



MINUTES
of a meeting held in Baptist Church, Chelmsford
Tuesday 11th February 2020 at 2pm-4.40pm

Present members:

Louise Fuller (LF)	Katherine Evans (KE) –	Ed Dixon (ED)
Vernon Glashier (VG)	Chair	Sue Dobson (SD)
John Victory (JV)		Martyn Towns (MT)
Jan Arthur (JA)		Len Banister (LB)

LA Officers present:

Shirley Anglin (SA)

Members of the Public:

Cllr Bob Chapman - Great Burstead & South Green Village Councillor

Apologies:

Ray Booty (RB), Sandra Reynolds (SR)

Minute Taker:

Theresa Tremain, Business Support BC3 Mid (TT)

1	Chairman's Welcome	Action
	KE welcomed Cllr Bob Chapman, Village Councillor for Great Burstead and South Green and gave apologies from Ray Booty and Sandra Reynolds and Koula Valsamis-Warren.	
2	New members applications	Action
	The Chairman announced that Rowena Macaulay's application to join ELAF has been accepted and we look forward to welcoming her at our next meeting.	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 November 2019 and matters arising	
	These were agreed with the following amendments: Pg 4 Heading 10 should read Traffic Regulation Orders and Structures. SA will add these approved minutes to the website.	SA
	ELAF website This will be discussed at the next meeting when RB is in attendance.	RB

	<p>Highway Strategy</p> <p>KE asked SA to circulate PROW Strategy presentation.</p> <p>KE is still using her gmail address – she will talk to RB.</p> <p>Active Essex</p> <p>SA has contacted the Area Manager but has not had a response.</p> <p>ED did not attend the meeting held on 21st November 2019 as he was told this was a follow up meeting. He is waiting for further dates to be notified to him. It appears Active Essex is happy to support projects and events but is not proactive. Promoting Rights of Way as an activity is not happening.</p> <p>ECC Draft Walking Strategy and the ECC Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy</p> <p>KE said we have not had the opportunity to feed in apart from via the Public Consultation. SD wondered what has been published. SA raised that Jane Rogers had attended the LAF to consult some time ago. Discussions took place and different ideas and aims were expressed at a recent internal workshop. SA has not yet seen the final document. The Green Infrastructure Strategy will go to Cabinet on 17th March 2020 and then on to Full Council on 12th May 2020.</p> <p>LB asked if it was an oversight that the ELAF have not been consulted on the Green Strategy although we had a presentation. The public consultation would not have included expert opinion. SD thought as a LAF we should be ready to make comments on strategic policy. JV wanted to know who the 61 members of the Partnership are. KE will write to John Meehan and check her sent emails to see if she replied to the consultation on behalf of ELAF. She will circulate this letter before she sends it to the appropriate Director and Cabinet Member. LB thought we needed to be involved at the beginning as we are a strategy group. KE will say we would like to be more involved in both the Green Infrastructure and Walking Strategies.</p> <p>Future ELAF meeting dates</p> <p>KE notified that she and 2 other members now cannot make the next scheduled date of 12th May and asked if we could agree to meet a week earlier on 5th May. SA will check room availability and ask non-attendees if this change of date will suit them. RB as Vice Chair will make the final decision.</p>	<p>SA</p> <p>KE</p> <p>ED</p> <p>KE</p> <p>KE</p> <p>SA RB</p>
4	ECC Structures – Inspection and prioritisation	
	SA clarified that structures must be over 8 metres end to end. Koula will be invited to the next ELAF meeting to give a detailed presentation on structures.	SA
5	Active Essex Local Delivery Pilot	
	This was discussed under matters arising.	

6	ECC Report Matters Arising	
	<p>SA has previously distributed the report via email.</p> <p>Winter Cutting – SA has circulated the schedule.</p> <p>England Coast Path: There are some concerns about the quality of Natural England’s work involving both the details of the report and the quality of the work carried out. They are publishing their proposals therefore ELAF can make representations to the Secretary of State if they wish to. ELAF members were advised to google England Coastal Path in Essex to increase their understanding. The habitats layer is visible on a map. MT asked if we can write to Natural England. Wallasea to Burnham is an area of concern. There is a very short response time and all routes are published at the same time which puts pressure on ECC resources. We have to apply for Grant Funding which is very detailed. Once the grant is in we need ensure the work is carried out as per our requirements. Roy Read is responsible for this. Very tight for time for Highways to do this work. It was asked if the deadline for grant applications can be extended to December 2021 as December 2020 is too short a period. JA offered to look at the Wallasea to Burnham section.</p> <p>LF asked SA to update ELAF on the staffing situation in her next ECC report.</p> <p>KE asked if there is any progress yet regarding TROs being put onto the map on the website. SA explained that there are still staff shortages in the team and this cannot be pursued at this time. VG complained that there are numerous bridge/path closures and currently there is no prior warning for walkers of these closed routes until you get to the path that is closed.</p> <p>SA told us Koula Valsamis-Warren intended to come to our meeting today but unfortunately is off sick. She has a presentation to share with us. KE asked SA to invite her next time so we can voice our concerns. KE would like resources to publicise TROs. VG asked who he can lobby. Peter Massie advises Cllr Kevin Bentley so it was suggested to contact Peter or Cllr Bentley. Need to state importance of more money required for PROW. LB understands Council Tax could be increased to provide additional funding. VG frequently looks at TROs. ED says we need to evidence increase in TROs so we can make a better case for additional funding. A data processing person is required to update maps on the website. SA explained closures are only put in place after a full inspection. JA thinks we have left it too late this year to request funding for additional resource. VG thinks we need to highlight the problem to Cabinet members. SA will write the request to advertise TRO’s on the Website into the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. KE will update her spreadsheet and write to Jo Heynes to ask for TROs to be publicised.</p>	<p>JA</p> <p>SA</p> <p>SA</p> <p>SA</p> <p>KE</p>
7	LAF Regional Meeting (15th Jan) feedback	
	<p>KE reported that Norfolk and Suffolk PROW and ELAF seem much more supported than Essex and Hertfordshire. This is possibly due to the importance of their tourism industry. Several A14 crossings have</p>	

	<p>been requested. ELAF will submit a report regarding the Lower Thames Crossing. Thurrock LAF are having a special meeting to discuss PROW enhancements around the M25 and A127. There are potential development and enforcement issues. SD will put in a report for Thurrock. Also happy to do similar from ELAF. Would like a crossing suitable for all users including horse riders. She is looking at historical severance and maneuverability to reconnect paths. Legacy funding is available for historical severance. Highways England gave a presentation to Thurrock LAF. Told them they need to act now. There are lots of opportunities so they now have a schedule. KE thanked SD for reporting on this. KE circulated some information on the Agriculture Bill. The first committee meeting is today. It is intended to support greater understanding of the environment. Not supporting or improving is ever increasing. SD states that we need more off road routes and farmers should be paid to improve and grant access across their lands. She thinks recreational horse riding could disappear in the next 10 years if more off road paths are not provided. We need to send a succinct letter which adheres to the required format. Environment land management is taking over from stewardship -is there any news on this? Public money should be available for public goods and environmental causes. We need to request public access.</p>	<p>SD</p> <p>KE</p>
8	Blackwater Rail Trail – Project Update	
	<p>KE thinks ECC should be promoting this. It is still a fragmented route so it is not on the Country Parks website. Need to keep up the pressure. The bridge issue is still the main obstacle. SA had an enquiry from an engineer this week regarding the owner of the Langford Halt. Jo Matthews, Development Management Officer had views regarding the crossing but as she has now moved on it is possible that her replacement will have a different outlook. SR and SD are talking to people to pursue this. KE asked to keep it on the agenda.</p> <p>It was mentioned there is a useable walking/cycle trail through Witham which is part of the Blackwater Trail.</p>	<p>SR/SD SA</p>
9	PROW Hierarchy	
	<p>SA is developing the PROW strategy which requires that a hierarchy is prepared. Essex have not had one before. Will need to establish hierarchy then we can allocate funds and resources. There are currently 3 categories - Primary Network, Secondary Network and Tertiary Network. The 9 small circular routes do not appear in the hierarchy as Primary network, SA was asked to consider including them. SA distributed maps of the districts for ELAF members to view and discuss.</p> <p>The LAF members agreed that there was a need for a hierarchy and the approach was sensible and practicable but wanted enjoyment and wellbeing to be considered in the categorization.</p> <p>At present we are limited to 3 categories. KE asked that this PROW hierarchy be added to the next agenda and requested that the LAF review the routes over the next 12months.</p>	

10	Items for next agenda	
	<p>PROW Hierarchy Structures – Koula Valsamis-Warren Blackwater Rail Trail</p>	
11	Public Questions	
	<p>Cllr Chapman reported that he has had a lot of complaints from local parishioners about horse riders using public footpaths. He has come to our meeting in order to obtain advice to find a solution. It was confirmed to him that horse riders can ride on footpaths with the landowners permission. SD suggested posting a query on the Essex Horse Riders Association website. Need to find out who the landowner is and if he has given permission. It was suggested he could make enquiries at the local stables. SA advised surface damage to footpaths can be added to the Highways website and repairs will be carried out in due course.</p>	
12	Date of next meeting	
	<p>Tuesday 12 May 2020 at 2pm as previously advised or Tuesday 5 May 2020. Date and venue to be confirmed</p>	SA