



**East of England Biodiversity Forum Meeting Minutes Tuesday 8 July 2014  
Maulden Working Woodlands Centre Bedfordshire**

<p><b>Present</b></p> <p><b>Steve Scott</b> ~ Forestry Commission  <b>Mark Iley</b> ~ Essex LBAP  <b>Catherine Weightman</b> ~ Natural England  <b>Gen Broad</b> ~ Suffolk LBAP  <b>Naomi Stevenson</b> ~ Natural England  <b>Henry Bexley</b> ~ National Trust  <b>Liz Anderson</b> ~ Central Bedfordshire Council/Alge rep  <b>Dominic Coath</b> ~ Environment Agency  <b>Martin Hicks</b> ~ Hertfordshire County Council  <b>Deb Howard</b> ~ Essex Wildlife Trust (minute taker)</p>	<p><b>Apologies</b></p> <p><b>Stuart Warrington</b> ~ National Trust  <b>John Sharpe</b> ~ RSPB  <b>Deborah Ahmad</b> ~ Cambridgeshire County Council  <b>Stuart Banks</b> ~ National Trust  <b>Anne Casey</b> ~ Norfolk LBAP  <b>Andrea Kelly</b> ~ Broads Authority  <b>Richard Barnes</b> ~ Woodland Trust  <b>David Hooton</b> ~ Deer Initiative  <b>Philip Pearson</b> ~ RSPB  <b>Kieren Alexander</b> ~ Essex LBAP  <b>Jennifer Faulkner</b> ~ National Trust  <b>Martin Horlock</b> ~ Norfolk County Council  <b>Ellie Henderson</b> ~ Woodland Trust</p>
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	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>Minutes from the last meeting</b>            Minutes of the meeting from 25 March 2014 were agreed</p> <p><b>Update from secretariat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark informed the forum that the following had been spent since the last meeting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ £180.00 on the website</li> <li>○ £140.00 room hire at BTO Thetford.</li> <li>○ £70.00 room hire at Maulden Working Woodlands Centre</li> <li>○ £50.00 room hire at Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club</li> </ul> </li> <li>• £10,012.50 remains in the account. If anyone has a regional project that would benefit from support of these funds please put forward an A4 side proposition to Steve for the Forum to consider.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>NCA's and Geology for East of England – Naomi Stevenson (see attached presentation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Character Areas (NCAs) are available for download on the Natural England website <a href="http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/587130">http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/587130</a> Natural England are keen for these documents to be used.</li> <li>• If you find any errors please contact <a href="mailto:Naomi.Stevenson@naturalengland.org.uk">Naomi.Stevenson@naturalengland.org.uk</a> who will feedback to national teams for updating.</li> <li>• Sometimes areas of scrub for example are removed to expose geodiversity, this involves integrated conservation and management for biodiversity.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Innovation – potential regional event – Catherine Weightman</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns were raised about raising the profile of conservation and it was agreed that it is a bad time for the environment.</li> <li>A regional event was discussed, with concerns about what would follow the event.</li> <li>It was agreed that development pressure poses problems for biodiversity.</li> <li>Mark felt that water is what matters to people and it is a commercial resource and government will listen when it comes to water but will not listen to any ecological reasons.</li> <li>Everyone in the forum is pushing biodiversity in their day jobs.</li> <li>Mark recently attended a Leader funding workshop and attendees did recognise and knew that biodiversity is important.</li> <li>It was agreed that we would be able to give MPs the tools to get the biodiversity message across but we would need to show the practical value of protecting the environment.</li> <li>Planners are under pressure to push through development plans overlooking green infrastructure. Training for planners was put forward as an idea.</li> <li>The British Standard for Biodiversity would be a useful tool.</li> <li>Steve asked for members of the forum to think about ideas of how and what the forum could do to raise biodiversity awareness.</li> <li>Messages could be sent out through newsletters and correspondence.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ALL</b></p>
<p><b>NELMS – Catherine Weightman</b>  Defra, with the assistance of the ALBs, are developing a New Environmental Land Management Scheme (NELMS). NELMS will incorporate the best elements of Environmental Stewardship, Catchment Sensitive Farming and the English Woodland Grants Scheme  It will be funded under the new CAP and RDPE programme  More information here:  <a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/developments.aspx">http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/farming/funding/developments.aspx</a></p>	
<p><b>Local Food – Martin Hicks (see Martin’s document attached to these minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was agreed that local food should be given a profile.</li> <li>If alternative funding could be gained it would be more attractive to farmers and landowners.</li> <li>Farmers that are doing good work should be supported.</li> <li>Local food has a lot of profile in the media at present</li> <li>This country still imports a lot of produce.</li> <li>Leader funding is a potential source of support for the production of local food.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gen Broad is working on a 6 counties orchard project</li> <li>The Environment Agency intended to make 1500 – 1700 redundancies in October 2013 but this will no longer be happening, due to the flooding more funding has been allocated to EA. There will be a restructure moving to a 2 tier organisation which will make it difficult to cover all bases, there will be drawing back from planning and development. Resources will shift from regional to national and so expect change.</li> <li>Catherine is in an Area 8 partnership team (Beds, Cambs, Northants, Essex and Herts). There are potentially 86 Local Action Groups, but only perhaps 70 will be funded(these will be announced Oct/Nov 2014) NE are encouraging the Leader groups covering the The Fens to promote Leader funding for tourism and farm reservoirs/water for biodiversity. There will be potentially approx. £2 million available for each leader group. Groups will need 40 – 60% matched funding. The funding has to be linked to job creation.</li> <li>Martin informed the group that Herts LNP have produced a mapping system for planning indicating where work can take place showing grasslands and historic parklands. Martin will send a link to forum when the mapping is available for all to</li> </ul>	<p><b>MH</b></p>

<p>view.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gen told the group that Suffolk's nature strategy was launched by Chris Packham. The strategy had input from Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, National Trust and RSPB. A good glossy document.</li> <li>• Mark informed the group that the Biodiversity Offsetting report would be out shortly. Essex Biodiversity Project have received work on a site in Thurrock from the Bio offsetting pilot. He also informed the group that there is money available for river work from the Environment Bank.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Dates and venues for 2014 meetings</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 7 October 2014 – Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club - saltmarsh restoration project at Falkenham</b></p>	
<p>The meeting closed at 13.00, followed by lunch, presentation from Jon Balaam, Director of The Greensand Trust, and a guided walk around Maulden Woodlands led by Sue Raven</p>	