



MINUTES
Held via Teams
Tuesday, 11th February 2025 at 2pm – 4pm

Present members:

John Victory
Rowena Macaulay
Janet Arthur
Geoff Fletcher
Martyn Towns
Sam Iddison
John Buchanan
Vernon Glashier

Apologies:

Katherine Evans
Louise Fuller
Martin Crisp

LA Officers present:

Shirley Anglin (SA) – The interim Chair
Simon Taylor

Minute Taker: Nathan Duberry

1	Chairman's Welcome	Action
	<u>Review of Minutes from November 2024:</u> John Victory identified a spelling error within the Minutes. Rowena raised a point around an action within the Ramblers Accessibility Fund section, which was to speak to the landowner to gain an understanding as to why he was refusing to have any work done to his land. Rowena clarified that there had already been conversations with the landowner, and he said unless the Local Authority would take care of the new barriers, he could not accept them. The landowner was already being offered new barriers, which would be funded by the Local Authority, but he still did not accept. No nominations for Chairman were forthcoming <u>Member profiles and website updates:</u> Shirley Anglin mentioned that Sam Iddison's profile was outstanding still. Sam clarified that he would sort this out.	

	Geoff believed he submitted a member profile before, which Shirley will look for again. <u>Matters arising:</u> The alt text has now been set up for people with a sight impairment, within the PDF for The Coastal Path Access Guide. Rowena added that the PDF will be converted to a slide format as well. There are two PDF's ready to be published, and Shirley suggested that people can investigate new sections to see whether they are suitable or not. Rowena noted that there were several sections up the Essex coast, which have a high level of accessibility. John Buchanan mentioned that there is a spot, which is east of South Woodham Ferrers, where it is possible to get up and down the sea wall by climbing however, John Buchanan questioned whether there could be a ramp installed however, Shirley believed there was not a standard design for this, and that the Environment agency would need to consent to it. Vernon thought it would be beneficial to gain suggestions from people with background knowledge of areas that may be suitable to look at and scoping further. Shirley shared a map with the meeting, which presented the coast from Heybridge to Maldon. Shirley highlighted the accessible routes around Maldon to the meeting. The meeting began to look at the coast by South Woodham Ferrers, which John informed was a good area for accessibility. Shirley mentioned that Wallasea Island would be another area to explore, because there are alternative tracks for the RSPB, which they can link to as part of the route. John Buchanan informed that more money was being funded into this area now, so there may be an opportunity with this area to improve access. Shirley will ask Roy to suggest areas to look at, or any places that could have issues. Vernon highlighted that Paglesham would have various issues, which would stop people from walking around there. Simon Taylor mentioned a stretch of coastal path at east Tilbury, although it was noted that this is not within the Essex Administrative area.	SA
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2	Rights of Way Improvement Plan: Review update. Shirley introduced Simon Taylor to the meeting, by announcing that he is a public Rights of Way Enforcement and Liaison Officer. Simon had picked up the review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan as a project. Simon wanted to speak about the plans for this review. Simon mentioned that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan was supposed to be reviewed after ten years, however, this was published in 2009, so there had been delay in the review. There was not much progress to report, and he was still gathering information. Simon wanted to be involved in this meeting to appeal to attendees for ideas or set up subgroups to discuss issues. Accessibility, climate change, and biodiversity were the themes involved in this plan. Rowena mentioned that it could be beneficial to have a small working group to look at, as it was a document that they should be proactively using. Vernon highlighted that a subgroup was set up in 2018 by LAF's, which did put together some findings, which he could attempt to find. Vernon believed the basics of the original plan was fair, except from the statistics, which were out of date. Shirley suggested going through the plan and developing the actions going forward, to send to Simon for consideration. Jan found the draft version of the original response to the ROWIP review, which was created on the 5th of August 2019. Simon requested for this to be shared with him, and Shirley suggested for people to review the draft before discussing it further. Shirley highlighted an out-of-date section of the ROWIP, which was producing a public digitalised definitive map. Theme D of the ROWIP was around joining up the networks for continuous routes for people. Rowena believed that Theme E could involve more information and detail within the ROWIP. Simon did suggest that there was further detail further in the document. Theme G was around reducing the levels of anti-social behaviour, such as fly-tipping. This also displays the impacts that this would have on landowners. Shirley suggested each picking a theme to review and then come back as a group to discuss their reviews. Simon informed that he would be happy to do one-to-one or group sessions, to swiftly move through the reviews. Rowena added that she would like to be involved. Shirley clarified that she would send out an email containing the themes from the ROWIP, which volunteers could review and send back a response. John Buchanan attended a meeting, where there were aims for everyone in the county to have access to green areas in a certain distance to them. This would have relevance to footpaths, which may be needed to help the public access certain areas. Shirley noted that this was the Green Infrastructure Strategy, which was a document that assessed the ability to access green or blue infrastructure	
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	as residents. Simon added that he was in a meeting about the green estate, and how the Rights of Way feeds into this. Shirley clarified that she would liaise with John Meehan, to ask if someone could come to the next meeting to discuss the outcomes from the GIS. Rowena mentioned that before Christmas 2024, herself and Jeremy Warren were invited to the house of lords, as there was an event, where they kickstarted a proposal for a new access to nature bill. Stephen Russell spoke with Rowena, who was interested in having a meeting, which was about the number of barriers to public rights of way. The number of barriers was calculated to be over 100,000, and the meeting with Stephen Russell was around breaking down the number of barriers. Stephen Russell mentioned that the Ramblers could do the auditing themselves of the barriers, while they were out on a walk.	
3	Regional LAF meeting 25th January 2025. There were no updates from this meeting, but Katherine may receive the minutes.	
4	ECC Report. Shirley sent out the ECC report, which included several updates, such as network rail updates and staffing updates. Tom Breen will be helping Rob with the public path orders and commenting on planning applications. Martyn Towns questioned who will take Andy Reynolds position. Shirley mentioned that there were hopes he would change his mind of retiring, but Helen will be looking for other options to take his position.	
5	Update from the Byways working group. Vernon mentioned that he was not at the last meeting for this, which was in November 2024. Shirley mentioned that there is a byway that passes through the river Chelmer, in Little Waltham. The area is valued for its biodiversity, so ECC are proposing to put a prohibition order to prevent any attempts to cross the river and disturb the ecosystem. This has gotten cabinet member approval, and now sitting with the Network Assurance Team to make the order. On byway 14, there are badgers creating their habitat in the middle of the byway, which will be discussed with local badger groups. Shirley noted that there were schemes noted for capital works in Saffron Walden 18 and Saffron Walden 3. There were conversations around Navestock 55, and how there was a constant battle with fly-tipping and bollards being removed.	

	There was an agreement around volunteers closing the gates over winter and to make sure they remained closed. There was a proposal to make a permanent TRO on Navestock 61. There was a permanent TRO agreed on Newport 10, to prohibit use by horses, cycles, and motor vehicles. This being a very short dead-end lane, truncated by the M11. The Byway Working Group was working well to make improvements to the by-way network. Geoff questioned whether there was an update for Little Burstead 56. Shirley confirmed that this was closed under a temporary traffic regulation order, which should be extended or remade until remedial works to the surface were completed. Vernon noted that this had been extended.	
	Any other business. John Victory questioned whether they need to revisit the overground pylons infrastructure in the next meeting. Shirley mentioned she did not have an update on this at the moment. Martyn Towns raised that the improvements and alterations to the Essex section had not been published. Martyn questioned whether definitive maps will be reissued. Shirley informed that there were hopes to reissue the definitive maps as a digital version, and the de-regulation act would make the changes in legislation to move from paper copies to digital versions, but this change was not made.	
6	Dates of next 2025 meetings: 13th of May 2025 12th of August 2025 11th of November 2025	