

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.

Recommendations:

- (i) That members agree to the retention of the 24hr mooring and marsh.
- (ii) That members agree to dispose of the woodland, 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
- (iii) That the Chief Executive be delegated to evaluate bids and conclude the sale

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 at 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 by South Norfolk Council as a community asset, as has the marsh. This means that following the Broads Authority notifying its intention to sell, any community groups can register an expression of interest in the purchase of a community asset within a 6 week notification period. South Norfolk District Council has written to all potential interested parties, with a deadline of 15 October 2014 and has received notification from the River Waveney Trust of their intention to submit a bid. A moratorium period totalling six months is then enforced, which would expire on 4 March 2015, 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; the 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.

5 Navigation Committee Consultation

5.1 The Navigation Committee were consulted at their meeting on 23 October 2014, and agreed with the office's conclusions and proposed way forward.

6 Evaluation of Bids

6.1 The Asset Management Strategy sets out the criteria to be considered when seeking to dispose of Broads Authority assets (Appendix 5). It is suggested that this be followed, with additional consideration given to:

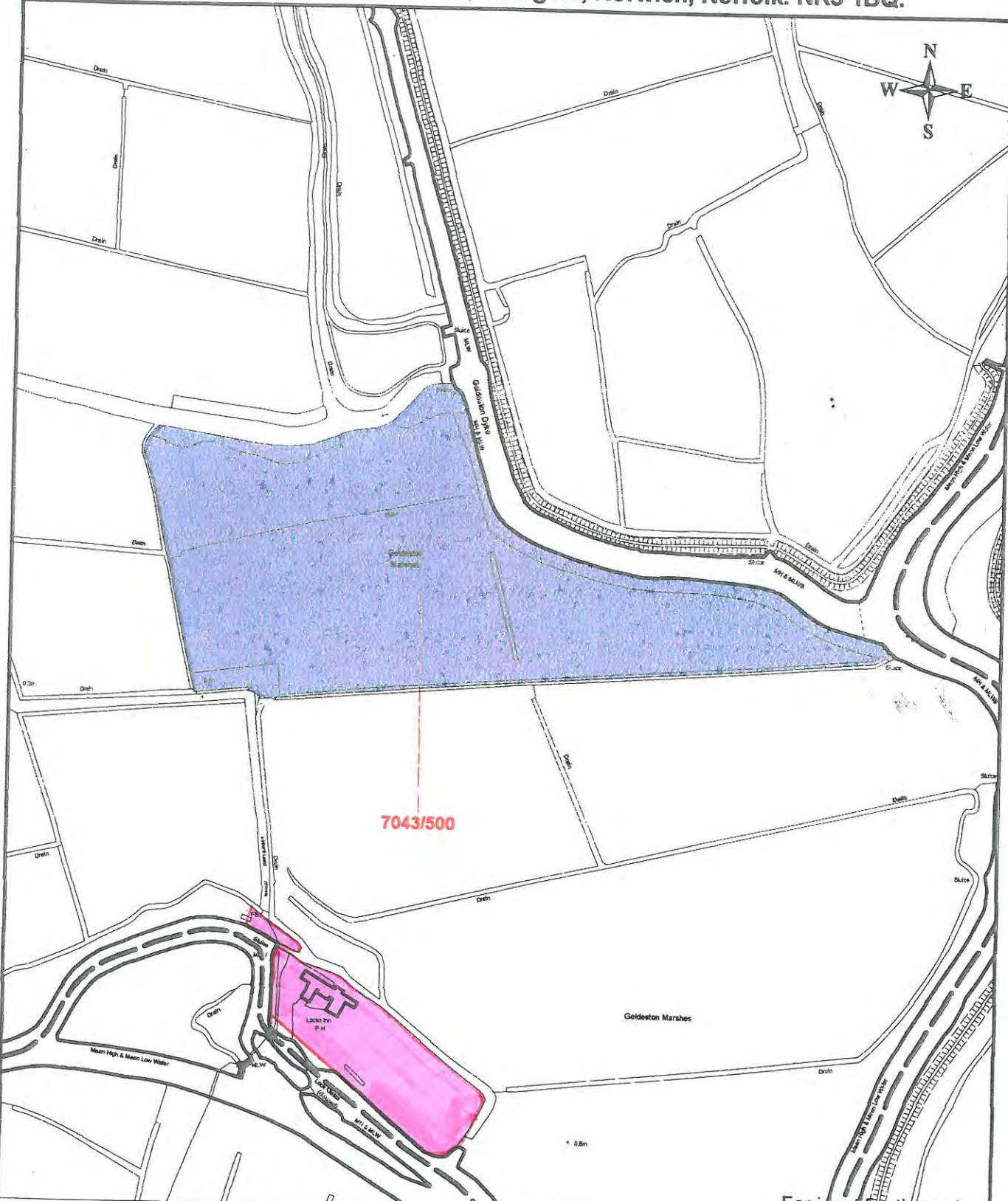
- public access
- transfer of liability
- the Management plan for the land to include intended short/ long term use and overall best value for the Broads Authority

Background papers: Broads Authority report May and November 2013, March and July 2014

Author: Trudi Wakelin/ Angie Leeper
Date of report: 28 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
APPENDIX 5 – extract from Asset Management Strategy



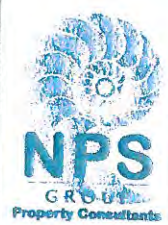
For identification only.

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Broads Authority. Licence No: 100021573. 2007

GELDESTON - Lock's Lane

Geldeston Marshes ■ **THE LOCKS PH** ■

THIS MAP IS TAKEN FROM ORDNANCE SURVEY DIGITAL DATA.
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: TM.3908 9116



PLAN No. 7043/500

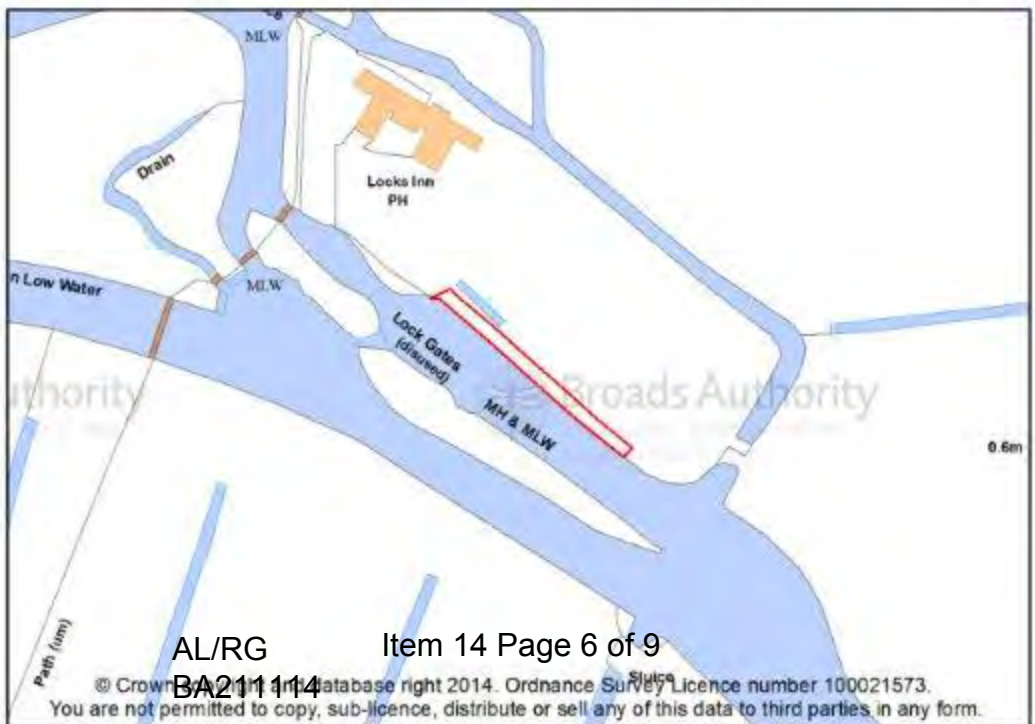
DATE: 26/04/2007 SCALE: 1:3500

DRAWN BY: R.J.BUNTON

APPENDIX 2



© GetMapping, 2012



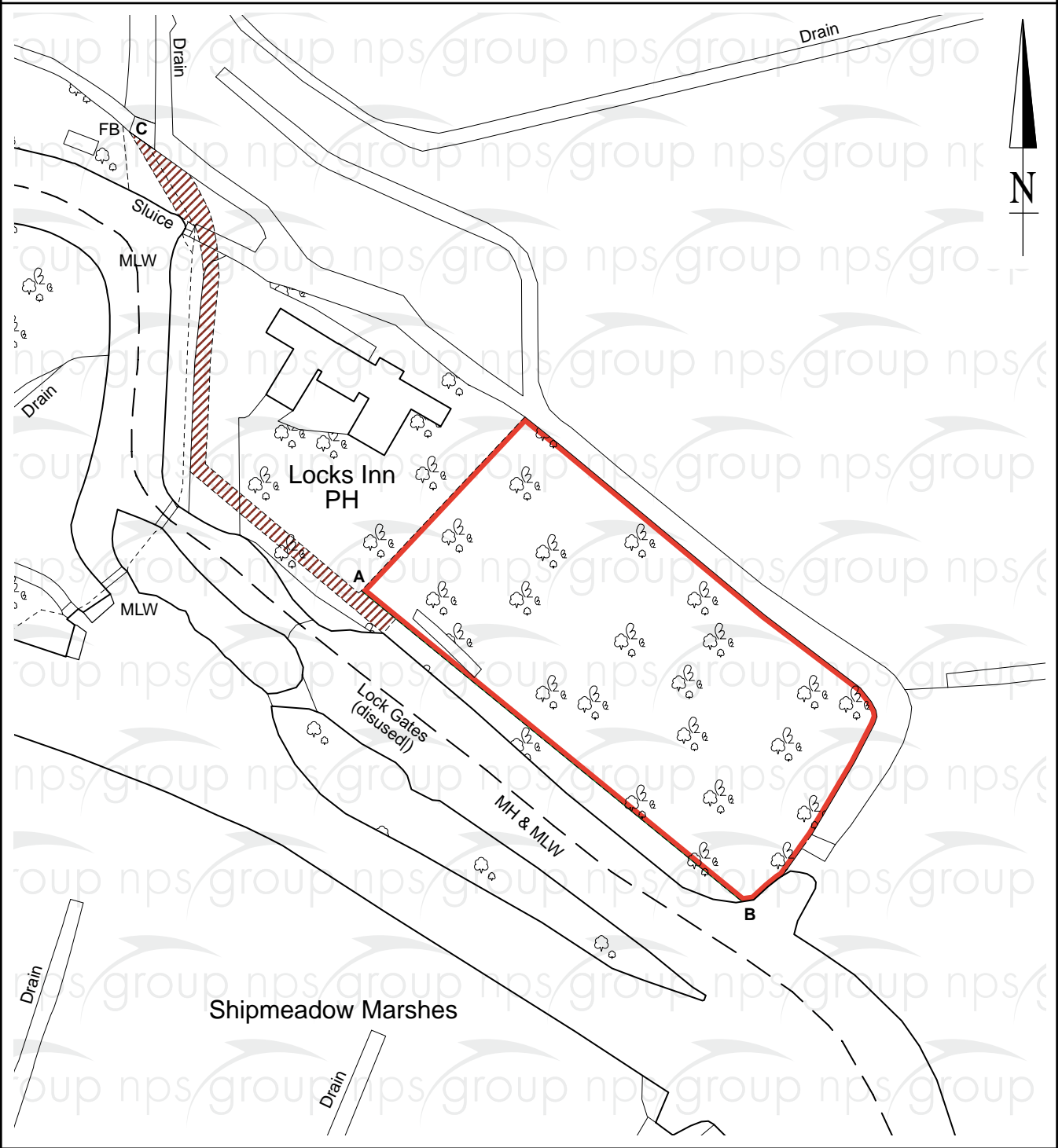
AL/RG

Item 14 Page 6 of 9

BA2111114



NPS Property Consultants Ltd,
on behalf of The Broads Authority,
Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road,
Norwich, NR1 1RY.



This map is taken from Ordnance Survey digital data. National grid reference: TM. 3906 9084

**GELDESTON - Locks Lane
Woodland adjacent to The Locks PH**

NPS Property Consultants Ltd,
Lancaster House, 16 Central Avenue,
St Andrews Business Park,
Norwich, NR7 0HR.

Not to scale

Date: MARCH 2013

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

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Broads Authority. 100021573. 2013.





Extract from Asset Management Strategy

7. Guidance for Procurement and Disposal

Land and Buildings (Operational and Community) and Infrastructure Assets

- 7.1 Because of its limited capital budget, and in order to minimise maintenance and running costs, the policy of the Broads Authority is not to purchase land and property except in certain specific circumstances. Instead the Authority prefers to facilitate the acquisition of land by partner organisations, which are able to manage it in accordance with the Authority's Asset management principles (Section 3). Partner organisations can include parish councils and community groups, charities etc.
- 7.2 The circumstances under which the Authority will consider the acquisition (whether freehold or, more commonly, leasehold), of land and property are as follows:
- as a last resort, to protect land and property which is of critical importance to the enhancement and integrity of the Broads, subject to all other options having been exhausted; e.g. the How Hill Estate which was purchased to maintain the estate and provide a demonstration project for large scale conservation management.
 - for key operational reasons, such as the acquisition of the operational base at Thorpe St Andrew, or sites for the disposal of spoil; and
 - to provide key community and visitor benefits as identified in the Authority's strategies and priority objectives, including the provision of 24 hour moorings in identified locations.
- 7.3 In all such cases the Authority must take professional advice to satisfy itself that the costs of the acquisition are reasonable, and also that they are proportionate to the benefits which will be attained.