



Community Action Group

Tuesday 29th November 2011, commencing at 2:30 pm

RCCE Offices, Threshelfords Business Park, Feering CO5 9SE

MINUTES

Present:

Suzanne Harris (SH)
(Chair)
Daisy Martlew (DM)
(minutes)
Paul Williams (PW)

Pooneeta Mahadeo (PM)
Julie Nelson (JN)
Darren Smart (DS)
Rachael Price (RP)
David Eniffer (DE)

Joy Darby (JD)
Chris Rust (CR)
Brian Goodwin (BG)
Chivonne Claydon (CC)
Faye Doherty (FD)

1 Welcome & Introductions

1.1 Apologies

Apologies had been received from: Canon John Brown, Linda Riley, Melanie Rundle, Ken Edwards, Philip Wilson, Judy Cuddeford, Gary Raynor, Sheila Jackman, Angela Balcombe

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting on 20th June 2011

2.1 Accuracy

Approved for accuracy

2.2 Matters arising

Rural locations map is now available on the ERP website
Great Saling's Parish Plan is not yet published

3 Good for Essex

Faye Doherty from Essex County Council gave a presentation on the new Good for Essex campaign (available on the [ERP website](#)). Questions were as follows:

DE – There appears to be a few problems with the website e.g. opportunities not being updated when they are filled, have these been resolved?

FD – When opportunities are registered, the organisation has to put a close date, but if there is a huge response there can be an issue. If more than one person registers for an opportunity, then we could target those who don't get it with other opportunities.

DE – Do organisations register as themselves?

FD – Yes. Some use it to promote their own website. Most people search via location, so doing this may mean that the organisation misses these people.

DE – We've had problems with companies wanting to register for opportunities that are in fact cheap labour posts. How do you prevent this?

FD – There is a built-in mechanism on the site. We have to approve all registrants and if in doubt, we liaise with colleagues. The volunteer centres also have knowledge and expertise on this, so we have links to their websites if people want further information.

DE – How sustainable is this campaign?

FD – We've had discussions with teams around the Olympics and hopefully we can tap into legacy funding for this campaign. We have submitted a bid.

RP – How do groups put opportunities on the site?

FD – They can follow instructions on the website, which ask for a brief introductory paragraph and then about 12 search criteria fields. The volunteer also sets up a profile page and is sent relative opportunities.

DE – The website can't do face-to-face though, which is the beauty of volunteer centres.

FD – The benefit of the website is that it is an Essex-wide site that covers all opportunities. We received feedback from grassroots organisations that this was a gap in the market. The 'Love Where you Live' campaign was very successful last year and we are running it again this year, but hoping to link in with Good for Essex – perhaps for people who want to volunteer as a one-off.

DE – How far does your duty of care extend?

FD – We are very detached because we act as a signpost, but I think there is an opportunity to work with the volunteer centres on this.

DS – Do you have another mechanism of reaching people who can't get online?

FD – We have been having discussions with the libraries on how we increase opportunities for older people and what's the best way of accessing those people not online.

PW – Have you talked to Adult Learning?

FD – At the moment we are trying to unpick all the organisations involved and I would be grateful for any access points that people can recommend.

JN – It seems to have quite an urban feel. How will this work in rural areas?

FD – From desktop research I've found that the social networks of people living in rural areas are much more within the local community, whereas urban social networks are more wide spread. It's about developing different approaches to the different areas.

PW – Do you have an interactive map facility on the website?

FD – No, we have a post code search facility, whereby people can choose the radius from their home to search for opportunities. There is something similar to a map on the Love where you Live website though.

SH suggested that Good for Essex launch could link in with the full ERP and EERF joint meeting on 18th January. For copies of the Good for Essex toolkit contact FD.

All

4 **Village Agents (Brian Goodwin)**

BG gave a presentation on the Village Agents project (available on the [ERP website](#)). Questions were as follows:

RP – There was debate over whether to employ people who live in the parish, but you decided not to. How do you feel about that decision now?

BG – Most of the agents do live in the area they work in. We felt early on that they had to be local, someone people could relate to, but people have said that they like talking to the agents because they don't live in the village. I think we were right to seek the right people for the job, not just because they lived in the area.

PW – Do you have professional indemnity for giving fire safety advice? On whose behalf do you offer this advice?

BG – We follow guidelines that the Fire Service uses. All agents are trained and approved and we do have professional indemnity insurance. We offer advice on behalf of the Fire and Rescue service.

DS – What events are you looking for?

BG – We run coffee mornings, drop-in sessions, BBC First Click courses, etc. We should be getting people out, e.g. out for lunch rather than having lunch delivered to them.

JN – Do the agents only work in villages?

BG – We will see anyone in mid-Essex. The service is actively promoted in villages but if anyone outside of these areas would like to see us then we will try and help them. The concept is equally applicable to urban areas; they have just the same levels of isolation and deprivation as rural areas.

5 **Community visits**

5.1 Great Saling: a Village Agent's perspective (Chivonne Claydon)

CC explained that she is not that active in village and that there are not many meeting places so word does not spread so easily. They are a close-knit community and do a lot for each other. They hold about three or four events per year at the village hall. There is a lot of concern about the bus route number 23 being stopped. It has taken a while for people at the coffee morning to accept that CC will keep coming back and it's a case of keep reminding people that we are there.

5.2 How can we utilise the information gathered?

RP explained that the Parish Council in Great Saling are supportive of transport and the Village Agents are good because they talk to people about the shopper bus. Unfortunately the service is failing – what do you do to get people using services?

DS suggested that the Village Agents come out on the library bus to reach people. CC explained that she has done this a few times.

JD added that cold calling is not a good way to reach people. BG agreed and explained that Village Agents never cold call and give out lots of messages about rogue traders.

SH suggested that the lack of services is not having a big impact on Great Saling or uptake of village agents.

RP explained that isolated people often seem to be in affluent areas. Uttlesford is an example where there are a few long-term residents who are less well-off who would benefit from a bus service, but the demand is not strong enough.

SH thanked BG and CC for attending the meeting and added that it would be useful for BG or AP to attend future meetings to update on the project.

6 Police Authority Consultation

SH explained that Maureen Browning from the Police Authority has requested our help in distributing a questionnaire to everyone, and in particular hard to reach rural communities, in Essex. The Police Authority is aiming to consult in December and January on people's views of the Police service to try and shape future provision. The survey is online, but hard copies can be made available. SH is awaiting more information from Maureen.

DS suggested that hard copies could be distributed via the mobile libraries.

7 AOB

7.1 Forthcoming events/information sharing

DM explained that the meeting with Harwich Connexions has been arranged for Tuesday 13th December, 10:30am – 12:30pm at the Harwich 1912 Centre (directions will be circulated). So far, DM, SH, JB, JN, PW and GB have confirmed their attendance. If anyone else would like to attend please notify DM by Friday 2nd December.

All

JN will contact her church contacts in Harwich to see if they would like to attend.

JN

JD was dismayed at comments made under item 3 in the minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2011. Minutes will be revised and distributed shortly.

RP added that there is a free training session on working with gypsy and traveller communities on 7th December – will send link to SH

RP/SH

7.2 Date of next meeting

Proposed 24th or 25th January. DM will email dates

DM