

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 01 December 2021

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Present

Keith Bacon – in the Chair, Linda Aspland, Richard Atkins, Louis Baugh, Katie Baxter, Harry Blathwayt, Robin Buxton, Christine Cane, Peter Dixon, Tony Gibbons, Tim Harris, John Murray, Steve Read, Martin Rendle, Paul Saunders.

In attendance

Ken Hawkins – Norfolk Local Access Forum, Matt Hayward- Norfolk County Council, Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Harry Mach – Carbon Reduction Officer, Kylie Moos – Administrative Officer, Lewis Treloar – Waterways and Recreation Officer.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Today is the last meeting for Waterways and Recreation Officer, Lewis Treloar who will shortly be leaving the Broads Authority. The Chair thanked Lewis for all of their hard work and dedication to the Forum and wished him well in his new role. An advert for the Waterways and Recreation Officer role will be published in the new year.

Apologies received from Dawn Hatton, Peter Mason.

2. Declarations of interest

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered and set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

3. Minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 1 September 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings

Open water swimming

Safety advice signs are due to be installed at a trail site within the Broads. The signs will offer advice for those entering the water and to inform boaters that there may be people swimming in the water. The Broads Authority's message on open water swimming has not changed, however the signs will be in place to help reduce the number of accidents taking place. An internal meeting will be taking place tomorrow and a risk assessment will be conducted before the signs are installed.

The open water sub group will consider both the safety management of open water swimming and the broader managed access, facilitating people's enjoyment of the area.

A member of the Broads Authority open water swimming sub group will be invited to provide an update at a future Broads Local Access Forum meeting.

Lost Paths in the Broads

Lost paths in the Broads is still to be discussed at the Norfolk Local Access Forum. Ken Hawkins agreed to raise this item at the next meeting in January 2022.

The Chair agreed to contact Norfolk County Council and Suffolk Council and request a list of all of the paths that have been lost to the river.

Remote meetings

The capacity for Yare House remains at 15 due to the Covid-19 restrictions in place. Alternative venues such as Hickling Barn, Ludham Village Hall and Acle Recreation Centre were suggested for future meetings. A decision on the format going forward will be reviewed at the end of each meeting. It was agreed that no further action was needed

5. MONUMENT project

Matt Hayward, Lead Projects Managers for Norfolk County Council (NCC) Environment team presented the MONUMENT project to the Forum. The MONUMENT project aim is to support informal carers of people living with dementia by providing professional and structural support to these carers and tailor-made technological solutions. NCC Environment Service wants to understand barriers and provide bespoke support to improve access to green space for informal carers and people living with dementia.

Objectives

- Implement five pilots offering support to informal carers of people living with dementia based on the Odense concept.
- Test and co-create technological solutions tailored to the needs of informal carers of people living with dementia.
- Set up a multilingual digital platform by and for informal carers, consolidating information on dementia friendly services, and enhancing exchange with peers. Linked to Active Norfolk Activity Finder & mapping work.
- Conduct a socio-economic feasibility study on the MONUMENT model for policy makers and provide guidance for solution actors. Including evaluations of the project impact.

What's happening in Norfolk?

- Training sessions in Norfolk for carers and volunteers and leisure activity providers from November 2021 to June 2022.
- Demonstration of technology.
- Carers Peer Support at Bridewell museum and Hellesdon Library.
- Outdoor Leisure Activities at Nancy Oldfield Trust (Barton Broad), Pensthorpe, Blickling Hall, Marlpit Community Allotments, Ranworth Broads, Green Light Trust, Shallow Brook Lakes.

- Family Day on 11 June 2022.

Comments

- BLAF members offered to share details of the project with their interested groups outside of the meeting.
- The MONUMNET project team are able to provide outdoor leisure activities at additional locations such as Wroxham if requested.
- Waveney Sailability offers sailing opportunities for those with impaired health or disabilities and may benefit from further information on MONUMENT.

6. Carbon reduction in the Broads

Harry Mach, Carbon Reduction Officer at the Broads Authority presented an overview of carbon reduction measures taking place within the Broads, and to update the Forum on key data that has been gathered. There is various public data available which has been used to map CO2 sources in the Broads. The mapping shows Norwich, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Cantley Sugar Factory to be the biggest sources of CO2, which is to be expected and highlighted the need for more in depth research.

The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research has produced a calculator for all Local Authority areas to reach Net Zero by 2050. The calculator shows that the reduction in emissions need to be front loaded, with a much steeper trend in the early years, to ensure reaching the target doesn't become more difficult later on. Once past 2035 the focus will be on the hard to reach emissions.

The Broads Authority, working the National Parks family have commissioned Smallworld to analyse the consumption based footprint of the Broads. The final data is yet to be released but a draft footprint for; residents in the Broads, visitors in the Broads and visitor travel to the Broads was presented to the Forum.

Another ongoing study is on the carbon already stored in the Broads. It is estimated that between 40 to 50 million tonnes of CO2 is locked up in peat soils; how these soils are managed in the future will be key for keeping the carbon in the ground. Wet farming, also known as paludiculture is currently being trailed at Horsey, if successful the crop will be grown with a higher water table which will ensure the carbon remains locked up.

The Broads Authority are working towards Carbon Neutral by 2030 through a mixture of offsetting and emissions reductions. For example, switching to Green Electricity, the use of biofuel in operations equipment and the use of electric vehicles.

Key actions for the Broads

- Improving understanding of emissions and sources of emissions
- Reducing Transport Emissions
- Reducing Boating Emissions

- Preserving the carbon store

To begin to reduce transport emissions, both visitors and residents would need to be encouraged to travel to the Broads without a car. There are 15 train stations within the Broads, with many of the trains now bike friendly. Additional car charging points would need to be installed to encourage the use of electric cars and for those that are unable to access public transport.

Comments and answers to questions

A change in food production in the Broads does not necessarily mean that the production will take place elsewhere in the UK. Instead, the aim would be to use current available land more efficiently and encourage sustainable food production from farm to fork. Looking at nationwide issues such as reducing food waste would also free up land for other purposes.

Sustainable food choices could be cutting back on meat and selecting meat which has good welfare standards and environmental credentials. A member responded that the measuring of greenhouse gases associated with UK beef needs to be more balanced and look at the effects of global warming instead of just emissions alone.

Public transport across the Broads does not appear to run frequently enough, nor would there be enough space on trains to encourage everyone to bring their bikes. Harry Mach responded, it is unfortunate that trains can only facilitate 4-6 bikes, these are the kind of concerns that need to be challenged with current and new transport companies. A map or mobile app was suggested to show the links between bus and train stations in the Broads for both cyclists and pedestrians. Taking your bike on the train can also be marketed as part of the day out.

A case for additional stops to the current bus timetable, for example a link from Wroxham station and Great Yarmouth would require subsidising and support from a local bus company before presenting to the Transport Department at Norfolk County Council.

The use of the waterways as a mode of transport was also suggested similar to the Thames. Harry Mach noted that the lower speed limits in the Broads would be more suited to tourists rather than everyday transport.

A member suggested that the preservation of existing peat layers and storage of carbon should be given the top priority. Creating new peat marshes could take up to 500 years to replicate the peat which is already stored elsewhere in the Broads. There was also concern as to what would happen to the peat in the event of a severe drought and how can this be mitigated. Another member reported that Defra have formed a Lowland Agricultural Peatland Task Force to look at limiting greenhouse gas emissions from peat. One of the major concerns is in the Fens where peat soils are cultivated for crop production, but they are also looking at lowland grazing marshes. The group recently visited Horsey and looked at grazing in practice whilst raising water tables.

The Broads Authority through CANAPE (Creating a New Approach to Peatland Ecosystems) have commissioned a study by Queen Mary University of London to look at the depth of peat within the Broads. The Broads Authority placed a bid for the Nature for Climate Peatland

Grant Scheme (NCPGS) Discovery Grant and will find out shortly if it has been successful. The purpose of the project is to address the risks and barriers for rewetting land to create peat forming habitats with carbon and nature benefits. It also provides the opportunity to work with farmers and land managers to prepare the feasibility stages of potential future projects that would deliver multiple ecosystem services.

A member queried if the existing cable infrastructure would be able to cope with the increasing needs for electricity to charge cars. Harry Mach responded, as part of the Electrifying the Broads project the Authority are working with Net Zero East who will provide mapping which will show where there are already constraints on the network.

The Balanced Pathway approach requires a higher up take of electric vehicles combined with a reduction in miles driven. There are still emissions associated with electric vehicles from their construction and maintenance, also the electricity used to run the vehicles is not taken from a 100% green electricity grid.

7. Project update from Norfolk County Council

Matt Hayward provided updates for cycling and walking projects at Norfolk County Council. Regular updates are also provided at the Norfolk Local Access Forum and the papers can be found online.

As part of the Active Travel fund programme, local walking and cycling infrastructure plans are currently under review. The 10 year programme will look at behaviour changes and locations which require further infrastructure, for example linking up public transport as suggested in agenda item six. The programme will also include the development of a Travel North website, which will highlight and promote the existing sustainable travel options across Norfolk. Public engagement will begin in spring 2022.

The E-cycle extension fund has been granted encouraging more people in Norfolk to trial E-bikes. Discussions are currently in place with various operators throughout the county to offer the trial. Both visitors and residents of Norfolk will be able to participate. More information will be provided through the Norfolk County Council website.

A member recently met with a Norfolk County Council Highways engineers to discuss pedestrian access from a National Trust car park at Horsey to a permissive footpath on the other side of the road, the engineer has proposed a 'slow' sign to calm traffic. The member asked if there was anything else that could be done to direct a large number of pedestrians across a busy road. Matt Hayward recommended to continue working with the Highways team at Norfolk County Council who can also work with the network management team and road safety team.

8. Integrated Access Strategy: Update

Lewis Treloar presented a list all of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) projects and their current status. It was noted that the outcome of the partnership bid with Norfolk County Council for the Wherryman's Way Hardley Flood project and Wherryman's Way Bramerton to

Surlingham project was due to be announced in December 2021, not December 2022 as written in the report. A member requested that the projects are updated with a grid reference number to help identify the projects.

The Waterways and Recreation Officer agreed to include grid reference numbers to future Integrated Access Strategy updates.

9. Open access restriction at Ludham and Potter Heigham Marshes National Nature Reserve outcome

Lewis Treloar reported that the public consultation has now closed. The continued restriction of dog access on Open Access land at Ludham and Potter Heigham marshes has been approved, and will be in place until 2027.

A member raised the issue that there is gap along the riverbank near Ludham that is not registered as a public right of way. Lewis Treloar has previously contacted the Environment Agency who own the stretch of path, and confirmed that they plan to keep permissive access in place. The next step would be for the Forum to send a request to the Environment Agency for a public path creation order to register the path.

10. Any other business

Agenda items

Forum members are encouraged to suggest agenda items and provide presentations at future meetings.

Membership term of appointment

Several members will be coming to the end of their Broads Local Access Forum membership after today's meeting. The recruitment of new members will be taking place in the new year and members that wish to re-join the Forum are invited to apply. Those members whose term is about to expire will be contacted.

Water Skills Academy

Water Skills Academy is an international organisation providing watersport instructor courses and consultancy across the disciplines of Stand Up Paddleboarding, Beach Lifeguarding, & Surf Instructing. Membership to the organisation includes third party insurance and a Canals and Rivers Trust License. Martin Rendle is the representative in the Broads and reported that there has been an increase in membership from the Broads area. Over the last two years Martin has been trying to contact the Broads Authority to see if an arrangement can be made similar to British Canoeing. Members of British Canoeing can use the Broads navigation area at no extra cost providing that membership is carried at all times. Dan Hoare apologised that the request has not been acknowledged and requested a copy of the email so that the query is followed up.

Linda Aspland requested further information on Water Skills Academy to advertise on the Wroxham Broad noticeboard.

Safety ladders

Richard Atkins commented on the number of safety ladders installed around the Broads and suggested that more would be welcome. Increased ladders at Public Houses would not only benefit anyone who may fall in the river, but those on canoe and paddleboard could use them to access the facilities. The Broads Authority would be able to provide the specification for the Safety Ladders but would not be able to finance the project. Love the Broads, Farming in Protected Landscapes and the Canoe Foundation were suggested as possible funding sources. The project was also suggested as an agenda item for a future meeting.

Next meeting

Meetings cannot take place at the Broads Authority offices due to the reduction in meeting room capacity to remain Covid-19 secure. The Forum agreed to return to face to face meetings and suggested Hickling Barn as the venue however, if Covid-19 cases continue to rise, or restrictions are in place then the meeting will be held online.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum would be held on Wednesday 9 March 2022 at 10.00am, location to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 11.50pm

Signed by

Chairman

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Broads Local Access Forum, 01 December 2021

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest
Louis Baugh	Agenda item 6	Farms on peat marshes which forms part of the consideration for this paper
Tim Harris	Agenda item 6	Owns peat marshes