



MINUTES
of a meeting held in Diocese offices, Chelmsford
Tuesday, 15th May 2018 at 2pm-4.37pm

Present members:

Louise Fuller (LF)	Katherine Evans (KE) –	Ed Dixon (ED)
Vernon Glashier (VG)	Chair	Gary McCarthy
Adam Scott (AS)	Ray Booty (RB) – Vice	(GMcC),
Jan Arthur (JA)	Chair	Malcolm Lees (ML)

LA Officers present:

Shirley Anglin (SA)

Members of the Public:

Marlene Curtis, British Horse Society
 Sandra Reynolds, Sustrans

Apologies:

Sue Dobson (SD), Doug New (DN), Martyn Towns (MT), John Victory (JV), Bob Drane (BD)

Minute Taker: Val Cleare, Business Support BC1 Mid (VC)

1	Chairman’s Welcome: apologies and appointments	Action
	<p>The Chairman welcomed Malcolm Lees as a member of the LAF and Marlene Curtis and Sandra Reynolds to the public gallery.</p> <p>The Chairman informed members that David Massey had resigned.</p>	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting	
	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Local plans and planning applications – SD has been circulating in-formation. Action: KE to provide input regarding local plans and National planning framework.</p> <p>Admin matters – there was discussion about problems experienced with receiving emails. KE is not able to open some attached documents. SA reported that it was only KE that was experiencing this.</p>	KE

	<p>Post-Brexit Access proposal paper. There was discussion about this whereby everyone had been asked to respond with their comments. There is a need to improve communication by setting a response date and issuing drafts to ALL. SD had written a letter on behalf of LAF but this was altered considerably which had upset her. It was agreed that everyone should see comments circulated so that they know what is going on. It is KE's role as chairman to make decisions and take on board the views of everyone and make a balanced decision.</p> <p>KE sent a reply to the MP for Brentwood and Ongar which was circulated to all LAF members. RB reminded members that he could have dealt with this on behalf of the Chair whilst she was unavailable.</p>	
3a)	ELAF revised Constitution outstanding (Essex Legal Services/ECC)	
	<p>It was noted that Essex Legal Services have agreed to the Constitution. Action: SA to circulate after the meeting to KE and RB for views. This will be sent to Forum members ahead of the next meeting. If in agreement the revised Constitution can be adopted at the next meeting.</p>	SA
3b)	ECC Secretarial Support	
	<p>Discussion took place over the concern by members that SA does not have the capacity to provide secretarial support. KE felt on behalf of LAF that this area was under-resourced and required a certain amount of time to be allocated. This needed to be raised as a formal concern to Garry White, Public Rights of Way and Records Manager. It was pointed out that it is not SA's role to provide secretarial support. VC has been provided by ECC solely as a minute taker.</p> <p>SA was asked what her role entailed. Agenda emails, forwarding information, checking inboxes, improving communication. Checking minutes produced by VC and booking rooms, dealing with requests for information for the Chair.</p> <p>Action: KE to write to Garry White.</p> <p>There was further discussion over what happens about secretarial support in other counties. It was suggested to put this as an item on the agenda for a future joint meeting with other counties. RB noted that from his knowledge this area has always had very little support. Action: Agenda item for joint meeting</p>	KE
4	ECC Report	
	<p>There was discussion about missing link on the Flitch Way. SA confirmed that there had been agreement in principle with all the developers to provide this link but waiting for them to start on site.</p> <p>It was noted that footpath 55 linking, which will eventually link onto the Flitch Way had had surface improvements. The ECC Development</p>	

	<p>Management internal team are dealing with the all the developers to support the new links that are needed. This will be a bridleway.</p> <p>It was reported that a developer in Rochford had applied for a variation in the conditions of their planning application and that ECC was in support of the variation which removes a condition to provide a bridleway. ELAF did not support this variation.</p> <p>Sometimes there is a variation on the planning conditions not to put in a PROW previously agreed. If the developer has asked not to fulfil a condition on a PROW, then the planning authority who granted the initial planning permission would be approached rather than the PROW team.</p> <p>It was suggested to write again to the District Planning Authorities with reference to the removal of planning conditions and that they should refer consideration of the variation to the PROW team.</p> <p>Action: SA to ask Rob Lee to provide up-to-date list of contacts in Planning Authorities.</p> <p>Action: KE ask everyone to let her know of examples where PROWs had been removed from planning applications over the last year.</p>	<p>SA</p> <p>All</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Essex Highways PROW fault reporting and “check a query” system including update from PROW User Group meeting.</p>	
	<p>SA confirmed that the works to add the PROW map layer to the “check a query” page had been ordered. Pitney Bowes had been requested to install it. Testing internally first to make sure it is working properly.</p> <p>SA described the tracking system. It is not operational for new defects as do not have processes in place at the moment. A new suite of statuses has been set up for PROW issues which generates a response from Essex Highways that relates to PROW matters. Currently it is only set up for roads and pavements. SA informed that the PROW processes will be up and running by September 2018. SA also notes that the defects disappear from the website view 28 days after they have been inspected.</p> <p>SA mentioned two systems: Pathwatch and “Up my Street”. ECC do not recommend using these two systems as the reports do not come to the Highway Authority.</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Temporary TRO closure Orders including update from PROW User Group meeting.</p>	
	<p>At the User Group there had been queries about Network Rail temporary TRO closures because they are doing a two year closure on some network crossings and seem to be using the TRO process to pre-empt the Transport and Works Act Order application to permanently close rail crossings. SA explained Essex policy. SA confirmed that ECC are looking at each TRO application individually on its own</p>	

	<p>merit. ECC have a due responsibility to listen to that information where safety concerns have been raised and act accordingly.</p> <p>It was noted in Suffolk that Network Rail have closed them without consent as in Essex. They had been physically closed with barriers and reported no-one using the crossings.</p> <p>VG asked if Network Rail have a duty to provide upgraded access. KE confirmed that if Network Rail goes for Highways order to vary PROW over railway crossings they have to show they considered signalling or traffic lights or gates. However, Network Rail is attempting to close the rail crossing using the Transport and Works Act which removes this responsibility.</p> <p>SA said that it was not possible to challenge a TRO but that representation could be made to the TRO team. Gemma Hills is the best person to ask questions to.</p> <p>SA confirmed that training on the legislation with Gemma has been set up for 6/6/18 – 9.30 am at County Hall. Gemma will talk about the process and legislation. KE requested to see some examples of forms completed. KE requested SA to advise an alternative date for this training.</p>	SA
7	Network Rail:	
7a	Feedback from Cambs and Suffolk TWAO Inquiries (ECC).	
	<p>Feedback from Suffolk that they are still continuing with the Inquiry. Cambridge had overrun. There are no timescales outlined for Inspectors report and Minister to respond. SA said that it was unlikely that there would be a response from the Planning Inspectorate for 6-9 months.</p>	
7b	Current PROW crossing access and TWAO Essex and others inquiry – due to re-start 24 September 2018.	
	<p>KE thought that there needs to be a push from Essex Ramblers. Also to discuss this at the joint LAF meeting. It was noted that there had been no response from the NFU person.</p>	
8	Byway Management Review (LF)	
	<p>The next meeting will be held in a week's time. VG has set up a byway condition database and will discuss about future format. SA confirmed that the byway database will provide supporting information for when funding for byways is being considered, and will help set priorities. This database is on One Drive and not shared with anyone else. Any comments for the Byway Working Group should be fed into the online reporting system. It was noted that the Byway Working Group is looking at specific projects and how to manage prioritisation.</p> <p>Marlene felt that it would be useful to have a carriage driver on the committee because of restrictions within TROs. SA had invited one</p>	

	but got no response and so had invited another to meet the PROW team.	
9	LAF Liaison with neighbouring forums; dates and topics (KE)	
	<p>KE reported that 21/6/18 had been booked for KE and RB. Also to include Sue Dobson (Thurrock LAF Chairman). Phil Clark (Cambridge LAF) has not heard from Suffolk and Hertfordshire. Have sent list of topics as agreed at the February LAF meeting.</p> <p>Cambridge LAF had indicated a number of agenda items. Action: KE agreed to circulate these to members.</p> <p>It was noted that Mary Sanders is the Cambridge LAF Chairman. The meeting is arranged to start at 10 am and finish by 1.30 pm. This first meeting is to understand where everyone is. Agenda items to be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Each area is to prioritise what is equally important to be discussed. Strategies for dealing with Network Rail, Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), responding to planning applications, temporary TROs, budgets. It will be useful to know what projects other LAFs work on. SA suggested ELAF work more with disabled groups to improve access through infrastructure plans.</p>	KE
10	ELAF – publicity (JV/all); domain update (RB); ELAF member profiles and members webpage on Essex Highways website (SA/all).	
	<p>Membership ELAF thanked JV for the work he had done on publicity for the group and to encourage new members to come on board. As membership had now increased to a healthy number the publicity was not required at the moment, but could be used in the event that membership fell in the future.</p> <p>Domain Update RB gave an update on the domain which had expired on 9/5/18. It was noted that the website domain is registered to someone in Sweden at the moment. It is not actively used and has not come up for sale. It is necessary to wait for 2 months and then go to the domain registration company.</p> <p>There was discussion about looking at an alternative domain and register a new name which would equally flag up on searches. The question of maintaining the website was raised. RB informed that it is not necessary to create a new website to maintain but to own the domain name and put a divert on it to the current one within Essex Highways. The cost is approximately £12 to register.</p> <p>Action agreed: As and when the domain comes up RB is authorized to re-register it for the sum of up to £20.</p>	RB

	<p>ELAF member profiles These are required as soon as possible from everyone. Action: All. A reminder to those who have not responded to send to SA</p> <p>Action: SA to add Chairman's email address details on the front page.</p>	<p>All SA</p>
11	<p>Access and country parks/ECC owned land (SD/LF/JA).</p>	
	<p>There was an issue about the possible introduction of height barriers at car parks in country parks. This would prevent access for horse boxes, and also for other high vehicles (e.g. land rovers) and cyclists who may travel with bikes on the roof of a vehicle. This would restrict access to public rights of way for many users. Height barriers are actively being considered at Thorndon, Belhus and Weald parks.</p> <p>SA did not know if SD had forwarded the information from an email received from the country parks team to anyone else. Essex country parks are looking for people to consult on regarding what types of barriers would work. SA has made ECC representation. Action: SA to ask to include ELAF in their access consultation.</p> <p>The Ministry of Housing is carrying out a consultation on powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments; it ends on 15.6.18.</p>	<p>SA</p>
12	<p>Access and common land between Roydon and Harlow (KE).</p>	
	<p>KE had replied to an email forwarded to her at the beginning of the year about this area of common land and sent a powerpoint to illustrate the points she wanted to make. KE had asked for a meeting. It was agreed that ML should be involved in this relating to Hunsdon Mead/Roydon Mead.</p> <p>This is a project to improve the access and is driven by ELAF. It is about looking at access provision and where the pressures and whether existing access can be improved. It is cross border project and the site is managed by Hertfordshire Wildlife Trust.</p>	
13	<p>Any Other Business</p>	
	<p>SA sent email consultation about the Stour Valley. SD had responded that she had spoken to horse riders and advised that any bridleway access will be welcomed.</p> <p>Should we invite people to attend this forum from Natural England? Does Natural England have anyone who manages LAFs?</p>	<p>SA</p>

	<p>Action: SA to write to Natural England asking for their contact for LAFs.</p> <p>MC represented BHS and expressed horse rider's concern over Hull-bridge Development and the possible withdrawal of the bridleway planned through the site that has ECC approval. The development is over a farm where there was a livery yard. It was noted that there are no linking PROW. MC had written to Rochford on 8/5/18 to object to the planning application. JA commented that in the original plan it was agreed and then it was withdrawn for a bridleway. KE pointed out that a variation had been agreed and this had not been widely publicized. It was noted that SD is making a response.</p>	
	<p>Date of next meeting</p>	
	<p>Tuesday, 7th August 2018 at 2pm To be held at the Chelmsford Diocese Offices.</p> <p>Future meetings: 2018 Tuesday, 6th November 2018 at 2pm</p>	