

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021

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Present

Keith Bacon – in the Chair, Kelvin Allen, Linda Aspland, Richard Atkins, Louis Baugh, Katie Baxter, Harry Blathwayt, Robin Buxton, Christine Cane, Peter Dixon, Tony Gibbons, Tim Harris, Dawn Hatton, Peter Mason, Steve Read, Martin Rendle, Paul Saunders, Richard Webb.

In attendance

Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Environment, Kylie Moos – Administrative Officer, Lewis Treloar – Waterways and Recreation Officer, Gavin Rumsey – Environment Agency, Kellie Fisher – Environment Agency, Ken Hawkins – Norfolk Local Access Forum.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

The Chair welcomed 6 new members to the Forum; Richard Atkins, Katie Baxter, Christine Cane, Peter Dixon, Martin Rendle and Paul Saunders.

Mike Flett (Vice Chair) and Liz Brooks have resigned from the Forum, the Chair thanked them both for their contributions to the Forum. The election of Chair and Vice Chair will take place at the next meeting in June 2021.

Apologies none.

2. Declarations of interest

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered and set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

3. Minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 2 December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising from the minutes

EXPERIENCE Cycle Hubs project

Stephen Read sent a paper to Andrea Auburn presenting a potential cycle route from Norwich to Oulton Broad making use of the ferry crossings at Reedham and Waveney River Centre. A copy of the paper will be circulated to Forum members with the minutes.

5. Broadland Futures Initiative

Kellie Fisher, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Senior Advisor and Gavin Rumsey, Engagement Specialist for the Environment Agency presented to the Forum Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI). BFI is a partnership for future flood risk management in the Broadland area, the main goal is to agree a framework for future flood risk management which better copes with the changing climate and rising sea levels.

Partnership

The Initiative has been set up by organisations responsible for managing coastal and inland flood risk.

- The Environment Agency (technical lead)
- Broads Authority (governance, support and engagement lead)
- Natural England
- County and District Councils
- Internal Drainage Boards
- National Farmers Union
- Water Resources East
- RSPB and Wildlife Trusts

Governance

The BFI will work in partnership with local communities and other stakeholders to identify the way forward. Democracy is at the heart of decision making & engagement central to BFI. The decisions made must be acceptable for local communities, for the environment, and also be technically possible and affordable.

The Stages in BFI Development

- Stage 1- Define the problem and set objectives (current stage)
- Stage 2- Identify the full range of strategic options
- Stage 3- Shortlist the strategic options
- Stage 4- Develop the short list of strategic options
- Stage 5- Compare and select the preferred strategic options
- Stage 6 - Complete the plan and gain approval

Study Reports Available Now

- Origins of the Plan Area
- The Sources and Nature of Flood Risk within the Plan Area
- Coastal Processes within the Plan Area
- Current Approaches to Flood Risk Management within the Plan Area
- The Influence of Flood Risk Management within the Plan Area
- The Futures Impacts of Climate Change

Governance update

The Elected Members Forum is due to convene in spring 2021 where the Terms of Reference will be agreed.

2019-2020 Engagement Activity

- Carrow Road meeting in 2016
- Mid 2019 - a re-engagement survey was released, followed by series of awareness raising events around the BFI Plan area
- 2020- planned face to face events, followed by Covid -19 and re-planning
- Mid 2020 - ongoing digital newsletters and online flood modelling survey
- 2020/2021 - planning and promotion of virtual exhibition

Engagement Update- Online Survey

- Online survey launched 18th January until 11th April. As well as online, stakeholders can also participate via postal submissions or telephone with a member of the BFI project team.
- Virtual exhibition includes 2 videos about flood modelling and the impacts of dredging in the Broads.
- Videos and StoryMaps allow visitors to explore different levels specific to their location.
- Virtual Village Hall events to be held online with three dates bookable via Broads Authority BFI webpage on 17th February, 10 March, and 24 March (7.30-8.15pm).
- Engagement Promotion- newsletter, social media, IPT minutes, press releases and dedicated BFI webpage.

Next steps

- Establish increasing connections with those organisations and individuals that come forward from our engagement activities
- Focus engagement activity to specific demographic groups
- Continue to produce technical baseline reports
- Share a regular newsletter on progress of the initiative with our key stakeholders
- Maintain close links with EA Fens Project
- Embed democratic involvement and governance structure by convening our Elected Members Forum
- Continue to collect evidence and material with support from consultant

Comments and answers to questions

- BFI presented at the first Norfolk Flooding Alliance meeting which was received warmly and look forward to supporting the Norfolk Flooding Alliance.
- BFI is looking to the next 100 years. The strategy is fully funded but individual flood risk management projects fall out of strategies and will require a separate appraisal process.
- BFI recognise that overtopping occurs at Walcott and has been included in the BFI plan area.
- Matthew Bradbury has been nominated to the Elected Members Forum to represent the Broads Authority.
- Previously flood risk management was seen as fragmented with funding and planning of projects difficult, BFI has brought all of this together.
- BFI cannot change Shoreline Management Plan policy but can make recommendations. The Environment Agency have committed to holding the coast line and will continue to do so.
- A barrier is one approach that will be investigated by BFI. Justification for any new physical structure requires a rigorous evidence base and would have to follow the following mandatory tests if funded fully or partly by central government:
 - Is it technically achievable?
 - Is it economically desirable?
 - Is it environmentally acceptable?

6. Integrated Access Strategy: Update

Lewis Treloar provided an update on the highest strategic priority projects identified for delivery by a range of partners as part of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS).

Broads Mills Trails

Signage is due to be installed this summer across Halvergate Marshes. The programme of projects is still in development, as and when they become available they will be brought to the Forum.

Bure Valley Path

Norfolk Country Council noted that some funding has been given from the EXPERIENCE funds and they will be progressing with additional funding to complete further work on the Bure Valley Path. Installations are due to take place winter 2021/2022.

The path is attempting to connect to the Marriots Way which not suitable as a bridleway due to its narrow width.

Wherryman's Way

Sculptures and signage has been delayed due to the declined funding application, alternative funding solutions are being investigated.

Hoveton Riverside Park

Designs have been received and a paper is being written for the next Broads Authority meeting looking to receive members support to look for additional funding solutions for the park.

Land raising is taking place as part of a landscaping programme at the park, ensuring the land is fit for purpose and benefits from the dredging programme

River Wensum Strategy- Canoe pontoon

An application has been submitted for a new canoe pontoon on the River Wensum following a petition and letters of support from various local group. The exact location of the canoe pontoon on the River Wensum is yet to be determined but is likely to be between Norwich Yacht Station and New Mills, subject to funding bid being successful.

Reedham Permissive Path

The Broads Authority are planning a press release to announce the re-opening of the permissive path.

7. Opening access to EA owned banks: Update

Tony Gibbons provided an update to the Forum on three projects to improve river banks under Environment Agency (EA) control. Due to the high-water table not all banks were accessible to complete the feasibility study. A series of pictures were taken in February highlighting the improvements needed at each location and presented to the Forum.

River Thurne, Potter Heigham

Reedmace within the area has not been maintained in the last 3-4 years. Banks between the Riverside Bungalows have been used for dumping rubbish. Discussions with local residents indicate strong community support for clearing the banks.

The quantity of waste and the narrow path accessing the banks suggests that the waste could be being dumped from the Riverside Bungalows.

Comments

- Section one is in the parish of Repps with Bastwick and the remaining is in the parish of Martham, all of which are owned by EA.
- A s215 Notice (power to require proper maintenance of land) can be served to the landowner if an agreement cannot be met.
- Concerns were raised over rights of access for angling. No clear agreement is currently in place.

- The path is a public right of way and is covered under statutory law, as is the offence of fly tipping.

The Forum recommended Broads Authority Officers contact the Environment Agency (David Horsfall) to discuss the maintenance of the bank.

River Thurne, Womack Water

This stretch of river requires the removal of litter, reeds to be cut and 'No Mooring' signs to be displayed.

Comments

- Opening up the bank may encourage anglers to use the area as an unofficial campsite as it has done in the past. Tony Gibbons noted that any waters leased by Norwich and District Anglers Association (NDA) do not permit overnight fishing, however this area is not within NDA jurisdiction.
- The ownership of the river bank, which has no public right of way, and vehicular access and carparking both need to be addressed before any work is started.

River Ant, Ludham Bridge

This stretch of river requires removal of litter and reeds to be cut to allow for angling access. The potential access points are currently inaccessible due to the high water level.

Comments

- Access to the river (Ant) from the flood bank path is always very soft mud which would be hazardous and not suitable for the project proposal.
- The banks at Ludham Bridge are EA owned up until a point, then privately owned and then reverts back to EA owned.

Dan Hoare agree assist on identification of bank ownership on the River Ant with Tony Gibbons.

8. Any other business

Meeting start times of 10am have been proposed for Broads Local Access Forum in the new committee year (July 2021- June 2022). Forum members agreed to the changed time which would start in September.

Paul Saunders requested an item on the next agenda to present open water swimming to the Forum. The Forum welcomes input and presentations from members on their interests.

Norfolk Local Access forum are working with Norfolk Association of Local Councils to generate interest from parishes within the county for wider engagement and footpath wardens.

There is a planned increase in the Norfolk Trails budget, planned improvements will also need to be an environmental improvement to qualify.

The path near Pyes Mill at Loddon has closed. Lewis Treloar has begun conversations with the parish council to re-establish the path and address any concerns the landowner may have.

Access issues to the staithe at Bungay has been raised by a member of the public. Lewis Treloar welcomed any information on the staithe and ownership from Forum members.

9. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum would be held on Wednesday 9 June 2021 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 16.00.

Signed by

Chairman

Summary of progress

Outstanding actions	Meeting date	Assigned to
Assist on identification of bank ownership on the River Ant with Tony Gibbons.	10/03/2021	Dan Hoare
Contact the Environment Agency (David Horsfall) to discuss the maintenance of riverbanks at Potter Heigham	10/03/2021	Lewis Treloar
Contact the Environment Agency asking their opinion as a follow-up from the publication of the staithe report.	04/12/2019	BLAF Chair

Completed actions	Meeting date	Assigned to
Contact the local rangers and Oulton Parish Council regarding the moorings.	04/12/2020	Lewis Treloar
Investigate the footpaths and access towards Moy's Mill.	04/12/2020	Lewis Treloar
Investigate which permissive paths may be lost in the Broads when the Countryside Stewardship expires.	04/12/2020	Lewis Treloar

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Broads Local Access Forum, 10 March 2021

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest
Kelvin Allen	Item 7	Director and Chairman of BASG
Louis Baugh	Item 7	Conflict of interest
Harry Blathwayt	Item 5	NNDC representative on BFI Elected Members Forum