



## Essex Rural Partnership

### ERP Full Partnership Meeting Minutes of the Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2010 10.00 am, Marks Tey Parish Hall

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**Present:**

| <b>Init</b> | <b>Name</b>   | <b>Surname</b> | <b>Organisation</b>                                  |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|--|
| JJ          | Cllr. John    | Jowers         | Essex Rural Partnership Chair - Essex County Council |
| JB          | Canon John    | Brown          | Essex Rural Partnership Vice Chair/ C of E / RCCE    |
| RA          | Rosemary      | Alexander      | Farm Crisis Network                                  |
| PB          | Cllr. Peter   | Baggott        | EALC/ EnvAG  |
| JBe         | Cllr. Jo      | Beavis         | Braintree District Council                           |
| KBI         | Keith         | Blackburn      | Essex County Council                                 |
| FB          | Fiona         | Bryant         | EEDA   |
| JBu         | Cllr. John    | Buchanan       | Essex Association of Local Councils                  |
| PC          | Cllr. Peter   | Chillingworth  | LGA/ Colchester Borough Council                      |
| SC          | Sue           | Cornwell       | Colchester Borough Council                           |
| KC          | Kate          | Crofts         | Essex County Council                                 |
| KE          | Ken           | Edwards        | Essex and Southend LINK                              |
| BE          | Brenda        | Ellis          | CVS Tendring   |
| TE          | Tony          | Ellis          | CVS Tendring   |
| JG          | Judy          | Gray           | Essex County Council                                 |
| JH          | John          | Hall           | Essex Wildlife Trust                                 |
| PH          | Paul          | Harris         | Maldon District Community Transport                  |
| LH          | Lauren        | Harris         | Maldon District Council                              |
| SH          | Suzanne       | Harris         | Rural Community Council of Essex                     |
| LH          | Lisa          | Hart           | Essex County Fire and Rescue Service                 |
| MI          | Mark          | Iley           | Essex Biodiversity Project                           |
| SJ          | Cllr. Sheila  | Jackman        | Ongar Town Council                                   |
| Sja         | Inspector Sam | Jarvis         | Essex Police   |
| GK          | Geoffrey      | King           | Disability Essex                                     |
| JL          | Jenny         | Lewsey         | Maldon District Council                              |
| PM          | Petra         | McQueen        | Transition Wivenhoe                                  |
| CM          | Chris         | Moor           | English Rural Housing                                |
| RP          | Rosemary      | Padfield       | Essex NFU  |
| Mp          | Cllr. Mick    | Page           | Essex County Council                                 |
| DP          | Dominic       | Petre          | Essex Tourism Association                            |
| TR          | Tracey        | Rudling        | Colchester Community Voluntary Services              |
| MR          | Melanie       | Rundle         | Colchester Borough Council                           |
| SS          | Sue           | Sheppard       | RCCE   |
| NS          | Nick          | Shuttleworth   | Rural Community Council of Essex                     |
| GS          | Geoff         | Sinclair       | Woodland Trust                                       |
| DS          | Dr Darren     | Smart          | ECC Libraries  |
| PS          | Phil          | Smith          | Rural Shops Alliance                                 |
| BS          | Brian         | Stacey         | Essex County Council                                 |
| JW          | Jo            | Wheatley       | Transition Wivenhoe                                  |
| PW          | Paul          | Williams       | Essex County Council                                 |
| SW          | Dr Steve      | Willoughby     | Walden in Transition                                 |
| MW          | Mrs           | Willoughby     | Walden in Transition                                 |
| PW          | Philip        | Wilson         | Essex County Council                                 |
| RW          | Richard       | Woolley        | Rural Community Council of Essex                     |
| TW          | Tony          | Wright         | East Of England Ambulance Trust User Group           |

**In Attendance - minutes**

|    |        |      |                                  |
|----|--------|------|----------------------------------|
| KM | Kirsty | Monk | Rural Community Council of Essex |
|----|--------|------|----------------------------------|

**Apologies**

|      |            |              |  |
|------|------------|--------------|--|
| KiBa | Kitty      | Barrett      | Braintree District Council               |
| TB   | Tony       | Benton       | Essex University                         |
| PBl  | Peter      | Blackman     | Essex and Southend LINK Countywide Group |
| KBr  | Keith      | Brown        | Federation of Small Businesses           |
| JBr  | Jackie     | Brown        | RRAVS                                    |
| Abz  | Alex       | Butler-Zagni | NFU                                      |
| HC   | Helen      | Clothier     | CPRE                                     |
| Pcol | Pris       | Colchester   | Farm Crisis Network                      |
| GC   | George     | Courtauld    | Rural Community Council of Essex         |
| JC   | Judy       | Cuddeford    | BDVSA                                    |
| DE   | David      | Eniffer      | Volunteer Centre Tendring                |
| AG   | Adrian     | Gascoyne     | Essex County Council                     |
| EG   | Ed         | Gregory      | Essex County Council                     |
| MH   | Mike       | Hall         | Assoc of Universities in East of England |
| TI   | Tim        | Isaac        | CLA                                      |
| WJ   | Wendy      | Jackson      | Essex County Council                     |
| CK   | Caroline   | Kay          | Moat Housing                             |
| AL   | Andrew     | Lowing       | Rochford District Council                |
| PM   | Pauline    | Mann         | Tendring Community Transport             |
| AM   | Alan       | Morgan       | Sustrans                                 |
| PMu  | Paul       | Murphy       | Maldon CVS                               |
| JM   | Jayne      | Mason        | South West Essex PCT                     |
| AP   | Amanda     | Plummer      | Rural Community Council of Essex         |
| RP   | Rachael    | Price        | Essex County Council                     |
| LR   | Linda      | Riley        | Voluntary Sector Training                |
| CR   | Chris      | Rust         | Maldon DC                                |
| MS   | Mike       | Sandison     | Geo Essex                                |
| ASJ  | Andrew     | St Joseph    | Managing Coastal Change                  |
| WS   | Wendy      | Scattergood  | Braintree District Council/ LGA          |
| JS   | Joy        | Sheppard     | EALC                                     |
| Ssu  | Sue        | Sumner       | CVS Uttlesford                           |
| KT   | Karen      | Thomas       | Environment Agency                       |
| NV   | Nileema    | Vaswani      | Essex and South End LINK                 |
| MW   | Ven Martin | Webster      | Diocese of Chelmsford                    |
| RW   | Richard    | Whetton      | Rochford District Council                |

**Welcome and Introductions****Act:**

Chairman Cllr. John Jowers welcomed all to the meeting.

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

- 1 **Minutes of the previous meeting 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009 & matters arising.**  
Correction to item 3 & 4 noted.

Those present agreed the minutes.

**Matters Arising**

Matters arising were dealt with in the main agenda items.

## 2 Election of the Essex Rural Partnership Vice Chairman

SH advised members that at this meeting the Essex Rural Partnership would be seeking to elect a Vice Chair in accordance with the requirements of our terms of reference. Nomination forms had been sent out to members in for this purpose prior to the meeting.

A nomination (Richard Woolley–RCCE) had been received for Canon John Brown to be re-elected as Vice Chair and this was seconded by John Hall- EWT.

SH confirmed with those present that no other candidate wished to be put forward by members of the ERP.

Members present agreed to the proposed re-election of Canon John Brown as Vice Chair.

Canon John Brown kindly accepted the role as Vice Chair of the Essex Rural Partnership.

JJ thanked JB for accepting the continuing role of Vice Chair and for his ongoing work on behalf of the Essex Rural Partnership.

## 3 Presentation : “Transition: Preparing for the New Reality Beyond the Industrial Age”

Dr Steve Willoughby, Walden in Transition

*(A full electronic copy of this presentation is available on the ERP Website [www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk](http://www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk)).*

Dr Willoughby (SW) outlined his professional background and involvement in Transition. He said he wished to paint a bigger picture of “Transition”.

SW advised that there are 3 interlocking crisis generated by our way of living which modern civilisation is facing, “Climate Change”, “Peak Oil” and “The Growth Economy”.

### **Peak Oil.**

Resources of fossil fuels and oil are running out and are becoming harder and more expensive to extract, yet modern day life is based around the availability of cheap fuel and energy. Paradoxically as demand for fuel increases its availability is decreasing.

### **The Growth Economy**

SW felt that the driver for the current modern economic model was based on growth. In order for the economy to grow we must consume things and consumption equals use of energy. SW believed that to continue using the current economic growth model could not be sustained as it was interlocked with cheap energy.

SW felt that that modern thinking perpetuated unrealistic visions of the future which ranged from techno fantasy, where growth developed unhindered and technological solutions were found, to seamless greening, where for instance wind and nuclear power takes seamlessly over from fossil fuels and oil or finally the myth of collapse – a “Mad Max” type scenario.

### **Transition - Managing Energy Decent**

Transition groups looked at ways of managing energy decent to react positively to the affects of climate change, declining energy supplies, and economic implications. For instance by relocalising, re-skilling and making different arrangements and ways of living to make communities more self sufficient and resilient to these problems.

### **What can Communities do?**

- Assess local resilience and build it
- Raise awareness and educate
- Create a positive vision of the future: hope, determination, common purpose
- Embrace the possibilities of a relocalised future
- Engage people in the adventure and build community
- Develop confidence and remoralise
- Create an Energy Descent Action Plan

- 4 **Case Study: “Transition Wivenhoe, how do we sell the sizzle and not the sausage”** Jo Wheatley, Transition Wivenhoe.  
(A full electronic copy of this presentation is available on the ERP Website [www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk](http://www.essexruralpartnership.org.uk)).

Jo Wheatley explained that the Transition Wivenhoe had been going for about a year and had followed on from the Wivenhoe Town Plan launch in October 2008. The core concept of the initiative was resilience and re-localisation in order to manage the impact of energy decent and it is grassroots led by local residents. The idea was to ensure that the community had the ability not to collapse at the first sight of oil or food shortages, and its ability to respond with adaptability to the disturbance.

JW felt that transition is about doing something with others towards creating a better future, not campaigning against something negative.

Training and support was provided by the Transition Network and a training event was hosted by Colchester Borough Council with the help of the Transition Network.

Examples of possible activities which add resilience to a community could be productive tree plantings, local [organic] food initiatives, local green building materials, local currencies & investment, singing in a choir, playing football and also sourcing the majority of resources, materials and food locally.

JW went on to highlight some of the activities that they had carried out as a community such as community fruit picking walks, food groups, awareness raising events, bike powered cinemas, smart energy meter loans and an eco schools summit.

- 5 **Presentation: Case Study: Transition (Stour) Valley** : Petra McQueen, Transition Wivenhoe

Petra McQueen said she was presenting today on behalf of Marina O'Connell from Transition Stour Valley as Marina was working today with East Bergholt Primary school.

Transition Stour Valley is a transition hub, providing a focus for several communities across their area, including Lawford, Manningtree and East Bergholt. They've set up a core group, communications group and others are in the making.

The transition model comes directly from permaculture. The co-founder of transition towns, Rob Hopkins, created the transition town's concept following a permaculture course where students applied permaculture design principles to the town (village) of Kinsale in Ireland. Totnes was the first English town to take up the transition model.

Permaculture was originally conceived as a sustainable way of growing and farming by working with nature rather than against it, the principles devised can be applied to all aspects of life, helping us take positive steps to care for and sustain our planet, our communities and ourselves.

Re-skilling is a really important way of enabling communities to become sustainable. Older generations know how to live with less oil and have the skills we need once again. One way of transferring these skills to a new generation is to go into a school and involve the students in Transition ideas and practises.

Marina is working at East Bergholt primary school, getting the whole school to think about how their school will work in 2030? Where will their food come from? What will they be eating? What will they need to learn? How will they get to school? Pupils will talk to older people in their families and their communities about lost skills and ways of living and then have the chance to re-discover some of these.

Transition projects involved lots of events and celebrations - strong social connections are needed to build community resilience. Events, such as the one above, show people how simple some aspects of sustainable living can be. During a food swap in Manningtree people were asked to bring something they had grown, picked or made and swap it. It was an energising, inspiring event. A group of children in Manningtree are now in the process of organising a toy swap.

PM Another scheme that is relevant to the 'now' is the Manningtree Wombat car club scheme. If you drive less than 6000 miles, a car club will cut your costs. It costs About £2 hour and you can book and pay on-line.

PM spoke of the next steps and ideas proposed by Transition Stour Valley such as:

- More swapping and more films
- Continue to build links with Business Chamber of Commerce and others
- Work with the Market Town Initiative to support sustainability and resilience

## 6 Transition Questions and Discussions

Q. DP felt that the initial presentation was hostile to technological solutions. DP said that we should be looking at alternative sources of energy and that we should be mining sources of Uranium first as these naturally deplete over time.

A. SW replied that the idea he wished to convey was that the Techno Fantasy was a model of hope which promoted business as usual without addressing the problem- but that energy resource limits would not be put away by technology, although they could be mitigated by it.

Q. PC felt that the concept of collapse of the industrial economy was not necessarily a myth, as small changes trigger significant hardship and industrial collapse. If oil prices were to jump 5 or 10 % this would have serious economic repercussions causing a large impact collapse by a relatively small change in circumstances and potential collapse was far nearer than has been suggested.

A. SW responded that his point was that these myths at either end of the spectrum (techno fantasy and collapse) give us permission not to do anything, when we should be acting. It's about building resilience in local communities.

Jbu advised members that Billericay Town Council had just started a greening campaign. They had also tried to provide allotments but land for this purpose was too expensive.

RW felt that addressing these problems affectively was a huge issue to confront and that it impacted on cross cutting social, economic and environmental issues; rather than being led by transition we could encourage communities to build on village and town community led plans.

JW responded that Transition Wivenhoe had done just that and carried on from the Town Plan, it was very much grass roots initiative led by the community.

JH felt that the transition presentations had seemed to focus on the community and economic elements of the transition model and not really looked at the importance of creating a resilient environment and eco system.

SW responded that Permaculture had been briefly discussed and addresses the environment aspect of transition but as it was such a large subject it could not be covered fully in the presentations today.

***A short 20 minute interval was held for refreshments 11.40 am to 12.00pm***

## 7 Report from the East of England Rural Forum (EERF) -Suzanne Harris (RCCE)

**EERF Meeting 3rd March 2010: Rural Development and Annual General Meeting - Shuttleworth Park, Bedfordshire**

SH reported that at the last meeting, Pat Holtom had been elected as the new Chairman of the EERF and SH and Martin Collison had been elected as Vice Chairs.

The latter part of the meeting focused on workshop consultations regarding the proposed EERF Rural White Paper. The Forum debated several issues such as which was the highest priority, broadband access or taking services to local people; the outcome was that they were both equally important issues.

**Proposed dates for future EERF Forum meetings:**

- 20 April (EERF Annual Conference) - Venue to be confirmed

*Further information, presentations and papers regarding previous meetings can be found on the EERF website: [www.eerf.org.uk](http://www.eerf.org.uk)*

8 **Report from the ERP Steering Group** -Suzanne Harris RCCE

SH reported that the Steering had expressed their thanks to Chris Allen from East of England Development Agency (EEDA) for his many years of work with the Essex Rural Partnership and welcomed Fiona Bryant (Director, Essex, Southend and Thurrock, EEDA) who will now be representing EEDA at future ERP meetings.

SH reported that they had discussed topics for future meetings and how to best take forward the ERP Environmental Action Group.

**Essex Rural Partnership Meeting with Dr. Stuart Burgess (Commission for Rural Communities) CRC.**

SH advised that the meeting with Dr. Stuart Burgess had gone well and they had raised the following topics:

- The New ERP Strategy - explain the differences and linkages to the ERC report
- Affordable Housing
- Rural Broadband
- Role of Voluntary Sector and Communities
- Funding for Commercial buildings
- Rural planning issues and training planning officers to understand rural issues
- CIF Fund model
- Bank of Essex

SH invited Members to suggest topics for future meetings and advised that they could let SH (Suzanne Harris-RCCE) or Kirsty Monk- RCCE know if they wished to put forward any suggestions.

9 **Community Action Group (CAG) Report** – Canon John Brown - (Vice Chairman ERP/ Chair CAG)

JB reported that at the last meeting of the Community Action Group (CAG) on 22<sup>nd</sup> February they had held 2 workshops, the purpose of the workshops were to narrow down the priority action points taken from the new ERP Rural Strategy to form the basis of the Community Action Group Action Plan, focusing on choosing those actions which the CAG felt could be delivered realistically by the partnership.

Actions under the Strategies “Active and Caring Communities” and “Greater Availability of Affordable Housing” fell most appropriately to the CAG remit; with joint actions required on cross cutting issues with other ERP action groups such as “Access to Services”, “A Thriving Economy” and “A Rich and Varied Environment” and Lobbying.

Members considered who should be involved, how to be involved, ideas and then members proceeded to vote on their top priorities. We also had a presentation by Moira Groborz, (RCCE - Rural Housing Enabler) to give the CAG an excellent overview of the current issues and problems regarding affordable rural housing in Essex and how the ERP and membership could help.

**Active and Caring Communities –Actions Chosen by CAG**

- ERP will encourage and support efforts by young people to get more engaged with their local communities.
- ERP supports the Work of the Village Agents, Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPS) and other such projects to assist rural communities. These projects should be encouraged to link with other existing networks.
- ERP believes Strategic Policies should be provided for the Promotion of Community Engagement (including Community Led Plans) and other enabling skills to aid local people to influence decision making

**Greater Availability of Affordable Housing – Actions Chosen by CAG**

- ERP will encourage every Parish Council to identify the housing need in its community and to take steps towards addressing outstanding need
- ERP will support the Rural Housing Enabler project and recognises it as a means of ensuring that development is initiated in accordance with local need
- ERP will engage with the Rural Housing Enabler project to raise awareness of the socio-economic benefits of affordable housing to rural communities

PhW reported that Chelmsford Borough Council had just announce 12 new affordable housing units

10 **ERP Economic Action Group EcAG) Report – Philip Wilson (EcAG Chairman)**

PhW reported that the Economic Action Group met on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2010. They received an update and held a workshop with Dr Andrew Fieldsend regarding rural employment and evidence gathering. PhW thanked the action group members for their participation; the final version of the report will be available shortly.

PhW reported that poor rural broadband service was still proving a barrier to accessing markets for rural small businesses in some parts of Essex. Work was on going to improve access and it was evident that we need as a County to build in resilience in to our system to provide a consistent broadband service that was fit for purpose.

PhW felt it was important to lobby potential future political candidates on this issue given the upcoming general election.

11 **ERP Environmental Action Group Update – John Hall EWT - Chair EnvAG.**

John Hall reported that the Environmental Action Group invitations had been sent out and that the Group was in the process of arranging a meeting shortly.

JH advised that They would be discussing how to best take forward the priorities outlined in the new ERP Essex Rural Strategy under the Rich and Varied Environment Section and hi-lighted the seven key actions put forward within it.

12 **Ten Good Reasons to Shop Locally Campaign – Nick Shuttleworth RCCE**

NS reported that the Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) campaign Ten Good Reasons to shop locally went live at a launch event on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March.

The new campaign led by RCCE and supported by Essex County Council through the Local Area Agreement – wants to get more people in rural Essex shopping in their local shops and supporting local services.

RCCE and the Essex Partnership hope to get more people in rural Essex shopping locally and supporting local services by promoting the **Ten Good Reasons** campaign  
There is a Ten Good Reasons website which you may wish to visit; [www.tengoodreasons.org.uk](http://www.tengoodreasons.org.uk)

NS asked any one interested in the campaign to contact RCCE if they wanted further information. (For further information please contact Kris Radley, email: [kris.radley@essexrcc.org.uk](mailto:kris.radley@essexrcc.org.uk), tel 0844 4773938).

13 **Soapbox Items and Discussion**

**Essex and Southend LINKs**

KE reported on the Essex and Southend LINKs (Local Involvement Network) project. Essex & Southend LINK is a statutory body which has been created to cater for public involvement with all aspects of health and social care around the county and was the successor to the PPIF (Patient and Public Involvement Forums).

The LINK consists of the Countywide Group which steers the work of the LINK, 5 locality groups and theme groups/issue groups and has statutory powers to enter and view NHS and Social services provider's premises. It works closely with the Overseeing and Scrutiny Committees and can affect change through identifying problems in its role as a critical friend to Health and Social Services providers in Essex. At the Public meeting due to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> March £250,000 worth of project funding is due to be signed off.

IF anyone would like further information regarding the LINKs and meeting dates the website address is: [www.essexandsouthendlink.org.uk](http://www.essexandsouthendlink.org.uk)

**Action:** KM to circulate Essex and Southend LINKs website details.

### **Dates of Future Meetings**

- 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 - Targeted Support - Essex Community Engagement Network Conference, Hylands house, 9.00am– 3.30pm.
- 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010 ERP Economic Action Group Meeting has been postponed new date and venue TBC
- 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010, Essex Compact Forum Meeting

### **Date of Next Essex Rural Full Partnership Meeting**

29<sup>th</sup> July 2010 (9.30am Registration, 10am Meeting Commences, followed by a buffet lunch at 1.15 pm) Venue TBC

Meeting concluded 1.15 pm