



MINUTES
of a virtual meeting held on Teams Tuesday, 9th November -
2021 at 2pm-4.50pm

Present members:

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| Louise Fuller (LF) | Katherine Evans (KE) -Chair | Jake Richards (JR) |
| John Victory (JV) | Ray Booty (RB) – Vice Chair | Rowena Macaulay (RM) |
| Robert Wright (RW) | | Martyn Towns (MT) |
| Edward Dixon (ED) | | Malcolm Lees (ML) |
| Vernon Glashier (VG) | | Sam Iddison (SI) – new member |

LA Officers present: Shirley Anglin (SA)

Apologies: Sue Dobson (SD), Jan Arthur (JA), Sandra Reynolds (SR), Sandra Reynolds

Members of the Public: none

Guest: John Buchanan (JB), Kris Radley (KR)

Minute Taker: Val Cleare

| 1 | Chairman’s Welcome: apologies and appointments | Action |
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| | KE welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. KE formally welcomed new member Sam Iddison. Also Kris Radley, Essex Cycling Strategy Leader. KE also welcomed John Buchanan as a guest who is a potential new member. | |
| 2 | <p>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 May 2021. Minutes were circulated. RM raised the issue of receiving the minutes the day before the meeting for which KE apologised. Noted.</p> <p>RB explained he had difficulty accessing the minutes as they were sent out as a Word document. Action: SA to send out in pdf format to RB.</p> <p>Minutes were agreed by all.</p> | SA |
| 2 | Matters Arising – there were no matters arising. | |
| 3. | Essex Highways Cycle Programme | |
| | Kris Radley, Essex Cycling Strategy Leader, Essex Highways was welcomed. Kris was invited to update on cycling policies in Essex Highways and some of the objectives he has over the next 10-15 years. The main objective of the Essex Cycling Strategy that was adopted in 2016, is to encourage more people to cycle for everyday journeys, to create a shift with regards to business and to see cycling as an | |

alternative to taking the car.

Strategic Position: Benefits picked up in the Strategy

- Children getting best start to life to cycle or walk to school.
- Aspirations for people to cycle to employment and training and further education as well.
- Social, economic growth is important. Reducing road congestion by reducing the number of cars on the roads.
- People want to live independently in Essex and having direct, coherent cycle networks would encourage people to travel by bike.

Active modes of transport are good for health and wellbeing. Physically active residents reduce cardiovascular disease which is important.

My role as Essex Cycling Strategy Leader, is policy work, influencing and working with Members and politicians across the county to improve sustainable travel through the Essex Highways framework.

The aim is to ensure a cultural shift stays in Essex toward everything being safer, healthy and cleaner.

Covid-19 had a massive impact on active travel and how people thought about cycling and walking. It was noted last year that there was a 40% increase in the number of bike sales in the UK. Also, there was a 46% increase in people who took up road cycling. The Department for Transport last year announced a gear change in that the Government were stepping up the importance of cycling and walking from a national perspective. Also released a document: LTN120 (Local Transport Note), in association with that there was an increase in funding for Active Travel. In the Government Spending Review £2bn was announced for walking and cycling. £2bn equates to 80% more funding than in 2005.

Coherent networks – what the cycle network will look like in the next 10- 15 years.

There will be strategic planning, feasibility, scoping, design and delivery. The idea is to develop the network to identify funding streams and high profile schemes to deliver the cycling action plans and every district has one. These are an overview of the existing network and where we would like to see cycling infrastructure in Essex.

Two years ago the Government announced for all districts to plan **in a similar format**. Local Authorities should have Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans (LCWIPs). Colchester, Chelmsford, Braintree, Harlow and Basildon areas **have LCWIP** plans. Essex is in a very strong position for future **funding**.

From the Department for Transport there is an active travel fund in response to the pandemic. There has been over £10m transformation funding in Essex.

Best Practice Design

We engaged with the design engineer teams and colleagues, we have got a good database and knowledge base around best practice. The Essex Design Portal has the latest best practice and is a really useful tool.

Behavioural Change (modal shift) Programme

This is a cultural shift to work with people and address barriers for people to take up active methods of transport.

An example in Clacton and Jaywick - Essex Pedal Power / Tending Free Bikes. We are building a new route and introducing cycle parking around the town. We are giving people free bikes in deprived parts of the county. It is on loan for one year and if meeting criteria after one year, they can keep the bike. Looking at extending the scheme to Colchester, Harlow and Basildon.

Q&A

Q: ML asked about the New Street, Chelmsford project. Is it correct there are not any kerbs alongside the cycle track?

A: There are kerbs but they are not quite full kerbs. It is a Cambridge bullnose which is similar to those in Cambridge. It is a Danish hybrid.

Q. ML asked is it part of your work to enhance bridleways used by cyclists?

A: Yes, if fits within strategic planning.

Historically, there has been a lot of focus on urban. The benefit cost ratios (numbers of people onto the network) have to be considered when doing bids.

Q: JV – from our point of view looking at linking public rights of way and where all non-motorised users can go, we would like to see them linked together as far as possible. Some of the links go onto a normal highway which is quite dangerous.

KR- With the LCWIPS we identified trip developers and trip attracters. If you look at, for example, Earls Colne to Coggeshall, people moving between these two large villages get to the main road and it is 60mph with really long traffic volumes. Can we do something with a quiet lane perhaps where walkers, cyclists and horse riders become priority on the quiet lanes. We would like to explore these options more in detail.

Q: Will you be working with Sustrans?

A: KR - I worked with RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) and then went to Sustrans as Network Development Manager and now I'm with Essex. However, still work very closely with Sustrans.

LF: Horse riders do not want to see surfaces of bridleways turned into tarmac. Please can this be borne in mind and not all surfaces are suitable for cyclists.

RM pointed out a crossover issue of physical barriers work in Colchester relating to the whole county regarding a meeting held recently.

KR - barriers are often introduced within the highway network to manage access or control users coming out into dangerous environment. Quite often teams not following best practice. There are issues about quality of information what standards should be following when introducing access control barriers. There is a need to make sure designers are aware of latest standards.

MT asked about the multi-user pathway from Chelmsford to Writtle where they replaced bridge with a wider one which is great. Problem is if you have two people with push chairs and cyclists are trying to utilize the pathway. If you want cyclists to use these routes at a certain speed. It is a very congested footpath.

KR - The issue is with speed and cyclists should travel at an appropriate speed. They are using a bike because they want to get somewhere quicker. Multi-user routes have to be wide enough.

KE –We would like to be very much involved in looking at the strategic routes in the Cycle Action Plans

Kris Radley offered to do a specific Q&A session and maybe a do a presentation. Kris said he can show some of the maps developed and how they strategically plan. Also, can talk about maintenance programmes.

RM – Raised the issue with barriers either on or proposed to go on Cyclepaths preventing accessibility to those in wheelchairs. Proposed that barriers should all be subject to review. RM informed that planning applications routinely go through without mention about barriers. The Planning Department should ask that all barriers are specified. To get planning permission they must adhere to certain standards.

SA – Essex Design Guide for Cycling and Barriers should be used by developers. Need to refresh training of PROW Officers about what their responsibilities are and what the standards should be to ensure routine removal of barriers to access.

SA – We do not have a cycle path map on the Highways Information Map. There is no comprehensive map of all the cycle paths in Essex that can just be clicked on for public viewing. It is a huge piece of work to create this. It is how we collate the information and keep it accurate and up-to-date. Just as there is no map layer for barriers.

ML suggested volunteers to survey where barriers are and to photograph them and we could develop a map where the barriers are.

RM – This has been done in Colchester and the Colchester cycle campaign has been adding information potentially with photographs and details of the barriers and who is prevented access by this. Also can understand when the barrier was put there etc.

JV - we can do all this work but unless someone is there to put it on the system, it is work wasted.

SA – It may work better with parishes. Perhaps we could start a pilot with two parishes to see how it goes.

ML – Suggested about a map of cycleways in Galleywood and Great Baddow.

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| 4 | Rail Trails and Linear Country Parks | |
| | <p>KE reported VG went to Flitch Way and did a survey of a section looking at barriers. KE suggested the information could be put in a table against the Definitive Map Order showing bridleways and these could be compared. Perhaps we can survey the whole the Flitch Way about what is legally allowed to be there and what is not.</p> <p>SA stated it is owned and maintained by Braintree District Council (BDC) from Rayne into Braintree. VG was happy to take photos across the whole stretch. SA believed if they are not structures with licences, then we can get them removed and changed for something else. We can do this with our Country Parks colleagues. They have various issues around antisocial and illegal use, but we can talk to colleagues about it.</p> <p>Blackwater Rail Trail is not on any maps at all.</p> | |
| 5 | ELAF Site Visit – Photo Trail Outcomes | |
| | <p>LAF site visit in August was circulated by KE. JV provided a report and showed tour online to understand how you can make a route that is available to everyone and looking at hazards around the route that might impede people. It started in a park area.</p> <p>A brief summary:</p> <p>There is a bridge over the river. There is a problem for people with wheel chairs. RM commented about the gradients being a problem.</p> <p>The PROW meant having to go through a hedge which was restrictive. We followed a grass path to a T-junction. The road was a private road with a cul de sac but noted it will be a busy road with the development taking place in the park. We then followed a public footpath but that brought us into the same field. If producing a route guide you need to be precise about where to follow. Then into a private roadway.</p> <p>There was a nature reserve where there is a barrier. It was very difficult in a wheelchair to get over the kerb. We followed through a field, some reeds exposed problems for visually impaired users to be highlighted and then another step ramp into a service road. It was quite steep.</p> <p>Once back to the service road, there were ramps by the rail trail. It was difficult manoeuvring in a wheelchair. This led to the ex-rail trail where the vegetation was well-maintained.</p> <p>Barriers provided through the housing estate to stop people cycling or motor bikes. RM thought it looked as if most mobility scooters would manage the space of the barriers. We continued through the housing estate, turned right into town.</p> <p>There was the question of where to cross the main road as there was no pedestrian crossing which faces the main entrance to the park. RM did not know whether the Highways Department can get a crossing there.</p> <p>JB mentioned Elms Farm, Maldon where there is a footpath into the park and no crossing on the road. JB did say there is a little island there but still no crossing.</p> <p>Observations – VG said it was an eye opener for people who do not have an impairment and on the first approach there was a problem with the wheelchair. RM reported we were using the photography to do an audit of a route that day but also talking about the creative possibilities of photo trailing as we are opening up to display to people the opportunities that are out there.</p> | |

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| | <p>ML described a path which would be a useful photo trail – from Vicarage Lane to Craiston Way in Great Baddow. At the start there is a barrier to prevent motor cyclists using the route. ML would like to see a bridge there over a ditch. The ditch has been filled in by people walking along the path which needs tidying up. Ownership of the land – no-one knows who owns it. The path gets very muddy in winter.</p> <p>There was discussion about possibly covering it with wood chippings. There was a question whether it would be ok for horse riders. LF commented we would ride on bark chippings but do not know how long they would last. It is not accessible for wheelchair users. It was noted cyclists use the paths now.</p> <p>It would be useful to create a map along with reference to define exactly where the path is located. It was suggested this could be used with the Go Jauntly App and people might like to put this together perhaps with a model example.</p> | |
| 6 | <p>Update from Regional LAF meeting in July</p> | |
| | <p>KE had circulated the minutes on 7/11/21. It was basically that with the mild winter and lockdown and everyone was using the PROWs.</p> <p>Land management scheme – nothing positive was concluded about PROW and access.</p> <p>The regional LAF have not had much support from Natural England. They used to get secretarial support and nothing like that is happening anymore.</p> <p>Norfolk rail projects have diminished.</p> | |
| 7 | <p>ECC Report</p> | |
| | <p>SA distributed her report on 4/11/21 with the agenda.</p> <p>SA highlighted from the report:</p> <p>Essex Highways transformation –Consultation closes 10/11/21. Subsequently will share the details and new look of the service going forward. SA commented it is a difficult time for all of us and she appreciated thepatience with the team over the next few weeks.</p> <p>The report details updates on the Capital schemes for 2021/22</p> <p>KE asked about Shalford 13 TRO.- byway closed to protect the surface of the lane.</p> <p>SA showed the LAF the new look and functionality of the TRO map on the EH webpages. You can now print the map as well as drop a pin, measure lengths and many other functions.</p> <p>Network Rail – no update on Transport and Works Act Order Inquiry.</p> | |

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| | <p>Enforcement – Simon has been doing with Crossfields enforcement.</p> <p>Next year looking at paths for surfacing schemes but do not know what the budgets are and then need to do scoping exercise to see which we can afford to do.</p> <p>LF asked about Stanford Rivers 26 but it was not on the list of schemes for 2022. LF thought works would be required. SA has not seen any scheme proposals yet from the Inspection team.</p> | |
| 8 | <p>GO Jauntly App – Feedback on Usage</p> <p>RB had done some screen shots and these were shared at the meeting.</p> <p>VG had the use of a smart phone for 6-7 weeks and used an App. VG looked at the Aubrey Buxton walk and found photographs for the walk very good, however a little difficult in a couple of places. You would need a reasonable standard of walking. It is not suitable for wheelchairs. VG personally would have preferred the OS map to see where he was going. A lot of the walk is not on the PROW. The pictures were taken in springtime and summer about 2-3 years ago and things change. VG added the route is not GPS as such.</p> <p>SI stated with the GJ App you can make changes to the map yourself. It is quite a detailed map.</p> <p>Perhaps we can summarise points which VG and RB uncovered during the trial session and with SI, put together feedback and put in an email to Sustainable Transport.</p> <p>VG stated he would like to look at another walk first.</p> <p>RM was keen to separate out aspects of what was not so good an experience and general experience of members. RM was comparing with what they did on an exact Colchester walk. RM indicated information had been taken out which meant you could barely follow the trail in many cases. RM felt you could not accurately follow the route which was 24 miles.</p> <p>Action: RB and VG agreed to do another walk. Also JB to do a walk and give feedback in the New Year.</p> | RB/VGJB |
| 9 | <p>LAF & Planning Applications – Minerals and Solar Farms</p> <p>LAF comments should be appearing on planning applications site when we make comments as LAF.</p> <p>Deferred to next meeting.</p> | |

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| 10 | <p>Byway Working Group Update Deferred to next meeting.</p> | |
| 11 | <p>Items for next agenda Please email any items to KE and SA.</p> <p>Look at old walks on Essex website. Action: SA to send link.</p> <p>Next year is 50th Anniversary of the Essex Way – any items to be included.</p> <p>Invite Kris Radley – Q&A. Kris Radley and someone from Strategic Development - look at barriers in development.</p> <p>GO Jauntly</p> <p>10th May 2022 – site visit.</p> | <p>SA</p> <p>SA</p> |
| 12 | <p>Any Other Business</p> | |
| | <p>JB mentioned about verge cutting. KE commented it was only BDC which did experimental verge cutting. BDC are asking for feedback from parish councillors, district councils. They are not asking non-motorised users. KE stated the issue was raised when she was walking down a narrow country lane and she stepped into a verge and if it has overgrowth you donot know what you are stepping into. JB commented when verges are properly managed, they cut 6-8ft into short grass. Topic for a future agenda. Action: SA to find out if ECC proposing to roll out county-wide verge cutting.</p> | <p>SA</p> |
| | <p>Date of next meeting 8 February 2022, 10 May 2022, 9 August 2022, 8 November 2022 2pm via Teams except for May possible site visit</p> | |