



**MINUTES**  
**Held via Teams**  
**Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 2pm-4.30pm**

**Present members:**

Katherine Evans (KE) -Chair	Louise Fuller (LF)
Ray Booty (RB) – Vice Chair	John Victory (JV)
Vernon Glashier (VG)	John Buchanan (JB)
Martyn Towns (MT)	
Rowena Macaulay (RM)	

**Apologies:**

Jan Arthur (JA), Ed Dixon (ED), Sam Iddison (SI)

**LA Officers present:**

Shirley Anglin (SA)

**Members of the Public**

Martin Crisp (EBA)

**Guests**

1	Chairman’s Welcome	Action
	KE welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were noted. Martin Crisp was welcomed as a new member. It was stated that volunteer chairman and vice chairman are needed. This will be an agenda item at the next meeting.	
	Minutes from last meeting held on 10 <sup>th</sup> May were read. KE will send draft minutes to everyone.	KE
2	Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising	
	A12 Update - ECC still trying to agree with National Highways statement of common ground before moving forward to DCO - no date for DCO (possibly September 2022)	

	<p>Blackwater Rail Trail - updates: National Highways proposing WCH bridge to connect Witham footpath 95. KE thought it better to connect Howbridge Hall Lane on the Maldon side to make horse riding and cycling possible as it's a public road. This would still be tricky because it would come out on a bend on the Maldon Road.</p> <p>SA - thinks there is scope to create something along the side of the A12 to try to avoid double bends on Maldon Road.</p> <p>KE - also Cookswood which belongs to Witham Town Council.</p> <p>SA shared screen to show works that will happen on Howbridge Hall Road in the future. John asked if it will be wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>SA will raise with National Highways at any future meetings with them.</p> <p>Rowena check LTN 1/20 Cycling infrastructure design note and share findings - if it doesn't comply push for that.</p> <p>No update on Tiptree to Kelvedon Designated Funds cycle route at present. No formal request submitted, still focussing on widening project. No obvious solution has yet been found. A lot of resource has been absorbed in the A12 widening - priority for Designated funds would be Blackwater Rail Trail.</p> <p>KE asked if there were any updates on Network Rail. SA explained work has begun on looking at the first sites. Network Rail have to send tender document to supply chain contractors - this is expected to take a few months so not expecting any closures until late Autumn. Residents around the first five sites have been notified by Network Rail that closures have happened. SA still waiting for paperwork to certify it.</p>	SA RM
3	<p><b>Regional LAF Meeting</b></p> <p>KE asked for any thoughts around the Regional LAF minutes which were circulated yesterday to be sent by email. The next meeting will be a regional one via Zoom. It was suggested to let Natural England and NFU know that meetings are now held virtually to see if this encourages them to send a representative in the future.</p>	SA
4	<p><b>ECC Report</b></p> <p>SA had sent round the ECC report prior to the meeting. No matters arising. Vernon stated proposed capital schemes all been completed except for Debden.</p>	
5	<p><b>England Coast Path – Opening Event</b></p>	

John showed some slides of the England Coast Path Launch from the Two Tree Island event he attended. The meeting was held to officially open the route from Tilbury to Southend and from Southend to Wallasey Island.

John explained it's an ambitious project for a footpath giving opportunities for more people to appreciate the coast. When completed, it will be the world's longest footpath and has got the attention of senior government. There is a large amount of funding available which includes ongoing maintenance.

There were representatives from different organisations such as RSPB at the meeting making it good for networking. Access should be available to all on foot. During the meeting the attendees visited a hide in Two Tree Island, John stated it was an interesting day and garnered a lot of enthusiasm. John explained although there were a lot of young people representing the various organisations at the meeting there were not many attending as guests.

John stated there are barriers such as ramps and stiles in addition to rough ground and narrow spaces along the route and it may be that these can't be removed due to issues with livestock escaping. It was suggested that man-made barriers need to be mapped to give disabled people an idea of possible pitfalls before deciding to visit.

Rowena believes there is a legal obligation towards disabled and chair users and believes it is good to share information.

It was suggested that Active Essex may be able to help with mapping alongside existing walks and that Natural England must know where the remaining barriers are, mapping them is a good idea especially for disabled people. ECC are doing the implementation. Need to be careful with the wording in terms of access but getting rid of stiles (stile free) is a good starting point. Perhaps a way to word this would be "Man-made Barrier Free" as it would be difficult to describe rough ground, gradients etc. It was noted that giving access to basic information would be helpful for disabled people so they can make their own informed decisions about visiting the area. Another suggestion was that it would be good for ECC to keep information up to date and use photos showing dates they were taken to give people more options. It was suggested LAF may be able to do the mapping themselves or employ someone to do so as part of a funded project.

SA- funding will be available in the future, and this could be used to improve access and solve issues such as this. Look to implement project with funding from Natural England. SA stated she could take this on in a couple of years but does not have the resource to do it any sooner.

Maldon - Salcott already established. Rowena, Vernon and John will work on this and will find out what is needed and how to get it publicised. Funding input from ECC.

JB,  
RM,  
VG

	<p>John will go back to NE and ask what their solution is to getting access for all.</p>	<p>JB</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Cable routing from the North Sea wind farms to Tilbury power station</b></p> <p>John stated this is going to affect all sorts of highways and paths between proposed start and finish of the route. There are a lot of grass root objections being raised. Alternative proposals are running it in the sea rather than across the land. Martin explained the pylons are up to 50 metres high.</p> <p>Completion date 2032</p> <p>John and Martin will speak to MPs around changing the route</p> <p>SA included useful design link in her August report about Essex design guide and solar farm guidance from ECC.</p>	<p>JB, MT</p>
<p><b>7</b></p>	<p><b>Solar Farms</b></p> <p>Discussion around Longfield Solar plant which had been distributed earlier detailing what was said on behalf of LAF in June deadline. It was noted the response of the applicant is now on the planning authority website so members can see responses to all comments. It was agreed to look into this and decide how to proceed with the next stage and to discuss reasons for agreeing or not with each part.</p> <p>KE stated she had asked for a bond to be sure the money would be there in 30 years - they said they had restoration and decommission plans which didn't answer any of the questions of where the money will come from if the applicant has decided to walk away and take the solar farm money with them.</p> <p>Martin stated he has replied on behalf of the EBA and has taken on the role because his predecessor advised him that aspirations are low due to the area being devoid of bridleways other than one in the Boreham area where the landowner is not very equestrian friendly. It will be up to the landowner to determine what rights of way would be available long term.</p> <p>KE asked SA what she thought about the point that at the end of 40 years any path or pathways put in would be dismissed as they're not PROW and they have no intentions of making them PROW. SA encouraged KE to say that they should be improving the network for the long term.</p>	
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>PROW Maintenance and Inspection Strategy</b></p>	

	<p>SA shared the Maintenance and Inspections Strategy document via Teams.</p> <p>SA – Has been training the PROW Team for these changes and now needs to get people together to make changes to the internal systems to identify the PROW hierarchy. Lots of work to do. Blacktop to go over to the roads teams as a priority. Already doing Risk Assessments and using defects scoring. Looking at programming in accordance with strategy. Good feedback from customers, especially rambblers on the recent changes and the new direction for the team.</p>	
9	<p><b>Items for next Agenda</b></p> <p>It was agreed to extend the Essex.org.uk domain for another year.</p> <p>Next meeting:  Chair / vice needed  A12 widening  Solar farms</p> <p>SA will add linear country parks to the PROW-map.</p> <p>John will cc Lord Blencathra, House of Lords representative when requesting funding from coastal path project.</p> <p>Next meeting 8th November 2022 at 2pm</p>	<p>SA</p> <p>JB</p>
	<p><b>Date of next meeting</b></p> <p>8 November 2022 2pm via Teams</p>	