



Norfolk County Council

NORFOLK LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April 2016
at 10.30am at County Hall, Norwich

Present:

Stephen Agnew
Chris Allhusen
Tim Bennett
Helen Chester
Victor Cocker
Hilary Cox
Geoff Dogett
Mike Edwards
Seamus Elliott
Ken Hawkins
David Hissey
Pat Holtom
Kate MacKenzie
Ann Melhuish
Paul Rudkin
George Saunders
Graham Sillett
Jean Stratford
Martin Sullivan

Representing:

Norfolk County Council
Land ownership / management / farming
Walking / Conservation
Equestrian / Voluntary sector
Walking
Norfolk County Council
Conservation / voluntary sector
GI and planning / conservation / sustainability
Sport and outdoor recreation / cycling
Walking / cycling
Cycling / public transport
Economic development / walking
Voluntary sector / walking
Equestrian / all-ability access
Walking / GI and Planning
All-ability access / health and wellbeing
Walking / health and wellbeing
Youth and education / walking
Motorised vehicle access / cycling

Officers Present:

John Jones
Kirsty Webber-Walton
Russell Wilson
Nicola LeDain

Countryside and Coastal Manager
Trails Officer (Development)
Senior Trails Officer (Infrastructure)
Committee Officer

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves around the table.

2. Apologies

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Ian Monson, Rebecca Champion, Fiona Prevatt, and Kate MacKenzie.

3. Minutes

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 2016 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Declarations of Interest

- 4.1 There were no interests declared.

5. Items of Urgent Business

- 5.1 The Chairman agreed to accept an urgent item of business regarding the Northern Distributor Route. A representative would be joining the meeting in July to discuss any issues that the Forum would like to raise.

6. Public Questions

- 6.1 There were no public questions raised.

7. National Trail Partnership

- 7.1 The Forum received the annexed report (7) and presentation which updated them on the progress of the group's work around the National Trail partnership.
- 7.2 There could be opportunities for match funding to extend the programme.
- 7.3 The Forum heard that the circular walks would be audited which would show if there were any other possibilities to change parts of the walk which would take it off the roads.
- 7.4 The Forum **NOTED** the report and **NOTED** that future projects would be shared with the Forum in due course.

8. Update on Coastal Access

- 8.1 The Forum received the annexed presentation (8) from Jonathan Clarke from Natural England which updated them on the progress to develop the England Coast Path and work towards completion of the entire route in Norfolk.
- 8.2 The Forum **NOTED** the presentation.

9. Delivery of Coastal Access

- 9.1 The Forum received the annexed report and presentation (9) which provided an overview of how coastal access would be delivered based on the report from Natural England.
- 9.2 It was reported that Norfolk Coastal Path was currently only suitable for walkers but access for cyclists might be able to be arranged and this would be reviewed. Footpaths could only be changed with landowner's permission.

10. Joint Local Access Forums sub-committee

- 10.1 The Forum received the annexed report and presentation (10) which outlined the proposal to hold more joint LAF meetings with neighbouring Local Access Forums.

- 10.2 The next meeting would be held on 27th June 2016 in Beccles and if anyone wanted to attend they were asked to contact the Senior Trails Officer (Infrastructure).

11. Parish Conference

- 11.1 The Forum received the annexed report (11) which updated them on the Parish Conference which was hoped would bring about better partnership working with communities.
- 11.2 The Forum suggested that the objective of the conference was made clear especially if parish councils could not attend. There was also a short discussion around the benefits of the conference and if similar events could be held in the future.
- 11.3 The Forum **NOTED** the report.

12. Sub-Groups

- 12.1 The Forum received the annexed report (12) which explained the need for sub-groups.
- 12.2. Members of the Forum were asked to express an in interest for joining one of the sub-groups before the next meeting.

13. Walking and Cycling Strategy Consultation

- 13.1 The Forum received the annexed report (13) which updated the Forum that the draft Norfolk Cycling and Walking Action Plan was currently out to public consultation.
- 13.2 The Forum felt that plan had a imbalance of proposals between those for walking and those for cycling, and that those for walking had more of an emphasis of the local walking network.
- 13.3 It would be useful to help identify the hierarchy of the documents in order to be able to follow the route that delivers the objectives and the Forum were unsure where the information from the consultation would feed into.
- 13.4 The Forum **AGREED** that the Forum supported the intentions and aims of the strategy and would like to help develop the work. They welcomed the report and as a group with the expertise can help strengthen the work.
- 13.5 It was **AGREED** that a letter would be drafted and circulated for comments.

14. Permissive Access

- 14.1 The Forum received the annexed report (14) which outlined the relationship, responsibilities and agreements made between landowners and Norfolk County Council and encouraging landowners to continue to provide permissive access on a voluntary basis.

- 14.2 The Forum felt that individuals would not be able to make much difference to the process but that it needed to be co-ordinated by Norfolk County Council. Although this had been going on for a number of years there was still not a process or model put into place.
- 14.3 There was a lack of dedication from landowners as there could be a number of landowners who would not want their paths dedicated.
- 14.4 It was suggested that Natural England could be able to help with the resource and a sub-group of the LAF could be set up to drive this forward. The process needed a simple agreement which could be signed and returned with identified routes.
- 14.5 Clarification on who would be responsible for the maintenance of the paths would also be needed. It was felt that if the landowners could take responsibility for the maintenance they could need some legal protection on which to provide permissive paths.
- 14.6 The Forum felt that there was now some urgency with this and would like to see a timescale for the conclusion.
- 14.7 It was **AGREED** that a sub-group would be convened.

15. Boudicca Way – Audit Success

- 15.1 The item was deferred to a future meeting.

16. Access Enforcement Approach and Landowner Obligations

- 16.1 This item was deferred to a future meeting.

17. Pathmakers (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) Final Branding

- 17.1 The Forum received the annexed report (15) which updated Members of the developments of Pathmakers.
- 17.2 If members of the Forum had any questions on the report, they were encouraged to speak to Seamus Elliot or the Chairman.

18. Whitwell Station Proposals

- 18.1 The Forum received the annexed report (18) which updated the Forum on the proposals for running trains at Whitwell Station and how this would impact on the use of Marriott's Way.
- 18.2 The Forum welcomed Mike Urry to the meeting, the owner of Whitwell Station.
- 18.2 The Forum expressed some concern over the plans for Whitwell Station including the ability for wheelchair to access the platform due to the gradient of the approach. It was confirmed that this would be suitable for wheelchairs and that it would be

audited by DDA.

- 18.3 Some members of the Forum were concerned about the dangers of allowing horses so close to a steam train. There would need to be significant safety been in place such as signage, holding bays or a traffic light system. There was a short discussion about how the traffic light system would work in order to keep everyone safe or other types of warning systems such as a bridge at each end of the platform.
- 18.4 The Forum heard that although Norfolk County Council own Marriott's Way, the planning authority was Broadland District Council, however Norfolk County Council want would to be content that the development did not infringe on future use of the land.
- 18.5 The Forum suggested that it was difficult to take a view as it needed an expert to provide the facts. It was **AGREED** that this would be discussed at a future meeting and the LAF would have sight of the independent risk assessment that had been carried out.

19. Future Meeting Dates

- 19.1 The future meeting dates are as follows:

Date	Time	Venue
6 July 2016	10:30am	Edwards Room, County Hall
12 October 2016	10:30am	Edwards Room, County Hall

The meeting closed at 1.10pm.

CHAIRMAN



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