

## MINUTES

### Greensand Ridge Local Action Group

1 December 2008

2:00-4:00pm

Mid Beds District Council, Priory House, Chicksands

**Present:** Jon Balaam, Greensand Trust  
Ali Bradbury, Clophill Parish Plan  
Joel Carré, BRCC  
Jennifer Dancy, Flitton and Greenfield Parish Council  
Steve Dowie, Chicksands Bike Park  
Jilly Hall, Natural England  
Pauline Hey, Heath and Reach Parish Council  
Sara Hind, EEDA  
Richard James, Haynes Parish Council  
Matthew O'Brien, Beds FWAG/ Bedfordshire County Council  
Bridget Smith, Forward Gamlingay/ Gamlingay Parish Council  
Mark Smith, CVS – Mid and North Beds  
Charles Whitbread, Southill Estate (Chairman)

		<b>Actions</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and introductions</b>  Charles Whitbread welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>  Leanne Bacon, Gamlingay Parish Council Jon Boswell, BRCC Diane Budd, Business Link Steve Cahill, Beds Fat Trax/ Chicksands Bike Park) Colin Carpenter, Community Tree Trust Helen Deavin, RSPB Mark Egar, Southill Estate Sarah Hughes, Bedfordshire County Council Laura Kitson, Beds and Luton Green Infrastructure Consortium David Morgan, Beds and Cambs Rural Support Group Anita Stone, Forestry Commission Gill Welham, Greensand Trust	

<p><b>3.</b></p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting</b></p> <p>Minutes of 10 October 2008 were agreed as a true record.</p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p><b>Update from LAG Steering Group</b></p> <p>Joel Carré took members through written update report which had been previously circulated ahead of meeting. Report focused on matters arising from Steering Group's inaugural meeting of 21 November 2008.</p> <p>Members requested that a web-link be circulated to enable LAG to access the minutes of Steering Group meetings as soon as posted on the web.</p> <p>In considering the steering group's report recommendation (no.1), it was agreed that all LAG members would have the opportunity to comment on a full draft of the 3 year delivery plan over the period 13-19 January 2009. It was agreed that all comments should be sent to Joel Carré to collate into a report with recommendations to be presented for consideration at the LAG Steering Group meeting on 23 January 2009.</p> <p>Members supported the report's recommendation (no.1) to delegate authority to the LAG Steering Group for signing off the 3 year delivery plan and submitting it to EEDA by 31 January 2009 deadline.</p>	<p>Joel Carré</p> <p>Joel Carré</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p>5.1</p> <p>5.2</p>	<p><b>Update from accountable body</b></p> <p>Joel Carré took members through written update report which had been previously circulated ahead of meeting.</p> <p>In considering the draft partnership agreement, Members supported the following proposed amendments under section 4.2. Insertion of following bullet points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Undertake an assessment of risk to delivery and process for business continuity where it is practical to do so'; and</li> <li>• 'Ensure that the accountable body is represented on the LAG by a senior manager'</li> </ul>	

5.3	Members agreed to submit the revised agreement to EEDA for endorsement and, subject to that being received, to obtain the signature of the LAG Chair and BRCC CEO.	
5.4	Jilly Hall suggested that Natural England's Communications Team may be able to help with producing news releases and advising on/ supporting LAG with media relations.	
5.5	Jilly Hall also suggested use of Defra Census mail-shot service to help reach local farmers, land managers and rural businesses. She also suggested the Rural Land Registry as another source of contact information on local farm businesses.	
5.6	Mark Smith suggested use of Mid Beds Horizon and Business Link newsletters to publicise the programme. Also suggested were local National Farmers Union (NFU) and Country Landowners Association (CLA) newsletters and meetings. Joel Carré to approach NFU/ CLA to see if willing to join LAG as members.	Joel Carré
5.7	Joel Carré to send draft LAG Communication Plan for LAG member comments following Steering Group meeting on 23 January for 'sign off' at LAG meeting on 6 March.	Joel Carré
5.8	Members agreed to amend the deadline for the completion of 'project idea' returns for inclusion in 3 year delivery plan to 12 January 2009 to fit with the agreed LAG consultation timetable (4.3 above).	Joel Carré
5.9	The proposed operational delivery plan to 6 March 2009 as set out in the update report was noted.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Local Development Strategy 3 year delivery plan</b>	
6.1	Joel Carré introduced members to the draft 3 year delivery plan, which had been previously circulated ahead of meeting. Joel explained that in order to complete the plan, the LAG needed to attract completed 'project ideas' forms from potential applicants in order to identify firm year 1 project investments and indicative areas for years 2 and 3. Sara Hind explained that the LAG had the flexibility to support/ fund projects which didn't appear in the 3 year delivery plan.	

<b>7.</b>	<b>Update on RDPE from EEDA</b>	
7.1	Sara Hind explained that the password protected regional extranet site was aimed at LAG officers, however, if LAG members wanted access to the site, then they should contact her and she would issue password.	All
7.2	Sara Hind reported that EEDA had a monthly feed into Hilary Benn MP on information and issues, including delivery of Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE). To date, EEDA had not seen any evidence to suggest that the economic downturn was having an adverse impact on its RDPE activity. However, EEDA is keen for LAGs to keep it informed of any local examples of such impact.	
7.3	Sara Hind reported that EEDA had awarded a £4.5 million tender for rural skills development to Land Skills East. All levels of skills training, from vocational to business management, would be delivered regionally under this tender contract once signed.	
7.4	Sara Hind also reported that EEDA was running a region wide competitive expression of interest process for collaborative reservoir projects where necessary consents were already in place – see: <a href="http://www.eeda.org.uk/rdpe">www.eeda.org.uk/rdpe</a>	
7.5	Sara Hind explained that under RDPE Regulations, ‘private’ match funding was defined as coming from private finance sources, such as bank-loans.	
7.6	Sara Hind reported on attending Chilterns LAG Programme launch, which has £200k RDPE project funds to commit by March 2009, with maximum project grant of £50k and average of £20k. She emphasised need to explore opportunities to collaborate on x-border, inter LAG projects.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>LAG training</b>	
8.1	Joel Carré invited members to suggest training needs, which he could then help to provide either as part of a scheduled LAG meeting or a separate event.	
8.2	Matthew O’Brien highlighted the need for LAG members to be able to explain in simple terms what was in it for farmers and other rural businesses and communities. Jilly Hall suggested the use of project case studies, such as those	

	from recently published Leader+ review, and worked examples as a useful supporting explanatory tool, though members expressed concern that this shouldn't be allowed to stifle local innovation.	
8.3	Joel Carré to organise workshop for February/ March 2009 for LAG members and their frontline staff/ advisors, farm/ rural businesses and communities with aim of raising awareness of Greensand Ridge LDS and associated investment opportunities and to foster development of large, partnership projects.	Joel Carré
<b>9.</b>	<b>Strategic developments affecting LAG area</b>	
9.1	Jon Balaam suggested the value of guidance/ training for project promoters on how to pitch their projects to the local planning authority and how to interpret/ translate Local Development Framework planning policies.	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Any other business</b>	
10.1	Ali Bradbury suggested the value of a map showing accurately the areas covered/ not covered in Bedfordshire by LAGs. Jon Balaam reported that Jonathan Woods, Beds County Council had agreed to produce such a map. Joel Carré to obtain and circulate a copy once available.	Joel Carré
10.2	Jilly Hall tabled an East of England Higher Level Stewardship Theme Statement and supporting maps for the Greensand Ridge LAG area for members' information.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>	
	Friday, 6 March 2009, 9:30-12:00, venue tbc	