

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2013

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Louis Baugh
Mr David Broad
Liz Brooks
Mr Mike Flett
Mr Alec Hartley
Mrs Hattie Llewelyn-Davis
Mr Stephen Read

Mr Peter Medhurst
Mr George Saunders
Mr Gary Simmons
Mr Charles Swan
Mr Ray Walpole
Mr Chris Yardley

In Attendance

Mr Steve Birtles – Head of Safety Management
Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)
Ms Lottie Carlton - Administrative Officer
Mrs Trudi Wakelin – Director of Operations
Mr Russell Wilson – Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)

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 Robin Buxon, Mr Patrick Hacon, Mr Tony Howes, Mrs Jo Lester

Mr David Broad declared interests as a boat toll payer.

1/2 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2013 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment of the word demisting to demasting in Item 1.3 (5), and signed by the Chairman.

1/3 To receive any points of information arising from the minutes

(1) Minute 1/3 (1): Huddle Update

Huddle update information was available regarding the Plan of Engagement between Defra, Natural England and Local Access Forums, the Deregulation Bill, LAF funding, removal of stiles discussion, a statutory street register and not for profit organisations linked to LAFs.

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

The Norfolk Trails Officer confirmed that the Highways responsibility for trails maintenance did not extend to 5 mile wide corridors around trails.

(3) Minute 1/3 (6): Cess Staithe, Martham

There was still no outcome to report regarding the legal issue surrounding use of Cess Staithe.

(4) Minute 1/5: Climate Change Stakeholder Engagement Project

Discussions were on-going with stakeholders and a set of information leaflets and a 'Talking Heads' video were being produced to assist with public engagement highlighting issues and potential solutions. Timescales were tight to produce a final Climate Change Adaptation Plan by summer 2014 but Simon Hooton was confident this could be achieved.

(5) Minute 1/7: Integrated Access Strategy – Update

- Permissive path agreements and maps for the Ludham Bridge to St Benet's path had been sent to landowners with the aim for the agreements to be signed by autumn and works completed within this financial year ready for completion by the start of the new season.
- The Ant Valley path linking How Hill, Catfield Fen and Wood End Staithe had been raised as a project proposal at the Broads Authority's Project Development Group who had accepted this as a priority project. It was hoped to deliver the first section to Crows Staithe although there were potential environmental concerns for the other sections.
- The Broads Authority Navigation Committee had agreed to new moorings provision at Hardley Cross, a Lower Bure site and demasting pontoons at St Olaves Bridge. Negotiations were underway regarding leases. There was concern surrounding the longer term issue of losing moorings at BESL sites when pilings were

removed. A working group was being formed to look into the challenges posed regarding resource management, financing and potential sponsorship/advertising.

- The BA Navigation Committee had also welcomed the canoe trail leaflets and progression of a Broads rowing scheme had also been recommended.
- It had been noted that there were new moorings extending out into the river at St Olaves. It was confirmed that retrospective planning permissions had been submitted and that the moorings were viewed as acceptable.
- The Ludham Bridge to St Benet's footpath was likely to be completed by May. It would be a 20 year agreement with a break clause. The terms of the agreement met the Ordnance Survey criteria for the route to be shown on Explorer maps. A guided walk was planned for inclusion in the Broads Outdoors Festival in May 2014.
- It was agreed that the SWRO would investigate the free quay and adjacent car park at Oulton Broad being used as a slipway.
- Regarding ferries: A retrospective planning permission had been submitted for ferry mooring at Burgh St Peter. The Horning Ferry had been abandoned despite offers of assistance from the Broads Authority. There was still no funding for a ferry at Whitlingham.
- The Broads Society was keen to improve access to nature reserves from boats e.g. at Hickling and Strumpshaw. RSPB had also expressed similar interest and had offered to discuss with the Broads Authority the possibility of taking on the Berney Arms site, Rockland Short Dyke and Strumpshaw moorings (daylight hours only to be self-managed). The Norfolk Wildlife Trust was willing to have moorings with access to their Upton Marshes reserve. Woodbastwick was provided as an example of where this kind of proposal worked well. It was also felt that the Broads Authority needed to set a good example at How Hill.
- A suggestion was made to rename the Rackheath Way the Broadland Way as there was potential to link via Plumstead, the Wherryman's Way and including Whitlingham.
- The Visitor Giving scheme now had 40 businesses involved, most selling the pin badges but at least 10 businesses using various add-on amounts for services as a means of donation to the scheme. The first three projects had been awarded grants using donations made by visitors. Different methods for donation were being developed to increase business take-up. An independent grant awarding panel would be set up prior to the next round of project grant awards.

(6) **Minute 1/13: St Benet's Abbey Sustainable Access Workshop**

It was confirmed that the small gate could not be used on horse-back. Norfolk County Council was dealing directly with Norfolk Archaeological Trust regarding both the gate and the fencing issue. Reference was made to the 'Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside' document.

(7) **Minute 1/14: The Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2012/13 – Draft for Consideration**

Suffolk County Council had indicated that they were willing to send Officers to BLAF meetings when pertinent issues arose. It was agreed that Suffolk County Council should be invited to the next BLAF meeting and an agenda item be set to include an update on Suffolk footpath maintenance and other relevant issues.

1/4 Safety Management System Development for Land Based Sites

The Head of Safety Management requested the Forum's help in reviewing a draft hazard identification document that would provide the basis of a system for land based risk management in the Broads. It would apply only to permissive footpaths that the Broads Authority had control over. Rights of way were not included as these were the responsibility of Norfolk County Council. It was noted that mitigation measures needed to be both reasonable and practicable.

Comments against the hazards were received as follows:

1	A potential hazard involved people holding on to their dog on a lead and consequently being injured by livestock. It was therefore preferable to use the phrase 'under close control'. The leaflet 'Your Dog in the Countryside' endorsed this approach.
2/3	Snow and ice were highlighted. Falling into the water from a bridge or from a soak dyke/river next to a footpath were additions suggested.
4	Considered comprehensive and ALARP.
5/6	It was suggested to develop design standards and to include inspection protocols.
7	A public reporting mechanism was suggested for tree hazards.
8	Considered comprehensive and ALARP.
9	Permissive path junctions with highways could in certain circumstances warrant signage. It should be remembered that sometimes a private right of way existed.
10.	Considered comprehensive and ALARP.
11	Add flytipping otherwise ALARP.
12	Conflict of use with anglers equipment impacting on walkers. Examples given: Beccles Quay, section of river bank at Thurne, Potter Heigham, Bramerton. Leaflets were available from the Environment Agency via licences.
13	Missing: Travellers and antisocial behaviour. Fires – with risks both

to controlled land and adjacent.

1/5 Wensum River Parkway update - including Deal Ground Bridge planning application

The SWRO gave an update on the Wensum River Parkway.

Meetings had taken place to try to agree a joint approach with Norwich City Council but they had decided to go ahead with their own strategy. The Partnership was trying to influence the strategy and a draft was available.

A mapping exercise to get definitive knowledge of land ownership and management in the Norwich River Corridor was being worked on. .

Students from Notre Dame School had completed a project looking at project improvements along the river and had come up with some interesting proposals.

A new bridge at the Deal Ground site had received planning permission with a number of conditions attached. A slipway was also being considered. No design details were available yet.

1/6 Department for Transport cycling funding update

Unfortunately the bid had been unsuccessful. It had been viewed as too small a proposal financially in comparison to other bids. Feedback had been good regarding the scope for extension but there had not been a big enough business case for the local economy. A future bid had been advised.

1/7 Draft Deregulation Bill – call for evidence

The Broads Local Access Forum and the Broads Authority had submitted a response to the initial consultation regarding the content of the proposed bill.

A package of measures had been put forward by a partnership of bodies and the view of the Forum was that it should be supported. The package of measures had therefore been carried forward to the draft Bill stage. Guidance notes would be published by Defra.

The SWRO recommended supporting the draft Bill however he suggested the following amendment in relation to Section 147 of the Highways Act 1980 regarding the authorisation on Public Rights of Way: that the Section should be amended to allow Authorities to authorise gates and fences for reasons of public safety on all types of public rights of way e.g. separating vehicles from users of Public Rights of Way.

The following comments were received by members of the Forum:

- The Bill would help with the problem of flytipping
- Horse-drawn carriages/carts would be affected

- There was an issue regarding individual/private access
- There was a safety issue regarding horse and their riders, even specially designed barriers being difficult to use unless the horse was extremely placid and the rider experienced
- Members felt that consultation with Parish Councils should be put in place for any new barriers, but the Broads Authority view was that this would add to the layers of bureaucracy
- 'For reasons of public safety' was viewed as good wording
- Protection of assets was also an important consideration

It was agreed that the Broads Authority and the Broads Local Access Forum send separate responses to the call for evidence, reflecting their slightly different views.

1/8 Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2013

The BLAF Annual Report had been received by the full Broads Authority at its 12 July 2013 meeting. The main item discussed was the cut back of Norfolk County Council's maintenance of Public Rights of Way.

It was noted that the reporting period covered had excluded some areas of BLAF work.

1/9 Broads Forum Update

Four main items had been discussed at the last Broads Forum meeting on the 25 July 2013:

- (1) Keeping levels of dredging to the current agreed amounts.
- (2) Formal agreement of the Breydon Water ski zone.
- (3) River Yare being used as a testing zone for new craft to be reviewed.
- (4) Education in the Broads

It was noted that Ray Walpole was the appointed substitute member for Land Based Interests on the Broads Forum.

1/10 To receive any other items of urgent business

- (1) The Norfolk Trails Officer updated the Forum that a new Access and Projects Manager had been appointed at Norfolk County Council, Mr Andy Hutchinson who would be working on the Trails.
- (2) The WRO let Forum members know that a 'drop-in' style Broads Authority Parish Forum event would be held at Ludham Village Hall on 18 September 2013 covering a wide area of the Authority's work.

- (3) The Government was seeking evidence regarding how the Common Agricultural Policy should be implemented. The SWRO suggested that a response from Broads Local Access Forum would be appropriate highlighting that CROW factors should be taken into account when granting funding for permissive access. It was agreed that the Chairman and SWRO would draft a response.
- (4) The WRO advised that coastal access between Happisburgh and Winterton was currently out to consultation. It was agreed to invite Officers from AONB to the next Broads Local Access Forum meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 4 December 2013 at 2pm.

The meeting concluded at 4.37 p.m.

Chairman