



MINUTES
Held via Teams
Tuesday, 12th November 2024 at 2pm – 4pm

Present members:

Katherine Evans – The Chair
 Louise Fuller
 John Victory
 Rowena Macaulay
 Janet Arthur
 Geoff Fletcher
 Martin Crisp

Apologies:

Vernon Glashier
 Sam Iddison
 Malcolm Lees
 Martyn Towns
 John Buchanan

LA Officers present:

Shirley Anglin (SA)

Minute Taker: Nathan Duberry

1	Chairman's Welcome	Action
	<u>Resignations and Elections</u> Katherine Evans wanted to highlight Ray Booty's years of service with the Local Access Forum, as he had resigned on the 31st of May 2024. Ray was now the chair of the National LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association). Ray mentioned that he still wished to be part of the Byways Working Group, which Shirley confirmed was still possible. Katherine mentioned this would be her last meeting as Chair, as she volunteered to be the Open Spaces Correspondent for Essex. To identify a member of the meeting to be the future Chairperson. <u>Member Profiles and Website Updates</u> John B, Sam Iddison and Martin Crisp to send their photographs and biogs to Shirley Anglin.	Every-one

	<u>Publicity and Member Balance</u> Katherine was concerned that they were supposed to have councilors as members, and there were currently no County Councilors or District Councilors, which would be a task for the new Chairperson to take on. It was believed that there had been councilors in previous meetings, but they had never consistently joined in with all the meetings or remained members of the LAF. Katherine highlighted that there used to be an NFU member however, there had not yet been a replacement for them. It was noted that Sam Iddison as a member represents landowners. There used to be an annual report that needed to be completed for Natural England, which had not been required for several years, and Katherine noted that this may raise the group profile if it were to be brought back. It was confirmed that the group no longer had a cycling representative however, there were multiple members with cycling connections. Geoff Fletcher mentioned he could talk to cycling UK representatives to see if one of them could join. Geoff added that Cycling UK have completed a lot of work relating to developing long distance cycle routes. Katherine confirmed that it would be good to speak with representatives at Cycling UK. Katherine informed that Sustrans have been invited to PROW User Group meetings in the past however, they have not attended a meeting since Sandra Reynolds left Sustrans. Geoff believed that Sustrans do not have a Local Rep now.	GF
2	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th May 2024 and matters arising. Shirley shared her screen with the meeting, which had the amendments made by Katherine to the previous minutes. <u>Section 3: Circulation of Definitive Map Modification Orders.</u> There were various dates that were changed to this section of the minutes. <u>Section 4: Ramblers Accessibility Fund.</u> Rowena wanted to update professionals around the Ramblers Accessibility Fund, as the money had recently been registered into an ECC account and the work was set to commence imminently, which was not ideal because of winter. There had been correspondence back from the head of the Ramblers Accessibility Fund, who suggested that there may be money left over to explore other opportunities. There were questions around replacing kissing gates, and Katherine believed that it was the landowners responsibility to replace these gates. Shirley confirmed that structures such as gates are the responsibility of the landowner to install and maintain. The highway authority will become involved if they become unsafe to use and can also become involved if they are not legal structures. Shirley mentioned that there were cases when the kissing gates were able to remain however, the landowners would be encouraged to replace them.	

	Rowena mentioned that Salary Brook Valley would become part of the garden community. There was funding ready for this however, the landowner was denying any work to be done on his land. Shirley suggested talking to the landowner to gain an understanding as to why he was refusing to have any work done. <u>Section 5: National Grid</u> John mentioned that the construction of this project would be done primarily with pylons. John noted that he had done research around the sea route, and he discovered that this was not a normal process in shallow seas. <u>Section 6: ECC Report</u> There was one change in this section. <u>Section 7: Costal Path Inclusive access guides update.</u> There were no changes to this section. All of the attendees were now happy with the amended minutes. <u>Matters Arising</u> Rowena noted that an action point from the last meeting was to create alternative text for the PDF she shared, and to look at the slide format that Shirley's team wanted to use. Shirley presented the access guide and mentioned that there needed to be special text added in for people with visual impairments. Rowena highlighted that she e-mailed Shirley to clarify whether the text Rowena had written under the pictures in her PDF would be replaced by the alternative text however, Rowena did not receive a reply. Rowena mentioned that Shirley sent her a link to the software that was being used however, once Rowena opened the link for this software, she was unable to identify the template that ECC used. Shirley mentioned that the PDF was unable to be fully launched until the alternative text was written. Shirley was not familiar with the Web Creator Page software, which made it difficult for her to complete the slides. Katherine advised to pause any action around creating the slides on the Web Creator page, and instead Rowena should finish creating descriptions of the photographs for the PDF, as additional text. Once this extra work is complete by Rowena, the PDF would be ready to upload onto the website.	
3	A1023 Brentwood Walking and Cycling Scheme public Consultation. Geoff received an e-mail from Gareth Burton. Geoff mentioned the issue was that the path would be a shared path, and non-segregated, which could be an issue, as it was on a steep 4-5% downhill gradient. There was a counter proposal to Highways around the central lane, which was minimally used. It was questioned whether this lane could be converted to a cycle lane however, Highways believed this could cause congestion.	

	Katherine agreed with the need to have a separate cycle lane, and there should be no reason for a shared cycle foot lane. Geoff mentioned that there were certain parts of the road, where there was not much of an issue with a shared footpath.	
4	Sunshine Coast Greenway project. This was always intended to be a multiuser route because it was defined as being two routes around the peninsula. The idea was to join up various towns with accessible routes, shared paths, and separate paths for cyclists and pedestrians. This project was at the point for defining the optimum cycle and walking paths, as well as the need for funds. This project was estimated to need £500,000 to complete the 95-kilometre route. Katherine informed that ELAF do not have any funds however, the Norfolk LAF have set up a separate charitable arm. The charitable arm needed a project in order to be set up. Jan questioned whether the multiuser group included horse riders, which it did not. It was mentioned that the path would be ruined if horses were allowed on, and this would ruin the path for cyclists and pedestrians. Geoff Fletcher mentioned that landfill companies usually have funding available, but they would not be able to fund the full £500,000. Katherine highlighted that because this project was based around the tendering peninsula, which is supposed to be a deprived area in England, there would be funding from the Essex County Council available. Rowena mentioned that the LDP funding was coming to an end, and it will be replaced by a new funding round, which may provide help for Sunshine Coast Greenway project. The Tendering District Council got their first draft strategy, which Sunshine Coast Greenway project is a part of. The District Council have funding and they were intrigued with this project. Shirley was interested to see the route for the Sunshine Coast Greenway project, and Shirley mentioned that she can provide updates around the England Coast Path Scheme. It was mentioned that Rick would provide help outside of the meeting, around how to access commute. Shirley mentioned that on the website, there is no ownership to say who the organisation is, which would be useful to have to gain recognition from other organisations.	

	Shirley mentioned there is funding available through the AONB National Landscape for projects. This funding would need to be spent within the year, and they are consistently looking for projects to improve accessibility.	
5	Regional LAF meeting 25th January 2025. The chairman gets invited to attend. Anyone who wants to attend the next one in place of the chairman should contact Katherine for the Temas link. The group consist of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire LAF, Suffolk, and Essex. Katherine mentioned that if anyone wanted to address anything at this meeting, they would need to e-mail the new Chairman and Shirley.	
6	Site meetings, incl. August site meeting report. Katherine mentioned that there was not much to add around the site meeting and John's report was comprehensive. The site meeting was well attended and a very positive experience. Some great work had been achieved at the site.	
7	ECC Report. Shirley shared the ECC report, which contained cutting programs, Network Rail updates, capital scheme progress and England Coast Path progress. There were questions around the consultations from the Network Rail Project, and Shirley informed that it would be unlikely that Network Rail would do any further consultation or contact with Parish Councils. Shirley noted that the digital definitive map will be updated with the Network Rail diversions. There have been concerns around traffic regulation orders for rail crossings, and Shirley confirmed that these were not always a decision made by the Essex County Council, but instead made by the Secretary of State. The Ramblers were preparing to legally challenge an Order relating to Dixie's crossing in Newport. Geoff questioned whether Byway 56 will remain closed until 2025. Shirley confirmed that this will remain closed until work had been carried out. Work is due to be completed after April 2025.	
8	Essex Highways interactive websites - Track-it / Tell-us functionality. Katherine mentioned that the tracking had been taken off the website as she couldn't find some enquiries. Shirley shared her screen and shared how to use the interactive map. Sometimes there are technical issues with the mapping online. There are now defect photos available to view through Track-it.	

9	Update from the Byways working group. Vernon Glashier e-mailed the Byways working group report, but he was not able to attend this meeting. Ray booty and Louise Fuller are also members of the Byway Working group and were available for any questions arising from the report.	
10	NR Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders. Malcolm Lees was not in the meeting to discuss this.	
11	Major Schemes Affecting PROW, incl. Longfield Solar Farm Katherine mentioned there was a Community Liaison Group set up for the Longfield solar farm. Katherine was unsure how to get the Local Access Forum on the Community Liaison Group. SA to make contact with the organisers of the Community Liaison group. Geoff highlighted another issue of the path leading to nowhere, as it would end just before the high street. To continue the route up to the high street would be significantly expensive, so there would need to be an alternative route found to get to the train station.	SA
12	Other Matters Shirley mentioned that Simon Taylor had been tasked with reviewing the rights of way improvement plan. Simon asked for any comments from members of the LAF, around what was missing from the plan or what people wanted on it.	
	Dates of next 2025 meetings: 11th of February 2025 – Katherine reminded the meeting to find a new Chairperson for this meeting. 13th of May 2025 12th of August 2025 11th of November 2025	