



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

## MINUTES

19<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
2pm – 5pm

### Present

Members:

Mick Brash (Chairman)	Bob Drane	Robert Johnstone
Alan Adcock	David Eagle	John Victory
Kevin Ascott	Norman Hunt	

**Observers:** Julie (Purleigh resident)

**Apologies:** Christine Allman, Edward Dixon, Richard Tattersall, Ed Woods

### The following Officers were present in support:

Michelle Gardiner – Rural Community Council of Essex  
Jo Metson – Rural Community Council of Essex  
Garry White – ECC Definitive Map Manager  
Nick Burley – Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

		ACTION
1	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>	
	MB welcomed Nick Burley, ROW officer from Southend-on-Sea Borough Council and Julie, an interested member of the public from Cock Clarks (Purleigh parish).	
2	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>	
	The minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting held on 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2009. All agreed.  <i>Matters arising</i> Michelle Gardiner reported that ELAF's response to Defra's consultation on amendments to the CROW Act 2000 for coastal land had been submitted. ELAF's recommendations for managing verges had been sent to Jason Botelho as an article for Access Essex. Jason amended the article to make it more appropriate for the Access Essex audience. ELAF has the opportunity to have a	

	regular slot in Access Essex.	
3	<b>Public questions</b>	
	Julie talked about her interest in ROW issues and mentioned some of the problems she encounters using her local ROW. MB briefly explained the role of ELAF and informed Julie that she is welcome to attend future meetings.	
4	<b>ELAF Secretariat</b>	
	<p>Michelle Gardiner reported that she had met with Rosemary Welch and Christine Allman for preliminary discussions relating to RCCE continuing to provide secretariat services to ELAF for 2010/11.</p> <p>MB introduced Jo Metson from RCCE who will be acting as ELAF Secretary whilst Michelle is on maternity leave. Jo will work part-time from home and will have a designated ELAF e-mail address (details to follow). Sarah Sapsford from RCCE will be taking over Michelle's management work and so will be Jo's line manager. Sarah will therefore also have some involvement with ELAF and will be the point of contact at RCCE offices for ELAF members. Sarah's contact details were distributed to members.</p>	
5	<b>Schedule of future meetings and timing of meetings</b>	
	<p>Michelle Gardiner reported that she has attended events during the last year to promote the work of ELAF and to try to recruit new members. Several people expressed interest in becoming members but were unable to attend day time meetings. Michelle had asked ELAF members for feedback about timing of meetings by e-mail but had received no comments.</p> <p>MB asked members if they would consider holding some or all of the ELAF meetings later in the day, possibly from 5-8pm commencing with the buffet tea. Members discussed the pros and cons of changing the meeting times, including the possible impact on officer attendance if the meetings were held later.</p> <p>Members decided to vote on the issue and the majority voted to continue holding day time meetings. It was agreed that the diverse experience of present members and input from officers such as Garry White should not be potentially lost by changing the meeting times. Meetings will therefore continue to be held on Tuesday afternoons for the foreseeable future. This decision can be reviewed if membership levels significantly decrease.</p> <p>The following dates were proposed for 2010/11 ELAF meetings:  4<sup>th</sup> May 2010  6<sup>th</sup> July 2010  7<sup>th</sup> September 2010  2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010  11<sup>th</sup> January 2011  1<sup>st</sup> March 2011</p> <p>Michelle will check availability of the venue for these dates.</p>	<b>MG</b>

6	<p><b>Combining Southend LAF with ELAF</b></p> <p>MB reported that he and Michelle Gardiner had met with ECC and Southend BC officers to discuss combining Southend LAF with ELAF and the concept had been agreed. There will be no need to change the title of ELAF as Southend is geographically part of Essex. Southend's inclusion will be added to any ELAF material as from next financial year when the arrangement officially starts. Southend BC will be making a financial contribution to the ELAF pot.</p> <p>Nick Burley explained that he is contacting residents from Southend area who have previously expressed an interest in joining a LAF. There will be a maximum of two representatives from the area.</p> <p>MB felt that it might not always be necessary for Nick to attend ELAF meetings, but recommendations will still need to be communicated to Nick's superiors and Southend BC members.</p>	
7	<p><b>ELAF constitution</b></p>	
	<p>Michelle Gardiner distributed copies of the current ELAF constitution to members. The document will need to be amended to include Southend. Michelle invited members to send comments to her by e-mail.</p>	All
8	<p><b>Feedback from LTP3 workshop session</b></p>	
	<p>Michelle Gardiner had previously circulated the comments gathered from all of the workshop sessions that RCCE had facilitated for ECC, including the ELAF session. Michelle thanked ELAF members for participating in the session which was quite productive compared to some of the others. Similar feedback about ECC's lack of presence had been noted at all of the sessions.</p> <p>Michelle reported that RCCE is currently preparing a report of the findings for ECC. There will be further opportunity for consultation when LTP3 is drafted and ELAF will be kept informed of progress.</p>	
9	<p><b>Development and PROW Advice Note</b></p>	
	<p>A Development and PROW Advice Note from Garry White had previously been circulated to members. Garry explained the background to the need for a protocol to consider ROW as material consideration in the planning system. Some planning officers have little understanding of ROW issues. Planning officers are target driven and have to respond to a set number of planning applications, so sometimes ROW issues are overlooked. There are examples where ROW are permanently obstructed (e.g. under lakes/reservoirs or through properties) and it is very difficult and costly to rectify these situations retrospectively.</p> <p>Garry has attended meetings of the Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) and realised planning officers and developers would benefit from written guidance as no districts currently have ROW on their application form checklist and statutory notice of ROW is not displayed alongside planning notification in any of the districts.</p>	

	<p>EPOA has now endorsed the guidance document and their logo is included. Garry read out the letter which will accompany the document when it is distributed to all Chief Planning Officers in Essex. The document will also be pushed by Garry's team at the quarterly district planning liaison meetings.</p> <p>ELAF members felt that the document was very positive and discussed how to help raise the profile of the guidance. It was suggested that the ELAF logo could be included and that ELAF could distribute the document to Chief Executives of all local planning authorities with a covering letter to encourage them to adopt the guidance.</p> <p>Other suggestions included incorporating higher rights claims in to the document, producing a shorter version of the document to highlight to developers ROW problems that could arise, providing training for local area officers and having a common planning application form for all districts to simplify the process.</p>	<b>MB</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Feedback from November SMP events</b>	
	<p>Norman Hunt, Kevin Ascott, David Eagle and David Corke had all attended one of these events during November. Kevin felt that there has been some progress since the last SMP meeting that he attended but more with housing issues rather than the ROW concerns.</p> <p>The EA are casual about the liability of people attempting to use breached ROW and still seem to be assuming that coastal access will solve the ROW issues. Norfolk has been selected as a pilot area for coastal access and ECC is liaising closely with Norfolk. The SMP for Norfolk is also currently being drafted.</p> <p>SMPs are long-term strategies and it is difficult to plan so far in to the future. Landowners are confused about the process and their responsibilities. SMPs are not statutory documents and there will be no funding or resources from central government for implementation.</p> <p>Further consultation for the Essex SMP will take place in March. ELAF members agreed to continue to attend events and contribute to the consultation process.</p>	
<b>11</b>	<b>Natural England's coastal access scheme consultation</b>	
	<p>Michelle Gardiner had previously circulated the link to this consultation. MB has some comments regarding signage to be included in the ELAF response. Michelle requested that members e-mail their comments to her before the end of January in order to meet the 5<sup>th</sup> February deadline for responses.</p>	<b>All</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Response from ECC re: maintenance of verges</b>	
	<p>MB read out the reply which had been sent to ELAF from Robert Overall.</p> <p>The letter outlines that grass is cut for safety purposes to improve visibility and although the conflict between this cutting and biodiversity is recognised, all work is carried out within existing policy. The response also invites ELAF to submit examples of encroachment issues to the relevant Area Offices for action.</p>	

	MB asked ELAF members to look out for an example of an encroachment problem in their local area, to take some photographs and bring along to discuss at the next meeting.	All
13	<b>Sadlers Farm update</b>	
	Michelle Gardiner had previously circulated the link to the Inspector's report and decision letter. MB reported that ELAF's recommendations had not been included and it will now be impossible for users to cross the road. It was agreed that ELAF should write to ECC to express disappointment at the decision and make reference to ROWIP in the response.	MB
14	<b>LAF regional conference – 17<sup>th</sup> February</b>	
	John Victory, David Corke and Jo Metson are already booked to attend this event. MB will also attend and possibly Nick Burley. Michelle Gardiner to book additional places.	MG
15	<b>Correspondence</b>	
	Michelle Gardiner had received an e-mail from Jason Botelho to inform members that Access Essex was due to be circulated in the next few days.  Christine Allman had sent Michelle an e-mail to inform members that the 2009 BVPI outturn was 60.9%.  MB suggested that it might be useful to compile a bibliography of relevant publications for ELAF and invited members to send ideas	All
16	<b>Any other business</b>	
	It was agreed that ELAF should attend any relevant meetings about the A127 improvements.  Alan Adcock suggested reintroducing an outside meeting in the summer, for example visiting quiet lanes, and possibly inviting ECC representatives.  John Victory had "A Guide for Landowners and Occupiers" leaflet from Durham CC that he thought members might find useful. Michelle Gardiner will circulate the link to members.	
17	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2010	