



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

MINUTES

July 6th 2010

2pm – 5pm

Present

Members:

Mick Brash (Chair)	Hazel Jarrold	Kevin Ascott
Edward Dixon	Bob Drane	Alan Adcock
John Victory	Robert Johnstone	

Observers:

David Hitchman
 Mags Hobby (Ramblers Association Essex Area Footpath Secretary)
 Alan Sievewright (Ramblers Association)
 Nick Burley (Southend Borough Council)

Apologies:

Richard Tattersal
 Norman Hunt
 Edward Woods
 Jeremy Squier

The following officers were present in support:

Jo Metson (RCCE ELAF secretary)
 Garry White (ECC Definitive Map Manager)
 Christine Allman (ECC PROW Manager)
 Rosemary Welch (ECC Network and Safety Manager)

		ACTION
1	Welcome and Introductions	
	Mick Brash welcomed all attendees.	

2	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</p>	
	<p>The minutes of the ELAF meeting on May 4th 2010 were proposed as a true and accurate report by Kevin Ascott and seconded by Edward Dixon.</p> <p>Matters arising:</p> <p>A letter had been received from Jacqueline Millward of Essex Legal Services in response to ELAF's letter about access to commons with horseriding rights. She stated that the record of commons is kept in paper form and they are available to be inspected should ELAF desire by prior arrangement. Maps are kept at Essex Record Office.</p> <p>Mick Brash appealed for Members to help him establish where some of the commons are</p> <p>A letter had been sent to Karen Fulcher thanking her for her work with ELAF</p> <p>A letter had been sent to Richard Benyon, Under-Secretary of State for the Dept of Rural Affairs, in support of the England Access Forum.</p> <p>Jo Metson had received details of the workshops being run at the Herts LAF conference on 9th October 2010 and had copies of the application form available. These will also be e mailed to members.</p> <p>JM had sent off ELAF's response to the SMP consultation and had copies of it available for members to look at if desired.</p> <p>Robert Johnstone updated members on the obstruction of Footpath 54 reported in the May meeting. Colchester Borough Council withdrew the diversion under the TCPA following RJ's comments to them. They are now working with Garry White to resolve the situation under Section 119. The Parish Council have also met with them to discuss adopting GW's advice note. The instigation of a local Access Panel remains doubtful.</p>	JM
3	<p>Public Question Time</p>	
	<p>No questions were raised by the public.</p>	
4	<p>Secretariat Provision</p>	

	<p>The provision of secretariat to Essex Local Access Forum has been awarded to the RCCE for another two years. This should provide continuation and stability for the Forum.</p> <p>Kevin Ascott personally thanked Jo Metson and said he thought the RCCE's provision had been very successful so far.</p>	
5	<p>On line Essex LAF Forum</p>	
	<p>One of the actions raised in the ROWIP was the possible provision of an on-line forum for PROW users hosted by Essex LAF. There would be a link to it from the ECC website, the ELAF website and possible those of user groups such as the Ramblers Association.</p> <p>It was felt by the members that this would help ELAF to be more representative and make it easier for the public to put across their views. It was suggested by Members that it would be an area for people to raise ideas for future meetings or for ELAF to put to appropriate bodies rather than for Members to respond to threads directly. A definition of what was in the scope of ELAF would be needed and a FAQ section could be provided to stop repetition. A moderator would also be needed and members felt this would be a duty to fall to the secretary.</p> <p>JM would discuss the option further with the RCCE and ECC.</p>	JM
6	<p>County Council Reports</p>	
	<p>The following officers from Essex County Council presented reports as follows:</p> <p>Garry White- SMP Consultation: The County Council had submitted a response to the SMP consultation and had supported their workshops as a partner agency. The Highway Authority had asked for further consideration as to who was responsible for maintenance where the sea wall serves as a sub-soil to the highway. There had been no clear answer from the Environment Agency or found in case law.</p> <p>Definitive Map Public Path Orders: Up to 1st March this year, 20 cases had been resolved – 15 by liaison, 5 by direct action. 5 of these cases had been in the Eastern area, 11 in Mid area, 9 in West area, 3 in South area and 4 in Brentwood. Brentwood and Uttlesford have now transferred their PPOs to ECC meaning only Rochford continues to do their own. ECC does contribute to this process.</p> <p>Christine Allman- Best Value Performance Indicator survey: The recent BVPI showed that 84.4% of the network was easy to use. This was the Council's best ever percentage pass and they were very pleased. All offices received fairly consistent scores. Stiles/gates showed the only downward trend, all other areas had improved, especially bridges. The overall target for the year is 54%. Rosemary Welch added that the Capital Programme is now in its fourth year and is now making a real difference. However there are difficult times ahead.</p>	

	<p>A133 Little Clacton bridleway link proposal: Christine reported to members on possible solutions to the problems faced by NMU's on the A133. This is an ongoing situation and Members will be kept informed of progress.</p> <p>Byway 13 Shalford: Objections to the consultation have been submitted and letters were being prepared asking objectees to withdraw them. If objections still stand a report will be made to the cabinet member.</p> <p>Rosemary Welch – Rosemary reported on some of the changes affecting PROW within the County Council due to budget cuts. Rosemary herself has taken voluntary redundancy and so will be leaving her post on 31st August this year. Others had also taken this option. The department is now facing a complete restructure and effectively a layer of management will be removed. There will no longer be area managers but PROW will continue to fall within Safety and Walking. Staff will continue to work in local areas but are likely to be managed centrally and will hopefully result in a more consistent service countywide. There may still be further redundancies and the situation is unlikely to be completely clarified until September this year. MB thanked RW for all her support and encouragement on behalf of the Members. The future austerity measures mean that money will have to be spent wisely and may well mean there is a greater role for ELAF in an advisory capacity.</p>	
7	<p>Membership including Southend-on-Sea provision</p>	
	<p>Although operating within the constitution the Forum is still down on numbers and MB invited Members to bring any prospective new Members along to meetings.</p> <p>Essex LAF is likely to soon be joined in an official capacity by Southend-on-Sea. Southend-on-Sea Borough Council now have member approval but agreement needs to be received from the Essex County Council Cabinet Member. Once obtained Jeremy Squier and David Hitchman will join us in an official capacity. Nick Burley was very pleased and hoped that this would be advantageous to all concerned.</p>	All
8	<p>Inviting Councillors/new MPs to join ELAF</p>	
	<p>MB felt that ELAF was a very good "talking shop" but we needed people to champion our work and get it noticed. To this end he suggested inviting councillors and new MPs to be members of the Forum. Originally it was felt that this may make the Forum too political and he wanted an update on Members' thoughts.</p> <p>Members felt that this worked well in other areas, particularly Suffolk, Oxfordshire and Liverpool and there was definite merit in this. Suggestions included Douglas Castle MP, Bob Rosset MP or possibly a more well-known figure such as the explorer/broadcaster Nick Crane.</p> <p>MB asked Members to gather suggestions for the next meeting.</p>	All

9	Frequency of meetings	
	<p>MB wanted Members' opinions on this following Karen Fulcher's resignation from the Forum due to a clash with work commitments. However all Member's present were concerned and the meetings will continue as they are for the foreseeable future.</p>	
10	Producing an Essex LAF presentation	
	<p>MB showed a PowerPoint presentation to all present that he had received from an associate in the horseriding fraternity. It was used to promote access to the countryside for riders and he felt it could be easily adapted to suit the needs of Essex LAF. This would then show the benefits of an unfragmented network to all NMUs and the local economy – including equestrians, cyclers, walkers, the less able, landowners etc and champion the countryside generally. It could also be used to promote Essex LAF and PROW in general. The message of "With Rights come responsibilities" would need to be out over and we would need to be careful not to cause negative representation. RW has copies of similar presentations that her team have done and will send too JM. JM would probably be able to produce the actual presentation. All members thought it a viable idea and MB asked Members' to send suitable photos/case studies to JM or bring to the next meeting. JM to discuss with RCCE/ECC</p>	<p>All JM</p>
14	Correspondence	
	<p>In addition to correspondence already covered in the meeting.</p> <p>Letters had been sent to: (All letters sent had been previously circulated to members.)</p> <p>Rebecca Howard MP, Member for Castle Point and Rochford re Hansard report/Horseriding on Canvey Island, cc Cllr Howard, Member for Canvey Island West Cllr Wood, Member for Canvey Island East Cllr Hume, Cabinet Member for Highways Mr Bob Spink, previously Member for Castle Point and Rochford</p> <p>Richard Benyon, Secretary of State for Dept of Rural Affairs Re Supporting the England Access Forum</p> <p>Jaqueline Millward Cc Dr David Corke Re Commons with rights for horseriding (See Matters Arising)</p> <p>Replies had been received from:</p> <p>Robert Overall in reply to ELAF's letter re Sadlers Farm Improvements.</p>	

	<p>He stated that ELAF had been consulted during the scheme development and our concerns noted with respect to walkers, cyclists and equestrians crossing the A130 north of the scheme. A Vulnerable Road User Audit had been taken out and additional requests by the British Horse Society had been granted. The cycle track / walkway along the east side of the A130 was abandoned after objections from local residents regarding public safety and anti-social behaviour. With regard to the Canvey Island NMU facilities, this cannot be considered within the Sadlers Farm scheme. He invited ELAF to discuss proposals for future cycle routes with him if they so desired and enclosed copies of the minutes of the consultation meeting with Essex LAF in April 2009.</p> <p>Action: MB will arrange a meeting to include John Victory and any other member interested. JV added that the Echo newspaper had suggested doing an article but needed someone to front it. It was decided that this conflict with ELAF's working principles but he may follow it up as an individual.</p> <p>Paul Mattheison in reply to ELAF's letter re Progress Road stating that a Pegasus crossing would not be viable in that location and including a copy of a letter sent to Marlene Curtis of the British Horse Society explaining this. This stated that providing a crossing is not a matter of cost but of the number of potential users which does not meet Dept of Transport minimums and showing ways that the Council has implemented other ROWIP actions in respect to bridleways.</p> <p>MB said that ELAF should accept at this stage that we have made a recommendation for improvements and what little had come out of it has still befitted users. Department of Transport statistics cannot be argued with and until the situation becomes completely untenable, ELAF will remain quiet.</p> <p>Action: ELAF will write to thank him for his letter and express disappointment that facilities aren't being expanded.</p> <p>Public Path Diversion Orders had been received relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpath 3, Mayland • Footpaths 8 and 17, Tendring • Footpath 10, Sandon • Footpath 3, Little Clacton • Footpath 84, North Weald • Footpath 13, Cold Norton • Footpath 26, Boxted • Footpath 1, Mayland • Footpath 3, 4 and 5, Moreton • Footpath 11, 12, 13 and 26, Stock <p>JM had copies of relevant maps etc for members to view if desired. ELAF will not get involved in Footpath Diversion Orders unless user groups raise objections.</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>JM/MB</p>
15	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kevin Ascott asked if the User Group minutes would be of interest to the Forum? Christine Allman will add ELAF members to the distribution list. • Allan Sievewright suggested that ELAF's correspondence be added to its website to provide members of the public a better understanding of representations etc that had been made on their behalf. Members agreed with this and JM will look in to it. 	<p>CA</p> <p>JM</p>

