



**ERP Full Partnership Meeting
Minutes of the Meeting held on 24th November 2010
The Reid Rooms, Margaret Roding**

Present: see final page of minutes

Action

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Cllr. John Jowers welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies**

Apologies were taken as read (please see final page of minutes).

3. **Minutes**

3.1 Accuracy

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2010 were agreed.

3.2 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. **Vibrant Rural Communities**

The Chairman introduced Pat Holtom from the East of England Rural Forum, who gave a presentation on Vibrant Rural Communities: a Rural White Paper for the East of England (*available to download shortly via ERP website*). Pat explained that the RWP is a 10 year evidence-based plan detailing how to develop opportunities for rural communities, in order that they become thriving places to live and work. The RWP's top three priorities are digital inclusion, rural economic growth and demographic change.

The Chairman invited questions, as follows:

Question – Richard Woolley, Rural Community Council of Essex – There has been a lot of political change. Is the RWP still relevant?

Answer – Until things settle down politically, we don't know

Question – Keith Brown, FSB – How do you see community led planning coping with 'NIMBYism'?

Answer – We will need to revisit questionnaires and update toolkits to deal with it. The proportion of people who vote needs to be reduced. There needs to be some development to enable rural communities to grow and survive.

Question – John Gilli-Ross, Essex Association of Local Councils – How are you going to use the available expertise to move digital inclusion forward?

Answer – Best practice guidelines are laid out in the RWP, but it is a question of who does it. Workshops will be held in February, with the hope that an organisation will volunteer.

Question – Penny Wallace, Writtle College – We need to increase the rural skill base and feed this into educational policies. How do we encourage young people in rural areas to learn the necessary skills?

Answer – There is a desperate need for highly skilled people. We would like to see these skills encouraged in agricultural colleges, but how we do it is up to the colleges themselves.

Question – Revd. Julie Nelson, Church of England – Why is there no reference to the strength and presence of the church?

Answer – The church was given the opportunity for input, but failed to make itself heard. A church presence at the workshops would help identify areas where the church can be involved.

Question – Chairman John Jowers, Essex County Council – When will the workshops be held?

Answer – A series of three workshops will be held in February & March. Venues have not yet been agreed.

Question – John Carr, Essex and Southend LINK – PCTs are disappearing, so rural communities should be involved in future provision of health and social care, so why is this not included in the RWP?

Answer – This area is included in chapter 7 – Living Well.

JJ thanked Pat Holtom for her presentation (*copy presentation in agenda pack*).

4.1 Report from East of England Rural Forum (EERF)

SH reported that at the last meeting on 4th November, the main topic was the Big Society. Notes and presentations are available to download from the website www.eerf.org.uk

5. Pub is the Hub

JJ introduced Terry Stork and Gordon Stewart, from Pub is the Hub. Gordon gave a presentation on the 'not for profit' advisory organisation (*available to download shortly via ERP website*), which helps pubs provide the valuable services to rural communities that are rapidly disappearing, for example, the post office and village shop. The campaign works in partnership with public, private and voluntary organisations, licensees and communities to develop local services.

JJ thanked Gordon for his presentation and invited people to direct any questions to Terry and Gordon during the break, as time was short.

A 20 minute interval was taken for refreshments at 11.15 am.

6. Big Society

Alastair Gordon from Essex County Council, introduced by JJ, gave a presentation on the Big Society. He explained what the concept means at a national level and a local level. He also reported on the progress of the Big Society in Essex so far.

Questions were taken as follows:

Question – Darren Smart, Essex County Council – What are we going to do to

encourage people to get involved, and how do we ensure provision is not just focussed on affluent areas?

Answer – You tend to see a lot of voluntary work where it is needed most. It is a challenge to recruit volunteers, but where people have time and the will, we will start with what they can do. Volunteers do not need to have skills to start with. Council staff could volunteer their skills, for example, help with the books, legal advice etc. Volunteers do not need to originate from a community to be involved with it.

Question – Tony Wright, Ambulance Trust – Will community organisers be responsible to anyone, and if so, who?

Answer – They will have to raise funds to justify their post, so in a sense they are responsible to their funders, but ultimately serve the community. The Government is to put out tender for a partner to deliver training – deadline 23rd December.

Question – Canon John Brown, Church of England – Who will employ community organisers?

Answer – They will be trained by partner organisations, but will have to raise their own funds after this period. They are not accountable to any public body, and will effectively be self-employed.

Question – Dominic Petre, Visit Essex – How will you ensure they are spread out evenly?

Answer – They are not intended to be spread out evenly geographically

7. **Group discussions – Big Society in Essex**

At the Chairs suggestion, and by agreement of the meeting, this item was disbanded in favour of continuing open discussion

8. **ERP Action Groups and Taking the Essex Rural Strategy Forward**

7.1 Steering Group – Report from Suzanne Harris

SH reported key points from the previous ERP Steering Group meeting:

- The Essex survey of Parish Councils found that 62 of 92 parishes have ‘inadequate’ broadband service.
- EEDA funding would be reduced by 24% and EEDA would disband in March 2012.
- The Steering Group had had in-depth discussion about the introduction of Local Enterprise Partnerships and had agreed to support the Essex and Kent liaison which was the current proposal at the time of the meeting. A letter had been sent to Essex County Council to affirm this support.
- Future funding of Essex Rural Partnership had been discussed; with no outcome known.
- The Services in Rural Essex 2010 survey had been discussed and distributed.

7.1 Community Action Group (CAG) – Report from Canon John Brown

Nothing to report as CAG had not met since July’s ERP meeting

7.2 Economic Action Group (EcAG) – Report from Philip Wilson

PW reported on 29th October meeting which discussed first reactions to the

Government spending review, which was broadly welcomed. There was concern that the National Insurance holiday would not extend to London and the SE, having a negative effect on employers. The Dartford crossing toll has been increased to £2 per vehicle. The VAT increase to 20% is bad for tourism and small businesses in Essex. Penny Wallace from Writtle College joined the group, welcoming the cap on Universities. Broadband announcements were welcomed and the impact of LEPs was discussed.

7.3 Environmental Action Group (EnvAG) – Report from Peter Baggott

PB reported on 3rd September meeting. It had been agreed that the EnvAG would focus on 3 key priorities:

1. Local projects and improve green infrastructure
2. Tourism trails
3. Initiatives to encourage local practices and crafts

The final draft of the Woodland Strategy is available.

Work on the two LAA targets was reported to be continuing, despite withdrawal of Performance Reward Grant funding. Progress on the targets:

- Ni 197 – sites under positive conservation management: target: 530; 493 achieved - fully confident of achieving
- Li 10.1 - Living Landscapes: target: 41; 37/38 achieved – not expected to be met

Next meeting 3rd December 2010 – *subsequently postponed*.

9. Soapbox

8.1 Keith Blackburn, Essex County Council – An update was given on the Rural Diversification sub-group work. Guidance notes are expected to be available early next year.

8.2 John Carr, Essex and Southend LINK – The Local Involvement Network is looking at health and social care in the community and will; 1) improve the information flow to the general public – a booklet will be issued to all providers of health and social care; and 2) set up a protocol for the provision of services for diabetic children in schools, with the hope to extend this for other illnesses.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending, closed the meeting at 1.15pm and invited attendees to have lunch.

Present:

	Peter	Baggott	Essex Association of Local Councils
	Angela	Balcombe	Essex County Council
	Simon	Banks	Essex County Council
Revd	Lee	Batson	Church of England
	Keith	Blackburn	Essex County Council
	Gaynor	Bradley	Uttlesford District Council
	Jackie	Brown	RRAUS
Revd Canon	John	Brown	Vice Chair of ERP
	Keith	Brown	Federation of Small Businesses
	Fiona	Bryant	East of England Development Agency
	John	Carr	LINKs
	Peter	Chillingworth	Colchester Borough Council
	George	Courtauld	Rural Community Council of Essex

	Joy	Darby	Essex Association of Local Councils
	Ken	Edwards	Chelmsford Sport / Chelmsford LSP
	Yvonne	Freeman	Rural Community Council of Essex
	John	Gili-Ross	Essex Association of Local Councils
	Alastair	Gordon	Essex County Council
	Suzanne	Harris	Rural Community Council of Essex
	Paul	Harris	Maldon District Community Transport
	Paul	Hart	CAB
	Pat	Holtom	East of England Rural Forum
	Mark	Iley	Essex Wildlife Trust
Cllr	Sheila	Jackman	Essex Association of Local Councils
Cllr	John	Jowers	Chair of ERP / Essex County Council
	Geoffrey	King	Disability Essex
	Jenny	Lewsey	Maldon District Council
	Andrew	Lowing	Rochford District Council
	Daisy	Martlew	Rural Community Council of Essex
Revd Dr	Julie	Nelson	Church of England
	Rosemary	Padfield	NFU
	Mick	Page	Essex County Council
	Dominic	Petre	Essex Tourism Association
	Rachael	Price	Essex County Council
	Mel	Rundle	Colchester Borough Council
	Wendy	Scattergood	Essex Local Government Representative
	Nick	Shuttleworth	Rural Community Council of Essex
	Graham	Simmons	Essex County Council
	Darren	Smart	Essex County Council
	Phil	Smith	Rural Shops Alliance
	Gordon	Stewart	Pub is the Hub
	Terry	Stork	Pub is the Hub
	Pennie	Wallace	Writtle College
	Paul	Williams	Essex County Council
	Philip	Wilson	Essex County Council
	Richard	Woolley	Rural Community Council of Essex
	Tony	Wright	LINKs
	John	Zammit	Essex County Council

Apologies:

	Mary	Atkins	Essex County Council
Cllr	John	Buchanan	Chairman EALC
	Sue	Cornwell	Colchester Borough Council
	Judy	Cuddeford	Braintree District Voluntary Services Association
	Ed	Gregory	Essex County Council
	John	Hall	Essex Wildlife Trust
	Keith	Hughes	Business Link
	Wendy	Jackson	Essex County Council
	Wendy	Scattergood	Braintree District Council
	Karen	Thomas	Environment Agency
	Rob	Wise	Country Land and Business Association