



The Broads

Local Access Forum

Wednesday 13 Mar 2019

2.00pm

Yare House

62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich

AGENDA

Wednesday 13 March 2019

2.00 pm

		Page	Time
1.	Apologies for absence and welcome		2.00
2.	Declarations of interest		
3.	Receive and confirm the 05 Dec 2018 minutes (included)	1-5	
4.	Matters arising from the minutes		2.15
5.	Membership review (report by the WRO included)	7-20	2.30
6.	Regional LAF meeting update (oral update by the Chairman, minutes included)	21-41	2.40
7.	Norfolk County Council update (presentation by Norfolk County Council representative)		2.50
8.	County Council prioritisation of Rights of Way claims under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (presentation by the SWRO included)		3.10
9.	Broads Integrated Access Strategy update on draft changes (presentation by SWRO)		3.25
10.	Any other business (advance notice needed)		4.05
11.	Date of next meeting Wednesday 05 June 2019 at 2.00 p.m.		4.15

Broads Local Access Forum membership details included.

Broads Authority

Broads Local Access Forum Members

Name	Address	Phone No	Email	Interest
Kelvin Allen	9 Landseer Drive Downham Market PE38 9NG	01366 384458	kelvinallen@btinternet.com	Broads Authority
Keith Bacon	Woodcroft Wood Street Catfield Gt Yarmouth, NR29 5DF	01692 581314	keithbacon@keme.co.uk keithbacon@broadland.net	Archaeology and landscape heritage
Louis Baugh	Neatishead Hall Neatishead Norwich NR12 8XX	07785 224589	lbaugh@netcom.co.uk	Landowners and managers
Liz Brooks	Heronway Norwich Road Ludham Gt Yarmouth, NR29 5QD	01692 678674	ejb553@gmail.com	Equestrian riding and driving
Robin Buxton	Speedwell House South Burlingham Road Lingwood NR13 4ET	01493 750102	robin.buxton@ukgateways.net	Landowners and managers / Tourism and local businesses
Michael Flett	33 Broad Reaches Ludham Norfolk NR29 5PD	01692 678560	mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com	Local Authority (Parish Councils)
Tony Gibbons	19 Blithewood Gardens Sprowston Norwich NR7 8PS	01603 400973	tonygibbons.ndaa@gmail.com	Angling
Alec Hartley	23 Ipswich Road Norwich Norfolk NR2 2LN	01603 452884	alecandkathie@gmail.com	Wensum River Parkway Partnership
Dawn Hatton	'Windward' Woodland Drive Thorpe End Norwich, NR13 5BH	01603 433174	stock.dawn@gmail.com	Walking / People with disabilities / Access for all
Peter Mason	7 Brick Kiln Gardens Catfield Gt Yarmouth NR29 5DW	01692 583152	peter.mason51@sky.com	Walking / Tourism and local business

Name	Address	Phone No	Email	Interest
Steve Read	The Anchorage Broadview Road Oulton Broad Lowestoft, NR32 3PL	07720 808715	stevereadcon@btinternet.com	Walking / Water borne recreational users
George Saunders	c/o Broads Authority Yare House 62-64 Thorpe Road Norwich, NR1 1RY	01603 413485	georgesaunders@btinternet.com	People with disabilities/ Access for all
Richard Webb	9 Bek Close Norwich NR4 7NT	01603 505362	dickwebb@talktalk.net	Walking / Sailing
Christopher Yardley	Thorpe Cloud Creake Road Burnham Thorpe Kings Lynn, PE31 8HW	01328 738705	cj.yardley@tiscali.co.uk	Waterborne recreational users / Nature conservation

Secretary to the Broads Local Access Forum:

Lottie Carlton, Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1RY

Telephone 01603 610734, Fax 01603 756069, Email BLAF@broads-authority.gov.uk

Broads Authority
Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 05 December 2018

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon (Chairman)

Mr Kelvin Allen
Mr Louis Baugh
Miss Liz Brooks
Mr Tony Gibbons
Mrs Dawn Hatton

Dr Peter Mason
Mr Stephen Read
Mr George Saunders
Mrs Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro
Mr Chris Yardley

In Attendance

Ms Lottie Carlton – Administrative Officer
Mr Adrian Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (SWRO)
Mr Simon Hooton – Head of Strategy and Projects
Mr Mark King - Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO)

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

Mr Mike Flett, Mr Alec Hartley, Mr Charles Swan and Mr Martin Symons sent their apologies. The SWRO welcomed members to the meeting.

2/2 To receive declarations of interest

Mrs Vigo di Gallidoro declared an interest in relation to her role as Chairman of the Broads Authority Planning Committee and involvement as a facilitator at the Broads Engage event. Mr Baugh declared an interest in relation to item 2/8 regarding point 1.48 of the report and parts of the presentation due to personal financial interests.

2/3 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Dr Keith Bacon was nominated for the position of Chairman of the Broads Local Access Forum. There were no other nominations. Members voted unanimously to appoint Dr Bacon to this role.

Mr Alec Hartley, although not present at the meeting, had indicated he would be willing for the Forum to nominate him for the position of Vice-Chairman of the Broads Local Access Forum. Mr Hartley was the only nomination. Members voted unanimously to appoint Mr Hartley.

2/4 Review of BLAF membership

The SWRO gave a presentation reviewing membership of the BLAF.

Membership is due for renewal. Members are welcome to put themselves forward to continue their membership for a further three-year term. Members agreed to email the Forum Secretary with their intentions.

Following resignations this year, there are 19 members, although one member has not attended a meeting since 2016.

The Forum agreed to advertise for three new members to cover the areas of tourism business, nature conservation and entry level craft.

2/5 Receive and confirm the 05 Sept 2018 minutes

The Forum approved the minutes which the Chairman signed.

2/6 Matters arising from the minutes

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

EA inspected the bridge. They are likely to finish work to bring the bridge up to standards by February 2019.

(2) Minute 1/4 (2) River Wensum Strategy

Invitations to the official launch go out in the New Year.

Project work: Planning applications are in for the New Mills canoe platforms; discussions between Norwich City Council and Norwich City Football Club are taking place regarding the moorings project near the football ground and a UEA post-graduate student completed a riverside biodiversity audit under the direction of Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

(3) Minute 1/4 (4) Staithes Report

All parish councils and others responsible for staithes had the chance to review the report and provide feedback. Thorpe St Andrew agreed wording changes to a section of the report. After a final proof read the report can be published.

Publicity would include clear attribution for the report to Prof Tom Williamson, UEA.

(4) Minute 1/4 (5) Wherryman's Way – Phase 2

Following completion of the Phase 1 hydraulic modelling work, BA has received a quote for Phase 2. This involves upgrading a model to show effects of various work options. The Broads Authority and Norfolk County Council are contributing funding to Phase 2, but are also asking for

contributions from the Environment Agency, the Parish Council and South Norfolk Council. Commissioning of Phase 2 work will take place after this.

2/7 Norfolk County Council update

No representative from Norfolk County Council was available.

2/8 Broads Engage update and Review of Broads Integrated Access Strategy

The Broads Engage event took place on November 6th and focussed on Access.

65 people took part and feedback was good. The Broads Authority, with help from the Forum, will analyse suggestions made by attendees and decide which to include in the review of the Broads Integrated Access Strategy.

Some suggestions were already known, some were new, some were known not to be possible and others give potential to work up the ideas.

Norfolk County are keen to work in partnership with the Broads Authority on the delivery of the new Norfolk Access Improvement Plan including shared routes and access for all/audits.

Two Broads Engage events will take place per year. The next is due to take place in March/April 2019. The Broads Authority has not yet confirmed the topic but this could be Education or Biodiversity Strategy.

Comments and answers to questions:

- It could be useful to identify previous stewardship scheme permissive paths.
- The sustainable travel list should include trains.
- If suggestions fall outside the National Park boundary but provide connectivity of strategic missing links, the Integrated Access Strategy can still include them.
- Linking circular walks with permissive paths: Deciding who is best placed to deal with landowners to speed up the process should be based on a case by case basis. Sometimes the relationship is difficult between the landowner and parish council and Broads Authority is the better negotiator, at other times there is already a good relationship that and the Parish Council taking the lead is the preferred option. The Forum prefers a sequential approach: PROW as preference, then Permissive Paths. Multiple landowners for a single permissive path create extra difficulties and delays which need to be factored in.
- Various national events could have impacts on access: Glover Review of National Parks, Brexit, resulting changes to agri-environment schemes.

The SWRO agreed to check details on creation of new PROW within the Broads area and the issue of compensation payments made to landowners.

The SWRO agreed to circulate a link for the Glover Review of National Parks consultation (ending 18th December).

The SWRO agreed to draw together a draft review document for Forum members to provide comment on.

2/9 Aston Rowant National Land Access Centre

The SWRO gave a presentation updating Forum members on the new Aston Rowant National Land Access Centre which opened in September 2018.

The centre aims to highlight best practise for surfaces, gates and gaps via a series of trails. Good vs bad examples will show how to make improvements and easier access for all.

The centre took on board comments received during the BSI Gaps, Gates and Stiles consultation, plus advice from various organisations and businesses with specific expertise.

The centre is keen for people to visit and 'road test' the trails.

The Government's MAGIC website with interactive mapping of the national environment is also a useful tool. <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

2/10 Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment – The National Survey on People and the National Environment

The SWRO gave a presentation highlighting relevant sections of the Natural England survey that monitors people's engagement with the natural environment.

Many interesting facts and statistics in the report show an increasing trend towards more frequent use of natural environments and a desire to learn more about and protect such areas.

Barriers to accessing the natural environment include disposable income, access to transport, time factors (caring responsibilities/work) and poor health.

Comments and answers to questions:

- Pathmakers engaged UEA to answer some of the questions raised.
- The survey will be useful to help guide the Forum's work.
- There is a need to overcome perceptions that the natural environment 'is not for people like me' and to raise understanding. Projects like the Water, Mills and Marshes English Plus grant to help take immigrants on a visit to Hoveton Great Broad and MOSAIC (now finished) encourage people to get out in the natural environment and feel they belong. It helps to show photos of a wide range of people so that everyone can relate to what they are seeing on a personal level.

- It was encouraging to learn that even when people do not, or cannot, use the natural environment themselves an overwhelming 93% said they felt green space was important and should be protected.

The SWRO agreed to circulate the full report to Forum members.

2/11 Any other business

The Forum's response to the Food and Farming consultation was well received as it encompassed landscape and agri-environment issues relating to access. Members were complimentary of the letter's contents.

2/12 To note the date of the next meeting

The date for the next meeting is Wednesday 13 March 2019 at 2pm.

The meeting ended at 4pm.

Chairman

**BLAF Membership Review
Report by the Waterways and Recreation Officer**

Summary:	This report considers the issue of membership of the Broads Local Access Forum (BLAF) and puts forward a proposal to recruit new members to represent the interest groups identified within this report.
Recommendation:	That members support the proposal for the recruitment and appointment of members to the BLAF outlined in this report.

1 Background

- 1.1 Local access forums are statutorily prescribed bodies under Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 1990 (CROW). Their main function is to advise their appointing authority, i.e. either a local highway authority (LHA) or a national park authority (NPA) for their area, as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. The regulations governing the composition of local access forums state:

“forums should have at least 10 and a maximum of 22 members, and that these should be people who appear to be representative of:

- a) Users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers);
- b) Owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way subsist; or
- c) Any other interests especially relevant to the appointing authority’s area”.

- 1.2 Terms of membership are covered by the regulations and state that “a member of a local access forum shall be appointed for not less than one and not more than three years”.

- 1.3 However, the regulations also make it plain that an appointing authority may reappoint a person to membership of a forum on the expiry of his or her term.

- 1.4 Members were written to in late 2018 asking if they wished to be reappointed to membership of the BLAF and 14 members opted to be reappointed.
- 1.5 This means that the BLAF now consists of 14 renewed members along with a member of the Broads Authority.
- 1.6 The Authority usually appoints two members of the Broads Authority to membership of the BLAF so there will be a need to appoint an additional Broads Authority member to membership of the BLAF.

2 Recruitment and Appointment of Forum Members

- 2.1 The guidance from Government regarding the recruitment and appointment of new members to local access forums is very detailed. Appointing authorities are obliged to advertise vacancies in local or regional newspapers and consult with such bodies or individuals that they consider appropriate prior to the appointment of members.
- 2.2 The appointment process must be fair and transparent and comply with any relevant policies on social inclusion and diversity that the authority may have. The Regulations advise appointing authorities to adopt a creative and proactive approach in advertising vacancies in order to attract applicants from as wide a background as possible. The appointment process should also take account of the needs of all relevant social groups.
- 2.3 Government advice to appointing authorities is that they should ensure there is a reasonable balance of representation between the interest groups defined in the Regulations. Officers consider that the current membership of the Broads Local Access Forum broadly achieves this balance, but recognise that, some groups still require representation of the forum.

3 Proposal for Recruitment and Appointment of Members to the Broads Local Access Forum

- 3.1 Members of the BLAF have also recognised that there are gaps in representation and identified the interest groups that should be prioritised in a recruitment exercise.
- 3.2 As advised by the BLAF Officers now propose to go through the recruitment process set out in the regulations seeking to recruit new members from the following interest groups which are those identified by members at the last meeting:
 - Tourism business (business owner /manager)
 - Nature Conservation
 - Entry level craft
- 3.3 Following discussion with the Chairman, Officers also feel that it would be appropriate to seek additional members from the following interest groups:

- Cycling
- Youth ambassador
- Health and wellbeing
- Diversity

- 3.4 This will enable the Authority to demonstrate that the membership of the BLAF meets the requirements of the Regulations and ensure that appointed members cover all the interests that are relevant to the Broads, potentially contributing additional skills and perspectives to the work of the BLAF.

4 Appointment Process

- 4.1 The Chief Executive has delegated powers to appoint and re-appoint members to the Broads Local Access Forum, in consultation with the Chairman of the Forum.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The BLAF provides valuable advice to the Broads Authority on access related issues and contributes greatly to the delivery of the Authority's Integrated Access Strategy. Officers are therefore keen to complete the recruitment and appointment of members as soon as possible and seek members' support for the recruitment exercise outlined in this report.

Background papers:	Nil
Author:	Mark King
Date of report:	13 February 2019
Broads Plan Objectives:	6.1
Appendices:	Appendix 1: Application for membership of the BLAF Appendix 2: BLAF Constitution



Application for Membership of the Broads Local Access Forum

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Home Phone _____ Mobile Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Background

Occupation _____

Any relevant professional qualifications

Appendix 1: Application for membership of the BLAF

Which interests would you be representing?

Please do not indicate more than 3 interests. Please rank your primary interest as 1, and the others as 2 and 3.

- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Equestrian riding and driving
- ☐ Motorised vehicle use
- ☐ Tourism business (business owner /manager)
- ☐ Nature conservation
- ☐ Archaeology and landscape heritage
- ☐ Angling
- ☐ Waterborne recreational users
- ☐ Entry level craft
- ☐ Landowners and managers (including farmers, large, small and tenant.)
- ☐ Educational establishments
- ☐ People with Disabilities/Access for all
- ☐ Diversity
- ☐ Youth ambassador
- ☐ Health and wellbeing
- ☐ Local Authorities
- ☐ Wildfowlers/Field Sporting users
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

Experience

Please detail the relevant skills, knowledge and experience that you would bring to the Broads Local Access Forum. Please include details of the length and nature of your involvement with any interests and memberships of any relevant organisations.

Appendix 1: Application for membership of the BLAF

Do you have any knowledge of rights of way issues? (please detail)

Please include anything else of relevance.

Why do you want to be a member of the Broads Local Access Forum?

What qualities would you bring to the Broads Local Access Forum?

What do you see as the most important issues for the Broads Local Access Forum to tackle?

Appendix 1: Application for membership of the BLAF

Communication

Please give an outline of how you would seek the views of your interest group on items considered by the Broads Local Access Forum, and how you would publicise the work of the Forum.

Other Information

For how many years would you initially be willing to serve on the Broads Local Access Forum?
(Please circle)

1 2 3

Are you a member of a district/borough/parish council?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give details

Do you have any connection with the Broads Authority?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give details

Appendix 1: Application for membership of the BLAF

Statement

I am applying to be a member of the Broads Local Access Forum and certify that the information given on this form is correct. I have read the members roles and responsibilities and if appointed will agree to undertake all duties as described in the constitution.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return to:

Lottie Carlton
Secretary to the Broads Local Access Forum
Yare House
62-64 Thorpe Road
Norwich
NR1 1RY



Broads Authority
Broads Local Access Forum
Constitution

This Constitution brings together the requirements of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002 and decisions made by the Broads Authority under these regulations.

1 Purpose of the Forum

- 1.1 Local Access Forums (LAFs) are statutory advisors to the appointing authorities (local highway authorities, national park authorities and the Broads Authority) on the improvement of public access to land within their area for open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area (not just relating to rights of way issues).
- 1.2 A LAF is expected to advise on strategic and planning issues (e.g. local and structure plans) but not on individual cases.
- 1.3 In the first instance, the LAF will consider draft maps of open countryside, access land and registered common land due to be published by the Countryside Agency for the east of England in September 2003. It will also advise on issues to be considered in a rights of way improvement plan to be established by the highways authorities (Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council) by 2005.

2 Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The Broads Local Access Forum will have the following terms of reference:
 - (i) To be a statutory advisory body to provide guidance and advice to relevant authorities on the improvement of public access to the countryside of the Broads Executive Area and to contribute to opportunities for the enjoyment of the area.
 - (ii) To comment on draft maps of open countryside and registered common land for the Broads as will be produced by the Countryside Agency.
 - (iii) To provide a consultative forum for and advising on issues relating to access land, exclusions, restrictions and the appointment of access wardens on land where new rights of access exist.

- (iv) To contribute (in an advisory capacity) to the development of Rights of Way Improvement Plans which cover any part of the Broads Executive Area, together with any other strategies or plans relating to rights of way and open access.
- (v) To advise on all other aspects of improvement of public access to land in the Broads for the purposes of open air-recreation.
- (vi) To advise on issues relating to public access to water.
- (vii) To advise on the promotion and appropriate use of opportunities for all types of user to enjoy access to the countryside.
- (viii) To promote closer liaison and understanding between the various interest bodies and organisations which have an interest in access to the Broads and its wider catchment area.

2.2 In providing advice, the Forum will have regard to:

- (i) the needs of land management;
- (ii) the conservation of the natural beauty of the area;
- (iii) the management and maintenance of recreational access whilst balancing this against the needs of nature conservation, agriculture, the interests of landowners and managers, navigation and countryside management projects within the Broads;
- (iv) the general duty of the Authority to manage the Broads for the purposes of:
 - (a) conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
 - (b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and
 - (c) protecting the interests of navigation.

2.3 In providing such advice and comment the Forum shall also bear in mind the Authority's requirement to have regard to:

- (i) the national importance of the Broads as an area of natural beauty and one which affords opportunities for open-air recreation;
- (ii) the desirability of protecting the natural resources of the Broads from damage; and

- (iii) the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interest of those who live or work in the Broads.

3 Principles

- 3.1 The Forum will consider strategic/significant issues only and will not be asked to consider detailed operational matters such as individual planning applications and individual rights of way matters such as diversions except where they may have significant strategic importance or implications for Broads Authority policy.
- 3.2 Members of the Forum may propose items for discussion at future meetings.
- 3.3 The Forum will produce an annual report to the Broads Authority. The annual report will:
 - (i) set out the occasions and issues on which the Forum has provided guidance in the preceding year, and indicate to whom advice was given.
 - (ii) include such information as the Forum thinks fit.
- 3.4 In addition the advice or comments of the Forum will be reported to and taken into account by the appropriate committee(s) of the Authority in the decision making process.
- 3.5 The Forum will meet at least twice a year.

4 Membership

- 4.1 The Forum will comprise between 17 and 22 members appointed by the Broads Authority drawn from the following:
 - (i) recreational users of the countryside (RoW and access land);
 - (ii) landowners, occupiers and land managers working in the countryside and making economic gain from it; and
 - (iii) other interest groups relevant to the area and with access to it.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Members

Members of the Broads Local Access Forum should:

- (i) be representative of access land and public rights of way users or other interests relevant to the Broads;
- (ii) provide an independent view rather than reflect the views of any particular organisation;

- (iii) support and pursue opportunities to publicise the work of the LAF, obtain feedback from their own organisations and the general public; and
- (iv) be willing to serve for an initial period of between one and three years.

4.3 Declarations of Interest

A member of the Forum who is directly or indirectly interested in any matter brought up for consideration at a meeting of the Forum must disclose the nature of that interest to the Forum. Failure to do so may mean that the Broads Authority will terminate the member's appointment.

- 4.4 The appointment of a member of the Forum shall be determined by the Broads Authority and notified to him/her in writing.
- 4.5 Members of the Forum shall be appointed for not less than one and not more than three years.
- 4.6 A member of the Forum may resign by giving notice in writing.
- 4.7 The Broads Authority shall terminate the appointment of a member of the Local Access Forum in the following circumstances:
 - (i) if the Authority is satisfied that he or she has become a member of a District or County Council or national park authority and, as a result, regulation 4(2) of the Local Access Forums (England) Regulations 2002 is not complied with;
 - (ii) if, without the consent of the Broads Authority, he or she has been absent from all meetings of the forum during a period of one year; or
 - (iii) if the member has failed to comply with regulation 6(6) of Statutory Instruments 2002 No 1836 – The Local Access Forums (England) regulations 2002 or has failed to disclose an interest under paragraph 4.3.
- 4.8 The Broads Authority may re-appoint a person who ceases to be a member of the Local Access Forum.
- 4.9 The Chair will be a person appointed by the Forum who is able to command the respect of other members of the Broads Local Access Forum.
- 4.10 The Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed for a term of one year, at the first Forum meeting in each calendar year. In making these appointments, the Forum must ensure so far as practical that they are not at any one time both drawn from the same interests referred to in paragraph 4.1.

- 4.11 The Chief Executive, together with other officers of the Authority as appropriate will, if available, attend meetings of the Forum to present reports and answer questions.
- 4.12 The Forum may, in respect of any particular matter or more generally, invite other persons or representatives of other organisations to attend meetings of the Forum and participate in discussions, but not to vote.

5 Access to Meetings and Documents

- 5.1 Meetings of the Forum are open to the public subject to any power of exclusion to suppress or prevent disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour at a meeting.
- 5.2 Copies of the agenda and any reports for meetings must be open to inspection by members of the public at the Broads Authority offices Head Office at least three days before the meeting except:
 - (i) where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, the copies of the agenda and reports must be open to inspection from the time the meeting is convened; or
 - (ii) where an item is added to an agenda, copies of the document adding the item and the copies of any report for the meeting relating to the item, must be open to inspection from the time the item is added to the agenda.
- 5.3 An item of business may not be considered at a meeting unless these requirements are complied with, or by reason of special circumstances to be specified in the minutes, the Chair of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency.
- 5.4 After the meeting of the Forum, the minutes, agenda and reports must be open to public inspection at the Broads Authority offices for at least two years after the meeting. There must also be available for inspection copies of a list of any background papers for the report, together with a copy of any documents included on that list.

6 The Role of the Broads Authority

- 6.1 The Broads Authority will support the Local Access Forum by providing secretarial support.
- 6.2 The secretariat will have the following functions:
 - (i) arranging a venue for Forum meetings;
 - (ii) organising and advertising meetings;

- (iii) preparing the agenda and commissioning and distributing papers;
- (iv) assisting the Chair in conducting meetings;
- (v) producing draft minutes of meetings;
- (vi) reimbursing members expenses for travel, subsistence and care of dependents where appropriate; and
- (vii) organising and providing training for members if deemed appropriate.

6.3 The Broads Authority will also support the Forum by:

- (i) preparing an outline work programme for the Forum;
- (ii) liaising between the Forum and the appointing authority and neighbouring Local Access Forums;
- (iii) communicating the Forum's advice to relevant authorities and bodies;
- (iv) providing on-going support and advice to the Forum and its members;
- (v) ensuring that the Forum's advice is made available to the relevant committees, Broads Authority members and officers; and
- (vi) promoting the Forum's work through press releases and on its website.

7 Amendments

- 7.1 Any amendments to the Terms of Reference, Principles and Membership of the Forum, to reflect changing circumstances or legislation, must be agreed by the Broads Authority following consultation with the Forum.

Actions from the meeting

- i. Each LAF to consider the key issues relevant to their situation that they will raise in a letter to send to a senior officer in their appointing access authority.
- ii. David Barker to circulate an electronic copy of the body text of the letter that he had sent to Suffolk MPs concerning a range of countryside matters including access on to farmland. Attendees are welcome to use that text that makes the general points to prepare their own letter to send to their local MPs but to remember to modify it to their own locality and case studies. Please do not copy and send it verbatim.
- iii. Attendees to write their email address on the sheet circulated by Mary Sanders to confirm that they are willing for other LAF members to see and use their email address to correspond about LAF matters. Through this willingness to supply an email address it is understood that GDPR requirements will have been satisfied.
- iv. NE (FT) to follow up and clarify the position regarding each LAF producing an Annual Report.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Attendance

Person	LAF / Organisation
Clive Beckett	Central Bedfordshire & Luton
David Barker	Suffolk
Fiona Taylor	Natural England
Katherine Evans	Essex
Keith Bacon	Broads
Ken Hawkins	Norfolk
Liddy Lawrence	Hertfordshire
Louis Upton	Central Bedfordshire & Luton
Martin Sullivan	Norfolk
Mary Sanders (Chair)	Cambridgeshire
Ralph Barnett	Natural England
Ray Booty	Essex
Roger Buisson (Notes)	Cambridgeshire

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Barry Hall, Suffolk LAF and Alex Hartley, Broads LAF.

3. Minutes of last meeting

On page 3, item 4 on coastal access funding the text should read “up to 75% grant can be claimed”.

4. Matters arising from minutes of last meeting

Email correspondence after the last meeting had raised the matter of a request for a letter to be sent from Natural England to the access authorities to remind them of their responsibility toward their LAF and rights of way. Fiona Taylor recommended that a letter from the grass roots i.e. LAF members, would be more effective. This could cover the access authorities' responsibilities to their LAF, including for instance that the access authority should be appointing elected members (from both county and district where relevant). **Action: Each LAF to consider the key issues relevant to their situation that they will raise in a letter to send to a senior officer in their appointing access authority.**

Item 9 Lost Highways: Rumours had been heard about an extension to the cut-off date for submitting claims. Others had heard the same. It was considered better to act on the basis that there will not be an extension. BHS is offering a £100 'grant' toward the costs of submitting a claim for a lost highway. [post meeting information: The BHS website <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/access/campaigns/2026/financial-support-dmmo> states *"With generous support from Sport England, matched by the BHS's own funding, we are able to offer a grant of £100 towards your expenses for each eligible application that you submit to a local authority and is accepted on their statutory register of DMMO Applications. Due to funding conditions, the grant is available in England only, and for applications made on or after 1st January 2018. The grant is available to anyone, you do not have to be a BHS member."* A 'toolkit' for making a claim is here: <https://www.bhs.org.uk/our-work/access/campaigns/2026/2026-toolkit>]

It is still not clear whether or not a LAF annual report is required. It is understood that the minimum is that an annual report should be produced but no one from natural England will be chasing if one is not produced. An annual report is a good LAF profile raising exercise within a council and is as used in this way by some LAFs. **Action: Fiona to follow up within NE to clarify.**

5. Round-up of issues affecting your LAF

Bedford Borough: Not attending.

Broads:

- Meet in Broads Authority office, have members from the BA but not local council members. Have cross membership with Norfolk LAF.
- Little development pressure within the Broads National Park but there is adjacent to the NP.
- Erosion of river embankments - responsibility for remedial action is disputed.

Cambridgeshire:

- Considering merging with Peterborough LAF given the latter's current in status of being in abeyance.
- Development pressures including new settlements. There are poor links between planners, developers and highways authority.
- Road developments – the A14 is being built, the A428 will come next.
- Greenways - leisure and commuting cycle routes planned from surrounding villages in to Cambridge - pressure from LAF to make each of bridleway status to ensure NMU use.

Central Beds & Luton:

- Concerns over the impacts of major developments / growth areas and the low priority given to funding green infrastructure.
- Specific Houghton Regis development - several developers involved and lack of coordination that risks fragmenting network. Within that development the access routes are not likely to be PRoWs which places them at risk if the developers fold. Consider it better to have a commuted sum and then local authority adoption.
- Oxford to Cambridge expressway route near Milton Keynes - environmentally sensitive areas on the route include Rushmere Country Park and 800 acres of access land at Aspley Woods.
- East-West rail impacts on the PRoW network.

Essex:

- Network rail closures inquiry - still ongoing because of the large number of objections.
- LAF Membership - difficulty in getting councillors to be LAF members.
- Support from the council is poor.
- A12 and A120 improvements delayed due to delays with the planning of a new garden community. Lower Thames Crossing - this primarily affects Thurrock.
- The Council's fault reporting system is still unsatisfactory.
- TRO extensions of over 2 years' length are still being used with no facility for the public to know which are closed.
- PRoWs claimed under 20 year use rule - they are going on to the definitive map but without any obligations on the council to maintain them at public expense, as a result they are not being maintained. Some have been taken on by volunteers but that requires liaison time from a council officer. [A post meeting update of the relevant text from the 'Blue Book' is included as Appendix 1 to this meeting note]
- Bridges over PRoWs that are in an unsafe condition have caused problems.

Hertfordshire:

- Network rail crossing closures, currently the major focus is on a crossing in St Albans that splits the community from the town centre.
- The LAF has organised a local conference on development planning.
- Following pressure on the council the LAF has been provided with additional support from officers.
- LAF Membership - seeking to co-opt a student each year from the University of Hertfordshire environment planning course, cannot get a district council member, have recently been through a 3 year membership refresh.

Norfolk:

- Good support from the council.
- LAF Membership – undergoing a refresh after a three year period - currently advertising and there has been good interest.
- Pathmakers charity arm of LAF (<http://pathmakers.org.uk/>) is going well and continuing to put in funding applications for specific projects (two this year).

Peterborough: Not attending.

Suffolk:

- Network rail crossing closure inquiry - representations made, now with Inspector for report and recommendations.
- Sizewell C – potential for large impacts on PRoW network.

- There is strong council support for the production of an annual report.

Thurrock: Not attending.

6. Update from Natural England

Fiona Taylor provided an update on the following topics:

- LAFs
- Deregulation Act rights of Way reforms implementation
- Motoring Stakeholder Working Group
- Agriculture Bill, Environmental Land Management scheme
- Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE)
- ORVAL Outdoor recreation evaluation tool
- Opening access to the countryside
- Impact of PoW and Sweetman
- Land management - Farmland Conservation
- Living Coast
- Parks
- National Trails
- Protected sites and species
- National Nature Reserves
- Wildlife licensing
- Publications, maps, data

A full copy of the text of the update sent by Fiona after the meeting is attached as Appendix 2 to this meeting note.

Ralph Barnett, NE National Trails Officer, also attended the meeting and spoke about National Trails (NT's). The England Coast Path is scheduled to open in 2020 but this may be delayed. NE is still funding NT's although for 2019 Defra agreed to fund NT's directly from its budget rather than via the NE core budget. NT's funding has been at standstill for 5 years, a 5% reduction is expected in 2019. There is no programme in place at present to designate any new trails as funding is limited and the England Coast Path takes priority.

England's Great Walking Trails - an initiative from the Discovering England Fund with a budget of £1M to promote holidays in England to the US, German and Dutch market (project details here: <https://trade.visitbritain.com/destination-uk/discover-england-fund/englands-great-walking-trails/> and the public facing website here: <https://www.greatenglishtrails.com/>).

7. Public access under the Agriculture Bill

David Barker of Suffolk LAF spoke of his own experience and the position more generally. On his own farm he has yet to receive money for a new stewardship scheme agreement that started in 2018, a common picture amongst farmers. The loss of access options in stewardship was in part said to be because of EU rules. That position clearly changes with Brexit and there is now the opportunity for the UK to support access on farms. There is the opportunity with the Agriculture Bill (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/landmark-agriculture-bill-to-deliver-a-green-brexite>) and the Government stated policy of public money for public goods, a policy that can include

public access. The Agriculture Bill is enabling legislation. It is a good time to lobby local MPs. He has written to his own MP and the other Suffolk MPs. The text of that letter can be used as the basis for others to prepare their own letter but please do not reproduce DB's letter verbatim. It would be helpful to add in reference to the Defra 25 year environment plan. **Action: DB to circulate an electronic copy of the body text of the letter that he had sent to Suffolk MPs.**

8. The impact of the People Over Wind & Sweetman court case on ECP progress

This issue was raised by Ken Hawkins of Norfolk LAF and spoken to by Fiona Taylor and Roger Buisson. The conclusion was that this court judgment, through requiring additional detail and procedural steps, would be likely to result in longer lead times in approving England Coast Path proposals but that the outcomes are not expected to change.

9. Network Rail level crossing closures

Essex LAF: Essex still at inquiry phase following an adjournment and restart. Essex LAF involvement is in the strategic case. Believe that Network Rail had not understood the level of opposition prior to the Inquiry. Concerned about the promises made by Network Rail that were stated at the Inquiry but have not been seen in writing. The concern is over whether or not they will be delivered. The County Council is not known to be recording and following up these promises.

Cambs, Herts & Suffolk LAFs: In contrast to the above, in the cases of the Inquiries for crossings in Cambs, Herts and Suffolk the respective county council has been very active and particular in ensuring that undertakings (promises) were followed up with detailed negotiation. Those crossings that would require significant redesign and landowner negotiation were withdrawn from the Inquiry process.

10. Regional road schemes

Road schemes highlighted during the earlier discussions were: A414, A12, A120, A14, A428 and the Lower Thames Crossing.

11. AOB

The following topics were very briefly addressed in the limited time available:

- Height restriction barriers on parks and green spaces – these restrict access for horse boxes and hence excludes horse rider use.
- HLF and National Trust have joined forces to fund the 'Future Parks Accelerator', an initiative that aims to secure the future of urban parks and green spaces (more information here: <http://www.futureparks.org/home-page>) The local NE link is John Torlesse.
- Cambridge/Milton Keynes/Oxford (CaMKOx) Arc – There is £1 million funding for green space across the Arc.
- Seasonal TROs using gates with lock codes - some linked to track condition and rainfall. Viewed as a successful initiative.
- Publication of the existence and details of TROs - Central Beds and Cambs have good systems, Essex has no system.

- Essex highways devolution pilot - this would transfer various maintenance responsibilities to town and parish councils. The initial view of one parish was that it was a lot of work for very little finance – the fund was calculated on a per capita basis and not on a need/assets basis. District councils had declined to participate. A similar Bedfordshire initiative had got nowhere. The approach to parishes appears to be motivated by the fact that county and district council precepts are capped but parish councils are not.
- Sharing email addresses - currently emails are sent bcc for data protection reasons, please sign on list giving consent for email address to be circulated.

A repeat of this meeting?: Yes. Proposed for next meeting:

Wednesday 10th July 2019, 10.30 am – 2.30 pm, Natural England Peterborough office.

See Appendix 3 for further details of office location and how to get there.

Appendix 1: No public maintenance of 20 year claimed routes

The following is the text supplied by Katherine Evans, EssexLAF Chair, taken from pages 277 and 278 of the 'Blue Book', more correctly known as 'Rights Of Way: A Guide to Law and Practice' published jointly by the Ramblers and the Open Spaces Society in 2007 (updates are published here:

<https://www.ramblers.org.uk/advice/rights-of-way-law-in-england-and-wales/the-blue-book/the-blue-book-extra.aspx>).

Section 10.3

All expressly created public paths (i.e. footpaths & bridleways) are maintainable at public expense except those in the following categories...

(c) a path dedicated after 1949 in respect of which the statutory procedure under the Acts of 1835, 1959 or 1980 has not been observed.

Public paths that came into existence after the 1959 Act from long usage are not publicly maintainable because

(i) the procedure required to be followed for a way to be publicly-maintainable has not been (indeed cannot be) followed;

(ii) the liability of the inhabitants of the parish to maintain highways no longer exists; and

(iii) no other provision of law imposes the duty to maintain.

A way added to the Definitive Map is therefore publicly-maintainable only if it can be shown to have come into existence prior to the 1959 Act.

No statute imposes a duty to maintain a path or way that arises from long usage. But power is conferred by the 1980 Act [s. 50(2)] on a district, parish or community council to undertake the maintenance "of any footpath or bridleway" within its territory, thus including a path that arises out of long usage.

I think I could be forgiven for not immediately grasping the implications of all that in the Blue Book:-)
No mention of byways of any sort.

The 1959 Act is... Highways Act 1959 (I think)

The 1980 Act is . . . Highways Act 1980

Essex Highways / ECC used to include these types of paths in their maintenance schedules - but with budget cuts this is no longer the case. The suggestion is that Parishes - whose ability to increase their Precepts is not capped - should fund /carry out the maintenance and/or interested User groups like the Ramblers, BHS, etc.

Appendix 2: Update from Natural England

Below is a compiled copy of the text provided by Fiona Taylor in a series of emails after the meeting.

Access and rights of way and recreation (Andy Mackintosh)

LAFs NE has once again had to focus its spending on a reduced number of areas and, apart from delivering the England Coast Trail and supporting National Trail Partnerships, public access is not currently a priority. This means that we still don't have any proper cover for a LAF co-ordinator role but a case has been made to allocate resource for this. In the meantime I will continue to monitor HUDDLE and answer queries. *[This text is subject to confirmation: It is again unlikely that LAF will be asked to submit annual reporting forms this year (but any received are still welcome) but NE will continue to receive annual reports as required by the CROW Act and LAF regulations.]*

Deregulation Act rights of Way reforms implementation: Due to Defra's Dave Waterman's retirement and Brexit work prioritisation, the planned introduction of the regulations and guidance associated with the rights of way measures is currently delayed until the latter half of 2019. Defra appreciates that this is leaving increasingly little time before the 2026 cut-off date but will continue to work with the Stakeholder Working Group to explore options and refine processes and guidance.

Motoring Stakeholder Working Group: This group, (convened to look at off-road vehicle use issues in the countryside and chaired by NE) last met in May and Defra and NE have decided to take forward actions to consult with order-making authorities regarding the suitability of current regulation e.g. the use of Traffic Regulation Orders and other off-road vehicle management approaches, and aiming to revise the existing 2005 Defra guidance in "Making the Best of Byways" and "Regulating the Use of Motor Vehicles on public rights of way and off road".

Agriculture Bill, Environmental Land Management scheme: The new bill recognises that public access is a public good and makes provision for the Secretary of State to give financial assistance: *'...for or in connection with any of the following purposes—(including)*

(b) supporting public access to and enjoyment of the countryside, farmland or woodland and better understanding of the environment;'

In relation to this, options are being considered for a new land management scheme that may include measures of provision for improving/enhancing public access. NE is providing evidence and justification for support of access and green infrastructure. As with much of current activity in this area the main driver is Defra's 25 year Plan objectives e.g. *Enhancing beauty, heritage and engagement with the natural environment - Making sure that there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work, particularly in urban areas, and encouraging more people to spend time in them to benefit their health and wellbeing.*

Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) - New national statistics published by Natural England show that more people than ever before are visiting and spending time in the natural environment.

The proportion of adults visiting nature at least once a week has increased from 54 per cent in 2010 to 62 per cent in 2018. 51% visiting countryside and coast and 49% in and around towns. In 2017/18 health and exercise was the main motivation for spending time in the natural environment (reported for over half of all visits).

The [Monitoring of Engagement with the Natural Environment](#) (MENE) report also found that this trend could be seen across population groups, including groups where levels of participation have historically been lower.

ORVAL Outdoor recreation evaluation tool. An online model that predicts the number of visits to existing and new greenspaces in England, and estimates the welfare value of those visits in monetary terms (partly based on MENE data). It is increasingly being used by Local Authorities to show the value of existing and new access provision. <https://www.leep.exeter.ac.uk/orval/>

Opening access to the countryside <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/opening-access-to-the-countryside>

The country's first ever specialist centre in Oxfordshire will improve countryside access for wheelchair users, those with mobility needs, horse riders, cyclists and walkers.

Aston Rowant National Nature Reserve has been turned into a specialist site for accessibility including structures compliant with the new BS5709 standard following our self-closing gate trial. (You will also see in his speech that he reaffirms NE's commitment to promoting public access and that access is a means of achieving Defra 25 Year Plan objectives).

The new National Land Access Centre, located in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, has been designed to demonstrate the use, maintenance and installation of gaps, gates and stiles meeting the new British Standard for improved countryside access.

The centre has been developed by Natural England, in partnership with The British Horse Society, Centrewire and the Pittecroft Trust, to ensure those who usually struggle with access to the countryside can access the natural environment and enjoy England's beautiful countryside.

Natural England research shows there are around 519 million visits to paths, cycleways and bridleways in England each year. However, mobility issues can be a major barrier to people heading to the countryside. Over 20% of England's population cannot use public rights of way, either because they cannot use stiles or kissing gates themselves, or they are accompanying someone who can't.

Deputy Chair of Natural England, Lord Blencathra, said:

'Improved access will help to connect more people with their natural environment, giving them a chance to enjoy our countryside, its open space and fascinating wildlife– all key aspects of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.'

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Sarah Newton said:

'Installation of easy-access gates. This is key to the National Nature Reserve Strategy, itself a year old in September, which seeks to see England's nature restored, enriched and reconnected to people.'

The British Standard 5709: 2018 for Gaps, Gates and Stiles requires 'the least restrictive option' to be made available to users. Its implementation will help ensure that everyone can access and enjoy the countryside.

For more information about the new National Land Access Centre or to register for a training course please contact NLAC@naturalengland.org.uk.

Impact of PoW and Sweetman (Chris Pope) - Following the result of the People over the Wind case, Natural England is working closely with local authorities, developers and other partners to make sure the implications of this ruling are properly understood.

In most cases, we already work with developers at the pre-application stage on options to reduce or minimise impacts on protected sites. This ruling simply requires us to carry out a more formal assessment of their mitigation measures.

Continuing these conversations at an early stage will ensure this process is streamlined and any additional delays are minimised.

We have also set up a new unit that will be concentrating on delivering the Habitats Regulations assessments.

Land management (Dougal McNeill) - Farmland Conservation

Following the Health and Harmony Consultation the government published a [policy statement](#) which sets out England's agricultural policy for the next 10 years and how the Agriculture Bill will help achieve this. This includes a timeline for transition from the current CAP to the new arrangements. As part of this some existing HLS customers with agreements expiring in 2019 have been given the option to extend their agreements by one year (with potential for renewal) rather than move to Countryside Stewardship. This option may be available to some HLS customers in 2020 and beyond subject to ministerial approval.

In addition Defra are in the process of developing a new domestic Environment Land Management (ELM) scheme which will ultimately replace both pillars of CAP namely Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) and agri-environment schemes (Countryside Stewardship and Environmental Stewardship)

2019 and 2020 – Direct payment (BPS) continues (with possible simplifications). CS agreements continue to be signed. HLS agreements extended (subject to ministerial approval for customers with agreements expiring in 2020). Tests and trials for ELM.

2021 – First year of progressive reductions in BPS payments. CS agreements continue to be signed. HLS agreements may be extended (subject to ministerial approval). First pilots and ongoing tests and trials of ELM.

2022 to 2024 - progressive reductions in BPS continue. Final CS agreements start (but numbers depend on ELM). HLS agreements may be extended (subject to ministerial approval). ELM pilot, tests and trials continue.

2025 to 2027 - progressive reductions in BPS continue. ELM fully up and running.

2028 – No Direct (BPS) payments.

Landscape (Sarah Manning) - We will be hearing from the team again in the near future but as an overview of the work of Living Coasts:

SUMMARY PAPER: England's Living Coast: More than a Path – using the England Coast Path to secure a better future for people and the environment.

The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan recognises the opportunity provided by the completion of the England Coast Path in 2020 to enable more people to benefit from and help deliver a net improvement in the quality of the natural environment.

Natural England has been developing Living Coast which we aim to roll out as a national programme to capitalise on the completion of the England Coast path (ECP) in 2020.

What will Living Coast be?

A high profile programme that builds on the huge public investment in the ECP. It will use the new National Trail as a catalyst to unlock and sustain greater investment at the coast, ensuring an inclusive and long term legacy for society and the environment. Living Coast will be a visionary, landscape scale programme for the whole of the English coastline. Locally delivered projects within a national framework will deliver big outcomes for nature and people.

Our vision is that: more people from more sectors of society benefit from the environmental, economic and social services provided by the England Coast Path.

The core objectives to underpin and deliver this are:

- To increase the number and diversity of visits and visitors to the coast.
- To develop the ECP as a responsible tourism destination that provides high quality, locally distinctive, inclusive facilities and experiences for both local communities and visitors.
- To create sustainable tourism and local economies that value the ECP and invest in the path's corridor to manage and improve the access and environmental assets.

Key outcomes:

- A distinctive and resilient nature-rich corridor created around the entire coast. Demonstrating sustainable land management, enhancing our coastal landscapes and contributing to healthy and biologically diverse seas.
- More people visiting the coast, benefitting from a rich, coastal environment and contributing to the coastal economy.
- ECP better valued and supported as a foundation for building stronger, healthier, more environmentally connected and economically stable coastal communities.

Leading to:

- Health and wellbeing improvements across more sectors of society as more people access coastal landscapes and engage with the natural environment. Reduced socio-environmental deprivation within coastal communities.
- A society that through a greater connection and understanding of the value of the coastal and marine environment is interested and passionate about caring for it.
- Increased natural capital as a result of more people inspired to take action for the environment.
- Sustainable local economies underpinned by decision makers, business, communities and visitors committed to and investing in management of ECP and its corridor.

Why do we need to do this?

There are significant environmental assets at the coast, the interface between our terrestrial and marine environments. Both the environment and coastal communities face big challenges. For example:

- Coastal towns have above national average levels of socio-environmental and economic deprivation with growing risks to the [health & wellbeing of coastal communities](#). Our coastal and marine habitats face increasing challenges from climate change, fragmented management and the effects of development.
- We know that spending time in and enjoying the natural world is hugely important to improving health and wellbeing for both urban and rural communities. [MENE](#) data shows that 45% of people never or rarely visit the coast but would like to do so.
- Walkers on the [Welsh Coast Path](#) spent £84.7 million in 2014. Walkers on the [South West Coast Path](#) spent £436 million in 2012. Domestic coastal tourism contributes £8 billion annually to the economy, and the [National Coastal Tourism Academy](#)

believes this can grow. We need some of this to be invested in the environment which makes the coast so special.

Without a national framework to facilitate transformational, timely and integrated outcomes for people, places and nature, it is likely that the full potential of the ECP will not be realised and ineffective, scattered and small scale change will occur instead, not necessarily where it is needed most.

Where and how will the benefits be delivered?

The whole coast will be in scope, but we will prioritise places where investment will make the most difference. Through a small number of demonstration pilots we will show how the benefits of the ECP can be amplified by working with local stakeholders to develop a shared plan for that stretch of coast.

With a unique interest in people, environment and heritage across the whole coast, Natural England is well placed to provide the coordination of this national project and we will work across Government departments, with NGOs, communities and new sectors including business.

Publication of the Government's 25YEP coupled with the energy and publicity generated by completion of the ECP in 2020 provides us with a unique moment in time to initiate this ambitious project.

Next Steps

Work with local stakeholders through our Area Teams to develop and deliver three or four demonstration pilots using a mix of funding sources.

Create a national partnership of interested and influential external partners to help further develop and refine the project.

The learning from the pilot projects and our partner contributions will feed into the development of a business plan which will then facilitate the roll out of the national project once the England Coast Path is completed.

Parks (Dave Solly) - In October 2017 the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Parks Minister (then Marcus Jones MP) convened [the Parks Action Group](#) to bring sector experts – including Natural England - together with government to find solutions for the issues facing public parks identified by a 2016 Communities and Local Government Select Committee thereby helping England's public parks and green spaces meet the needs of communities now and in the future. Government committed to support the work of the group in its [25 year Environment plan](#) (page 77).

The group initially identified 6 priorities for consideration:

- Addressing sustainable **funding** for parks
- The importance of **standards** to ensure continued quality of delivery
- How to better **empower communities** to be involved in parks
- Addressing loss of **knowledge and skills** for delivery
- The importance of **increasing usage** amongst disadvantaged groups to ensure equitable access to the benefits of parks
- The need for a **vision** for parks and greater **valuing** of the benefits of parks in decision making

The Group will draw on baseline information it is collating as it develops its recommendations to Government on options for solutions to in particular the issues that Government committed to respond to in [its response](#) to [the inquiry report](#). We anticipate that MHCLG will report on group progress during early 2019.

National Trails (Ralph Barnett) - Ralph will be attending in person to give an update of this area of Natural England's work.

Protected sites and species (John Torlesse) - NE's overall approach is to invest in making a long term contribution to Government's ambition, as set out in the [25 Year Environment Plan](#), for a growing and resilient network of land, water and sea that is richer in plants and wildlife. This involves the following activities:

- SSSI casework (Dealing with notices, consents, assents or advice and notifications)
- SSSI designations – we have a small programme of designations (both new sites and changes to existing sites). This programme is publicised on 'gov.uk'.
- Ensuring good management of sites through new Countryside Stewardship schemes and through working with existing Stewardship agreement holders on SSSIs.
- Partnership working to deliver Government's Biodiversity 2020 strategy for protected species and habitats. This includes supporting externally funded projects (e.g. Back From The Brink), developing guidance for Nature Recovery Networks and Species Re-introductions
- SSSI condition assessments – focussing this current year particularly on those with agri-environment schemes
- Taking enforcement action for species and SSSI offences.

National Nature Reserves (Ben le Bas) - Natural England is responsible for the designation 'National Nature Reserve' in England: that is to say, the selection and declaration of sites, the management of some sites and the approval of other organisations to manage others.

Today there are 224 NNRs in England - c95,000 ha -managed by 53 different organisations. NE manages c2/3rds of England's NNRs by number and area. Other managers include the conservation NGOs, local authorities and a small but increasing number of private parties.

In the last few years an effective partnership has developed nationally between NE and some of the managing organisations and we have launched a joint NNR strategy. NNRs are an active work area for NE and as well as managing our own reserves we are busy expanding the NNR network.

Wildlife licensing (Gareth DGLISH) - District Level Licensing is a pioneering new approach to authorising developments affecting great crested newts (GCN).

Instead of developers carrying out detailed survey and mitigation measures within development sites, the scheme provides for new or enhanced GCN habitat at a landscape scale in the best locations for GCN within a given local authority area, and on the basis of net gain – i.e. more habitat is created than will be lost. This way, GCN habitat is created in areas away from developments, on greenspaces and farmland, which will improve the conservation status of the species.

Developers pay into the scheme to fund the habitat improvements. The scheme is being rolled out to 150 local authority areas over the next couple of years, including all Essex authorities and a number of other areas across the East of England. There will be opportunities for farmers and

landowners to participate in the scheme by providing land for new ponds and allowing derelict ponds to be restored

Publications, maps data (Richard Alexander) - Evidence Services provide scientific and evidence leadership, so that Natural England operates as an evidence-based organisation.

We:

- lead the delivery of Natural England's Evidence Programme (£2m pa) of prioritised terrestrial and marine monitoring projects, monitoring reform activities (e.g. piloting new techniques like eDNA) and evaluation/evidence reviews
- lead the delivery of NE/Defra's agri-environment monitoring and evaluation programme (£2.8m pa)
- provide expert analytical, data management and interpretation services to Natural England and its customers which include spatial analysis and mapping, earth observation, statistical analysis and modelling
- ensure adequate and appropriate access to evidence through on-line systems (e.g. MAGIC) and scientific publications (GOV.UK)
- lead on the Evidence Strategy and the Evidence Standard underpinning the delivery and use of evidence in Natural England

Green Infrastructure: Our Natural Future - People, Places and Prosperity
Natural England Internal Policy Briefing

Purpose of the Paper: The purpose of this document is to provide an internal policy briefing setting out what Green Infrastructure (GI) is, why it matters to Natural England, what GI outcomes we want to achieve in the next five years, where and how we will prioritise our efforts.

What is Green Infrastructure?

The National Planning Policy Framework defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as: *A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities¹*

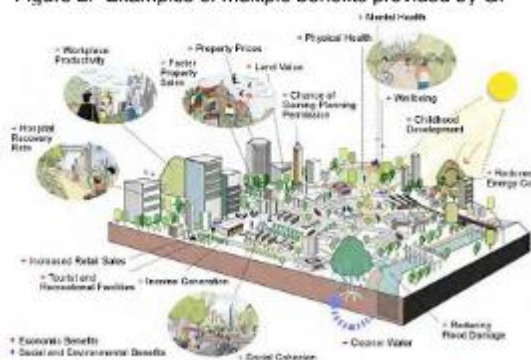
Essentially Green Infrastructure is 'nature doing a job' where it is most needed and adds greatest value. At its heart is the relationship between people and nature. At an operational level it involves working collaboratively with stakeholders, often outside the environment sector, to secure mutually beneficial outcomes.

- GI is a critical infrastructure, performing multiple functions and delivering benefits for people, places and nature, as well as for the economy.
- GI comprises a living network of green and blue spaces, corridors and other environmental features in urban and rural areas at a local and landscape scale¹.
- Benefits of GI include outdoor recreation and access; enhanced biodiversity and landscapes; producing food and energy; adapting to climate change; flood protection; clean air and water.
- These benefits support health and wellbeing; make better places to live, learn and work; and enhance resilience to climate change.

Figure 1: GI networks at landscape scale. Enlarged diagram available [here](#). (page 26)



Figure 2: Examples of multiple benefits provided by GI



Photograph courtesy of ARUP. Enlarged diagram available [here](#). (page 11)

- GI is important for connecting biodiversity, landscape and access. It comprises features like wildlife areas, woodlands and field margins; road verges and rights of way; parks and gardens; canals, rivers and wetlands; green-grey infrastructure such as green bridges and green walls/roofs; natural flood management and sustainable drainage.
- GI can be delivered as part of new development via the planning system; upgrading of existing GI and retrofitting of new GI in areas where provision is poor.

¹ Whilst much GI is publically accessible, not all GI can provide public access.

Why Green Infrastructure Matters to Natural England

Whilst GI is an asset, it is also an approach that optimises delivery of environmental services and benefits for people, places, nature and the economy. GI delivers across our three Conservation Strategy (C21) themes and is pivotal to delivering place-making, resilience and growth:

1. Putting people at the heart: **Place-Making for Nature and People**

As part of people's everyday experience of nature, GI helps to deliver our ambition to put 'people at the heart' of the environment'. Often close to where people live, GI connects people with nature, improving health and wellbeing and contributing to the beauty and prosperity of the places where they live, learn, work and visit.

2. Resilient landscape and seas: **Resilience to Climate Change**

Re-connecting urban, urban-fringe, coastal and rural areas across multiple scales contributes to building resilient landscapes and seas and enhances landscape character. GI can reduce the impacts of climate change on towns and cities, for example by providing more resilient water supply and natural flood risk solutions.

3. Growing Natural Capital: **Growth and Prosperity**

GI is a collection of connected natural capital assets managed to provide ecosystem services and benefits for people and nature. Delivering high quality, well designed and maintained GI will grow the natural capital of city-regions, rural-urban fringe (including Green Belts) and rural areas. Biodiversity and environmental net gain can lever investment in new and existing GI assets. Taking a GI approach can help manage pressures and improve the quality and performance of housing, industry, transport, energy, agriculture, and is essential for economic growth and prosperity.



The natural capital and ecosystem services approaches are broadly equivalent to the GI approach. GI is a network of connected natural capital assets. An 'ecosystem service' is broadly equivalent to a GI 'function', and the 'need' for GI is usually referred to as 'demand' in ecosystem services parlance.

Drivers and Opportunities

In England over **80% of people live in urban environments** and [ONS projections](#) shows the number is set to increase. Our towns and cities face challenges such as pollution, flooding, heat and extreme weather impacts on infrastructure. Often these are diagnosed and treated in isolation and yet GI innovations² can help address these challenges in a more joined up way.

There is growing evidence to support the **economic and business case** for GI. [London's public green spaces](#) are valued at £91 billion³. A [Sheffield](#) study found for every pound spent by the Council on parks, £36 of services are supplied. The challenge is to realise these values in budgets through innovative payments for ecosystem services and other market based instruments.

The **inter-relationship(s) between town and countryside** is vital, with urban populations often benefitting from rural and urban-fringe GI and natural capital e.g. woodlands, sustainable drainage or wetlands contributing to natural flood management (NFM). Any environmental land management (ELM) system needs to recognise these inter-dependent relationships, and maintain and manage GI into the future. Well designed and maintained GI alongside [linear infrastructure](#) (such as transport networks, canals and rivers) can play an important role connecting town and countryside.

Across England there is an unequal spatial distribution of environmental goods and services⁴ giving rise to environmental and social inequalities. **Environmental deprivation** is strongly associated with existing measures of deprivation and is linked to place, with urban and coastal areas being

² Natural England [Annual Horizon Scanning Synthesis](#) 2017

³ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/11015viv_natural_capital_account_for_london_v7_full_vis.pdf

⁴ Sustainable Development Research Network, 2004 Environment and Social Justice: Rapid Research & Evidence Review

most vulnerable. GI can help address these inequalities and changing demographics, targeting interventions (new and retrofit) where they are most needed such as GI close to where people live.⁵

Policies driving the GI agenda, such as the 25 YEP, the Industrial Strategy and Clean Growth Strategy, are summarised in annex 1.

What Outcome Natural England Wants...

- More, better quality, well managed GI⁶ at local and landscape scales, delivering multiple benefits for the people and places that need them most, in line with emerging GI standards.
- GI embedded in national and local policy, including statutory development plans (strategic, local or neighbourhood plans) and local industrial strategies (LISs) and delivered by developers, infrastructure providers and land managers.
- Strategically planned and designed GI, developed collaboratively through partnerships and co-created shared plans, integrated with local natural capital plans and environmental land management, as a means of delivering environmental net gain, nature recovery networks, accessible natural greenspace and resilient landscapes.

Where... we will focus our work on areas where there is greatest opportunity and most need for new and enhanced GI, shifting our geographical focus to prioritise:

- Environmentally deprived urban, urban-fringe, rural and coastal areas, where there is not enough good quality green infrastructure.
- Growth areas and corridors, creating inter-city green growth corridors through investment that regenerates natural capital and creates prosperous places to live and work.

How... we will deliver our work aligned to the following 6 themes. The GI delivery plan will develop these themes in more detail.

1. National GI projects:
 - Developing a framework of GI Standards and testing in up to 6 local areas by 2019
 - Support the Parks Action Group to test solutions to issues faced by England's public parks and green spaces to ensure their multiple benefits are enhanced for communities.
 - Developing next generation GI Strategies to embed 25 YEP GI ambitions in local planning and strategy
2. Place-based GI projects:
 - GI for growth and net gain: embedding GI outcomes through new development, focusing on areas with major change such as growth corridors/garden towns.
 - Green urban recovery: developing an urban nature recovery network for people and wildlife that tackles environmental deprivation and delivers 25 YEP targets for net gain, community forests and re-purposed green belts.
 - Urban/rural interactions: embedding GI approaches in nature recover networks, new environmental land management schemes and natural flood management
 - Coasts and Seas: GI approaches for enhancing coastal towns through living coasts project.
 - Cohesive Investment: joining up multiple funding mechanisms such as those controlled by LEPs, for bigger, better GI.
3. Develop and promote a GI chargeable services offer
4. High impact evidence and horizon scanning to address gaps and capture GI benefits
5. GI conversations that put people at the heart of decision-making, locally and across government.
6. GI skills training on what tools and techniques work best for what job.

⁵ [Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment visits to urban greenspaces \(2009-2016\) \(JIP027\)](#), Natural England 2018

⁶ This can include green infrastructure in new developments, upgrading of existing green infrastructure and retro-fitting of new green infrastructure in areas where provision is poor.

Annex 1: Key Policy Drivers for Green Infrastructure

25 Year Environment Plan	Green Infrastructure is a theme that threads through the 25 YEP. Net gain in chapter 1 provides a key mechanism for securing better quality green infrastructure. It includes reference to natural capital, woodland, sustainable drainage systems (SUDs), natural flood management and soils which are all highly relevant to GI. The Nature Recovery Network in chapter 2 will link existing sites with urban green and blue infrastructure to bring a wide range of public benefits. Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing is a key theme in chapter 3 and includes a commitment to update green infrastructure standards. A full summary of GI in the 25 YEP is attached here .
Industrial Strategy	Highlights importance of ' <i>enhancing natural capital as an essential basis for economic growth and productivity over the long term</i> ', achieving this through ' <i>infrastructure investment that aims to regenerate natural capital</i> '. Four Grand Challenges include artificial intelligence and big data; clean growth; the future of mobility; and meeting the needs of an ageing society.
Clean Growth Strategy	Recognises that the land and agriculture sectors play a significant role in low carbon growth, with UK forests absorbing 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide a year.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The revised NPPF outlines that Plans are to take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure. GI is identified as a strategic policy area to be included in strategic plans. Green belt protection is maintained and strengthened and requires compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt land are to be made where land is removed.
EU Exit	Proposed new land management system with its focus on public goods for public money and on all land, offers significant opportunities for GI integration.
Public Health Outcomes⁷:	Framework recognises the significance of accessible outdoor space as a wider determinant of public health.
Sporting Future⁸	Highlights potential of our natural capital (e.g rights of way, canal and river paths, National Parks and AONBs, accessible forests and open spaces) to meet physical activity needs.

Annex 2: Further Reading

Published Documents

[Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards in Towns and Cities](#), NE

[Cities Alive: Rethinking Green Infrastructure](#)

[Invest in Green Infrastructure video](#)

[Local Green Infrastructure](#), 2011

[Green Bridges Technical Guidance Note](#), Landscape Institute, 2015

[Green Infrastructure: and Integrated approach to Land Use](#), Landscape Institute, 2013

[Greenspace design for health and well-being](#), Forestry Commission, 2012

[Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance](#), NE 2009

[Maximising linear infrastructure resilience, environmental performance and return on investment](#), LINet 2017

[Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment visits to urban greenspaces \(2009-2016\) \(JP027\)](#), NE, 2018

[Microeconomic Evidence for the Benefits of Investment in the Environment 2 \(MEBIE2\) \(NERR057\)](#), NE 2014

Internal Guidance:

[Green Infrastructure briefing note](#)

[GI Case Studies](#)

⁷ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/545605/PHOF_Part_2.pdf

⁸ [Sporting Future](#), 2015

Appendix 3: Next meeting

Wednesday 10th July 2019

10.30 am – 2.30 pm (room available 9am – 3pm)

Red Kite room, Suite D, Natural England, Unex House, Bourges Boulevard, Peterborough, PE1 1NG.

[View map](#) (Google)

Telephone 0300 060 3900

Natural England Unex House reception desk: 0208 026 1774

How to get there

1. The office is a 10-minute walk from the station. If you are on foot, walk from the station towards the multi-storey car park (Perkins yellow) on the right hand side of Station Road, near the traffic lights. Just before the car park entrance/exit, on the right there's a footpath/cycleway leading to an underpass. Go through the underpass; walk past the steps on your left and bear right, to come up onto Bourges Boulevard, a dual carriageway. Cross the road at the first set of lights.

Alternative route: turn right out of the station, walk through the main car park (watch out for cars obviously!) and turn right through the yellow framed exit onto the road. Then follow 2. and 3. below.

2. Look for Asda and the 'Pets At Home' shop ahead of you on the right. Head towards 'Pets At Home' and then walk down the right hand side of this building, keeping it on your left.
3. Walk past a barrier and small car park; at the end of the 'Pets at Home' building is another barrier which marks the main entrance to the Unex House car park.

The walking route has some areas of uneven surfaces and no drop kerbs. If you have walking difficulties, visual impairment or use a wheelchair you may wish to consider taking a taxi from the station, especially if you are taking this route on your own for the first time.

Car parking

There is limited visitor parking on site; contact the NE reception desk on 0208 026 1774 before your visit to find out if there is a space you can use.

If there isn't, there's ample parking available in the public car parks close by (see Google map - link above).

Access to building

Unex House is shared with 3 other companies and the building is open from 7.00am to 7.00pm.

For access into the building, press the Natural England buzzer to the left of the front entrance. The NE office is on the first floor; press the buzzer to the right of the NE office door to gain access.

Sign in at reception; Fiona (or another Natural England colleague) will come and meet you.

You should wear Natural England pass cards at all times when in the building.

Entry to and exit from the building is via the main front doors. The other ground floor doors are for emergency evacuation use only.

SLAF
Suffolk Local Access Forum

Westhorpe Lodge
Westhorpe
Nr Stowmarket
Suffolk

SLAF
C/O Suffolk Highways
Phoenix House
Goddard Road
Ipswich
IP1 5NP

Tel: 01473 260159
Email: slaf@suffolk.gov.uk
Web:
<http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum/>

Your Ref:
Our Ref: DB/AM01
Date: 31st October 2018

I am writing in my capacity of Vice Chairman of the Suffolk Local Access Forum, as you are aware Local Access Forums were constituted as part of the 2001 Wildlife and Countryside Act and act as a statutory consultee on matters of access with a wider responsibility for public enjoyment of the countryside.

The Agriculture Bill is now working its way through parliament and we are asking that you as a local MP support the wider provision of access during the passage of the legislation.

The Government's consultation in February of this year gave little practical detail, the bill does not identify particular aspects and we are asking that you might make input in a number of ways.

The early Countryside Stewardship Schemes made funds available to farmers and landowners to provide permissive access. My own farm was involved in providing access under a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme from 2007 to 2017. The most recent Countryside Stewardship Scheme does not permit permissive access due to EU rules not permitting such payments.

I led a delegation in March 2011 with MPs Dr Dan Poulter and David Ruffley to meet Richard Benyon who was at the time DEFRA Minister of State, we raised concerns about the loss of permissive access and were told at the time that access is not supported by EU funding and for that reason they were removed from later stewardship schemes. The minister was able to inform us at that meeting he was able to bring back educational access under future schemes.

As the UK leaves the EU we have a golden opportunity to create an Agricultural Support system that delivers wider public benefits and meet the wider needs of the country. Michael Gove has stated a central theme is public money for public goods.

Clearly public enjoyment of the countryside alongside food production is an important public good. I am sure you appreciate the health and well-being of exercise and greater provision for people to enjoy the countryside.

Permissive access has worked well but there should be the opportunity to provide permanent routes under any new law.

Particular emphasis should be placed on improving access around places of high population and linking existing routes and providing circular ones.

There is no doubt that the existing rights of way network can be very variable, some parishes are well provided and others have very limited paths.

The provision within the network for horse riders in many areas is poor and this raises serious safety issues. Under our own Higher Level Stewardship Scheme we were able to provide a superb network off road for horse riders linking with our neighbours but the scheme came to an end in 2017.

Better public access clearly brings with it responsibilities in particular for owners to control their dogs and people to keep to the available routes, however I believe it is possible to deliver a partnership between landowners and government for people to both enjoy and appreciate the wider countryside and this bill can deliver that.