

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2012

Present

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr David Broad	Mr Peter Medhurst
Mr Charles Swan	Mr Ray Walpole
Mr Chris Yardley	Mr Stephen Read
Mr Gary Simons	Mr Tony Howes
Mr George Saunders	Mrs Hattie Llewelyn-Davies
Mr Louis Baugh	Ms Liz Brooks
Mrs Jo Lester	

In Attendance

Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)
Mr Russell Wilson - Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)
Mr Simon Hooton – Head of Strategy and Projects
Miss Jo Eames – Administrative Officer

Also In Attendance

Miss Louisa Lloyd – Norfolk County Council

4/1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Mike Flett.

The Chairman informed the Forum that there would be a presentation regarding the possibility of creating a mobility access path at Breydon Water as part of Item 4/3.

4/2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4/3a Points of Information Arising from the Minutes

(1) **Minute 3/7: Improvements to the Policy and Legal Framework for Public Rights of Way Consultation**

The SWRO confirmed that he had submitted the Forum's response to the Policy and Legal Framework for Public Rights of Way consultation to Defra. He had also copied it to the Regional LAF Coordinator for the East of England, who had thanked the Forum and had confirmed that she had not, as yet, received any other responses.

(2) **Minute 3/9: Paths for Communities Update**

The SWRO reported that Natural England's Paths for Communities East of England Officer would be attending the December Forum to discuss the application process with members.

(3) **Minute 3/10: Rights of Way and Access Improvement Plan Update**

The SWRO reported that Grade I Listed Buildings had not been incorporated onto the GIS maps that had been produced, as it was necessary to establish if there would be any additional work implications.

4/3b Breydon Water Mobility Access Path

Norfolk County Council's Trails Officer (Information Management) gave a presentation to the Forum regarding an opportunity to create a mobility access path with parking bays from Asda's car park in Great Yarmouth to the railway line at Breydon Water, including a new mobility access bird hide, which had arisen because of bank strengthening works BESL hope to undertake next year. BESL had agreed to part fund the project and Asda had agreed to provide parking bays for mobility vehicles. Other organisations such as the RSPB, Broadland District Council, the Environment Agency and disability/community groups would be contacted regarding possible contributions to the scheme.

The SWRO estimated that the total cost of the scheme would be in the region of £100,000. The Broads Authority would need to ascertain how the scheme would fit in with the projects that the Authority and the Forum had already prioritised, and to do this they would require a more detailed report. The SWRO therefore agreed to ask Norfolk County Council for a definitive cost for the scheme for the December Forum.

The Forum felt that this was a good scheme for the area as it was ideally situated for accessing the Broads. The Forum requested that a caveat be forwarded to Norfolk County Council that the Forum supported the scheme but could not contribute funding to it.

Following the Trails Officer's presentation the Forum raised the following points:

- Would there be a more direct route than the proposed one from the petrol pumps in Asda car park?
- Who would maintain the mobility access path?
- Would it be possible to move the new bird hide north west of the proposed location as the view would be greatly improved?
- Would it be possible to negotiate with Asda for dedicated parking bays for the Weavers Way?
- Would it be possible to prioritise specific aspects of the scheme and cost these rather than attempting to undertake the whole scheme?
- Would it be possible to extend the mobility access path to Berney Arms?
- An alternative to a gravel/clay path surface might be advantageous as it does not favour wind swept locations.
- Would it be possible to apply for 'Paths for Communities' funding if there was local community involvement and support from the highways authority?

Norfolk County Council's Trails Officer (Information Management) agreed to forward the Forum's points to Norfolk County Council.

David Broad suggested that he could raise the Forum's points at the next Broads Authority meeting.

4/4 Huddle Update

The SWRO updated the Forum regarding Huddle, noting that it was the only Local Access Forum in the Eastern Region not to have registered. He explained that there might be capacity within the Strategy and Projects section for an officer to be registered. Alternatively one member of the Forum could register and share the password with the rest of the Forum enabling any member to access the site and report back to the Forum on any relevant issues. Steve Read agreed to put his name forward and to share the password with the rest of the Forum. Keith Bacon agreed to raise the relevance of Huddle at the regional Local Access Forum Chair's meeting in November.

4/5 Oulton Broad Environment Development/Heritage

Charles Swan gave a presentation to the Forum regarding the current status of the free quay and jetty at Oulton Broad. Built in the 1930s the quay and jetty provided free mooring facilities. It was closed to the public in 2001, then

removed and had not been replaced. Provision of a jetty would enable vessels going through Mutford Lock to moor and access the local shops and park.

Mr Swan questioned whether the Forum would support a firm proposal for the re-instatement of the jetty for free moorings and whether funding could be sourced, as he was concerned that Waveney District Council was not progressing the issue.

The SWRO reported that Waveney District Council had had concerns regarding the structure of the jetty and had commissioned Nuttalls to remove it. The land transfer was between ABP, Suffolk County Council, Waveney District Council and the Broads Authority and, as far as he was aware, was currently with the solicitors.

As the free quay and jetty had originally been given to the community the SWRO confirmed that the Authority would support a free mooring.

DB confirmed that the land transfer had been completed/that one of the Authority's priorities was to provide more free moorings.

The Forum felt that a free mooring was important, and that this type of scheme had been undertaken before with a local management committee and funding. It was noted that adjacent to the site of the original jetty were commercial moorings so the jetty would need to be for a particular purpose.

The SWRO stated that the Authority was keen to see the jetty re-instated but commercial moorings were a concern, therefore only short-term moorings, for demasting or for access to the shops, park, etc would be appropriate.

The SWRO agreed to ascertain the current position regarding the land transfer and report his finding at the December Forum.

As the Forum felt that the re-instatement of the jetty was a priority the SWRO agreed to add it to the integrated access strategy so it could be carried forward.

4/6 River Waveney Ferry Burgh St Peter

Steve Read gave a presentation to the Forum summarising the access opportunities presented by the newly re-opened ferry at the Waveney River Centre at Burgh St Peter.

It was noted that with partnership support rail route links were being made with Anglia Railways.

The WRO agreed to produce a map illustrating the proposed route for the December Forum.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Forum agrees with the recommendations of the report; and
- (ii) that the recommendations be added to the action plan priorities so that the feasibility of a footpath link to the ferry could be investigated.

4/7 Footpath Link from Ludham Bridge to St Benet's Abbey

The SWRO gave a presentation to the Forum summarising the latest situation regarding the negotiation of a footpath linking Ludham Bridge with St Benet's Abbey.

The SWRO reported that Ludham Parish Council had asked parishioners who had used the riverbank from Ludham Bridge to St Benet's Abbey to contact them, and had received approximately thirty replies, most of which indicated usage over many years.

The Forum stated that lessons needed to be learnt by the Authority regarding the possible loss of rights of way through flood bank re-alignment, especially if publically owned, to ensure it did not happen again as it could have countrywide implications.

The Forum requested that these concerns be raised with the Authority.

The SWRO reported that flood alleviation planning applications were widely consulted on.

The Forum questioned whether the Authority could contact the parish councils to explain that they could lose their local permissive footpaths if they were not registered.

The SWRO explained that unless permissive footpaths were registered the Highways Authority would have nothing to refer to when considering planning applications and the Authority did not have the capacity to establish the location of all the potential routes. However, the Authority could apply pressure to ensure that parish councils were given a copy of the 'List of Streets' and up-to-date copies of the definitive map.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Forum notes the contents of the report; and
- (ii) that the Forum supports the Authority's proposal to continue to seek to establish a permissive path linking Ludham Bridge with St Benet's Abbey.

4/8 Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report Pro Forma

The SWRO reported that, as he had had a limited response from the Forum regarding the content for the pro forma, he produced a draft for discussion.

The Forum agreed the draft and requested that the following points be incorporated into it:

- The Forum had concerns regarding the lack of funding for path maintenance.
- The Forum was pro-activate in the development of projects.
- The Forum was keen to protect permissive paths that might be lost when the current stewardships finished, as they were extremely important in rural areas.

The SWRO agreed to update the pro forma with members' comments.

4/9 Punting on the River Wensum

The SWRO reported that for the last two months the Norwich Punting Company had been running punt trips from St George's Bridge to Pull's Ferry. The company had paid tolls for their punts and a Small Passenger Boat Licence. A planning application to run punt trips from Bishop's Bridge had been submitted by a rival company. The Authority was only keen to allow chauffeured punting and felt that two companies was probably enough for the present, but this could be reviewed in the future.

4/10 Broads Forum Update

Peter Medhurst reported that the main item discussed by the Broads Forum on 19 July 2012 was the review of the consultative arrangements and community/stakeholder engagement consultation that was currently taking place. Once the compilation of the responses had been completed the outcomes would be placed in the public domain.

4/11 Any Other Business

(1) Wheelchairs at Whitlingham Country Park

The SWRO reported that in response to an enquiry from Ray Walpole and George Saunders regarding advertising the two all terrain wheelchairs kept at Whitlingham Country Park, the Visitor Services Supervisor had confirmed that as the wheelchairs belonged to the Outdoor Education Centre it was not possible for the Authority to advertise them. Staff did, however, offer them to visitors when they were at the Park. The SWRO agreed to contact the Outdoor Education Centre to ascertain if it would be possible for the Authority to advertise

the wheelchairs, and to update the Forum on the outcome of that discussion at the December meeting.

(2) **Paths for Communities: Whitlingham Ferry Proposal**

Ray Walpole raised concerns regarding the fact that Natural England was not able to support a ferry crossing proposal between Whitlingham Country Park and Thorpe Marshes under the Paths for Communities scheme because it was outside the park's boundary.

It was noted that as one of the Authority's policies was to improve links between land and water, it was keen to re-instate ferries. Ferries were also a key element in the Integrated Access Strategy. The Authority had already mapped the location of existing ferries and the possible location of new ferries. However, because of the Authority's limited finances, it would have to prioritise where to allocate its resources, especially as it was not in a position to maintain any ferries.

David Broad stated that he could raise the issue of the prioritisation and the maintenance of ferries with the Authority.

(3) **Deal Ground Development**

The SWRO reported that the Authority was currently resisting a piecemeal approach to the Deal Ground development.

The Forum questioned whether there were any detailed plans of the development, as they had only seen the artist's impression. The SWRO agreed to find out and report back at the December Forum.

(4) **Review of Consultative and Community Engagement Arrangements**

The SWRO reminded the Forum that as part of the Authority's commitment to review its consultative and community engagement arrangements it had organised a half day workshop at Dragonfly House on Wednesday 3 October which was open to all members of the Forum.

(5) **White Horse Inn, Neatishead**

Steve Read reported that the White Horse Inn at Neatishead was to close shortly.

(6) **Dedication of Natural England Freehold National Nature Reserves**

The SWRO reported that he had received a consultation from Natural England regarding the possibility of dedicating eligible National Nature Reserves for permanent public access. The two sites within the

Broads Authority executive area were Ludham and Potter Heigham Marshes and Calthorpe Broad.

The SWRO agreed to contact Natural England to ascertain if one of their representatives could attend a future meeting to discuss the proposal further with members.

(7) **CPRE Norfolk 'Protect our Paths' Workshop**

Peter Medhurst agreed to raise the Forum's concerns regarding the loss of rights of way at the workshop on Thursday 20 September.

4/12 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next Forum meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 5 December 2012 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 12 September 2012*

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 ✓
<i>David Broth</i>		<i>TOLL PAYER, MEMBER OF THAMOUTH PORT CONSULTATIVE CTR, LANDOWNER HOUSING</i>	
LOUIS BAUGH	7	LAND MANAGEMENT INTEREST ON THE ROUTE	