

AGM Chair report 2024

2024 has certainly been a busy year for EBA. With a new chairman in place, a challenging ride schedule, projects and ever-increasing development throughout the county we have found ourselves involved in many diverse issues.

I can't believe that I have now been in post for 1 year it only seems like yesterday when I was sitting in the front row listening to Julia and being introduced to you all. I want to thank all the people you see beside me who have welcomed me and guided me in the right direction when needed.

So the good news is our membership is stable and this year have been able to offer 5 planned rides, unfortunately, we had to take the hard decision to cancel our every popular holiday due to increasing insurance costs, thanks to Alison Craigmile for organising the holiday and then unfortunately having to break the news to those that has booked that we needed to cancel the holiday. I have to thank Alison P and Sandra for all their hard work pulling together the ride schedule without these two we wouldn't have been able to offer these, and also thanks to all the volunteers who have helped us with marking of the rides on the day before or marshalling on the day without you we would not have been able to make these possible.

Running a ride requires an enormous amount of work and it is truly a team effort. We do rely heavily on volunteers to help on the day and sadly these seem in short supply. If you can spare a few hours one weekend please let us know as we would really appreciate it.

As we all know EBA is certainly not just about the rides, indeed these are a small amount of the work we carry out. This year we have been busy looking at ways to enhance and improve the access for riders in Essex

Martin our Bridleways Development officer's role is to work with authorities to improve, restore and create a safer riding environment for riders in Essex. This means he looks at planning applications across Essex to see if there is an opportunity to create a new bridleway and seeks to work with the landowners and developers where possible.

In addition, if existing bridleways are threatened for whatever reason, he goes into battle to protect it and reads and responds to Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans to ensure the rights of equestrians are represented.

His year has been dominated by infrastructure related issues, as national projects and local projects to upgrade pylons, build solar farms and seek new sites for quarries to support aggregate and mineral extraction have become high profile.

Of these, the largest workstream was the Essex Replacement Minerals Plan, a consultation seeking comments on no fewer than 52 potential sites for quarries across Essex. Martin researched each and every site, seeking to understand if and where bridleways might be affected and responded in writing on behalf of EBA.

Another significant and ongoing project is the National Grid Power Line upgrade from Norwich to Tilbury. This involves 112 miles of new high voltage cables being constructed across East Anglia as part of the Great Grid upgrade.

Martin continually beats the drum on EBA's behalf, emphasising the point that equestrians are vulnerable road users and need and deserve better protection, which includes the

provision of more safe off-road riding routes.

A big thank you Martin for his efforts this year. He is here this evening and I know would be delighted to meet with you to chat about bridleways, potential new routes or any local matters to you where he may be able to help.

Chris our Projects and Funding officer has also been busy this year and these are a few of the items that she has been involved with on our behalf

In March a Collaboration with the ECC PROW Team on projects such as re-surfacing of 3 bridleways 56, 95 and 96 in Waltham Abbey and bridleway 51 in Purleigh. Due to the partnership of working on both the above this has resulted in 2 successful bids by EBA to the BHS Ride Out Fund, bringing in match funding of over £4,000. EBA have contributed £2,000 of its own funds to each of the above projects.

Partnership working with London Borough of Havering Council, Trailnet, and Essex Green Lane Association on bridleway 119 in Havering, a bridleway that has not been able to be ridden for many years now. The land has now changed hands and following contact by all 3 organisations working as a team, LBH are writing to the recorded owners to ask them to clear obstructions to this bridleway including stiles, inappropriate gates and fencing.

Working in partnership with Brentwood Borough Council to create opportunities for permissive equestrian routes across council owned land which includes a request for parking spaces for horseboxes.

Working with Thurrock Council to provide signage for equestrians using the Recreation Ground in Orsett Road, Horndon on the Hill to help them access the area safely, and avoid conflict with pedestrians and sports users.

Supporting local rider Lucy White in her quest to be able to ride along the side of the new solar farm at Layer De La Haye Nr. Colchester, alongside the very busy Birch Road, used as a rat run for the A12. Trying to convince the operatives of the Solar Farm to change their planned permissive footpath into a permissive all user path to join up with Birch bridleway network. Lucy has also agreed to become a trustee for the association and look forward to welcoming her to the team.

Express Dedication at Common Law (EDCL) has, also taken up a lot of time for Jan and Chris this is how they have got on this year.

They both have been regularly exploring options for this alternative way of establishing new Bridleways without going through the lengthy and cumbersome route of making a Definitive Map Modification Order.

It requires finding a sympathetic landowner who is open to allowing a permanent bridleway across his land. Not an easy task!

Several ideas have been suggested to Chris and Jan and they have looked at routes in Rettendon, Stock, Margaretting, Thorndon and Blackmore. A few have been identified as worth following up.

The most positive result so far has been at Armitage Bridge, near Thaxted, where a bridging footpath between two bridleways has been turned into a permissive bridleway, leading into

a prospective EDCL in the future, hopefully.

There has also been an exciting prospective extensive bridleway development including some EDCL in Little Dunmow, where a sympathetic landowner is keen to develop a new bridleway across his land. This also involves a bridge across a deep stream being upgraded so is a long term and involved project.

Recently Spains Hall has come to their attention and hopefully there will be some positive development there. Though it is early days here.

Work on EDCL is ongoing and relies on EBA members identifying likely routes. So if you know of any please let Jan or Chris know.

We have also diversified this year and ran a couple of evenings with various contacts we have in the equestrian world where we have had talks from Shirley Anglian, the public rights of ways officer at Essex CC, out talk from the team of the Essex Horseriders Volunteer scheme where they were able to offer free saddle marking, and we also attended the Essex Heavy Horse show at Beechwood. These are something that we would like to try and organise again throughout next year and welcome any suggestions of other events/chats that you might be interested in us arranging.

Providing and enhancing safe access is paramount for riders so any work we can do to provide that is essential. We are extremely lucky that we have the funds to ensure this work is continued. As you know the majority of our funding comes from the membership and our rides and across the year we have been having a look into how we can increase our membership, increase the funds raised and reach more people and we recently got together and with the help of a couple of external facilitators held a SWOT analysis session where we talked about our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. I have to say this was a real eye-opener and got us all thinking and we have come out with a list of objectives to achieve over the next year

The AGM is always a good opportunity for me to thank the committee and Area reps for all their hard work over the year. Without them none of this would be possible. They all play an important role in helping EBA to run smoothly, supporting each other and our two employed officers.

We are always looking for new trustees and area reps to come on board, if you feel you have something to offer then please speak to myself or any of the committee and area representatives who are here this evening. This leads me on to our very own Lisa Guy our secretary who has decided to step down from her role which she has held for around 12 years. I think you will all agree that she has done an amazing job and we are certainly going to miss her *present flowers and chocolates*. This does mean of course that we are looking for a new person to take on her role. It is also sad to inform you all that Louise Fuller has decided to step down from her role as Treasurer, Louise has given us a year's notice so that we can find someone whom she can start to hand the ropes over to. If you think that this something that you might be interested in then please do not hesitate to come and speak to her.

The last thing for me to do is to announce our Volunteer of the Year award. It's never an easy decision because we have so many regular volunteers but this year, we have decided the award should go to Lesley Gilman. As many of you know Lesley was on the committee for a number of years and used to organise all the EBA rides, and without her

knowledge we would have been lost, She is the first to offer her services for Marking, and riding the route before any of you venture out making sure that it is safe and still marked correctly. – *Present Lesley rosette and chocolates*

So that concludes my report for tonight, thank you for listening.

ESSEX BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

TREASURER'S REPORT TO AGM ON 14 NOVEMBER 2024 FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

It is a particular pleasure to be with you tonight as last year, many of you will remember, I was housebound with a badly broken ankle (no, I didn't fall off my horse, I fell off the mounting block). Mending has been a long job and is still ongoing, but I am glad to say I am back riding again. And of course mucking out, poo picking and all those other jobs that have to be done!

Copies of EBA's Income and Expenditure for the year and the Balance Sheet have been posted in advance on EBA's website for you to see. I will pick out significant factors affecting our finances this year.

Our income from rides has more than doubled compared to last year. This is because we cancelled three rides last year due to adverse weather conditions; rain had made either the parking or the route unusable. Maybe this is something we will face more often in light of the climate crisis. We have also had some rides on the brink of cancellation due to extreme heat so we go from one end of the spectrum to the other.

The income from rides is the biggest single contributor to our receipts, and makes it possible for us to carry on paying our contractors, getting work done on bridleways etc. Sadly we are finding it increasingly difficult to attract volunteers to help on our rides. We do have many loyal volunteers who help regularly and of course we are immensely grateful to them for their input, but we still need more. We know from comments on Facebook that many riders really enjoy our rides and we don't want to disappoint them, but the reality is that without more help coming forward, the rides won't happen. You will see from our ride schedule for next year that we are already planning to run fewer rides, and this is because of the lack of helpers. Please do consider if you can give up part of a Saturday or Sunday to help at a ride. It is actually good fun, and great to feel you are part of the team.

As the rides income increased due to running more rides, so the associated expenses have also increased. There are various costs associated with a ride; sometimes we have to pay a fee to the landowner, there are gifts purchased, rosettes, refreshments and parking fees for helpers, mileage for pre-ride recce trips and for taking the trailer, portable toilet, and for the Thetford Forest holiday of course we have to pay for accommodation for people and horses.

Our miscellaneous income has dropped in 2023/24, because in the previous year we received significant grants. Although there were none in 2023/24, we have more in the pipeline for the current financial year; our Projects and Funding Officer has done well in sourcing grant aid for our projects.

The cost of meetings increased this year because we have held another meeting for area representatives and also two meetings for our members – one by the Essex County

Council Public Rights of Way team and one by the police rural policing team.

Miscellaneous expenses were a lot lower in the year, as in the previous year we purchased the new trailer and undertook several projects on bridleways and byways.

Our overall picture remains healthy; in fact our balances have increased by £5,600. The balances do go up and down year by year; some of our projects take a long while to get to completion so we spend more on them in some years than in others. But we are always happy to use our funds in various ways for the benefit of bridleways and byways.

We need to appoint the Independent Examiner for next year; Ian Dunn has agreed to do this and I ask you to approve this.

Resignation

You may have seen in the Update magazine that I am stepping down as Treasurer at the 2025 AGM. I will have done the job for 15 years; I have had a very good time working with EBA, met some lovely people and had some great experiences, but it is time for somebody new to take over. They don't have to hold a finance qualification nor be a genius, I certainly am not, but it does help if the person is comfortable with figures and can use basic Excel spreadsheets. I expect a new person will want to do things their own way anyway.

It is a requirement that EBA has a treasurer so it is imperative that we find a new one to take over. I have given a year's notice in the hope that we can get somebody on board who will be able to start taking the reins during the year. If you think you, or anyone you know, fits the bill, do please get in touch.

Are there any questions?

ESSEX BRIDLEWAYS
ASSOCIATION
Y/ENDED 31 AUGUST 2024

INCOME & EXPENDITURE A/C		
YEAR		YEAR
2023		2024
	<u>INCOME</u>	
30	Donations	294
9,355	Rides income	18,853
11,575	Members' Subscriptions	11,310
438	Bank Deposit Interest	687
3,471	Miscellaneous Income	263
<u>24,870</u>		<u>31,407</u>
	<u>EXPENSES</u>	
677	Cost of meetings	981
108	Printing & Stationery	260
104	Postage	100
27	Travelling	62
4,092	Rides	8,123
	Historic Research/Bridleways Develop-	
8,504	ment/P&FO	8,237
3,826	Update magazine (all costs)	4,105
60	Donations & Gifts	400
8,331	Miscellaneous expenses	2,634
542	Fees and charges	561
0	Depreciation	250
<u>26,269</u>		<u>25,712</u>
<u>-1,399</u>	Profit/(Loss) for the year	<u>5,695</u>

Note: Rides Profit and Loss account

9,355	Income	18,853
4,092	Expenses	8,123
<u>5,263</u>	Profit	<u>10,730</u>

Notes

* Miscellaneous income in 2023/24 includes £207 from the AGM raffle and refreshments, and £56 from the sale of EBA Christmas cards

Miscellaneous expenses in 2023/24 includes £307 for trustees' indemnity insurance; £396 for PO Box address; £139 for BHS affiliation; £545 for items related to the new trailer; and £1,115 for website hosting and work, domain names etc.

ESSEX BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 AUGUST 2024**

Y/END 2023				Y/END 2024
	<u>FIXED ASSETS</u>	COST	DEPN	NBV
2,500	TRAILER	2,500	250	2,250
0	TOOLS	0	0	0
<u>2,500</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>2,250</u>
	<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>			
1,228	DEBTORS & PREPAYMENTS			1,033
1,054	BANK BALANCE - CURRENT ACCOUNT NATWEST			2,744
49,188	BANK BALANCE - BUSINESS RESERVE ACCOUNT NATWEST			50,375
2,331	BANK BALANCE - PAYPAL			1,991
<u>53,801</u>				<u>56,143</u>
	<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>			
4,438	CREDITORS, ACCRUALS AND RECEIPTS IN ADVANCE			835
<u>49,363</u>	NET CURRENT ASSETS			<u>55,308</u>
<u>51,863</u>	NET ASSETS			<u>57,558</u>
	<u>ACCUMULATION FUND</u>			
53,262	BALANCE AS AT 1 SEPTEMBER			51,863
-1,399	ADD: SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR			5,695
<u>51,863</u>	BALANCE AS AT 31 AUGUST			<u>57,558</u>

NOTES

1) EBA's policy is to keep £5,000 of uncommitted funds in reserves.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ESSEX BRIDLEWAYS ASSOCIATION

I have examined the accounts prepared which are in accordance with the books and records and explanations given to me. The Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet present a true and fair view of the Essex Bridleways Association for the year ending 31 August 2024

Signed

Ian Dunn

Hon. Examiner Ian Dunn

L R Fuller

Hon. Treasurer Louise Fuller

Date

7 October 2024

24 September 2024