



Essex Rural Partnership

**Minutes of A Meeting of the Economic Action Group
of the Essex Rural Partnership**

on 16 November 2007

Present:

Ed Gregory
Dominic Petre
Suzanne Roast
Pat Roberts
Phil Smith
Paul Williams
Philip Wilson

Apologies:

Terry Taber
Keith Hughes
Richard Devanney
John Buchanan

1 Apologies

See above

2 Notes of last meeting

The draft minutes presented were approved.

3 Action Plan

➤ Rural Shops

SR informed the meeting that Elizabeth Thorogood had been appointed as the Research Officer, who would be in post until March 2008. The research was intended to support the case for a Retail Advisor, and EEDA had indicated that money would be available from the IiC budget for 2008-9 to fund a one-year pilot project, subject to evidence gathered in the research.

It was intended that a grant fund would be created by ECC, and that the new Advisor would be instrumental in administration and promotion of this.

SR updated the meeting on PO closures, confirming that the consultation period had closed (for the majority of Essex) and that the outcomes were awaited.

➤ Social Enterprises

PaW informed the meeting of the work of SENEST – the Social Enterprise Network for Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

➤ Funding

Leader

- Colchester, Maldon, Rochford and Tendring have grouped to form a Local Area Group (LAG) to look at coastal farm diversification and tourism
- There is a Stour Valley LAG, covering north Essex and south Suffolk (Dedham and Haverhill are main centres)
- The Green Arc LAG is believed to have been 'put on hold'

- There is an East Herts LAG, whose area covers part of Uttlesford, known as the Essex Plateau. The project purpose is to reduce carbon emissions in rural communities

➤ Planning and Diversification

The final draft of the report has been issued. An event is to be held in February – primarily for planners.

A report will go to Jonathan Shaw, via EERF, on this topic.

➤ Rural Crime

This would be dealt with in conjunction with CAG

Key issues identified were:

- *Fly tipping*
- *Joy riding*
- *Vandalism*
- *Drugs*

➤ Market Towns

PhW reported that new Uttlesford DC officer (Bruce Tyce) is in post; he is seeking a district network.

➤ Migrant Workers

PaW reported that ESF funding is available – with a lead body in Luton, Beds. This is for engaged learning with providers in Eastern region for ESOL training. 30ppl trained – must reach level 2 by March. Popular with Polish and Portuguese.

➤ Signage

The benefit of the presentation had been lost. Aims:

- *Better diversion **from** rural areas*
- *Good brown signs **to** rural attractions*
- *Decrease in clutter*

PhW would invite a Highways rep to a future meeting.

➤ Sustainable construction

Richard Devanney should be approached to assist with forming a cross AG working group; possibly a presentation to the full partnership.

4 AOB

Rural Summit to be held on 3 Dec at the Reid Rooms – 6.30pm

Tourism – a new ECC Head of Tourism was shortly to be appointed. It was agreed that this should be a future agenda item and that this new Officer should be invited to attend.

Regional Economic Strategy (RES) – PhW would circulate his response to the RES.

5 Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.