



EAST OF ENGLAND CIVIC & AMENITY SOCIETIES

COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday 14 September 2011 - 10:30 am
at the CambridgePPF Office, Wandlebury Country Park, Cambridge

MINUTES

- 1 **Present** – Peter Landshoff, Andrew Sangster, Terry Betts, Alex Hartley
Apologies - Jo Edwards, Sue Sollihull, Nigel bell
- 2 **Notes of the last meeting** – 15th June 2011 **Appendix 1**
- all correct
- 3 **Matters arising**
- details of Norwich Heritage Economic and Regeneration Trust (HEART) received (AH)
- 4 **Chairman's Report** – discussion notes: **Appendix 2**
 - Item 1 – need to check **role of EELGA** now and in future
 - Item 2 – **homeless and other waiting lists** – recently reported that housing starts are even lower than ever before in recent times due to lack of capital for developers and mortgage provisions for buyers (there would be 2 million more houses if Councils had not stopped building of council houses)
 - item 3 – Hertfordshire seems to have 2 **LEPs** Hertfordshire (the NE area links up with Cambridgeshire/Rutland LEP)
 - item 4 – **to most people it is a total surprise that heritage environments can benefit business** (ref Heart in Norwich); average architects produce average/ poor buildings and certainly some planners do not have a flair for design – a problem; local societies have award schemes, usually covering building and developments – should also invite/ target planning officers. Design and Conservation Panels can tremendously help to upgrade designs – Norwich and Cambridge has such panels (check CABA design guides and make link in next EEACS newsletter highlighting good practice in region). Refer to this week's RIBA's article on house sizes => also article for EECAS newsletter – see <http://www.architecture.com/HomeWise/> . Need to correlate with draft NPPF on this matter? To what extent does the market determine the layout of dwellings (open kitchen to small sitting rooms, upstairs bedrooms with en-suite bath rooms? Or in Cambridge insufficient housing being built for families (3, 4 or more bedrooms) – all societies need to check their local housing studies and needs strategies. e-news
 - ⇒ **All civic societies need to be more active and vigilant to achieve good design in their area.** All
 - item 5 - **Regional Transport Forum** is still continuing (but its recent meeting did not even discuss the A14)
 - item 6 – **Sustainable Communities Act** will be given more

explanation before the report is put on web/newsletter and web links included; other examples from region required – all to contribute

- **EECAS membership and Civic Voice benefits** – need to update lists and canvass new membership for EECAS; Civic Voice list needs to be checked if some societies placed in the wrong region; pleased to see Civic Voice is increasing contacts with Government to make voice heard.

PL/ NB

- additional item: the **Green Deal** – see

e-news

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment-and-recycling/sustainable-city/sustainable-communities-act.en>

government proposals to upgrade existing housing stock to make these more energy efficient/ reduce their carbon footprint; in Cambridge a company will check all housing stock in city to check energy leaks and offer good deals

CambridgePPF seminar series Vision 2030 – education and skills – Government's Wolf Report highlighted that skills taught do not reflect what is needed for available jobs. Students need to be trained to solve problems rather than absorb facts; some jobs did not exist 10 years ago (for information see cambridgeppf.org/vision/3/)

5 Forums

a) **East of England Environment Forum (EEEF)**

- 14th July 2011

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Same problem as other environmental organisations affected by cutbacks; requires contributions from member organisations of EEEF via fielding delegate, providing meeting place at no cost and financial support for admin costs (latter currently provided by RSPB).

Verbal Report

Should request EEEF to also consider urban and urban/rural fringe issues where natural and built environments coincide (as this is the area most civic & amenity societies cover) and tackle Local Plan issues as well as the Localism agenda (note Green Infrastructure Strategies often do not include urban areas); EEEF should increasingly play a role as a more independent organisation as some member organisations cannot comment critically on Government issues/ consultations etc; particularly now needed as so many changes to planning framework and other important policy documents.

- ⇒ **It was decided that EECAS should continue to field a delegate and CambridgePPF could offer for free a meeting place at Wandlebury Country Park (just south of Cambridge) and EECAS should make an annual contribution of £75.**

CG

b) **Historic Environment Forum (HEF)**

- 6th September 2011

Serious cut of heritage officers in Local Authorities - 10% in past year; often now merged with planning department and so reduced in status; more councillors as heritage champions are needed to put heritage to forefront.

and add other references – any suggestions?

- 8 **Newsletter** - suggested items in addition to above: e-news
- King's Lynn article on under-used housing should be included
 - Civic Voice AGM
 - Request pictures of local areas/ civic societies happenings for website and newsletters in Region (built/natural environment)

- 9 **Website**
- minutes to go up and reference to web links of HEF and EEEF to be made PL

10 **Any other business**

Planning the next EECAS Event - suggested draft theme:

Why should we care?

How high quality environments benefit the development of our communities
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Venue: in Cambridge as central

Date: in April 2012 - a day seminar

⇒ NB/CG/PL to finalise date and venue and propose outline

PL/CG/NB

11 **Date of next meetings**

9 December 2011 at 10.30am at Wandlebury (CambridgePPF office)