



**Minutes of Community Action Group meeting  
20<sup>th</sup> May 2008  
RCCE Offices Feering**

**Attendees:**

John Brown (JB)	RCCE – CAG Chair
Suzanne Roast (SR)	RCCE
Chris Allen (CA)	EEDA
Chris Rust (CR)	Maldon District Council
Keith Cheesman (KC)	ECC
Judy Cuddeford (JC)	BDVSA
Linda Riley (LR)	VST
Gill Burden (GB)	TDC
Kitty Barrett (KB)	BDC
Paul Williams (PW)	ECC
Philip Wilson (PhW)	ECC
Jenny Salisbury (Jes)	ECC Library Services
David Eniffer (DE)	Volunteer Centre Tendring
Sue Sumner (SS)	CVS Uttlesford UVCC
Tony Shelton (TS)	Age Concern Essex
Carole Randall	CERA
Kirsty Monk (KM)	RCCE (minutes)

**Apologies**

Joy Sheppard (JS)	EALC
Theresa Coyne (TC)	Tendring Community Transport
Wendy Jackson (WJ)	ECC
Melanie Rundle (MR)	Colchester Borough Council
Mike Hall	
Vincent Marley	CERA
Dorren Marsden	Vol Centre Uttlesford
Paul Murphy	Director Maldon DC Vol Service
Ken Edwards	Chelmsford Sport
Fiona McMahon	ECC
Elaine Woods	ECC
Graham Bushby	Essex SJA
Ed Gregory	ECC
Dianne Hardy	ExDra
Ruth Juett	EREC
Gill Pike	UVC
Brenda Towle	ECVS
Miriam Stead	ECC
Angela Balcombe (AB)	ECC
Karen Flack (KF)	ECC
Neil Keylock (NK)	ECC

**1 Chairman's Introduction**

John Brown (JB) (Chairman) welcomed and thanked all for attending the meeting, introductions were made. Apologies were taken as read.

## 2 Minutes of the previous meeting, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007 & matters arising

JeS advised that that the new library in Great Dunmow would actually be 3 times the size of the existing Library. No further matters of accuracy were raised.

Those present then agreed the minutes.

### **The following were reported as updates/ matters arising from those minutes;**

SR reported that since the December Community Action Group (CAG) meeting the CAG had held a successful joint working party visit with the ERP Economic Action group to Langford, to view a potential community shop in a church.

PhW felt that the trip brought together the right people with the right expertise to give advice to the project.

JB advised that the project leaders were awaiting the diocese to produce a faculty before they could pursue the project further. JB felt that it was an extremely good example of working together and getting out and about to view projects at a grass roots level.

JB suggested that it might perhaps be beneficial for the Community Action Group to visit projects with in the County twice a year

**Further matters arising were covered within the main agenda items.**

## 3 Post Offices Update Further Post Office Closures

SR advised that 2 further post offices (that had recently been undergoing a public consultation process) Henham and Little Bentley, were due to close in June 2008.

Those sub post offices scheduled for replacement by outreach postal services have been confirmed as East Mersea, Langham and Birch. The Post Master will be based at Wivenhoe and will operate a greatly reduced satellite service to these 3 areas. The post office at Birch had been relocated to the village pub.

SS felt that if capital was put into helping communities install the necessary security for a Postal Service, more communities could be encouraged to pursue this sort of scheme.

### **Action:**

Circulate a copy of list of post office closures CAG members

KM

### **ECC Negotiations with Post office Limited (POL)**

Essex County Council (ECC) are currently in negotiations with POL and had offered 1.5 million over the next 3 years to help reopen and subsidise at least some of those post offices that have been closed during the Network Change Programme. ECC hoped to help them to become self sustaining in the future through advice and support over the next 3 years.

There had been some hurdles to overcome, notably the possibility that if ECC funds Sub Post Offices (which would be regarded as a private enterprise), ECC could be seen to be in breach of EU regulations. However this obstacle was to be surmounted by ECC funding not only the post office element, but ensuring the reopened centre offered other community benefits such as a shop and information hub.

PW advised that the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) had announced that ECC would have no case to answer regarding state EU regulations.

**Action:** Copy of cabinet report to be circulated to CAG members

PhW

**The South Essex Area Plan** (proposed post office closures in the southern area of the County) is due to be announced on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2008. The plus side is that this is not a particularly rural area; the minus side is that all the publicity surrounding the 1.5 million pledged by Essex County may have a detrimental influence on the level of closures identified by POL in this second round of closures. Especially as the ECC money cannot be allocated to areas under unitary control. We are not sure whether POL has taken this into account.

#### 4 **Essex Rural Partnership (ERP) Activity Review**

##### **ERP Rural Services Survey 2008**

SR reported that that RCCE on behalf of the ERP and ECC had undertaken a Rural Services Survey (RSS) and that RCCE had received a good response rate (70) %. All the data had been entered and RCCE were currently on the process of writing the RSS report.

KB: advised that Braintree District had carried out a similar survey in 2007 and circulated copies to the group. Their survey had proved a useful tool to identify gaps in services in the Braintree District.

##### **ERP Economic Action Group**

PhW advised the Group that ECC had undertaken a project looking at employment access across the county, which would prove a valuable exercise in predicting the future nature of employment in Essex.

#### 5 **Rural Social and Community Programme (RSCP)**

##### **Rural Retail Advisor RRA:**

SR reported that due to drastic cuts in the liC budget that the 1 year funding for the RRA has now been withdrawn.

##### **Market Towns Initiative MTI**

SR advised that there would now be an MTI in Great Dunmow which was due to take place in September 2008 (co-organised with Sally Williams).

PW felt that communities needed to be made aware of the benefits of becoming Market Towns as it was an excellent magnet to those funding streams not available to Town Councils.

CA explained that the definition of a Market Town was a population of 3-30,000, the definition had broadened in recent years. If the Town Councils worked together with MTI partnerships they could attract funding to buy their own assets.

##### **Action:**

Promotional Material for the MTI event in Great Dunmow to be circulated to the CAG SR KM when available

#### 6 **ERP Environmental Action Group (EnvAG)**

SR reported that the EnvAG was concentrating on influencing the environmental priorities of the new Local Authority Agreement. There was talk of splitting the ERP element and the Essex Partnership element of EnvAG back into 2 working groups. The next meeting was due on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

##### **LAA2**

SR advised that the Essex Partnership Group working group overseeing the LAA are looking to form cross cutting sub groups to tackle priority elements of the LAA. They have tried to recruit John Hall from EWT into the environmental sub group. However there is some dispute as to which groups should be linked; for example it was

intended that environmental be linked with waste management, but this proposal was rejected and instead it is now proposed that environmental be linked with community. However one might feel that perhaps economic concerns had a greater impact on the environment than community issues.

#### 7 **Year of Food And Farming (YOFF)**

PhW reported that the main YOFF event on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008 at Writtle College for all key stage 2 primary school children had been a great success with good attendance.

PhW gave his apologies at this point in the meeting as he had another urgent meeting to attend.

#### 8 **Terms of Reference for the Community Action Group (CAG)**

SR explained that following the last meeting of the CAG, she had revised the existing CAG terms of reference. A copy was circulated to the group for review; the CAG then decided to take the following actions:

##### **Actions:**

- All comments regarding the CAG Terms of Reference to be circulated for review and feedback within 2 weeks (03/06/08) to Suzanne Roast , RCCE. ALL/SR
- Voluntary Sector members of the group suggested that a nominated voluntary sector attendee to represent that sector and report back; this is to be considered at the next meeting. SR/ALL
- Email copy of CAG Terms of Reference to be sent to members KM

#### **Future Meeting of CAG**

The Group discussed methods of revitalising CAG meeting, the following proposals were suggested:

- Combined ERP Action Group meetings/ workshops looking at 3 cross cutting issues, such as fear of crime, tourism and migrant workers.
- Away days viewing rural issues affecting communities at grass roots
- ERSAP Themed Meetings, such as Health, childcare etc
- Continued recruitment of new members with a stake hold in rural issues

#### 9 **Date of next full Essex Rural Partnership Meeting**

The next full ERP Partnership meeting will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008, 9.30 am registration, meeting commences 10.00am- 1.15pm, Best Western Hotel, Marks Tey, Colchester followed by a hot Lunch.

#### 10 **Date of next CAG group meeting**

Next meeting of the CAG to be held on 14/07/08 11.00am to 1.00pm, RCCE Offices Feering.

**Meeting Concluded 11.15am**