

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2013

Present

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr David Broad	Mr George Saunders
Ms Liz Brooks	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Mike Flett	Mr Ray Walpole
Mrs Jo Lester	Mr Chris Yardley
Mr Stephen Read	

In Attendance

Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)
Mr Russell Wilson – Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)
Ms Lottie Carlton – Administrative Officer

Also In Attendance

Mr Peter Howe – Three Rivers Way
Mr Matt Worden – Norfolk County Council
Mrs Sarah Abercrombie – Norfolk County Council

1/1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Patrick Hacon, Mr Tony Howes, Mrs Hattie Llewelyn-Davies and Mr Gary Simons.

David Broad declared interests in a number of agenda items (see Appendix 1 for details).

1/2 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

1/3 To receive any points of information arising from the minutes

(1) Minute 1/3: Membership

The SWRO had attended a Wensum River Parkway meeting where confirmation was received that the group were interested in attending Forum meetings.

The Chairman proposed inviting the Chairman of the Wensum

River Parkway to become a member of the Forum and this was supported by Forum members.

(2) **Minute 1/7 (1): Breydon Water Mobility Access Path**

Norfolk County Council (NCC) had so far not responded to queries raised. The SWRO would continue to ask for a definitive cost.

It was noted that ASDA supermarket had failed in their Paths for Communities funding bid.

(3) **Minute 1/7 (2): Huddle Update**

Huddle information was circulated during the meeting and would be emailed to Forum members by Steve Read following the meeting.

Steve Read agreed to inform the SWRO and WRO of any pertinent points arising on Huddle and relevant information would be circulated to Forum members.

(4) **Minute 1/7 (5): Paths for Communities: Whitlingham Ferry Proposal**

A Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) funding bid had not been successful as it had not met the criteria of the fund. It would, however, be possible to reapply for SDF funding if criteria conditions were addressed.

(5) **Minute 1/8: Partnership Working with Other Organisations**

It was noted that Suffolk County Council Officers would be available to attend relevant Forum meetings in the future.

Grouping of relevant Suffolk agenda items was suggested.

(6) **Minute 1/12: Natural England/Local Access Forum Conference 2013**

The LAF Conference in Sheffield had not been attended by the Chairman as no places remained when booking was attempted. Unfortunately the opportunity to talk to LAF members in other National Parks had therefore been missed on this occasion.

(6) **Minute 1/14 (3): Any Other Business**

It was agreed to invite the Chairman of Broads Tourism to a future BLAF meeting.

1/4 Three Rivers Way Update

Peter Howe, Three Rivers Way (TRW), gave an update. The background of the TRW had been covered in previous meetings so the update concentrated on potential funding opportunities.

Paths for Communities and the Community Construction Fund had presented opportunities for funding and a route from Horning to Ludham Bridge had been identified for bid submissions. This section could also link to St Benet's Abbey. An access gap was identified on the route and a feasibility study had therefore been commissioned. Results from this study were now available.

In January 2013 the Department for Transport had announced £62 million of funding available for improving cycling facilities, with £50 million allocated to the cycle/rail infrastructure and £12 million to National Park areas. Following discussions between the TRW, NCC and BA, NCC had agreed to be lead partner in a funding bid. The tight deadline of 30 April 2013 had meant the Horning to Ludham Bridge route could not be submitted, but a previously worked up proposal linking Hoveton to Horning route was viable and NCC would be preparing an application for this section of the route

The Forum thanked Peter Howe for attending the meeting and for providing them with a helpful update regarding the Three Rivers Way.

1/5 Department for Transport Funding for Cycling in National Parks

The SWRO reported that a meeting between the local authorities and BA had taken place on 25 March 2013 to discuss potential projects that met the criteria of the Department for Transport (DfT) cycling in National Parks funding. £5 million of this DfT funding was allocated to dangerous roads and it was agreed that the Hoveton to Horning route, outlined in item 1/4, was considered suitable in meeting criteria for a bid that could also meet the tight deadline.

NCC as a local authority would act as lead with BA acting as a partner due to the National Park criteria. Paul Donnachie was the NCC officer dealing with the bid.

It was noted that 30% match funding would be required and that Sustrans would judge submitted funding bids.

Following the SWRO's presentation the following points were noted:

- Although competing with much higher costed projects, feedback from Sustrans was that the proposal should be submitted. The SWRO was attending a meeting in London to gather information about the application process. It was noted that the TRW bid had the potential to be extended thus meeting one of the application assessment criteria. The scheme also met the aims of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS).

- It was confirmed that although much of the proposed route lay outside the BA executive area it would still meet the criteria for the funding as rail links into and out of National Park areas were included in the criteria. It was also confirmed that the Broads Authority, as part of the National Park family, was included in the National Park criteria.
- It was noted that although stressing the potential for extension of the route to How Hill and St Benet's Abbey could help with the bid it was important to recognise that land owner agreements were not currently guaranteed for all sections and the extension of the route could not be guaranteed.
- It was suggested that Wroxham rail station had potential for cycle hire and this could link in with the bid.
- The Forum recognised that the tight deadline and difficult criteria for this funding process was not unusual and it highlighted the need to work up schemes in advance, having a 'book shelf' of ready projects available when funding opportunities presented themselves. It was agreed that the Forum should give feedback regarding the difficulties presented by the tight deadline and criteria of the DfT funding for cycling in National Parks after the bidding process was concluded.
- Norwich City Council would be submitting a funding bid under the urban allocation. The BA would be keen for links to Whitlingham Country Park and towards Postwick to be included in such a bid and would be lobbying for this inclusion.
- The Forum confirmed that they were supportive of the proposed bid by NCC, BA and the TRW. David Broad was happy to add his support in his capacity as a BA member.

1/6 Integrated Access Strategy Update

The SWRO explained that following pre-draft publication advice from the Forum, the Broads Hire Boat Federation, Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association, BA Navigation Committee, the Broads Angling Strategy Group and the Anglian Regional Paddleboat Group, the draft IAS had gone out to wider consultation groups.

The IAS was intended for guidance and to provide a means for submission of potential projects. The strategy included mapping and a prioritised three year action plan. It was recognised that there would still be gaps regarding actions, but this was the best starting point with information available.

The action plan, split into river valleys, included all the high category projects from the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), but imbedded in the strategy was potential for adaptation to changing circumstances and inclusion of new projects. Timescales were also included.

It was noted that action B1, River Bure Stracey Arms to Great Yarmouth, had been particularly requested by all groups during consultation.

BA Navigation Committee had reviewed the actions relating to mooring elements.

Once the draft IAS was approved the SWRO and WRO would concentrate work towards ensuring demonstrable achievements of actions.

It was noted that GIS mapping of historical dredging, bus routes and angling access 'wish list' areas still needed to be completed and this had to be finalised before sharing of information was possible. Additionally Ordnance Survey copyright issues had to be resolved.

It was explained that the Broads Authority's Project Development Group (PDG) was an internal group of cross-directorate officers. Project ideas could be put forward to the group, although projects with multiple benefits were preferred. Projects also needed to demonstrate delivery of Broads Plan objectives and related strategy priorities. A budget was assigned to the PDG for delivery of approved projects.

Following the SWRO's update the following points were noted:

- A suggestion was made to add a bullet point on page 20 of the report 'Work with County Council Highways regarding duties to maintain Rights of Way'. The SWRO agreed to consider this suggestion.
- David Broad commented that this was an excellent document, well laid out and should be used as a model for any future strategy documents. He suggested that the Table could be better laid out alphabetically for ease of use and drew attention to a few minor typographic errors.
- A further typographic error was noted on page 20 'de-misting' should read 'de-masting'.
- The omission of actions relating specifically to the Trinities was due to omission in the ROWIP. New projects could still be developed and included at a later stage as the strategy was intended to be a 'living document' which could be updated to take account of new opportunities or changes in circumstances.
- The definition of 'staithe' in the glossary section was queried as it did not adhere to legal definitions. The SWRO explained that the definition used mirrored the definition in the Broads Act, but that it could be reviewed.

The Forum gave full support for the draft IAS.

1/7 National Trails and Rights of Way Update – Norfolk County Council

Norfolk County Council's Countryside Access Strategy Coordinator updated the Forum on Norfolk Trails.

Funding for upgrading signage along the Angles Way had been allocated. A marketing agent had been employed and the website was up and running at www.norfolk.gov.uk/trails. The trail had been split into long and short sections and circular walks. A leaflet was being produced for market towns along the trail. Norfolk Enterprise Services was being employed to encourage businesses to promote the route.

Following the Countryside Access Strategy Coordinator's updates the following points were noted:

- The development of the Greater Rackheath cycleway was connected to a new housing development. As this was in the early stages of development there were currently no further updates concerning the cycleway. NCC was keen to promote the cycleway and recognised the links to the Wherryman's Way, Whitlingham Country Park, the 3RW and Salhouse as important considerations and would update the Forum as the scheme developed.
- The Forum questioned whether five mile corridors adjacent to Norfolk Trails were the responsibility of NCC as had been indicated in previous meetings. The Countryside Access Strategy Coordinator agreed to seek clarification on this query.

Norfolk County Council's Highway Manager answered questions and received comments from the Forum as follows:

- NCC had four area offices each with a manager and 16 staff.
- Norwich City Council had an agreement in place with NCC for footpaths within the city.
- No definitive maps were available for Norwich City or part of Yarmouth Borough. If not registered the Forum felt they could be at risk.
- Regarding creation of new PROWs it was confirmed that NCC was generally supportive whilst needing to balance the requirements of maintenance.
- In response to a request for clarification on NCC's cutting regime in order to avoid duplication of effort, it was confirmed that NCC would fulfil their statutory duty and were cutting public highways in urban areas five times a year and in rural areas two times a year. Trails were cut, dependent on growth, three times a year while PROW were not

proactively cut rather reactively cut. Monitoring took place once a year in urban areas and once every five years in rural areas. It was possible to request cutting for specific paths.

- It was confirmed that where a PROW bordered farmland it was the responsibility of the farmer to cut crops and hedges next to the path and the responsibility of the Highways Department to cut vegetation on the path itself.
- Any PROW complaints could now be logged on a Highways Report Form online and the process and actions could also be viewed there. No legal challenges had so far been made.
- The Highways Manager suggested that one potential for the Forum would be to lobby local Members of Parliament and Councillors regarding PROW maintenance.
- The Highways Manager confirmed that £1 million was available through Parish Partnerships this financial year. Parish councils had received information about the scheme. Grants awarded would have to be spent during the current financial year.

The Forum thanked the Countryside Access Strategy Coordinator and the Highways Manager for attending the meeting and for providing them with helpful updates regarding the National Trails and Rights of Way.

The Forum agreed to set agenda items involving invited NCC officers at either the start or the end of the meeting in the future to aid attendance.

1/8 Canoe Trails

The WRO gave a presentation on a project to deliver canoe trails across the Broads area in partnership with the Canoe Hire Network.

Varying standards of mapping and information were currently used by the hire centres for their visitors. The aim of the project was to provide a more standardised approach.

It was intended to use an illustrated map with the potential to add businesses and facilities thereby avoiding copyright restrictions when using ordnance survey mapping.

Following a meeting with Canoe England it was planned to develop canoe activities with them for the Broads Outdoors Festival in 2014.

Following the WRO's presentation the following points were noted:

- The trails were intended to provide sustainable impact and access to quieter areas. Using the Canoe Hire Network centres would ensure that visitors would not unduly disturb wildlife.

- Licensing provided income to assist with managing the canoe trails.
- The chosen four trails were sited at quieter parts of the system to avoid the difficulties sometimes faced at busier starting points.
- A leaflet would not be produced to avoid information going out of date. An updateable pdf version would be used instead. This would be available for visitors to download at home, at Tourist Information Centres and at the Canoe Hire Centres. The option of providing the information via hand held devices was also being explored.
- The meeting with Canoe England had been very positive with potential for partnership working, including financial input and promotion of the Broads via their organisation both within the UK and throughout Europe.
- Once completed, the canoe trails project could translate to other recreation activities such as cycling or horse riding.

The SWRO gave an update on punting. The Cambridge operation would have to resubmit their planning application to address certain issues. The existing operation had been closely monitored for compliance during operation.

The SWRO informed the Forum that the Wensum River Parkway Partnership, facilitated by the Norwich Society, intended to develop an Integrated Access Strategy for access to the river corridor running through the city. They would be convening a conference at Dragon Hall in Norwich and Stephen Johnson had agreed to chair. The BLAF was invited to attend.

1/9 Broads Forum Update

The chairman gave an update on the Broads Forum meeting held on 2 February 2013.

Election of chairman and membership scrutiny were on the agenda for the 25 April 2013 Broads Forum meeting.

Reports were received on Consultative Arrangements and Community Engagement, Climate Change, Landscape Sensitivity Study, Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy and Speed Boat Testing at the RSPB Strumpshaw Reserve.

Confirmation was given regarding wakeboarding and waterskiing zones being trialled on Breydon Water from 1 April 2013. A log book and notification regime would be in place.

It was noted that Suffolk's northern parishes were keen to receive further information on consultative arrangements.

1/10 Planning Application at Deal Ground Trowse for Bridge over the River Yare

The BA Head of Development Management had given a presentation at BA Navigation Committee but no detailed drawings had been available. The bridge would have a 14 foot clearance height and would be openable.

The Committee had given advice regarding signage and de-masting and had stressed the potential for additional access options and improvements.

The Forum agreed to add their support regarding additional access benefits including the provision of a public slipway, demasting moorings, online moorings and the need for detailed operating procedures.

1/11 To receive any other items of business

(1) Cess Staithe, Martham

The Chairman reported that a legal dispute over ownership and use of Cess Staithe Martham was being investigated by the Land Registry Inspector. This would be an important test case. The costs were likely to be in the region of £30k and demonstrated the need to settle agreements out of court.

(2) Permissive Path off Station Road, Reedham

Jo Lester reported that the permissive footpath off Station Road, Reedham was very muddy and in need of maintenance. The SWRO and WRO agreed to investigate.

(3) South Walsham Staithe

Chris Yardley reported that South Walsham staithe had been refurbished by the Broads Authority but access to the staithe had been blocked by a locked gate. The WRO explained that the slipway was subject to an access agreement between the Broads Authority and the Parish Council and it had been arranged for a day key to be left at the post office and a sign directing visitors would be displayed on the gate. The access agreement would be reviewed annually.

1/12 To note the date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 12 June 2013 at 2.00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 5.00 p.m.

Chairman

Code of Conduct for Members
Declaration of Interests

Committee: Broads Local Access Forum
Date of Meeting:

Name Please Print	Agenda/ Mins No(s)	Nature of Interest (Please describe the nature of the interest)	Please tick here if the interest is a Prejudicial interest ✓
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