

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 06 Dec 2017

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Kelvin Allen	Mrs Dawn Hatton
Mr Louis Baugh	Dr Peter Mason
Miss Liz Brooks	Mr Stephen Read
Mr Robin Buxton	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Mike Flett	Mrs Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro
Mr Tony Gibbons	Mr Ray Walpole
Mr Alec Hartley	

In Attendance

Ms Lottie Carlton – Administrative Officer
Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)
Mr Mark King - Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)
Mrs Marie-Pierre Tighe – Director of Strategic Services

Also In Attendance

Dr Andy Hutcheson – Norfolk County Council

2/1 To receive apologies for absence and welcome new members

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Tony Brown, Mr George Saunders, Mr Martin Symons and Mr Richard Webb.

Members were welcomed to the meeting by the SWRO prior to the election of Chairman.

2/2 To receive declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting. Declarations of interested occurred during the meeting at item 12: Mr Robin Buxton and Mr Louis Baugh declared an interest regarding their roles as land managers in relation to the access issues post Brexit letter proposal.

2/3 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Mr Robin Buxton nominated Dr Keith Bacon as Chairman and this was seconded by Mr Tony Gibbons. No further nominations were received. The vote was carried unanimously and Dr Keith Bacon was therefore elected as Chairman.

Mr Robin Buxton nominated Mr Alec Hartley as Vice-Chairman and this was seconded by Mr Ray Walpole. No further nominations were received. The vote was carried unanimously and Mr Alec Hartley was therefore elected as Vice-Chairman.

2/4 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 06 Sept 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 06 Sept 2017 were confirmed as a correct record. A minor amendment of a title was made and the minutes signed by the Chairman.

2/5 To receive any points of information arising from the minutes

(1) Minute 1/4 (1) How Hill Footpath

Issues regarding responsibility for the water control structure (providing flood defence for adjacent land) and the bridge are still to be resolved between the Environment Agency (EA) and the Broads Authority (BA). The footpath is being maintained to ensure it is ready when the footpath can be opened.

Cutting of grass on EA flood banks in the Broads was discussed: EA cutting does not always coincide with public use of the banks as footpaths, as this is not the main purpose for cutting them. Some footpaths on banks have been cut in order to help consolidate growth and stabilise the bank while in other areas they have not been cut due to health and safety concerns of using machinery on steep banks. Those that are part of the BESL contract have to be cut until 2020. The SWRO agreed to circulate the EA's cutting programme in the BESL project area.

(2) Minute 1/4 (2) Staithes Research

A meeting is due to take place with Tom Williamson to go through feedback responses and agree amendments to the staithes research report prior to a publication. Ongoing amendments will need to be planned for so that the document remains 'live' when new evidence comes to light or registrations of staithes takes place.

(3) Minute 1/4 (3) Mutford Lock

BA is due to discuss Mutford Lock at its 26 Jan 2018 meeting to decide how to proceed.

(4) Minute 1/4 (4) Burgh Castle

People counters at Burgh Castle show 40-50k people have used the new boardwalk since it was opened.

(5) Minute 1/5 River Wensum Strategy consultation update

Approximately 500 consultation responses were received from the public, stakeholders, residents and user groups. 70-80% agreed with the document's proposals. More projects upstream of New Mills were requested by local community groups. The Carrow Cup Regatta was suggested as a feature for the River Festival and schools are using the strategy to pin project work around. The results are being analysed in more detail prior to publication which will include a summary of responses. An Oversight Board and a Delivery Board will be responsible for progressing actions in the strategy. The Chairman agreed to provide formal advice to the River Wensum Strategy Board on behalf of the Broads Local Access Forum concerning widening their membership to include non-commercial members.

(6) Minute 1/7 Select Committee on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 – Call for Evidence

A response was submitted by the Chairman and SWRO on behalf of the BLAF and this was published in the official responses for the consultation.

(7) Minute 1/8 British Standards: Gaps, gates and stiles – Specification Consultation

An online response was submitted by the Chairman and SWRO on behalf of the BLAF. Feedback was also given regarding difficulties created by the restrictions surrounding circulation of the consultation documents and difficulties in providing feedback online.

(8) Minutes 1/10 AOB

Smallburgh: It was not clear who had raised the question concerning Smallburgh regarding the Staithes research item. The SWRO agreed to investigate further.

Hunsett Mill does not have a staithe. There is a private track to the house on Chapelfield Road.

Moys Drainage Mill has always been a private mill dyke but a public footpath runs to and past the mill.

Mutford Lock: It was reported that as well as the lengthy delays of the legal situation there had also been traffic problems due to signal and car parking issues.

2/6 Norfolk County Council update

Dr Andy Hutcheson of Norfolk County Council (NCC) gave a presentation updating Forum members on Norfolk County Council projects:

Wherryman's Way at Reedham

A permitted route would not be eligible for CIL funding as it could not be classed as permanent infrastructure. The Parish Council are looking into alternative sources of funding. A costed specification for required work has been completed. The high cost is due to a dangerously sloped section requiring a boardwalk, stock-proof fencing required by the landowner and two sets of steps.

Comments and answers to questions:

- The Forum agreed that this is an important and popular route and needs continuity despite the high costs.
- Broadland District Council has also become involved and are assisting the Parish Council.
- BA can offer labour to carry out the work but no budget provision.
- Permissive paths are not generally used by Norfolk County Council (unless they own the land in question) due to the potential for closure due to land ownership changes. Defra no longer funds such paths via countryside stewardship. This could be a good case study to highlight the complexities of permissive paths and BLAF's input into partnership working.

Hardley Flood

- A stretch of the path at Hardley Flood has been reopened from the BA 24 hour moorings to the weir. While this is welcomed by the Forum there are concerns that a more permanent solution still needs to be found.
- Distribution of shared costs of the hydraulic modelling required to determine options needs to be agreed between partners. If such work shows there is no way to save the bank a permanent closure would have to take place.

National Trail

(1) Sea Palling to Hopton on Sea

A 1.5km section of the Sea Palling to Hopton on Sea coastal footpath route runs through the National Park area. Access to the beach has been created at Winterton and North Denes for disabled users that also protects the dune system with mitigation measures put in place via the HRA process.

(2) Horsey

100k people came to Horsey to see the seals in 2016. Access and parking is an ongoing problem. Norfolk County Council is working with the 'Friends of Horsey Seals' who provide a voluntary wardening service. People counters are in place to gather data to be used for funding applications.

Endure

Endure is an Interreg funded project starting in June 2018 that will study how dune systems can be protected via mitigation measures. Norfolk County Council is considering using Horsey as one of the areas to be studied.

2/7 Progress Report on Defra's 8 Point Plan for the English National Parks

The SWRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on the Government's 8 point plan for English National Parks.

- A review of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) is due in 2018/19. The BLAF will assist with this work. Both the new Broads Plan and the Defra 8-point plan will have to be considered when carrying out the IAS review.
- The eight points of the plan cover: Connecting young people to nature; Integrated Management; International Tourism; Apprenticeships; Promoting British food from National Parks; Everyone's National Park; Landscape and heritage in National Parks; Health and wellbeing.
- Many of the points of the plan are within the IAS and BLAF remit and can be used to provide evidence to help prioritise IAS actions against both the 8-point plan and Broads Plan objectives.

2/8 Sport England Draft Report – Walking Insight

The SWRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on the early findings of the Sport England Walking Insight draft report.

- Walking is the most popular sporting activity for adults, particularly among women, older adults and those who class themselves as white British or from certain socio economic groups. It is also popular among adults who describe themselves as having a limiting disability.
- Data has been collected on frequency, intensity, duration and dependence.
- The data, once fully analysed, will provide evidence on who to target to try to increase this activity into wider sections of the population.

2/9 Sustrans Proposal - East Norfolk Cycle Routes

The SWRO gave a presentation updating the Forum on 'East Norfolk Cycle Routes', a project proposal by Sustrans, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils and the Broads Authority to improve cycle signage in the Broads via an application to LEP funding.

- Cycle route provision and improved signage are included in the IAS and Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategy hence the reason for the BA's interest in Sustran's proposal.
- Proposal: Cycle routes on 'quiet roads' from key destinations to be waymarked using the Dutch Model helping cyclists to plot routes and move from marker to marker that show the next turn to take.

Comments and answers to questions

- Bike hire schemes could be included in the proposal e.g. Ofo bikes, Greater Anglia and Broads bike hire.
- Potential to link with schools.
- Opportunity to raise awareness of the relationship between different road users and the need for compromise and safety. 'Share the space, drop the pace' slogan can be used.
- Some concerns expressed over the potential increase in cyclists on shared routes with horses that this project could bring.
- Some concerns expressed over encouraging more cyclists onto roads lacking cycling infrastructure and potential safety issues this could create.

Following a vote by Forum members (11 for and 2 against) it was agreed that the Chairman would write a letter on behalf of the BLAF to the LEP in support of the funding application for the Sustrans' East Norfolk Cycle Routes project proposal.

2/10 Miles without Stiles

This item was deferred.

2/11 Broads Forum updates

The Broads Forum met on 02 November 2017 and the main item discussed was:

Purpose and future of the Forum

- Inconclusive, but it was felt the Forum has too wide a remit and discussions are too general with some individuals receiving a greater platform to air issues than others.
- Representatives from 10 to 15 groups attend meetings and are supposed to report back to approximately 50 other groups but this does not seem to happen in practice resulting in little direct contact with these groups.
- The onus should be on Broads Forum representatives to get items of interest onto the agenda but despite repeated requests very few come forward and therefore agenda items tend to come from BA or stakeholders only.

- Minutes of the Forum go to Broads Authority committee meetings so could provide some influence to decision making.
- Although an explanation note is included in BA minutes, it is felt that greater feedback on how Broads Forum and Broads Local Access Forum ideas are received and acted upon would be useful.
- Outcome: BA to write to all stakeholder groups to find out views on the usefulness of the Broads Forum and its future.

2/12 To receive any other items of urgent business

- (1) **Letter from Cambridge LAF** tabled regarding opportunities post Brexit to form policy for agri-schemes that maximise access benefits. Three proposals include: Additional access (payments for provision of targeted new access routes); Enhancing existing access (maintenance and waymarking); and Cross compliance. BLAF members were in agreement with many of the points in the letter. The Chairman agreed to send a letter of support in principle to the parts of the letter the BLAF support but to request that a full consultation is put in place.

2/13 To note the date of the next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 07 March 2018 at 2pm.

The meeting concluded at 4.50pm.

Chairman