

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Jill Christley
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

		Paper Number
1.	3.00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 12/07
3.	Declaration of interest	
4.	3.10 Lynda Foster Lead Adviser (Essex and Suffolk) People and Partnerships, Natural England	Presentation
5.	3.40 Coastal Guidance for Land Managers – Total Environment	LAF 12/08
6.	3.55 National LAF Conference	LAF 12/09
7.	4.05 Babergh Green Infrastructure Framework	LAF 12/10
8.	4.10 Independent Forestry Panel – visit to East Anglia	LAF 12/11
9.	4.25 A11 Underpass	LAF 12/12
10.	4.35 Correspondence / updates:	
	• Letter from Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries	LAF 12/13
	• Rights of Way and Rail Crossings – update	LAF 12/14
	• Suffolk and Norfolk Local Nature Partnership	LAF 12/15
11.	4.50 Any Other Business	
12.	4.55 Public question time	
13.	5.00 Dates & Venues of Future Meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held in SALC meeting room, Claydon on 12 January 2012
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Jill Christley
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall.

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping.

Present: Melinda Appleby (MA), David Barker (DB), Bryan Collen (Chairman) (BC), Barry Hall (BH), Margaret Hancock (MH), Ann Langley (AL), Sandy Martin (SM), Alan Moore (AM), Mary Norden (MN), Monica Pipe (MP), Norman Southgate (NS), Mike Taylor (MT), John Wayman (JW), Anthony Wright (AWr).

SCC Officers Present: Jill Christley (minutes), David Falk (DF), Jackie Gillis (JG), Steve Kerr (SK), Alan Thorndyke (AT), Andrew Woodin (AW).

Apologies – Gordon Merfield, Jane Storey.

Guest – Steve Day, John Pittock and Claire McFarlane, representing Network Rail.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to be an accurate record.

Item 7 – SCC Budget Consultation. Expenditure on Rights of Way had not been well supported by those completing the consultation survey on SCC budgets. Whilst these results have been considered in setting the budget, other factors are also taken into account.

Item 8 – SCC Countryside Sites (Dedication of Public Rights of Way). Dedication of ROW on countryside sites is progressing well. Footpaths at Clare Country Park, Dunwich (Greyfriars) and the Railway Walks footpaths have all been agreed, and will go onto the Definitive Map, and be protected in perpetuity.

Item 11 – Correspondence. JC had informed all the local Parish Clerks that the SLAF meeting was taking place, and invited them to attend. No responses had been received. This will be done for all future meetings.

3. Declaration of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Rights of Way crossings on railway lines

BC welcomed Steve Day (SD), John Pittock and Claire McFarlane from Network Rail (NR) to the meeting.

SD gave a presentation on level crossing safety:

Level crossings are one of the largest risks to the railway, accounting for 80% of all public fatality risks, 42% of train accident risks, 8% of total system risks. NR's policy is to reduce the number and types of level crossings. There is a project in place aiming to close all

types of level crossings. So far over 60 private vehicular level crossings have been closed on Anglia routes since the project started. They aim to introduce new technologies and risk management processes, work with users and stakeholders, and target misuse and abuse. *ALCRM* is the system used to measure relative risk at level crossings to determine priorities, and evaluate best risk control solutions for each case.

Insufficient sighting - Crossings where there is insufficient warning of approaching trains to give enough time to cross the line safely are given priority. NR's priority in 2012 is to address crossings with insufficient sighting. Emergency and temporary closures have been put in force at the sea wall, Brantham and Willow Walk, Needham Market. As a long term solution NR propose to divert the footpaths.

SD also outlined proposals for crossings at Gipsy Lane, Cattishall, Great Barton, Stratton Hall, Keepers Lane, and Broomhaughton, and said NR would welcome SLAF's ideas on how they could work together to close more level crossings. AW pointed out that, whilst willing to work with NR, it was not the aim of SCC to close crossings, but to protect the public right of way system and to improve safety at level crossings.

The forum discussed NR's system for prioritising work on crossings, and their proposals. MA asked if there is a hierarchy of crossings and mitigation, and what is the threshold level of use? SD responded this is set by the NR operational risks team.

SM noted *ALCRM* doesn't address actual solutions.

MH was concerned that closure of crossings was the only option being considered by NR, and asked whether they were looking at installing improved warning systems. SD explained that it is expensive and takes a long time to install warning systems, and said that NR was looking for the best solution for each crossing.

SD explained that currently there were only two temporary closures in place, and that NR would be applying to SCC and going through the usual legal procedure to obtain permanent closures of these crossings.

BC asked on what authority NR had been able to close the crossings. SK explained that NR have to go through the usual legal procedure, in this case this would involve applying for a temporary closure which would be in place for six months, during which time NR would be expected to install eg. a bridge or underpass, and then legally modifying the route.

JW asked whether safety standards are regularly tightened up. JP confirmed that with faster trains and a more safety-conscious population NR's standards and systems are constantly being reviewed.

Steve Day, John Pittock and Claire McFarlane left the meeting.

5. **A11 Underpass**

See LAF 12/01.

The forum discussed the plans to construct the underpass with reduced headroom, and agreed that they were very concerned, particularly as this will disadvantage horseriders. The Highways Agency claim that the water table (at 3m) was too high to make the underpass deeper. However, members believed that the water table was around 30m. AT advised the forum that the Highways Agency would have drilled boreholes to establish the water table depth, and suggested that the Forum could ask for these results.

ACTION SCC to advise Highways Agency that SLAF object to the reduced height underpass, and ask for borehole results.

6. Future of the Public Forest Estate

MT gave a presentation explaining the Forestry Commission's position: The Forestry Commission's regions are being reorganised, the eastern region currently covers Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and part of Cambridgeshire. In future the region will be extended to stretch south to Kent and as far west as the Chilterns. Staff numbers will be reduced by 25% from April 2012. A strategic review is in progress looking at ways to deliver services, manage the forest and increase income.

Access in the forest. Rights of way in the forest are mainly footpaths and open access land. The Forestry Commission have a concordat with the British Horse Society which grants permission for horse riding. At Thetford forest visitors mainly park at the High Lodge visitor centre which affords easy access to the forest, this has the effect of concentrating visitors in one place, leaving other areas of the forest quiet.

Independent Panel on Forestry

See LAF 12/02.

AW explained he has again reminded the IPF that a SLAF representative would like to be invited to meet the IPF during their visit to East Anglia in March. The IPF had said that SLAF could make further representations if they wish.

7. East of England LAF Chair and Vice Chair Meeting

MH reported back on the discussions at the meeting, see LAF 12/03.

DF informed the forum that SCC and Norfolk County Council were working together to bid for funding for development of the Angles Way.

There is an opportunity for one representative from each LAF to attend the national LAF conference. This is a good opportunity to meet other LAF members.

ACTION ALL please let DF know if you want to attend.

8. Huddle

See LAF 12/04

Training had been arranged for Huddle 'champions'. However, concerns were raised about the potential complexity and terms and conditions which users were required to sign before training could be given. It had been hoped that MA and MH would receive training, and from that be able to decide whether they wanted to accept the role, but both also expresses reluctance to sign up to the terms and conditions. JC suggested that SLAF could have one user set up for the purposes of training, and other users could sign up after the training if they were willing.

BH expressed concern around how Huddle would work for SLAF, and felt a protocol would be needed to ensure that views expressed on Huddle were those of the forum, avoiding undue influence of single interests. SLAF want to be sure that the Huddle champion is focussed on all issues, and expresses the Forum's views as a whole. It was felt that the role should be filled by the SLAF secretary.

AW was concerned that the champion role would be time consuming, with little benefit, but that SLAF would become sidelined on LAF matters if it didn't join. SM also urged caution on being sidelined.

ACTION AW will liaise with other LAFs, and express concerns to Anna Mangini.

9. LAF representation on Local Nature Partnerships

See LAF 12/05.

Funding is in place for the LNP and SLAF will be kept informed of developments.

10. Ipswich Waterfront update

See LAF 12/06.

The two proposed options for traffic management and public rights of way on the waterfront were outlined by SK and discussed by the forum.

MH raised particular concerns about having cyclists and drivers in the same place, and felt that removing vehicles from the waterfront altogether would be the safest option. It was explained that property owners in the area have 'private rights' to drive along the bridleway, which makes it difficult to monitor and exclude other drivers. MH believed a lot of cars along Northern Quays are just looking for somewhere convenient to park, but there are car parks in the area.

SM was concerned that the terminology in the proposals was confusing, and believed that people completing the questionnaire didn't always understand them. He believed pedestrianisation, whilst it might be initially resisted, was the best option for Northern Quays.

11. Paths for communities

DF told the forum that the Treasury had announced a new funding package to aid rural tourism. This includes £2m for public rights of way countryside. DF is working with the Dedham Vale and Stour Valley Project to coordinate a claim, and asked SLAF members to let him know of any possible schemes or ideas that may benefit from this funding.

BH said that the Heart of Suffolk project had identified projects but these had not been implemented and were with SCC legal team.

AWr said that Sustrans had purchased some land between Elmswell and Woolpit, but had not been able to go ahead with their scheme due to lack of funds.

ACTION ALL notify DF of schemes that could be included in SCC's bid for funding.

12. Any other business

Ipswich Chord SK outlined the current position: the Inspector had asked for clarification on objections. SCC are currently awaiting confirmation of dates for the hearings (possibly 14/15 February 2012). There are still concerns over the design of the new bridge.

Sustrans had withdrawn their objection as Network Rail had agreed to provide an access ramp.

Rights of way will be closed but an alternative route will be provided for some of the closure period

Ipswich Waterfront MH requested the 'path ahead closed' signs at Pizza Express are removed.

ACTION SCC to investigate the sign at Pizza Express.

13. Public question time

No members of the public attended the meeting.

14. Dates and venues of future meetings.

3.00pm on Thursday 12 April 2012. Venue – Walberswick Village Hall.
Meeting dates for the coming year will be set at the next meeting.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Coastal Guidance for Land Managers – Total Environment
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

A. Guidance on Public Rights of Way Affected by Coastal and Estuarine Change or Management

There are three broad scenarios where rights of way could be affected by coastal or estuarine change:

1. Maintenance or improvement of defences which also support rights of way. This work may be led by land managers or the Environment Agency.
2. Managed realignment, where there is deliberate action to realign defences. This will generally be led by the Environment Agency.
3. No active intervention, where nature is allowed to take its course – either on eroding coasts or where defences are allowed to degrade due to lack of ongoing repair and improvement.

In order to ensure public access is, as far as possible, protected within these scenarios, the county council has developed the guidance shown at appendix 1. The guidance has been developed in conjunction with the Flood and Coastal Policy Manager and the Area Rights of Way Manager and attempts to balance the needs of land managers and the county council's duty to 'protect and assert' the public highway. The guidance is on the county council's website and is being distributed to land managers and agencies, and has been adopted as best practice by Essex County Council.

B. "Total Environment"

The county council and other coastal agencies (e.g. the Environment Agency) are developing a more joined up approach to coastal schemes. In essence, where an officer from one agency meets a land manager to discuss a coastal scheme, for example the rebuilding of a sea wall, the officer will also consider the effect of the proposed scheme on the other agencies, for example the EA, local planning department, or Marine Management Organisation. At the very least, the officer will be able to recognise the requirements of the other agencies, and be able to make their contact details available to the land manager. This approach has been termed "total environment".

It is proposed a check list of questions is developed, with a question covering public access along the lines of: Does the proposal affect a public right of way, or other path used by the public, either directly or indirectly (for example defence works which might affect the foundations of the path)?

C. Works

Some members of the forum will have seen work in progress or completed on coastal schemes at Southwold and Orford. The former is a £45k scheme funded from the local transport plan to provide improved access, in particular for cyclists, between Southwold and Walberswick. The scheme has received very positive feedback from the local community.

The Orford scheme has been driven by the local community to raise the height of a sea wall to protect the hinterland. The sea wall carries an important footpath which will be closed until the summer to allow the new earth bank to consolidate and for a new grass surface to establish. The partners are the County Council, Environment Agency, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB and the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board. The scheme is trialling an innovative and lower cost way of enhancing and stabilising the river wall near Orford Quay. The aim is to test a new method of construction that can be undertaken by local landowners using standard equipment, which results in a more robust flood defence. As many of these river walls support public rights of way, an important aspect of the trial is to test a range of footpath surfaces, for their ease of application, durability and acceptability to the public.

Appendix 1:



Guidance on Coastal
Change Affecting RO

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	National LAF Conference
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Barry Hall
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

Introduction

This conference was organised by Natural England and DEFRA and was the first of two identical conferences, the second being held the following week in Bristol. Not surprisingly the majority of attendees at Newcastle were from the north of England although there were two others from the Eastern Region.

Morning Session

The day was chaired by Liz Newton, head of Access and Engagement work at NE. The first speaker was Andy Mackintosh from their Rights of Way team who gave an overview of how LAFs and NE relate to each other now and in the future. Budget restraints and a change in NE strategy means that they will have more of a facilitating role rather than taking the lead in many areas, they are however still tasked with the role of improving the way LAFs are supported. National and local contacts for LAFs were to be established and funding had also been secured to retain Regional LAF co-ordinators for a further 12 months. Looking ahead it was hoped that LAFs would get involved in Paths for Communities, the CAP 2014 – 2020 review, NEWP – Stepping Forward and the 10 year review of the ROWIP.

Jonathan Tweney of DEFRA's Commons and Access Implementation Team looked at the role of government in LAFs as NE had been charged with reducing the number of arms length organisations from 92 to 36. He emphasised that access would still play a strong role in the organisation and be an important part of their activities in supporting farming, enhancing environment and biodiversity and also supporting sustainable green business. NEWP para 4.33 was quoted.

Workshops

Workshops were run in the morning and afternoon sessions, covering Green Infrastructure/Localism, shared use paths, ROWIPs/LTPs and Delivering with Less, with the chance to go to one in each session. Hopefully notes will eventually appear covering each one. In the morning I went to the Green Infrastructure/Localism session and the ROWIP/LTP session in the afternoon.

Green Infrastructure relates to the connectivity of a network of green spaces which could be at different spatial scales ranging from parish to regional. The guidance published by NE in 2009 specifically mentions walking and cycling routes to help

green travel and promote healthy and cohesive communities. It appears that many local authorities are involved in producing strategies for this which can be adopted as supplementary planning guidance. The new Localism Act delegating more decision making to local authorities and communities may see more local creativity and innovation in how green spaces and RoWs are managed and improved. Participants in the workshop ranged from those who wanted to find out what it was about to those who had already been involved, not necessarily as a LAF member, but wearing some other hat such as parish councillor. Having a LAF member on a Green Infrastructure partnership can help provide the access expertise

The ROWIP/LTP session mainly covered issues highlighted in the NE good practice note on their integration issued in 2009 and was also trying to find out how LAFs had been involved in the consultations on the preparation of these plans. Again there seemed to be a mixed response, but I think that from Suffolk's point of view we had been kept well informed of the progress through officer briefings at meetings, and with opportunities for discussion and comment.

Afternoon session

The first speaker in the afternoon was Martin Shaw, NE's Senior Advisor on Access and Engagement who outlined the Path for Communities project which should be launched in April. This would use £2 million of funding from ERDP for rural grant schemes to enable practical improvements to infrastructure. This could include some elements of new bridleways or enabling higher rights on parts of the network as well as improved surfaces signing and user friendly route furniture e.g. kissing gates. It would be a community led project, but would require some organisation to handle upfront payments as funding will be claimed retrospectively and also involve a commitment to future maintenance.

There then followed a brief demonstration of Huddle. At the moment NE are carrying the cost of putting users onto the system (£8.95 a person), that is why they are restricting the numbers for each LAF, although at least one of the LAFs present had an authority who were prepared to pay for all its members to sign up to the system.

The tabs showing the various areas available to view were highlighted. Whiteboard was the area where comments could be added on anything put on that site, Task was basically a calendar showing dates of LAF meetings and other relevant happenings countrywide. At present the Discussion area was where EN were inviting comments/suggestions relating to revision of the LAF handbook. In the File folder were topics relating to guidance and training. The final tab was for People where members could put their profiles!

There appeared to be two views, those LAFs who had embraced Huddle and those (like Suffolk) who were sceptical. It appeared that a lot of time could be spent reading through everything put on the site and getting into the discussion areas. It would seem that a possible way forward would be for someone to check out the site once a month to see if there was anything relevant to bring to members' attention.

Conclusion

It was a conference well worth attending as it highlighted several areas where LAFs could get involved in the coming months and from networking with others and comments from the floor it would seem that in Suffolk we are a LAF that is functioning extremely well and that the support we get from officers and members of the authority are excellent.

The key points that came out of the day were:

- A further 12 months funding for LAF Regional Co-ordinators
- Use of Sustainable Transport Fund for rights of way
- LAFs need to get involved in Local Nature Partnerships
- NE NNR freehold estate being dedicated under sect 16 of CROW with the possibility of higher rights where practical
- LAFs can influence strategic priorities in the Green Infrastructure/ Localism plans
- LAFs have a role to play in the Paths for Communities (P4C) being launched in April
- As stakeholders and statutory consultees, LAFs should be able to influence the integration of ROWIPs and LTPs and its rolling programme.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Babergh Green Infrastructure Framework
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

The following invitation has been sent for SLAF

Dear Sir / Madam

As part of the evidence base for the Babergh Development Framework we are developing a Green Infrastructure Framework for the Babergh District which builds on earlier work provided by the Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy the boundary of which, only included the eastern part of the Babergh District.

As part of this we would like to engage with you as a key stakeholder to consider the background, key objectives and opportunities and aspirations for the future. This will cover some of the broad concepts which may apply district wide, but the intention is to primarily focus on the Sudbury and Great Cornard area as a key part of the district which was not included in the Haven Gateway Green Infrastructure Strategy. As such we invite you or a representative of your organisation to join us at a Consultation Workshop on **Wednesday 25th April 2012- 1.45pm-4.45pm at the Delphi Centre (Sports and Social Club) Alexandar Road, Sudbury.**

A detailed programme and further information about the event and the venue location will be sent out nearer the time, but in advance of the date.

Please could you confirm whether you or a representative of your organisation wishes to attend the Workshop on the 25th April, by e-mailing me on Sandra.scott@babergh.gov.uk or telephoning on 01473 825881 by Friday 13th April. If you would like any further information, please also do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to seeing you on the 25th April.

Kind Regards

Sandra Scott
Senior Planning Policy Officer
Babergh District Council
01473 825881

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Independent Panel on Forestry – visit to East Anglia
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

Following representations from SLAF and the county council, the secretariat for the Independent Panel on Forestry (IPF) invited the chair of the forum to attend the panel's visit to Suffolk on 28th March 2012. This was the last of the IPF's visits. The chair was unable to attend and Alan Moore attended in his place. Ann Langley also attended representing the Mid Suffolk Bridleways Association, accompanied by Gloria Bell, also of the MSBA.

See appendix 1 for the visit itinerary and the panel representatives attending.

The Lawshall session focussed on access, with presentations made by Anne Mason, Friends of Thetford Forest and Janet Harber, East Anglian Forest Horse Riders.

Access priorities were well rehearsed at the meeting and the following points highlighted:

- Free and open access – important in region because lack of other access, backed up by studies by Natural England,
- There are many different types of access users,
- Concerns were expressed about conversion of forest to heath because it can reduce access,
- Access users should have more representation on forest boards,
- The Forestry Commission is a green employer,
- Brandon and Thetford rank as areas of deprivation,
- The value of Forestry Commission staff's expertise, guidance and balancing competing interests was valued highly and shouldn't be lost,
- There was a focus on equestrian use at the meeting,
- Dedication of the public forest estate (PFE) under CROW Act 2000 S.16 as open access with higher rights was requested,
- Examples of woods transferring ownership resulting in restricting access were given,
- An emphasis was placed on the value for money provided by Forestry Commission,
- And overall the PFE was delivered at low cost nationally,
- This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to address access to woodlands,
- AM summarised the benefits of the PFE, including tourism, ecological, environmental and financial,

- The importance of land in the PFE in long leasehold rather than freehold was raised,
- A request was made there should be no more piecemeal sell-offs,
- In response to a request by the chair as to how a good case should be made to the Treasury for access to the PFE, AW noted S.16 dedication incurred relatively very low costs, and the lower level of liabilities and related responsibilities also incurred lower costs than, for example, dedicating and managing public rights of way,
- The case for dedicating cycling rights as well as equestrian rights was also made.

The panel members thanked the meeting for their contributions and stressed the panel is genuinely independent and coming to its own conclusions. A summary of the visit will be made available on the IPF's website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/forestrypanel/>



The IPF and invitees at the Green Light Trust woodland area, Lawshall, Suffolk.

Appendix 1

Independent Panel on Forestry

Visit to East Anglia

Wednesday 28th March 2012

Panel Members attending:

Stuart Goodall
Shireen Chambers
Mike Clarke

Secretariat attending and contact numbers:

Paul Hill-Gibbins - [REDACTED]
Trevor Staines - 07944 562352

Regional Contact:

Steve Scott
FC, Forest Services Director East & East Midlands
T: 01223 773061
M: 07810 636722

Visit Locations:

Start point:
Forestry Commission Offices, Santon Downham, Brandon, Suffolk, IP27 0TJ
By the car parking sign in map 1 [Annex B](#).
Visit route [Annex C](#).
What happens during the visit

Visit itinerary

The itinerary for the Panel is below in [Annex A](#).

Focusing on

- Mechanisms for forestry sector support
- Woodland access and the public use of forests

Media arrangements

The secretariat will take photographs throughout the day for use in publicity after the visit.

We will “tweet” ahead of and during the visit to further raise awareness of your visit and engagement with people in the area.

Discussion sessions

Panel member, Mike Clarke, will chair the afternoon session and say the thank you’s.

Practicalities

Travel arrangements

Please be at the FC offices, Santon Downham, for a **9.30am** start. We will aim to return at 4.20pm. A minibus has been arranged for the day.

Clothing

During the visit you will be meeting with a range of local and regional stakeholders so some form of smart casual business dress is appropriate. During the site visits outdoor clothing and shoes may be required. Also bring your waterproof in case of rain!

Health and safety

Key points for your attention please are those below.

Weather. Please take warm clothing with you and wear suitable outdoor footwear for the site visits. If temperatures are warm as forecast please ensure you have some water with you.

Public order. We have made every endeavour to work with representatives of local community to minimise any such risks. We have no concerns at present. If necessary we will withdraw from a situation.

Violent situation. There is always the risk that an individual or individuals we meet become agitated / aggressive. You will all be familiar with this from your day jobs, but clearly in such situations it is important not to be drawn into the argument. We are visiting to listen. If necessary we will withdraw from a situation.

Collision with other vehicles. When out of the bus, please maintain vigilance of other vehicles as we will be close to roads / tracks with other vehicles present. Please wear a seat belt if fitted.

Panel Secretariat
23 March 2012
Annex A – Itinerary

Wednesday 28 th March 2012	
09:30	Meet at Forestry Commission Offices, Santon Downham, Brandon, Suffolk, IP22 5SE (see maps annex B – office is at car parking sign on map 1)
09:30 - 09:50	Travel to Euston Estate, Suffolk. A short introduction to woodland in East England from Steve Scott, FC Area Director
09:50 - 10:50	<p>Site visit: Euston Estate, owned by the Duke of Grafton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short tour of modified estate buildings and venison larder facility funded through Axis 1 (Economic) of the EU Rural Development Programme via a partnership of Deer Initiative and Forestry Commission. Complete venison supply chain support via this and FC English Woodland Grant Scheme (Axis 2 – Environment of RDPE) <p>Discussion on mechanisms for forestry sector support.</p> <p>Joined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duke of Grafton (TBC) • Andrew Blenkiron (Estate Director) • (1 or 2 of) Peter Watson, David Hooton and Graham Riminton (Deer Initiative) • Mike Seville – Woodland Agent • Chris Rogers - estate deer manager • Corinne Meakins - FC Local Partnership Advisor • David Bole, FC Partnership & Expertise Manager • Steve Scott - FC Area Director
10:50 - 11:10	Travel to Wyken Hall
11:10 - 12:10	<p>Site visit: Wyken Hall, Stanton, owned by Sir Kenneth Carlisle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short tour of woodland and proposed woodfuel systems supported through the Renewable Heat Incentive and Axis 1 (Economic) of the EU Rural Development Programme via Woodfuel East, a multi-stakeholder partnership hosted by Forestry Commission. Complete woodfuel supply chain support via this and FC English Woodland Grant Scheme (Axis 2 – Environment of RDPE) <p>Further discussion on mechanisms for forestry sector support.</p> <p>Joined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir Kenneth Carlisle – owner (TBC) • Mike Seville - CLA and Woodfuel East Chair • Karen Russell – Woodland Agent • Harry Barnett – Woodland Agent • Edwin van Ek and Sid Cooper - Woodfuel East

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Hoppit – FC Field Manager • David Bole, FC Partnership & Expertise Manager • Steve Scott - FC Area Director
12:10 - 12:50	Travel to Lawshall. Opportunity for further discussion/conclusions on mechanisms of support.
12:50 - 14:30	<p>Working lunch at Green Light Trust Foundry, Lawshall, Suffolk</p> <p>Tea, coffee & lunch</p> <p>Discussion on woodland access and the public use of forests.</p> <p>13:10 - Short presentations (10 minutes each max) by Friends of Thetford Forest and the East Anglian Forest Horse Riders followed question and answer session and informal discussion session.</p> <p>Joined by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends of Thetford Forest - Anne Mason, • East Anglian Forest Horse Riders - Janet Harber • Save Sandlings Forest campaign - Clive Coles, Imogen Radford • Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) – Alan Moore • Andrew Woodin - Rights of Way and Access Manager • Norfolk Local Access Forums (NLAF) – Don Saunders • Mid Suffolk Bridleways Association - Ann Langley • Nigel Hughes - Green Light Trust • Dr Gerry Barnes - FC Regional Advisory Committee • Jim Lyon - FE Forest Management Director for East England • David Bole, FC Partnership & Expertise Manager • Steve Scott - FC Area Director
14:30 - 15:30	<p>Site visit: Golden Wood, owned by the Green Light Trust on behalf of the community of Lawshall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short tour of new community woodland <p>Discussion on wooded green space in rural communities.</p> <p>Joined by – as above</p>
15:30 – 16:20	Return to Forestry Commission, Santon Downham

Panel members attending:

Shireen Chambers

Shireen Chambers is the Executive Director of the Institute of Chartered Foresters.

She has an extensive background in forestry in the UK and internationally, spending time working with the Government of the Bahamas to set up a new forestry department. She is also on the Board of Governors of the Macaulay Land Use research Institute.

She was a non-executive director of Scottish Natural Heritage's West Area Board and was a former Chair of the Forestry Commission's Regional Advisory Committee for Mid-Scotland.

Dr Mike Clarke (chaired the Lawshall meeting)

Mike Clarke is the Chief Executive of the RSPB.

For over 20 years he has worked for the RSPB, beginning in 1988 as one of the RSPB's first Conservation Officers, through to his most recent role as Director of Operations, running the RSPB's work throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Dr Clarke's passion for conservation of the natural world grew out of his childhood love of nature, combined with making a difference through teenage volunteering. Dr Clarke's scientific background encompasses post-graduate and professional experience of plant and animal ecology, soil science, geology, hydrology, and climate change.

The RSPB has 1,500 employees, 12,200 volunteers and over 1 million members (including 150,000 youth members), making it the largest wildlife conservation charity in Europe. The RSPB has a number of local groups and maintains over 150 reserves across the United Kingdom.

Stuart Goodall

Stuart Goodall is Chief Executive of the Confederation of Forest Industries (ConFor).

ConFor represents forestry and wood-using businesses across the UK. Stuart has over 20 years experience in forestry and wood, working both in the public sector for the Forestry Commission in a variety of policy development and representational roles, and in the private sector with ConFor.

Stuart regularly writes and speaks on forestry and climate change matters. He is a member of Scotland's 2020 Climate Group.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	A11 Underpass
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

David Barker's email of 22nd January 2012 sums up the meeting held between Suffolk County Council, the Highways Agency, Elveden Estate and Matthew Hancock MP held two days earlier.

From: David Barker [mailto:david@ejbarker.co.uk]
Sent: 22 January 2012 20:23
To: Jill Christley
Cc: Bryan Freemantle; David Falk; Andrew Woodin
Subject: Underpass

Dear Jill,

I represented SLAF on Friday at the meeting with the Highways Agency regarding the upgrade of the A11, the meeting was very well chaired by Guy MacGregor and included 22 people from Matthew Hancock MP, SCC, Elveden Parish Council, Elveden Estate, RAF Lakenheath, Brandon Town Council Bryan Freemantle and Elizabeth Barrett were there for BHS and Anthony Wright (Sustrans)

The key decision was that the underpass will now be erected to the original height of 3.7 meters and not reduced as had been suggested.

The Highways Agency admitted they had got the water table level wrong it is not 4.5 meters but 14.5 meters!

There is no need for a liner or a pump, we had told them this some 2 years ago but it has finally been accepted.

The scare story about traffic being sent through Brandon during construction was dismissed and is not true, traffic will use the A11 during the construction period as was the case at Haughley. The Highways Agency have achieved a saving of about £23 million on the scheme by reducing the width of the outer carriageway by 25mm, savings on the Gibson Accommodation bridge for the Elveden Estate.

The question of lighting in the underpass was raised I said that there should be no artificial lighting because people on horses would not use it after dark and cyclists or walkers would use their own light, we have enough light pollution already and it is not necessary in the open countryside, probably be a magnet for teenage drinkers etc if it had light anyway.

There is a remaining problem of a cycle route through Elveden village once the road is opened and this still needs to be resolved, a safe route for cyclists would be a big advantage in the future.

Had my rant about stone curlews being more important than people the supreme irony is the one Government department the Dept of Transport is spending about £2.5 million purchasing land from another Government department Forester Enterprise to acquire land as mitigation for stone curlews!

Helps Mike Taylor reach the sale target!

However the battle for the underpass is not yet won as the scheme is not active until it is signed off by the Minister.

Kind regards

David.

The county council is delighted that the NMU underpass will be constructed to the full 3.7m height referred to in the Environmental Statement and hence horse riders will be able to remain on their horses as they negotiate the new underpass.

SCC will be working with others, including Elveden Estates, to complete the public rights of way (PROW) links to the proposed NMU Underpass by diverting Eriswell Bridleway No. 8. Costs relating to order making will be borne by the Highways Agency.

Other NMU access issues

- The County Council accepts the proposed design for the surface finish of the underpass and approaches, being a bituminous macadam base course through the underpass itself and grassed gravel for the approaches;
- Grassed gravel footways are proposed for the links between the laybys on either side of the new road and the war memorial. The County Council queried the durability of this finish for both these links and the footpath connections between FP2 Icklingham and the B1112/C616 but ultimately as the links are within the boundaries of the new road this is a future maintenance liability the Highways Agency will have to address; and
- The County Council accepts the proposed design for the surface finish of the linking footway alongside the B1112.

The email below dated 17th January 2012 from the Highways Agency is self explanatory.

From: Gibson, Robert [mailto:robert.gibson@highways.gsi.gov.uk]
Sent: 17 January 2012 10:00
To: Peter Grimm; 'BRYAN FREEMANTLE'
Cc: Owen, Neil; Oliver Garland; Henry, Don
Subject: A11 Fiveways to Thetford NMU Underpass

Peter, Bryan,

I refer to the exchange of e-mails we had late last year about the height of the NMU Underpass.

In common with all Highways Agency schemes the A11 project team have been looking for opportunities to value engineer the proposals to ensure we deliver value for money for the taxpayer. One idea considered was to reduce the height of the proposed NMU underpass under the A11 Fiveways scheme to avoid the need to provide an expensive pumped drainage system.

I am pleased to inform you that following the concerns expressed by The British Horse Society about the proposed alteration to the height of the NMU underpass the Highways Agency has undertaken further ground water level investigations in the area of the NMU underpass. Following this review I can confirm that we will now be constructing the NMU underpass to the full 3.7m height referred to in the Environmental Statement (and without the need for an expensive pumped drainage system). Horse riders will therefore be able to remain on their horses as they negotiate the new underpass.

Many thanks.

Robert Gibson, Project Manager

The scheme awaits final sign-off by the Secretary of State.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Letter from Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

Nobel House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR

Telephone 08459 335577
Email helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
Website www.defra.gov.uk



All Local Access Forum (LAF) Chairs
[By email]

14 February 2012

From Richard Benyon MP
Minister for Natural Environment and Fisheries

Dear Chairs

On 5 April 2011 I wrote to all Local Access Forums setting out 4 proposals for the improvement of information flow between Forums, Natural England and Defra. I asked Forums to consider and comment on the proposals I put forward – it is pleasing to find that all 4 suggestions were broadly supported, with two of the proposals proving significantly popular with respondents.

The proposals were:

An annual training event probably run regionally rather than nationally - This proposal was positively received. It is good to see that Forums recognise the value of networking outside regional boundaries and appreciate opportunities to learn from each other, share good practice and discuss common issues. I understand there are two events now planned for February and March and I look forward to hearing how they go.

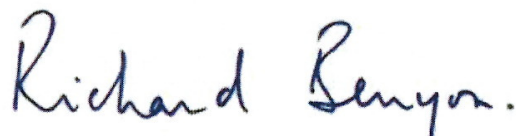
A virtual forum for LAF members - The idea of an on-line networking site for Forums was positively received. Some Forums expressed a desire to follow a hierarchical system of information flow and engagement rather than a cross-region, cross-issue method of working and reporting. There were concerns with the practicalities of on-line working. However, a pilot scheme using 'Huddle' technology is already underway, and proving popular – it's good to see Forums keen to work together and to explore new ways to communicate between Natural England and Defra. Huddle offers effective ways of supporting Forums into the future that Forums are welcome to take up, but also can abstain from.

A Memorandum of Understanding style agreement between Defra Natural England and Forums - Support for this idea was more muted than for other proposals. This seems to be, in part, because it wasn't clear to Forums what form the agreement would take or how it would be agreed. The role of Forums is set out in statute, and the understanding Forums have of their statutory basis varies. However, the role Defra and Natural England play in supporting Forums is not prescribed and a formal agreement may help all parties know what they should expect from each other.

A seat on the Rights of Way Review Committee - Some LAFs expressed doubts about Forums as local, independent bodies, being represented by ordinary Forum members, although Forum members have shown they are keen to have the opportunity to attend higher level meetings. There is no single national 'LAF view' and Forums should focus on the issues affecting their own areas, but Forum members being able to see policy making at a national level and feed back their experiences I think is very useful.

I am aware of how successful Forums are in carrying out their duties and in involving themselves in improving local quality of life. I put forward these proposals because I see them as key ways to help Local Access Forums continue to be effective and valuable players in the access agenda. Defra has tasked Natural England with improving the way Forums are supported and I am pleased to say that Natural England has committed resources to both improving communication and support. There is great deal of important work for Local Access Forums to be involved in and I want to help that happen.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Richard Benyon." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

RICHARD BENYON MP

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Rights of Way and Rail Crossings – update
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	Steve Kerr
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

This update follows the presentation by Network Rail (NR) at the Forum's last meeting on 12 January 2012.

The Suffolk Road Rail Partnership Group (SRRPG) met on Friday 30 March, 18 months after its last meeting in August 2010.

NR gave a presentation on the background to the risks associated with road and rights of way (ROW) level crossings, the various types of crossings and potential mitigation measures and overall strategic aims of the group.

NR confirmed level crossings constituted one of the biggest risk areas to its operations and addressing this risk was a national priority. NR has made a target commitment to the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) to reduce this collective risk by 25%, by April 2014. NR officers advised they were already close to meeting this reduction but further advised that regionally, Suffolk had some of the highest risk road and ROW crossings. Out of a total of 905 public and private crossings across East Anglia, 227 (25%) of these were in Suffolk.

A list of priority road and ROW crossings was tabled by NR (see Appendix 1) and officers will be working closely with NR over the coming months to investigate how the risks associated with these can be mitigated or eliminated.

Some crossing locations have been considered suitable for the provision of grade separated facilities, such as overbridges or underpasses (see Appendix 2). Others have been put forward for straightforward closure.

Another crossing under discussion but not showing on either of the attached lists is the Weatherby crossing in Newmarket. This is not recorded as a public right of way but has been used as if it were one over many years. There is considerable local opposition to NR's original proposal to close the route. NR are aware of the local strength of feeling here and are currently assessing all options, ranging from provision of an overbridge to straightforward closure.

In respect of the two ROW crossings currently the subject of temporary closures, Willow Walk (FP6 Needham Market/FP36 Creeting St Mary) has been identified as a suitable location for a stepped overbridge. This well used route, located at the edge of Needham Market, provides direct access to the wider countryside.

Concerns were raised by SCC regarding future access for both disabled users and those pushing prams, in view of the council's guiding policies and plans (e.g. Local Transport and Rights of Way Improvement Plans). NR confirmed that in that particular case, their engineers had advised there was insufficient room for a ramped access. In addition, NR advised providing ramps added further significant costs to the overall scheme. NR confirmed that similar concerns had previously been raised by neighbouring authorities and advised that these sorts of objections, although entirely valid, ought to be raised at the planning consultation stage. It is likely NR will be seeking a further extension to the closure, which expires on 21 August.

The second closure is on FP13 Brantham, a popular local walk around the Stour estuary, close to Mistley/Manningtree. There have recently been some works undertaken to clear trackside vegetation, the effect of which has been to significantly improve the sight lines. As a result, NR are proposing to re-open the crossing but have not yet re-assessed the risk or decided whether it should remain closed until the current closure expires on 29 June this year. They still, however, consider it a high risk crossing and would like a permanent solution implemented in due course.

The county council will continue to work with NR to provide the most appropriate solution for each highway crossing. The local access forum will be provided with any updates as these become available.

END

APPENDIX 1

Proposed Level Crossing Closures

High risk/non high risk/LXMP	Crossing Name	ELR (Engineers Line Reference)	Mileage/Chain	Footpath number (for council)	ORCC area (Operations Risk Control Co-ordinator)	TOP 55 crossing	County	Action	If closure-priority number
HRX	Sea Wall FPS	LTN1	60M 46CH	FP13 Brantham	GE-Central	YES	Suffolk	Closure	1
HRX	Cow Creek FP	LTN1	85M 24CH	FP18 Bacton	GE-Central		Suffolk	Closure via diversion	2
NHRX	Bunkers Hill FPS	ESK	97m 58ch	FP1 Bramfield	GE-Outer		Suffolk	Closure	3
NHRX	Broomfield FPS	LTN1	74m 14ch	FP12 Barham	GE-Central	YES	Suffolk	Closure by Diversion / Bridge	4
NHRX	Island FPS	LTN1	64m 4ch	FP18 Bentley	GE-Central	YES	Suffolk	Closure	5
HRX	Willow Walk FPS	LTN1	77m 54ch	FP36 Creeting St Mary/FP6 Needham Market	GE-Central	YES	Suffolk	Closure via diversion	6
HRX	Trimley FPS	FEL	81m 57ch	FP29/30 Trimley St Martin	GE-Central		Suffolk	Closure	7
HRX	Gun Lane FPG	FEL	82m 01ch	RB 28 Trmley St Martin	GE-Central		Suffolk	Closure	8
HRX	Grove Farm FPS	CCH	33m 71ch	FP No 11 Thurston	WA-Central		Suffolk	investigate closure with Suffolk CC. There is a simple diversion either via Barrell's crossing to the west, or via construction of a new right of way to the south of the railway to the Grove Farm over bridge.	9
NHRX	Kelsale Red House Farm FP	ESK	92m 54ch	FP26/27 Kelsale	GE-Outer		Suffolk	Closure	10
NHRX	Claydon CCTV	LTN1	73M 47CH	N/A	GE-Central		Suffolk	Closure	11
NHRX	Greens Farm FPS	LTN1	90m 15ch	FP12 Thrandeston (through underpass?)	GE-Central		Suffolk	Closure	12
NHRX	Lords No.29 FPS	CCH	37m 58ch	FP No 9 Elmswell	WA-Central		Suffolk	Closure via diversion	13
HRX	Hawkes Lane FP	FEL	83m 33m	FP 31 Felixstowe	GE-Central		Suffolk	Closure via diversion	14

HRX	Stowmarket Station MCB	LTN1	80M 54CH	N/A	GE-Central		Suffolk	Discuss with Suffolk CC how the road traffic will alter as a result of the new relief road, and what potential there is for closure	16
HRX	Thorpe Grove FPS	FEL	81M 31CH	FP1 Trimley St Martin	GE-Central		Suffolk	Investigate closure as the preferred option via diversion due to close proximity to other level crossings.	17
NHRX	Brandon MCB	ETN	86m 26ch	N/A	WA-Outer		Suffolk	Forest heath District Council has proposed closure and a bypass (JJ 13/2/12)	18
NHRX	Buxton Wood FPS	LTN1	63m 24ch	FP22 Bentley	GE-Central		Suffolk	Closure via diversion	20
NHRX	Grimstone Lane FPW	FEL	81M 48CH	FP33 Trimley St Mary	GE-Central		Suffolk	Close with diversion via Thorpe Lane AHB.	21
NHRX	Barhams FP	ESK	96M 70CH	FP9 Bramfield	GE-Outer		Suffolk	Closure via negotiation	24
NHRX	Fordly Hall FPS	ESK	93m 49ch	FP22 Middleton	GE-Outer		Suffolk	Closure	25

APPENDIX 2

Proposed Level Crossing closures and installation of bridge

High risk/non high risk/LXMP	Crossing Name	ELR Engineers Line Reference)	Mileage/Chain	Footpath number (for council)	ORCC area (Operations Risk Control Co-ordinator)	TOP 55 crossing	County	Action	Funding approved
NHRX	Brantham High Bridge FPS	LTN1	61m 74ch	FP6 Brantham	GE-Central	YES	Suffolk	Bridge or subway proposed (JJ 8/2/12)	Yes
NHRX	Broomfield FPS	LTN1	74m 14ch	FP12 Barham	GE-Central	YES	Suffolk	Closure by Diversion / Bridge	Yes
NHRX	Broomhaughton FPS	LTN1	65m 69ch	FP34 Wherstead	GE-Central	YES	Suffolk	Bridge or diversion (JJ 8/2/12) 27/2/12 - footbridge not possible due to overhead power lines. MWL or diversion now proposed.	Yes
HRX	Cattishall FPW	CCH	30M 49CH	U6318	WA-Central		Suffolk	Bridge with steps and cycle gutters proposed (JJ 8/2/12)	Yes
HRX	Gipsy Lane FP	LTN1	77m 64ch	FP39 Creeting St Mary	GE-Central	Yes	Suffolk	Bridge or underpass	Yes
HRX	Great Barton FPW	CCH	31m 76ch	RB19 Gt Barton	WA-Central		Suffolk	Bridge with ramps proposed as a bridleway crossing (JJ 8/2/12)	Yes
HRX	Keepers Lane FP	FEL	82m 32ch	BR 22 Trimley St Mary	GE-Central		Suffolk	Bridge with ramps proposed	Yes
HRX	Grove Farm FPS	CCH	33m 71ch	FP11 Thurston	WA-Central		Suffolk	investigate closure with Suffolk CC. There is a simple diversion either via Barrell's crossing to the west, or via construction of a new right of way to the south of the railway to the Grove Farm over bridge.	No

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Suffolk and Norfolk Local Nature Partnership
Meeting Date:	12 April 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Walberswick Village Hall

Views were sought on the proposed Suffolk & Norfolk Local Nature Partnership. The response from Rights of Way and Access is below.

From: David Falk

Sent: 02 March 2012 13:19

To: Gen Broad

Cc: Andrew Woodin; Peter Holborn; Alan Moore; Ann Langley; 'Anthony Wright'; Barry Hall; Bryan Collen; 'David Barker'; Jane Storey; 'John Wayman'; Margaret Hancock; Mary Norden; Melinda Appleby; Mike Taylor; 'Monica Pipe'; 'Sandy Martin'

Subject: RE: Proposed Suffolk and Norfolk Local Nature Partnership

Gen

This response is from Rights of Way and Access

From a countryside access and public rights of way perspective we would be interested in how the new organisation addresses public access to the countryside to enable people to enjoy the countryside and nature, raise awareness of conservation issues, and how the organisation positively contributes to other campaigns and initiatives that promote increased activity and healthy communities.

Previous examples in the attached were very focused on conservation issues, so the new organisation requires a wider brief to include access as well. This parallels well with the work our department is doing with SC&H Unit and the BALANCE project to balance public access with conservation in terms of managing access, providing waymarked and suggested routes within Open Access sites, promoting access with hand-held guides that inform the public of accessing the countryside and promotes less sensitive areas for higher footfall.

This leads into the wider topic of sustainable and responsible tourism, which public access to the countryside is. There are many examples, such as public access at Shotley Gate where conservation concerns have not been well communicated to the public, leading to conflict, and a different approach could have resulted in greater empathy and greater exercising of responsibility on all sides.

I see this new organisation having the opportunity and potential to address an often imbalance between public access and conservation in a more managed and constructive approach that does not rely on keeping people out of certain areas, but as in another example (Greenways and the Access to Nature Project), positively encourages access and with it voluntary activities to improve conservation - e.g. toad patrol, dormouse project, habitat management.

With specific regard to your questions, we would very much support this new organisation, the above highlights some concerns, and our contribution would be in terms of representing access at relevant meetings and feeding into appropriate strategies and plans.

I have sent your email to SLAF for any further comments.

Kind regards

David Falk
Countryside Access Development Manager
Rights of Way and Access Team