



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

MINUTES

5th May 2009
2pm – 5pm

Present

Members:

Mick Brash (Chairman)	Kevin Ascott	Robert Johnstone
Alan Adcock	Edward Dixon	Richard Tattersall
David Anderson	Bob Drane	John Victory

Observers: There were no members of the public present

Apologies: David Corke, David Eagle, Karen Fulcher, Hazel Jarrold, Ed Woods, 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
Mary Atkins – ECC Environmental Initiatives Manager

		ACTION
1	Welcome and introductions	
	The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting.	
2	Minutes of previous meeting	
	The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting held on 3 rd March 2009. All agreed.	
	<i>Matters arising</i> Michelle Gardiner had contacted Deborah Gallantree to find out if there had been any progress with the Chelmsford North East bypass. Deborah had confirmed that the proposed bypass did not receive an allocation of the funding that was available before 2013/14 for schemes in the East of England.	

3	Public questions	
	There were no public questions.	
4	ECC pledges	
	<p>Mary Atkins explained that she is working on the delivery of ECC's Community Pledges for 2009/10.</p> <p>One of the pledges involves improving access to the coast. Mary will be working with NGOs such as the RSPB on some projects and making improvements at ECC's own Country Parks. Works undertaken may include replacing stiles with gates, putting in bridges and providing site interpretation. There will be a small fund available for these improvements.</p> <p>Mary confirmed that this pledge is not a pre-cursor to the coastal access element of the Marine Bill. Members expressed concern about the merits of spending money on these improvements in advance of the Marine Bill being passed. Mary re-iterated that this funding is one-off one-year pump priming money to benefit the community in accessing the coast. Mary asked members for their suggestions of potential projects. Michelle Gardiner will circulate Mary's list of current suggested projects and members can add their ideas to the list.</p> <p>Another of the pledges involves working with BTCV to improve the biodiversity of identified special verges. It is likely that 6/7 verges will be targeted but the location of these is still to be determined. Mary will be arranging training for highways officers on managing verges for biodiversity. Mary will circulate the details of these training sessions via Michelle and all LAF members are invited to attend.</p>	<p>MA MG All</p>
5	Public Path Creations update	
	<p>Garry White reminded members that the backlog of 50 or so creations cases had been assessed through a risk assessment prioritisation process and six had been outsourced to Atkins as a pilot project. The work carried out by Atkins was reviewed at the end of February and Garry reported that ECC is pleased with the progress that has been made.</p> <p>Three of the cases are currently going ahead (Seamans Lane, Hanningfield reservoir, Highcross Lane West, Little Canfield and FP10 Great Hallingbury upgrade to bridleway) and three have failed because landowner negotiations cannot progress further. A significant learning point has been that quid pro quo agreements are essential to progress these types of projects. Garry confirmed that Atkins has been awarded a further contract for this financial year to work on 14 more cases. Garry will make the list available to members.</p>	<p>GW</p>

	Garry confirmed that the failed schemes are being documented and can be re-visited in the future.	
6	Shoreline Management Plan	
	<p>Garry White explained that the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is a high target non-statutory document written by the Environment Agency. The Essex SMP from 1996 is currently being reviewed. Garry is sitting on an officer group, chaired by Cllr Tracy Chapman which feeds in to the client steering group.</p> <p>Garry reported that there are three main approaches to shoreline management: (i) hold the line (ii) managed retreat (iii) no active intervention. The most likely approach for Essex is hold the line and managed retreat (Clacton exception – advance the line). The Environment Agency is working on a maximum 20 year forecast. There are 85 policy development zones, extending from Two Tree Island to Dovercourt/Harwich.</p> <p>Garry was concerned from the meeting that he attended that there is a lack of ROW user group representation and consideration of the Marine Bill, considering that over 85% of the coastline in Essex is covered by statutory ROW. He felt that he came away from the meeting with more questions than answers.</p> <p>There was no mention of the SMP in the draft ROWIP, but Christine Allman has now addressed this issue.</p> <p>The public consultation period for the SMP runs from July to November 2009. It was agreed that ELAF should feed in to the process.</p>	
7	Roadside margins	
	<p>(i) Barleylands John Victory reported that along with David Anderson and Ed Dixon, he had met with Great Burstead and South Green Parish Council to discuss the Barleylands linkage idea. It was agreed at their meeting to approach Mr Philpot (landowner) with the idea and John tabled a copy of the joint Parish Council/ELAF letter that had been sent. Mr Philpot had responded positively to the letter and the Parish Clerk is arranging for the Parish Council and ELAF to meet with Mr Philpot.</p> <p>MB thanked John, David and Ed for their work on this project. MB commented that if this scheme is successful, it could be used as a good practice example and replicated in other areas.</p> <p>(ii) A133 Little Clacton bypass MB's report and photographs had been circulated. MB explained that users were told the ROW problems would be rectified after the bypass was created, but this never happened. Users are pushed on to the busy</p>	

	<p>road to access the ROW. There is a wide embankment (similar to north section of A12) that could be used.</p> <p>Christine Allman is waiting for confirmation from highways engineers as to whether this case needs to go on the creations list or if improvements can be done within the existing highway.</p>	
8	Sadlers Farm	
	<p>MB reported that he and John Victory had met with Birse to discuss the Sadlers Farm scheme. Incidentally Birse thought they had already had a meeting with ELAF but they had actually met with Essex Access Forum on a previous occasion.</p> <p>MB and John listened to Birse's suggestions and were asked to withdraw the ELAF objections to the scheme. MB feels that there could be similar problems to those experienced with the Little Clacton bypass if the issues raised by ELAF are not addressed.</p> <p>There was some discussion about the remit of ELAF with regard to Public Inquiries. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for ELAF to provide advice/recommendations to the Inspector. MB will read the Statement of Case which has just been produced by ECC and then draft a letter with ELAF's recommendations for the Inspector.</p>	<p>MB MG</p>
9	Commons and village greens	
	Nothing to report under this item.	
10	Dedham Vale planning application	
	<p>Michelle Gardiner had previously circulated Ed Dixon's summary of the Horkesley Park Heritage and Conservation Centre proposal and the response to the planning application that Ed had written on behalf of ELAF. Ed tabled location maps and further information about the scheme.</p> <p>Ed reported that although there are some positive aspects of the scheme, Colchester CPRE is very concerned about this scale of development within the Dedham Vale AONB. The ROW that transect the site will be fenced off both sides with 1.5metre high hedgerows.</p> <p>Michelle has submitted Ed's comments to Colchester Borough Council as an ELAF advice note. MB thanked Ed for his work on this. Ed will follow progress of the application and report back to ELAF.</p>	
11	Southend airport	
	<p>John Victory reported that the Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan Preferred Options document is out for public consultation. John tabled the response that he has submitted and explained that he has made representations under 4 headings. As there is no LAF for the Southend area, MB confirmed that ELAF can endorse John's comments.</p>	MG

	Michelle Gardiner will submit an ELAF response based on John's comments before the consultation period deadline.	
12	Feedback from SE LAFs conference	
	<p>John Victory attended the SE LAFs conference on behalf of ELAF and produced a report of the event which Michelle Gardiner had previously circulated to members.</p> <p>John reported that this event had a stronger Natural England presence than the last East of England LAFs conference in Ely. It was a good event for exchange of views and sharing of common issues such as recognition of the role of LAFs.</p> <p>The regional co-ordinator for the East of England LAFs, Nicky Rowbottom will be taking up post mid-May. There will be a programme of training for East of England LAFs through 2009/10.</p>	
13	Logo options	
	Michelle Gardiner had circulated several options for a new logo for ELAF as members have discussed potential re-branding of the forum at previous meetings. Members were happy with the wording of the strapline but felt that the size of the strapline text was too small in relation to the logo size. It was commented that there is not actually anything wrong with the existing logo. Michelle reminded members that the existing logo had been created by Page Media and this company will no longer be undertaking ELAF work when the website is changed over. Michelle will ask the designer to produce a logo more similar to the existing one with larger text for the strapline.	MG
14	Correspondence	
	Correspondence received had been referred to during the course of the meeting.	
15	Any other business	
	<p>Robert Johnstone asked about the status of the ELAF website. Michelle Gardiner explained that the website now has a different domain name www.essexlaf.org.uk and that switchover of the maintenance and hosting to a different company is currently in progress.</p> <p>John Victory asked about potential funding sources for landowners with regards to the Barleylands link. Possibilities include landfill tax schemes or using the parish precept. Keith Blackburn is a funding advisor at ECC and could be approached for advice.</p>	
16	Date of Next Meeting	
	Tuesday 7 th July 2009	