



**Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) Full Membership Minutes
Wednesday 1st July 2015**

Crowne Plaza Resort Colchester, Five Lakes, Tolleshunt Knights CM9 8HX

1 Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Roger Hirst welcomed those present to the meeting.

2 Apologies: *shown as an appendix*

3 Minutes of the meeting held on 13th February 2015

These were approved

4 Rural Policing – Nick Alston Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Nick Alston gave a verbal presentation on his role as PCC, and the key crime issues affecting rural Essex. A more detailed record of this presentation can be found on the ERP website.

Questions and Answers:

Dominic Petre - As crime figures show the higher profile crimes are receiving more attention from the Police, with regard to the lower type of crime such as a typical shed break in do we still report and what is the process regarding insurance?

NA - Yes do report low level crime and any crime. 101 provides you a crime number for insurance purposes and it also records the crime so we know what is going on in the community. i.e. by recording trends such as burglary's the police can focus on this too, as ongoing problems and can be addressed.

George Courtauld – Essex Marine Police rumours that it may be abolished or merged with local police what's the status.

NA - Regional collaboration will be the way to go similar to the Police Helicopter, it is no longer viable for the Marine Unit to operate at county level.

Sheila Jackson – Why are success stories not published for us to see?

NA - Essex Police Press Office are in operation and working hard to show the Police figures and success stories.

Peter Davey - It is frustrating if one cannot afford to fund the PCSO and if possible would the PCSO attend something more higher ranking outside the community if he were called upon?

NA - Joint funding has never worked as well as hoped, some Parishes do fund the training but it is restricted to their local area. If the council tax were raised by a few pence per household then it would help the funding and there is call for a PCSO's for individual communities.

5 **Flooding and SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems)**

Kathryn Goodyear, Essex County Council

Impact of Flooding Power Point presentation available separately.

Cllr Hirst emphasised the need to reduce flood risks, saying that not enough has been done over the last decade. What we are trying to achieve is to make sure developers will put in schemes to reduce flooding; they should be encouraged to look at design guidance. If we all work together then we can help reduce the surface water issues incurred in the last 10 years.

Questions and Answers:

Adam Scott NFU – The farming community feel that new builds are creating problems with flooding what is being done about it? How are ECC working with the Environment Agency?

KG - There is no Essex wide strategy and currently a need to prioritise.

Cllr RH - Areas needing Surface Water Management Plans have been identified. Other areas are not in need of assessment due to the area not flooding much. If assessments to date are wrong then the problem needs to be highlighted – RH would be pleased to pass on any information.

Peter Davey – what is the definition of ‘major’?

10 or more new homes – the same as planning regulations. If 10 or more homes are to be built then there is a requirement for the developer to put in SUDS and apply for an application.

6 **The Hundred Parishes: An update on progress – Tricia Moxey, CPRE**

Tricia provided a verbal update to the meeting and circulated a leaflet.

- 2011 concept of the Parishes is now up and running, aiming to protect the area from development
- The area consists of geographically unspoilt countryside
- To qualify the area has to be predominantly countryside for a long period of time
- Each area displays a variety of: beautiful listed buildings, churches and greens
- The website offers information for each location regarding the history, walks and next year will include running and safer cycle routes
- Up to date events list on website
- Website address is: www.hundredparishes.org.uk
- Membership walk will take place on 9th September 15
- AGM to be held on 28th September 2015 at the Guild Hall, Finchingfield, Essex
- The society is not predominantly promoting tourism
- CPRE connected organisation with HP and a number of Parishes

Questions and Answers:

John Brown – is this a partnership with other organisations?

TM – it is led by CPRE; parishes are also involved.

7 South East LEP Rural Activities

Lorraine George, South East Local Enterprise Partnership

European funding – Power point presentation available separately

The South East LEP is focussing on economic growth and is aiming to support the area's estimated rural population of 936,000 – nearly a quarter of the 3.9m residents in the whole area.

The LEP area will benefit from £14.5m of EU funding to support rural business in the area. As part of the EU's European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) scheme, micro and small businesses will now be able to apply for awards of a minimum £50,000 to help support projects to deliver the aims of the SE LEP Rural Strategy. SE LEP is one of just five LEPs in the country to have already invited applications to this fund.

Other smaller grants will be available to rural business and rural communities through the RDPE LEADER programme delivered by nine Local Actions Groups across the LEP area. It is possible for the two funds to work in partnership to fund different elements of a larger strategic project.

SE LEP are aware there is 'white space' not covered by LEADER and need to know if there is a demand for 'LEADER-size' projects in these areas as there is potential to allocate EAFRD funding to support. Anyone knowing of possible projects should advise Lorraine or Suzanne. There are two relationship managers at Defra and they are happy to meet with potential applicants (Helen Dallas and Milena Hinkova); they are part of the South East team and so do not cover all Essex LEADER groups.

The launch of the SE LEP Rural Strategy took place on 21st May. SE LEP is one of the few LEPs in the country that have a Rural Strategy which has now been recognised throughout the country.

SE LEP spend this year so far is £2.5 million.

EAFRD has 5 thematic objectives and SE LEP is addressing the less controversial of these first. There have been 18 applications to the EAFRD first call for applications, but Defra have not shared information regarding the location or nature of the applications.

Questions and Answers:

Sheila Jackson – What are the outcomes of the strategy – who is benefiting from this & where is the money spent?

Are areas in Essex losing out if it's going to Kent?

LG - Please refer to the annual report on the LEP website [link here](#). There is half a billion fund available to local authorities.

John Brown – Can a whole community submit an application?

LG - It requires a lead organisation to submit the application for the community and act as an accountable body.

Michael Veasey – Some potential businesses' may need support in developing the application, and may require help. Would it be an idea to assign individuals to help with the application and does this work in Essex?

LG - Not so far – it is important to get some help, Defra will not complete the application for you but they will advise.

8 Ministerial Roles in the new Government

Cllr John Buchanan, Essex Association of Local Councils

Power Point presentation available separately

John Buchanan and Joy Darby had met Mark Francois MP for a discussion and raised a number of issues relating to problems experienced by the Parish sector. It was deemed as a successful meeting.

9 ERP Action Groups and Thematic Reports

Community Action Group

Canon John Brown reported that the CAG had received reports and/or discussed the following issues:

- An update on Health watch activities
- Rural Strategy review
- Time Banks

Minutes of this meeting will be available on the ERP website.

Environmental Action Group

Paul Hinsley reported that the Environmental Action Group had good representation across all 4 LEADER groups and it is very pleased to see strong environmental issues raised throughout the Essex area. Current issues of interest to EnvAG members include:

- SUDS design guide and website is open to all members.
- ECC submitted a bid to the EU looking at high value timber products which will add value to what we have.

Report on LEADER Funding

Suzanne Harris presented a verbal update on LEADER activity and 4 Local Action Groups.

- Local Action Group staff have received 3 of 5 training sessions from Defra.
- Timeline:
 - Defra require a financial Plan to be submitted by end June
 - Defra require a Delivery Plan to be submitted by end July
 - Defra will issue contracts once these documents have been received.
- Delivery is anticipated to begin in September
- Application will be via a two-stage process, which will vary slightly between LAGs
- First payments anticipated to be made in early 2016

Essex Rivers LAG information available at www.essexrivers.co.uk and leaflets available. Wool Towns LAG and Heritage Coast LAG information on Suffolk CC website <http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/your-council/finance/funding/leader-rural-development/> and leaflets available. Contact for Wool Towns and Heritage Coast is Gavin Talbot at Suffolk CC.

**10 Essex Rural Strategy Review : An update from the Strategy Working Group
Philip Wilson**

There is a need to revise the strategy and a small group has been set up to write the content of the document. The group consists of:

- Canon John Brown
- Joy Darby
- Craig Elliot
- Suzanne Harris
- Nick Shuttleworth
- Philip Wilson

A questionnaire is currently being which will made available electronically. Questions are being written to fit into the following categories:

- Home and health
- Work and study
- Leisure and Recreation
- Wider World/World Around Us

Essex Association Parish Council is hosting a consultation event on 21st July 2015.

The focus will then be then to get the questionnaire out to as many people as possible; it will be a very comprehensive survey enabling us to gain valuable information. ERP members were encouraged to pass the link to others fill it out and pass on to get furthest possible reach.

11 A.O.B

There was none.

DATES:

21st July 2015 Parishes Consultation Meeting (Rural Strategy)

Date for next ERP: October 2015

Dates for all Action Group meetings: tba