**

At the ACES Council meeting in January I had to report that the ACES South East Branch was in a state of flux, being effectively non-operational with no Branch Chairman and with a small membership of non-participating, disinterested members. Council gave me the task - as ACES Branch Liaison Officer – of nursing the South East Branch back to good health, starting with finding a new Chair (person) to drive the Branch “onwards and upwards”.

We held our first Branch meeting for 2025 on 12 March, on-line via Teams. The meeting drew a healthy attendance of twelve members, including our two new recruits since the start of the year, whom I hope we made welcome. Thanks go to our new Branch Secretary, Elizabeth Williams from Horsham, for sending out the agendas etc, and to ACES Assistant (National) Secretary David Pethan for helping me with the Informal CPD element of the meeting. The topic – The Government’s Devolution Plan for Local Government – attracted good participation from the members on-line who reported on how their authority was affected by the Government’s directive and initial progress in transitioning into Strategic Unitaries. We agreed to return to this topic later in the year when progress and timescales should be clearer.

Our next Branch meeting will be a hybrid event (in-person and via Teams) to be held in the afternoon of Wednesday 11 June at the Horsham District Council offices of Branch

Secretary Elizabeth Williams. National President Dan Meek has been invited and he hopes to attend. We also hope to have an interesting CPD element to the meeting – Biodiversity Net Gain in Operation – which I am currently trying to organise.

Excluding Honorary and Retired Members, the SE Branch membership stands at twenty one. Not one of the large County Councils within the Branch's catchment area (Berkshire, Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex, Kent), all with sizeable property departments, has a current member of ACES on staff – and Hampshire's only ACES member chairs the ACES Rural Branch. It is hoped our new ACES tri-fold publicity / recruitment pamphlet will come into play when we try to redress this lack of representation during the current year.

In the meantime – news hot off the press as of 02 April 2025 – we have found a new Chair for the SE Branch. I won't disclose her name for the moment as she has to be voted in to the (vacant) role of Chair by the SE Branch's membership. What I can say is she has previously held the role of Branch Chair for another ACES Branch, and with this experience of ACES matters I am very excited at the prospect of her taking on the SE Branch and my working with her as we get to work on re-energising the Branch and taking it out of the doldrums.

### **Branch Visits**

Have started again. Visits to date – to the Heart of England Branch, and to the Eastern Branch.

Due to my other non-ACES commitments I will not promise to visit all 10 ACES Branches during 2025 (as I managed in 2024) but I am determined to visit as many as I can manage and with this in mind I already have bookings in my diary for in-person meetings of the Welsh Branch, Rural Branch, South West Branch and the North West Branch – not forgetting my on-going commitment to the South East Branch !

**Marcus Perry**  
**ACES Branch Liaison Officer**  
**April 2025**