



Community Action Group

Thursday 9th December 2010, commencing at 10.00 am

RCCE Offices, Threshelfords Business Park, Feering CO5 9SE

MINUTES

Present:

John Brown (Chair) (JB)
Philip Wilson (PhW)
Paul Williams (PW)
Angela Balcombe (AB)
Sheila Jackman (SJ)

Gary Raynor (GR)
Darren Smart (DS)
Pooneeta Mahadeo (PM)
Rachael Price (RP)
Ken Edwards (KE)

David Eniffer (DE)
Gill Burden (GB)
Daisy Martlew (minutes)
(DM)
Suzanne Harris (SH)

1 Welcome & Introductions

1.1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Judy Cuddeford, Joy Darby, Pat Lodge, Julie Nelson, Melanie Rundle, Chris Rust, Brenda Towle

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting: 30th June 2010

2.1 Accuracy

Approved for accuracy

2.2 Matters arising

2.2.1 Item 4: Potential Project – ongoing. It was suggested that a map showing rural areas in Essex (and ideally identifying those which are un-parished) would be useful; it was agreed by the CAG that such a map would be requested.

Actions: AB to email link to map
SH/DM to bring list of rural locations to next meeting
Formal agenda item

**AB
SH/DM**

2.2.2 Item 5: Improving communications with communities

DS reported that the map is completed. It identifies some areas which have no schools, village halls etc. Library services for some Braintree parishes are delivered by Suffolk.

SH explained that the Rural Services Survey should provide a

comprehensive list of parish newsletters. PhW expressed concern that newsletters delivered door-to-door are declining in favour of 'pick-up' newsletters placed in public areas, libraries etc. KE felt it was important to distinguish between:

1. 'Push' – delivered to every household; and
2. 'Pull' – electronic communication, public have to 'pull' information off the website

2.2.3 Action Plan

KE circulated an Action Plan which he had put together, based on information from previous meetings. KE explained that the plan does not necessarily identify all potential actions and that there is opportunity for more to be added.

Active and Caring Communities

Priority 1: Formation of the community led plan network is completed. SH believed the presentation referred to (Chris Rust/Lynn Marston) is Maldon, not Braintree.

JB proposed inviting Sarah Sapsford to the next meeting to discuss the promotion of CLPs. SH highlighted that RCCE has produced a spreadsheet showing where RCCE has worked – this could be used to identify 'target' parishes.

Actions: SH to email CR and LM to check presentation
SH/DM to invite Sarah Sapsford to next meeting
Display parish-by-parish spreadsheet at next meeting

**SH
SH/DM**

Priority 2: KE noted that Essex Police have several internal priorities at present. JB suggested the group receive an update at the meeting after next.

GR reminded the group that the Village Agents project is currently in pilot stage and its future is unknown. JB requested that the group be kept informed and involved.

Action: SH to invite a Police representative to meeting

SH

Greater Availability of Affordable Housing

PhW reported that he had liaised with the CLA, who have informally consulted with landowners with available sites, to feedback to Parishes.

DS advised that, since the presentation given to CAG by Moira Groborz, mobile libraries were now carrying information on affordable housing.

3 An Environment of Change Deferred until the next meeting

4 **The Big Society – is there an initiative CAG should take?**

JB suggested the group look at local government initiatives and community initiatives.

SJ highlighted the difficulty in encouraging young people to get involved with their local communities. GB suggested the Citizen Scheme, which encourages young people and teaches them valuable skills.

The group discussed the possibility of tapping into some of the Big Society initiatives:

1. Big Society Bank
2. Community organisers
3. National citizen service.
4. Employee owned co-operatives
5. 'Your square mile'

SH advised that community organisers are likely to be targeted at urban areas. KE thought that the bank and co-ops initiatives are more suitable for the EcAG.

The group agreed that community groups are best kept informal, ongoing projects, open to change, and within easy contact, but need a catalyst to bring people together. The Royal wedding (or the Olympics/Royal Jubilee 2012) is a good opportunity to encourage communities to organise a street party. GR suggested the group put together a planning guide, possibly based on guide for Silver Jubilee. Planning/organising needs to commence from January as timescale is tight. SH suggested that RCCE could pull together existing advice, send out to parish councils. JB recommended an article be written about catalysts bringing people together for Oyster magazine.

Actions: SH/DM to track down source of information from local authorities
PhW to investigate idea of a guide for Royal wedding street parties

**SH/DM
PhW**

JB proposed that the group identify 3 or 4 models of community projects that work, e.g. Saffron Walden. Perhaps target communities involved with CLP to implement Big Society initiatives. SH expressed concern that this would be putting pressure on communities – Big Society is about people *wanting* to do something.

KE suggested that good ideas for community projects be divorced from the Big Society.

It was agreed that the ERP should be involved in promoting the Big Society in Essex, however we should not impose ideas on people; ideas should come from the community.

5 **AOB**

5.1 Date of next meeting

Week commencing 14th February 2011. SH to check diary and circulate dates

SH/DM