

AGENDA

Wednesday 06 Sept 2017

2.00 pm

		Page	Time
1.	To receive apologies for absence and welcome to new members		2.00
2.	To receive declarations of interest		
3.	To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 07 June 2017 (herewith)	1-7	2.10
4.	To receive any points of information arising from the minutes		
5.	Norfolk County Council update (presentation by Norfolk County Council representative)		2.30
6.	Trialling presentation for community groups on climate change, flood risk and how these affect the Broads landscape (presentation by Head of Strategy and Projects)		3.00
7.	Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 – Call for Evidence Consultation (report by SWRO herewith)	9-13	3.30
8.	British Standards: Gaps, gates and stiles – Specification Consultation (presentation by SWRO herewith)		3.50
9.	Broads Forum updates (Broads Forum representative to report)		4.00
10.	To receive any other items of urgent business of which notice has been received. If any member has any item they wish to raise, please let the Local Access Forum Secretary know as soon as possible after the receipt of the agenda.		4.15
11.	To note the date of the next meeting Wednesday 06 December 2017 at 2.00 p.m.		4.30

Details of the membership of the Broads Local Access Forum are enclosed for your information.

Broads Authority
Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 07 June 2017

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Olly Barnes	Mr Stephen Read
Mr Louis Baugh	Mr George Saunders,
Miss Liz Brooks	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Alec Hartley	Mr Martin Symons,
Mrs Dawn Hatton	Mr Ray Walpole
Dr Peter Mason	Mr Richard Webb

In Attendance

Mrs Jacquie Burgess – Broads Authority Chairman
Ms Lottie Carlton – Administrative Officer
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

4/1 To receive apologies for absence and welcome new members

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Nick Dennis, Mr Mike Flett, Mr Tony Gibbons and Mr Chris Yardley. Members were welcomed to the meeting. Mrs Jacquie Burgess, Broads Authority Chairman, Andrea Long, Broads Authority Director of Planning and Resources and Andy Hutcheson, Norfolk County Council were also welcomed to the meeting.

4/2 To receive declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest at this point in the meeting. No further declarations of interest occurred during the meeting.

4/3 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 01 March 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 01 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

(1) Minute 3/4 (1) Ludham Footpath

The Ludham permissive footpath was officially opened as part of the Broads Outdoors Festival with a guided walk 'Monastic Meanderings' led by the SWRO. A video made by Mustard TV was shown to the Broads Local Access Forum (BLAF). Not all BLAF members had received an invitation to attend the official launch. Apologies were given for this oversight. A morning site visit to the footpath is planned for the September BLAF meeting.

(2) Minute 3/4 (2) How Hill Footpath

All work has been completed. The path is ready to be opened to the public once the Broads Authority receives the official legal handover documents from the Environment Agency for the sluice bridge.

(3) Minute 3/4 (5) Hickling Project update

The winter work has been completed. Profuse growth of the water plant *cara intermedia* has been noted in the broad.

(4) Minute 3/4 (6) River Wensum Strategy update

Due to the recent general election and associated purdah requirements there has been a further delay in publishing the draft River Wensum Strategy for public consultation. The consultation will now start on 26 July 2017 and run until September. The document will be available to view online and at a venue yet to be confirmed. There will also be specific project consultations. The Vice-Chairman and WRO agreed to contact BLAF member Mr Tony Gibbons to get feedback from an angling perspective. CIL funding has been agreed and improved access to the riverside walk and links to the Marriott's Way projects will therefore definitely go ahead.

(5) Minute 3/4 (7) Staithes Research

There have been numerous requests to see the Staithes Research carried out by Professor Tom Williamson, but unfortunately photos and maps intended to accompany the report have still not been received which has delayed publication. Broads Authority's Management Team will discuss the issue next week to see if there is a way of intervening to ensure the report can be published. The Forum agreed this was important.

(6) Minute 3/4 (10) Mutford Lock

With the formation of the new Oulton Broad Parish all concerned are keen to get some progress regarding the land transfer at Mutford Lock. The Director

of Planning and Resources agreed to circulate an update to Forum members on the latest situation.

(7) Minute 3/6 (1) Pathmakers Burgh Castle Project

An official opening of the 'access for all' Burgh Castle boardwalk is taking place on Wednesday 14 June at 2pm. BLAF members were invited to attend.

(8) Minute 3/9 AOB

Cess Staithe, Martham: A date is yet to be set for a Public Enquiry into the proposed footpath at Cess Staithe, Martham.

Publicity: Rob Leigh has been appointed to the role of Head of Communications for the Broads Authority, Tom Waterfall has been appointed to the role of Communications Officer (Digital and PR) and is managing website and social media content. Interviews for the Communications Officer (Media and PR) are taking place next week.

BLAF Membership: Two members will be appointed to BLAF at the Broads Authority meeting in July.

4/5 Norfolk County Council update

Dr Andy Hutcheson of Norfolk County Council (NCC) gave a presentation 'Strategic update in the Broads and beyond':

Strategic Green Network: The national trails website includes the Coast Path, Marriott's Way, Wherryman's Way, Weaver's Way and Peddar's Way with lots of useful information, including circular walks off these national trails.

Coast Path: Numbers 1 and 2 are open and further changes are being worked on for North Coast and number 4. Norfolk is included in the south-east area. It is hoped to work with Suffolk County and Essex County to market the East of England as an area modelled on the South West Coast Path approach which has successfully increased economic impact and international visitor interest with clever use of itineraries.

The Norfolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan is undergoing a strategic review.

Norfolk Cycling and Walking Action Plan: The final draft is ready. The Department for Transport have also published their infrastructure document [covered in agenda item 6] which includes guidance for plans. NCC will follow this guidance in order to maximise access to funding.

'Pushing Ahead' is a three year Department for Transport funded project. NCC will liaise with the Broads Authority on project development.

Broads Access Improvements: The Chegrave section of the Wherryman's Way is bedding in after work carried out last year [photos shown to the Forum]. It is open to the public. A people counter showed 15,804 clicks since 01 February 2017. Similar people counters on other routes show that spring and early summer are most popular whilst August is the least used time of the year.

Comments and answers to question as follows:

- The Parish Council is happy to take forward the Permissive Path agreement with the landowner for the Chedgrave section of the Wherryman's Way.
- The people counter results tend to show local user focus. Ramblers Association walk statistics back the dip in August figures. Marketing improvements could be useful to improve footpath use during August. NCC funding is project based and there is no further budget available for marketing. There is however a visitor economy focus under the new Director at NCC and they are working with Visit Norfolk and district level DMOs sharing website links to improve tourism marketing coverage.
- On other sections of the Norfolk Trails surveys are available with questions relating to how often the path is used, average spend per visitor and where the visitor's are from etc. Surveys are either supervised (volunteers or professionals) or via self-completion.
- The 'access for all' terminology could be misinterpreted to mean access for all types of users e.g. horse riders, cyclists etc.
- Luggage transfer and linked bed and breakfast bookings services work well in other parts of the country to increase visitor numbers but is not something that has taken off for the Norfolk Trails. A commercial enterprise would be needed to get this up and running. Links to TV shows and films also help other parts of the country with visitor numbers.
- School links and promotion are integrated into various NCC projects including 'Pushing Ahead' and using heritage and wildlife aspects of the Marriott's Way.

4/6 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

The WRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on the Department for Transport Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy published in June 2017.

The main intention of the strategy is to make walking or cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys by 2040.

Sustrans has already successfully promoted cycling to schools resulting in 40% of children no longer being driven to school.

The strategy does not specify how it will be funded or who will be eligible, but the Broads Authority and the Broads Local Access Forum would be keen to access any funding available.

Objectives include: improved safety, reducing accidents, delivering high quality cycling and walking routes in deprived areas, connecting existing network hubs and encouraging bike parks in suitable locations both urban and rural.

As a result of the strategy it is hoped to save £1.7billion a year in national health costs, decrease traffic congestion in towns and cities, provide well connected, clearing waymarked cycle routes, improve safety and promote economic gains.

Sustrans has been working on a Phase 1 map identifying options in Norfolk. NCC and BA are discussing inclusion of Broads schemes in any future communities projects, £100k projects involving installation of numbered posts for cyclists to follow, similar to waymarkers, and linked to relevant mapping.

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- The 2040 target is ludicrously long. BLAF would want to see shorter timescales.
- Increased spots to park and pick up hire bikes in the Broads is supported.
- Cycling to school is not an option for many parents and children due to safety and timing issues (parents need to get to work, children are often in different schools).

4/7 Cycling UK Off-road Report

The WRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on Cycling UK's 'Rides of Way' report reviewing surveys of 11,500 off-road cyclists in England and Wales.

The survey highlighted the wide range of ages taking part in off-road cycling, the majority of whom emphasised the health and mental wellbeing aspects of the activity rather than the thrill of high speed mountain biking.

93% of respondents revealed that the quality of trails was the key to choosing where they visited.

The distinction between footpaths, bridleways and byways is based on historical evidence and the report highlighted that 70% of those surveyed felt the current PROW system is outdated, not reflecting life in the 21st century.

Cycling UK does not intend to push for all PROW to be opened to cyclists but since currently only 20% of the network is available to cyclists they feel a review is necessary to look at how they can work with National Park Authorities, Local Councils and other organisations to help improve routes.

Comments and answers to questions:

- The legalities of registration of public rights of way required user evidence, so for example Catfield could only be registered as a footpath despite being suitable for cyclists. The Forum agreed that the law needed reviewing.

- Landowner consents could open up permissive paths to cyclists and horse riders.
- Cycling UK lobbying could help facilitate the 2026 deadline for registration of unlisted routes.
- Carlton Marshes has a bridleway just half way into the marsh due to landowner objections. The Forum agreed that with the purchase of this land by Suffolk Wildlife Trust there could be potential to achieve positive outcomes here.
- A recent article in the EDP highlighted safe routes for cyclists, particularly Freethorpe to Thorpe Green. With schools along this route it would be good to encourage greater use by school children.

4/8 Broads Forum updates

The Broads Forum met in on 27 April 2017 and the main items discussed were as follows:

- (1) Presentation from Paul Mace of LEADER on financing schemes that create employment in the area.
- (2) Discussion on salinity and angling and measures to mitigate saline incursion led by Steve Lane of the Environment Agency, Tony Gibbons and Kelvin Allen.
- (3) Presentation from Rob Rogers, Broads Authority Director of Operations on the mooring strategy and landowner arrangements and opportunities.
- (4) Chief Executive's update on Broads Authority activities.
- (5) Boat waste update and possible solution at Ludham and Womak (joint scheme between the parish council and district council).

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- Public toilet provision in the Broads is the responsibility of district councils, but is not a statutory duty. These are loss making facilities and are difficult for smaller councils to support. This has resulted in some facilities having to be closed.

4/9 To receive any other items of urgent business

National Local Access Forum conference: This is taking place in Birmingham on 21 June 2017. The Vice-Chairman and SWRO will attend representing the BLAF. Agenda items include a Natural England update and various topic based workshops. It was agreed to bring a report of the conference to the next BLAF meeting.

Berney Arms path classification: Following up on a question raised at a previous BLAF meeting, the WRO confirmed that the Berney Arms path is classified as a bridleway.

Valentine's Meadow: The WRO reported that the kissing gates at Valentine's Meadow have been altered and are now DDA compliant.

4/10 To note the date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 06 September at 2pm. It is intended to include a site visit and lunch prior to this meeting.

The meeting concluded at 3.50pm.

Chairman

**Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act
2006 – Call for Evidence**

Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary: This report provides members with details of The House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006) call for evidence on its review of the Act. The remit of the Committee is “to consider and report on the NERC Act 2006”. The Committee will explore key issues relating to the Act in detail and would welcome views on a number of specific questions relating to the Act.

Recommendation: That members note the contents of the report and comment on the questions set out in the call for evidence document.

1 Background

- 1.1 The House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 was appointed by the House on 29 June 2017. The remit of the Committee is “to consider and report to government on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006”. The Committee is exploring key issues relating to the Act in detail and is inviting individuals or groups with an interest to submit their views about the Act. The deadline for the submission of evidence is 4pm on Monday 11 September.

2 The call for evidence document

- 2.1 The Select Committee is asking questions relating to a number of issues dealt with by the Act. The public call for evidence document is attached to this report at Appendix 1 and sets out in detail the questions the Committee is seeking views on. These are:

- Rural advocacy since the closure of the Commission for Rural Communities;
- Natural England and its role;
- Sustainability and biodiversity;
- The changing context since 2006.

The document concludes by asking if there are any further parts of the Act which are currently in force that need to be re-considered as a result of developments since 2006.

3 Questions of interest to the Broads Local Access Forum

3.1 The questions asked about Natural England are of particular interest:

- How well has Natural England fulfilled the mandate that it currently has? How well do its wide-ranging functions fit together, and does it have the appropriate powers and resources to perform these functions?
- Are any changes to the remit and responsibilities of Natural England required, either as a result of Brexit or of other significant developments in the period since 2006?
- Do the arrangements and provisions for enabling and managing access to the countryside remain appropriate? How effective have Natural England – and other partners – been in promoting better access?

These questions are pertinent to the business of the Forum particularly given the fact that there has been a significant reduction in support for Local Access Forums from Natural England since 2006. Further, since the removal of agri-environment payments for access to the countryside the promotion and maintenance of access to the countryside by government and other partners has undeniably reduced.

4 Conclusions

4.1 This call for evidence gives an opportunity for Local Access Forums to comment about the effectiveness of the NERC Act 2006 with regard to countryside access and members' views on this part of the document are particularly welcomed. Although it is not the BLAF's responsibility to respond to the sustainability and biodiversity elements of the consultation, in the context of countryside access in the Broads biodiversity and sustainability are extremely important issues as one of the most important reasons people access the countryside in the Broads is to experience biodiversity and nature. As there is substantial evidence of biodiversity decline in the Broads amongst certain species members' views are also welcomed as to whether the duty in the Act "to have regard to biodiversity in England should be amended to reflect the Scottish duty to "further" biodiversity and the duty to enhance biodiversity in Wales.

Background papers: Nil

Author: Adrian Clarke
Date of Report: 31 August 2017

Broads Plan Objectives: 6.1

Appendices: Appendix 1: Select Committee Public Call for Evidence document



SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES ACT 2006

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

The House of Lords Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 was appointed by the House on 29 June 2017. The remit of the Committee is “to consider and report on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006”.

The Committee will explore the following key issues in detail and would welcome your views on **any or all** of the following questions. Please note that questions are not listed here in any particular order of importance.

This is a public call for written evidence to be submitted to the Committee. The deadline is 4pm on Monday 11 September 2017.

Rural advocacy and the Commission for Rural Communities

1. Since the closure of the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC), and subsequent winding up of the Defra Rural Communities Policy Unit, how – if at all - are the CRC’s original functions of advocate, adviser and watchdog being fulfilled?
2. Are sufficient measures being taken to ensure that policies are rural-proofed at national and local levels? Who is taking the lead on policy for rural areas – and who should be taking the lead on such matters?
3. What role should Defra – or other Government departments – play in co-ordinating policy for rural areas? How effectively are the interests – including social and economic interests - of rural communities being represented within the current structures of Government, and how could representation and co-ordination be improved?

Natural England

4. How well has Natural England fulfilled the mandate that it currently has? How well do its wide-ranging functions fit together, and does it have the appropriate powers and resources to perform these functions?
5. Are any changes to the remit and responsibilities of Natural England required, either as a result of Brexit or of other significant developments in the period since 2006?

6. Do the arrangements and provisions for enabling and managing access to the countryside remain appropriate? How effective have Natural England – and other partners – been in promoting better access?

Sustainability and biodiversity

7. Is the duty to ‘have regard’ to biodiversity, which is contained within the Act, well understood by those bodies to whom it applies? Is any further work required to raise awareness of the duty?
8. What has been the practical impact of the 2006 duty? Is any modification to the duty required as a result of developments in our understanding of the value of ecosystems and biodiversity since 2006?
9. How does the English duty to ‘have regard’ to biodiversity compare to the Scottish duty to ‘further’ biodiversity and the enhanced biodiversity duty introduced in Wales in 2016?

The changing context since 2006

10. Will the structures established by the Act be sufficient to ensure appropriate protection for nature and environmental standards following Brexit? Are any modifications or changes to the structures established by the Act required to address the implications of Brexit?
11. Are there any further parts of the Act which are currently in force that need to be re-considered as a result of developments since 2006?

Guidance for making submissions

Written evidence should be submitted online using the written submission form available at <http://www.parliament.uk/nerc-written-submission-form>

If you do not have access to a computer you may submit a paper copy to:

Clerk to the Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Committee Office, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW.

The deadline for written evidence is 4 pm on 11 September 2017.

Short, concise submissions, of no more than six pages, are preferred. A longer submission should include a one-page summary. Paragraphs should be numbered. Submissions should be dated, with a note of the author's name, and of whether the author is acting on an individual or corporate basis. All submissions made through the written submission form will be acknowledged automatically by email.

Personal contact details supplied to the Committee will be removed from submissions before publication but will be retained by the Committee staff for specific purposes relating to the Committee's work, such as seeking additional information.

Submissions become the property of the Committee which will decide whether to accept them as evidence. Evidence may be published by the Committee at any stage. It will normally appear on the Committee's website and will be deposited in the Parliamentary Archives. Once you have received acknowledgement that your submission has been accepted as evidence, you may publicise or publish it yourself, but in doing so you must indicate that it was prepared for the Committee. If you publish your evidence separately, you should be aware that you will be legally responsible for its content.

You should be careful not to comment on individual cases currently before a court of law, or matters in respect of which court proceedings are imminent. If you anticipate such issues arising, you should discuss with the Clerk of the Committee how this might affect your submission.

Certain individuals and organisations may be invited to appear in person before the Committee to give oral evidence. Oral evidence is usually given in public at Westminster and broadcast online. Persons invited to give oral evidence will be notified separately of the procedure to be followed and the topics likely to be discussed.

Substantive communications to the Committee about the inquiry should be addressed through the Clerk, whether or not they are intended to constitute formal evidence to the Committee.

This is a public call for evidence. Please bring it to the attention of other groups and individuals who may not have received a copy direct.

You can follow the progress of the inquiry at www.parliament.uk/nerc-act-committee