

Geldeston Landholdings
Report by Asset Officer

Summary: This report summarises the current landholdings of the Broads Authority in regard to the Geldeston area and identifies reasoning for the retention or disposal for each parcel. Members views are sought on the preferred options identified in Section 4.

1 Background Information

- 1.1 Two large sites at Geldeston Locks were originally purchased by the Great Yarmouth Port and Haven Commissioners (see coloured pink and blue on plan Appendix 1). The public house and the majority of car park area within the land coloured pink were subsequently sold in 1980 for £18,000.

2 Current Landholding

- 2.1 The current landholding breaks down into three parcels as follows:
- (i) 64 metres of 24hr moorings, shown at Appendix 2
 - (ii) approximately 1 acre of woodland behind the 24 hour moorings shown at Appendix 3
 - (iii) approximately 11.679 acres of marsh and associated access, shown at Appendix 4, where sporting rights are retained by the original landowner
- 2.2 As part of the regular review of assets held by the Broads Authority as required by the Asset Management strategy, in 2013 officers identified that the moorings continue to support the Authority's statutory navigation purpose, and therefore are identified for retention.
- 2.3 However, the area of woodland at Geldeston was identified as no longer required for any specific purpose and in addition brings liabilities regarding the maintenance and safety issues for public in regard to the trees.
- 2.4 In respect of the marsh, officers identified that this land had originally been purchased for the disposal of dredged material, and was instrumental during the last dredging campaign of the upper Waveney.

3 Recent Developments

- 3.1 Following the Broads Authority decision to offer the woodland for sale, it has since been registered as a community asset, as has the marsh. This means that should the landowner notify its intention to sell, any community groups

can register an expression of interest in the purchase of a community asset and a moratorium period totalling six months is enforced, during which time the Authority is not able to exchange contracts with any party, although negotiations can continue. This is to provide community groups with time to develop proposals and raise funding, which can then be considered alongside any other bids received.

- 3.2 As a result of the publicity surrounding the proposed sale of the woodland, interest has also now been received for the sale of the marsh. It was agreed that the Navigation Committee should therefore be consulted on the future of this site, and to understand the relationship with other landholdings in the area.
- 3.3 Advice from NPS has indicated that it would be possible to sell the marsh whilst still retaining dredging disposal rights to the site, and the estimated current value is up to £45,000. However, retention of sporting rights by the original owner (which rights are actively pursued) may adversely affect perceptions of quiet use and enjoyment in the minds of prospective purchasers and therefore have a significantly depreciating effect on bids which is difficult to quantify.
- 3.4 However, additional complexities would also be involved with any proposed sale of this site, as we are also advised that Critchell Downs applies, which is a government provision to ensure that land offered for sale by government departments are first offered to the original landowner, at market value. Additionally, part of the site which has been made up for vehicular access is currently used as informal parking and is valued by local people who park here to access the footpath network, and as an overflow car park for the pub.
- 3.5 Officers have therefore reviewed the value of the site in relation to the Broads Authority statutory purposes. A recent survey of the marsh notes that the site consists of three distinct habitat areas:
 - (i) Wet marsh dominated by reed sweet grass with areas of sedge and reed canary grass. Nettles, willowherb and bindweed occur along the dyke bank. Within the marsh there are also frequent and extensive patches of water mint, skullcap and purple loosestrife.
 - (ii) Marsh grading into dry grassland occupies the eastern end of the site – difficult to access owing to vegetation growing over dredging disposal area.
 - (iii) Dredging disposal area – high dry bank with some willow scrub present on Southern edge; remainder of bank dominated by mix of nettles, thistle, hemp agrimony, bindweed and willowherb.
- 3.6 It can therefore be seen that the site also has inherent biodiversity value as an unmanaged area of wet marsh, with numerous footdrains, providing suitable habitat for mollusc species. The valuable source of nectar for butterflies was also noted at the time of visit. Surrounding marshes are grazed although many not to the level observed in previous years; site therefore contains a different type of habitat compared to its neighbours. Whilst due to the small

size of site, wet nature, high river bank and isolation from other amenity areas it means that this site is not suitable for enhancement as a public access site apart from the informal car parking currently enjoyed, as a past location for dredging disposal the site retains high value as a potential future disposal site.

- 3.7 It is therefore suggested that this site continues to fulfil statutory purposes of the Broads Authority and as such meets the test of the Asset Management Strategy to retain.

4 Conclusion

- 4.1 In conclusion, the following approach is suggested;

- (a) The 24hr moorings be retained
- (b) The woodland be disposed, following the regulatory Community Asset process and appropriate evaluation of all bids received, and that the Broads Authority places a restriction on the sale that allows the continuation of public access to this area
- (c) The marsh be retained

- 4.2 Members' views are sought on this position.

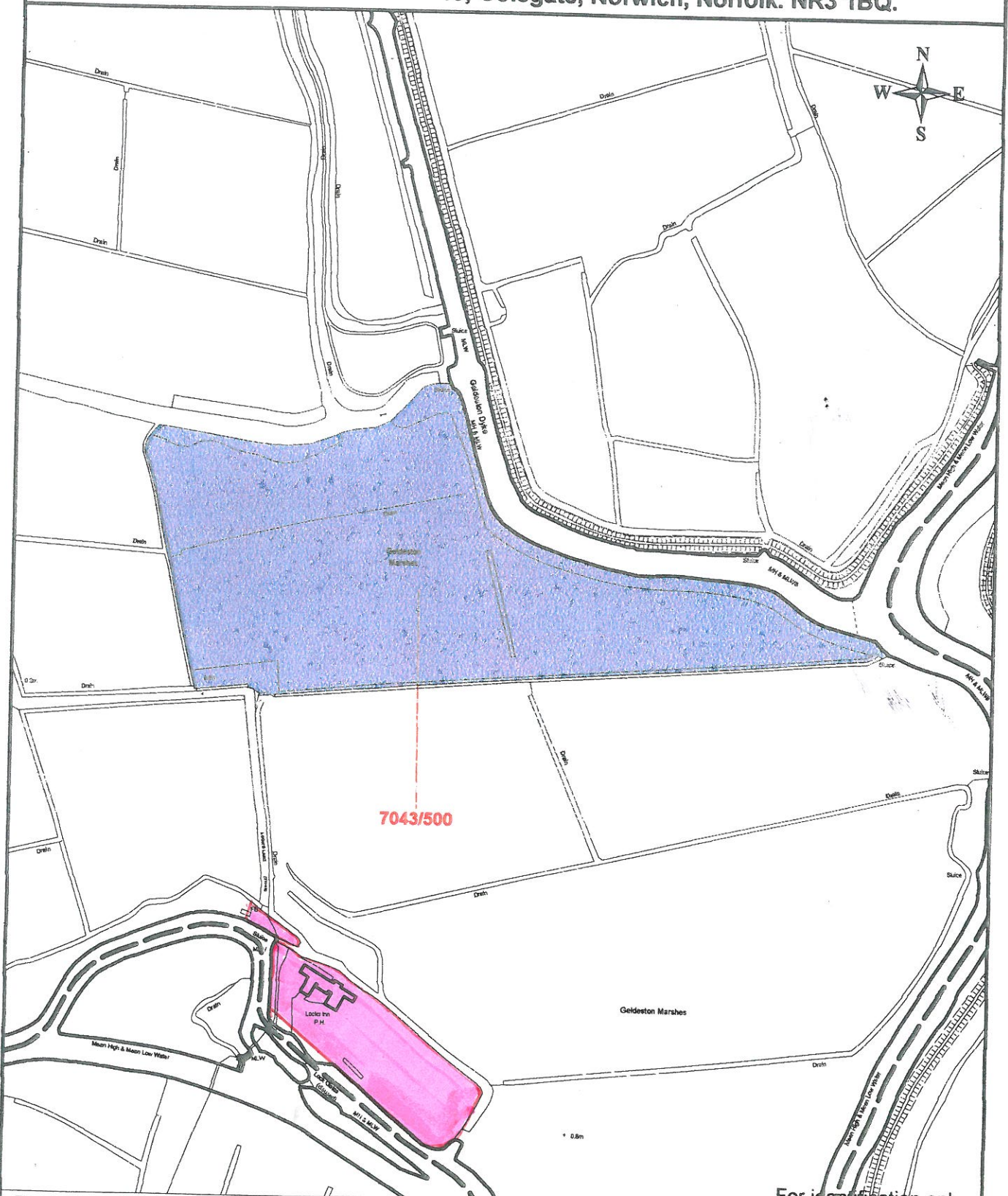
Background papers:	Broads Authority report May and November 2013, March and July 2014
Author:	Trudi Wakelin/ Angie Leeper
Date of report:	3 October 2014
Broads Plan Objectives:	None
Appendices:	APPENDIX 1 - map of original purchase APPENDIX 2 – plan of moorings APPENDIX 3 – plan of woodland APPENDIX 4 – plan of marsh



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APPENDIX 1

Property Consultants Ltd.
on behalf of The Broads Authority
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For identification only.

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GELDESTON - Lock's Lane

Geldeston Marshes **THE LOCKS PH**

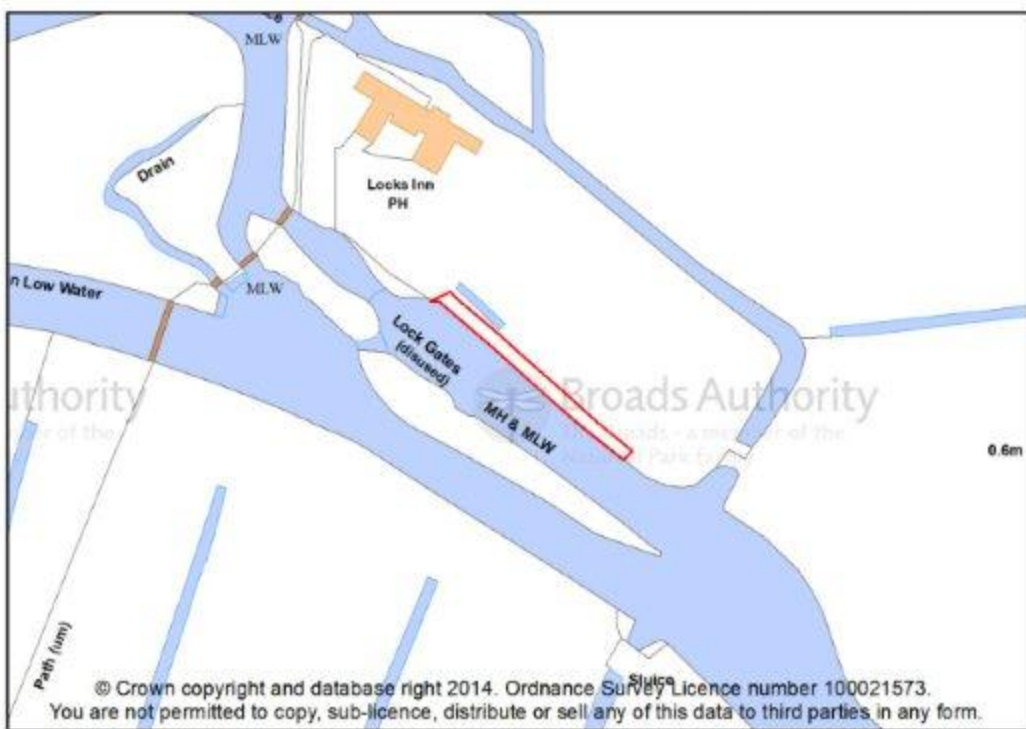
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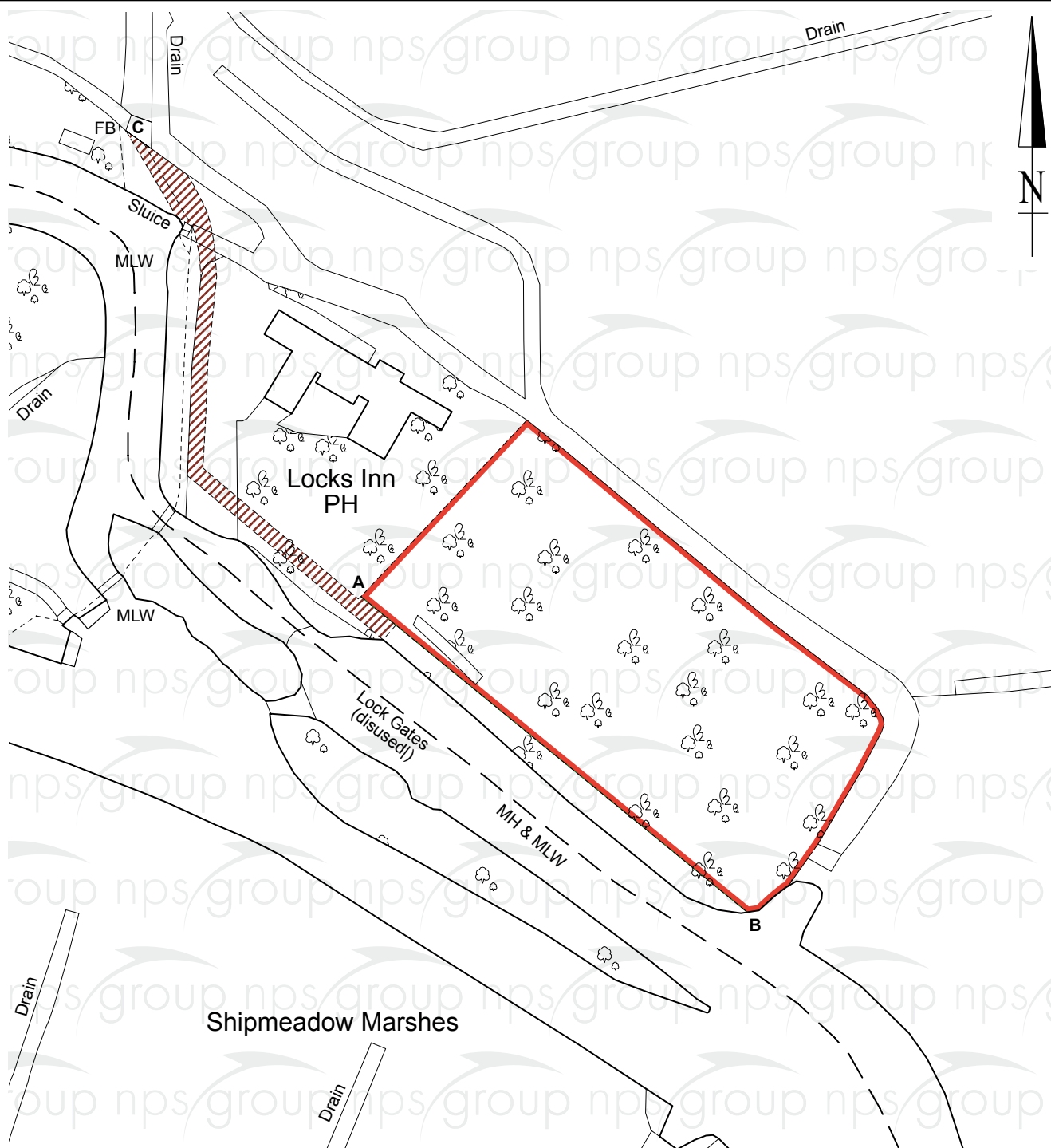






Broads Authority
The Broads - a member of the
National Park family

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GELDESTON - Locks Lane Woodland adjacent to The Locks PH

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Not to scale

Date: MARCH 2013

Plan No. **BA-7038-500-7**

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