

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 09 Sept 2015

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Ms Liz Brooks	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Mike Flett	Mr Ray Walpole
Mrs Jo Parmenter	Mr Peter Warner
Mr Stephen Read	Mr Chris Yardley
Mr George Saunders	

In Attendance

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

Also In Attendance

Mr Martin Caplin – Norfolk Trail, Norfolk County Council
Mr Jack Davidson – Norfolk Trails, Norfolk County Council
Mr Russell Wilson – Senior Trails Officer, Norfolk County Council

1/1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Louis Baugh, Mrs Lana Hempsall, Mrs Hattie Llewelyn-Davies and Mr Alec Hartley.

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting, including new Broads Authority appointed member Mr Peter Warner. Lana Hempsall, also appointed by the Broads Authority, had sent her apologies. Mr Russell Wilson, Mr Martin Caplin and Mr Jack Davidson of Norfolk County Council were also welcomed to the meeting.

1/2 Election of Vice-Chairman

It was agreed to move this item to after agenda item 7.

1/3 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2015

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 June 2015 were confirmed as a correct

record and signed by the Chairman.

1/4 To receive any points of information arising from the minutes

(1) Minute 4/3 (1) Staithes – Current information and role of Staithes Management

Work was due to start on the Staithes research project this autumn. Charles Swan had produced information about staithes in his area which the SWRO agreed to pass on to Tom Williamson who was undertaking the project.

(2) Minute 4/3 (2) Boundary Farm Mooring

Work was still ongoing to progress negotiations with the landowner.

(3) Minute 4/3 (5) Ludham Footpath

All agreements had now been signed by landowners and the Broads Authority and legal costs paid. The earth works would be carried out by contractors and the remaining works (stock proof fencing, gates and signage) would be programmed into Broads Authority Operations staff workload. A VIP opening ceremony would be arranged once the path was ready to be opened. Country Walking magazine would be including an article on the footpath in their publication. It was noted that a memorial bench for previous Broads Local Access Forum member Laurie Ritchie was now in place at St Benet's Abbey. The SWRO agreed to chase up the issue of the gate on the track again with Sarah Price of Norfolk County Council.

(4) Minute 4/3 (6) How Hill Footpath

The Chairman, SWRO and Dan Hoare had met a Natural England officer at the site and had received verbal agreement for the Broads Authority to open a permissive footpath from How Hill Staithe to Crowe's Staithe. Written confirmation is awaited. Once received the drop bridge will be lowered and signage erected. A people counter will be used to monitor use to help with an evidence base for deciding whether it will be feasible to complete the entire route to Wood End Staithe.

(5) Minute 4/6 River Wensum Strategy update

Public consultation had resulted in over 800 comments both online and at a public event held at Blackfriar's Hall, Norwich. Potential projects arising from the consultation were now being analysed and a response being prepared.

1/5 Norfolk County Council update

(1) Norfolk County Council's Norfolk Trails trainees Mr Martin Caplin and Mr Jack Davidson gave a detailed presentation on the Explore More Coast project that had been discussed at the joint LAF meeting.

20 circular walks were being developed with 5 of these aiming to be DDA compliant. BLAF member George Saunders had agreed to assist with

auditing these 5 routes.

Many of the walks could be split into two; a complete section and a shorter easier walk. Consultation had highlighted a need for longer distance walks.

Website and leaflet information was planned for completed by April 2016. These would highlight features on the walks and local facilities available on or near to the walks.

The 20 walks were intended to build on current publicised walks and historic routes using only PROWs (other than one walk over permissive paths connected with National Trust and Norfolk Wildlife Trust land in the Sheringham area).

LEP funding could be available for improving public transport and signage linked to bus stops.

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- Advice was given regarding early consultation with English Heritage.
- The Forum was pleased to see walks encouraging access from Great Yarmouth used as 'stepping stones' to connected footpaths into less urban areas.
- The Horsey walk, previously discussed at a BLAF meeting had not been included due to ongoing Highways historic issues.

Thanks were given to Norfolk County Council for their presentation and Mr Russell Wilson agreed to keep the Forum updated on progress of the project.

- (2) Mr Russell Wilson, Norfolk County Council Senior Trails Officer gave a presentation on the section of the Wherryman's Way at Hardley Flood.

The Wherryman's Way trail was heavily used: 50k people per year via a counter monitor.

Currently the Hardley Flood section of the trail was closed due to health and safety issues surrounding deterioration of the path and associated bridges. A diversion was in place, although it was proving difficult to stop people trying to access the closed trail and many complaints had been received.

There was lack of clarity concerning who had put these bridges in, but it was confirmed that legally the responsibility of the PROW lay with the Highway Authority. However, it was hoped that a partnership led approach would help to secure a resolution to the problems at this site. Environment Agency input would also be required.

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- BLAF members agreed that this was an important footpath that should be

retained if at all possible.

- Landowner involvement should also be sought.

Thanks were given to Mr Russell Wilson for his presentation.

1/6 Parish Council Issues

Herringfleet Car Park

Complaints had been received regarding the closure of Herringfleet car park as the gate was now being locked. This was causing traffic accidents. Information was requested regarding access to the PROW and Open Access land.

Mrs Trudi Wakelin updated the Forum that the Broads Authority no longer leased the car park and that legally the owner was not obliged to keep the car park open. Although the Broads Authority was sympathetic there was little they could do other than continue to instruct their Rangers to monitor the situation regarding the formal access points by foot to ensure these were not impeded. The Authority had suggested to the landowner that a pay and display system could be used if the car park were reopened. Currently activity at the site included removal of the height barrier and stocking of pigs on the heath.

The parish council had put forward the idea of volunteers opening and managing the car park at weekends and bank holidays.

Mutford Lock

Mr Charles Swan asked for an update concerning Mutford Lock and put in a formal request for the £25k in reserves to be used to replace the jetty. This jetty had been a 'gift to the people' and therefore he felt that Waveney District Council had a moral obligation to maintain the jetty.

Mrs Trudi Wakelin updated the Forum that a Navigation Committee report had requested that £80k was drawn down for acceleration of maintenance of Mutford Lock following on from emergency work carried out after the flooding incident. The Committee had been supportive and therefore the report would now go to full Authority at the end of September for budget approval. The tripartite agreement regarding land transfer had been signed and sealed by all parties and an application was now in with the Marine Management Organisation for a harbour revision order. It was hoped to have this in place by April 2016 with a renewal of contract going to Sentinal Leisure who would be conferred the legal registration.

1/7 Membership

The Broads Local Access Forum (BLAF) had identified interest groups that needed representation on the Forum at their meeting in September 2014.

Regulations stated a maximum of 22 members were permitted. With current members, interest from outside organisations and the above requirement for interest group representation a review of the BLAF membership selection process

had been made by the Broads Authority.

It was suggested that all current membership be terminated following this meeting, delegated organisations consulted, advertisements placed and an appointment /reappointment process followed to select a fully representative Forum in time for the December meeting.

BA was mindful of the value of current members' considerable experience and would therefore encourage all current members to apply for reappointment.

Comments and questions arose as follows:

- It was clarified that representation was for an area of interest rather than a specific organisation.
- A bird watcher rather than an RSPB representative might be more useful to the Forum.
- Other organisations were suggested for inclusion on the list of delegated consultees: Community Rail Partnership, Rail Users Group, Broads Tourism, Norwich Cycling Campaign, RYA, Cruising Association, Healthy Walking.
- Nature conservation should be included as an area needing representation.
- It was confirmed that the two Broads Authority appointed members were exempt from the reappointment process.

BLAF members agreed to the process and the SWRO agreed to finalise the lists using feedback given by the Forum and circulate the reapplication process to current members. It was hoped to complete membership selection ready for the December meeting.

1/2 Election of Vice-Chairman

Agenda item moved to this point.

It was agreed to post-pone the appointment of Vice-Chairman until the December meeting when the membership selection process should have been resolved.

1/8 Hickling Broad enhancement project

The Broads Authority Director of Operations gave a presentation on the Hickling Broad enhancement project.

This was considered a Broads Authority priority project.

The Upper Thurne Working Group were involved as a key partner in the project.

Maps showing the suggested actions were displayed which included:

- Dredging of the navigation channel

- Bank restoration works
- Creation of new refuge areas
- Beneficial reuse of sediment
- Research needs
- Linked work: Catchment and Prymnesium work

Comments and answers to questions as follows:

- The creation of the island at G would reduce the scale of the view of open water.
- Direct access to viewing Hickling Broad from the land would be welcomed. Currently this was limited.
- The reed swamp recreation is an excellent part of the project. Areas known prior to the 1940s suggested areas would increase this potential.
- Broads sediment would not be suitable for heath creation and therefore this wasn't seen as a viable part of the project.
- Small boat users have difficulties when sailing clubs are racing and have to move to areas of the Broad not being used by racers. Some of the suggested actions would therefore reduce access for small boat users on Hickling Broad e.g. the barrier at C which is an area currently as such.
- Regarding a question about scope for moorings and boardwalks for access from the water to the western portion of the Broad: Catfield Dyke was restrictive due to the width but a pontoon or platform near F could be possible, however this could reduce the visual impact of the landscape. Installing a pontoon into the area of the Dyke would be a better location.

The Forum was supportive of the scheme especially if it included potential access to views of the water without compromising nature conservation.

Thanks were given to Mrs Trudi Wakelin for her presentation.

1/9 Cockshoot Boardwalk update

The Forum was updated that unfortunately the landowner had not been able to offer acceptable terms regarding the length of the lease and partners for the proposed project were therefore not willing to commit funding. The Broads Authority was no longer leasing the boardwalk.

Repairs were being undertaken by the Broads Authority on both sections but it was unclear what the landowner's position would be regarding public access.

The Forum expressed disappointment that the scheme would not be able to go ahead.

1/10 Integrated Access Strategy Action Plan review

The SWRO gave a presentation on the Integrated Access Strategy Action Plan review.

The aim had been to review the Integrated Access Strategy as a mapping workshop at the September BLAF meeting but due to other important issues needing to be discussed it was decided to postpone the workshop until the December meeting instead.

A strategic view was needed from BLAF to feed into the review of the Broads Plan, currently underway.

The priorities list would need to be reviewed and the SWRO agreed to circulate the presentation to enable Forum members to be prepared for the review in December (should they be reappointed).

1/11 Broads Forum Update

The following items were discussed at the last Broads Forum:

- Pymnesium presentation by Kelvin Allen, Tony Gibbons and John Curry highlighting potential ways of rescuing fish, tourist industry effects and ways to combat misinformation.
- Hickling project presentation by Trudi Wakelin.
- Broads Authority changes: Jacquie Burgess was confirmed as BA Chairman. Changes to lead member roles on committees were explained.

It was noted that a replacement would be needed for Peter Medhurst who had sat on the Broads Forum representing Land-based Recreation interests along with Keith Bacon.

1/12 To receive any other items of urgent business

There were none to report.

1/13 To note the date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 09 December 2015 at 2pm.

The meeting concluded at 5.15 p.m.

Chairman