



MINUTES

**of a meeting held in Diocese offices, Chelmsford
Tuesday, 6th February 2018 at 2pm-4.10pm**

Present: Members:

Louise Fuller (LF)	Katherine Evans (KE) – Chair	Martyn Towns (MT)
Sue Dobson (SD)	Ray Booty (RB) – Vice Chair	John Victory (JV)
Vernon Glashier (VG)		Ed Dixon (ED)
Adam Scott (AS)		David Massey (DM)

There were no LA Officers present.

Members of the Public: Malcolm Lees (ML) Marlene Curtis

Apologies: Gary McCarthy (GMcC), Doug New (DN), Jan Arthur (JA), Shirley Anglin (SA)

Minute Taker: Val Cleare, Business Support BC1 Mid (VC)

1	Chairman’s Welcome: apologies and appointments	Action
	<p>Apologies had been received from Doug New, Gary McCarthy, Jan Arthur, and Shirley Anglin.</p> <p>The Chairman welcomed Malcolm Lees and Marlene Curtis.</p> <p>ML advised that he has put in an application for membership but he has not been appointed yet.</p> <p>KE reported that unfortunately Rick Gray had resigned as Vice Chair and has resigned from ELAF due to his increasing volunteer involvement in Walking for Health. Ray Booty volunteered to become Vice Chair for one year. This was proposed by John Victory and seconded by Sue Dobson. This was unanimous and RB was duly elected.</p>	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting	
	<p>The minutes were not signed off by the Chairman. See comments and matters arising below. Once the December minutes have been amended these are to be signed off at the next meeting.</p> <p>Amendments to the December Minutes Item 1, Page 1: Take out “and Basildon area”. Item 3, Page 2: 3rd paragraph – amend “mur” to Multi User Routes (MUR) Page 3, Penultimate paragraph – After S106 amend to read: “We propose that this forum should think about responding to Local Plans and major planning applications.” Page 5, 2nd paragraph amend to "It was noted that a Byways Working Group will be formed that will be made up of motorised users, ECC officers & 1-2 non-motorised users. "</p>	

	<p>The minutes were agreed subject to the above amendments.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>a. Local Plans and Major Planning applications</u> JA had volunteered at the last meeting to co-ordinate ELAF comments for local development plans. It was agreed that there is a need to put together a paper with standard format of words to be linked to policies.</p> <p>SD pointed out that when City/Borough/District Councils are looking at major growth sites, policies for these ideally should include footpaths, cycleways, PROW and bridleways and the LAF could comment on these. This could be explored further at a future joint LAF meeting to establish how this is done in a more efficient manner.</p> <p>Any notifications received regarding Local Plans consultations to copy to JA, SD, RB and KE.</p> <p>Action: All to email JA so that she can co-ordinate the information.</p> <p><u>b. Network Rail</u> Item 4, Page 4 – KE said there had been no feedback on Network Rail.</p> <p><u>c. Publicity</u> Item 8, page 6: JV to circulate revised draft. Action: comments to JV</p> <p><u>d. Admin matters</u> Request from RB, an Apple computer user, that the minutes in future are sent in a pdf format.</p> <p>Page 1 – To help new forum members, DM requested in the Attendee list to specify each Officer's / invited speaker's responsibility/ post.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>KE</p> <p>JV All</p> <p>VC</p> <p>VC</p>
3	Member profiles for website	
	Action: Members who have not already done this.	All
4	ECC Report - circulated beforehand	
	<p><u>Beaulieu Park:</u> There had been a planning application submitted for the new road layout at Beaulieu Park which included the agreed proposals for the bridleway/footpath network within the scheme.</p> <p><u>Winter cuts on byways & Bridleways:</u> LF noted that Navestock 55 had been cut. Action: A copy of the schedule of winter cuts was requested. Action SA.</p> <p><u>LHP PRoW capital schemes:</u> The User Group asked for a list of the active capital ProW schemes on the LHP (Local Highways Panels) lists. Action: SA</p> <p><u>ELAF website:</u> It was noted that SA had asked for this February Agenda and minutes to be put on the ELAF web page hosted on the Essex Highways website but this had not been actioned by Corporate IT.</p>	<p>SA</p> <p>SA</p>

	<p>It was unanimously thought a good idea to pursue our own ELAF website independent of ECC, as it has not been possible to have the ELAF website at a higher level than under the PRow heading.</p> <p>Action: RB offered to try to get the main domain name back, failing which another suitable domain name could be obtained.</p>	RB
5	Byway Management Review	
	<p>RB reported that an inaugural meeting had been held on 24 January 2018. There were 10 people who attended including LF representing ELAF and 3 other ELAF members RB, VG & GMcC representing their motorised interest societies. Simon Taylor and SA reviewed what had happened in the past and how winter closures had been poorly managed; they wanted a new, more evidential and consultative approach. They discussed six byways which were closed this winter and gave the current position on each of the six:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tilty 22/ Broxted 24/ Thaxted 99 ii. Wimbish 98 & 100 iii. Willingale 6 iv. Little Henny 1/ Middleton 13 v. Widdington 38/ Henham 33 vi. Pentlow 3/ Hoe Lane <p>Navestock 55 is in good condition but fly tipping is an appalling problem. A permanent all year closure of part of its width to motor vehicles & carriages is proposed.</p> <p>Action: RB to circulate outcomes report.</p> <p>It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for 30 May 2018.</p> <p>There are 8 more byways under consideration some of which had been closed in the past. There will be condition surveys done on byways. SA had prepared a spreadsheet showing every byway. VG had suggested putting this on One Drive so that members of the byway working group could add comments. This information is being trialled on the spreadsheet.</p> <p>LF did not disagree with the closures but felt it was a shame that carriages are not permitted. It is not possible to get horses and carriages down some of the byways. RB had suggested a permit scheme for the future.</p>	RB
6	LAF Liaison with neighbouring forums, dates and topics	
	<p>As agreed, SA had emailed neighbouring forums: Hertfordshire, Suffolk, Cambridge, Thurrock.</p> <p>It had been suggested to hold a meeting in April 2018. A list of topics for discussion were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Rail. • Brexit – Access post Brexit. Comment on (expected) government consultation / command paper • Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP). • Local Plans. <p>Add to end of agenda if there is time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary TROs. • Fault reporting systems. 	

7	<p>Post-Brexit Access proposals paper <i>"How public access can be improved post Brexit"</i>. Proposals from the British Horse Society, Byways and Bridleways Trust, Open Spaces Society and Ramblers for the redirection of agricultural funds to give public benefit, October 2017.</p> <p>There was much discussion round the table about the proposals in this document, and members agreed that the possibilities of further access in future was an excellent one.</p>	
	<p>There was concern about dogs and livestock but this is not as bad as in other areas. The issue of ground nesting birds with loose dogs was also raised. AS who works for the NFU gave some background about livestock and dogs chasing sheep. There is no particular connection with a dog breed. There was as a report in November 2017 by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Animal Welfare (APGAW). It was noted that between 15,000 and 18,000 sheep are getting killed per year and this is a big issue across the country. The police do not treat this as a recordable crime. There had been 72 incidences recorded that about 70 sheep had been killed in Hertfordshire along with one dog shot as a result. There had been posters "love your countryside, keep dogs on leads when around livestock". The issue is linked to urban areas. It was noted that Sussex is the worst county for this.</p> <p>There is a need to educate the public about keeping dogs on leads and farmers would need the flexibility to do this under any new access scheme. It has been found that the more people are educated to keep does on leads, the more self-policing it becomes. ELAF do not want to encourage widespread fencing.</p> <p>Action: AS to circulate report. The report has good recommendations.</p> <p>SD commented that farmers should get a payment for opening up access to more headlands. It is more appropriate for arable farmers. This is an opportunity for this country to have a more useful agricultural policy. Access is not possible at the moment under the current scheme. There is a need to encourage access rather than to stop it.</p> <p>There was discussion whether the ELAF supports the idea and how do we make this known. Other LAFs are writing to their MPs</p> <p>AS commented that the current countryside stewardship scheme is too complicated with 30% being spent on administration. Payments under various headland schemes (e.g. EAFR/ toll ride schemes, path maintenance payments, DEFRA permissive countryside access scheme) have not been enough to compensate for the DEFRA payments foregone. When terms such as "spreading room" and "right to roam" are used farmers become very concerned.</p> <p>Summary:</p> <p>ELAF believes it would be a good idea to give farmers payments for access to their land headlands at a sufficiently attractive rate / to give a comparable return to growing crops - rather than the current policy of penalising farmers if non-PROW headlands are used. The payment of different rates (e.g. a higher payment around towns) was felt to be too complicated. Any scheme must be simple, practical, proportionate & cost effective and provide access for all users including horse riders & cyclists.</p>	AS

	<p>Consideration should also be given to allowing temporary path diversions away from a field where there is livestock - especially at critical times e.g. lambing.</p> <p>Action: SD proposed that ELAF writes to Essex MPs to lobby for further access post Brexit. It was suggested that ELAF links its response to the Command Paper (due later in the spring) and bear in mind the issues which ECC has with maintaining existing PROWs. The letter would lobby for farmers getting paid to have published access for all to their land.</p> <p>Action: SD to draft a letter and send to all for comment. It was also suggested to send to Michael Gove as well as all Essex MPs and copy to Cllr Ian Grundy, ECC Cabinet Member for Highways.</p>	SD ALL
8	Access and common land between Roydon and Harlow	
	<p>It was noted that SA had made contact with the Herts & Essex Wildlife Trust. Chair to progress re the Stort Valley and access and the effects of Network Rail's proposed PRoW crossing closures.</p> <p>Action: KE</p>	KE
9	Any other business	
	<p>No apologies had been received from Bob Drane (BD). We were not sure if he had received the papers for this meeting.</p> <p>Action: SA to make sure BD receives papers.</p> <p>It was noted that Malcolm Lees (ML) is potentially a new member. Malcolm is a member of the Open Space Society. ML mentioned that in Galleywood there had been a landowner declaration discussion. ML has been in correspondence re the proposed diversion Woodham Walter public footpath 33.</p> <p>Stow Maries bridleway 24 (old railway line): a section is closed due to an unsafe bridge. As this was opened by a claim under the 20-year rule, it is not publicly maintainable by ECC / Essex Highways. Garry White is aware of this & discussions about maintenance are ongoing.</p> <p>It was felt that the layout of boardroom style for ELAF meetings worked well at today's meeting and this layout has been suggested for future meetings.</p>	SA AS
	Date of next meeting	
	<p>Tuesday, 15th May 2018 at 2pm To be held at the Chelmsford Diocese Offices.</p> <p>Future meetings: 2018 Tuesday, 7th August 2018 at 2pm Tuesday, 6th November 2018 at 2pm</p>	