

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Louis Baugh	Mr Peter Medhurst
Mr Robin Buxon	Mr George Saunders
Mr Mike Flett	Mr Gary Simmons
Mr Patrick Hacon	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Alec Hartley	Mr Ray Walpole
Mrs Hattie Llewelyn-Davis	

In Attendance

Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)
Ms Lottie Carlton - Administrative Officer
Mr Simon Hooton – Head of Strategy and Projects
Mrs Trudi Wakelin – Director of Operations

Also In Attendance

Mr David Yates – Norfolk Trails Officer, Strategic Development, Norfolk
County Council

1/1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr David Broad, Mr Tony Howes, Mrs Jo Lester, Mr Russell Wilson and Mr Chris Yardley.

Keith Bacon declared interests regarding agenda item 11.

1/2 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2013 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 (3): Huddle Update

Huddle update information was available and would be circulated to members following the meeting.

(2) **Minute 1/6: Integrated Access Strategy Update**

Following internal discussion it had been agreed to use the Broads Act definition of staithe as follows: 'Staithe – Any land which is adjacent to a waterway and which the inhabitants of the locality are entitled to use as a landing place.'

(3) **Minute 1/7: National Trails and Rights of Way Update – Norfolk County Council**

Mr David Yates provided an update on recent structural changes at Norfolk Country Council. Norfolk Trails had been separated into three strands; Infrastructure under Mr Tim Lydstone Scott, Projects under Ms Sarah Abercrombie and Development under Mr David Yates.

It was noted that there had been no changes to funding and external funding options still needed to be sought. There had been no changes to footpath maintenance.

Mr David Yates agreed to investigate a question regarding whether 5 mile wide corridors around trails, plus routes off these trails, would be included in Highways responsibilities for maintenance and whether the first maintenance cut of trails had taken place yet.

It was noted that many paths were still overgrown and reactive cutting relating to complaints received was still continuing and the Forum believed the statutory nature of the Highways Authority was not being properly adhered to in this regard. The Forum also viewed splitting Highways and Trails as a negative step and continued to assert that National Parks should be treated more favourably regarding Rights of Way maintenance by the Highways Authority. The Forum requested that Mr David Yates take these concerns back to Norfolk County Council.

The Forum indicated a wish to meet with Norfolk Trails and Highways to reassess following the organisational structural review at Norfolk County Council.

(4) **Minute 1/8: Canoe Trails**

It was noted that Norwich City Council had contracted NPS to look at a River Strategy, with a brief soon available for comments. The Wensum River Parkway Partnership had therefore decided to put their Integrated Access Strategy work on hold as it was hoped to develop a joint strategy. The Broads Authority views would also need to be taken on board.

A mapping project was going to be progressed with a site visit planned.

It was noted that City Bus pontoons may potentially be reviewed.

(5) Minute 1/10: Planning Application at Deal Ground Trowse for Bridge over the River Yare

A new drawing from the Deal Ground application had taken account of Broads Authority and BLAF comments regarding moorings, demisting and a slipway and this was welcomed. It was noted however that a bridge to Whitlingham Country Park was not included.

(6) Minute 1/11(1): Cess Staithe, Martham

The legal issue regarding use of Cess Staithe had not yet been resolved.

1/4 Whitlingham - update

The Director of Operations gave an update on the Whitlingham new build project.

The project was in the very early stages of development and had not yet been to the Broads Authority.

Discussions between partner organisations had been going on for the last two years and now these parties had come together, agreeing a vision statement as outlined in the accompanying report. There was strong agreement for the vision which would need to remain flexible enough to tailor towards funding bids. Success of the project was dependant on such external funding bids.

The next stage of the project would be an appraisal of physical constraints and options and looking at a business case prior to commissioning architects.

Forum views were sought at this early stage in the project and the following comments and answers were received:

- (1) Forum Members felt it would be useful to include older people, regular users and those who lived in the Norwich area in the vision statement. The Director of Operations agreed the wording could be strengthened to include older people. It was noted that local residents were represented by membership of Norwich City Council and South Norfolk Council Directors on the Whitlingham Charitable Trust.
- (2) There could be potential to access the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- (3) The Director of Operations explained that an idea by one Member for an expansion into the Park of outdoor entertainment would not fit with the agreed objectives of 'quiet enjoyment' and so would not likely be considered favourably.

- (4) Clarification was given that Whitlingham Charitable Trust had been supportive of the potential new bridge via the Deal Ground application but had stressed that funding the extra maintenance costs of footpaths from the ensuing increased use of the Country Park would need to be funded and this should have been considered in the application.
- (5) It was agreed that language flexibility was important in the vision statement regarding funding applications.
- (6) A community orchard/allotment was suggested for inclusion in the project.

1/5 Climate Change Stakeholder Engagement Project

The Head of Strategy and Projects gave an update on the Climate Change Stakeholder Engagement Project.

The likely impacts of climate change and current lack of planning, despite weather events affecting businesses, was highlighted.

The Broads Authority and Climate Change Adaptation Panel partners would be taking detail forward to Broads community engagement stage with specified target groups.

The Forum was being asked to assist with raising awareness and acting as a conduit for information and feedback was welcomed and the following comments and answers were received:

- (1) Members were pleased that climate change had not been taken off the agenda and agreed that sceptical opinions needed to be tackled, particularly in an area at risk such as the Broads.
- (2) Support was given for input from the Forum's access expertise and perspective in relation to climate change.
- (3) Whitlingham was suggested as a route to drawing the public's attention to the issue. It was noted that the first phase of the project involved connecting with communities and developing dialogues and education.
- (4) Those who lived by the river were particularly affected by insurance increases and tenants associations could be a good route into information exchange.

1/6 Department for Transport cycling funding - update

Nothing had been heard following the bid submission.

1/7 Integrated Access Strategy - Update

Following adoption of the Integrated Access Strategy by the Broads Authority,

the Action Plan needed to be progressed. A reminder was given that this was intended to be a flexible and reactive Action Plan.

Updates regarding actions from the plan were given as follows:

G1: The GIS access and gap analysis mapping had been completed apart from bus route information.

G2: The timescales for this action had slipped.

G3: The slipway and angling access consultation had been completed.

W3: A survey of pilings along the River Waveney had taken place and had been mapped.

W2: Canoe access on the River Waveney had received an in principle agreement from the landowners concerned to build a new launch point. The River Waveney Trust was hoping to take on the lease and further discussions were planned.

Y1: The moorings and pilings survey had taken place along the Rivers Chet and Yare and had been mapped. Two landowners had been approached and one was so far in agreement, including to links to a circular walk.

Y2: A canoe launch site on the River Yare at Rockland had been surveyed for potential and a landowner had applied for planning permission for a slipway at the Public House with agreement to public access. The legalities were being explored.

Y3: Norfolk County Council and the Wensum River Parkway Partnership were working towards this action. At Whitlingham Country Park a project was being developed for erosion protection, small boat access and disabled angling access. The Whitlingham Charitable Trust had given support to the project in principle and offered a financial contribution.

Y6: Moorings gap analysis had been mapped between Whitlingham and Bramerton and landowners would be approached.

B1: On the River Bure two landowners had been approached and negotiations were in progress with one landowner regarding the potential for a new mooring between Stracey Arms and Great Yarmouth.

B2: An agreement had been secured with the landowner to use pay and display car parking revenue to maintain the slipway for public access at Wroxham Broad.

B4: The Broads Authority and Norfolk County Council had made an application for Department of Transport funding for the first part of the Hoveton to Ludham section of the Three Rivers Way route. Discussions were under way with one landowner regarding a dedicated new ROW on their land

to enable the second section of the route between Horning and Ludham Bridge to be developed further.

AT1: In order to progress linking Ludham Bridge to St Benet's negotiations with the land agent had produced an in principle agreement. A draft agreement would be going out to all landowners concerned. Additional work would be required – stock control/gates/fencing - and this was on the Operation Directorate's work plan to deliver should the agreements go ahead.

AT1: An access workshop was planned in order to facilitate dialogue regarding the access in the immediate St Benet's area and beyond. It was stressed any ideas raised at this workshop could only be progressed with landowner agreement.

AT2: The landowner was in principle happy to extend the agreement on the other side of Ludham Bridge with existing terms to continue.

Following the Integrated Access Strategy action plan updates the following comments and answers were received:

- (1) It was noted that where appropriate all discussions with landowners involved requests for potential dredging disposal sites in tandem to access issues.
- (2) It was noted that there was no set statutory time limit for a permitted path agreement and negotiations could range from 5 to 99 years. Local Authorities negotiated agreements appropriate to local circumstances.
- (3) There were no updates forthcoming from BESL currently.
- (4) Regarding ferry provision in the Broads, it was noted that if the benefits from any potential new ferry increased access the Broads Authority could help. It was noted that Horning Ferry was hoped to up and running again this summer. The SWRO agreed to investigate the ferry issue at Whitlingham.

Thanks were given by the Forum to the SWRO and the WRO for their work in progressing actions in the Integrated Access Strategy.

1/8 Canoe Trails - update

The SWRO gave a presentation on the work carried out by the WRO who was unable to attend the meeting.

The project, included in the Integrated Access Strategy as a priority action, had been delivered on time and within budget using STEP project funding.

Feedback had been very good from the Broads Canoe Hire Network and the public.

It was noted that Canoe England viewed the Broads as England's best family canoeing destination and were keen to promote the area. They had also expressed an interest in being involved in the 2014 Outdoors Festival.

Following the Canoe Trails presentation the following comments and answers were received:

- (1) Regarding extensions to the canoe trails project through Norwich and beyond, it was suggested that David White and Norfolk County Council could be interested and the Norfolk Trails Officer agreed to pass this information on.
- (2) Cantley and its Staithe Management Group, was suggested as a further potential area for extension to the canoe trails project; similarly Thurne. It was noted however that any such routes within the Broads area would need to seek funding in order to proceed. Following a similar suggestion for the Trinities it was noted that this area was owned by Essex and Suffolk Water.
- (3) Lack of information and facilities for disabled canoe users was highlighted and it was agreed to include this in a wider reaching report on access for disabled people in the Broads at the next Forum meeting.

The WRO was thanked for his work on the Canoe Trails project.

1/9 Broads Forum Update

The first Broads Forum meeting under the new Chairman Richard Card and new Vice-Chairman Keith Bacon had taken place.

It had been agreed to review membership and Terms of Reference for the Broads Forum and ensure that groups were updated via their representative member more effectively.

A major agenda item covered a future strategy for dredging. It was highlighted that since the May Gurney operation had been taken over by the Broads Authority, 25% more dredging activity was taking place.

Discussion had taken place regarding the Hardley Flood weir that had recently been replaced, under a partnership project between the Broads Authority and Norfolk County Council, and was working well to control water levels. Feedback had been good and it was noted that the Wherryman's Way footpath was protected as a result. It was noted that additional bank protection was planned.

A report regarding the Broads Angling Strategy Group consultation had been well received.

1/10 Rackheath Way – proposed trail linking Thorpe End to Wroxham

A Norfolk County Council map was displayed to members showing a proposed new Trail from Thorpe End to Wroxham with potential for the Three Rivers Way route to link into this at Hoveton.

It was noted that this proposed trail demonstrated access into a National Park area which was one of the funding criteria from the Department of Transport. Only shared routes were considered under this funding stream and therefore such an option would be supported by the Forum.

It was suggested that the route also had potential to link to Whitlingham via the Yare viaduct rather than stopping at Thorpe End.

The Norfolk Trails Officer confirmed that this was being looked at as a shared route and agreed that the links beyond this trail were good. It was also confirmed that horse riders would have access to the proposed route.

1/11 Visitor Giving – Potential Projects for Consideration

A request had been made by the Broads Trust for potential projects to be considered for funding under the Visitor Giving scheme. Only projects not already covered by statutory functions could be considered. An independent panel had been appointed to select successful projects.

The report by the SWRO suggested projects from the Integrated Access Strategy fitting Visitor Giving Fund criteria that the Forum could promote.

A further suggestion of disabled hoists for access to boats was made, however it was noted that the Trust would need a costed project submission for consideration under the scheme.

It was noted that each year funding would be available and the amount would be dependent on donations made.

It was confirmed that businesses taking part in the scheme could do so by selling pin badges and/or including an opt-out extra donation on goods or services. It was noted that gift aid was only workable for larger donations.

Publicity surrounding completed projects was suggested as essential regarding marketing of the scheme in future years.

1/12 Upper and Middle Thurne Enhancement Fund – Potential Projects for Consideration

The Broads Authority had funding available via the Environment Agency, ring fenced to an area of the Upper and Middle Thurne as highlighted on a

displayed map. Match funding was required for any successful bids.

The Landscape Officer was administering the fund and was seeking project submissions from community groups and parish councils.

The fund had so far given £7k to a Hickling staithe enhancement project and a project at Potter Heigham was also being looked at.

The SWRO agreed to circulate the map and criteria for the fund to Forum members.

An initial project suggestion was made regarding visits to view the Horsey seals and the pressure this put on car parks.

1/13 St Benet's Abbey Sustainable Access Workshop

A workshop was being facilitated by the Norfolk Archaeological Trust on 19 June 2013 at Ludham Village Hall for local people to suggest potential improvements for access in the St Benet's Abbey vicinity. The Broads Authority would be assisting with the workshop. Current access would be assessed and the potential for new routes explored. A wide geographical area was being included. Attendance at the workshop was welcomed.

The Forum felt it was unfortunate that the Trust had shown insufficient knowledge surrounding access issues in the area prior to the workshop being advertised.

A current access issue was highlighted concerning a locked gate on the PROW making it impassable, particularly for horse riders. The Forum agreed this was a serious problem and they would register a demand to Norfolk County Council to investigate this issue.

1/14 The Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2012/13 – Draft for Consideration

The draft Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report for 2012/13 had been circulated to members for approval.

It was noted that the content reporting dates were stipulated by Natural England and it meant that only three meetings were therefore covered for this particular report.

Forum members agreed the content of the draft Annual Report was a true reflection of activities.

Forum members agreed to provide updated biographies if necessary.

The report highlighted that the Forum had not worked with Suffolk County Council over the reporting period; the intention was to do so in the future.

1/15 To receive any other items of urgent business

- (1) Cutting of ROW was as important as long distance trails and this was not being done. Members noted that Norfolk County Council was proposing having another “Big Conversation” consultation about service provision later in the year and it was agreed that comments from the Forum should be submitted to the consultation.
- (2) Following a concern that the Three Rivers Way resurfacing work would not be suitable for horses and therefore contrary to a multiuser claim it was confirmed that the section from Hoveton station to Horning did not have sufficient width, however the section from Horning to Ludham Bridge, was intended as a shared use route, grassed on the marsh side and a cycle/footpath surface on the other.
- (3) It was noted that the Broads Authority was aware of a Community Development Infrastructure Levy of £60m and would be discussing it.

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 11 September 2013 at 2pm. A site visit to St Benet's was requested.

The meeting concluded at 5.05 p.m.

Chairman

Code of Conduct for Members

Declaration of Interests

Committee: Broads Local Access Forum

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 12 June 2013

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 ✓
Ray Walpole	1/10	Resident of the area concerned.	
Louis Baugh	1/11	Trustee of Broads Charitable Trust.	
Keith Bacon	1/11	Trustee of Broads Charitable Trust.	
Robin Buxton	1/12	Horsey seals.	
Hattie Llewellyn-Davies	1/12	Horsey seals.	
Louis Baugh	1/13	Land management interest on part of route.	
Mike Flett	1/13	Ludham Parish Council.	