



**Minutes of Community Action Group meeting
13TH January 2009
2.00 pm RCCE Offices, Feering**

Attendees:

Canon John Brown (JB)	RCCE – CAG Chair
Angela Balcombe (AB)	ECC
David Eniffer (DE)	Volunteer Centre Tendring
Paul Williams (PW)	ECC
Philip Wilson (PhW)	ECC
Keith Cheesman (KC)	ECC
Katherine Sale KS	ECC
Wendy Jackson (WJ)	ECC
Rachel Price (RP)	ECC
Neil Keylock (NK)	ECC
Judy Cuddeford (JC)	BDVSA
Linda Riley (LR)	VST
Jenny Salisbury (Jes)	ECC Library Services
Terry Taber	FSB

Attendance

Kirsty Monk (KM)	RCCE (minutes)
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Apologies

Suzanne Harris (SH)	RCCE
Mike Hall	AUEE
Melanie Rundle (MR)	Colchester Borough Council
Vincent Marley	CERA
Doreen Marsden	Volunteer Centre Uttlesford
Joy Sheppard (JS)	EALC
Elaine Woods	ECC
Graham Bushby	Essex SJA
Ed Gregory	ECC
Dianne Hardy	ExDra
Ruth Juett	EREC
Gill Pike	UVC
Brenda Towle	ECVS
Miriam Stead	ECC
Karen Flack (KF)	ECC
Sue Sumner (SS)	CVS Uttlesford UVCC
Tony Shelton (TS)	Age Concern Essex
Paul Murphy	Director Maldon DC Vol Service
Chris Allen (CA)	EEDA
Chris Rust (CR)	Maldon District Council
Gill Burden (GB)	TDC
Kitty Barrett (KB)	BDC
Ken Edwards (KE)	Chelmsford Sport
Theresa Coyne (TC)	Tendring Community Transport

1 Chairman's Introduction

John Brown (JB) (Chairman) welcomed and thanked all for attending the meeting, introductions were made. Judy Cuddeford (BDVSA) would be reporting back on behalf of the Essex Association of CVS on any developments.

Apologies were taken as read.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting (14th October 2008) & matters arising.

Matters of Accuracy:

No Matters of Accuracy were raised.

Those present then agreed the minutes.

The following were reported as updates/ matters arising from those minutes;

LINKs (Local Involvement Network for Essex and Southend)

KM reported that she had established contact and 3 different area representatives who will now be attending the ERP Meeting on the 24th February 2009.

Migrant Workers Essex Forum.

PW Advised that he had not received further details of the next Multi Agency Forum event scheduled for 23rd January.

Action: KM to circulate details of the event to the CAG

KM

Further matters arising were covered within the main agenda items

3 Presentation “Community Well Being”- Keith Cheesman (Programme Manager, Community Wellbeing / Essex Later Life, ECC

(A full copy of this presentation has been circulated with these minutes for your information).

Key topics included:

- ECC Community Wellbeing Strategy
- ECC Later Life Strategy
- Driver and Performance
- Partnership Working
- Time Banks
- Various Community Schemes
- Day Care for Older People
- BE Smart BE Safe Scheme
- Trading Standards Buy with Confidence Scheme
- 50 not Out
- Village Agents Project

Comments and Questions regarding the presentation:

Time Banking and CRB Checking

JC: felt that the excessive red tape involved in CRB checking when working with children and vulnerable adults made it difficult for some groups to offer voluntary help and care in communities if they become a formalised group – as a result some communities were missing out.

KC: advised that ECC would be looking into this issue to see what could be done to ease restrictions and review policies where possible.

PW felt that this would be a good idea and that a middle ground should be found, whilst ensuring necessary and suitable checks were made without causing problems to voluntary groups.

DE advised that the main difference between Time Banks and the previous Lets (*Local Exchange Trading Systems or Schemes*) was that Time Banking would not affect individuals benefit payments, as it credits accrued via Time Banks would not be viewed as payment in kind.

LR reported that Voluntary Sector Training had received initial funding piloting help voluntary groups train in skills such as first aid and manual handling. She invited members to pass on details to anyone they felt may benefit from this free training.

Action: KM to liaise with LR and circulate details of the Voluntary Sector Training to Group Members

KM

50 Not out

PW highlighted the service offered by the Adult Community Learning project 50 not Out to the group. He advised that there was a scheme which involved paid and trained **Community Learning Champions** working with communities in all aspects of learning.

KC reported that the funding for the '50NotOut' project was due to end in March 2009 and his project was looking to possibly take over the funding.

PW reported that the aim of the project was to eventually become self sustaining.

Village Agents

KC explained that a successful pilot scheme for Village Agents has been launched by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (*Link to GCC Village Agents website <https://www.villageagents.org.uk/index.asp>*).

The Village Agents in Essex will be recruited locally; paid, trained and supported to provide face to face consistent and up to date information and support which enables individuals to make informed choices about their future health and wellbeing needs. The focus would be on isolated and disadvantaged people over the age of 50.

General Action

CAG members felt that it was important to ensure that this scheme worked with services already in place in each district and that the Village Agents Project should take this into account and carry out some fact finding research to identify which services were already provided.

JeS felt that it would be a good idea to widely disseminate the job profile of the scheme to help people understand its role.

KC/
ECC

Trading Standards Buy with Confidence Scheme

KC explained that they were hoping to work with partners such as Trading Standards to promote and support good, reliable tradesmen and retailers via an approved traders list.

DE advised that similar schemes were running in several districts already; Tendring offered a similar scheme where by those traders who signed up for the scheme **did not charge a call out fee to users** – a real benefit to vulnerable groups.

CAG members felt that it would be beneficial to review existing schemes currently in place and identify areas where residents did not have this service.

KC/
ECC

Rural Commission Update

4 PhW reported that the Essex Rural Commission had commissioned 2 surveys from external research companies based on:

- Evaluating the quality of life in rural Essex and aspirations for the future of Essex
- Younger Peoples Survey

The Call for evidence was still on going and PHW highlighted the fact that members can still contribute to the evidence gathering and go online to do so. To submit a response, please visit the Rural Commission Call for Evidence website page.

N.B. (Please follow this link: www.essex.gov.uk/ruralcommission).

PhW advised that a further smaller scale meeting between the ERP and the Rural Commission was to be arranged in the near future.

JB encouraged members to submit their evidence If they had not already done so, the Rural Commission required a grass roots input on rural issue that was forward thinking as well as identifying the issues of today's rural Essex.

5 Essex Rural Strategy

KM reported that following the Full ERP Partnership Meeting on the 24th the ERP Steering group reviewed all submitted member responses which identified key rural priorities. A Steering Group discussion followed which determined the following outcomes:

- That the revised strategy should incorporate a **5 year rural plan** for Essex which was deliverable in the short term and also outline **10 to 20 year aspirational objectives** for Rural Essex.
- That there was an optimum size of rural settlement which facilitated community viability in rural areas and that this should be investigated further.
- That the ERP Action Groups are involved in determining their individual relevant action plans once the Strategy has been revised.
- That the current Essex Rural Strategy needed to be refined to produce key priorities which could be delivered and were achievable; these priorities should meet the ERP Partnership vision and essential criteria of creating an environmentally and economically sustainable future for Rural Essex.

The Steering Group outlined the following **6 Key Priorities for Rural Essex** as a basis to help achieve Community Viability.

- **Affordable Housing**
- **Support for rural enterprise and a strengthened rural economy; for small business security and for local employment opportunities**
- **Access to essential services**
- **Community well-being, incorporating community voice and empowerment**
- **Land issues**
 - Accessible green space for all
 - Management of rural/agricultural land
- **Planning influence, incorporating housing, transport and business**

Urgent Action: CAG members felt that it was vital that transport should be included in the title of the access to services section and each sub section should bullet point the issues/headings contained within.

KM/SH

Essex Rural Strategy Refresh Workshop Event (24th February 2009).

KM advised that further wider consultation would be carried out to help inform the refresh process (agreed by the ERP Steering Group). It had been decided that invitations to a Essex Rural Strategy Refresh Workshop Event (24th February 2009) at the next Full ERP Meeting would be extended to Parish and Town Councils and District and Borough Councillors and other organisations with an interest in rural as well as the normal ERP members circulation list.

The event will be workshop based and we have thought it would be a good idea to have them based on the 3 ERP Action Groups (Community Action Group, Economic Action Group, and Environmental Action Group) with 2 leaders from each of the action groups to focus group discussions.

KM felt that perhaps it would be useful to have 2 members from each action group to lead the workshop groups on the day and invited volunteers from the community action group.

Action: KM invited suggestions as to any organisations members felt should be on the invitation list. (Please feel free to email suggestions).

KM/
ALL

6 Local Area Agreement Update

Rural Proofing (LAA2) – no further updates.

LAA2 a brief guide document circulated to members.

7 Any Other Business

Fear of Crime /Tourism Joint Working Group; Meeting on 7th November with ECC Alan Dork.

JB explained that he and Philip Wilson, Terry Taber and Suzanne Harris had met with Alan Dork (ECC) to progress some of the actions identified at the joint working action group meeting regarding Fear of Crime.

Since then we have received some statistics by ward but other action points have not progressed as hoped.

Fear of Crime Action: To follow up proposed joint working group actions

KM/SH
/Phw/
TT/JB

Tourism Action: PhW to propose follow up meeting with Lisa an Ellie from ECC Tourism Department.

PhW

Rural Commission Meeting

PHW The rural commission will be looking at the impact of fear of crime on rural communities at its next meeting on 20th January so it will be interesting to see the issues this meeting raises.

FSB Survey

TT advised that the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) would be undertaking a survey of Small business in Essex who may have experienced crime.

Action: TT to report back on FSB survey findings

Essex Crime Statistics (Taken from published Essex Police Statistics)

KM has reviewed the last 12 months of crime statistics for Essex and few conclusions are clear from the results.

1. The number 1 reported crime is anti social behaviour. 78665 crimes reported in Essex for this type of crime in the last 12 months; work on improving community cohesion and reduction of related high rates alcohol consumption could be an area of CAG work for future consideration.
2. Crime statistics show an overall reduction in crimes in Rural Essex in the last 12 months although fear of crime is still high especially amongst vulnerable groups and young people.
3. Rural Crime is not reported separately and much of it goes unreported by victims. We need to look at ways of encouraging victims to report crime in rural areas.

Compared with 2007 all reported crime in Essex has decreased by 5.4% across all the county as a whole.

Forthcoming Events

WJ/RP advised the group of the Working in Partnership to **Improve Access to Healthcare in Tendring** Seminar –(Wed 25th February 2009 The Columbine Centre, Princes Esplanade, Walton-on-the-Naze, CO14 8PZ).

Action: KM to circulate details to CAG members

Braintree District Council (BDC) - Parish Event

AB advised the group of the BDC - Parish Event - (19th March – 4pm to 9pm – venue –Committee Area, Causeway House)

NB – the aim of the event is to have a stall for many of the services parish and town councils may use or be interested in. This will include a number of BDC services. Other organisations such as Essex County Council and Essex Police will be invited to hold stalls.

8 Date of next CAG group meeting

Next meeting of the CAG Joint meeting to be held on 23/03/09; RCCE Offices Feering, 10.30am refreshments and pastries provided.

Meeting Concluded 3.45 pm