



Essex Rural Partnership

STEERING GROUP
18th January 2012
Minutes of the Meeting
Hylands House, Chelmsford, 2:00pm

Present	Representing	Orgn	Initials
Cllr John Jowers	Chairman	ECC	JJ
Canon John Brown	Vice Chair	RCCE	JB
Nick Shuttleworth	Facilitator	RCCE	NS
Daisy Martlew	Minutes	RCCE	DM
Suzanne Harris	CAG & EERF	RCCE	SH
Richard Woolley	EERF	RCCE	RW
Philip Wilson	EcAG	ECC	PhW
Cllr Mick Page	EERF	ECC	MP
Dominic Petre	EcAG	EET	DP
Cllr John Buchanan	EERF	EALC	JBu
Joy Darby	CAG	EALC	JD
Cllr Peter Chillingworth	ELG rep	Colchester BC	PC
Cllr Wendy Scattergood	ELG rep	Braintree DC	WS
Apologies			
Revd Julie Nelson	EERF	Church of England	JN
Cllr Peter Baggott	EnvAG	EALC	PB
Matt Searle	EnvAG	ECC	MS

1. **Welcome and Introductions** **Action**
 Chairman Cllr. John Jowers welcomed all to the meeting.
 - 1.1 **Apologies**
 Apologies were taken as read (see above for details).
 All agreed to send a 'Get Well' card to PB from the ERP **SH**
2. **Minutes of the ERP Steering Group Meeting held on 20th October 2011**
 - 2.1 **Accuracy**
 Agreed as accurate.
 - 2.2 **Matters Arising**
 No matters arising.

3. ERP (full) Meeting

3.1 Review of full ERP meeting

All felt that the meeting was a success and were impressed by Gareth Bradford in particular. It was felt that Gareth also took on board some good ideas from the meeting.

JJ – the meeting let every level know where their responsibilities lie.

DP – very Government focused and not much consideration was given to businesses.

JD – Rosemary Padfield’s question was very important – some small parishes will not be able to afford to do a Neighbourhood Plan. RCCE and EALC could support them.

WS – Braintree District Council will have to cut support to Parish Councils that raise their precept.

RW – We have to expect that some costs will fall on the community.

It was felt that the question panel was successful overall and that it allowed more time to get a discussion going by opening up the floor as well as the questions to all speakers.

4. Strategic Developments

4.1 Defra’s Rural and Farming Network – Suzanne Harris

The representatives for Defra’s Rural and Farming Network will be the Chair from each group; therefore JJ will represent the ERP. All groups will have a key contact for information as well, which will be SH for the ERP. The TOR is being written, but still waiting to see a draft. Frequency of meetings is still being decided but one annual meeting is proposed; in addition ministers and civil servants would like to visit the networks. A press release has been written and copies will be distributed to ERP members. The other networks are listed and mapped on [Defra’s website](#). The six remaining seats should cover the ‘white’ areas. We are the only geographic area represented by two seats.

ACTION: SH will distribute a simple guide to explain the structure

SH

4.2 EERF – Suzanne Harris

Whilst Pat Holtom will continue to Chair EERF there is still uncertainty about who will chair the EERF-FAB combined meetings – this person will also represent the region on the Defra Network. Future funding for EERF is unconfirmed.

4.3 SELEP (South East Local Enterprise Partnership)

PhW – Jon Regan is chairing the rural work stream, which is putting in a bid for the Rural Growth Network. The Bid is for three agricultural colleges in the area to develop business incubation centres, which will attract young entrepreneurs with the offer of office facilities and resources, mentoring and a pool of undergraduates for work experience. £2.3 million of the fund is reserved for women-led enterprises. We should hear around 16th February if our bid is successful.

NS – Attended a meeting with East Sussex Rural Partnership. It would be useful for the three Rural Partnerships to meet on an annual basis/twice per year to maintain and influence the rural agenda.

ACTION: SH and NS will look at ways of doing this.

NS/SH

PhW – There is an Essex representative on the rural work stream – Humphrey Squire – but he is not involved with the ERP. Perhaps we should invite him to attend a meeting?

4.4 Essex Partnership

There had been no developments since the last meeting. JBu reported that EALC has appointed Sheila Jackman as the new EALC representative.

5. Items to Report

JB – Missed the last CAG meeting, therefore SH Chaired. The presentations given at the meeting are available on the [ERP website](#).

6. AOB

JB – Ideas for future meetings include visits to communities and horticulture in the west of Essex.

DP – Visit Essex are still keen to come and present on rural tourism at a future meeting.

NS – The Village Agents project has been very successful with over 6, 000 cases in the last two years. It is hoped that an extended scheme will be up and running this year. We could provide more detail at future meetings.

WS – Village Agents was piloted in Braintree and was very useful. It was instrumental in assisting with the cost-savings in Braintree District.

SH – The presentation given at CAG, available on the ERP website, will have more information about Village Agents. Brian Goodwin, Village Agents Manager, uploads quarterly reports on the Village Agents [website](#). Perhaps when more is clear regarding funding we can include it in a meeting then.

JD – Layer Marney have had preliminary discussions about becoming a Parish Council.

6.1 Date of Next Meeting

Dates to be circulated

DM

The meeting concluded at 3:00pm