

Norfolk Local Access Forum
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 06 October 2021
at 10.30am in the Council Chamber, County Hall.

Member:

Martin Sullivan - Chairman
Chris Allhusen
Cllr Penny Carpenter
Victor Cocker
Mike Edwards
Simon Fowler
Suzanne Longe
Cllr Maxine Webb

Representing:

Motorised Vehicles
Land Ownership
Norfolk County Council
Walking
Land Ownership

Equestrian
Norfolk County Council

Officers Present:

Matt Hayward	Lead project Officer
Su Waldron	Project Officer (Green Infrastructure)
Russell Wilson	Senior Trails Officer (Infrastructure)
Nicola LeDain	Committee Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Jason Moorse, Bethan Edmunds, Elizabeth Meath Baker, Ken Hawkins, Mike Edwards and Cllr Lana Hemsall.

2. Election of Chair

- 2.1 Martin Sullivan was duly elected for the ensuing year.

3. Chair's Announcements

- 3.1 The Chair welcomed the new councillors to the Forum, Cllr Penny Carpenter and Cllr Maxine Webb and they introduced themselves.
- 3.2 The Chair also welcomed the new prospective members (Niall Petit, Kevin Grieve, Ruth Goodall, Fraser Bowe) who would hopefully be joining once the delegated decision had been agreed. They also introduced themselves.

4. Election of vice Chair

Ken Hawkins was duly elected for the ensuing year.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2021 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6. Declarations of Interest

- 6.1 There were no interests declared.

7. Urgent Business

- 7.1 The Chair announced that there was one item of urgent business which the Forum felt needed raising. Cllr Steffan Aquarone had recently raised an item at Full Council proposing more assistance with the loss of permissive paths, however this motion was lost. The Chair would contact Cllr Aquarone as the Forum felt it was important he knew that they too were concerned about the loss of the permissive paths.

8. Public Question Time

- 8.1 No public questions were received.

9. Local member Issues / Questions

- 9.1 There were no member questions received.

10. Feedback from Events

- 10.1 The Chair attended the broads meeting at the beginning of September. The main item discussed was regarding paths disappearing under the water

11. Meetings Forward Plan

- 11.1 The NLAF received the annexed report (16) which set out the Forum forward plan for future meetings.
- 11.2 The Chair encouraged members of the LAF to add items to the forward plan for future discussion. It was suggested that when the review of the NAIP took place, it could be useful to have an update on the items that haven't been started and if there was a plan for them to be initiated.
- 11.3 The NLAF **AGREED** the forward plan and considered items for future inclusion.

12. NLAF's subgroups' report (Permissive Access; PROW; NAIP)

- 12.1 The NLAF received the annexed report (12) which summarised the activities since the last NLAF meeting by the NLAF's four subgroup: The Public Rights of Way (PROW) subgroup; the Permissive Access subgroup. the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP) subgroup and the Vision and Ideas subgroup.

NAIP

It was reported that there hadn't been a meeting.

PROW

The PROW sub group had taken place and minutes had been circulated. There was an issue with the restricted by-way at Newton by Castle Acre. The Council had made two orders, one being to reject the deletion of the restricted by-way, and secondly to add an extension taking the route through to the common. It was likely that the locals would object to that. It would be taken to Planning Inspectorate for a final decision.

Visions and Ideas

A meeting of the Vision and Ideas subgroup would take place the following day

Permissive Paths

It was reported that it had been frustrating trying to seek some information from Defra about the future of permissive paths, and it seemed that they haven't grasped that the permissive paths network was relied upon heavily in many counties, especially as the public right of way network wasn't as robust as it could be.

It was also disappointing that the motion brought by Cllr Steff Aquarone exploring support for communities with establishing permissive paths at Full Council had been rejected. A parish paths seminar programme developed with Norfolk Association of Local Councils (NALC), NLA and NCC would include specific sessions on permissive paths. Support from Norfolk would be welcomed, as lots of time had been spent on devising a scheme with the Norfolk Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG). In correspondence with Defra, the NLA had suggested that local support was paramount and recent experience had shown that if local people gained the paths where they wanted, they would use it.

12.2 The NLA:

- i). **NOTED** the PROW minutes from 13 September 2021
- ii). **NOTED** the NLA monitoring report (March to September 2021) and Delivery Plan.

13. Pathmakers Project

- 13.1 The Forum received the annexed report (13) which updated the NLA on recent activity by the Pathmakers.
- 13.2 Lockdown had been used fruitfully and it was hoped that the Pathmakers vision would be rolled out soon. It was also reported that they wrote to George Freeman about the forthcoming Environmental Land Management System (ELMs) subsidies for land managers (inclusion of funding for permissive access within the scheme).
- 13.3 The NLA **NOTED** the update presented in the report

14. Monument

- 14.1 The Forum received the annexed report (14) and received a presentation about the project which involves reducing the burden on informal carers of those with dementia.
- 14.2 A NLA Member commented that his walking group had been contacted by isolated people who wanted to join them for the walk, but that was often difficult to establish what type and length of walk would be appropriate. Officers explained that an activity finder

would be developed as part of Monument which would help the end user find appropriate activities.

- 14.3 Officers clarified that Age UK weren't a project partner but had been consulted in relation to their work for those with dementia.
- 14.4 Officers noted that benches and seating on routes were important factors and that mapping of the routes and facilities on offer was key to be able to give individuals the confidence to carry out that activity.
- 14.5 The Norfolk Local Access Forum **NOTED** the work in progress to establish the Monument Pilot Project within Norfolk.

15. Countryside Access Arrangements Update

- 15.1 The Forum received the annexed report (15) which outlined the work in terms of the volumes of customer queries received and responded to. The paper also highlighted other key areas of work.
- 15.2 Members mentioned concerns over footpath BR4 at Fakenham which was now predominantly under water. Officers reported that a meeting had been held with all the relevant parties, and a process was agreed starting with stopping the footpath going under water by clearing debris from the water etc.
- 15.3 The boardwalk project at Cley was an Environment Agency (EA) led project. NCC officers had been in touch with the lead officer at the EA and have asked for an update as it looks complete but there maybe a small delay with one aspect. It was hoped that there could be a launch when it was ready to be opened.
- 15.4 The Local Access Forum **NOTED** the progress made to date since the Countryside Access Officer posts were introduced.

16. NCC Member Sustainable Transport Update

- 16.1 The Forum received the annexed report (16) which updated them on the progress on key projects from the Walking and Cycling Team.
- 16.2 It was reported that the NCC e-bike project includes a loan scheme to encourage e bike use in Norwich especially for access to education and places of employment <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/news/2021/06/e-bikes-funding-boost-for-norfolk>. Avoiding conflict between user groups could become an important factor with increased use of paths by e-bikes.
- 16.3 The Forum **NOTED** the progress of the walking and cycling projects.

17. Major Infrastructure Projects

- 17.1 The NLAF received the annexed report (17) which informed them of any major infrastructure projects including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) which impacted on public rights of way.

- 17.2 At Weston Longville (a parish affected by the Norwich Western Link route), it was hoped there would be some opportunity to create new permissive access as some ROW would be affected. It was suggested that the parish talks to Norfolk FWAG and landowners. Further consultation on the NWL would occur in the autumn.
- 17.3 The Norfolk Local Access Forum **NOTED** the table of major infrastructure projects in Norfolk.

The meeting closed at 11:35pm

**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.