



EAST OF ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING

9th December 2010 at 10.30am at Wandlebury Country Park, Cambridge

Present: Peter Landshoff (Chair), Alec Hartley, Sue Sollohub, Andrew Sangster & Carolin Göhler
[In attendance: Nigel Bell – Admin. Officer]

1. Apologies

From Terry Betts.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes were agreed with the following changes; it was the Wensum River “Parkway” (not “Pathway”) and it was “Colman Archive” (not “Colman Archive film of the city”).

3. Matters Arising

None.

4. Chairman’s Report

London societies did not attend the Civic Voice AGM in any numbers, and overall funding was still a problem with the membership needing to be doubled. Civic societies needed the will and capacity to work more than just ‘parochially’. They would need to engage with the localism agenda and contribute to government consultations.

5. Forums

East of England Environment Forum [EEEEF] – CG provided a paper from the national meeting in Birmingham on 25th November 2010. There was likely to be an ongoing funding problem for these forums and Local Enterprise Partnerships were unlikely to prioritise the environment or biodiversity. The next EECS e-Newsletter should draw attention to the EEEF. **[NB]**

Cambridge Past, Present and Future has offered to host the EEEF web pages on the EECS pages of its website. The question was raised as to what would happen to the various documents and papers on the historic and natural environment held by EEDA, CABE and other soon-to-be-defunct bodies. It was decided to ask Adrian Stannard at EELGA about this and to obtain copies of the most relevant documents if they were endangered. **[PL]**

Historic Environment Forum [HEF] – PL reported that the minutes of this meeting were no longer ‘secret’ but consequently were now less interesting. The last meeting had discussed cuts proposed in the Culture, Media & Sport Department and within English Heritage. The funding gaps would be filled partly by increased funding for the Heritage Lottery Fund. The EECS e-Newsletter should have an article on this issue. **[NB]**

English Heritage is trying to reduce its administration costs and is closing its London Office, though as a result the Cambridge Office is expanding. They will be recommending more ‘call-ins’ to the secretary of state. There is a concern that LAs could be cutting back on Conservation Officers and delegating many activities to less accountable ‘Trusts’.

The National Trust hopes to increase its membership by a third though admits this is ‘aspirational’. The Norfolk & Suffolk LEP bid has been resubmitted with Norwich now included. The CPRE were very concerned at the deregulation of power line locations, particularly those serving wind farms.

The HEF will continue and liaise with the new LEPs, though because these are focussed on business and economic improvements the emphasis will be on the economic benefits of tourism. The case must be made that a good environment helps businesses by its contribution to ‘quality of life’ and therefore helps them to recruit and

retain staff. The Committee thought we should campaign on this issue and that it was something we should contact Civic Voice about pursuing. [PL]

6. The Future of EECS

The Committee received a report from the PSO and it was agreed that the Committee should become a less formal regional cluster or 'Forum' of active civic and amenity groups. A name change to include Amenity groups was agreed so that EECS would now become EECAS or the 'East of England Civic and Amenity Societies'. EECAS would create an e-network for member societies to sign-up to and encourage new EECAS members. The new 'Forum' would hold a self-funding meeting in 2011 with a key speaker - though EECAS might continue to hold joint specialist events or seminars with the RSA. It was suggested that the 2011 Forum should be on the subject of the government's Localism agenda, held in the spring at Peterborough or Ely, with Griff Rhys-Jones suggested as the key speaker.

7. Financial Report

A financial report had been received from Terry Betts. Payments of £50 for website hosting and £250 administration costs to Cambridge Past, Present & Future were agreed.

8. Current Regional and National Consultations

Noted.

9. Newsletter

The next e-Newsletter would be produced in late January 2011. [NB]

10. Website

The website should hold the minutes from the EECS (now EECAS) meetings.

11. Any Other Business

AH said that The Broads National Park, which includes Norwich, was trying to achieve UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

SS suggested that Civic Voice be asked to host workshops on the new Planning regulations and arrangements.

12. Date of next meeting:

16th March 2011 at 10.30am at Wandlebury Country Park