



Essex Rural Partnership

STEERING GROUP

5th April 2011

Minutes of the Meeting

The Essex Golf and Country Club, Earls Colne, 2:00pm

Present	Representing	Orgn	Initials
Cllr John Jowers	Chairman	ECC	(JJ)
Canon John Brown	Vice Chair	RCCE	(JB)
Suzanne Harris	CAG & EERF	RCCE	(SH)
Daisy Martlew	Minutes	RCCE	(DM)
Philip Wilson	EcAG	ECC	(PhW)
Dominic Petre	EcAG	EET	(DP)
Cllr Peter Baggott	EnvAG	EALC	(PB)
Cllr John Buchanan	EERF	EALC	(JBu)
Apologies			
Fiona Bryant	EEDA	EEDA	(FB)
Peter Chillingworth	ELG rep	Colchester BC	(PC)
John Hall	EnvAG	EWT	(JH)
Joy Darby	CAG	EALC	(JD)
Nick Shuttleworth	Facilitator	RCCE	(NS)
Cllr Mick Page	EERF	ECC	(MP)
Richard Woolley	EERF	RCCE	(RW)
Wendy Scattergood	ELG rep	Braintree DC	(WS)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chairman Cllr. John Jowers welcomed all to the meeting.

1.1 Apologies

Apologies were taken as read (see above for details).

2. Minutes of the ERP Steering Group Meeting held on 24th November 2010

2.1 Accuracy

To be agreed.

2.2 Matters Arising

None

3. Items to Report

3.1 Updates from Action Groups

Agreed as reported sufficiently at the full ERP meeting in the morning.

4. Strategic Changes

4.1 Local Economic Partnerships

SH proposed that the group refer to the Greater Essex, Kent and East Sussex LEP as GEKES LEP (acronym used hereafter).

JJ reported that half the country now has LEPs; the other half are looking into partnerships. The GEKES LEP is the largest in the country with a population size of 4.4 million and 44 shadow board members at present. It is intended to reduce this number to 20 for the executive board. The potential for LEPs is huge, being primarily business-led, although it is still unclear how they will work. An integrated strategy, approved by all the districts, will be presented to the GEKES LEP; the ERP needs to consider what it wants from it. The GEKES LEP doesn't have a direct rural representative, other than Jon Regan who sits on the shadow LEP board.

JB felt that it was important to keep the ERP and rural communities informed on a regular basis of developments in the LEPs. The group agreed that this could be difficult, as the situation is very fluid and in danger of misinterpretation.

JBu reported that a resource pack detailing examples of best practice for Parish Councils has been produced in the last 4 months. The pack includes a CD with various information, including how to set up a Parish Council.

JJ reported that there have been big changes to the planning system – Parishes can determine, via their Community Led Plan, whether they welcome development. To launch a referendum, 5% of residents need to agree; 50% of the population must vote in favor of development for it to go ahead. The ERP has a powerful role in interpreting these changes. If we have a clear skeleton regarding rural issues which can be presented to the LEP, then it is more likely that the business community will take notice.

4.2 Other strategic developments

None to report

4.3 Actions identified

JJ suggested the SG reflect on how we see ourselves as a region and if we have addressed the vacuum left by the Regional Development Agencies (in our case EEDA) going.

5. Any other business

5.1 Items notified in advance of the meeting

SH proposed that the next full ERP meeting in July focus on farming and horticulture. Jon Regan could be invited to speak on food security. Mark Iley has offered to give a 15 minute presentation on biodiversity offsetting/green banking. The Edible Essex project, which RCCE are currently recruiting a project manager for, could also be included on the agenda. Writtle College has been offered as a venue for the meeting in July. The meeting in October could focus on localism or the

LEP.

DP suggested that biomass fuel be added to July's agenda, as there is a conflict between food and energy security – are we growing the nation's food or fuel?

5.2 Reports from meetings/conferences attended

PhW reported that BDUK is applying for funding to upgrade the rural broadband infrastructure from 2MB up to a maximum of 10MB by 2012.

JJ attended the Pub is the Hub opening event for a village shop within a pub in Great Tey, supported by a grant from the Big Society fund. The event was well-attended and a great success.

5.3 Forthcoming events

None to report

5.2 Date of next Full ERP meeting

End of May

The meeting concluded at 3:00 pm