



Minutes of meeting held on 5th September 2007

RCCE Offices Feering

Attendees:

John Brown (JB)	RCCE – Chair
Suzanne Roast (SR)	RCCE
Theresa Coyne (TC)	Tendring Community Transport
Joy Sheppard (JS)	EALC
Paul Williams (PaW)	ECC
Wendy Jackson (WJ)	ECC
Angela Balcombe (AB)	ECC
Philip Wilson (PhW)	ECC
Neil Keylock (NK)	ECC
Ken Edwards (KE)	Chelmsford Sport
Kirsty Monk (KM)	RCCE (minutes)

Apologies

Kitty Barrett	BDC
Judy Cuddeford	BDVSA
Sue Sumner	CVS Uttlesford
Elaine Woods	ECC
Chris Allen	EEDA
Keith Blackburn	ECC
Graham Bushby	Essex SJA
Gemma Driscoll	ECC
Ed Gregory	ECC
Mike Hall	Writtle College
Dianne Hardy	ExDra
Ruth Juett	EREC
Gill Pike	UVC
Linda Riley	VST
Jenny Salisbury	ECC Library Services
Nick Shuttleworth	RCCE
Brenda Towle	ECVS
Miriam Stead	ECC
Tony Shelton	Age Concern Essex
Linda Smart	ECC

John Brown warmly welcomed attendees to the meeting and introductions were made.

Philip Wilson (ECC) introduced himself to the group, he explained that he would be taking over from Keith Blackburn (ECC) who had moved to another area of work and his new remit would encompass economic regeneration in rural areas.

1. **Minutes of the last meeting & Matters Arising**

Matters of accuracy, items for amendment:

Item 6 – ERSAP, transport 2.a- amend to

PhW said that it might be a good idea to set up sub groups with specific knowledge to tackle these action point issues effectively.

AOB - amend to: by Central Government and Essex County Council instead of West Essex PCT

TC requested that the minutes have page numbers.

The minutes were then agreed by those present.

Matters Arising from those minutes:

Market Towns

SR advised that the National Market Towns event would have to take place before it was feasible to hold the County event. This meant that the earliest the event could be attempted would be November 2007

After a short discussion, the Group decided that it would be best to postpone the event until March 2008.

Continued Action: SR to liaise with JS and Parishes via EALC regarding this issue. SR to speak to Sally Williams.

Election of New ERP Chair (item 4)

Further to the news that Cllr. Peter Martin's Portfolio had changed and he would be stepping down as chairman of the ERP; SR explained that Cllr. John Jowers was to stand as Chair of the Essex Rural Partnership and that the election of the new chair would take place at the next Full ERP Partnership Meeting in September. Cllr Jowers has the support of the Essex Rural Partnership Steering Group.

2. Update on RSCP(Rural And Social Community Programme) Projects in Essex:

SR reported that the RSCP projects were continuing to run to target, with the Community Planning Fund having a steady stream of applicants. No further news had been given regarding funding for these RSCP projects post March 2008 (expected news - January 2008).

Action:

The proposed meeting with Rachel Stoppard (Essex Parliament) had been superseded by a re shuffle at ECC. This was still to be arranged with her successor. -SR

JS circulated a information sheet to the group regarding the Launch of the RSCP Grant schemes (EALC) on 18/09/07. The grant is aimed at providing tools, techniques and training to Parish /Town Clerks and Councils to better enable them to communicate and represent their communities.

Action:

JS explained that she wished to slightly alter how the money was divided and that this meant that SR would go back to the original group to ask permission to change this new division of funding.

JS advised the group that the funding had enabled Parish/Town Clerks to gain the new national Qualification and that clerks in Essex had achieved a 60% pass rate.

EALC had used RSCP funding to facilitate the following:

- 70 Election promotions and training

- 37 grants for training of clerks and new councillors and cilca
- 2 new notice boards
- 1 new Parish Council grant
- 6 software improvements for websites
- 30 computer updates and training
- 10 Annual Reports and News Letters
- 3 village Plans
- 1 Projector
- 1 Village design Statement
- 45 CILCA passes

JB congratulated JS and EALC on their hard work and success; this aid given to rural communities highlighted the need for further funding for these projects to continue.

Continued Actions

- Representation should be made to the LAA to get reward funding to keep these projects going. (SR/JB)
- A case with supporting evidence for the continuance of these projects etc should be put together (SR/JS)
- A meeting with the Essex Parliament - Directors from ECC and External Relationships and Partnerships should be sought -JS/SR to liaise about a possible meeting (please see above).

3. Update on Essex Rural Partnership Activities

Post Office Closures in Essex

SR advised the Group that the ERP Special working group had devised a strategy in response to meetings with Post Office Limited and Postwatch to give early warning, briefing and help to communities in Essex facing a possible Post Office closure. The first poster and briefing had already been sent to Parishes, Town Councils and Borough and District councils in Essex and stage 2 of the campaign would be to send out posters advising of the actual public consultation dates with cover letter, briefing advice and a list of Post Offices to close, to be issued in early October. The ERP website had special pages devoted to this issue with downloads of Poster/ Briefing already available and template response letters to come. The initial response from the Press on the consultation had been disappointing. However SR and Nick Shuttleworth were continuing their work on the media campaign.

WJ advised that ECC had devised a useful map plotting journey times to existing post offices. The Post Office had compiled their own database to show access to post offices.

KE believed it would be a good idea if ECC could share that information with Post Office Limited.

KE was concerned that the 6 week consultation period did not meet the 12 Essex Compact agreement criteria.

SR replied that this would be one of the matters raised in the ERP response to the 6 week public consultation by Post Office Limited.

Action: JS to write to Clerks in the county to advise them what to do regarding the Post Office Public Consultation

ERP Website

SR reported that his was progressing well and ERP activities, meetings minutes, contact details, strategy and special activities, ERP news and Links, as well as ERP action group's information, could all be viewed via the web site.

Action: PaW asked that an individual action plan for each action group be posted to the website. – SR

4. Year of Food and Farming (YoFF)

PhW explained that CERA (Centre for the Environment and Rural Affairs) working coordinating the East of England and County working committees and events for YoFF alongside the National Federation of Farmers. The Year of Food and Farming was a government initiative to promote understanding and reconnection of young people to where food comes from, nutrition and the role of farming and rural communities i.e. how it gets from farm to plate. The National Launch was due on 12/09/07 at Highgrove. The major Essex event for key stage 2 primary school children was due to be held on 1st May 2008 at Writtle College with over 3000 children from Essex schools invited.

5. liC Update

The Rural Access Project

SR had no further news on this project; except to confirm that arrangements were proceeding on target to secure funding.

PaW reported that ECC had been given 140,000 by liC to help people over the age of 50, retrain, retrain or join for the first time, the job market in rural and urban areas of Essex. The scheme "50 not out" would provide advice and training, job search and guidance. Job Centre Plus and the Library Service were helping to promote the service.

TC felt that the Voluntary Sector was also a great place to retrain and help get people back to work.

Action

The Group felt that this was an excellent project and it was decided to put Links and information on the ERP website. –SR/PW

The Rural Retail Advisor

SR advised that she would shortly be holding interviews for Research Post (a prerequisite for the actual retail advisor post being instated). Initially it would be purely a retail post with the option to follow through to the full post for the right candidate.

Action: SR to report back on further developments on these 2 projects.

6. Essex Rural Strategy Action Plan (ERSAP) – New Actions Tasks and Priorities

The Group felt that they should look at the Action plan to determine any actions that they could not facilitate or that were being covered by other organisations, so that they could more effectively tackle the remaining essential tasks on the ERSAP.

It was decided to:

- Review and identify what actions are currently being carried out in Essex regarding childcare to enable parents to return to work (via early years childcare and development coordinator)- action point 5e (NK, SR, PW)
- Determine which elements/ progress regarding action point 6g "Fear of Crime" had been undertaken by the ERP Economic Group to date (to avoid duplication) and which elements were covered by other organisations and at LSP/LAA level. This will enable the CAG group to determine the area of this action they need to undertake with the focus on community and the fear of crime.
- 6g contd – speak to the crime reduction officer and Crime reduction panel
- 1d report on the progress of the rural services survey.

- 3b-a Identify and determine which elements/ progress regarding action point 3b/3a -Tourism- (suggested contact with Miram Stead ECC)
- 6d Affordable Housing- JS wished to liaise with Moira Groborz the Rural Housing Enabler at RCCE to tackle this action point; SR to facilitate the meeting.
- 9E –Training to promote community leadership (EALC already covering this action) – Investigate Community Learning Service funding available for community training schemes and training in advocacy - PW to pass details to SR/JS
- Give greater detail on the progress to date for each task and achievements
- State the review date for each task.
- Revised ERSAP should be posted and updated regularly on the ERP website so that members had viewing access to ERSAP progress.
- The ERSAP should be reviewed at the next full ERP Membership meeting on 12/09/07 (workshop) –SR
- SR to update the action plan with environmental actions

7. Future Events

- **ERP Full Partnership Meeting-** 12th September 2007, High Barn Great Bardfield, Steering Group Meeting PM - Presentation from the Farm Crisis Network and YoFF with Workshops on ERSAP/Priorities.
- **Leader Presentation 17/10/07 – RCCE Office Threshelfords**
- **RTAN Networking Lunch 23rd October 2007, Chapter House, Chelmsford** - ask Kirsty Monk for details.
- **Transition Essex -RCCE 24/10/07 Essex Records Office**
- **ERP Steering Group Meeting 21/11/07**

8. Date of the next meeting

This was later arranged as 2nd November, RCCE Offices, Feering; arrival for Danish Pastries/ Refreshments 9.30am.

9. AOB:

TC advised that a very useful district wide survey of Tendring, regarding young people had been carried out and that she would email results of the survey to the CA group.