

## **Broads Authority**

### **Broads Local Access Forum**

Minutes of the meeting held on 06 Sept 2017

#### **Present:**

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Kelvin Allen	Dr Peter Mason
Mr Olly Barnes	Mr Stephen Read
Mr Louis Baugh	Mr George Saunders
Miss Liz Brooks	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Mike Flett	Mrs Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro
Mr Tony Gibbons	Mr Ray Walpole
Mr Alec Hartley	Mr Richard Webb
Mrs Dawn Hatton	Mr Chris Yardley

#### **In Attendance**

Prof Jacquie Burgess – Broads Authority Chairman  
Ms Lottie Carlton – Administrative Officer  
Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)  
Mr Simon Hooton – Head of Strategy and Projects  
Mr Mark King - Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)

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

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Martin Symons and Dr Andy Hutcheson, Norfolk County Council.

Members were welcomed to the meeting including new Broads Authority appointed members Mrs Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro and Mr Kelvin Allen. Professor Jacquie Burgess, Broads Authority Chairman and Mr Simon Hooton, Broads Authority Head of Strategy and Projects were also welcomed to the meeting.

It was noted that Mr Nick Dennis had resigned his membership of the Broads Local Access Forum and Mrs Lana Hemsall and Mr Peter Warner were no longer Broads Authority appointees.

As Dr Andy Hutcheson was no longer available to provide a Norfolk County Council update at item 5 it was agreed to feed back any comments or questions Forum members had for Norfolk County Council at this point.

It was noted that Suffolk County Council had agreed not to attend Broads Local Access Forum meetings on a regular basis, but instead to attend for specific issues when invited.

**1/2 To receive declarations of interest**

Mr Kelvin Allen declared an interest as Chairman of the Broads Angling Strategy Group. No further declarations of interest occurred during the meeting.

**1/3 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 07 June 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 07 June 2017 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 4/4 (2) How Hill Footpath**

The work on the footpath has been completed but the footpath could not be opened until the Environment Agency (EA) dealt with the transfer of ownership and liability of the dyke bridge to the Broads Authority. The Broads Authority Asset Officer is negotiating with the EA regarding this issue.

**(2) Minute 4/4 (5) Staithes Research**

An addendum to the report is to be produced detailing any omissions or amendments following on from comments received from parish councils and others. A meeting is to be convened with Professor Tom Williamson to assess submissions.

With regards to Norwich, it was not possible to identify individual sites as virtually the entire riverbank was likely to have been a staithe from medieval times. The SWRO agreed to request Professor Tom Williamson include this information as a comment in the report.

BLAF members were asked to send any known potential omissions or amendments to the report to the SWRO in the first instance who would pass these on to Professor Tom Williamson.

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

The Harbour Revision Order and tripartite agreement for Mutford Lock was still with the solicitors to finalise the legal transfer of land. The Marine Management Organisation was yet to receive an application regarding the Harbour Revision Order.

**(4) Minute 4/4 (7) Burgh Castle**

The Burgh Castle boardwalk had been officially opened and some BLAF members attended the opening.

## **1/5 Norfolk County Council update**

Dr Andy Hutcheson of Norfolk County Council (NCC) was unavailable to provide an update.

### **Wherryman's Way at Reedham:**

The SWRO gave an update regarding this path as follows: The parish council has taken on responsibility for the permissive path agreement with the landowner. £15k is required for work to the 120m stretch of footpath. NCC has said it is unable to finance the work as this is not a PROW. Broads Authority (BA) is unable to carry out the work this financial year, as requested by the parish council, as allocations to National Park work have already been assigned. It might be possible to undertake the work in the next financial year, but the path did not fit with BLAF prioritisation due to the path being part of NCC Trails. BA had offered to share the costs of the work with NCC but they had not agreed. It was suggested that Norfolk LAF be consulted.

The Chairman agreed to ask Dr Hutcheson if NCC use permissive paths as part of Norfolk Trails in any other areas and if it is a standard response that NCC does not carry out work on such permissive paths.

More tree work is scheduled for winter on the Chet. It was reported that some debris has fallen into the river. The SWRO agreed to investigate further.

Regarding the tourism dimension of the Trails, it was agreed to ask the Broads Tourism Chairman to update the Forum on work they are undertaking towards the Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy.

### **River Wensum Strategy Consultation update**

The SWRO and Vice-Chairman updated the Forum on the River Wensum Strategy consultation taking place until 15 September. The aim of the strategy is to 'Bring back life to the river' addressing issues such as rising river levels, absence of facilities/toilets, moorings, small craft launch facilities, lack of business activity on the river and missing links regarding the riverside footpath.

Forum members with angling interests had met to go through the strategy and had fed back their comments as follows: Angling in Norwich is problematic, much is gated off and the area lacks facilities such as parking and toilets. The mapping needs changes to reflect more accurately where fishing currently takes place and a coarse fishing season map is also needed. A fishing festival suggestion would be welcomed. To facilitate this initiative it is suggested that a new community interest company be set up to generate funds via a fishing passport scheme. The strategy is viewed as a positive step forward for angling in the city.

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

- Encouraging small, unpowered craft will be encouraged via the strategy, including improvements to slipways, mooring facilities and pontoons.

- No reports of conflicts between anglers and boaters along the riverside have been raised.
- Water-based 'come and try' schools link supported.
- Norwich Business Improvement District voted to include the riverside in their area and a Festival of Light is proposed for 2019.
- The SWRO has encouraged the Marlpitt Arms, Hellesdon to include canoe access, cycle hire and angling platform for disabled users within their pontoon proposal. A planning application has been submitted. If approved this can be included in the River Wensum Strategy.
- The Green Boat Show used to be popular at Salhouse, something similar could work in Norwich.
- It was agreed that the Chairman would submit a response to the consultation on behalf of BLAF in support of the strategy, particularly for the missing link and angling proposals.

#### **1/6 Trialling presentation for community groups on climate change, flood risk and how these affect the Broads landscape**

The Head of Strategy and Projects gave a presentation updating the Forum on the Broads Climate Partnership remit to try to get across proven scientific information regarding CO<sub>2</sub>, greenhouse gases and climate change in a way that is both understandable and engaging to the general public in order to engender changing behaviours and attitudes.

Presenting information in more relatable ways is being looked at with UEA creative writing students tasked with creating stories and drama sketches. One off shows aimed at younger audiences have already taken place; now adult audiences need to be engaged. Two story examples 'The Moth' and 'The Big Change – the Water Police' were performed to the Forum to illustrate the kind of thing that is proposed.

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

- Timing of about an hour would be suitable.
- Ambience is important and the suggestion of projecting photos and including accompanying music was made. This gives the audience something to focus on during the storytelling/drama.
- Broads villages, schools, Royal Norfolk Show were suggested as venues.
- Short videos of the dramas were suggested.
- Agreement that drama and storytelling provides an easier way to imagine change and should prove effective as long as there is focus on practical changes that can be made. Children can take part but power rests with adults to make significant changes.

## **1/7 Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 – Call for Evidence**

The SWRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on the Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, a call for evidence on how well the Act is working and how well Natural England (NE) and funding is working.

It was noted that years ago there was much more support for the BLAF from NE who sent representatives to meetings and supported LAFs. Reduction in funding has cut back this help and involvement.

The section in the document regarding sustainability and biodiversity is not consistent – in Scotland the wording is strong ‘further biodiversity’ whereas in the English version the wording is much weaker ‘have regard to biodiversity’.

The Act sits beneath the EU Directives and wording does not fit these.

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

- Short term contracts at NE leads to lack of continuity and long term planning. Additionally the specialisms of officers have changed from biology/science based and too narrow a focus is now observed.
- It is not clear who does what between NE and the EA and there seems too much self-interest. One body should be responsible. Fundamental change is required.
- LAFs and NE: Ely regional meetings used to be extremely useful and productive providing a chance to share ideas with other LAFs. All of these regional meetings have now been cut leaving LAFs feeling isolated. HUDDLE does not work as a replacement.

It was agreed that the Chairman and SWRO would submit a response of behalf of BLAF.

## **1/8 British Standards: Gaps, gates and stiles – Specification Consultation**

The SWRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on a consultation by the British Standards Institute (BSI) reviewing their ‘Gaps, gates and stiles specification’ document.

Diagrams from the document were displayed for the purposes of the meeting only due to copyright restrictions. Lack of access to the document prior to the meeting prevented proper research by Forum members and this would be fed back to the BSI.

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

- Forum members agreed that as a principal the least restrictive option should always be used.

- Regarding horse barriers, a 3m turning space is too restrictive.
- Many of the gates illustrated were not able to be opened from horse back. Additionally those that were did not have a mounting block for those riders on larger horses, or who were not confident to remain on the horse while opening a gate, to remount their horse after the gate had been negotiated.
- With self-closing gates the amount of force required to open them is often an issue for users, particularly if there is not a mechanism to open the gate on both sides. Disabled users cannot always lean over a gate to operate it in this way.
- Pushchairs also need to be considered when putting in any barriers as often negotiating these requires the infant to be removed and the pushchair folded away in order to get through the narrow gap. The National Trust push apart barriers are easy to operate but do not allow pushchairs or wheelchair users through.
- The horse stile is intended to keep out motorcyclists. It was felt that this design would be dangerous to use on horseback and should not be included.
- Site difficulties such as dykes could make the standards impossible to meet. Exceptions to the standards need to be included in certain situations.
- Broads Authority policy should be 'no stiles or gates to be installed unless absolutely necessary' as standard and a policy document drawn up to reflect this.
- Miss Liz Brooks agreed to access the consultation online and provide specific feedback regarding her area of expertise.
- The Chairman agreed to submit a response on behalf of BLAF following collation of the above comments and any further comments from members who wanted to access the online information after the meeting.

## **1/9 Broads Forum updates**

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

- (1) Public question on an incident regarding a boat hirer disturbance at Stokesby public house. A section 101 response and support from the police was recommended.
- (2) BA riverside tree and scrub management programme for the next three years: Difficulties gaining permissions from land owners was highlighted. The report is available on the Broads Authority website.
- (3) Hickling Broad management of plant growth.
- (4) Draft Broads Local Plan 2017.

(5) Parish Councils invited to a forum with the BA at the Kings Centre, Norwich on the 20<sup>th</sup> September to discuss the Broads Plan, the Broads Local Plan and improving communication between the BA and parish councils.

**1/10 To receive any other items of urgent business**

**Mutford Lock:** Mrs Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro agreed to investigate the reason for lengthy delays in the Mutford Lock issue with Suffolk County Council.

**Staithes report:** The new Oulton Broad parish is keen to have their comments included in the staithes report addendum review. Smallburgh has a closed parish staithe in private ownership and a boat moored at the end of the footpath near Wayford Bridge garage downstream of the bridge. The SWROW/WRO agreed to investigate the bridleway to Moys drainage mill.

**1/11 To note the date of the next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 06 December at 2pm.

The meeting concluded at 4.36pm.

Chairman