

**Norfolk Local Access Forum**  
**Minutes of the Meeting Held on 14 April 2021**  
**at 10.30am via Microsoft Teams**

**Member:**

Martin Sullivan - Chair  
Chris Allhusen  
Elizabeth Meath Baker  
Vic Cocker  
Bethan Edmunds  
Brigid Fairman  
Simon Fowler  
Ken Hawkins – Vice-Chair  
Cllr Andrew Jamieson  
Suzanne Longe  
Mike Edwards

**Representing:**

Motorised Vehicles / Pathmakers  
Land Ownership  
Rural / local business / economy  
Walking  
Nature Conservation  
Equestrian  
Walking / Pathmakers  
Walking  
Norfolk County Council  
Equestrian  
Land Ownership

**Officers Present:**

Su Waldron	Project Officer (Environment Team)
Jason Moore	Area Manager (West)
John Jones	Head of Environment
Nicola Ledain	Committee Services Officer, Governance Department, NCC
Matt Hayward	Lead Project Officer Walking and Cycling
Michelle Sergeant	Green Infrastructure Officer (Access)
Russell Wilson	Senior Trails Officer
Lee Cozens	Community Outreach Officer, Environment Team

**1. Apologies for Absence**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Cllr Beverley Spratt, Cllr Andrew Jamieson, Cllr Danny Douglas and David Hissey.

**2. Chair's Announcements**

- 2.1 The Chair reported that;
- A record of consultations circulated and dealt with by the NLAF between meetings is available on the NLAF SharePoint site;
  - Notification from Natural England that Huddle would move to a SharePoint (information would be reviewed before being transferred to the new platform);
  - Charlotte Watts from the Experience team invited the NLAF to participate in a survey to find out what local people feel about tourism (link on the NLAF SharePoint)
  - Time recording – Members were encouraged to record their time on SharePoint;
  - Vacancies on the Forum – currently 5, recruitment is underway.

**3. Minutes**

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021 were confirmed as a true record.

- 3.2 The vice-Chair updated that recommendations and proposals from the previous report 'Widening the Reach' had been considered and some had been actioned, some were in progress. An update will be provided to a future meeting.

#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

- 4.1 There were no interests declared.

#### **5. Urgent Business**

- 5.1 The Vice-Chair reported that the Ramblers wanted support from Government for extra funding for maintaining and promoting the rights of way network. The NLAF **AGREED** to support the Ramblers' call for funding for PROW maintenance.

#### **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.

#### **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 The NLAF **NOTED** the Forward plan.

#### **10. Economic and Health Value of Public Rights of Way in Norfolk**

- 10.1 The Forum received the annexed (10) report which was brought to the meeting by the Vision and Ideas subgroup (Vic Cocker)
- 10.2 The meeting discussed the benefits derived from the PROW network and resourcing required for maintenance and sustainability.
- 10.3 The Head of Environment highlighted step change at NCC for:
- capital programme investments (£400,000 per year for 3 years) to repair and improve PROW infrastructure;

- £495,000 for 3 years to develop the Greenways initiative to stimulate active transport;
- funding through the Experience project for sustainable tourism (including £1million for physical infrastructure improvements);
- NCC member budgets (each of the 84 NCC members has £10,000 to invest in their local area on walking and cycling initiatives and to encourage green projects in line with the Council's Environmental Policy: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/environmentpolicy](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/environmentpolicy) ). The Head of Environment **AGREED** to circulate a copy of the guidance note for NCC members on how to spend their £10,000 member budget. He confirmed he was very happy to work with the NLAf to support the paper presented.

10.4 The vice Chair reported that the requirement for adequate revenue funding for PROW maintenance (a statutory duty required of NCC) cannot be replaced by external funding.

10.5 Members highlighted the need for good signage for PROW and the need for new circular routes.

10.6 The Chairman recommended further discussion with the Norfolk Association of Local Councils over the establishment of a footpath wardens' network.

10.7 The meeting congratulated Vic Cocker on an excellent discussion paper.

10.8 The NLAf **AGREED** to engage in further discussions with John Jones and colleagues to see where there were opportunities to take ideas presented forward

## 11. **NLAf Subgroups' report (Permissive Access; PROW; NAIP; Vision and Ideas; Joint Communications)**

11.1 The NLAf received the annexed reports (11) (PROW subgroup and NAIP subgroup) which set out the latest discussions and recommendations of the sub-groups of the NLAf.

11.2 The Norfolk Association of Local Councils had set up and promoted an online event under its Wellbeing initiative (Greenways to Greenspaces webinar) for the NLAf and NCC Walking and Cycling Team to highlight the many benefits of the PROW and Trails networks in the county. The event was attended by over 100 representatives from parish councils across Norfolk. Many questions were asked at the seminar, and answers will be circulated to the entire Norfolk ALC membership.

11.3 The PROW subgroup put forward a recommendation to amend Section 22.7.2.1 of the NCC Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) 2019/20 – 2023/24 (page 305) which relates to priorities given to addressing faults with PROW. The recommendation was to amend the TAMP (when it comes up for review) as follows:  
Surfaces and structures are renewed or replaced based on continual monitoring or reports from the public. These are logged for attention as follows

- Immediate - if it has health and safety implications.
- High - if it affects a Norfolk Trail spinal route, **if it is a well used local route, if it is a route which constitutes a key link in the wider network or is the main or only access to a well used location.**
- Medium - if it affects a Norfolk Trail associated route **or if it is one of very few routes in its locality.**

- Low - if it affects only an isolated generally unused path or one that runs alongside another path.

**Path closures should be applied only as a last resort, and work to resolve the problem causing the closure should be given priority.**

(Proposed changes are shown in **bold**.)

- 11.4 The NLAF **AGREED** to support the recommendation when the TAMP comes up for review.
- 11.5 The NAIP subgroup were delighted to note that NCC had provided further resources to Legal Orders and Registers team
- 11.6 The Permissive Access subgroup were frustrated with the lack of clarity on whether permissive access would be included within the ELMs scheme. Chris Allhusen recommended asking Natural England to attend a future meeting to explain more.

## **12. Pathmakers Projects**

- 12.1 The NLAF received the annexed report (12) which updated the Forum on the activities of Pathmakers.
- 12.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the report.

## **13. Countryside Access Arrangements update**

- 13.1 The Forum received the annexed report (13) which highlighted this work in terms of the volumes of customer queries received and responded to. The paper highlighted higher incidences of people using local paths during COVID with wet winter creating an increase in flooding report and bridge damage. Meetings with Highways England continue to seek resolution to issues of PROW severance by main trunk roads. Norfolk Trails had completed many repairs to steps, bridges, board walks
- 13.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the progress made to date since the Countryside Access Officer posts were introduced.

## **14. Greenways to Greenspaces**

- 14.1 The Forum received a presentation which outlined the greenways approach to encourage a more active lifestyle, deliver the Council's Environmental Plan [www.norfolk.gov.uk/environmentpolicy](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/environmentpolicy) and support sustainable tourism. The project would deliver improvements and extensions to the Trails network, develop smart data and work with communities to create and maintain greenspaces.
- 14.2 The Forum asked if landowners had been approached over permissive access (and ELMs). The Head of Environment confirmed that he had been approached by Norfolk MPs keen to support this approach and he hoped there could be opportunities for piloting permissive schemes through ELMs in Norfolk.

- 14.3 Bethan Edmunds asked about roadside verge habitat monitoring as part of the project. Matt Hayward confirmed that a monitoring programme was being developed with Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service and UEA. The scheme would involve volunteers and tree surveys alongside highway corridors

**15. NCC Member Walking and Cycling Champion update**

- 15.1 The Forum received the annexed report (15) which provided a summary of the key walking and cycling projects relevant to the Local Access Forum.
- 15.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the progress of the walking and cycling projects as outlined in the report.

**16. Major Infrastructure Projects and Planning**

- 16.1 The Forum received the annexed report (16) which updated them on the major infrastructure projects that were currently underway in the County which impacted on Public Rights of Way.
- 16.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the table of major infrastructure projects in Norfolk.

The meeting closed at 12.07 pm

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



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