

Local Access Forum for Essex
Lower Hall, Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, CM1 1LN

25th September 2003

2pm – 5pm

AGENDA

Arrival and coffee

For information

2.30 (1) **Welcome** Liz Saville

For discussion / Decision

2.50 (2) **Guidance for Chair and Secretariat** All

3.20 (3) **Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

3.45 (4) **LAF Identity and Communications** All

4.00 (5) **Public Participation at meetings**

4.15 (6) **Future meetings- frequency, dates, venues and subjects** All

4.30 (7) **Future training needs** All

4.45 (8) **Consultation on Restrictions**

5.00 (9) **AOB**

5.15 **Close (meeting followed by buffet tea)**

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM for ESSEX

Minutes of the 1st meeting held on 25th September 2003
At Central Baptist Church, Chelmsford

Present

David Anderson
Kevin Ascott
John Colthorpe
Sharman Day
Bob Drane
Jenny French
Simon Gibson
Laurence Hammond
Nicola Haycroft
Carol Reta King
Simon Leatherdale
Brian Rowson
Richard Tattersall

Apologies

Leanne Block
Ted Durey
Catherine Mortimer

Officers

Liz Saville
Garry White
Geoff Wilkinson
Merryl Mackenzie

1. Welcome

Cllr Susan Flack, deputy cabinet member for Highways and Transportation opened the meeting with a welcome to all the members and the public. She expressed an interest on behalf of herself and Cllr Bass to be invited to return at a later date to see how the forum is progressing.

3. Election of Chairman and Vice-chairman

The meeting was chaired by Liz Saville until such time as the role to select a chairman was complete. Simon Gibson, who's main interest is Land, was voted as Chairman and Brian Rowson, who's main interest is conservation, was voted Vice-chairman.

After discussion led by Simon Gibson, it was agreed by the forum that all members would stand for an initial 2 years at which time a ballot would be taken as to who would stay on for the third year and who would stand down thus paving the way for a rolling programme to allow new members to apply to join the forum.

4. Public Participation

Liz Saville led the discussion on this document. It was agreed that an initial paragraph be added stating the purpose of the forum. It was agreed that the changes will be made and the final copy is to be accepted by the chairman on behalf of the members.

This document will be available at all future meetings for the public and will be available on the LAF website and will be circulated to user groups and other interested bodies. It was agreed that with Vivienne Loomes (editor for Ways and Means magazine) that she publish the Public Participation document in the December issue of the magazine.

5. Identity and communication

Some examples from other LAF websites were circulated for information and the members are to return to the next meeting with some ideas of content for our website. The point was made by Geoff Wilkinson (Rural Network Manager for PRoW) that the LAF cannot change the look of the web pages as they are standard ECC look, they can however, decide the content of the pages.

It was agreed that all communications from the public come through the Facilitating Officer.

It was agreed that any named letters / communications be passed to the person concerned and any un-named letters are dealt with by the chairman.

It was agreed that a standard item 'Correspondence' be added to future Agendas.

6. Future Meetings – frequency, date, venue and subject

After discussion and a vote, it was agreed that:

- * Meetings will be planned 2 meetings in advance
- * The next two meetings will be Tuesday 4th November 2003 and Tuesday 13th January 2004
- * Meetings will be alternated between a Chelmsford venue and alternative venues around the county.
- * Meetings will be held, in general, 4 times per year in January; April; July and October. Where possible meetings should not be held during the evenings, weekends or school holidays.
- * Meetings will be held in the afternoons starting at 2pm.
- * Meetings will be held close to public transport where possible.

Liz Saville suggested some topics for future meetings. She will be meeting with Garry White (Definitive Map Manager) and Geoff Wilkinson (Rural Network Manager) to draw up suggestions for a work programme for Public Rights of Way which will guide the Local Access Forum on the subjects for their meetings.

Main topics for discussion will be:

- Mapping Access Land (November 4th meeting)
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan (January 13th meeting)
- Code for Users of Essex Byways

7. Future Training Needs

It was agreed that members of the forum would contact the Facilitating Officer by 20th October with any training needs they feel are relevant. Training would take the form of presentations, subjects for discussion, site visits and any other information gathering exercises.

8. Consultation Paper on Regulations relating to the Removal or Relaxation of General Restrictions on Access Land under Part 1 of the CROW Act 2000

Liz Saville led the discussion on the document and it was agreed that there would be minimum impact on Essex as there is only a very small amount of open access land in the county being registered common land. It was agreed that Option 3 was favoured bearing in mind that paperwork and bureaucracy should be kept to a minimum. There was concern that Option 1 would result in a variety of different approaches across the country which may be difficult for landowners with land in different local authorities.

It was agreed that Liz Saville and Merryl Mackenzie would write a suitable reply which would be sent to the Chairman for his approval before being submitted to DEFRA.

9. AOB

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.

The next meeting for the Local Access Forum is

4th November 2003 at 2pm

Central Baptist Church
Victoria Road South
Chelmsford

Local Access Forum for Essex
Upper Hall, Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, CM1 1LN

4th November 2003

2pm – 5pm

AGENDA

Arrival and coffee

For discussion / Decision

- | | | |
|-------------|--|--------------|
| (1) | Welcome and Apologies | SG |
| (2) | Minutes of Previous Meetings | SG |
| (3) | Venue Options | MM/SG |
| (4) | LAF Identity and web page content | All |
| (5) | Open Access Mapping | SG |
| (6) | Future training needs | All |
| (7) | Correspondence | |
| 5.00 | Close | |

LOCAL ACCESS FORUM for ESSEX

Minutes of the 2nd meeting held on 4th November 2003
At Central Baptist Church, Chelmsford

Present

David Anderson
Kevin Ascott
Leanne Block
John Colthorpe
Bob Drane
Ted Durey
Jenny French
Simon Gibson
Laurence Hammond
Nicola Haycroft
Carol Reta King
Simon Leatherdale
Brian Rowson
Richard Tattersall

Apologies

Catherine Mortimer
Sharman Day

Officers

Geoff Wilkinson
Merryl Mackenzie

The chairman started off the meeting with a note to remind members that as a matter of protocol items under discussion should be restricted to the topics on the agenda. It was also noted that members should have regard to the diverse interests held by both the forum members and the general public when voicing their opinions during discussion.

1. Minutes of Previous Meetings

Minutes of the first meeting held on 25th September were accepted as correct.

2. Venue Options

Because of the problems with booking venues it was agreed that dates would be set for the rest of 2004. Dates accepted were:

30 March 2004	Chelmsford
29 th June 2004	Harlow
19 th October 2004	Chelmsford

Venues have yet to be decided.

3. LAF Identity

After discussion it was decided that the LAF should establish it's own identity apart from Essex County Council. It was decided that letterheads, a web page and a leaflet be designed.

Letterheads: The following points were agreed upon:

- *Must have a masthead
- *No picture logo
- *Colours that photocopy well
- *LAF 'Aim' to be used as a byline on the letterhead

Enquiries are to be made into having a letterhead with Braille.

Action Point

Merryl Mackenzie to do designs of simple letterheads and email/post them to all members for approval. The letterhead with the most votes will be accepted.

Web Page: Content was discussed and the following points were made:

- *There should be a clear explanation of what LAF does, what we can do and how it will affect the public
- *Where possible the format of the website should be as clear as possible and in short sections; bullet points and broken down under titles.
- *Items for download / printing should be in MS Word as well as Acrobat Reader
- *It was agreed that there is a link from Public Rights of Way to the new web page and a link back from the LAF site to Essex County Council page
- *After discussion it was agreed that there needs to be a 'WOW' factor to the page so that it holds attention and gets people interested.
- *Profiles of members with pictures to go on the site. The profiles in Ways & Means magazine will be used as a guide. Black and white pictures are to be used.
- *It was decided to have a section about Open Access Mapping
- *It was decided to have a map of Essex showing the district boundaries and the boundary of the forum.

Action Point

Merryl Mackenzie to research a company to design the site, getting quotes and designs for the work to present to the next meeting.

Vivienne Looms, editor of Ways & Means, will forward pictures of members to Merryl as will Simon Gibson, Leanne Block and Lawrence Hammond.

Leaflet: After discussion it was decided that a leaflet should be designed to serve as an introduction to the forum and to advertise the work of the forum. All the basic information about the forum would be on the leaflet.

Action Point

Merryl Mackenzie to research a company to design the leaflet. Mockups and quotes to be presented at the next meeting.

Article: After discussion it was decided that an article should be written about the LAF for inclusion in the C.L.A. and N.F.U. newsletters.

4. Open Access Mapping

A video from the Countryside Agency was shown followed by a briefing given by Simon Gibson. After discussion it was decided that the forum would not officially respond to the Countryside Agency's consultation due to the lack of open access land in Essex.

Formal letters from the forum will be sent to major landowners and district councils discussing the voluntary dedication of land for open access purposes. The secretariat would like to thank Richard Tattersall for agreeing to draft the required letters.

Letters will go to:

Essex Wildlife Trust; RSPB; Forestry Commission; Environment Agency; Woodland trust' MoD; Essex County Council; English Heritage; National Trust; Corporation of London; C.L.A; N.F.U.

5. Future Training Needs

After discussion it was decided that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was a priority and the forum will write to Geoff Wilkinson, Rural Network Manager, Public Rights of Way to request that he attend the meeting scheduled for 13th January 2004 to give a presentation on the subject.

After further discussion it was decided that members wanted site visits as part of ongoing training. Members were happy to have separate days set aside for site visits where they could not be incorporated into a meetings day. Further specific training from Public Rights of Way officers was also discussed as these would be of benefit to the forum's understanding and future work on the RoW Improvement Plans.

Note

A request was made to Geoff Wilkinson, Rural Network Manager, to provide the forum with the budget figure that has been released to Essex County Council to cover the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Members felt that it was important that they be aware of the available funding in order to address the issues under discussion in a realistic and practical manner.

6. Correspondance

The forum was invited to open a new bridleway creation near Wormingford. Brian Rowson, Vice Chairman, and Nicola Haycroft (riding her horse) will represent the forum. Members are welcome to attend the opening.

The date for the opening has not yet been confirmed and will be made available as soon as it is known.

7. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 13th January 2004 at Marks Tey Hotel, Colchester from 2 - 5pm.

Local Access Forum for Essex
Marks Tey Hotel, London Road, Colchester CO6 1DU

13th January 2004

2pm – 5pm

AGENDA

2 – 2.15pm Arrival and coffee
2.15pm Meeting starts

For discussion / Decision

- | | | |
|-------------|---|------------------------|
| (1) | Welcome and Apologies | SG |
| (2) | Minutes of Previous Meetings | SG |
| (3) | LAF Identity – Stationary, Web page
Leaflet design proofs | All |
| (4) | Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Presentation | Geoff Wilkinson |
| (5) | Consultation – ‘Use of mechanically
propelled vehicles on Rights of Way’ | All |
| (7) | Future training needs
Development and Rights of Way | Garry White |
| (8) | Correspondence | SG |
| (9) | Next Meeting | |
| 5.00 | Close | |



Minutes of the 3rd meeting held on 13th January 2004
At Marks Tey Hotel, Colchester

Present

David Anderson
Kevin Ascott
John Colthorpe
Ted Durey
Bob Drane
Jenny French
Simon Gibson
Laurence Hammond
Carol Reta King
Simon Leatherdale
Catherine Mortimer
Brian Rowson
Richard Tattersall

Apologies

Leanne Block
Nicola Haycroft
Sharman Day

Officers

Garry White
Geoff Wilkinson
Merryl Mackenzie

Cllr Susan Flack

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the members of the Forum and the public who were in attendance.

Unless a topic was under discussion on the Agenda, the chairman asked that members put any questions for Officers in writing, 5 days prior to each meeting. Advance notice would allow Officers time to research answers where necessary. He felt it was unfair for Officers to be put on the spot with no warning.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no amendments to the previous minutes and they were signed off as a true record.

3. Identity and communication

- 3.1 Examples of the Letterhead were circulated and a design chosen. Slight adjustments to the design were noted for inclusion.
- 3.2 It was agreed to go ahead with the information leaflet.
- 3.3 It was agreed that the website is to be done by Essex County Council web design team to LAF specifications as discussed with Design Services.
Specifications to be discussed included:
- Print friendly version of pages
 - Simplicity of design
 - Map showing Essex boundaries
 - Map link showing the venue of next meeting
 - Group picture of the members to be included
 - Content would include everything that is currently show on the ECC web page
 - Links would be made to ECC Public Rights of Way
- 3.4 It was proposed that, in line with DEFRA guidance, the LAF advertise their meetings in the Press to further public awareness. It was agreed that the colour adverts would be inserted in newspapers prior to each meeting.

Action Point: Merryl Mackenzie to finalize letterheads for printing.
Merryl Mackenzie to organise printing of the leaflets.
Merryl Mackenzie to work with Design Services to get the Web site up on the Internet.
Merryl Mackenzie to organise press adverts for future meetings.

4. Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Members had been sent a copy of the DEFRA Statutory Guidance on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) and Geoff Wilkinson, Rural Network Manager for Public Rights of Way, gave a presentation outlining the process that Essex would follow. The presentation included discussion on financing the RoWIP. It was decided that a budget breakdown for the LAF budget would be provided at year end. Richard Tattersall requested that it be minuted that there was some concern from the Forum that additional money has not been made available from Essex County Council for the implementation of RoWIP.

Geoff Wilkinson suggested that it may be helpful to the Forum members to have a copy of the Public Rights of Way Policies and Strategies.

The presentation was followed by discussion and questions from members.

Councillor Flack addressed the Forum.

- She suggested that the LAF could be involved in the new A120 roadworks assessing Rights of Way that may be affected by the planned route.
- With regard to the consultations that would be done for RoWIP, Cllr Flack discussed a new pro-forma which would be used for consultations with the Parish Councils. It is hoped that this will both speed up and streamline the process.

- Cllr Flack discussed the Best Value PSA (Public Service Agreement) suggesting that it was a good way to access additional funds to carry out improvements identified through RoWIP.

Action Point: Geoff Wilkinson to identify the relevant Public Rights of Way strategies and policies for the Forum members.

5. Consultation – Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles

Garry White introduced the topic and explained the reclassification of byways. He explained that Essex does not have any B.O.A.Ts (Byways Open to All Traffic) or R.U.P.P.s (Roads Used as Public Paths). The document therefore was mainly aimed at County Councils which still have a large percentage of these byways in their networks. It should be noted that representatives of mechanically propelled vehicle users expressed their misgivings over this document. They felt it was attempting to further limit their use of the Rights of Way network.

After discussion each proposal was viewed in turn:

Proposal 1: The Forum was happy to accept Proposal 1 as it stands.

Proposal 2: The Forum was happy with Proposal 2 but would like to see a copy of the research and the proposed changes which would result in the revision of 'Making the Best of Byways'

Proposal 3: As Essex has no R.U.P.P.s the Forum felt unable to comment on this proposal.

Proposal 4: The Forum was happy to accept Proposal 4 as it stands.

Proposal 5: The Forum was divided in this. 10 votes accepted that the Forum should not endorse this proposal. If it was implemented it was felt that it should be retrospective. 3 members voted to endorse the proposal as it stands.

Proposal 6: The Forum was happy to accept Proposal 6 as it stands.

Proposal 7: The Forum felt that the cut off date of 2026 was too far in the future, however it was felt that to have a cut off date of one year was unrealistic and unachievable. The Forum would endorse a 10 year cut off date.

Action Point: Merryl Mackenzie to have minutes circulated and accepted. Together with the Chairman, a letter will then be drafted sending the Forum's response to DEFRA.

6. Future Training Needs -

Creation of Rights of Way.

An Officer will be giving a presentation on this topic at the next meeting. The topic will include projects identified by PRow as being favourable for creation and the financial implications of these projects.

7. Correspondence

An email was received from a member discussing the issue of meeting times and the difficulty of making a meeting during working hours. It was discussed and decided that one meeting per year would be held in the evening, specifically during the summer. This would allow those members who work to attend the meeting without having to take time off from work.

It was suggested that members may like to meet in Chelmsford and share lifts to the away meetings.

8. Next meeting 2pm, 30th March, Miami Hotel, Princes Road, Chelmsford.

The meeting closed at 5.00pm.

Background Papers

Rights of Way Improvement Plans
Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England
DEFRA November 2002

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/index.htm>

Use of Mechanically propelled vehicles on Rights of Way
Consultation Document
DEFRA December 2003

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/publicrow.htm>



Miami Hotel, Princes Road, Chelmsford, CM2 9AJ

30th March 2004

2pm – 5pm

AGENDA

2 - 2.15 **Arrival and coffee**
2.15 **Meeting starts**

For discussion / Decision

- | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------|
| (1) | Welcome and Apologies | SG |
| (2) | Minutes of Previous Meetings | SG |
| (3) | Change to meeting dates | SG |
| (4) | RoWIP – Bedfordshire Demonstration Project | Phill Fox |
| (5) | Creation of Public Rights of Way | Karen Keefe |
| (6) | ‘Ways & Means’ – the future | All |
| (7) | Training needs – Local Transport Plan – How it affects RoWIP | Sean Perry |
| (8) | Defra consultation – ‘Public Place Provisions’ | All |
| (9) | Correspondence | |
| (10) | Group picture of LAF member | All |
| 5.00 | Close | |



Minutes of the 4th meeting held on 30th March 2004
At Miami Hotel, Chelmsford

Present

David Anderson
Kevin Ascott
John Colthorpe
Bob Drane
Jenny French
Simon Gibson
Laurence Hammond
Nicola Haycroft
Carol Reta King
Simon Leatherdale
Brian Rowson
Richard Tattersall

Apologies

Ted Durey
Catherine Mortimer

Officers

Katie Haines
Karen Keefe
Ian Blomeley
Merryl Mackenzie

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the members and the public who were in attendance.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no amendments to the previous minutes and they were signed off as a true record.

3. Change of meeting dates

The new meeting dates were handed out to Forum members and to the public in attendance. Because of the full agendas and the length of time meetings were taking it was decided that the Forum should hold meetings every 2 months as opposed to every 3 months as has previously been the case. Meeting dates were agreed and the calendar of meetings for the year was accepted.

4. Public Participation

An extra item was added to the agenda at the time of the meeting. The chairman raised the issue of public participation and suggested that the rules governing public participation were too restricting and prevented the public from commenting on anything that was said during the meeting. After discussion, the Forum agreed to have a 15 minute question time at the end of each meeting for the public to raise their issues.

5. Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Phill Fox, Countryside Access Development Officer, Bedfordshire County Council gave a presentation on the exemplar project 'Outdoor Access Improvement Plan' which was undertaken by Bedfordshire County Council on behalf of East Anglian region.

Bedfordshire's exemplar was one of 9 exemplars undertaken country wide. Phill Fox described the process involved in setting up the draft Improvement Plan and where the Local Access Forum was able to contribute during the process.

6. Creation of Public Rights of Way

Karen Keefe, Public Rights of Way Officer, Essex County Council gave a presentation on the creation of public rights of way. The presentation discussed the various ways which creation was achieved, the sorts of costs that could be incurred and the time frames that could be expected. Examples of some of the creations already completed were also included.

7. Ways and Means - the future

After discussion during which Karen Keefe gave a brief background to the subject, the following points were made for consideration by Essex County Council

i It was felt that there is a need for a vehicle to get across the sort of information that is contained in Ways and Means but it is not necessary for the magazine to be a stand alone publication.

ii The Forum agreed that the contents as they are, are important but it would be nice to see more 'ground breaking' information about new paths, enforcement etc.

iii The Forum agreed that it was an important mouthpiece for public rights of way and, in turn for the Local Access Forum.

iv It was felt that there needed to be a bigger circulation for the magazine whether it is a stand alone publication or incorporated into another publication.

v It was felt that rather than being incorporated in Essex Matters (a very corporate style publication) it should be included in a countryside publication such as 'Past and Present'.

vi The Forum agreed that it would not recommend a gap in the circulation and therefore would recommend that an interim contract of 1 year was made while new plans are put into place.

vii As is, it was felt that Ways and Means is not a cost effective magazine and is not best value for money.

8. Future Training Needs – Local Transport Plan

Sean Perry, Transportation Planner, Essex County Council gave a presentation on the Local Transport Plan, what it is and how the Rights of Way Improvement Plan ties in.

Sean Perry raised 4 points at the end of his presentation for your consideration.

i. Are there any policies you are aware of that we should include in the LTP?

ii What is the best way to feed into the rural and area strategies?

iii Can we get the monitoring right?

iv When do you want to see the team again?

9. Consultation - About public places under section 42 of the countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

After a short discussion it was agreed that because Essex does not have any open access land that it did not affect us to the degree it would other councils. Members felt that regulations should be kept under review.

10. Correspondence

The chairman suggested that rather than read out every letter received, if there was no reply necessary the correspondence would be filed and held by the secretary. Anyone wishing to see any such correspondence should contact the secretary. Carol King had requested some information on issues raised by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan presentation given in the last meeting by Geoff Wilkinson. These issues were addressed by Katie Haines, Public Rights of Way Officer, Essex County Council.

11. Public Questions

There were 4 items raised by the public during question time.

12. Group photograph

A group photograph of the Forum members was taken and it will be posted on the website alongside members profiles are.

13. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 8th June 2004 at the Moat House, Southern Way, Harlow from 6.30 – 9.30pm.

The meeting closed at 5.20pm.

Background Papers

Consultation about public places under section 42 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Consultation Document

DEFRA February 2004

<http://defraweb/wildlife-countryside/cl/accessopen.htm>



Moat House, Southern Way, Harlow, CM18 7BA

8 June 2004

6.45pm – 9.30pm

AGENDA

6.45 - 7.00 **Arrival, coffee and snacks**
7.00 **Meeting starts**

For discussion / Decision

- | | | | |
|-------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 7 - 7.05 | (1) | Welcome and Apologies | SG |
| 7.05 - 7.15 | (2) | Minutes of Previous Meetings | SG |
| 7.15 – 7.45 | (3) | PROW Maintenance Policy | Geoff Wilkinson |
| 7.45 – 8.00 | (4) | Applications for new members | All |
| 8.00 – 8.05 | (5) | Future Agenda Items | All |
| 8.05 – 8.10 | (6) | Correspondence | |
| 8.10 – 8.25 | (7) | Public Question Time | |
| 8.30 | | Close | |



Minutes of the 5th meeting held on 8th June 2004
At Moat House, Southern Way, Harlow

Present

David Anderson
Bob Drane
Simon Gibson
Nicola Haycroft
Carol Reta King
Simon Leatherdale
Richard Tattersall

Apologies

Kevin Ascott
John Colthorpe
Ted Durey
Jenny French
Laurence Hammond

Officers

Geoff Wilkinson
Merryl Mackenzie

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the members and the public who were in attendance and made apologies on behalf of those who were unable to attend.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no amendments to the previous minutes and they were signed off as a true record.

3. PRow Maintenance Policy.

Geoff Wilkinson explained that rather than a maintenance policy he was looking for an overall Rights of Way Policy which would link into the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. He explained that he was looking for an honest opinion of what the forum thought of the existing policy and suggestions as to what the forum thought should be in the next policy. Besides the existing policy some of the issues PRow would like LAF to discuss are: Maintenance of the network; Accessibility for all; Service delivery; Network hierarchy; Enforcement; Creation; Publicity and Promotion. He said that the policy was not a bidding document but would be used as a guide to how Rights of Way worked. The forum was asked to produce a report by the 15th September. After discussion it was decided that members would make written comments which would then be discussed at the next meeting.

Action Point: Members to make written comments on the Maintenance Policy. These should be sent to Merryl Mackenzie by the 19th July. All comments will be copied and circulated to members by 25th July for discussion at the next meeting.

4. Applications for new members

After discussion it was decided that the advert and application pack used for the initial recruitment drive should be used, with some minor changes. The wording should indicate which specific interest groups the LAF is short of and that previous applicants may reapply. Members agreed that they would like to use both LAF and Essex County Council logo's. Application forms will also be available on the website.

Action Point: Merryl Mackenzie to discuss with ECC about the use of both logos.
Merryl Mackenzie to finalize and place the adverts, across the county, as soon as possible.
Merryl Mackenzie to see that the information and application forms are put on the Essex LAF website.

5. Future Agenda Items

The secretary told members that the main items of training that had been identified by PRow had now be completed and that training needs would be driven by members as they identify their requirements and needs. After discussion it was decided that each interest group should have a chance to address the forum to put their views across. Agenda items for August will include an update on the Ways and Means publication and a continuation on the Maintenance Policy discussion. It was suggested that there be an item at the end of each agenda for general discussion, time permitting. After discussion Members agreed that site meetings would be helpful and could be held either before a meeting or at any other agreeable time. Site meetings could take the form of visits to both good and bad practice sites. On these occasions it would be helpful to have a PRow Officer to identify and discuss the relevant issues.

Richard Tattersall asked that a briefing paper was sent with each item the forum was asked to discuss so that members could be properly prepared for the meetings.

Action Point: Merryl Mackenzie to contact members to arrange for them to speak on the interest group they represent.

6. Correspondence

7. Public Question Time

With the resignation of Catherine Mortimer, a member of the public queried the mobility representation on the forum and expressed concern that there may be a need for further representation and asked whether the Forum would be able to bring in someone to discuss the access issues. The Chairman answered that it was hoped that the LAF would be able to recruit someone from that interest group to join the membership and increase representation of that sector.

- 8. Next meeting** 3rd August 2004 Basildon Holiday Inn, Cranes Farm Road, Basildon
Members to meet at 4.30pm, Salvation Army Farm, Hadleigh for a site visit before moving on to the Holiday Inn at 6.30pm for the public meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

Background Papers

Essex County Council – A Policy for the Maintenance of Public Rights of Way



Holiday Inn, Cranes Farm Road, Basildon, SS14 3DG

3 August 2004

6.45pm – 9.30pm

AGENDA

6.45 - 7.00 **Arrival, coffee and snacks**
7.00 **Meeting starts**

For discussion / Decision

7 - 7.05	(1)	Welcome and Apologies	SG
7.05 - 7.15	(2)	Minutes of Previous Meetings	SG
7.15 – 7.45	(3)	Update on Ways & Means	Paula Cheeseman
7.45 – 8.00	(4)	PRoW Maintenance Policy	All
8.00 – 8.15	(5)	Applications for new LAF Members	MM
8.15 – 8.20	(6)	Future Agenda Items	All
8.20 – 8.25	(7)	Correspondence	
8.25 – 8.40	(8)	Public Question Time	
8.45		Close	

SITE VISIT FOR MEMBERS:

The site visit is at the Salvation Army Farm, Hadleigh, at 4.30pm. After this we will move on to the Holiday Inn, Basildon, for the public meeting.



Minutes of the 6th meeting held on 3rd August 2004
At Basildon Holiday Inn, Cranes Farm Road, Basildon

Present

David Anderson
Kevin Ascott
Jenny French
Simon Gibson
Laurence Hammond
Nicola Haycroft
Carol Reta King
Simon Leatherdale

Apologies

Bob Drane
John Colthorpe
Richard Tattersall

Officers

Merryl Mackenzie
Paula Cheesman
Ian Blomeley

1. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed the members and the public who were in attendance.

2. Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no amendments to the previous minutes and they were signed off as a true record.

Site Visit – Salvation Army Farm, Hadleigh

Members met at The Salvation Army Farm, Hadleigh at 4.30pm and were shown around by Simon Gibson, manager of the farm. Members discussed disability discrimination issues raised by the opening of the Rare Breeds section at the farm, following that a kissing gate was inspected and discussion was held about the difficulty of making the area accessible and yet excluding rouge motorcyclists who misuse the footpaths. From Hadleigh Castle, Simon was able to show members a wheat field which walkers had crossed to get to the castle and where the wheat had been flattened and the fences broken allowing animals to enter the field. Members found it useful to see actual damage that can be caused during incidents which land managers have to deal with as a matter of course. Simon was able to discuss various incidents where there have been problems with members of the public using farm land that is not open access. A number of these issues are exacerbated by the close proximity to urban development. Discussion was held on the difficulties of farming on the edge of an urban area and next door to a country park and managing accessibility and the specific routes that people can use.

During the site visit it was suggested that LAF should have a training session on the Disability Discrimination Act and how it affects accessibility from the land owners, users and public points of view.

3. Update on Ways and Means

Paula Cheesman, Community Action Team Leader for Public Rights of Way, gave members an update on the situation with Ways and Means. As had been discussed at the 4th meeting held in March, it was agreed that, as the magazine stands, it is 'preaching to the converted' and the circulation is too limited. Ways and Means is to be incorporated into the Essex Matters magazine. The new insert will be full colour and will have a circulation of 605 000 (as opposed to 3000 which Ways and Means now has). So that there is not a break in the distribution of the magazine the last issue as it stands will be in October and the first of the new issues will take place in January 2005. The Essex Matters magazine is in the process of being redesigned and the new look will be ready for distribution at that time. Promoted walks will still be covered by the Essex Chronicle, as in the past, and the team will be looking at other newspapers to ensure coverage of Essex.

The Ways and Means section will be separate from the rest of the Essex Matters and will be branded to ensure that it remains a separate publication. It will have a new name and Members were asked to give some thought to finding that new name. There will be a slot for LAF information and the LAF will be able to decide on an article for each edition. Members felt that there was information in the existing Ways and Means that was important and that they felt shouldn't be lost in the new structure. Paula assured members that the new insert would blend information for those already committed to the countryside and those who didn't have the knowledge about countryside issues.

Paula will have a mock-up of the new insert ready to show members at the October 19th meeting.

4. PRow Maintenance Policy

The Chairman and members decided to leave this item for the end of the meeting so that more time could be devoted to it.

5. Applications for New Members

The Chairman raised the issue of the 2 members who have been absent for most of the meetings during the year. A letter was sent to the 2 members, after discussion at the June meeting, asking for their resignations. Nothing was heard from the one member and it was agreed that her silence was accepted as a resignation. The Chairman read out a letter sent in reply by the second member. After discussion, it was decided to abide by the commitment sent out in the Application Packs which states that members must attend at least 2 meeting per year. Members felt that everyone had to make some personal sacrifices to be on the forum. It was agreed that if a member couldn't make the majority of meetings for whatever reason, they should resign. The Chairman agreed to write to the member concerned terminating her appointment on the Forum. It was agreed, therefore that 4 new members were needed to bring membership numbers up to 16.

The Chairman discussed the applications that had been received and the 4 applications that had been short-listed. The short list was circulated to members and duly accepted. This short list will go forward to Cllr Bass and Cllr Flack for confirmation. New members will be in attendance at the start of the 2nd year of LAF (7th meeting to be held on October 19th).

6. Future Agenda Items

Ways and Means update
Training – Enforcement issues
Cllr Bass – a talk on resources

7. Correspondence

Members correspondence was dealt with under Item 5.

8. Public Questions

A member of the public asked whether the Countryside Agency's new Code of Conduct could be sent out with the next Ways and Means editions. Paula Cheesman agreed to look into the matter.

Chairman and Vice-chairman

Although not on the Agenda, It was decided to call for nominations for a new Chairman and Vice-chairman as they would be voted in at the next meeting. After discussion, and by popular demand, the existing Chairman, Simon Gibson, agreed to stand again for the next year. Nicola Haycroft volunteered to stand as Vice-Chairman. A vote will be taken at the next meeting in October.

4. PRow Maintenance Policy

Geoff Wilkinson explained at the last meeting that rather than a maintenance policy he was looking for an overall policy which would link into the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Besides the existing policy some of the issues LAF were asked to discuss were: Maintenance of the network; Accessibility for all; Service delivery; Network hierarchy; Enforcement; Creation; Publicity and Promotions.

After discussion it was agreed that rather than giving specific information better supplied by technical staff, the LAF could make suggestions about the content of the policy.

Maintenance of the network

1. There should be a place in the policy for a date as to when all PRow would be open. It was felt that there should be a specific schedule and time frame for completion.
2. Maintenance – drainage of paths should be looked at as a solution to many of the problems rather than simply resurfacing. In the long term this would save both time and money.
3. When maintenance is carried out the materials used should be environmentally friendly where appropriate.

Accessibility for all

1. It was felt that in many cases, information was one of the key issues. There should be information available on all sites – what the site has to offer; what facilities are available; what the conditions of the paths are
2. PRow should press for a common national standard for each description used for a path. This could be lobbied through Defra or the Countryside Agency.
3. A star rating should be applied to all paths so that people were immediately aware of how accessible the path was.

Service Delivery

1. A quicker response time was called for. There should be a priority of complaints and a date given for each category.

Network Hierarchy

1. There should be no network hierarchy. All Rights of Way should be maintained at or above the legal standard for usage.

Enforcement

1. With the member's limited knowledge of this subject and after some input from the Enforcement Officer, Ian Blomeley, it was felt that resources are a major factor in outstanding issues. Members called for a training session on this issue at the next meeting and would like to comment on this subject thereafter.

Creation

1. Creation is linked to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and it was agreed that that was the place for the detail. The Forum advocates the significant improvement of the Rights of Way Network as being essential.

Publicity and Promotion

1. New resources are needed to educate the youth and the general public on Public Rights of Way. It was felt that there should be an officer dedicated to these specific duties.

8. Next meeting

19th October 2004. Central Baptist Church, Victoria Road South, Chelmsford, CM1 1LN
2pm – 5pm.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Background Papers

Essex County Council – A Policy for the Maintenance of Public Rights of Way