



EAST OF ENGLAND CIVIC & AMENITY SOCIETIES

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

15th June 2011 at 10.30am at Wandlebury Country Park, Cambridge

Present: Peter Landshoff (Chair), Carolin Göhler, Alec Hartley and Andrew Sangster.

[In attendance: Nigel Bell – Admin. Officer]

1. Apologies

From Jo Edwards and Sue Sollohub.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes were agreed with the changes in item 4 that Hertford should be 'Town' and not 'City' Council and that 'AANTAS' be amended to 'ANTAS'.

3. Matters Arising

AH would provide an article on Norwich Society's work with the City Council for the e-Newsletter. **[AH]**

4. Chairman's Report

The Committee expressed concern at the loss of Archaeology, Environment and Conservation Officer posts by Local Authorities as a result of budget cuts. It was particularly noted that Archaeology was being outsourced and that only funded work would be carried out.

The Committee noted that the Local Enterprise Partnership in Cambridgeshire had submitted a bid for an Enterprise Zone in the County and also had a target for 160k extra jobs in the area, which considerably outstripped housing growth. Concern was expressed at the lack of initial funding for LEPs.

In the context of the forthcoming Localism Bill, concern was expressed at the low number of attendees for the recently held 'Big Society & Localism' seminar in Ely. It was noted that Civic Societies needed to prepare now to engage with provisions within the Bill for Local Asset Listings and Neighbourhood Plans and there was concern at their capacity to do this and even whether Parish Councils were able to take this on, lacking the staff or experience. The optimism expressed by Civic Voice for the civic movement to rise to this challenge was questioned. The Committee thought that telephone contact with the region's societies to assess their preparedness would be useful and that a list of their phone numbers and questions to ask them be drafted. **[NB]**

The Committee thought it useful to investigate other ways in which the civic movement could engage with Local Authorities, and the 'Bristol Network' and 'Heart' (Norwich) were cited as examples to explore further. AH would provide CG with contact details for Heart. **[AH/CG]**

5. Forums

East of England Environment Forum [EEEF] – CG said the Forum would continue as a network. Landscape East has now mapped the region's landscape 'character types' and this was available on-line. This would be a useful tool in assessing major planning applications and the links would be provided in the next e-Newsletter. **[NB]**

Historic Environment Forum [HEF] – most of this was covered by the Chairman's Report but it was noted that the Heritage Lottery Fund's rules on match-funding for grants had been relaxed.

6. Financial Report

There was still a total of £758 in the EECAS account as there had been no change since the last meeting. The seminar in Ely had made a small loss of £20 overall.

7. Ely Seminar 7th May

The day had received good feedback from those attending though the number attending had been disappointing..

The Committee suggested ideas for future seminar topics including; improving Civic Societies computer skills, Agriculture and Land-use, update on Planning Policy, update from English Heritage, preserving Industrial Heritage and an update on the Localism Bill. The seminar could be wide-ranging in its subject matter as long as it was united by a common theme. The Committee thought it should be held in spring 2012 after the Easter break but that we should look out for the opportunity to hold a shared event with another organisation in the autumn.

8. Newsletter

The next e-Newsletter would be sent shortly and would be again be a link to a webpage rather than sent as an attachment. **[NB]**

9. Website

It was suggested more pictures should feature on these pages.

10. Any Other Business

AS said that ANTAS would be having a junior government minister speak on the Localism Bill at their AGM.

11. Date of next meeting:

14^h September 2011 at 10.30 am at Wandlebury Country Park