

## Application for Determination

<b>Parish</b>	Ellingham Parish Council	
<b>Reference:</b>	BA/2014/0165/FUL	Target 09/07/2014
<b>Location:</b>	Ellingham Mill (south), Mill Pool Lane, Ellingham Bungay	
<b>Proposal:</b>	Construction of new canoe portage with new fence, grass protection on access path and regrading of slope	
<b>Applicant:</b>	Broads Authority	
<b>Reason for referral:</b>	Broads Authority own Development/Objection received	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	Approve with conditions.	

### 1.0 Description of site and proposals

- 1.1 The application site comprises a strip of land measuring approximately 56m long by 2.5m wide on the southern bank of the River Waveney immediately downstream (eastwards) from Ellingham Sluice.
- 1.2 The land lies at the northern end of a field of grazing marsh, but is separated from the marsh by a post and wire fence. This unmanaged strip of ungrazed land is noticeably different from the managed grazing marsh and has been colonised by ruderal plants species, with bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), nettles (*Urtica dioica*) and cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) dominating.
- 1.3 The riverbank alongside the application site is finished in sheet steel piling for approximately half the length of the site; the remainder is natural bank. A timber post and rail fence runs along the top of the sheet pile heading and a set of steps provide access to the site from the public highway, which is set approximately 1.5m above the ground level of the application site.
- 1.4 An informal pathway leads from these steps to an informal canoe portage point at the eastern end of the application site. The pathway is very narrow – situated as it is between the post and rail fence on the riverbank side and a post and wire fence on the grazing marsh

side.

- 1.5 This application proposes the installation of an improved (and landowner agreed) canoe portage point. The development proposed is relatively modest; the existing pathway would be cleared, widened to 2.5m and finished with a geogrid plastic mesh ground [protection system] which would be backfilled with shingle to provide an improved pathway. In addition, the existing informal portage point would be dug out and expanded to provide a level access platform. The surrounding banks would be graded down to this level to provide a ramped access to the platform. Both ramp and platform would be finished in the same backfilled ground protection system as the pathway.
- 1.6 The proposed portage point would connect to a similar, formal portage point situated immediately upstream of the sluice. By enabling canoeists to more easily exit the river downstream of Ellingham Mill, walk round to the upstream portage and re-enter the river it will provide improved canoe access on the stretch of the River Waveney between Bungay (to the west) and Geldeston (to the east).

## **2 Site History**

None

## **3 Consultation**

*Broads Society* – No response received

*Ellingham Parish Council* – No response received

*District Member* – No response received

*Environment Agency* – No objections, but flood defence consent will be required

*Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association* - – No objection

## **4 Representations**

One letter of objection from a local resident expressing concern regarding parking provision.

Two letters in support of the application

## **5 Policy**

Adopted Broads Core Strategy (2007) [Core Strategy Adopted September 2007 pdf](#)

The following policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and has been found to be fully consistent with the direction of the NPPF [NPPF](#)

CS13 – Water Space Management  
CS17 – Safe Recreational Access to the Water

*Adopted Broads Development Management DPD (2011)*

The following policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to be fully consistent with the direction of the NPPF

[DEVELOPMENTPLANDOCUMENT](#)

DP2 – Landscape  
DP4 – Design

The following policies have been assessed for consistency with the NPPF and have found to be mostly consistent with the direction of the NPPF; any divergence from the NPPF is due to the content of the policy being largely Broads-specific and therefore not being reflected in the document. The policy below is not considered to conflict with the NPPF:

DP12 – Access to the Water

*Material Considerations*

NPPF  
[NPPF](#)

## **6 Assessment**

- 6.1 This application seeks consent for the installation of a path and reprofiling of a bank to provide an improved canoe portage point downstream of Ellingham Sluice, on the River Waveney.
- 6.2 Planning policies within both the adopted Broads Core Strategy and the adopted DM DPD are supportive of development which seeks to encourage sustainable use of the waterways through improved access. Consequently, there are no objections to the principle of the development and the key considerations when assessing the application are considered to be the design and landscape impacts, of the proposal, the ecological impacts of the proposal and highways impacts associated with the proposed improved portage point.
- 6.3 Considering first the design and landscape impacts of the proposed development, the proposed path and portage point would formalise an existing arrangement and are of similar design and materials to other portages in the Broads. As such the proposal represents a type of

development which is readily associated with the riparian landscape, and particularly in locations such as the application site which lies immediately downstream of a sluice, there are no objections in principle in landscape terms.

- 6.4 Turning to the specific detail of the proposed works, the application proposes a palette of natural materials and these, combined with the modest scale of the works, result in a proposal which is considered to be of a high standard of design.
- 6.5 With regards to landscape impacts, the proposed works would result in the removal of an area of scrub and the loss of one mature Alder tree. In landscape terms the loss of the tree is regrettable, however, the specimen is a self-seeded riverside Alder and it is not considered that its loss is problematic in landscape terms. Similarly, there are no objections to the loss of scrub.
- 6.6 Consequently, there are no objections to the proposal in terms of either landscape or design.
- 6.7 With regards to ecological impacts, the proposal would require the removal of scrub which does provide habitat to wildlife. However, the area to be cleared is modest and in the rural context of the site, any ecological loss is considered to be negligible. The applicant has indicated that prior to the works being carried out both the scrub and the trees will be inspected by a suitably qualified ecologist. If protected species are found in this investigation then all works will cease, the Local Planning Authority will be informed and a scheme of appropriate mitigation measures will be submitted and, if acceptable, be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. In the event of finding protected species at the site no works will be able to commence without this written approval from the Local Planning Authority.
- 6.8 Subject to a condition securing this protection, there are no objections to the proposal on the grounds of impact on ecology.
- 6.9 Considering highways impacts associated with the proposed new portage point, no specific additional parking provision is proposed as part of the application. However, the public highway immediately south of the site does incorporate a natural widening which is used as an informal parking area.
- 6.10 Whilst it is recognised that the improved access to the river provided by the proposed new portage may result in more people starting canoe journeys from Ellingham Mill (and so more people using the existing informal parking area), it is envisaged that the most significant beneficial impact will come from making it easier to continue journeys along the Waveney past Ellingham Mill, where canoeists currently have to use an unsafe informal portage, from the upstream settlements of Bungay and Ditchingham (approximately 3.5km upstream), to the

settlements of Geldeston (3.5km) and Beccles (5km) downstream.

- 6.11 In terms of highways impacts, this means that the new portage at Ellingham is not necessarily intended to make Ellingham a destination from which to start journeys from, rather it is to facilitate the onward movement of canoes from Ellingham Sluice down river.
- 6.12 It should also be noted that whilst some canoeists will, no doubt, choose to take advantage of the proposed new portage and start their journey at Ellingham, others who currently have to end their journey at Ellingham (and so park at Ellingham) due to the lack of a safe portage on the downstream side of the sluice would be able to continue onwards.
- 6.13 Given the above, it is not considered that the proposed canoe portage would have any significantly detrimental highways impacts sufficient to warrant the refusal of this application.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 This application seeks consent for small scale works to provide an improved canoe portage point immediately downstream of Ellingham Sluice.
- 7.2 Policies within both the Broads Core Strategy and the Broads DM DPD seek to promote sustainable use of the rivers and improved access to the water and, as such, there are no objections to the proposal in principle.
- 7.3 With regards to the specific detail of the proposal, the development would be small scale and have minimal landscape impacts. The design is considered to be appropriate to the rural nature of the site and it is not considered that the proposal would result in unsafe traffic movements or have any significant detrimental impact on the safe functioning of the public highway network.
- 7.4 Consequently, the recommendation is for approval subject to conditions as detailed below.

## **8 Recommendation**

Approve subject to conditions:

- (i) Time limit
- (ii) In accordance with approved plans
- (iii) Protected species watching brief by ecologist prior to the commencement of works

**Background Papers:** Application File BA/2014/0165/FUL

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**Date:** 4 June 2014

**Appendices:** Location Plan

BA/2014/0165/FUL Ellingham Mill (South), Mill Pool Lane, Ellingham  
Construction of new canoe portage with new fence, grass protection on access path  
and regrading of slope



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