

ESSEX AREA UPDATE



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE RAMBLERS'
ASSOCIATION — ESSEX AREA

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 10

February 2007

HERE WE GO AGAIN

Kate Ashbrook, RA Chair, sent out this circular just before Christmas:

Chief executive

18 December 2006

We are sorry to tell you that, having reached the six-month mutual review point of her contract, our chief executive Christine Elliott has decided not to continue in post with the Ramblers' Association.

The Board wants to take this opportunity to thank Christine for

the considerable amount of work she put into the RA during her time with us and for the exciting new ideas which she brought to the organisation. We intend to maintain the momentum of her work on our new strategic plan and shortly to involve you in its development.

At its January meeting the Board will decide how best to proceed with the appointment of a new, permanent Chief Executive.

In mid January, we hope to appoint an interim Chief Executive to serve until the new Chief Executive is in place. In the meantime, and with immediate effect, David Joseph (finance director) and Paul Wilkinson (development manager) have accepted the board's invitation to be joint acting interim Chief Executives.

THE RA IS DROPPING THE WELCOME TO WALKING WEEK due to diminishing support.

Use Your Paths Weeks, 23 June – 1 July and the **Festival of Winter Walks**, 26 Dec – 2 January 2008 will continue, as will the **National Day of Walking**, 16 September, and **In Town Without My Car Day**, 22 September.

PLEASE DO YOUR VERY, VERY BEST TO ATTEND THE AGM:

Saturday 3rd February

St Bartholomew's Church Hall, Church Rd, Wickham Bishops

(TL 837 120)

The meeting will run from 10am to 1pm with a break for refreshments.

After lunch, participants are invited to join one of two walks organised by members of our host Group, Maldon and Dengie Hundred.

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Your friends & colleagues can get this version simply by emailing:

talkingwalking@aol.com

Contact:

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AGENDA FOR THE ESSEX AREA RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION AGM 2007

Guest Speaker: *Kate Conto*

Head of the Ramblers' Association Freedom to Roam Team

1. Welcome from **David Cullington**.
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Minutes of the meeting of 4th February 2006.
4. Matters arising.
5. Address by **Kate Conto**, the RA's Head of Freedom to Roam Team
6. Chair's remarks.
7. Secretary's Report
8. The Treasurer's Report
To receive the accounts for the year 2005 – 2006.
9. Officer Reports – (reception of written reports)
10. Motions received:
 - a. West Essex Group regrets the disappointingly low attendance at the Protest Rally on 1 July 2006 at Chelmsford and suggests that Area should in future ensure that it has enough support and commitment from constituent Group committees if the exercise is repeated. (p: *Mike Whiteley*; s: *John Francis*)
 - b. The Management Committee of each Group is asked to consider whether, in its opinion, the Essex Hundred (E100) should continue to be run on an annual basis and whether alternative events should replace it. (p: *John Francis*; s: *Mike Whiteley*)
11. Election of Officers
 - a. constitutional: President; Vice President(s); Chair; Vice Chair; Treasurer; Secretary; Footpath Secretary; Countryside Secretary
 - b. others: Membership; Public Relations; Web Site; Communications.
12. Representatives of
 - a. Affiliated organizations - maximum of five
 - b. Individual members - maximum of five
13. Election of Honorary Auditor.
14. Delegates to General Council
15. Any other business – notified to and accepted by the Chair prior to the meeting.
16. Thanks to the Host Group from the Chair

GREAT BRAXTED MILL, FOOTPATH 17 The position at January 2007

Background: New owners at the Mill since moving in a year two ago, noting that there was a 100 yard gap between the county road to the Mill and the commencement of Fp 17 on the definitive map, are insisting that there is no right of way and have put a notice on their gate to that effect.

We have consulted county officers, who have opened their files to us. There are internal documents dating back to 1956 including one stating that the county road went "to the river" [NOT 100 yards short of the river] and one from 1990 asking that this anomaly be corrected. A reply asked how the anomaly occurred.

My personal view is that since 1950 the county road has shrunk by 100 yards, but there is no record of it being altered. [JND]

We wrote to the officers who told us that the matter would be dealt with at the next review. This will be in a number of years. The alphabetical review has reached Rochford, and is about to start in Tendring. After Uttlesford, they will go through districts again, alphabetically. Maldon was never fully covered in the first review.

I understand that the reason for not taking immediate action is financial. It is unlikely that it will be a formality, in spite of the evidence, as the new owners could well mount a legal challenge, which means that ECC will have had to have made a fully detailed search of documents and maps.

Kevin Ascott, as District Footpath Secretary therefore served a formal notice asking for them to make a definitive map modification order [DMMO], based on the evidence in their possession [this is under a different section of the highways act to one for 20 years use] That notice was sent recorded delivery in May 2006, copied to the owners. There was neither acknowledgement nor reply. A second copy was sent recorded delivery in the autumn - still no response. On enquiry in December, I was told that ECC had not seen either copy of it. We provided details of the recorded deliveries, one with no signature, the other with one. [Presumably someone in the postroom!]

With no response to this over Xmas and the New Year, we have now asked our RA Central Office to enquire into the ECC system for receiving recorded deliveries and to ask ECC to accept that notice was served in May. It is our intention that after 12 months, if no DMMO is forthcoming we will try an appeal to the Secretary of State. If that is not possible, it could be the Ombudsman as this seems to be a classic case of maladministration!

JND

PUBLIC TRANSPORT WALKS PROGRAMME

Aha! I've been after someone who gets all the local groups programmes! What I need to know is how many of the Aug - Nov 2006 programmes actually put in a bit about my **Public Transport walks programme** as **Area** asked them to?

This is so I can work out how many RA members in Essex there are who still know nothing about the programme. Thereby, I can judge how much the apathetic response to it is due to unawareness. If you could actually tell me which groups did mention it, that would be helpful too.

I have decided to suspend the programme for the current four months as the number of site visitors has been so small that it does not justify my time in preparing it. I will be putting a note on the site tonight to this effect.

It was a great pity that when that letter was sent out by Area to all RA members in Essex in the summer, it was not preceded by a notice asking whether other Area projects could usefully be advertised in the same mailing.

Peter Kay peterkay.colchester@virgin.net

BEING CLEAR ABOUT WHAT'S INVOLVED WHEN YOU VOLUNTEER

Too often potential volunteers are hoodwinked into volunteering without knowing what's really involved. This is neither good for them or for you. A clear, written role description can be a first step to getting people involved by being clear what you want at the outset.

Have you ever agreed to get involved with something locally, and only realised subsequently that you're not quite sure what you've let yourself in for? Perhaps you've been asked if you can just give a little help with the Christmas pantomime, imagining you'll be serving mulled wine in the interval, only to find you're constructing and painting the props or sewing together Widow Twanky's pinafore.

No doubt what lies behind this is a certain caginess when we ask for volunteer help. We assume our prospective volunteer will be reluctant, and so we try to get a foothold in the door. "It's really nothing", "It's just about turning up for a few meetings a year", "We just need someone to keep things ticking over". How different this is from the world of paid work where every effort is made to talk up the job and make it seem far more interesting than it actually is.

Perhaps there are two possible causes for our caginess. It could stem from a fear that the right person will not want to do the job if they know all that it entails. If this is the case, it is rather a twisted logic to follow. Rather than try to persuade someone that they have a lot to offer and could put their time and skills to great effect in support of our work, we tend to suggest that they probably can't offer much, but could put it to minimal effect if they didn't have anything better

to do. An alternative explanation is that we ourselves are unsure about what is involved and don't really know what we're asking for. If this is the case, it doesn't bode well.

Being clear on who does what is evidently good practice for the smooth-running of any operation. But in addition, spending some time to define volunteer roles carefully can help greatly with what we might call "volunteer recruitment" by creating the right impression. It shows that our group is organised and knows what each part does. It demonstrates that we value people's time by being clear about the commitment involved upfront. It helps to clarify expectations so that people don't gain a false impression of what is being asked of them.

In addition to stating what needs to be done, defining volunteer roles also gives the opportunity to state some other relevant bits and pieces that potential volunteers could welcome. A role description that lists the purpose of the role, the main duties, the skills and time needed, and the support available can be both an excellent first step in the recruitment process, and also an invaluable cross-reference for all other volunteers in the team. All of this takes some time and thought, but perhaps it can be seen as a necessary investment.

Of course, not every volunteer role needs a written role description - it is unlikely that you will need one for each member of your team of envelope-stuffers - but many of the roles taken on or around the committee could benefit as could the widely repeated roles you may have such as walk leader, or parish footpath monitor.

Two words of caution: First, do remember that a role description is a live document that will need reviewing from time to time - especially if the role is ultimately tailored around an individual.

Second, watch out for jargon. The final stage in writing any role description should be to show it to friends who are in no way involved with the Ramblers. If they can understand what's involved, you're likely to have done a great job.

Generic role descriptions for the committee roles in Areas and Groups are available on www.ramblers.ora.uk/volunteer/roles.

Andrew Chadwick, Volunteer Development Manager

Your letters....

Hi Gordon,

Your approach to stiles, as depicted in the letter appearing on page 4 of current EAU, is right on target from my present point of view.

As a disabled rambler, I can manage unaided proper British Standard stiles, but alas the B S is not commonly applied by stile-installers and repairers, as well you know.

When I risk crossing one of substandard-issue, my rambling friends use magic carpets and izzy-wizy stuff to propel me over, intact and with ever reddening face.

Your highlighting of the value of these B S standards, even as poor substitutes for various others forms of gateways, should help keep paths available for less-able walkers like me.

Keep happy feet. **Derek Keeble** LDW 495

Blackwater Marathon

I would be grateful if you could include the details of the above challenge walk in your next newsletter as it may be of interest to some of your members.

The Essex & Herts group of the LDWA are organising the *17th Blackwater Marathon* on **Saturday 3rd November 2007**.

For the first time, the challenge walk will be a linear event. Based in Tiptree, entrants will be taken by coach to Tollesbury to start the walk which follows the seawall to Goldhanger. The 26 mile option then continues to Heybridge Basin before following paths, tracks and minor roads through Wickham Bishops and Great Braxted before returning to Tiptree.

The 13 mile option passes Little Totham en route to Tiptree from Goldhanger.

Full details are included on the entry forms, available from *Maldon Tourist Information Centre* after 1st June.

Thanking you for your assistance. **Doug Plumb**, 01245 226112

Len,

Thanks for putting the bit in about Stansted. That is a great help. I have some more just received here below. The essence of it is that with carefully co-ordinated campaigns, it is possible to win, and Stop Stansted Expansion has just demonstrated this. CPRE think so too. See CPRE web site: www.cpre.org.uk/planning.

It is after all, our enjoyment that is under threat if we have to walk under the drone of thousands of planes overhead, not to mention the thousands of houses threatening our countryside - 100,000 alone for Hertfordshire and 125,000 for Essex. Here is a bit more info'.

Uttlesford DC turned down the BAA application for unlimited passengers to use the existing runway and an extra 80,000 flights a year on nine points including climate change. Although requested by Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) to respect the decision and do the decent thing for the sake of the local community, BAA has lodged its appeal. This means it will now go to public enquiry and SSE estimate that £100,000 will be needed for the external support needed for its existing team.

See www.stopstanstedexpansion.com for more information. In the meantime the 2003 Air Transport White Paper on which BAA depends for its expansion proposals is becoming increasingly outdated, particularly with the recent Stern Report on Climate Change and needs a rethink!

See Airport Watch's rethink campaign, www.airportwatch.org.uk"

Best wishes, **Philip Greswell**, Countryside Secretary, Herts and N Middx.

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STOP STANSTED CAMPAIGN

Diary Date:

Book now for

THE BROXTED QUIZ SUPPER

**Saturday 10 March 2007
7.30 for 8.00pm**

**Village Hall, Browns End Road,
Broxted**

Phyllis and Roger Clark are gearing up to run yet another successful

Broxted Supper Quiz in aid of **Stop Stansted Expansion**

Tickets are available on an individual basis or for tables of six (max)

at £9 per head to include supper (bring your own drink)

This is always a very popular event in the **SSE** fundraising calendar so book early to avoid disappointment by contacting Phyllis and Roger:

clarkatbroxted@hotmail.co.uk

or 01279 850638

DIARY DATES

2007

- 15 Jan: Area Council 7.30pm
30 Jan: Executive Committee 7.30pm
3 Feb: Essex Area AGM— Wickham Bishops
16 to 18 Mar: Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show (Birmingham NEC)
30 Mar - 1 Apr: General Council - Reading University
4 Apr: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
17 Apr: Executive Committee 7.30pm
14 May: Area Council 7.30pm
23 Jun—1 Jul: Use Your Paths Week
9 Jul: Executive Committee 7.30pm
15 Aug: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
16 Sep: National Day of Walking
22 Sep: In Town Without My Car Day
17 Sep: Area Council 7.30pm
27 Nov: Executive Committee 7.30pm
5 Dec: Footpaths Committee 7.30pm
26 Dec—2 Jan: Festival of Winter Walks

2008

- 7 Jan: Area Council 7.30pm

Please note:

All meetings are held at the Friends' Meeting House, Chelmsford unless stated otherwise.

THE SAFFRON WALDEN REPORTER is running a poll on airport expansion, asking:

"Would you like to see BAA win their appeal for expansion at Stansted Airport?"

To vote, click on the following link:

<http://www.saffronwalden-reporter.co.uk/content/saffron/default/default.aspx>

Stop Stansted Expansion

info@stopstanstedexpansion.com; www.stopstanstedexpansion.com and 01279 870558

"Our Community - Our Responsibility"

Have you signed the Downing Street e-petition against the expansion of Stansted Airport?

Sign up now at <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Stansted/>

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