

Norfolk Local Access Forum
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 27 April 2022
at 10.30am at County Hall, Norwich

Member:

Martin Sullivan - Chair
Ken Hawkins
Chris Allhusen
Penny Carpenter
Vic Cocker
Andrew Darby
Simon Fowler
Kevin Grieve
Lana Hemsall
Suzanne Longe
Elizabeth Meath Baker
Maxine Webb

Representing:

Motorised Vehicles / Pathmakers
Walking
Landowners
Norfolk County Council
Walking
All Abilities Access
Walking / Pathmakers
Health and Wellbeing
Norfolk County Council
Equestrian
Landowners
Norfolk County Council

Officers Present:

Matt Hayward	Lead Project Officer Walking and Cycling
Nicola Ledain	Committee Services Officer, Democratic Services
Katy Owen	Protected Landscapes Manager
Ed Stocker	Farming in Protected Landscapes Adviser
Su Waldron	Project Officer (Environment Team)
Russell Wilson	Senior Trails Officer (Infrastructure)

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Andy Brazil, Fraser Bowe, Ruth Goodall, Paul Rudkin, David Hissey, Mike Edwards, Bethan Edmunds, Niall Pettitt and Jason Moore.

2. Chair's Announcements

- 2.1 The Chair thanked those members who were retiring from the NLAF; Andy Brazil, Vic Cocker, Bethan Edmunds, Mike Edwards, David Hissey, Suzanne Longe, Louise Rout and Paul Rudkin. He also welcomed the new members that were at the meeting today as observers; Rob Lodge, Karen Davison, Paul Baker, Birgit Griem, Rebecca Durant, Sarah Morgan and Anne Killett.

3. Minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2021 were confirmed as a true record.
- 3.2 The vice chair added that it would be useful for everyone to have notes of the informal meeting that had been held on 26 January 2022.

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 There were no interests declared.

5. Urgent Business

- 5.1 There was no urgent business.

6. Public Question Time

- 6.1 No public questions were received.

7. Local member Issues / Questions

- 7.1 There were no member questions received.

8. Feedback from Events

- 8.1 The vice chair reported that a note regarding the events attended had been circulated. He highlighted that the Suffolk LAF had met, and the next meeting was on 28th April which he would not be able to attend. He noted that the Broads LAF who met in March had a presentation from the Water, Mills and Marshes project which may be of particular interest to the NLAF.

9. Meetings Forward Plan

- 9.1 The NLAF received the annexed report which outlined agenda items for the forthcoming meetings.
- 9.2 The Chair reminded NLAF members to put forward further agenda items for consideration at any point either by contacting him, the vice chair, or the officers.
- 9.3 The NLAF **NOTED** the Forward plan.

10. NLAF Subgroups' report (Permissive Access; PROW; NAIP; Vision and Ideas; Joint Communications)

- 10.1 The NLAF received the annexed reports which set out the latest discussions and recommendations of the sub-groups of the NLAF.
- 10.2 Permissive
The chair of the subgroup reported that it had been a very frustrating 6-12 months. They had written to Ministers, Members of Parliaments and DEFRA about bringing back permissive paths into the Environment Land Management Schemes project but had received very little response and therefore he had no further update. The subgroup had been disbanded for the time being but if any matters arose, they could be discussed as part of the other subgroups.
- 10.3 Public Rights of Way (PROW)
The chair of the subgroup highlighted the following points.

- The subgroup was disappointed that although the NLAF had generated some points for consideration in response to the consultation around the Transport Asset Management Plan, the points had not been transmitted into the process. This had since been followed up with officers, but the points had not made a difference so far. The chair of the subgroup was exploring the possibility of taking them forward in some way. It wasn't clear how topics and comments discussed by NLAF were reported into the main council system, and he suggested that there needed to be a mechanism of how the minutes of the NLAF filtered into other the wider system. It was suggested that the Infrastructure and Development Select Committee could receive the minutes of the NLAF as part of the NAIP report twice yearly.
- A planning application affecting East Winch footpath 2 had been reviewed and noting that NCC had made lengthy comments, the NLAF were in support of the NCC response and therefore didn't feel an additional response was necessary
- Officers within NCC had reported steadily increasing numbers of Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO), and had an increase in staffing resources however, the level of applications were still outstripping the staff allocated to deal with it. It was agreed that an update would be brought to the next meeting regarding the DMMO applications.
- The NLAF's comments on the LTP4 Implementation Plan consultation would be submitted.

10.4 Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP)

The last meeting had taken place in March. The NLAF noted that the work that had been done around achieving the NAIP had been tremendous.

10.5 Vision and Ideas

The Chair of the subgroup reported that the last meeting was held in January. The group had been seeking a way to extract value from the network, especially the ordinary footpath network as it needed to be thought of as an asset rather than a liability where costs always needed to be cut. The NLAF had recently received a report from the subgroup which showed that the economic and health benefits outweighed the costs of maintaining the network. The County Council had several future initiatives ongoing which would provide funding for the networks and secure the future of the network. This report would be circulated again for the benefit of the new members. The chair of the subgroup was standing down as a member of the NLAF and therefore the NLAF would need to find a new Chair for the group. In the interim the Chair of the NLAF would stand in as chair of the subgroup.

10.6 The NLAF

- NOTED** the PROW minutes from 4th April 2022
- ADOPTED** the title Community Access Warden by the NLAF to label parish volunteers
- SUPPORTED** NCC's position regarding a planning application affecting East Winch FP2
- AGREED** to ask NCC for its plan for dealing with increasing numbers of DMMO applications and to request an update at the next meeting
- AGREED** to invite NLAF members to write to their MPs regarding the lack of public access in emerging government programmes such as ELMS, referencing a list of concerns
- NOTED** NAIP monitoring report (October 2021 to March 2022) and subgroup minutes from meeting on 10th March 2022

- vii. **NOTED** that officers would explore potential for NLAF minutes to be received by the I and D Select Committee twice a year with the NAIP report.

11. Pathmakers Projects

- 11.1 The NLAF received the annexed report which updated the Forum on the activities of Pathmakers.
- 11.2 Pleased to report that an events manager had been appointed for the walking festival for the NCC Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. The walking festival would be aimed at those who don't normally walk either through disabilities or socio-economic background. There would also be some funding associated with this.
- 11.3 The NLAF **NOTED** the report.

12. Protected Landscapes and Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

- 12.1 The NLAF received the annexed report and presentation which outlined the Norfolk Coast partnership response to the Glover review and Government recommendations. The report also explained the Defra funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) program.
- 12.2 In response to a question regarding the level of confidence that ELMS and other land management schemes would provide funding if the Government does not, Officers explained that it was a case of not how much money was given, but how that was used and how opportunities were taken advantage of to deliver the aims. There was a high profile around diversity, equality and inclusion and a lot of the initial and pilot phases of schemes had a lot of emphasis on this. The Landscape Recovery ELMS pilot in Norfolk did include 30 evaluation points on innovative approaches to access in the countryside (which could be used for upgrading existing routes).
- 12.3 Members of the Forum were concerned that the wider ELMS scheme (once finalised) might not include restoring access. Officers confirmed that this was currently the case unfortunately.
- 12.4 With the FiPL scheme, landowners within the Norfolk Coast AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) could apply for funding for projects that met the criteria, and access was a main focus for this year's funding. Forum members were invited to spread the word about the scheme to encourage local funding applications. More detail here <https://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/>
- 12.5 Members highlighted that the previous permissive paths schemes (funded through the previous Countryside Stewardship scheme) were short lived but had been hugely successful. When the scheme ended, people were upset about the closure of their local permissive paths. Landowners had tried to retain the paths to help local tourism, but without ongoing payment for maintenance etc. there was not enough incentive to do so. There was therefore concern that this program would again be successful but too short and would disappoint a lot of people once again when it finished.
- 12.6 The NLAF **NOTED**

1. The Norfolk Coast Partnership response to the Glover review and subsequent Government recommendations
2. The presentation on the Defra funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) program

13. Countryside Access Arrangements update

- 13.1 The Forum received the annexed report which highlighted this work in terms of the volumes of customer queries received and responded to. The paper highlighted the work in terms of the volumes of customer queries received and responded to. The paper also highlighted other key areas of work.
- 13.2 The Senior Trails Officer highlighted that some of the schemes in the report had been success in receiving additional funding through Natural England meaning that some schemes were predominantly funded externally.
- 13.3 The Forum acknowledged the work that had been carried out through the various projects, and how much it had changed the access of the networks for individuals.
- 13.4 The NLA **NOTED** the progress made to date since the Countryside Access Officer posts were introduced.

14. NCC Member Sustainable Transport update

- 14.1 The Forum received the annexed report which provided a summary of the key walking and cycling projects relevant to the Local Access Forum.
- 14.2 The lead project Officer reported as an update that with reference to point 2.2, NCC had been successful in October 2021 in getting some funding from Department for Transport Capability fund which would help deliver a Norfolk-wide Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This would deliver a mapping of all the key priority active travel routes across Norfolk and would provide a prioritised list of infrastructure improvement for the short, medium and long term. As part of this there would also be a report which would cover the different stages of the delivery of the plan and would provide the local context. Due to having the list of improvements, that would help with applying for future funding such as Active Travel Funding which was due to be set up later in the year. They were already working with Countryside Access Officers to identify the prioritised routes and had reviewed all the neighbourhood plans that had been submitted and were also working with District Councils. Through the plan, engagement had started and there had been positive press regarding the plan. Officers confirmed that the Dereham LCWIP was in an advanced stage of development and would be included as part of the Norfolk LCWIP document due to be completed by the end of the year.
- 14.3 The NLA **NOTED** the progress of the walking and cycling projects as outlined in the report.

15. Major Infrastructure Projects and Planning

- 15.1 The Forum received the annexed report which updated them on the major infrastructure projects that were currently underway in the County which impacted on Public Rights of Way.
- 15.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the table of major infrastructure projects in Norfolk.

The meeting closed at 12.22pm

**Martin Sullivan, Chair,
Norfolk Local Access Forum**



If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.