



Essex Area Update

Volume 10. February 2012. Issue 10

The newsletter of the Ramblers' Association Essex Area

**“The Ramblers’ Association is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales.
Company registration number: 4458492. Registered Charity in England and Wales number:
1093577.**

Registered office: 2nd floor, Camelford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW.”

Editor

Len Banister

len@talkingwalking.co.uk

Your friends and colleagues can get their own copy simply by emailing:

len@talkingwalking.co.uk

Or take a look at our website:

www.essexarearamblers.co.uk

A belated Happy New Year to all our readers.

Page:03: Summary of the Board of Trustees meeting, December 2011

Page:05: Keep the habit of walking.

Page:06: Introducing the Big Walk Map.

Page:06: Walk London.

Page:06: Support St Clare Hospice. (Walk)

Page:07: Essex & Herts. Air Ambulance. Join us. Challenge Italy.

Page:07: Hft.org.uk

Page:08: Pub of the month.

Page:08: Essex Area Quiz 2012.

Page:08: The Essex Area Rambler's Association. A.G.M.

Page:11: Minutes of the Essex Area Ramblers' Association

Page:14: Dates, for your Diary.

Summary of the Board of Trustees meeting, December 2011

Announcements

The Board noted with sadness the death of Maurice Johns. Maurice was the former Chairman of the West Wiltshire Group. Also the death of Les Hodgetts, a long-standing member and volunteer who was a Vice-President of the North Wales Area.

New Chief Executive

From the 110 candidates who had applied for the post, The Board appointed Benedict Southworth as the new Ramblers chief executive. He is due to start on 1st February 2012. Benedict is a keen walker and has more than 20 years' experience in the charity sector, including holding senior positions in Greenpeace International, "Friends of the Earth", "The World Development Movement Trust", "Amnesty International" and pro bono work for campaigning force, 38 Degrees. For the past two years Benedict has worked as a consultant to a long list of high profile charities, providing top-level support on strategy development, mentoring and campaign planning processes. Among others his clients have included "ActionAid UK", ActionAid International, Christian Aid, European Climate Foundation, Friends of the Earth, and UNICEF UK. (Ramblers press release)

Benedict Southworth takes over from Tom Franklin, who after four years as CEO will be leaving the Ramblers at Christmas to become chief executive of Think Global, a charity that aims to help people in the UK learn about such issues as poverty and climate change and find out how they can play a part in creating a more just and sustainable world.

President, Chair, and Honorary Treasurer

The Board agreed its nominations for key posts, which are due to come up for election at General Council in the spring of 2012, as follows:

- President: Kate Ashbrook. Kate will be stepping down from the Board of Trustees after more than 30 years.
- Chair: Jonathan Kipling. Jonathan is currently Honorary Treasurer. (Rodney Whittaker will be stepping down after three years as Chair at the next General Council.)
- Honorary Treasurer: Robert Peel. Robert is currently a member of the Board and is chair of its Strategy and Governance Sub-Committee.

Walking for Health

After considering very carefully the risks and benefits of doing so, the Board of Trustees approved the submission of our tender to take on the running of the England-wide Walking for Health (WfH) scheme. This scheme focuses on the delivery of short local walks.

The government is divesting the assets of the 'national centre' of the WfH project from its current home at Natural England to a non-government body. Many Ramblers volunteers in England will be familiar with WfH, which is currently largely funded by the Department of Health. Nearly 70,000 regular walkers take part in over 600 health walk schemes across England, led by 12,000 active volunteers – some of whom also lead Ramblers walks. There are separate schemes in Scotland and Wales.

Although WfH will utilise the skills we have built up running Get Walking, Keep Walking, it attracts a substantially different type of walker and in the long run we see WfH both complementing our existing walking programmes and nurturing new walkers.

Macmillan Cancer Support is offering to fund much of the WfH programme for at least three years, to the tune of £1.9m. Although the Ramblers would contribute resources too, we will proceed only if satisfied that the benefits to our other activities, such as development of a training model that can in due course be adapted for our traditional led walks along with enhanced reputation and influence, are sufficient to justify the investment. We believe that a partnership with Macmillan, another highly respected charity doing

immensely valuable work, will bring benefits to both parties.

It is anticipated there will be several bidders, possibly with alternative sources of funding. Should the Ramblers be accepted as preferred bidder, negotiations will begin on the funding conditions. They should be completed by March and the BoT would then make the final decision on taking on WfH. Should we ultimately become the new host, we will deliver Walking for Health as an externally funded discrete project – similar to Get Walking Keep Walking. Over time, we believe there will be benefits for the Ramblers as a whole, including for example:

- Making it easier for people new to walking to find the group that's right for them – whether that's a WfH or a Ramblers Group
- Greatly increasing our campaigning influence, by representing a broader range of walkers. We would be able to say we speak "for ¼ million walkers, in over 1000 groups, putting on more than 100,000 led walks a year" and use this to support our role as guardians of the footpath networks, the right to roam and the countryside;
- Providing greater co-ordination for volunteer walk leader training, expanding the model which is already well established by WfH;
- Encouraging those taking part in WfH to get give something back as volunteers, hopefully, to cancer support and walking.

Many Ramblers Groups report that there are local walking groups, separate from the Ramblers, springing up all the time. As Britain's premier walking charity, we believe it is far better for the Ramblers to take on the running of WfH and in so doing to provide better co-ordination of volunteering, promotion and progression for all walkers (for previous volunteer news items about Walking for Health, please click [here \(October 2011\)](#) and [here \(November 2011\)](#))

Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive reported that the interim report of the Independent Forestry Panel, on which he sits, would be published on Thursday 8th December. **(Please click [here](#) for the interim report, and [here](#) for the Ramblers response.)** He also reported on the lobbying work, which is on-going over the Government's 'Red Tape Challenge', and on coastal access in England. This was the Chief Executive's last Board meeting, and he thanked the Board for its support and guidance over the past four years, and wished the charity success for the future. The Board presented him with a picture featuring the hand-illustrated covers of historic Ordnance Survey maps for well-known walking areas of England, Scotland and Wales.

Partnerships

The Board of Trustees discussed at length a motion passed by the Inner London Area calling for the Ramblers to terminate our new partnership with BUPA. The Board decided to continue with the partnership, as part of our work to diversify our funding and recruit and retain members. It appreciated that whilst some people had very strong views against the partnership, other members had sent messages strongly in favour. The Board believes that the charity needs to keep separate the private viewpoints of individual members from its consideration of what is in the best interests of the charity.

The Board appreciates the sensitivity of partnership/sponsorship/member benefit activity, and in accordance with best practice, it will be reviewing the principles that we use in determining such activity during 2012. It will keep this and other partnerships under review to ensure that they work effectively for the Ramblers.

Management Accounts and Performance

The Board received and discussed information on our finances and our performance for the end of 2010/11 (to the end of September) and for October, the first month in the new financial year.

On the finance front, we made a surplus in the year 2010/11 of around £600k (mostly because of unbudgeted legacies and better than expected membership income), bringing reserves up to around £3m. The budget for the coming year sets out to spend this surplus on investment in areas including a new website, the Ramblers Routes database (see below), and membership recruitment. It is also likely to be a tougher year financially.

On performance, the Board reviewed our dashboard of key performance indicators, most of which are on track. It was particularly pleasing that in October alone, 69 footpaths had been reported as unblocked or opened thanks to Ramblers work. The main focus of concern remains membership numbers, which during 2010/11 slipped by 6,000. The Director of Marketing and Communications reported that during November, overall membership had slightly increased, partly thanks to our new partnership with HF Holidays.

Ramblers Routes

The Board received an update on the development of Ramblers Routes. This is a database of walking routes, developed through the Get Walking Keep Walking project, which Ramblers volunteers from across the country will be able to upload routes into from Spring next year. Our aim is to create a national repository of thousands of the best walking routes, available for Ramblers members to use. A number of Ramblers volunteers have been testing the database for ease of use, and feedback has been very good. The aim is to combine the database into the new Ramblers website, when that is launched next summer. It is intended that the routes (apart from the shortest ones which will be available free of charge to all) will be available only to members, with non-members able to access them for a fee.

.....

Keep the habit of walking.

At this season of the year you get more variety when out walking than at any other. There can be days that start out with superb low sunlight setting off deep shadows and others when you can barely see a thing. I had one of the toughest walks ever a few days ago in Hertfordshire in gale-force winds on slippery muddy fields yet, over Christmas, in the Cotswolds, apart from bit of drizzle the walking was great.

From the healthy-living point of view it is obviously a good idea to keep up the habit of walking throughout the year and not allow the weather to dictate too much...if you believe this then you might like to share your belief with others. Now is the time when people make resolutions...so it provides an excellent opportunity for you to introduce them to the joys of walking regularly.

The membership of the Ramblers in Essex has been declining over the last ten years. Without the income we get from subscriptions it will be difficult for us to protect the Rights of Way Network which we have fought so hard to achieve. For this reason it is really important that **you**, dear reader, do your very best to recruit someone to our cause.

Think of the people you know:

Someone who has never given any thought to walking for pleasure and who probably has no idea what a public footpath is or how to find one – why not taken them on a walk, in the country or the town, with a couple of mutual friends and introduce them to the kinds of activities they can pursue with our organisation? Someone who is a keen walker – why not tell them about our campaigning activity and how it is that the paths they see in green or red on their maps are there because of the Ramblers. Explain how they can help us to further help them by joining our Charity.

Someone who would like to build or rebuild a social life – take them on a short walk with your local Group and tell them about the other activities that are on offer like holidays, socials etc.

Introducing The Big Walk Map!

Ever wanted to find a great walk near you? We've added **Walk's** ever-growing selection of FREE route cards to a new online map - making it easy to search for walks in all corners of the UK.

[The Big Walk Map](#) puts our extensive collection of expertly crafted routes at your fingertips - from walks in the farthest reaches of Scotland to a stroll around Land's End and everything in between! We'll also be posting walking news and features by location, making it easy to keep track of what's happening where.

Check out [The Big Walk Map](#) - and don't forget to bookmark it for handy future reference!

Walk London

The walk schedule for Walk London's Winter Wanders walking weekend is now available.

Put Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 January 2012 in your diary and browse the walk schedule at <http://www.walklondon.org.uk> for more information. All walks are free to join and each led by a trained guide.

If you have any questions please email info@walklondon.org.uk or call us on 0870 240 6094.

Best wishes
The Walk London Team.

Support St Clare Hospice Sunday 29th January 2012

Hello, I work for St Clare Hospice and I am currently organising a 5km countryside walk at the end of January to raise money for the charity. I would be extremely grateful if you could share the following information with your walking group should there be anyone who wishes to take part.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sunday 29th January 2012.

Grab your wellies, it's time for walkies! Support St Clare Hospice at their 5km sponsored dog walk, which starts and finishes at the hospice in Hastingwood. The walk starts at 10.30am. After the walk round the local Hastingwood countryside, there will be treats and even a medal for the pooches... soup and rolls will be provided for the owners! If you don't have a pet to bring with you, please still come along to join us for a lovely countryside walk...there will be a prize for the 'Best Wellies'! Register online today or download an entry form to complete and return to us. Entry costs £10 per adult, £5 per child or £27.50 per family (two adults, two children), which includes warm refreshments. Call 01279 773750 to register or online at

www.stclarehospice.org.uk/walks.html .

Best wishes, Tracy Stratford (Events Fundraiser)

(01279) 773 758

St Clare Hospice, Hastingwood Road, Hastingwood, Essex, CM17 9JX

Essex & Herts Air Ambulance. Join us.Challenge Italy.

Hello,

Great news! The Essex & Hart's Air Ambulance Trust are now recruiting for their 2012 trek and as keen ramblers we didn't want you to miss out!

Attached is the itinerary for Challenge Italy, which will be taking place on 14th - 19th June 2012. Join us and trek 3 volcanoes; Vesuvius, Stromboli and Etna! See some of the great attractions that Italy has to offer as well as help us raise much needed and vital funds to keep our helicopters flying.

We would be extremely grateful if you would be able to pass this information onto any of your members. We also have leaflets to advertise this if you are able to display these anywhere?

If you have any questions or want to know more, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We hope you can join us on what should be an amazing trip.

Kind Regards

Sabi Blyth

Fundraising Coordinator. FRco-ordinator@ehaat.uk.com

Hft.org.uk

We are a group of people who are supported by Hft.

We want to find out about walks suitable for people with learning disabilities, perhaps shorter walks not too hilly around Bishops Stortford, Stansted, Saffron Walden, Harlow area.

We would like to meet new people and make friends. We look forward to hearing from you. You can contact us via this email address or sara.trim@hft.org.uk

Yours sincerely,
Rory Hambling
Graham Heslop
Leigh White
Maureen Lindsay
Support Worker

Pub of the month

Just to let everyone know that there is a very nice and simple pub just outside of Hadleigh, Suffolk which is in a village called Lower Layham - closed lunchtimes but willing to open for groups and serve food for groups if requested to do so - other groups including walking groups already use this place. I think it was called the "Queens Head" - anyway details can be found via Google. Good walks around there.

I was walking there with some friends and assumed it was open - landlord/owner was in there doing cleaning so let us in and served us and seemed glad of the company - he is very friendly and loves his way of life even after 18 years of it he told us.

Anthea

Essex Area Quiz 2012

The Area quiz in 2012 is being jointly hosted by, C&B and M&D Hundred on Saturday 3 March 2012, at 7 for 7.30 in the Wickham Bishops Village Hall, (grid 844 124). Entries are invited from groups in teams of up to 8. The cost is £6pp payable at the door, (correct money please), which includes supper and a hot drink. BYO drinks and nibbles. To book contact Jim on 01621 891055 or james.mcwhirr@btinternet.com by 3 February.

The Essex Area RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 2012

Saturday 4th February 2012, 10:00 to 13:00

Stock Village Hall

(Exp 175 TQ694992)

Stock Village Hall is readily accessible by public transport, being served by no. 100 Chelmsford - Lakeside bus route which stops in the village centre and operates direct from Chelmsford in the north, also from Lakeside, Grays, Stanford-le-Hope, Basildon and Billericay Rail Station in the south.

No boots in hall

The meeting, hosted by the Lea Valley Friends Group, will run from 10am to 1pm with a break for refreshments

There will be a walk of 4 miles, starting from the Hall at 2 pm

Guest speaker: JANET DAVIS

Senior Policy Officer

Plus

Presentation by Gary White and Andy Reynolds from Essex County Council on the Digitisation of the Definitive Map

Both ECC and Jane will address the meeting at a time considered appropriate by the Chair who will also designate a break for refreshments

1. **AGENDA** Welcome by the Chair, David Harvey
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (05/02/11) **item 1**
4. Matters arising

5. The Annual Report. **Item 2**

1. Chair's report
2. Treasurer's & Secretary's reports
3. Reports from Officers (reception of written reports)
4. Reports from Groups
2. Formal Reception of the Annual Report
3. Election of Officers
 1. Constitutional: President; Vice President(s); Chair; Vice Chair; Treasurer; Secretary; Footpath Secretary; Countryside Secretary
 2. Others: Membership; Public Relations; Webmaster; Assistant Secretary; Communications.
 3. Election of Honorary positions (President; Vice Presidents)
4. Election of Area Council Representatives (in addition to those appointed by Groups)
 1. Affiliated organizations - maximum of five
 2. Individual members - maximum of five
5. Election of Delegates to General Council (21-22 April; Gilbert Murray Conference Venue, Manor Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 2LH).
6. Election of representatives for the Ramblers Greater London Forum
7. Nomination for Board of Trustees
8. Election of Auditor
9. Motion to General Council:
10. Other motions from Groups or Individuals
11. Any other business – notified to and accepted by the Chair prior to the meeting.
12. Thanks to the Host Group from the Chair
13. Address by guest speaker

Following the AGM there will be short meeting of the Area Council with a two item agenda:

1

The election of the Executive Committee 2012 – 2013.

The following is an extract from the Constitution:

- a. *The Area Council shall, at its first meeting following the Annual General Meeting in each year, appoint an Executive Committee.*
- b. *Unless otherwise agreed to by the Council, the Executive Committee shall consist of not more than 6 members of the Council in addition to the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and such other honorary officers as may be decided on by the Council.*

2 The formal confirmation of the appointments of Countryside & Footpath Secretaries:

COUNTRYSIDE SECRETARIES

Area Countryside Secretary

David Harvey

Chelmsford Borough

Terry Foster

Basildon District

Geoff Forward

Braintree District

David Harvey

Brentwood District

Gordon Fairgrieve

Castle Point & Rochford District

Mike Berry

Colchester District

Mags Hobby

Epping Forest District & London Borough of Waltham Forest

David Weekes

Harlow district

Vacancy

Maldon District

Kevin Ascott

Southend Unitary Authority

Vacancy

Tendring District

John Wolton

Thurrock Unitary Authority

Hazel Jarrold

Uttlesford District

Alan Goffee

London Boroughs of Newham

Joan Bullivant

London Borough of Havering

Joan Bullivant

London Borough of Redbridge

Ian Shaw

London Borough of Waltham Forest

David Weekes. See Epping Forest.

London Borough of Barking & Dagenham

Michael Cullen

FOOTPATH SECRETARIES**Basildon District**

Geoff Forward

Braintree District

Katherine & Paul Evans,

Brentwood District

Vacancy

Castle Point District

Bob Turner

Chelmsford Borough

John Pavitt

Area Footpath Secretary & Colchester Borough

Mags Hobby

Epping Forest District

Peter Cozens

Harlow District

Roger Johnson

Maldon District

Kevin Ascott

Rochford District

Jim Woodcock

Southend Unitary Authority

George Cox

Tendring District

Wally Webb

Thurrock Unitary Authority

Hazel Jarrold

Uttlesford District

Alan Goffee

London Borough of Barking & Dagenham

Michael Cullen

London Borough of Havering

Joan Bullivant - new

London Borough of Newham

Joan Bullivant - new

London Borough of Redbridge

Martin Howells - new

London Borough of Waltham Forest

David Boote

Assistant Area Footpath Secretary

Vacancy

Item 1

Minutes of the Essex Area Ramblers' Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Held on 5th February 2011

1. The 40 members from 16 of our groups were welcomed by the Chair, along with Justin Cooke from Central Office and Simon Taylor from ECC PROW team. The Chair especially welcomed any new faces to the meeting who hadn't attended an area AGM before.
2. Apologies were received from Dave Hitchman, Maureen Taylor, Derek Gillard, Les Townsend, Val Pickford, Jo Harrison, Terry Foster, Maureen Gourley, Ruth Melling, Lucy Fletcher, Chris Barclay, Pauline Spratt, Mike Whiteley, Richard Iles, Mike Berry and Michael Cullen.
3. The Minutes from the last AGM, held on 6th Feb 2010, were accepted and signed as correct. Proposed: Kevin Ascott Seconded: Gordon Grout. There were no matters arising.
4. The Chair added to her written report stating that the Ramblers are more than just a walking group and are involved in all aspects of rights of way work. The Ramblers needed to retain existing members as well as recruiting more members. When the Essex Area first started there were eight groups. As the number of groups grew then there was less support for Area projects. The Chair hoped that by moving the location of the AGM around the county then more local members would become involved.
The Chair thanked everyone for their support during her three years in office and apologised for not doing as much as she should have over the past eight months due to illness.
5. The Treasurer hoped that the presented audited accounts were self-explanatory. As he was standing down he thanked the Executive Council for their advice and assistance over the last three years.
The Treasurer reiterated the process of groups submitting budgets to cover their funding for Ramblers charitable activities. He gave thanks to the groups who don't submit requests for additional funding. The budget process is now a lot better.
The Chair gave thanks to Norman for his work over the past three years.
6. The Secretary added to his written report stating that Essex County Council were in the process of reviewing the Saffron Trail route devised by Dave Hitchman. It is hoped that the route will be added to the OS maps in the future.
The Secretary also reiterated the budgetary process which was highlighted in some group reports along with the goal of the Ramblers to end 2011 with more members than at the start. One of the areas to be looked at is the relationship between the Ramblers and Affiliated Groups. Tom Franklin, Ramblers Chief Executive, has asked Essex Area to assist with this analysis.
7. Reports from other Officers were noted, as were reports from each of the Groups. Ann McLaren explained the Non-walkers Meals group, who holds monthly get-togethers; details of which are published in the Essex Area Update.
8. Len Banister explained the background to the West Essex group report regarding the statement on dissatisfaction with the group's capitation from Area and the criticism of Essex Area in providing funds to the group. As West Essex hadn't made any request for additional funding, through the budgeting process, they were not justified in making the claims as noted in the group report.
9. The formal reception of the Annual Report was proposed by the chair and all agreed. The motion was carried.
10. Elections were held with the following results (new holders in **bold**).
 - a. President: Dave Hitchman
 - b. Vice Presidents: Ann McLaren & Kevin Ascott
 - c. Chairman: **David Harvey**, Proposed Ann McLaren Seconded Mags Hobby
 - d. Vice Chairman: **Len Banister**, Proposed Ian Hynd Seconded Boyd French
 - e. Treasurer: **Paul Evans**, Proposed Alan Goffee Seconded Len Banister
 - f. Secretary: Kevin Clark, Proposed Len Banister Seconded Roy Carpenter
 - g. Footpath Secretary: Mags Hobby, Proposed Roy Carpenter Seconded Kevin Ascott. This is Mags last year in the role. It's a busy job and totally different from Group/District Footpath Secretary.

- h. Countryside Secretary: **David Harvey**, Proposed Mags Hobby Seconded Len Banister.
- i. Membership Secretary: **Roy Carpenter**, Proposed Colin Jacob Seconded John Champ.
- j. Public Relations: Ken & Margaret Adams, Proposed Ann McLaren Seconded Len Banister.
- k. Webmaster: Ian Hynd, Proposed Len Banister Seconded Boyd French. Ian indicated that this would be his last year in the role and would be standing down at the 2012 AGM.
- l. There were no nominations for Assistant Secretary. Request for volunteer would be made in the Essex Area Update.
- m. Communication: Maureen Taylor, Proposed Len Banister Seconded Kevin Clark.
- 2. There were no representatives from affiliated organisations but Michael Cullen and Adrian Vincent-Jones were elected to represent individual members on the Area Council. Proposed by Alan Goffee and Seconded by Mags Hobby.
- 3. Mags Hobby, David Harvey and Kevin Clark were elected as delegates to General Council.
- 4. Joyce Whiteley and Joan Bullivant were elected as representatives on the Greater London Forum. Len Banister is already chairman and we can have up to three representatives from groups in the London Boroughs.
- 5. Jim McWhirr was appointed as auditor. Proposed Norman Berry Seconded Hazel Jarrold.
- 6. It was agreed to put forward the following motion to General Council “This General Council is concerned at the lack of information on progress with the Campaign Policy adopted here in 2010 regarding gaining access to woodland, river banks and canals subject to exclusions of domestic areas. Given the newly perceived threat to such areas by the possible sale of Forestry Commission assets, this Council urges the Trustees to take positive action forthwith.” Proposed by Brian Collings Seconded by Kevin Ascott.

Justin Cooke, from the Ramblers, stated that Woodland and Canal Sides paths come under his remit. The Ramblers has been working behind the scenes with the British Water Ways Charitable Trust helping to make the PROW more friendly and usable. The Charitable Trust has only recently been set up as a charity and the Ramblers have also been assisting with this. Riverside paths will get greater access. With the government announcing plans to sell of Forestry Commission land will lead to greater focus by the Ramblers.

Hazel Jarrold stated than the perception is that we’re not kept up-to-date with Central Office work.

- 7. Ann McLaren outlined the Olympic Walk.
 - a. The idea behind the Olympic Walk is to provide a lasting legacy for the “Olympic Games”.
 - b. The walk will link the two Olympic sites in the county and can be completed in 7 days, measuring around 74 miles extending to the main Olympic site at Stratford.
 - c. A leaflet will be produced along similar lines to the existing Essex Way leaflet, showing maps and places of interest.
 - d. The leaflet will also detail 14 half day walks along with Olympic Walk.
 - e. Organisations such as Essex County Council will be involved right from the beginning.
 - f. The Olympic Baton walk will take place from the 20th May 2012 until the 26th May 2012. Groups will be asked to volunteer to lead a day.
 - g. The “Baton Walk” will be done by Two Car Trick as there are not many options to use public transport.
 - h. Area Council have approved a budget of £1000 to be used to cover publicity.
- 8. As there was no other business, Hazel thanked the Colchester group for hosting this year’s AGM and gave thanks to the tea/coffee team. Hazel would be contacting all groups in Essex requesting hosts for the 2012 AGM.
- 9. Justin then gave a talk on Coastal Access.
 - a. Justin started his talk by stating that Coastal Access is still going ahead, despite all the government cutbacks being announced.
 - b. The process is halfway through the first stretch along the coast at Weymouth Bay. This is due to be completed in time for the Olympics in 2012. Natural England’s (N.E.) final report is due out at the end of March. The Secretary of State has to agree the report.
 - c. The next five stretches given the go ahead are in Somerset, Cumbria, Durham, Norfolk and Kent. Each

stretch will take around four years to complete the analysis creation of the route and paths, starting with N.E. gathering information on the current state of the area in question. The information-gathering phase includes walking around areas with local landowners. The final report is submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. The Landowner can comment on the report findings. The report covers access for walkers and pedestrians. If other access types are possible then these will be included.

d.N.E. review of Coastal Access includes looking at the cost of any new paths or upgrading existing paths. They decide where the paths should go, including access land (spreading room). N.E. has the power to instate spreading room on landward side of path where applicable. N.E. has already decided where this spreading room should be without involving the Ramblers. The Welsh Ramblers have produced reports one each stretch of coastal access stating where the paths should go. All areas should adopt this process. In Weymouth, local groups have produced very detailed reports on where the paths should go. It's in N.E.'s interest to agree with Ramblers findings making any issues easier to correct.

e.The Ramblers has published a guide to Coastal Access, which provides a background to this process.

f.There is a large role for the Ramblers in this process and to help the Ramblers have set up a process to enable volunteers to help. Each area has a Key volunteer, not necessarily someone from the Ramblers. Central Office has arranged for these volunteers to receive training to enable them to use N.E.'s process in making surveys, knowing what they are looking for. The training also provides sample coastal areas to see if the volunteers get the same route as N.E.

g.As with all areas there will be 'Problem Areas'. N.E. has to balance a number of objectives including paths being close to the sea, having a sea view, safe as well as land owners land management with public access.

h.Some of Essex's coast might not be identified as coast as it is an Estuary. Estuaries are not part of the overall coastal path. Where possible the path will follow the estuary and cross at the first crossing point. The transition between coast and estuary is defined as the point where salt water and fresh water meet.

i.Estuaries present their own problems as one side might be ok and the other side may have problems. N.E. doesn't have duty to allocate coastal access to estuaries, which could have quite an impact in Essex.

j.When Rights of Way disappear when cliffs collapse the official line of the ROW remains in place. With 'rollback', the line of the ROW can move over the adjacent open access land. N.E. is obliged to move the path infrastructure as the path moves. If there are obstacles, such as gardens, N.E. is obliged to revisit the access.

k. Kevin Ascott stated that a survey of Essex coastal paths had been conducted. Essex County Council confirmed that they had been in contact with N.E.

l. Another area where there could be problems is the "150 MOD" sites around the country. Some will be opened up, but have strict controls in place on keeping to the designated paths, due to unexploded ordnance. Also Marinas, Holiday/Caravan parks and Private Beaches all present problems. Most golf courses don't present problems, as there are generally provisions for paths.

m.N.E. is slow at identifying the next areas to be tackled. Weymouth was pushed to the front due to the Olympic timescales.

n.N.E. was timetabled to complete the analysis in 10 years. It now doesn't have any timescales and there is no indication that any new areas will start next year. Budgets and manpower issues may cause the project to stall. The Ramblers will be lobbying N.E. and the Secretary of State to ensure that other stretches are looked at.

o.Once the paths are in place N.E. have a duty to maintain their condition, which they may pass onto local authorities with sufficient funding.

p.With regard to Islands, if you can't walk to it then it's not part of the mainland. They are not of the scheme unless the Secretary of State says so.

q.Nature reserves with limited access will be identified in the N.E. report and they may well do a full impact survey. The spreading room could be repositioned due to nesting birds for example.

r. Sea walls can be included as part of the project if not already in use.

10.Hazel thanked Justin for his very informative talk and closed the meeting.

11.David Harvey, the new Area Chairman, thanked Hazel for her hard work over the past three years.

Dates, for your Diary.

(Unless stated otherwise, all meetings are held at the Friends' Meeting House Chelmsford)

23/01/2012	Executive Committee
04/02/2012	Essex Area Annual General Meeting 10.00 Stock Village Hall
03/03/2012	Essex Area Ramblers Quiz
11/04/2012	Footpath Committee
23/04/2012	Executive Committee
05/05/2012	Coast for Most
14/05/2012	Area Council
20 to 26/05/2012	Essex Leigh on Sea to Stratford Legacy Walk
26 to 28/05/2012	Get Walking Weekend / Get Walking for the Games
02/07/2012	Executive Committee
15/08/2012	Footpath Committee
17/09/2012	Area Council
28/11/2012	Footpath Committee
10/12/2012	Executive Committee