

EERF Steering Group

1.00pm – 1.45pm, 12th December 2008

Woolpit Village Hall, Woolpit, Suffolk

Minutes

Attendees

Andrew Budden
Emma Powlett
Suzanne Harris
Sarah Prentice
John Mullen
Graham Hedger

Diana Bradley (minutes)
John Yates (Chair)
Pat Holtom
Martin Collison
Nicola Lloyd

Apologies

Kate Belinis
Francis Bedding
Sally Williams

Sarah Hughes
Kirsten Bennett

1. Welcome

The Chair welcomed everybody to the Steering Group meeting.

2. Minutes and matters arising of last meeting

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. Most actions from the previous meeting have been completed except for Item 3 under budget update: Sarah Prentice to send out mid year budget update. Update: Sarah has sent a budget update to the Steering Group on 18th December.

Under Item 5 Annual Conference 4th March 2009: the secretariat to book Lavenham Village Hall venue. Emma and Diana have arranged a visit to Lavenham Village Hall on the 9th January 2009 to check suitability.

Under Item 8 Outcomes of Action statement – EERF's Position - Sarah and Emma to look into reconstitution of Task and Finish Group. This action is carried forward.

Under Item 9 Future Sustainability of the Forum future of the County Forums: Emma to arrange meeting with County Forums to discuss their future. The secretariat is currently looking for a suitable date for this meeting in January 2009.

The action for the secretariat to send out the Position Papers was put on hold until after the 12th December Rural Forum meeting.

3. Actions and Outcomes from EERF Social Inclusion meeting

Emma suggested some possible action points from the EERF Social Inclusion meeting. These are:

- Is there a need and/or potential funding to carry out similar Social Inclusion investigations in the more southern counties of the region?
- Do we go ahead and develop a Paper and/or Action Plan?
- Talk to Commission for Rural Communities on how best to develop their findings in the region if at all?

ACTION: Emma Powlett and John Yates to explore ways of developing the Social Inclusion agenda further and report back to the Steering Group.

4. Review of the Position Papers

The Steering Group discussed who the Position Papers should go out to. The following was agreed:

Water

- Environment Agency
- East of England Regional Assembly
- East of England Water Partnership
- Coastal Initiative Project Manager at GO-East

Sustainable Rural Growth

- Ministers – Defra, Housing, Regional Minister, BERR
- EEDA
- East of England Regional Assembly
- County Forums (to send out to their local authorities planning departments)
- RCC's

Learning and Skills

The Learning and Skills Paper was sent to the Rural Minister earlier this year. This Paper needs some updating before it can be sent out to the Forum and wider.

ACTION: Martin Collison to update Learning and Skills Paper.

5. 4th March 2009 Annual Conference update

The proposed theme is "The impact of the downturn of the economy in rural communities".

Venue

The proposed venue is Lavenham Village Hall and Emma and Diana have arranged a site visit to Lavenham Village Hall on the 9th January 2009. Andrew Budden has visited the Hall recently and says it is a good sized venue with plenty of parking.

Speakers

Need to book and confirm speakers. Suggestions for speakers include:

- Key note Speaker – CRC speaker to respond to Rural Advocate's report

- Transport/Fuel Poverty – ask Carole Randall to talk to Bruce Pittingale who knows the Fenland District Council area well.
- Food – Marie Francis
- Health – Chris Town, temp Chief Executive Cambs PCT or Julie Garbutt Chief Executive, Norfolk PCT
- Housing – Housing Association speaker
- Skills/Education – Ron King, Confederation of Small Businesses
- Enterprise - Ron King

Other suggestions for speakers were discussed including contacting the Citizens Advice Bureaux and Community Rural Trust.

ACTION: John Yates to write to Ron King, Chair of the Confederation of Small Businesses about Enterprise and Learning & Skills issues and to approach Health contacts to find potential speakers.

ACTION: Emma Powlett to approach Renewables East contact Carole King about Transport and Fuel issues and write to confirm Marie Francis as a speaker.

ACTION: Graham Hedger to look into potential Housing Association speakers.

ACTION: Martin Collison to investigate a Citizens Advice Bureaux speaker.

ACTION: Nicola Lloyd to find a keynote speaker from CRC.

Agenda

The Steering Group agreed that it would be a full day agenda and that the speakers and discussion groups should be spread out across the day rather than have the speakers in the morning and discussions in the afternoon.

6. 18th March AGM Forum meeting

The next Rural Forum meeting is the AGM meeting on 18th March 2009. The theme agreed was Land Use and Local Food. John Yates and Emma Powlett will meet Marie Francis to discuss the agenda. Defra has recently published a discussion paper on ensuring the UK's Food Security in a Changing World. Need to identify a venue for this meeting. Suggestions include Abbots Ripton or Essex area.

ACTION: Steering Group members to suggest possible venues to Emma Powlett.

7. 2009/10 Strategic and Action Plan

Emma asked the Steering Group for further comments on the Strategic Plan. Graham said that he had not been sent some of the Steering Group papers.

ACTION: Diana Bradley to send Graham Hedger the recent Steering Group papers and ensure he is on the Steering Group contacts list.

8. 2009/10 Communications Plan

The Steering Group endorsed the Communication Plan.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate Communications Plan to the Forum.

9. Any other Business

Vice Chair

Andrew restated that he will step down as Vice Chair from next March.

Budget

- Sarah gave a quick update on the budget to the Group. There is no extra money to be found this year.
- She thanked the County Forum's who have sent their funding invoices already and reminded the remaining County Forums to send their invoices to Diana Bradley by the 31st January 2009.
- The members travel claims are up on this time last year.

Coastal

The Marine and Coastal Bill had its second reading in the House of Lords on 15th December.

10. Date of next meeting

Graham Hedger offered to look into booking a room at Hastoe Housing Association, Rectory Farm Barns, Little Chesterford, Saffron Walden, CB10 1UD.

ACTION: Graham Hedger to book a room at Hastoe Housing Association for the Steering Group and confirm this to Emma Powlett.

11.00am 9th February 2009 at Hastoe Housing Association subject to confirmation.

Diana Bradley
Secretariat
16th December 2008