

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 01 March 2017

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Olly Barnes
Miss Liz Brooks
Mr Mike Flett,
Mr Tony Gibbons
Mr Alec Hartley
Mrs Dawn Hatton

Dr Peter Mason
Mr Stephen Read
Mr Charles Swan
Mr Ray Walpole
Mr Chris Yardley

In Attendance

Ms Lottie Carlton – Administrative Officer
Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)
Mr Mark King - Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)
Mrs Andrea Long – Director of Planning and Resources

Also In Attendance

Dr Andy Hutcheson – Norfolk County Council

3/1 To receive apologies for absence and welcome new members

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Louis Baugh, Mr Nick Dennis, Mr George Saunders, Mr Martin Symons, Mr Peter Warner and Mr Richard Webb. Members were welcomed to the meeting.

3/2 To receive declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting. Mr Olly Barnes subsequently declared an interest at item 9, AOB regarding Martham Cess Staithe – a non-pecuniary working relationship with Martham Development.

3/3 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 07 December 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 07 December 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3/4 To receive any points of information arising from the minutes

(1) Minute 2/5 (1) Ludham Footpath

The signed agreement had been received and all invoices settled. Signage is now being put in and once completed the footpath can be opened. A formal opening will take place at Easter with invitations going to landowners, parish councils and others. A guided walk from How Hill to St Benet's, including the Ludham section of footpath and led by the SWRO, will be included in the Broads Outdoors Festival in May.

(2) Minute 2/5 (2) How Hill Footpath

The path has been cleared. Wet areas have been identified where work is needed to raise levels. Once this work, along with some stock-proof fencing, has been completed the path from How Hill Staithe to Crowes Staithe can be opened. People counters along the path will help to provide evidence of use to Natural England (NE) regarding the possible clearing of the path along the riverbank northwards from Crowe's Staithe to Mud Point. NE is more likely to agree if the numbers are not too high. The Wood End Staithe to Mud Point section of the footpath is already well maintained.

(3) Minute 2/5 (3) Herringfleet

The WRO had recently visited the site and was able to report that the many gates on the path were all open. Signs on each gate give information about who to contact if they are shut. Paths had been strimmed and there were no obstructions. The landowner was therefore not currently in any breach of Open Access requirements. The car park was still locked and contained a burnt out car. A report has been sent to the parish council. The SWRO agreed to attend a Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton parish council meeting to explain Open Access and landowner responsibilities.

(4) Minute 2/5 (4) Cycling and Walking investment Strategy

The report has still not been published, however the Norfolk Cycling and Walking Action Plan is to be published very soon.

(5) Minute 2/5 (5) Hickling Project update

Work has progressed well. An extension of the work period had been agreed due to the water temperatures remaining below the set limit. Techniques are working well and the project is on target to achieve expected results.

(6) Minute 2/5 (7) River Wensum Strategy update

The draft strategy document should be signed off by the Strategy Group on the 14th April after which it will go to Norwich City Council for approval prior to going out to partners' committees. Once all parties have agreed, the draft

strategy document will go out to public consultation in May. It is recognised that anglers need to be properly consulted and Mr Tony Gibbons has agreed to look over the document to provide angling input to the strategy on behalf of the Forum.

(7) Minute 2/6 Staithe Research

Although the Staithe Research report has been completed and is available the accompanying photos and maps are still not ready. Once these have been received the report will be published on the Broads Authority website and comments will be welcomed. The research is based on academic study of historical data and does not include any anecdotal evidence. It is hoped that parishes will become more interested in their staithe as a result of the research. It was agreed to notify Forum members and parish councils once the photos/maps have been received and the report available to view online.

(8) Minute 2/9 Blue Book for Roads

A letter with feedback had been sent advising on a better structure for some otherwise very good ideas.

(9) Minute 2/10 British Horse Society – Auditing the list of streets

Norwich City Council was sent the two questions posed by the British Horse Society. So far no response has been received.

(10) Minute 2/12 Mutford Lock

There has been no development on the land transfer. BLAF will be updated as soon as there is any progress.

3/5 Broads Tourism update

Unfortunately Mr Greg Munford, Chairman of Broads Tourism, had to send his apologies and a replacement could not be found at short notice. It is hoped to have a presentation at a future meeting to explain how Broads Tourism, a membership group of Broads businesses and organisations, has been reinvigorated over the last year with a growing membership now numbering over 100 members

3/6 Norfolk County Council update

Dr Andy Hutcheson, Norfolk County Council, gave an update on Norfolk Trails projects as follows:

(1) Pathmakers Burgh Castle Project

Pathmakers is a charity set up by Norfolk Local Access Forum to help improve access infrastructure. Their first project, in partnership with Norfolk County Council and funded by WREN, is installation of a boardwalk at Burgh Castle to improve access at this section of the Angles Way. The footpath had become very muddy and difficult to maintain due to flooding and work has been carried out to make this section more accessible for all. Due to the historic significance and environmental importance of the site many consents were required which had been a very time consuming part of the project. After clearing the line, work began to install the boardwalk. Non slip wire mesh is still to be added and work is expected to be completed by 13th March 2017.

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- The work is being publicised as part of the Angles Way with extra publicity to come. The Norfolk Archaeological Trust will also be helping to promote the project.
- The Forum discussed the merits of plastic wood as an alternative to timber. While approximately 3 to 4 times the cost of timber, plastic wood is thought to have twice the life span, but this is unconfirmed until sufficient time has passed for current installations to show wear over time.
- Pathmakers was set up as a charity to enable access to funding and grants that would not be available directly to Norfolk County Council. The Museum Service also uses this option.
- It is possible to access the boardwalk as part of a circular walk from the monument.

(2) Wherryman's Way (Loddon section)

The floodbank at the Loddon section of the Wherryman's Way was reinstated by the Environment Agency. The path on the top of the old floodbank had surface problems. This surface has now been replaced, the work being carried out just before Christmas. The path runs from the Loddon moorings up to Chedgrave and is finished with a gravelled, easy access surface. The footpath came about as the Environment were replacing the bank as part of the BESL scheme so completed the path at the same time.

(3) 'Pushing Ahead' Project

'Pushing Ahead' is a Department for Transport funded project aimed at encouraging more cycling and walking. A successful bid for funding produced £1.6million over three years for venue work (promotion and information) in Great Yarmouth. A cycle map has been produced similar to the Pedalway map. One side of the map has circular tourist routes into the Broads with accompanying descriptions and the reverse side has commuter access routes in Great Yarmouth that highlight safer/quieter routes. The maps are made of plastic/waterproof material.

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- The Broads routes do not all start in Great Yarmouth but are within the Borough Council area.
- It was queried if the Martham route would be affected by the current issue at Cess Road. Dr Andy Hutcheson to clarify and report back to the Forum.
- There is scope for further additions and updates to the current routes as the funding covers a three year period. However, due to the constraints of the funding, only those within the area specified can be included.
- Although currently just map based there could be scope to include signage at a later date. The maps are also available online, but so far apps have not been explored as an option.
- Cycle hire is being set up at both Somerleyton and Great Yarmouth Stations. The link to these and the 'Pushing Ahead' cycle routes themselves would help encourage more sustainable use of the Broads area.
- Visit Norfolk is helping to promote the project and four thousand copies of the map will be available in Tourist Information Centres and libraries. It will also be publicised on the Norfolk Trails. Broads Tourism and Visit the Broads National Park websites were suggested as additional places to publicise the routes.
- There is scope to investigate how the HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme on the Halvergate marshes could work together with this project. Mills trails discussions could link into this.
- The riverside walk in Norwich was suggested as a potential cycle route to link with the Marriot's Way and the Wherryman's Way. Norfolk County Council would be keen to help promote this as a project idea.

3/7 River Chet condition update including Wherryman's Way and water level monitoring

The SWRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on the Hardley Flood section of the Wherryman's Way.

Currently a diversion route is in place to take walkers around this section of the Wherryman's Way and a temporary traffic order has been placed on the path in order to give time for partner organisations to investigate options.

Potential hydrological effects of any proposed work, including changes to the bank, river and Hardley Flood itself (an SSSI), needs to be known before any decisions are made. An hydraulic modelling brief is being put out to tender to BESL and two other contractors to get costs for such work. The Broads Authority is willing to contribute to the costs of this work and it is hoped that the other agencies involved will be equally willing to contribute.

Water level monitoring has been taking place. This has shown that Hardley Flood is not adversely affecting water levels along the river. Tidal range is also unaffected.

Photos and a map were shown of work already carried out by the Broads Authority to help stabilise the bank through scrub clearance and tree felling. As part of their dredging programme along the Chet the Broads Authority will also be able to deposit dredged material onto this bank to help raise and strengthen some of the lower, narrower sections of the path.

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- The Forum were pleased to see positive progress and agreed that it was desirable to try to retain the footpath. Compliments were given to BA and NCC and other for their work so far. This was a much better situation than previously reported.
- It was confirmed that further scrub removal along the banks/footpath would be needed, including any regrowth from already cut material. In the wider sections, and on the Hardley Flood side, scrub and trees were being left for wildlife habitat, particularly important due to the site's SSSI status.
- The two gaps in the bank had been in place for decades. Ideally water should only spill into the Flood at the top of the tide as happens with the more newly installed weir.
- If the bank failed altogether it was unknown for sure if sediment would move into the river system, but it seemed very likely considering the strong flow and impact of tidal levels. Dredging would have to increase if this happened. Maintaining the bank is crucial to access, navigation, tourism and the local economy.
- The dredged material would take approximately a year to stabilise. Dredged material here tend to dry quickly and has sufficient nutrient content for vegetation regrowth to occur.
- Seven scenarios are listed in the hydraulic modelling brief.

Reedham update:

The Reedham section of the Wherryman's Way had potential to be re-opened with a new landowner agreement. Works would be needed on the path to make it safe and an annual payment would need to be made to the landowner. A CIL funding application has been submitted for the works, but the agreement needs to be sufficiently long to ensure a secure future. The Parish Council may be interested in holding the permitted route agreement with the landowner. NCC is happy to facilitate the process between the parish council and the landowner who is yet to agree to the proposals.

The Broads Forum met in on 02 February and the main items discussed were as follows:

- (1) Boat waste. Potential leases for waste disposal facilities are being negotiated between Ludham Parish Council and North Norfolk District Council.
- (2) Presentation by UEA PhD student Ulysse Pasquier on modelling flooding risk and climate change in the Broads.
- (3) Presentation by Ian Holman and Giles Bloomfield, Water Management Alliance, on the Brograve Catchment Project including regulation of drainage and reduction of ocre experiments.
- (4) Presentation by Rory Sanderson, Environment Agency on how to make their water quality research statistics more accessible to the general public.
- (5) An update on progress with CEOs and other high level officers following on from the flood risk workshop held in November 2016.

3/9 To receive any other items of urgent business

Cess Staithe, Martham: An application had been submitted to divert the path at Cess Staithe Martham. Agreement could not be reached with Norfolk County Council and so this would now have to go to a public enquiry.

Publicity: Two posts are being recruited within Broads Authority's Communications Team to cover print media and digital media.

BLAF membership: Peter Warner is a Broads Authority appointed member of the Broads Local Access Forum. He ceases to be a BA member from the end of March 2017 and so a new appointment will be made by the Authority.

3/10 To note the date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 07 June 2017 at 2pm. A request was made to include a site visit with this meeting.

The meeting concluded at 3.50pm.

Chairman