

**Broads Authority**  
**Broads Local Access Forum**

Minutes of the meeting held on 07 December 2016

**Present:**

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Louis Baugh	Mr Charles Swan
Robin Buxton	Mr Ray Walpole
Mr Mike Flett,	Mr Chris Yardley
Mr Stephen Read	Mr Richard Webb.
Mr George Saunders	

**In Attendance**

Ms Lottie Carlton – Administrative Officer  
Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer  
Mr Mark King - Waterways and Recreation Officer

**Also In Attendance**

Mr Russell Wilson – Norfolk County Council

**2/1 To receive apologies for absence and welcome new members**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Olly Barnes, Mrs Dawn Hatton, Mr Alec Hartley, Mr Martin Symons, Mr Nick Dennis, Mr Peter Warner, Dr Peter Mason, Miss Liz Brooks and Mr Tony Gibbons. Members were welcomed to the meeting.

**2/2 To receive declarations of interest**

Mr Louis Baugh declared an interest for items involving Ludham footpath.  
Mr Robin Buxton declared an interest for items involving Horsey footpath.

**2/3 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman**

Mr Ray Walpole nominated Dr Keith Bacon as Chairman and this was seconded by Mr Charles Swan. No further nominations were received. The vote was carried unanimously and Dr Keith Bacon was therefore elected as Chairman.

Mr Alec Hartley, not present, had indicated he was willing to stand for Vice-Chairman. Mr Mike Flett nominated Mr Alec Hartley as Vice-Chairman and this was seconded by Mr Ray Walpole. The vote was carried unanimously and Mr Alec Hartley was therefore elected as Vice-Chairman.

**2/4 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 07 September 2016**

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

**2/5 To receive any points of information arising from the minutes**

**(1) Minute 1/4 (1) Ludham Footpath**

The planned October opening of the Ludham footpath had not taken place due to a stock control issue. An in principle agreement had been negotiated for the Broads Authority to make a one off payment to the landowner to waive the Authority from liability for the provision of stock control fencing and gates fencing. A signed agreement is awaited confirming the arrangement in order for the Broads Authority to be able to make the payment. Apologies for delays in producing the signed agreement have been received from the land agent who has agreed to action the process. It is now hoped to open the path in the spring.

**(2) Minute1/4 (2) How Hill Footpath**

The Broads Authority's Operations Team have completed work on the How Hill footpath and it is ready for inspection prior to opening of the path.

**(3) Minute1/4 (3) Herringfleet**

The gates are locked and cars are still parking on the verge. Construction is going on at the site and a caravan park for tourers has appeared. Nothing further has been reported regarding the bridleway or steps.

**(4) Minute1/4 (4) Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy**

The report has still not been published but is due early next year.

**(5) Minute1/4 (6) Hickling Project update**

Work has started on the Hickling Project now that temperatures have dropped (prymnesium requirement). The sale of Hickling Broad will not affect the work.

**(6) Minute 1/7 Wherryman's Way update**

The Reedham section of the Wherryman's Way has been shut as there is no longer an agreement in place with the landowner. Norfolk County Council have put in a CIL funding bid but are not confident the landowner will be cooperative. It is hoped to have a permissive path agreement with the Parish

Council. FWAG are assisting with advice regarding drawing up the legal agreement. NCC have agreed to keep BLAF and Norfolk LAF updated.

**(7) Minute 1/10 River Wensum Strategy update**

The River Wensum Strategy will go out to public consultation in early 2017.

**(8) Minute 1/11 Broads Forum updates**

The Broads Authority are working with Local Authorities (high level) to try to resolve the boat waste issue which arose due to the reclassification of boat waste from domestic to business waste creating an unforeseen loophole. It was agreed to update the Broads Local Access Forum at the March 2017 meeting.

**2/6 Staithes Research**

Professor Tom Williamson, UEA, had been engaged to carry out research into staithes in the Broads. His report is now available, but the historic mapping is still to come. Once all the information is available the Broads Authority will publish the research on their website.

The SWRO gave a presentation on the staithes research highlighting how the research had been carried out, which reference material had been used and some of the most interesting conclusions.

The Forum agreed this was interesting and useful research that will make it easier to decide if the Broads Authority should pursue any legal disagreements.

**2/7 Norfolk County Council update**

Mr Russell Wilson, Norfolk County Council (NCC), gave a presentation updating the Forum on activities carried out by NCC since the last meeting as follows:

**Weavers Way:** Lots of work has been completed on the Cromer to Yarmouth section including carparks, access points and improved signage. NCC is working on improving the Acle to Burlingham link (due to housing development there), working with volunteer groups.

**Angles Way:** Due to problems with the path being boggy/wet a project is planned to improve access by constructing a boardwalk on the path below Burgh Castle. Planning permission is awaited from the Broads Authority's Planning Committee. Mobility and access improvements are being addressed following an audit by George Saunders. A WREN external funding bid has been successful in gaining funds for the project. Following a question regarding the Bank to Breydon Bridge section Mr Russell Wilson agreed to investigate and report back on the status of this section regarding permissive rights.

**Railway connectivity:** Improvements, including better signage to get users to the start/end of the Wherryman's Way had been highlighted and new signage put in as a result (the same applied to the Boudica Way). An access audit had been completed from the railway to the Bramerton Woods End. An information launch would be available as packages at the end of the financial year.

**Loddon to Chedgrave section:** A problem with matting and other issues was being worked on between NCC and the Environment Agency. A public meeting involving NCC and the Broads Authority had attracted 120 attendees. A series of negotiations were underway with EA regarding the bank being reinstated and resurfacing it with Type 1 granite, rather than mesh, on a geotextile base. The work had been agreed and was due to be completed by Christmas 2016. There had been difficulties managing the site during the footpath closure due to trespassing. There would be an official opening once the work was complete.

## **2/8 River Chet Wherryman's Way update**

A map was shown highlighting the areas of the Hardley Flood section of the Wherryman's Way that were due to be cleared of scrub and trees in order to prevent further erosion/damage and encourage reed growth to stabilise the bank (January 2017). The SWRO confirmed that this work was being carried out by the BA and NCC was contributing to the cost.

Dredging infilling is also planned which should help to stabilise the bank further.

A meeting about the future of this section of path is being organised by NCC which will involve the District Councils, Parish Councils, NCC, BA, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The Broads authority is preparing a brief for the Hydraulic modelling which is required in order to ascertain how any proposed changes might affect the path, Hardley Flood, the river's hydrology and the bank.

Water levels are also being monitored.

### **Comments and answers to questions as follows:**

- (1) Hardley Flood water levels do not need to match the river water levels, but with SSSI and other conservation designations in place, licences are required to undertake any work that might affect the site.
- (2) Mr Tabor owns the Flood and the bank. Crown Estates owns the river bed.
- (3) It was agreed by the Forum that the partnership approach was vital and members were supportive of the line being taken by NCC and BA. The multiple benefits of navigation, tourism, biodiversity and economic factors were sufficiently valued to require a suitable solution to be found.

It was agreed to bring take a report to the Broads Authority from the Forum to highlight the issue.

## **2/9 Blue Book for Roads**

Following the Deregulation Act and confirmation that the Department for Transport did not intend to produce any guidance on the matter, a 'Blue Book for Roads' guidance book had been written via Huddle contributors regarding the 40k plus roads in England.

The current version of the LAF guidance book was difficult to understand, needed simplification and better structure with more logical sections. A flow chart would also be needed.

It was agreed that the Chairman would submit constructive comments on behalf of the Broads Local Access Forum, also suggesting that the project needed a lead.

There were similarities between needing research evidence for these roads and the staithe research work.

Some roads were recognised as Public Rights of Way but Highways were not responsible for maintaining them, while some could be privately maintained and listed as private but actually are for public use.

BLAF members expressed a need to know how to access the list of streets.

The importance of the street works register was highlighted. If permission was required from Highways in order to carry out any work on a road it must therefore follow that the road is a Public Right of Way.

It was noted that the status of the Berney Arms track is retained regardless of ownership.

## **2/10 British Horse Society – Auditing the list of streets – a role for local access forums**

The British Horse Society has raised the issue regarding auditing the list of streets and is asking for comment from LAFs.

The SWRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on auditing of the list of streets.

Every Highways department must keep an up to date 'list of streets'. It is important to ensure that all those 'streets' that should be on the list are included before the cut-off date of 2026. If on the list it will save time trying to prove a PROW.

The Department for Transport estimate there are 40k such streets, but three times as many is thought to be a likely estimate.

Removal of 'streets' from the list should not happen and where there is no definitive map, missing 'streets' should be recorded.

It was agreed that the Chairman would write to Norwich City Council to request a list of streets for Norwich and to ask Highways (Norfolk County, Suffolk County and Norwich City Councils):

- (1) What unsealed highways have been removed from the list of streets since 1998 (the year in which the Ordnance Survey collected such data for the purposes of showing ORPAS on leisure mapping)?
- (2) What procedures apply to any proposal to remove a highway from the list of streets, other than in response to a legal event (such as a magistrates' court stopping up order, or a Town and Country Planning Act diversion order)?

It was agreed to inform the British Horse Society of the BLAF's actions and report back to both the BHS and the Forum regarding any answers received.

## **2/11 Broads Forum updates**

The last Broads Forum meeting had taken place in June 2016.

An expanded forum had been convened on 03 November 2016 to discuss flood defences and climate change to which 70 people attended. Three strategies (sea breach, river flooding and Yarmouth barrier) had been reviewed by consultants and they concluded an integrated strategy approach would work better. It was agreed by attendees that engagement with senior level officers for all authorities involved was needed. Currently only BA has climate change as a priority and therefore they have agreed to act as lead in encouraging greater involvement.

## **2/12 To receive any other items of urgent business**

### **(1) Mutford Lock**

Mr Charles Swan gave a presentation on Mutford Lock highlighting problems with lack of attention to the surrounding area, too many notices on display and the length of time taken to transfer legal status via a tripartite agreement.

It was noted that currently the Broads Authority pays Sentinel Leisure to manage the Lock. Once ownership is transferred BA will manage the site in a more joined up way, but until then this would not be possible.

It was agreed that new interpretation would improve the site. It was noted that signage needed to be in place regarding safety by water requirements of RoSPA and Highways adoption but that some of the signs belonged to Waveney District Council.

It was noted that the Friends of Nicholas Everitt Park were keen to help with maintenance at the Lock and the SWRO agreed to inform the BA Volunteer Coordinator.

A meeting had taken place with the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club to encourage transit through Mutford Lock to help promote its use and generate additional income to cover the ongoing management costs.

At the Tolls Review the BA Navigation Committee had given strong support for Mutford Lock and highlighted its importance for the southern Broads. This view was reinforced at the Broads Authority meeting.

The SWRO agreed to take a suggestion regarding promotion of Mutford Lock via the Countryfile television programme to the BA Head of Communications.

## **(2) New Town or Parish Councils for Lowestoft**

A map was shown of the proposed new parishes for Lowestoft. A budget of £165k was available. An interim clerk is due to be appointed in February and the new parish to take effect from 01 April 2017. The BA executive area covers most of the new parish area. An increase in council tax charge will come into effect as a result of the changes. Planning issues should be easier as a result of the changes. It was noted that the current Pegasus Boatyard development would be dealt with by Waveney District Council rather than the new parish. Oulton and Oulton Broad parish councils will remain and there will be a Town Council for Lowestoft.

### **2/13 To note the date of the next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 01 March 2017 at 2pm.

The meeting concluded at 4.20pm.

Chairman