



**MINUTES**  
**Held via Teams**  
**Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023 at 2pm - 4.30pm**

**Present members:**

Katherine Evans – Chair  
 Ray Booty – Vice Chair  
 Sam Iddison  
 Louise Fuller  
 John Victory  
 Malcolm Lees  
 Martyn Towns  
 Martin Crisp  
 Rowena Macaulay  
 John Buchanan

**Apologies:**

Jan Arthur  
 Vernon Glashier  
 Ed Dixon

**LA Officers present:**

Shirley Anglin (SA)

**Minute Taker:**

Diana Lloyd

1	<b>Chairman’s Welcome</b>	<b>Action</b>
	<p>Katherine provided the Chairman’s welcome and reminded the gathered professionals that the next Regional LAF meeting would be held virtually on 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2023.</p> <p>Katherine would aim to get Rowena’s Local Access Guide for Coastal Paths to them before the meeting and hopefully Rowena, Vernon, and/or John would be able to virtually attend.</p> <p><b>Katherine would send the Regional LAF invite to John Buchanan.</b></p>	KE
2	<p><b>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023 and matters arising.</b></p> <p>Actions from the previous meeting were discussed amendments of the minutes were made.</p>	

<p>Katherine confirmed the gritting work hours in the ECC Report from February with Shirley. Essex Highways would begin preparing their job packs for the winter season beginning in October.</p> <p><b>Shirley would circulate an updated map of the patches with who was in place currently, with a note of where Nicki was newly placed.</b>  Uttlesford – Ned, Braintree – Jason, Colchester/Tendering – Nicki, Maldon/Rochford – Roy, Brentwood/Chelmsford – Laura, Epping/Harlow/Castlepoint/Basildon - Alan Roscoe</p> <p>There was no update on the funding for the Blackwater Trail because they would not fund anything that could not yet be feasibly built.</p> <p>Katherine had an email from Sandra who was hoping a bridge that was supposed to be funded by S106 provision from a planning application in 2013, of £70k for the provision of new and/or improved footpaths, footways, cycleways, in the vicinity of the development in Witham including the provision of a bridge over the river Brain to provide a link on the Witham side of the A12, potentially from Constance Close to Blackwater Lane, in addition to the cycleway to Maldon Road currently under construction.</p> <p><b>Katherine would forward the email from 24/04/2023 and notes from Sandra to attendees.</b></p> <p>Martin understood that the Braintree District Council was undertaking a feasibility study upon which Sandra was awaiting the outcome from Witham Town Council and had no details of the type of bridge it would be yet.</p> <p>Essex Highways would not become involved until a design was created and would approve or deny it's ability to carry highway.</p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> August 2023 was confirmed as a field trip for ELAF.</p> <p><b>Shirley would try to get the linear country parks like the Blackwater Rail Trail onto the map in the public view.</b></p> <p>Regarding the green infrastructure maps, there was one created by the councils but there seemed to be no resource for maintaining the map with any updates.</p> <p><b>Malcolm would look into the law that states a county needs to maintain a map of access land, possibly the Village Greens register, or any grant funding regarding it.</b></p> <p>Shirley shared her screen and focused on the green areas in Brentwood as an example, including the South Weald, Thorndon, and Warley Country Parks as spaces included on the Essex Highways map but it was noted the spaces could be a bit misleading because not all of the space is publicly accessible.</p> <p>John Buchanan shared a map published by Place Services that had differently designated green spaces and included lines of public footpaths. This information was not being kept updated, but Shirley believed it was pulled together to try to use it as a strategic tool for linking different types of habitats, or creating public greenways, not really a public access map. The map is not interactive.</p>	<p>SA</p> <p>KE</p> <p>SA</p> <p>ML</p>
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	<p><b>Put together an idea for an access map and possible funding for it as a LAF Project. John would follow up on updates of for public assess mapping and copy Shirley in on his emails.</b></p> <p>Natural England might have done a reported survey on the metric of how long it takes to reach a green space.</p> <p>Katherine thought this would be a good point to start searching for available grants to apply for public access green space mapping.</p> <p><b>Rowena would like to assist in the grant finding and applications for grant funding regarding the mapping of green spaces.</b></p> <p>Regarding the non-adopted paths, the estate developers had created connections to public footpaths and if the public could walk through those estate roads, it was assumed that unless the community was gated, then people would walk through the path whether it was adopted by Highways or not.</p>	<p>JB, ML</p> <p>RM</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>ECC Report</b></p> <p>Shirley confirmed that Essex Highways begins looking at their Winter Cutting Program now, during the Summer, in order to begin cutting at the start of September, which is very much about the side growth on the green lanes. The access is a very small window after bird nesting and before the wet weather comes in.</p> <p>Malcolm had reported on one bridleway that was overgrown from Swan Lane over the river to Margaretting Church, possibly Bridleway 22, and would look up the number. If it was Bridleway 22, Shirley confirmed it to be on the schedule of Highways for cutting.</p> <p><b>Ray from the Byways Working Group would send an update report from their next meeting to the LAF members.</b></p> <p>Regarding A12, Katherine confirmed that LAF could quote Shirley's ECC submission that they have no objection to the LAF things about Gershwin Bridge and Coleman's Cottage Fishery for positive support.</p> <p>Shirley stated LAF would need to make their submission strong and could say that LAF are fully in agreement with the ECC response as per that representation, which are the diagrams from a rep Shirley put in with a deadline for submission. The diagrams are in an ECC response to the EXAQ4, Deadline for Submission.</p> <p>The next deadline was set for 10/05/2023.</p> <p>ECC Cutting Program update, Shirley started last year to publish the programs of the different cutting schedules, it would not be repeated this year because Shirley did not receive enough regular information from the contractors and was not comprehensive enough. Highways has contracted out again to various parties for cutting this year and are trialling a new method of recording when they are cutting, with a cutting map they can edit and date when they cut those sections. All of the Highways Officers should then have live updates on when a parcel was</p>	<p>RB</p>

	<p>cut. If all goes well this year, then next year, Shirley could open the dates of when they were cut to the public.</p> <p>Shirley would probably ask some of the Ramblers and some parishes to help out with checking locations and if they have any questions or queries in order to help keep on top of the contractors. That cutting information would not go live to the public this year because it is a new development for the contractors to trouble-shoot.</p> <p>On the Highways Information Interactive map, Katherine noted the Parish and prow code was set wrong when clicked on. <b>Katherine would send Shirley some examples.</b></p>	KE
4	<p><b>Coastal Path inclusive access – Next steps</b></p> <p>Rowena and Katherine had emailed back and forth about this since the previous meeting because Rowena was going to get back to Darren Brain from Natural England, although he had since left that post. The Coastal Path material had not been progressed yet at all and Rowena thought it would be good to complete that Goldhanger report as far as possible as well as possibly another one, maybe the Clacton/ Walton stretch from Vernon before inviting Natural England to their next site meeting in August.</p> <p>Before that, Rowena would endeavour to complete a couple of those audits. These reports could really only be presented prior to the site meeting online and Rowena thought that possibly herself, John, and Vernon could meet with someone from Natural England online to present the model accessibility reports as a precursor to the site meeting.</p> <p>Rowena also needed and did email to get some idea of pricing from Colchester City Council, but not yet heard back. <b>Rowena could continue trying to get pricing for that.</b></p> <p>Katherine asked if the pricing might warrant going for a grant. Once the design work was finished, it would only be a question of how wide the coverage should be and how many should be printed. Rowena did not think it would be a huge amount of money for a single two-sided flyer template as a framework for the design.</p> <p><b>Shirley could set up a meeting with Chloe from Natural England, Rowena, Vernon, John Buchanan, and Shirley for a show and tell session between the Regional meeting and the Site meeting.</b></p> <p><b>John Buchanan would reach out to the Maldon Ramblers to invite them into the project regarding photography and the time lapse.</b></p> <p><b>Try and complete the model flyers by the time of the Regional LAF meeting.</b></p> <p>Roy would be working on the next couple of stretches this year and Highways would be working on Burnham to Maldon, it is open and walkable, just getting the final pieces done. There were no current plans to do the other half of the sea wall and Highways is waiting to see how it recovers before doing anything else to it beyond the tip of the trail.</p>	<p>RM</p> <p>SA</p> <p>JB</p> <p>RM, VG</p>

<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Solar Farms – Update from sub-group</b></p> <p>On the Longfield Solar Farm, Katherine received an email that the Examining authority have sent their report on the Longfield Solar to the Secretary of State on 18/04/2023, and the Secretary of State would supposedly reply sometime in July with a decision.</p> <p>There might also be an issue in Periwinkle Green, or somewhere in Braintree District that has not been followed up on yet.</p> <p>Martin noted there is a Solar Farm in Layer de la Haye that went through it's final consultation with a permissive path that runs through the site of the solar farm, which is now all approved. In the final consultation it was asked by EBA that the permissive path be upgraded to a bridleway, but the landowner and developer did not want to adjust the lease negotiations at this stage. Once the lease was finished, the developer and landowner would be willing to revisit accommodating some form of upgrades.</p> <p>John Victory noted the applications were still going in for planning and the one on Knit Greys Hill was knocked back and the other ones near Brentwood were still under review.</p> <p><b>John would update LAF once the current status was updated on the applications.</b></p> <p>John Buchanan mentioned a solar farm being approved in Woodham Mortimer in Maldon, and that it was surprising how many were happening simultaneously, and it would be interesting to note how many solar farms were going up across the county. It is apparently extremely lucrative for the farmers.</p> <p>Martin thought the average across the country, not necessarily Essex, was about £1000 per hectare per year of rental income.</p> <p>Katherine stated it was possible to find where solar panels will be placed by going through every single planning authority and keying in solar, but it is a tedious process. Katherine thought PRow probably should know by reports from development management because of the impact of on any footpaths. Unfortunately, there has been nothing set up holistically across the network for planning and it not necessarily under development.</p> <p>John Victory noted the planning applications usually provide a public notice in the local press for a small forewarning.</p> <p>When inputting a solar farm, usually there would need to be a scoping or screening application (SCO or SCR). Usually for the larger farms, construction traffic needs access to a road and has involved footpaths as well, which involves Strategic. A site plan will generally show the PRow's.</p>	<p>JV</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>A12 DCO Public Inquiry</b></p> <p>The next Deadline 5 was on 10/05/2023. It seemed that whenever LAF sent something in, National Highways sent tangled reasons back for their rejection of the application. Katherine listened in virtually to the last set of site-specific hearings and got the impression from the examining authority that they might have</p>	

	<p>been expecting or wanting LAF to carry on pushing and repeating, to which Shirley agreed.</p> <p>The Messing and Inworth Action Group was also pushing and said the same thing that the examining authority have said to them to keep the pressure up to remind them what they are pushing for and if the pressure is relieved, then they would think it was possibly not that important.</p> <p>Katherine would try to manage at least a repeat of things said in the past for Deadline 5 just to keep the pressure up.</p> <p>At the last inquiry specific hearing, Shirley's written submissions had not changed, and she just reiterated that she stood by her previous convictions of what they wanted to see for the Gershwin Boulevard Bridge around the Coleman's Fisheries. Shirley has continued to push what they wanted and reflects Katherine's thoughts on just continuing to push LAF's goals and submission to keep up the pressure.</p> <p>From continuing to push, Nationals Highways had a meeting to go on site at Coleman's Fisheries to discuss options. National Highways have made their submission to DCI and have to believe in their decision, and it is down to the inspector to decide on any changes from it. It's always up to the examining authority, so the more LAF pushes what they want to see, then the more likely it is that the examining authority will make the order with modifications.</p> <p>Shirley insisted that LAF should continue to push in order to end up with a workable option and it was clear the inspectorate, National Highways, and by the landowners were listening to and acting on the thoughts and feelings of LAF.</p> <p>Katherine mentioned National Highways was going to put a footpath on their land between World's End Lane in Feering and Inworth Road and the narrow bridge there. The parish council then had a meeting with Neil Hall from WSP, the agents for Crown Estates. They have said they would bear in mind the footpath would be on the opposite bank from National Highways and would possibly consider putting a bridge across Domsey Brook, not guaranteed.</p> <p>There would be development on both sides of Inworth Road on the Braintree side of that bridge. There is an old Railway through there, the Crab and Winkle Line, it goes towards the A12, and it stops where the embankment is high up and disappears in Inworth as well. That is where the Messing and Inworth Action Group want to place their local bypass at the root of the old railway line.</p> <p>The underpass is still there as well, Katherine walked it and came out into a big lay-by on the A12, the footpath is overgrown though.</p>	
7	<p><b>August site meeting and date confirmation</b> The next site meeting would be the 8th of August and Rowena suggested Goldhanger would be the obvious location to meet, with a pub nearby.</p> <p><b>Rowena would speak with the pub and ask if they would be open to allowing LAF to park there and utilise their services before or after the site visit.</b></p>	RM

	Meet at 12:00 pm for lunch at Chequers the pub before going on the site visit.	
<b>8</b>	<p><b>Items for next Agenda</b></p> <p>Coastal Path. The final deadline for the A12 is 12/07/2023, so it will be gone by November 2023.</p> <p>Mapping of Green Spaces. The interactive map and getting those things back on, the aerial and linear country parks.</p> <p>Solar Farms.</p> <p>Katherine thanked the attendees and ended the meeting.</p>	
	<p><b>Dates of next 2023 meetings:</b></p> <p>8<sup>th</sup> August, Goldhanger, Chequers Pub at 12:00 pm.</p> <p>7<sup>th</sup> November, 2pm via Teams</p>	