

# Hoveton & Wroxham Station Improvements



## Three Years On

Chris Wood  
Community Rail Norfolk

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## 1 Introduction

A variety of interests are focussed on improving the environment at Hoveton & Wroxham station and on making it into a Gateway to the Broads. This project began in 2012 and received a major boost in 2013 through the Greater Anglia station refresh and EU STEP-funded work to brighten up the platforms, facilitated by the Broads Authority, but there has been no significant progress on keeping paths clear, signage or the subway, and the death of the proprietor of the Chinese restaurant has been a set-back. This paper sets out progress to date, lists issues still of concern, and attempts to set out a basis for the next steps.

## 2 Progress on key elements of the project

### 2.1 Station renewal as part of the Greater Anglia franchise commitment, including previously neglected items, particularly the canopies.

2.1.1 The canopies were painted in 2013, but are already looking tired again.

2.1.2 The problems with the guttering on the Sheringham-bound platform superstructure (especially the lack of down-pipe) have not been addressed, so that rain still soaks the brickwork.

### 2.2 The provision of boards over disused windows and doors on both platforms to brighten up the walls and promote the Broads as a destination.

2.2.1 This was achieved through the Broads Authority / EU STEP project.

2.2.2 However, there has now been damage to one of the boards on the Norwich-bound platform. This appears to be the result of a careless attempt to examine the door behind the board. The damage needs to be made good.

### 2.3 Potential uses for the old taxi office.

2.3.1 A survey by Greater Anglia's asset team showed that significant work would be needed to bring the office up to usable (safe) standard.

### 2.4 The replacement of the mural on the Sheringham-bound platform.

2.4.1 Achieved as part of 2.2.

### 2.5 Community-based mural or other work to improve the aesthetics and so the attractiveness of the station subway, both in the subway itself and at its portals.

2.5.1 The essential first stage here would be basic work to strip back and repaint the walls and ceiling (including metalwork), costed at c. £18,000. No funder has as yet been found for this work.

### 2.6 Work to improve the convenience, attractiveness and signage of the routes to and from the village centre from the station (see section 3).

2.6.1 No progress.

2.6.2 However, there is now a station adopter, who may be willing to take responsibility for minor vegetation trimming.

- 2.6.3 Representations to Norfolk County Council about the flooding at the end of the path to Station Road have so far proved abortive. Other channels are being pursued.
- 2.6.4 The problem remains of cars being parked obstructing the non-flooded side of the above path.
- 2.6.5 A recent visit revealed Broads Authority contractors blocking the path via the riverside park without regard to its strategic use. This is currently being pursued with the BA.

**2.7 The provision of high-quality information on foot, cycle and public transport links to the village centre and onwards to Broads attractions, such as the Bure Valley, Aylsham (via the BVR), Bewilderwood, Horning, Stalham (including the Museum of the Broads) and Wroxham Barns.**

- 2.7.1 No progress so far, although a signage project, which could be in co-operation with the planned Our Bike hire scheme at the Broads Information Centre, is in development, awaiting the experience of a similar project at Brundall station.

**2.8 Other developments.**

- 2.8.1 As part of the wider Bittern Line Carbon Reduction Project, money held by Community Rail Norfolk from Norfolk County Council has been used to fund replacement departure display screens on both platforms, with that on the Norwich-bound platform moved closer to the entrance.
- 2.8.2 The death of the proprietor of the Chinese restaurant in the old station building has left the premises empty since 2014. Progress on improving the look of the building awaits a new tenant.

## Developments

*The Sheringham-bound platform: 2012*



*...2015*



*The Norwich-bound platform: 2012*



*...2015*



*The subway: 2012*

*...2015*



*The path to Station Road: 2012*

*...2015*



### 3 Routes to and from the station

There has been little real change as regards routes to and from the station over the last three years. Some tree work has been carried out around the station car park, but this has had minimal impact on the pedestrian environment.

There are two key routes between the station and the village centre (and the main bus stops). The obvious one to a new arrival at the station is the path that leads out from the subway to the car park and the end of Station Road. Leaf mould and other plant debris has built up on the edge of the path, reducing its effective width. In wet weather, the end of this path is often flooded. However, this end of the path is not on railway land. Station Road itself is not particularly attractive, having a narrow footway, punctuated by access to the Roys car park. There is also no signage.

The second and more attractive route lies to the south of the subway and steps. This begins on the expanse of tarmac, apparently installed for parking when the restaurant opened, but not accessible to cars in any case. As well as signage, some vegetation clearance at the subway mouth is needed to make this an obvious route. The route continues along the side of the Roys car park into the riverside park. A narrow path (also prone to flooding) then runs out onto Station Road by the Broads Information Centre. Again, there is no signage, save for a rather off-putting danger notice at the entrance to the park (actually warning anglers about overhead cables). Vegetation often overhangs from the railway embankment.

A further route is available as far as the park, by taking the footpath from the Sheringham-bound platform side of the subway down to the river and then under the railway. Again there is no signage and this route is more overgrown.

The route from the park out onto Station Road means that the road is still an essential part of the route. An option to come out directly onto the main village road, by the bridge might be possible in consultation with the pub there, although it is narrow and access to the back of the pub is via the moorings area, subject to flooding.

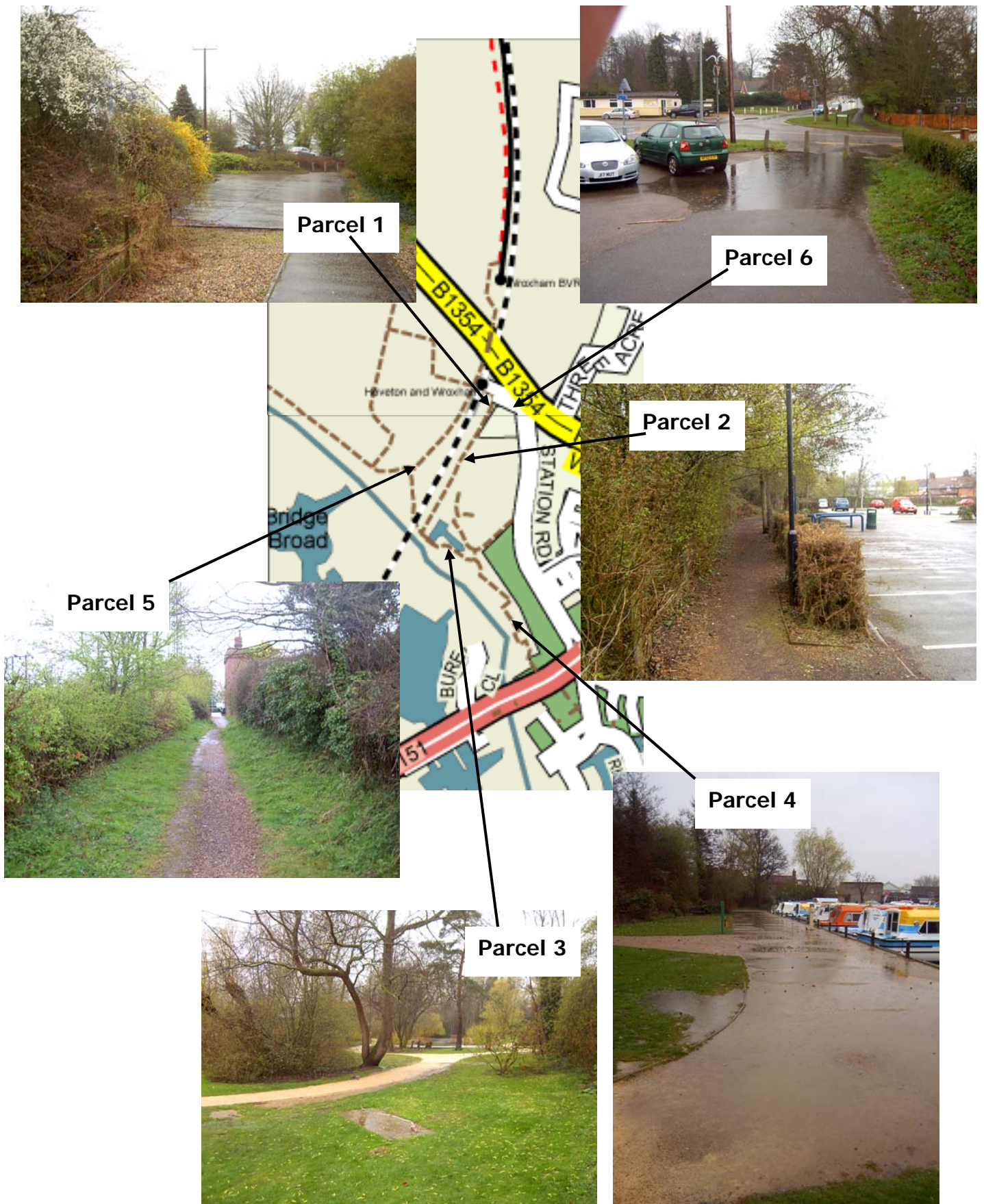
None of these routes are signed from the village centre.

All told, the most attractive and still fairly legible route is the second route described above. Whilst the path is generally good, some improvements are desirable, notably to drainage and signage. However, this and the path to the west of the railway are permissive paths, not Public Footpaths. It is therefore more important than otherwise to work with the landowners (see below).

Once at the station, facilities for cyclists in particular need improvement, with the 'Sheffield' stands on the Norwich-bound platform, in particular, poorly installed, too close to the fence. No improvements have occurred since 2012.



**Figure 2 Land on the approaches to Hoveton and Wroxham Station**



The land ownership on the approaches to the station is believed to be as follows (parcel numbers refer to the those in Figure 2, above).

- Parcel 1 Network Rail: part of the Abellio Greater Anglia.
- Parcel 2 Roys.
- Parcel 3 Broads Authority on a 99-year lease from Roys.
- Parcel 4 Orchid Brewery. Moorings themselves owned by the Broads Authority.
- Parcel 5 Probably Trafford Estates.
- Parcel 6 Norfolk County Council Highways.



#### 4 Next steps

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>
4.1	Remedy the damage to the picture panel on the Norwich-bound platform.	TOC?
4.2	Seek, with NCC Highways, improvements to drainage at the Station Road end of the direct path from the subway.	CRPM
4.3	Install one or more bollards to keep the end of the path clear of parked cars.	TOC
4.4	Clear debris along this path.	Adopters?
4.5	Clear vegetation at the south side of the subway mouth to make a good sight line to the path to the park.	TOC
4.6	Keep overhanging vegetation along this path trimmed back.	Adopters?
4.6	Seek, with the Broads Authority, improvements to drainage on the path through the riverside park and to the Broads Information Centre.	
4.7	Work with landowners, NNDC, NCC, the Parish Council and the Three Rivers Way Cycle Hire project to install a comprehensive set of signs aimed at people walking between the village centre (and its bus stops) and the station via the Broads Information Centre and park, and via Station Road, as well as signs to other destinations by agreement.	CRPM
4.8	Improve the positioning of cycle stands on the Norwich-bound platform.	TOC
4.9	Repair guttering faults.	TOC
4.10	Encourage more people to register as Station Adopters, leading to the formation of an Adopters' Group, able to take on minor maintenance issues such as trimming vegetation.	

## 5 Longer-term measures

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>
5.1	Strip back and repaint the subway, ideally with community murals as the top layer.	
5.2	Find a new occupant for the Norwich-bound platform station building.	TOC
5.3	Repaint the outside of the Norwich-bound platform station building.	TOC?
5.4	Repaint the platform canopies.	TOC
5.5	Install a ticket vending machine in the car park.	TOC/CRN