



Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, CM1 1LN

MINUTES

2nd December 2008
2pm – 5pm

Present

Members:

Mick Brash (Chairman)	David Corke	Hazel Jarrold
David Anderson	Edward Dixon	John Victory
Kevin Ascott	Bob Drane	Ed Woods

Observers: There were no members of the public present

Apologies: Alan Adcock, Jenny French, Karen Fulcher, Charles Gooch, Norman Hunt, Richard Tattersall, Rosemary Welch

The following Officers were present in support:

Michelle Gardiner – Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)
Christine Allman – ECC PROW and Rural Network Manager
Garry White – ECC Definitive Map Manager
Simon Taylor – ECC PROW Liaison and Enforcement Officer
Katie Brimley – ECC Senior Road Safety Officer

		ACTION
1	Welcome, introductions and new members	
	<p>MB welcomed all to the meeting. MB reported that ECC had approved 2 new LAF members: David Eagle and Robert Johnstone.</p> <p>Norman Hunt and Mick Brash have been re-appointed to LAF as they had come to the end of their 3 year term. Kevin Ascott and Bob Drane were also re-appointed for a further 3 years to balance out the number of members due to stand down next year.</p> <p>MB informed members that Jenny French has resigned from ELAF. MB will write to Jenny to thank her on behalf of all members.</p>	<p>MB MG</p>

2	Minutes of previous meeting	
	<p>The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting held on 7th October 2008. All agreed.</p> <p><i>Matters arising from the minutes</i> Michelle Gardiner circulated copies of the recent correspondence with Jacqueline Millward regarding claims review procedure to all members present. Michelle sent the ELAF response to the Defra consultation on the implementation of Part 2 of the Commons Act 2006. Ed Woods responded to the strategic plan for water related recreation in the East of England.</p>	
3	Public questions	
	There were no public questions.	
4	Public Rights of Way Enforcement and Liaison	
	<p>Simon Taylor introduced himself to LAF members. Simon explained that he came to post in March 2008 with previous experience of enforcement work and an opportunity to make the role his own.</p> <p>Simon reported that serving notices to landowners gives ECC the opportunity to reclaim costs, but much of the action he is taking to remove obstructions is being carried out under common law right rather than serving notices in order to make the process quicker. There is an ECC Concordat which explains this process to landowners and users.</p> <p>Crossfield enforcement has been rolled out to Area Officers and Simon has dealt with the high priority cases from the Area Offices. The DM Team are currently assessing approximately 100 cases to determine which ones are enforcement issues, Simon anticipates there will be about 30. Prioritisation of the backlog of enforcement cases should be completed by December.</p> <p>Garry White praised Simon for dealing with the common law cases and the impact this work has had, particularly where barbed wire has been removed. Members felt it would be a good idea for Simon to leave a note for landowners when removing obstructions under common law right. This can be discussed with the NFU and CLA at a meeting to be held in May.</p>	
5	Coastal access audit	
	Christine Allman explained that staff from Natural England (NE) came in for 3 days and worked with Area Officers to identify the coastal access 'gaps' using 1:10,000 scale maps. Provisional alignments were drawn in to fill the gaps based on knowledge of permissive routes, information from Google Earth and using common sense etc. NE was pleased with the input from ECC. The NE staff have taken away the maps to do a	

	<p>digitised layout which should be back to ECC by March. The next steps after that depends on how the Marine Bill progresses.</p> <p>Christine confirmed the coastal route will be for access on foot only with 'spreading room' for leisure activities e.g. flying a kite. Officers had to identify areas at risk through erosion, either under constant threat or on a longer term basis. NE staff were noting current definitive status of routes but were not considering higher level access at this stage. MB quoted correspondence from Huw Irranca-Davies MP about contingency/higher level access. Christine explained that more detailed alignment work will be carried out by NE if the Marine Bill goes through parliament, they would then need to go and talk to landowners etc.</p> <p>MB recommended that ELAF follows the progress of the Marine Bill and gets involved if and when appropriate.</p>	
6	<p>Roadside margins</p> <p>MB explained that many roadside verges/margins are unavailable to users due to problems such as overgrown hedges. This can sever important links between routes and marginalises pedestrians, cyclists and horse users. The safety of pedestrians comes through strongly in Parish Plan consultations.</p> <p>MB reported on the positive response by Nicola Foster and her team to dealing with obstructions that are identified and notified to West Area Office. MB would like to see this approach rolled out throughout the county rather than just in the West Area.</p> <p>MB suggested that the issue needs to be taken up with the Highways Authority, as upgrowth on verges is the responsibility of the HA rather than landowners. Various questions were raised and discussed by members. MB recommended that ELAF pursues this issue with relevant people and all members enthusiastically agreed. MB suggested that the first step should be to identify some specific problem areas. Members agreed to come to the next meeting with examples of problems on routes and photographic evidence if possible.</p>	All
7	<p>Commons and village greens</p> <p>David Corke thanked members who had contributed comments on the Defra consultation on the implementation of Part 2 of the Commons Act 2006. Michelle Gardiner sent the ELAF response to Defra.</p> <p>David had circulated a list of commons from Defra which is available online but details of owners of common land is held by ECC and is not currently available electronically. The information is held by Jacqueline Millward's team at ECC. It was felt that there is a need to link up that data and make it available. It was agreed to contact Jacqueline Millward regarding access to this information.</p>	MB MG

	<p>David reported that village greens are covered in a new guide by the Open Spaces Society (green book). David explained that anyone can register a village green, it does not necessarily have to be a parish council. There are some cases where land is registered as a common and it should be a village green and vice versa.</p> <p>David suggested that it might be useful to purchase some copies of the Open Spaces Society guide and other relevant books for use by LAF members.</p>	
8	ROWIP	
	<p>Christine Allman explained that the network assessment element is still to be carried out and she is currently looking at how much detail needs to go into that. The network assessment could be a larger document published separately to the ROWIP. This could help with claiming from improvement budgets. The connectivity of network exercise (e.g. where PROW meet roads, speeds counts etc) might be contracted out to consultants.</p> <p>Christine confirmed ECC is on track with publishing the ROWIP in this financial year. Christine is still trying to establish who signs off the document; it will probably be the Cabinet as there is a wider interest than just the Highways member.</p>	
9	Online reporting system	
	<p>Christine Allman reported that changes have been made to the online reporting system to make it more accessible on the ECC website but there is still some work to do on making sure the search engines pick it up.</p> <p>David Corke has been contacted by the Area Office to update on the faults he has reported and only 1 fault is being actioned at present. Christine explained that the 5 year rolling programme is being undertaken by Area Officers to tackle maintenance problems (20% of the network is surveyed each year). Most maintenance issues will therefore eventually be picked up through the 5 year rolling programme. This work is limited more by manpower availability than financial constraints. Christine will take back comments made about how long it takes to implement actions.</p> <p>Christine has met with her colleague who maintains the Confirm system at ECC and there is capacity to update on status (e.g. has been inspected etc) if an e-mail address is given. Christine will find out if it is possible to add a tick box to ask if a status update is required.</p>	CA
10	“Be Safe Be Seen” campaign	
	Katie Brimley, Senior Road Safety Officer at ECC outlined her	

	<p>responsibilities and talked about the Road Safety Team's calendar of events. The "Be Safe Be Seen" campaign starts when the clocks go back in October. Katie circulated examples of some of the publicity material used for the campaign.</p> <p>MB suggested that the Road Safety Team could get involved in the roadside margins issues discussed earlier in the meeting.</p>	
11	Work programme	
	<p>An updated work programme was circulated. The work programme should be regularly updated and ideally available on the ELAF website. MB briefly talked about each item on the programme.</p> <p>Christine Allman confirmed that the LTP3 budget has not yet been set. MB suggested that ELAF writes to ECC to encourage PROW to be considered when determining the LTP 3 budget.</p>	MB MG
12	Brainstorming session	
	Members were asked to brainstorm ideas and suggestions under the following headings: taking LAF forward, training issues, promotion and publicity ideas.	
13	Correspondence	
	There was no correspondence.	
14	Any other business	
	<p>Christine Allman circulated information about the Wallasea Island Wild Coast project. ELAF should respond if appropriate.</p> <p>Christine reported an overall pass rate of 66% for the May and November BVPI surveys combined but explained that this figure still needs to be validated by the Ramblers Association.</p>	
15	Date of next meeting	
	Tuesday 3 rd February 2009	