

Maldon & Blackwater Estuary Coastal Community Team

Monday 25th July 2016 at the Harbour View Bar & Bistro, Tollesbury Marina

Meeting Notes

Present:

Name	Organisation	Management Team Member
Andrew St Joseph (ASJ)	Essex Coastal Farmers	√
Cllr Adrian Fluker (AF)	Maldon District Council Maldon Harbour Improvement Commissioners	
Cllr Elaine Bamford	Maldon District Council	√
Cllr Lew Schnurr (LS)	Heybridge Parish Council	√
Cllr Michael Edwards (ME)	Heybridge Parish Council	
David Gibson	Thames Sailing Barge Trust	
Jack Ellum (JE)	Dengie Gateway Project Officer	
Jean Allen	Bradwell Parish Council	
John Oatham (JO)	Mayland Parish Council	
John Rayment	Thames Sailing Barge Trust	
Julia Bourn	Goldhanger Parish Council	√
Julian Goldie (JG)	Tollesbury Marina	√
Kerry Martin (KM)	Maldon District Council	
Marian Elsdon (ME)	St Lawrence Parish Council	√
Marian Sidebottom	Maldon District Council	
Nicky Spurr (NS)	Essex County Council	√
Paul Jeffries (PJ)	CCT Chairman – Topsail Charters	√
Phil Sturges (PS)	Natural England	
Roy Chandler (RC)	Essex Waterways Ltd	
Russell G Everard (RGE)	CCT Meeting Facilitator	
Suzanne Harris (SH)	Rural Community Council for Essex	

Apologies:

Cllr Penny Channer, Cllr Ron Pratt, Emma Ormond, Ben Brown, Clare Cadman, Jonathan Bustard, Rochford District Council, Richard Holmes, Cllr Brenda Harker, Jon Howarth, Paul Haworth and Anthony Sinclair.

1. Welcome & Introductions

Chairman Paul Jeffries opened the meeting outside the Tollesbury Marina Cruising Club and invited Phil Sturges, Lead Adviser with Natural England, to lead a short walk to the sea wall to speak about progress on the coastal access project. During the presentation, PS spoke about the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009, and explained the purpose of the project. Referring to a printed handout, PS shared some of the challenges and opportunities presented by the project, and encouraged CCT members to share any observations or concerns they may have regarding the coast path. As a farmer with land in Tollesbury, ASJ took the opportunity to highlight a range of short and long term issues faced by coastal farmers, particular those with livestock responsibilities.

At the end of the presentation, the Team returned to the Harbour View Bar & Bistro for the remaining agenda items.

2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Notes from the CCT meetings held on the 29th April 2016.

As a matter of clarification for Agenda item 5 (England Coast Path), PS had earlier commented by email to RGE that the legislation underpinning the England Coast Path (Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009) is based on the objective that the route will provide a continuous path around the whole of the English coastline. This means that the route will, in places, be established across hitherto private land. Natural England must demonstrate that the choice of route will not impact adversely on current land management (e.g. farming / business) or compromise privacy. The Natural England approach is to engage with all interested parties early on and to strike a fair balance between the public having access over coastal land and the interests of owners and occupiers.

Also the report(s) to the Secretary of State are expected in the first half of 2017 and will be subject to an 8-week public consultation period. Some Essex sections could be open as early as summer 2018, with an overall England-wide project target of 2020. The public consultation will be the key opportunity for Maldon & Blackwater Estuary CCT members to make representations (as an interested third party) or objections (as a directly affected land owner or occupier).

The meeting notes were approved.

4. Actions arising from the meeting notes:

- The meeting agreed to progress the Parking Survey through the parish council network. ME agreed to be project lead and to design an on-line survey which it was hoped would be easier to complete. The draft document presented at the meeting would be amended to carry more detail regarding the role of the CCT. It was hoped that results would be available at the next CCT meeting.
- AJS was keen to monitor the impact of improvements to the tourism offer and it was hoped that the annual tourism Volume and Value Report would provide meaningful data.
- RGE stated that amendments to the Terms of Reference was work in progress, and it was hoped to present a revised draft for discussion at a future meeting.

5. Coastal Community Fund Round 4 – Stage One Bids

- JE confirmed that Maldon DC had submitted 'Project Samphire' to Round 4. The project aimed to build on the success of the Dengie Gateway Project and to deliver key elements of the Coastal Community Teams' economic plans. The project also had strong links with the ambitions of the Bradwell Legacy Partnership.

The project would create a district ambassador scheme with local businesses, using a mobile saltmarsh hub , creating 9 training places, 10 direct jobs and stimulating a further 40 indirect jobs. The Maldon project has been costed at £377k. Both CCTs had provided letters of support for the project. A printed copy of the application form and letter of support were made available at the meeting.

- NS confirmed that Essex County Council had also submitted a bid which aimed to develop an Essex coast path brand. If successful, the project would provide sustainable access to the coast path, including bus links and information points. NS commented that Essex had a poor customer satisfaction rating and the aim was to improve the quality of the tourism offer. The project would include an element of business training. It was noted that the bid had also been supported by both CCTs.

6. Big Lottery Funding

- Referring to a printed information sheet, JE explained the various entry criteria and confirmed that the District Council could act as the accountable body should the CCT wish to submit an application. Successful applicants would have 12 months to deliver an event. JE also took the opportunity to introduce Marion Sidebottom (MS) who had recently been appointed as Dengie Gateway Project Officer.

7. Heybridge Basin Signage Project

- JE confirmed that MS would now be progressing the signage project. All signage hubs would be completed by the end of the year, and sign layouts and content would be circulated shortly. Parishes will be consulted on sign content in a few weeks' time.
- Referring to the Coast Path Project, PJ identified a few timing challenges with publishing footpath detail, which may form 1/3rd of the signage detail. It was acknowledged that the use of QR codes on all signs would provide smart 'phone users with up to date information.
- MS asked for information on brown highways signage for Heybridge, having received no response from an enquiry to Essex County Council. JE suggested that contact be made direct with Visit Essex representatives. (Further information at <http://www.visitessex.com/industry/brown-signs>)

8. Maritime Skills

- PJ stated that the industry was finding it difficult to attract young people. Existing trainees, 4 from Maldon and 1 from Burnham, were having to travel to Brightlingsea weekly to pursue a City & Guilds award in Marine Engineering, and felt it would be more cost effective to ring a lecturer to Maldon. There were clear examples where young people had progressed from training to full time positions. PJ felt that skills are just about managing to survive in this District, but have disappeared altogether in some areas, and there was now a clear need to engage with businesses and public agencies to seek a solution.

- LS said there were key components including schools and young people, and suggested setting up a small task group. PJ commented that older/semi-retired workers would also benefit from the training, and that the group may need to include other interested parties in the task group. Contact had already been made with the County's Skills Team.
- KM commented that the issue had also been raised by the Sense of Place project Place Board, which had identified the maritime sector as very important to the economic well-being of the District. The Place Board was suggesting a Maritime Summit, sometime in the autumn. KM was currently preparing a list of local stakeholders and would welcome receiving contact details for potential attendees. The event would aim to raise the profile of Maritime Skills, and to give the Place Board a clear indication of the challenges and opportunities. The CCT could then take the project forward. AF was keen to help and canvass support from other harbour commissioners.
- **ACTION:** KM to share Maritime Skills Summit details with CCTs.

9. The Great British High Street Awards

- PJ expressed his enthusiasm to support an application from the CCT, and was keen to see perhaps a business association submission, on behalf of town centre businesses, from both Maldon and Burnham-on-Crouch.
- The meeting discussed the potential of an entry to recognise the success of the Tollesbury Salt Pool (TSP), perhaps via the parish council. ASJ suggested that this may also help with a request for a small grant for screening, which would improve the user experience at the Pool.
- **ACTIONS:** ASJ to progress TSP entry with Tollesbury Parish Council
PJ to progress with local business associations.

10. Future Projects

- PJ said he was pleased that the CCT had decided to meet at Tollesbury, which would help the Team to identify projects which could have an impact on the tourism offer. One area of interest was boat access to the river, particularly for recreational sailors with no experience of Essex mud. There was a need for small grants which could be awarded without the necessity of a detailed and lengthy bidding process, for small works to footpaths.
- SH commented that LEADER funding focussed on jobs as outputs, and would not be suitable for these types of works. NS suggested that a list of projects, which perhaps could utilise small scale underspends and could be delivered in a short time frame, be drafted for discussion by the Team. AF suggested that improvements could be made to existing hards and slipways.

- ME proposed a sight-seeing bus for the District, and PS gave examples of a Hopper Bus operated in Norfolk. JE commented that this type of local service would need a private sector partner. An idea for a closed Facebook site or a Google Group as a means of communication between Team members was raised by JO. SH agreed to share her experience of using Facebook.
- JE suggested that a project list should be drafted by the Team and updated as necessary. The project list would need to show how a project would impact on the tourism offer, and how it linked with the Team's Economic Plan and the District's Economic Prosperity Strategy.
- **ACTIONS:**
 - RGE to draft a project template for discussion at the next meeting.
 - LS to prepare an information sheet on a proposal to improve a local demand-led transport offer for tourists.
 - RGE to prepare a briefing note on the potential use of Facebook, Google Groups, LinkedIn and Yahoo.

11. Other business

- PJ was keen to attract feedback from the community and suggested that a small leaflet would be a useful media to raise awareness of the Team's work. This was to be discussed at the next Management Team meeting.

12. Date & location of next meeting

- Thursday 13th October 2016, commencing at 14.00 at St Lawrence. Venue to be advised in due course.

The meeting closed at 16:45

The Chairman thanked everyone for their continued support and active participation in the meeting. Lew Schnurr thanked Julien Goldie for hosting the event and for providing refreshments.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO COMPLETE THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER AT EVERY MEETING
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