

Norfolk Local Access Forum
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 04 August 2021
at 10.30am via Microsoft Teams

Member:

Martin Sullivan - Chair
Elizabeth Meath Baker
Vic Cocker
Simon Fowler
Ken Hawkins – Vice-Chair
Suzanne Longe
Mike Edwards

Representing:

Motorised Vehicles / Pathmakers
Rural / local business / economy
Walking
Walking / Pathmakers
Walking
Equestrian
Land Ownership

Officers Present:

Su Waldron
Nicola Ledain

Project Officer (Environment Team)
Committee Services Officer, Governance Department,
NCC
Lead Project Officer Walking and Cycling

Matt Hayward

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Andrew Jamieson, David Hissey, Jason Moore, Bethan Edmunds, Chris Alhusen.

The Chair also welcomed Niall Petitt and Kevin Grieve who were prospective members of the NLAF.

2. Chair's Announcements

- 2.1 The Chair reported that;
- The Norfolk County Councillors had been appointed as Cllr Penny Carpenter, Cllr Maxine Web and Cllr Lane Hemsall.
 - A record of consultations circulated and dealt with by the NLAF between meetings is available on the NLAF SharePoint site;
 - The amended constitution on the website
 - Brigid Fairman had resigned from the NLAF, and the Chair thanked her for her contribution while she had been a member.

3. Minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2021 were confirmed as a true record.

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 the reports from the three regional LAF meetings that had been held since the last NLAF meeting were in SharePoint.

Suffolk Local Access Forum had been getting more involved at planning applications. They had been looking at not just protecting the routes through new developments and ensuring there was one but also making sure it was a substantial route. They had also talked about officers from Suffolk, Essex and Norfolk together promoting a regional trail around the coast once the coast path was more established.

The East Regional LAF meeting had focused on the removal of bridges but there was concern about where the funding was coming from to remove the proposed bridges. NCC Officers confirmed that the funding was coming from Highways England and as part of the Greenways project, they had been tasked to ensure that the removal of bridges doesn't hinder any future development of railways. The NLAF would welcome information regarding the consultation about the bridges.

9. Meetings Forward Plan

- 9.1 The NLAF received the annexed report (9) which outlined agenda items for the forthcoming meetings. The Chair reminded NLAF members to put forward further agenda items for consideration at any point (by contacting him).
- 9.2 Members hoped that someone would be able to attend the next meeting to update and inform regarding ELMS.
- 9.3 Points raised in the feedback from the events report would predominately be picked up in the PROW sub group, such as the footpaths through developments, and interactive maps and their temporary closure
- 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 (10) (PROW subgroup) which set out the latest discussions and recommendations of the sub-groups of the NLAF.

- 10.2 There was some concern that the Local Access Forum set up lacked Government strategy. It was felt that there was sometimes lots of talk, but it was difficult to make an impact and put into action the decisions made.
- 10.3 It was reported that the amount spent on footpath maintenance was £70k per year. There was also going to be an additional Countryside Officers for an 18month period in the first instance.
- 10.4 A NAIP sub-group would be set up for September.
- 10.5 There was no more development from vision and ideas sub-group.
- 10.6 The Forum **AGREED**:
- That in supporting voluntary work in parishes and towns, NLAf encourages adoption of an alternative name to Footpath Warden, in order to reflect the full range of work included in the role
 - That Ken Hawkins (as PRow subgroup Chair) and Martin Sullivan (as NLAf Chair) should meet with appropriate NCC staff to explore approaches to dealing with reports of issues on the rights of way network, and to the processing of applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs).
 - That NLAf responds to proposals at Thickthorn junction to suggest that the bridge joining the two parts of Cantley Lane should accommodate use by cyclists and horse riders as well as pedestrians.

11. Pathmakers Projects

- 11.1 The NLAf received the annexed report (11) which updated the Forum on the activities of Pathmakers.
- 11.2 Pathmakers had received some funding from Paving Away and Geovation. Pathmakers were currently redefining their business strategy and communication plan along the marketing and redesigning the website. There was also a parish map board project ongoing that would be reported in the future.
- 11.2 The NLAf **NOTED** the report.

12. Countryside Access Arrangements update

- 12.1 The Forum received the annexed report (12) 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.
- 12.2 There was concern raised that footpaths were disappearing due to the amount of growth from hedgerows etc. and it was making people walk in fields, over crops and creating own trails. It was vital that this was tackled as the network would disappear. This was probably due to the wet / dry weather, and the increase in footfall due to lockdown and Covid-19. Officers encouraged reporting any overgrown footpaths on the online reporting system.

12.3 There was concern raised about enforcement and that there seemed a lack to push forward with any kind of enforcement. It had been discussed in great detail previously, but the proposed regular catch up with Officers would provide an opportunity to discuss this again.

12.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the progress made to date since the Countryside Access Officer posts were introduced.

13. NCC Member Walking and Cycling Champion update

13.1 The Forum received the annexed report (13) which provided a summary of the key walking and cycling projects relevant to the Local Access Forum.

13.2 The NLAF asked if the change of title to the Member Champion reflected a change a role or just a change of title. The role would still primarily be about walking and cycling but would also incorporate some additional aspects. It would also depend on how the Member would like to focus the role.

13.3 The NLAF **NOTED** the progress of the walking and cycling projects as outlined in the report.

14. Major Infrastructure Projects and Planning

14.1 The Forum received the annexed report (14) which updated them on the major infrastructure projects that were currently underway in the County which impacted on Public Rights of Way.

14.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the table of major infrastructure projects in Norfolk.

The meeting closed at 11.45am

**Martin Sullivan, Chairman,
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.