

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012

Present

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr David Broad	Mr Patrick Hacon
Mr Charles Swan	Mr Peter Medhurst
Mr Chris Yardley	Mr Ray Walpole
Mr George Saunders	Mr Stephen Read
Mr Louis Baugh	Mr Tony Howes
Mrs Jo Lester	Ms Liz Brooks
Mr Robin Buxton	Mr Mike Flett

In Attendance

Mr Russell Wilson - Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)
Mrs Andrea Long – Director of Planning and Strategy
Mrs Lottie Carlton - Administrative Officer
Miss Jo Eames – Administrative Officer

Also In Attendance

Mrs Fiona Taylor – Natural England

1/1 Appointment of Chairman

The WRO invited nominations for the position of Chairman for the forthcoming year.

It was proposed and duly seconded that Dr Keith Bacon be appointed as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED

that Dr Bacon be appointed as Chairman for the forthcoming year.

Dr Bacon in the Chair

1/2 Appointment of Vice Chairman

It was proposed and duly seconded that Mr Peter Medhurst be nominated for Vice-Chairman for the following year.

There being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED

that Mr Medhurst be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

1/3 Membership

The WRO reported that the Chairman of the Parkway Partnership wanted to put together an integrated access strategy for the Norwich River Parkway and questioned whether the members felt it would be beneficial for the Chairman to attend the Forum's meetings to provide a link to the Norwich River Parkway. As members felt that it would the WRO agreed to contact the Chairman.

1/4 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Hattie Llewelyn-Davies and Mr Gary Simons.

Keith Bacon, Louis Baugh, Mike Flett and David Broad declared interests in a number of agenda items (see Appendix 1 for details).

1/5 Paths for Communities

Natural England's East of England, People and Access Officer gave a presentation to the Forum regarding Natural England's Paths for Communities (PfC) scheme, which would be operating until March 2014, with a total fund of £2m. Further information could be found at

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/access/rightsofway/p4c.aspx>

or by emailing

P4C@naturalengland.org.uk

Following the People and Access Officer's presentation the following points were noted:

- There had been a large number of expressions of interest, but the number proceeding to application stage was smaller. If projects had the right criteria they had a good chance of going forward.
- Natural England would ideally prefer a regional spread of funding grants but ultimately funding would be granted for good projects regardless of where they were located.

- Expressions of interest were sent from the central team to the People and Access Officer, who worked with the applicant on their bid for a grant. Application forms were scored and those achieving a threshold “score” were considered by a grants panel. This panel met once a month and decided whether an application (from anywhere in the country) would be awarded a grant and the size of the grant.
- The grants were one off payments. There needed to be some element of Public Right of Way creation (e.g. footpath, bridleway or restricted byway); any other routes for improvement as part of the project as a whole must also be Public Rights of Way and all routes must link into Public Rights of Way (not permissive routes). PfC did not seek to replace Higher Level Stewardship permissive access payments.
- For those landowners in HLS permissive access agreements, PfC would be more appropriate for those whose agreements expired within the lifetime of the PfC scheme.
- If a community could demonstrate that they wanted a permissive path to continue and had agreement from the landowner for it to become a permanent path then the community could be eligible to apply to the scheme for funding.
- A town or parish council could act as an applicant for PfC funding on behalf of a community. Landowners may be eligible for a one-off facilitation payment, but not if the land is already in public ownership.
- A project could include a number of paths if they formed a standalone project.
- Funding could not be used to undertake the statutory functions of local authorities such as footpath maintenance.
- Long term maintenance of paths funded by the scheme may require the support of the highways authority.
- Shared use paths were eligible for funding as the creation of bridleways was the main aim of the grant scheme. For cycle ways to be eligible there would need to be a very good reason why horse riders were excluded as well as some element of Public Right of Way creation.

The People and Access Officer agreed to circulate a bridleway specification to the Forum for information.

The Forum thanked the People and Access Officer for attending the meeting and for providing them with helpful information regarding the grant scheme.

1/6 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

1/7 To receive any points of information arising from the minutes

(1) Minute 4/3b: Breydon Water Mobility Access Path

The WRO reported that Norfolk County Council had responded to the questions the Forum raised at the last meeting, although a definitive cost for the project had not been provided.

The WRO confirmed that the Broads Authority was in discussion with Norfolk County Council regarding the tourism benefits of the project and would continue to ask for a definitive cost.

(2) Minute 4/4: Huddle Update

Steve Read confirmed that he was now registered with Huddle and that information was starting to filter through to him.

(3) Minute 4/5: Oulton Broad Environment Development/Heritage

Charles Swan confirmed that he was currently in discussion with Waveney District Council regarding the land transfer and would report any progress at the next meeting.

(4) Minute 4/11 (1): Wheelchairs at Whitlingham Country Park

The WRO confirmed that he would contact the Outdoor Education Centre to find out whether it would be possible for the Authority to advertise their all terrain wheelchairs at Whitlingham Country Park. He would then report back to Ray Walpole direct.

(5) Minute 4/11 (2): Paths for Communities: Whitlingham Ferry Proposal

Ray Walpole confirmed that it had not been possible to apply for funding for the ferry project, as it did not have enough community support.

David Broad noted that the Authority had agreed to reduce the toll rate for ferries to that of a private toll.

1/8 Partnership Working with other Organisations

Keith Bacon stated that, because of the effects of the current financial situation on councils, direct contact with their countryside officers was very

important, as it provided a mechanism for the Forum to discuss footpath issues directly with them. He expressed concern about the absence of these officers at recent meetings which had reduced the interaction between the Forum and Norfolk and Suffolk County Council.

The Forum suggested that an agreement could be sought to ensure that a senior officer responsible for rights of way from both Norfolk and Suffolk County Council attended each Forum.

The Forum also suggested that a standing item 'issues relating to county councils' could be added to the agenda. The relevant officers could then be contacted in advance of each meeting regarding the issues to be discussed and be invited to attend.

The Forum questioned how other national park authorities dealt with these issues.

David Broad agreed to raise the Forum's concerns at the following week's governance meeting and feed back to the SWRO, the WRO and the Forum. A way forward could then be discussed with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.

The Forum felt that an officer report regarding the new governance arrangement would be advantageous.

The Forum suggested that further interaction with both the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Access Forums would be beneficial.

The Forum requested increased partnership working with the Whitlingham Country Park trustees. The WRO noted that the Head of Strategy and Projects attended Trustee meetings and suggested that he be invited to give a report at the next meeting.

1/9 Ludham Bridge Footpath Update

The WRO reported that the meeting which was due to take place on 27 November had been cancelled at the last minute, but would be re-arranged before the end of the year.

It was noted that once an agreement had been reached the Authority would initiate a formal agreement.

The Forum thanked Mike Flett and Louis Baugh for their assistance with this issue.

The Forum also thanked the SWRO and the WRO for their assistance in arranging for the key footpaths at How Hill and Acle to be cut. The WRO confirmed that this was the aim of the Authority.

Ray Walpole reported that next year's Outdoor Festival would include an

event at St Benet's Abbey.

1/10 Integrated Access Strategy

The WRO gave a presentation to the Forum regarding the background to why the Integrated Access Strategy had been developed, and how feedback from a recent consultation had been incorporated into it.

The WRO explain that the strategy was a tool which could be used to progress schemes and access funding.

A web based approach had been adopted as information contained within the documentation could be instantly updated.

The maps not only showed the location of footpaths but also included information relating to slipways, fishing points, railway stations, bus stations, bus routes and nature reserves.

Gap analysis would be undertaken to identify access opportunities and issues.

Chris Yardley stated that the Dinghy Cruising Association would be keen to add their weight to the slipway provision. The WRO therefore agreed to provide Mr Yardley with the information to forward to them.

The Forum raised concerns regarding the potential loss of flood bank footpaths through flood bank realignment and changes of land ownership. The WRO stated that the Environment Agency's Project Manager had noted the Forum's concerns having read the minutes of the last Forum meeting. The WRO explained that rights of way were recorded on the definitive map so would always exist but flood bank footpaths, which were not actual rights of way, did not have a designation in law. The Authority therefore urged people to make it known, when flood banks were due to be moved, that they were used so they could be registered. Robin Buxton confirmed that BESL should establish land ownership before works were undertaken.

The Director of Planning and Strategy explained that as part of the integrated approach to planning the Integrated Access Strategy fitted in with both the Broads Plan and the Local Plan.

Members felt that the Integrated Access Strategy was a fantastic piece of work and suggested that the presentation be taken to the County Councils, as it might encourage them to engage further with the Forum. The WRO confirmed that, although this had not been discussed, it would be considered in the future.

1/11 Potential Access Benefits of using the Burgh St Peter Ferry to link the Access Networks North and South of the River Waveney

The WRO explained that he had investigated possible cycle routes linking Burgh St Peter Ferry to Reedham Ferry to create a cycle route from Burgh St Peter to Norwich.

The Forum felt that a route closer to the river and the railway line might be more appropriate. The WRO therefore agreed to re-map the route.

Ray Walpole stated that Sustrans was interested in identifying a cycle route from Reedham to Great Yarmouth that avoided the Acle straight.

The Forum felt that the planning application that BESL would be submitting for Carlton Marshes flood defences might be contentious, but an extension to the bridleway would make an attractive route. The SWRO would establish whether it would be possible to progress this.

1/12 Natural England/Local Access Forum Conference 2013

The WRO reported that the next National Local Access Forum Conference would be taking place in Sheffield on 27 February 2013. Keith Bacon confirmed that he would be able to attend.

1/13 Broads Forum Update

Keith Bacon reported that the main items discussed by the Broads Forum on 22 November included the Review of Consultative Arrangements and Community Engagement, Breydon Water's water skiing zone, the Integrated Access Strategy, the Visitor Giving Scheme and the fen harvester replacement.

1/14 Any Other Business

(1) East of England Local Access Forum Chairs and Vice-Chairs' Meeting

Peter Medhurst reported on the meeting he and Keith Bacon attending on 15 November in London. The main items discussed related to issues raised by the region's Local Access Forums, these included:

- The underpass for the A11 dualling at Elvedon
- Unmanned railway crossing issues
- Local Nature Partnerships
- Long distance routes
- Digital mapping
- NHS Health Walks
- Loss of rights of way through housing developments
- Huddle
- New HLS

- Coastal Access
- Ash Dieback.

(2) **Yare House**

The Forum agreed that they liked the new venue, however more cycle racks would be an advantage. The WRO agreed to raise this with the Head of Governance and Executive Assistant.

(3) **Broads Tourism**

Members requested that a representative of Broads Tourism be invited to the next meeting. Tony Howes confirmed that he was part of this group and would update the Forum on relevant issues.

(4) **EDP's Say No To Pylons Campaign**

Keith Bacon stated that as the EDP's campaign had already been raised by a number of groups including the Broads Authority and the Broads Society, the Forum would only need to consider its effect on rights of ways should any specific issues arise.

(5) **Parish Footpath Wardens**

The Forum questioned whether it had a link to the parish footpath wardens register or if a list of parish footpath wardens was available. Keith Bacon explained that due to the effects of the current financial climate on the CPRE the scheme now had a lower profile.

The Forum suggested that the Association of Parish and Town Councils might be able to assist in the compilation of a list.

(6) **Change in Secretariat**

The WRO introduced to members the administrative officer who would be taking over the role of secretariat to the Forum in the new year.

1/15 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 6 March 2013 at 2.00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 4.50 p.m.

Chairman

Code of Conduct for Members

Declaration of Interests

Committee: Broads Local Access Forum

Date of Meeting: Wednesday 5 December 2012

Name <i>Please Print</i>	Agenda/ Mins No(s)	Nature of Interest (Please describe the nature of the interest)	Please tick here if the interest is a Prejudicial interest ✓
Keith Bacon	1/13	Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust	
Keith Bacon	1/14 (5)	CPRE	
David Broad	1/7-1/11	Toll Payer, Member of the Great Yarmouth Port Cons. Committee	
Mike Flett	1/9	Ludham Parish Council interest	
Louis Baugh	1/9	Land management interest on part of route	