

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Agenda
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

		Paper Number
1.	3.00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	LAF 12/25
3.	Declaration of interest	
4.	3.10 Coastal Access Carrie Kerry, Countryside Officer, NCC	Presentation – CK
5.	3.30 Angles Way Project Carrie Kerry, Countryside Officer, NCC	Presentation – CK
6.	3.45 The Suffolk Coast and Estuaries Community Conference 2012	Verbal – BC
7.	3.55 Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2011-12	LAF 12/26, 27, 28 – DF Verbal – BC
8.	4.05 Open Access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural England National Nature Reserves • Review of dog restrictions • Access restrictions (teleconference) • Mapping review 	LAF 12/29 – DF LAF 12/30 – DF Verbal – DF Verbal – DF
9.	4.15 Independent Panel on Forestry	LAF 12/31 – AW
10.	4.20 Local Nature Partnership – Wild Anglia	LAF 12/32 – AW
11.	4.30 Ipswich Waterfront	LAF 12/33 – AW
12.	4.35 Updates/correspondence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trunk Roads A14/A11 • Regional LAF Chair Meeting • National LAF Conference • Forest Heath DC Dog Control Order 	Verbal – AW Verbal – DF Verbal – DF LAF 12/34 – DF
13.	4.45 Membership – renewal and recruitment	Verbal – AW
14.	4.50 Any Other Business	
15.	4.55 Public question time	
16.	5.00 Dates & Venues of Future Meetings	

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held at Dance East, Ipswich, 12th July 2012
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	Jackie Gillis
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Bryan Collen (Chair) (BC), David Barker (Vice-Chair) (DB), Melinda Appleby (MA), Barry Hall (BH), Margaret Hancock (MH), Ann Langley (AL), Cllr Sandy Martin (SM), Gordon Merfield (GM), Monica Pipe (MP), Norman Southgate (NS), Anthony Wright (AWr)

SCC Officers Present: David Falk (DF), Jackie Gillis (minutes), Steve Kerr (SK), Andrew Woodin (AW)

Apologies: Alan Moore, Cllr Jane Storey, Mike Taylor, John Wayman

Guest: Anna Mangini, Regional LAF Coordinator

2. Minutes of previous meeting LAF 12/16

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

Item 4: DF provided an update from National England concerning Coastal Access in Norfolk - .

Stretch 1 Sea Palling to Weybourne; NE are currently writing the draft coastal access report for this stretch identifying their preferred route which they expect to publish at the end of August 2012 when there will be a 12 week consultation period. They encourage all interested parties to view it on their web site. Once consultation comments have been analysed and any revisions required to the proposals made, the final report for this stretch will be published (around May 2013) and there will then be a further 12 week consultation period.

Stretch 2 Sea Palling to Hopton On Sea; NE anticipate writing to landowners along this stretch in September 2012 to advise them NE are commencing work and will start to visit any land affected in October. During autumn and winter they will be "walking the course" with land owners to identify route options, and anticipate publishing their draft coastal access report for this stretch around May 2013.

GM questioned how many people walk the Suffolk Coast as currently it is very overgrown and that it needs to be maintained.

ACTION: **AW** to contact Area Officer regarding overgrown routes
DF to contact NE regarding ongoing maintenance of new coast path

Item 8 - Independent Forestry Panel – visit to East Anglia. AW had circulated the summary of recommendations to Government. Although the report had many positives there was very little was mention of access improvements, especially with regard to equestrian and cyclists.

AL expressed her disappointment for horse riders.

MA believed that a final response may be withheld until after the triennial review early 2013.

DB felt SLAF should take this issue up with locals MPs and voice their concerns.

ACTION: BC and DB to write to Matthew Hancock MP and Dr Therese Coffey MP, cc'ed to Peter Aldous MP and David Ruffley MP.

3. Declaration of interest

AWr expressed an interest in the Suffolk Road-Rail Partnership.

4. Membership Update

Six memberships were due for renewal; BC, DB, MP, MT, JW, AWR and all have agreed to continue.

BC thanked the members for continuing and for their contribution to SLAF.

5. Ipswich Waterfront – Traffic Management Update

SK presented LAF 12/17 paper.

Seven members had attended a site visit to the docks prior to the meeting where SK advised on the various issues related to access. MH also gave a very interesting historical tour of the docks.

6. Huddle

BC welcomed Anna Mangini (AM) to the meeting.

AM introduced herself as the East of England LAF Coordinator and Herts LAF Coordinator.

A video address to LAFs from Environment Minister Richard Benyon MP was played; he stated that he wanted to hear from LAFs about what was being achieved throughout the country. An example he gave was Hertfordshire LAF addressing bridleway links and equestrian crossings. He felt that better communication and support was important from NE as the work of LAFs was highly valued due to their local knowledge and experience.

AM discussed Huddle, explaining briefly how it worked and the benefits of being able to share knowledge and experience.

DF presented LAF12/18

DF had contacted Rob Leek (NE) concerning the use of Huddle and access for all members, even if the function was read only. NE advised that originally only 3

licences per LAF had been available but this had increased to 5. However, NE does not have the staff resources to cope with greater number of users.

AM explained that Huddle was used by several Government departments in their normal day to day work. DEFRA buys the licences from Huddle for NE to allocate to LAFs as an information exchange forum. NE has to monitor the type of information being entered. Therefore the more users there are, the more staff needed for monitoring.

AM advised that it was easy to transfer a licence between LAF members, but if a licence was not used after three months it would be removed and transferred to another LAF.

SM queried the use of an IT system that was expensive and complicated compared to one that is inexpensive and easy to use and questioned whether Huddle would last.

MA commented that with slow broad band speed and limited band width it was difficult to volunteer as a user. She felt the system requirement was too great for most rural locations and should be used by people in a professional capacity.

BH preferred the use of regional conferences to share knowledge.

MP felt it would be useful for contacting other LAFs but suggested SCC officers hold the licences.

BC thanked AM for attending the meeting.

ACTION: DF arrange licences for DF, JG and AW.

7. Suffolk Road-Rail Partnership

SK presented LAF 12/19 paper.

BC stated it was essential that users are considered to ensure crossings are appropriate, for example a stepped bridge or a ramped bridge.

AW replied SCC supports a faster rail service to help businesses and Network Rail (NR) and that NR are prepared to invest and erect bridges.

However, SK commented that NR aren't following their own Risk Mitigation Procedures.

AL advised that the Port of Felixstowe Senior Safety Officer had made contact concerning the phones either side of the bridleway which cross the track wishing to remove them due to vandalism.

AWr stated that that specific route was well used by mountain bikers and SK advised that there were other options NR could implement.

DB said he had taken on the tenancy of Grove Farm at Thurston, but this was the first he had seen of proposals at that location and he hadn't been consulted.

BC suggested members could also make representations where they have a local interest.

AWr advised that Sustrans had their own meeting with NR concerning cycle routes 13 Cattishall and 51 Gt Barton and NR would consider requirements for cyclists. Cattishall is an important location as demand will increase as development takes place in the area.

ACTION: AW contact NR to encourage them to consult more widely with Parish Councils, landowners and user groups.

8. Local Nature Partnerships

MA provided feedback of a meeting she attended in May on the formation of an LNP. DEFRA received 50 applications for LNPs and are expected to announce the successful applications by the end of July 2012.

(AWr left the meeting.)

9. Babergh Green Infrastructure Study

DF presented LAF12/20 paper.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council had been through a similar process to identify GIS and as a result SCC had received funding to improve access along the Lark Valley Path.

BC raised concerns over whether Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) rates would vary between districts across the county.

DB commented that the Chilton Woods development, Sudbury, should be of a higher standard and sustainable, in line with Suffolk's aspirations to be the greenest county.

SM commented that s106 agreements were good during boom years but during recessions should be more specific. He was also concerned CIL money could be siphoned off for local authorities' statutory duties.

10. Paths for Communities

DF presented LAF 12/21 paper.

One P4C scheme being considered is the promotion of the St Edmund Way long distance path by Bury Ramblers.

DB suggested Parish Council in the eligible areas should be consulted. DF advised they were being advised through SALC.

MP suggested that AL could advise equestrian groups.

MA mentioned Waveney & Blyth Communities groups, who wish to improve the Little Ouse path and the Angles Way.

Action: AW to discuss this latter project with Norfolk CC at a meeting on 4/9/12.

(SK / AM left the meeting)

11. Review of Definitive Map Prioritisation Policy

AW presented LAF 12/22 paper.

AW requested the view of SLAF members on how to prioritise claims.

SLAF generally agreed the suggested approach was common sense and had to be the right way in most cases. Priorities should be based on whether or not it would benefit the general public.

SM stated the policy had to be objective, e.g. estimating the public use of the routes.

AW asked the meeting whether they supported having a cut off date for processing formal applications. This was not supported by the group who felt public benefit should override the age of the application.

Members agreed the proposed common sense approach and the need wherever possible to process cases in the public interest.

12. SLAF Annual Report – August 2011 - July 2012

DF presented LAF 12/23 paper.

DB stated SLAF appreciated SCC's commitment to ROW maintenance, compared to some other counties. SLAF agreed this should be a priority bullet point. He asked whether SCC had an Open Access Warden as it was felt a warden was needed on site.

DF explained that there was no longer a warden due to lack of funding. Volunteer work had been carried out by the Suffolk Coasts & Heath AONB but had ceased a year ago. He stated that SCC still dealt with enquiries and a staff member checked the sites.

BH asked whether the RSPB monitor sites on their land. DF confirmed that they do. In addition, SCC had recently completed the project with RSPB to create a trail through Snape Warren OA site, helping to keep people and dogs away from more sensitive areas of the site with ground nesting birds.

SM commented that the 6th bullet point in the Report regarding value for money provided by investment, on page 1, should be placed 1st due to its importance for tourism and the local economy.

All agreed work on updating the Definitive Map was important and appreciate there are constraints with resources.

GM felt money spent on well used routes was value for money in terms of increased health and fitness, both physical and mental. BC agreed saying taking people into the countryside was very beneficial.

Action: DF to incorporate these comments in to the report.

13. Correspondence/updates

DF presented the NICE Consultation LAF12/24 paper. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to invite a representative from Public Health to a future meeting.

Action: DF to issue invite

DF advised that Broads LAF had offered an invitation to SLAF to attend a future meeting.

Action: DF to circulate dates of meetings to BC

14. Any Other Business

DF gave an explanation of the Easy Going Trails Project and its launch at Thornham Walks by Linda Hoggarth MBE and SCC Chief Executive Deborah Cadman. Members each received a copy of the pack and were asked to advise him of locations/organisations who would benefit from receiving packs. There is hoped to be a 2nd pack in the future.

The 2012 Walking Festival and in particular the long distance challenge walk was well supported by both participants and local companies.

15. Public question time

No members of the public were present.

16. Dates and Venues for Future Meetings

18th October 2012: Beccles – Beccles Town Hall

24th January 2013: Bury St Edmunds – West Suffolk House

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2011-2012
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles



Agenda Item

Committee:	Cabinet
Meeting Date:	11 September 2012
Lead Councillor/s:	Councillor Guy McGregor
Local Councillor/s:	All Councillors
Director:	Lucy Robinson, Director Economy, Skills and Environment
Assistant Director or Head of Service:	Alan Thorndyke, Head of Highway Network Management
Author:	David Falk, Telephone: 01473 264752

Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report August 2011 - July 2012

What is the Cabinet being asked to decide?

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| <p>1. The Cabinet is asked to accept the 2011/12 annual report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) (Appendix A) and to note the report's recommendations and the action that the Council is taking to address these recommendations.</p> |
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Reason for recommendation

2. As a statutory adviser to the Council on rights of way and access matters, and as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Suffolk Local Access Forum is required to submit an annual report and make recommendations to the Council. Guidance by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs states: "We would expect the authority to respond positively to the forum's annual report and to say what actions they have taken on the advice and recommendations of the forum."

What are the key issues to consider?

3. The key issues raised by the Suffolk Local Access Forum 2011/12 report are as follows:

- a) The Suffolk Local Access Forum welcomes the continued support given by Suffolk County Council (SCC) to public rights of way and countryside access. The forum stress upon the council the importance of access for providing sustainable travel options, helping the rural economy and tourism and providing physical and mental health benefits. The forum reiterate that investing in public rights of way and access, in maintaining the network, making small scale improvements and promoting access, provides value for money with modest expenditure reaping considerable benefits to the public and boosting the tourism offer of the county.

SCC response: The Council values the benefits provided by public rights of way and countryside access and will reflect these in its priorities moving forward.

- b) The forum is pleased that the Highways Agency has backed down on its proposal to reduce the height of the bridleway underpass on the A11 dualling designs and thereby retain full height, providing access between rights of way and areas of open access either side of the A11. However, the forum remains greatly concerned that severance of rights of way by railways and trunk roads elsewhere in the county is not being adequately addressed. The forum urges the Council to press Network Rail and the Highways Agency to seek suitable solutions to severance, where possible.

SCC response: The Council is also pleased that a suitable bridleway underpass was achieved on the A11 dualling and will continue to work with the Highways Agency to seek suitable solutions on severed crossing points elsewhere in the county. The Council will continue to work with Network Rail through the Suffolk Road Rail Partnership to seek suitable solutions to public rights of way crossing railways, and impress the importance of ensuring safe access is provided rather than looking to close crossings with no suitable alternative provided.

- c) The forum welcomed the formation of the Independent Panel on Forestry to advise government on the future of the Public Forest Estate. The forum broadly welcomed the Independent Panel on Forestry vision for the future of forests and woodlands in England. However, the forum was disappointed the panel did not take the opportunity to propose the dedication of higher rights of access to meet the need of equestrians and cyclists. The forum has expressed this view to MPs.

SCC response: The Council acknowledges the importance of the Public Forest Estate, especially in Suffolk.

- d) The Suffolk Local Access Forum is keen that countryside access is protected, maintained and enhanced across Suffolk, and welcomed their involvement in developing a green infrastructure strategy for Babergh District Council and their future involvement in the Suffolk and Norfolk local nature partnership 'Wild Anglia'.

SCC response: The Council will continue to work proactively with all partners to protect and enhance public rights of way in local authority development proposals.

- e) The Suffolk Local Access Forum recognise the importance of developing the Definitive Map to be responsive to customer's needs and requests the Council to continue supporting this area and maintaining the ability to extinguish, divert and create public rights of way where needed.

SCC response: The Council continues to invest in rights of way priorities, including the Definitive Map and recognises the importance of consolidating the map and developing the map for Ipswich.

- f) The Suffolk Local Access Forum is an efficient, balanced and cost-effective forum providing an important advisory service to the Council and other organisations by raising issues regarding how the public access the countryside and use the public rights of way network for leisure, health and sustainable travel options.

SCC response: The Council acknowledges the continuing impact of the Suffolk Local Access Forum in 2011/12, its cost-effectiveness and its focus on key issues regarding countryside access and the use of public rights of way.

4. The priorities for SLAF over the coming year include:
- a) Ensuring the county council budget for rights of way and wider access continues to be sufficient to deliver a viable service and rights of way improvement plan priorities;
 - b) Severance of public access along rights of way by road and rail networks;
 - c) The future of the Public Forest Estate and preserving and enhancing public access;
 - d) The recognition of public access in the policies and development plans of other organisations; and
 - e) The development of the Definitive Map.

What are the resource and risk implications?

5. The Suffolk Local Access Forum considers that the Council should maintain an effective level of funding for rights of way and access maintenance and improvement. The Director for Economy, Skills and Environment will consider and discuss with the Cabinet Member for Roads and Transport the appropriate level of Suffolk County Council funding for the public rights of way and access network in looking at the priorities for Council revenue and capital budgets, recognising the contribution to healthy and sustainable communities and the benefits to the rural economy that these can provide.

What are the timescales associated with this decision?

6. Not applicable.

Alternative options

7. Cabinet could change the responses given by Suffolk County Council to the recommendations from the Suffolk Local Access Forum, or could suggest additional issues that it would like the forum to explore over the coming year.

Who will be affected by this decision?

8. Officers acting on these recommendations and potentially users of public rights of way, land managers and communities within Suffolk.

Sources of Further Information

- a) Suffolk Local Access Forum web pages:
<http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum/>
- b) The Suffolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan:
<http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/home/rights-of-way-improvement-plan/>

Suffolk Local Access Forum

Annual Report – August 2011 – July 2012

Introduction

1. As required by the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2002 I have pleasure in submitting the ninth Annual Report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum to Suffolk County Council as the highway authority.
2. The Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) was formed under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) in 2003. SLAF acts as an independent body to advise the Council on matters relating to rights of way and access to the countryside. It is also a statutory consultee for Natural England on mapping of open country and plans and policies produced by a wide range of organisations. The forum is administered by the Rights of Way and Access team, Suffolk County Council.
3. The forum is made up from those interested in access to the countryside and rights of way including users, landowners, land managers, members of community organisations and those with conservation interests.
4. Full membership for 2011/12 is listed in Appendix B.

Our Work

5. The forum met at quarterly intervals in 2011/12 to discuss a range of issues that have arisen from consultations, presentations, papers, reports and site visits from amongst others, Suffolk County Council, DEFRA, Natural England, Highways Agency, Network Rail, the Independent Panel on Forestry, Babergh District Council, Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership and the Forestry Commission.
6. Members of the public are able to attend meetings and have the opportunity to raise items or comment on issues discussed or related to countryside access.
7. Local parish councils are alerted to SLAF meetings in their area and invited to attend.
8. Members of SLAF attend regional meetings and conferences and neighbouring local access forums to improve access in Suffolk.

SLAF Cost

9. SLAF have their own identity to ensure they are clearly recognisable as an independent body with letter heading with PO address box, an independent email address and a dedicated website on the One Suffolk platform - <http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum>
10. The cost for servicing SLAF for 2011-12 was approximately £2,000. This includes secretariat, room hire and member travel expenses. To place this in context, the overall budget for Countryside Access is £1.2M.

Investment in Rights of Way

11. The forum congratulates officers on delivering improvements to public rights of way and countryside access in partnership with Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area's of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) through the BALANCE Project.

BALANCE is a £500k (approx) European match-funded project to manage visitors in environmentally sensitive landscapes. Rights of Way and Access have £100k (approx) of funding to deliver access improvements within the AONB. The key BALANCE access project is improving the Sailors Path (a long distance footpath between Aldeburgh and Snape) for accessibility, including wheelchair users.

12. The forum congratulates officers in delivering significant improvements to access in partnership with St Edmundsbury Borough Council Growth Area Funding. This funding is delivering improvements along the Lark Valley Path, north of Bury St Edmunds, for safe, off-road cycling.
13. The forum congratulates officers in delivering Natural England Community Funding to improve access and awareness of open access sites.
14. The forum welcomes investment in public rights of way through Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3), although are concerned this concentrates resources in urban locations.
15. The forum is concerned that within a predominantly rural county access improvements are difficult to fund in rural locations. The forum suggests that relatively low cost solutions can be delivered with rights of way improvement schemes providing a positive impact on people's quality of life, health benefits and the rural economy.
16. The forum is encouraged that officers are proactively working with community groups to develop ideas to bid to Natural England's new fund, Paths for Communities. This fund will enable the creation of new rights of way and promotion of countryside access.

Rights of Way Severance

17. SLAF is pleased that the needs of non-motorised users were incorporated into designs for the dualling of the A11.
18. However, the forum was very concerned about the intention to reduce the height of the bridleway underpass near Elveden Monument, adversely affecting its use for horse riders.
19. The forum pressed the Highways Agency on this and is delighted that they have altered the underpass design to accommodate horse riders, without the need to dismount.
20. The forum is also very concerned with Network Rail's approach to rights of way level crossings and the lack of coordination by Network Rail with a policy of closing crossings as a first option. SLAF question this approach when alternative, more suitable options may be available to improve public access.
21. SLAF received a presentation from NR on this policy and pressed the case for improving public access, not losing it.
22. SLAF supports the work of officers, especially with the Suffolk Road Rail Partnership, to improve access at a number of key crossing points.
23. The forum continues to support SCC and Sustrans' efforts in securing and improving access at the location of the Ipswich Chord.

Future of the Public Forest Estate

24. The forum welcomed the formation of the Independent Panel on Forestry to advise government on the future of the Public Forest Estate.
25. The role of the Independent Panel on Forestry was crucial to future decisions about the Public Forest Estate and SLAF was keen to be invited to a visit by the panel to East Anglia. SLAF worked closely with the Norfolk Local Access Forum prior to the visit to discuss a joint approach. The visit took place on 28 March 2012 and SLAF was able to make representation to the panel.
26. The panel published their Final Report in July 2012 and the forum broadly welcome their vision for the future of forests and woodlands in England.
27. However, the forum remain concerned about the future of the Public Forest Estate and the opportunity it offers the public for improved quality of life, health benefits, learning and contribution to the local rural economy.
28. The forum are disappointed the panel did not take the opportunity to propose the dedication of higher rights of access to meet the needs of equestrians and cyclists. The forum has expressed this view to MPs.

Babergh's Green Infrastructure Framework

29. The forum welcome the opportunity to participate in developing Babergh's Green Infrastructure Framework to preserve and enhance countryside access in the district and play a role in helping the district decide on the level of its Community Infrastructure Levy.

Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Partnership

30. The forum was encouraged to be involved at a very early stage in the consultation process to develop a Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Partnership (LNP).
31. The LNP 'Wild Anglia' gained approval from DEFRA in July 2012 and the forum are keen to be represented on the new board, ensuring that countryside access is a key issue for the new partnership.

Open Access

32. SLAF congratulates the Council in obtaining funds and delivering improvements with Natural England's Community Funding to develop signage of open access sites across the county. This project involved working with partners including National Trust, RSPB and volunteers to raise awareness of sites.
33. SLAF support the retention of extended restrictions on five open access sites beyond the standard March-July period to keep dogs on short fixed leads in the month of August to protect ground nesting birds.
34. SLAF are concerned over the cessation of open access funding by Natural England resulting in the loss of a warden to monitor open access sites across Suffolk.

Other Issues

35. **Communication between Local Access Forums:** The forum was concerned with the loss of the England Access Forum as a national voice for Local Access

Forums and expressed these concerns to Natural England. SLAF welcome the continued role of a Regional Local Access Forum Coordinator but have expressed their reservations to Natural England about replacing the England Access Forum with Huddle, an on-line resource. Access to Huddle is restricted to five members per forum and SLAF are concerned this places an unnecessary, additional burden on those members whilst limiting the scope for other members to be aware or involved with other forums on key issues.

36. **Coastal Path:** The forum is interested in the progress of a Coastal Path nationally and very interested in the lessons being learned developing coastal access in Norfolk. SLAF remain concerned that a key feature of Suffolk's coastline, its estuaries, will prevent a continual coastal route and SLAF will press Natural England to enable the Coastal Path to continue along estuaries to the first permanent crossing point.
37. **Ipswich Waterfront:** SLAF support the work of officers in securing public access along Ipswich Waterfront.
38. **Countryside sites:** The forum is pleased with the progress of dedicating rights of way on countryside sites previously managed by SCC.

Consultations

39. SLAF has been consulted on:
 - a) SCC's Budget Consultation;
 - b) Future of the Public Forest Estate (DEFRA/Independent Panel on Forestry);
 - c) Local Nature Partnerships (Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership);
 - d) Review of Open Access Restrictions (Natural England);
 - e) Draft National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government);
 - f) Consultation on Town and Village Green Registration (DEFRA); and
 - g) National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) developing guidance on walking and cycling (Department of Health).

Meetings

40. SLAF members have attended meetings on:
 - a) 20 July 2011 – Norfolk Local Access Forum, attended by Bryan Collen (Chair) to discuss a shared approach to the visit to East Anglia of the Independent Panel on Forestry;
 - b) 22 November 2011 – East of England Local Access Forum Chair and Vice Chair meeting, Cambridge, attended by Bryan Collen (Chair) to raise issues that SLAF have focused on and to develop closer working relationships with other forums;
 - c) 20 January 2012 – A11 Dualling, attended by David Barker (Vice Chair) to press case for design of new underpass to accommodate horse riders;
 - d) 28 February 2012 – National Local Access Forum Conference, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, attended by Barry Hall;

- e) 28 March 2012 – Independent Panel on Forestry visit to East Anglia. SLAF was represented by Alan Moore. The visit took place at Green Light Trust's offices in Lawshall;
- f) 25 April 2012 – Babergh Green Infrastructure Framework, Sudbury, attended by Cllr Jane Storey; and
- g) 28 May 2012 – Local Nature Partnerships, National Trust Ickworth House, attended by Melinda Appleby.

Presentations

- 41. SLAF received presentations on:
 - a) 20 October 2011 – Local Nature Partnerships, Gen Broad, Biodiversity Officer for Suffolk;
 - b) 12 January 2012 – Rights of Way Crossings on Railway Lines, Steve Day, Liability Negotiations Advisor, Network Rail;
 - c) 12 January 2012 – Future of Public Forest Estate, Mike Taylor, Forestry Commission;
 - d) 12 April 2012 – Natural England presentation on Coastal Access, Huddle and Paths for Communities provided by Lynda Foster, Natural England; and
 - e) 12 July 2012 – Natural England presentation on use of Huddle on-line forum, provided by Anna Mangini, Regional Local Access Forum Coordinator.

Site Visits

- 42. 12 April 2012 – Orford Quay, to see pilot scheme on sea wall to address erosion on a sea defence which carries a public footpath.
- 43. 12 April 2012 – Southwold, to see development of a new bridleway adjacent to a river wall to provide a route for cyclists travelling between Southwold and Walberswick.
- 44. 12 July 2012 – Ipswich Waterfront to see issues regarding public access along quayside.

Training

- 45. 26 January 2012 – Huddle. Margaret Hancock attended training on the use of Huddle, an on-line resource for Local Access Forum members provided by DEFRA and administered by Natural England. Training was provided by the Regional Local Access Forum Coordinator at Constantine House, Ipswich.

Membership of SLAF

- 46. During the past year there have been four meetings, all of which were very well attended.
- 47. DEFRA guidance advises Local Access Forum membership can be between 10 and 22 members.
- 48. At the start of this year SLAF membership was 16 members. One member resigned during the year and six members renewed. Membership currently stands at 15 members.

49. A full membership list for 2011/12 is provided in Appendix B.

Looking Ahead

50. The practice of making site visits to complement meeting agendas, meet key partners and see issues relating to access in situ will continue.

51. Priorities for SLAF over the coming year include:

- f) Ensuring the county council budget for rights of way and wider access continues to be sufficient to deliver a viable service and rights of way improvement plan priorities;
- g) Severance of public access along rights of way by road and rail networks;
- h) The future of the Public Forest Estate and preserving and enhancing public access;
- i) The recognition of public access in the policies and development plans of other organisations; and
- j) The development of the Definitive Map.

Main Recommendations for Suffolk County Council to consider are:

52. The Suffolk Local Access Forum welcomes the continued support given by Suffolk County Council to public rights of way and countryside access. The forum stress upon the council the importance of access for providing sustainable travel options, helping the rural economy and tourism and providing physical and mental health benefits. The forum reiterate that investing in public rights of way and access, in maintaining the network, making small scale improvements and promoting access, provides value for money with modest expenditure reaping considerable benefits to the public and boosting the tourism offer of the county.

53. The forum is pleased that the Highways Agency has backed down on its proposal to reduce the height of the bridleway underpass on the A11 dualling designs and thereby retain full height, providing access between rights of way and areas of open access either side of the A11. However, the forum remains greatly concerned that severance of rights of way by railways and trunk roads elsewhere in the county is not being adequately addressed. The forum urges the Council to press Network Rail and the Highways Agency to seek suitable solutions to severance, where possible.

54. The forum welcomed the formation of the Independent Panel on Forestry to advise government on the future of the Public Forest Estate. The forum broadly welcomed the Independent Panel on Forestry vision for the future of forests and woodlands in England. However, the forum was disappointed the panel did not take the opportunity to propose the dedication of higher rights of access to meet the need of equestrians and cyclists. The forum has expressed this view to MPs.

55. The Suffolk Local Access Forum is keen that countryside access is protected, maintained and enhanced across Suffolk, and welcomed their involvement in developing a green infrastructure strategy for Babergh District Council and their future involvement in the Suffolk and Norfolk local nature partnership 'Wild Anglia'.

56. The Suffolk Local Access Forum recognise the importance of developing the Definitive Map to be responsive to customer's needs and requests the Council to continue supporting this area and maintaining the ability to extinguish, divert and create public rights of way where needed.
57. The Suffolk Local Access Forum is an efficient, balanced and cost-effective forum providing an important advisory service to the Council and other organisations by raising issues regarding how the public access the countryside and use the public rights of way network for leisure, health and sustainable travel options.

Bryan Collen

Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

David Barker

Vice Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

July 2012

Suffolk Local Access Forum – Members Details

Melinda Appleby – Since childhood Melinda has had an interest in wildlife and conservation. With a degree in Rural Environmental Studies, Melinda has pursued these interests in her career with the Countryside Movement, the RSPB, NFU, and at Suffolk County Council.

David Barker (Vice Chairman) – With his wide experience within the NFU, CLA and as a former Countryside Agency commissioner, David seeks to work to balance all interests involved in countryside access. David is also Chair of Creating the Greenest County. Renewed membership in July 2012.

Bryan Collen (Chair) – Bryan has been involved in the NFU, Anglian Water, Internal Drainage Boards and the County Council's Rights of Way Liaison Committee. Renewed membership in July 2012.

Barry Hall – Barry is a retired local government officer with experience of working on countryside and rights of way projects. Barry retains an interest in countryside access as a member of the RSPB, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and National Trust.

Margaret Hancock – Margaret is a Blue Badge Tourist Guide. A keen cyclist, Margaret is passionate about promoting sustainable tourism by encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Margaret is a volunteer for the Out and About charity, providing support for children and young people with disabilities.

Ann Langley – Ann is involved with the Pony Club, the Easton Harriers Hunt, and is a founder member of the Mid-Suffolk Bridleways Association which works to maintain and open bridleways. Ann is also Councillor on Ashfield cum Thorpe Parish Council.

Councillor Sandy Martin – Ipswich Borough Council and SCC Councillor. Sandy Martin lived in Halesworth from 1971 to 1993, and has lived in Ipswich since then. He is a keen walker and cyclist. He was elected to Suffolk County Council in 1997 and to Ipswich Borough Council in 2002, and is currently a Councillor on both Authorities. He acted as deputy to the County Portfolio Holder for Environment & Transport from 2001 to 2005, and is now Portfolio Holder for a Fairer and Greener Ipswich at Ipswich Borough Council and Leader of Suffolk County Council Labour Group.

Gordon Merfield – With a background in agriculture, since the 1980's Gordon has been active in participating and coaching in field sports events as well as being interested in the wider countryside and walking in foreign countries.

Alan Moore – Alan is a retired Head of Regional Planning and Transport for the East of England Regional Assembly, and is now a volunteer with the Stroke Association and West Suffolk Headway. With a particular focus on access for

disabled people, Alan is interested in the issue of local access and the need to ensure that it is properly and effectively provided for in both urban and rural areas.

Mary Norden – Mary worked for the RSPB, is a member of Suffolk Bat Group, a bat worker for Natural England and supports the Bat Conservation Trust's national monitoring programmes. Mary is also a keen walker and cyclist. Mary resigned from SLAF in 2012 due to relocating with a change in employment.

Monica Pipe – Monica farms just north of Ipswich and has many well-used footpaths on her land including the promoted Fynn Valley Walk. Renewed membership in July 2012.

Norman Southgate – Rights of way officer for the Suffolk Landrover Owners Club, Norman keeps members aware of where they can legally go off-road. He is a keen sailor and member of the Copdock & Washbrook footpath maintenance working group.

Councillor Jane Storey – SCC Councillor for Thedwastre North, has interests around walking, dog-walking, off-road driving and being a farmer's daughter with some strong views along the lines that with rights come responsibilities. Jane believes that we should preserve our Rights of Way, including BOATS and Bridleways, but not at the expense of common sense. These are an important part of presenting Suffolk as the Greenest County, useful for getting from A to B, but also for getting people who do not normally exercise out and about at little or no expense.

Mike Taylor – With a Forestry Commission background, Mike brings experience of managing large tracts of land as a business whilst ensuring that conservation and public access are fully taken into account. Renewed membership in July 2012.

John Wayman – A former district council member farming in the Stour Valley, John feels that he now would like to contribute to a the wider rural picture. Renewed membership in July 2012.

Anthony Wright – a long-term cyclist and walker, Anthony has worked with several local authorities on the production of cycling and walking publications and works part time with the sustainable transport charity Sustrans. Renewed membership in July 2012.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Annual Report to Cabinet
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

SLAF Annual Report to Cabinet – 11th September 2012

Cllr McGregor opened the item by commenting on the success of gaining a full height bridleway underpass in the design for the A11 dualling, highlighting its importance for users and the local tourism economy. He expressed an interest in severance of rights of way on railways crossings but added the importance of developing the speed of the rail network and the need to address right of way crossings seriously. Cllr McGregor thanked the forum for their work highlighting their independence with the county council's full support.

Bryan Collen, Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum, introduced himself to Cabinet, explaining the forum's role and how its membership represents a range of interests. He recognised SCC's role in supporting SLAF.

Key points of his presentation were:

- Countryside access brings enjoyment and health benefits to the people of Suffolk, benefitting the tourism economy, but SLAF were concerned it is often undervalued.
- The outcome of the A11 dualling was good, and he thanked SCC for their support, but emphasised the need to address the design of schemes early on to ensure access is correctly provided.
- SLAF welcomed the decision of the Independent Panel on Forestry to retain public ownership of the forest estate, but were disappointed over the lack of higher status access and have addressed this to local MPs.
- SLAF were concerned about ensuring the Definitive Map was adequately resourced to record the county's public rights of way network.
- He praised officers for doing an excellent job in supporting SLAF.
- Future priorities were highlighted as:
 - Ensuring budgets are sufficient to deliver service;
 - Severance of network by railways; and
 - Address coastal access earlier than Government proposals suggested as early intervention will assist in any difficult/contentious areas.

Questions/points by cabinet or councillors were:

- Cllr Lisa Chambers (Newmarket and Red Lodge), Cabinet Member for Environment and Property Management, was very pleased to see rail crossings were a SLAF priority, highlighting issues in Newmarket.

- Cllr Sandy Martin commented that he could assist with county-borough issues regarding developing the Ipswich Definitive Map.
- Cllr Inga Lockington (St Margaret's and Westgate) spoke about rail crossings, citing the Fonnereau Way and the importance of it being on the definitive map as it could have been lost if Network Rail had closed the crossing.
- Cllr Jane Storey endorsed the work being done on the definitive map. She also highlighted the importance of a public rights of way network for tourism and people's health. Cllr Storey praised the work of officers in supporting SLAF and managing access.

Cllr McGregor concluded by stating the public inquiry for Ipswich Waterfront was one of the biggest held in Britain. He added that railway crossings were contentious and alternative solutions should be sought but that speed was a priority and rights of way can be a bar to these aspirations.

He thanked Bryan Collen for attending cabinet.

The report was agreed by cabinet.

The following are the unconfirmed minutes of the Cabinet meeting:

Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report August 2011- July 2012

A report at Agenda Item 5, by the Director for Economy, Skills and Environment, invited the Cabinet to consider Suffolk Local Access Forum's report.

Decision: The Cabinet accepted the 2011/12 annual report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum and noted the report's recommendations and the action that the Council was taking to address these recommendations.

Reason for Decision: As a statutory adviser to the Council on rights of way and access matters, and as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Suffolk Local Access Forum was required to submit an annual report and make recommendations to the Council. Guidance by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs states: "We would expect the authority to respond positively to the forum's annual report and to say what actions they have taken on the advice and recommendations of the forum."

Comments by other Councillors: Councillors stressed the need for the completion of a definitive map and expressed concerns over the closure of railway crossings. The benefits to having a good rights of way network were recognised.

Alternative options: None considered.

Declarations of interest: Councillor Jane Storey, Cabinet Member for Finance declared a local non pecuniary interest by virtue of the fact that she was a member of the Suffolk Local Access Forum.

Dispensations: None reported.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	SLAF Annual Report to Natural England
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

The following report, summarising the SLAF Annual Report, was sent to Natural England.

Local Access Forum (LAF) Annual Report Proforma	
* Reporting year	2011 – 2012
* Name of LAF	Suffolk Local Access Forum
* Name of LAF secretary	Jill Christley

Review of Current reporting year	
Were you successful in meeting the achievements set out in your Annual Report or LAF work programme? Please provide supporting information.	
<p>Yes, the forum had regular meetings at quarterly intervals, all very well attended. The cost of services the LAF was approximately £2,000, making it a very efficient and cost effective forum.</p> <p>Key areas of success included gaining a full height bridleway underpass incorporated into the design for the new dual A11 at Elveden, between Barton Mills and Thetford.</p> <p>Initial meetings with Network Rail are also allowing the LAF to address PROW severance on railways and seek suitable solutions.</p> <p>Meeting with the Independent Panel on Forestry was welcomed, although gaining higher rights of access in the PFE is an issue SLAF are pursuing.</p>	
* How many Open Access Restriction cases have you been informed about/involved with?	
One consultation regarding 5 sites	
* Give up to three examples of advice given by your LAF to section 94 bodies:	

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Nature Partnerships – NE 2. National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance on walking and cycling – DEFRA 3. Future of PFE – DEFRA
<p>Give up to three examples where you have encountered difficulties; explain what mechanisms could be put in place to alleviate this issue:</p>
<p>The key issue is with communication and adoption of Huddle, which is seen as less effective means of communication, especially in a predominantly rural county where broadband speeds is a key issue.</p> <p>Gaining a full bridleway underpass for the A11 – gaining accurate information from highways agency and being able to convince them of the need for effective links between OA and PROW network.</p> <p>Severance of PROW on railways – issue with NR and convincing them of need to develop access rather than simply lose access.</p>
<p>Do you have any issues with recruitment of members from particular interest groups? Does this hinder your work in any way?</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>Comments from appointing authority</p>
<p>The Suffolk Local Access Forum continues to be a very constructive body with a very positive working relationship with the local authority.</p>

<h2>Forward Look</h2>
<p>What are your priorities for next year (list up to 3)</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring access is sufficiently resourced to provide a viable service 2. Severance of rights of way by road and rail 3. Future of PFE
<p>* What support/training will you need to be able to deliver these priorities?</p>
<p>On-going presentations and site visits by relevant industry experts</p>
<p>Do you perceive any barriers to delivering your priorities?</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>Any other comments</p>
<p>None</p>

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Dedication of Natural England Freehold National Nature Reserves
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

September 2012

Our ref:

Your ref:



Bruce Cutts,
Natural England, Mail Hub
Block B, Whittington
Road, Worcester,
WR5 2LQ

T 07900 608 274
F

Dear LAF Chair

Dedication of Natural England Freehold National Nature Reserves

In November 2011 the Natural England Board decided that all parts of our eligible NNRs and similar holdings should be dedicated for permanent public access unless there are compelling reasons on particular sites not to do so. This gives Natural England a real opportunity to show how seriously we take integration of our various statutory roles, to respond to the clear agenda for improved public engagement with nature, set by the Natural Environment White Paper.

In April 2012, planning for the four-year implementation programme got underway. Within Natural England our NNR staff will be working closely with the Access Team to assess all parts of the NNRs we own or hold on a long lease for potential dedication during this period. The first six-monthly batch of dedication proposals will be ready for approval in September.

The resulting open access rights will run with the land permanently. By default, dedication is for open-air recreation on foot but for each site we will also consider the potential to create higher rights for horse riders and cyclists if appropriate, for example along specific tracks or link routes.

At each NNR there will be detailed discussions involving the site manager, the responsible officer for the SSSI and the local open access lead adviser, to agree proposals that ensure there will be no significant detrimental effect on the key features of the site. Where this requires some kind of special intervention, the discussions will consider the role of tried and tested management techniques which we already use on many sites. These can be supplemented by specific local restrictions if necessary to address known issues.

In each case we will adopt the 'least restrictive' approach that delivers on our statutory responsibilities, is consistent with the approach to dedication agreed by the Board and the primary conservation purpose of NNRs. Non-dedication of eligible NNR land is likely to be exceptional but we will retain the option to recommend this to the Chief Executive if it is the only practicable outcome for nature conservation, public safety or other reasons.

Your input

The case officers will be interested to hear from your LAF of strategic ambitions for higher rights on these sites in line with the criteria set out in annex 1. In addition they will be interested in the wider access context of the NNRs in your area; how they fit into the access network and any ambitions for the enhancement of the network as set out in a ROWIP or other strategic document.

I have included a list in annex 2 of all of the NNRs to be dedicated along with a proposed completion date. If you are a LAF with NNRs falling within your patch, we would be happy to come and meet you and discuss the dedication programme at one of your meetings. Please contact me on the number below and I can put you in contact with the relevant case officer to arrange a time to do this.

Yours

Bruce Cutts
Project Manager

The above letter details proposal by Natural England to assign permanent public access to all of its sites. This will provide access on foot, but also offers the potential for higher rights for horse riders and cyclists, if appropriate.

In Suffolk the sites affected are:

- Westleton Heath – decision to be made by end March 2013
- Cavenham Heath – decision to be made by end March 2014
- Suffolk Coast – decision to be made by end March 2015

In considering whether higher rights should be allowed, Natural England has established the following criteria:

- When considering the dedication proposals for each of our National Nature Reserves, we will also consider the potential for improving access for horse riders and cyclists where possible, for example along specific tracks or to provide links with existing routes.
- The potential for this will form an element of the discussion with the reserve manager and then, if proposals for improvement are in mind, will be discussed with the Responsible Officer during the initial assessment.
- The following considerations should inform these discussions:
 - the particular requirements of key habitats and species;
 - the robustness or otherwise of the site or parts of it, or of existing tracks through it;
 - any existing permissive or customary use for riding or cycling that takes place and might be recognised and formalised through dedication;
 - the scope for additional benefits to be created, for example by adding to an existing path network or completing a strategic or missing link;
 - **any aspirations for riding or cycling that may have been put forward by the local community, Local Access Forum or by relevant user groups; and**
 - the need to respect the existing characteristics of the site (for example as a place for quiet enjoyment of nature), and avoid transforming it into a generalised recreation site where these characteristics are lost.

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Review of dog restrictions on Open Access sites
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

Natural England consulted on the following Open Access sites with regard to retaining restrictions for dogs on leads beyond the end of July to the end of August. This review decision was to retain the restriction. This decision will be reviewed again in 2018.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

**NOTICE OF RELEVANT AUTHORITY DECISION
FOLLOWING REVIEW OF DIRECTION RESTRICTING CROW ACCESS**

Prepared by Sarah Haigh, Natural England

Access authority: Suffolk CC
Relevant authority: Natural England
Local access forum: Suffolk Local Access Forum

Land Parcel Name	Direction Reference	Details of restriction on original direction
Brick Kiln Walks	2007020104	Dogs on leads between 1 August and 31 August each year annually until 31 August 2013 to protect ground nesting birds under Section 26 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.
Westleton Heath	2007020105	
Dunwich Heath	2007020106	
Walberswick Common, Tinkers Walk & East Sheeps Walk, Newdelight Walks	2007020109	

Natural England has now decided how to proceed following its review of the above mentioned long-term directions to restrict CROW access on this land. A consultation was held with statutory consultees and the general public, which closed on 31 October 2011.

Where available, we received monitoring data for 2011 for the sites under review, and confirmation from all sites that the bird species of interest are still present.

Outcome of the review:

Natural England last reassessed the need for these directions in 2009. This confirmed the continued need to extend the national restriction to keep dogs on leads from 1 March to 31 July each year for an additional month until the end of August each year (dogs on leads from 1 March to 31 August inclusive). The extension of the restriction specifically protects nightjars whilst nesting, and whilst their young are fledging the nest. The sites also have Dartford warblers and woodlarks present, which are also vulnerable to disturbance from dogs during the nesting season.

As nightjars are still present on all of these sites, the need for these restrictions remains unchanged since the last reassessment. Natural England's decision is to vary the directions, extending the end date of the restrictions. Natural England will formally review this decision within 5 years of its issue.

Summary of changes made to the existing directions:

Land Parcel Name & Reference	Reason for exclusion	Details of restriction on original direction	New details of restriction
Brick Kiln Walks (2007020104)	Nature Conservation	Dogs on leads between <u>1 August and 31 August each year</u> annually until 31 August 2013 to protect ground nesting birds under Section 26 of the CROW Act.	An extension of the restriction to keep dogs on leads <u>between 1 August and 31 August</u> each year 31 August 2018 under Section 26 of the CROW Act.
Westleton Heath (2007020105)			
Dunwich Heath (2007020106)			
Walberswick Common, Tinkers Walk & East Sheeps Walk, Newdelight Walks (2007020109)			

Details of the restriction will appear on the relevant map of access land on the Open Access website - www.naturalengland.org.uk/openaccess.

Date review completed: 17 July 2012

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Independent Panel on Forestry
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

The following letters were sent following the publication of the final report by the Independent Panel on Forestry.

SLAF
Suffolk Local Access Forum

Matthew Hancock MP
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

SLAF
P.O. Box 872
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 9JW

Tel: 01473 264759
Fax: 01473 216877
Email: slaf@suffolk.gov.uk
Web:
<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/PublicRightsOfWay/SuffolkLocalAccessForum>

Your Ref:
Our Ref: SLAF/BC/DB/jag
Date: 19 July 2012

I
Dear Mr Hancock,

Ref: THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON FORESTRY FINAL REPORT

I am writing on behalf of the Suffolk Local Access Forum (local access forums are statutorily prescribed bodies whose main function is to advise on improving recreational public access in the area they represent).

On 4th July 2012 the Independent Panel on Forestry (IPF) published its final report. Whilst the Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) broadly welcomes the Panel's vision for the future of forests and woodland in England, and its recommendations to reconnect people and nature, plant trees closer to people and incentivise more access to existing woodland, the forum is disappointed that the Panel did not make a more robust and focussed recommendation to extend the rights of public access in the public forest estate. SLAF wrote to the Panel on 16th June 2011 and proposed the dedication of higher access rights for equestrians and cyclists under Section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act on the whole of the public forest estate, including land in long leasehold. This followed lobbying by equestrian and cycling groups in Suffolk and I know that SLAF were not alone in making this request to the panel, with other organisations making the same specific suggestion.

As it is too late to repeat SLAF's request for the extension of S.16 CROW Act access to the IPF, I am writing to you as a Suffolk MP with a large area of forest in your constituency to ask that you lobby the Secretary of State direct to consider using these powers to enhance public access for equestrians and cyclists in the public forest estate (including land in long leasehold). Surely this would be a quick win for improving access at low cost – and might even help win back some goodwill lost from users when the original proposals were put forward by Caroline Spelman early last year.

Yours sincerely

Bryan Collen Chairman
On behalf of Suffolk Local Access Forum

David Barker Vice Chairman

cc: David Ruffley MP and Peter Aldous MP

Providing independent advice on access to the countryside in Suffolk

SLAF
Suffolk Local Access Forum

Dr Therese Coffey MP
 House of Commons
 LONDON
 SW1A 0AA

SLAF
 P.O. Box 872
 Ipswich
 Suffolk
 IP1 9JW

Tel: 01473 264759
 Fax: 01473 216877
 Email: slaf@suffolk.gov.uk
 Web:
<http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/Environment/PublicRightsOfWay/SuffolkLocalAccessForum>

Your Ref:
 Our Ref: SLAF/BC/DB/jag
 Date: 19 July 2012

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Yours sincerely

Bryan Collen Chairman
 On behalf of Suffolk Local Access Forum

David Barker Vice Chairman

cc: **David Ruffley MP** and Peter Aldous MP

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Local Nature Partnership – Wild Anglia
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

The following text is from a newsletter providing an update on the development of the Local Nature Partnership – ‘Wild Anglia’

**News Update: Wild Anglia
Norfolk and Suffolk’s new Local Nature Partnership**

Impatient for news on Wild Anglia, we’re glad you’re so demanding

Until a fully branded newsletter is ready, we hope you won’t mind just a plain, text-only news sheet to keep you up to date.

Wild Anglia

We have chosen the name ‘Wild Anglia’, and we’re pleased how many of you have said you like it. ‘Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Partnership’ is technically what we are, but it was quite a mouthful.

Apart from describing what our interests are, the name ‘Wild Anglia’ clearly positions us alongside New Anglia (Local Enterprise Partnership) and the two organisations will be working together, as our economic and environmental futures are so intertwined.

Since Springboard

Our ‘Springboard’ event at Ickworth House, which involved many of you, was followed by an application for Local Nature Partnership status in June and notification from Defra of our success in mid-July.

Nuts and Bolts

In the last two months we have been working on how to form and constitute Wild Anglia. From many possible models, we decided a not for profit company limited by guarantee would give Wild Anglia a strong and independent basis, with freedom to operate, employ, contract, receive and give funds, and perhaps seek charitable status at a later date.

We’re aware this is quite different from many other Local Nature Partnerships, but it sets the right tone for Wild Anglia, and Defra had challenged us to find local solutions.

The Wild Anglia board

Wild Anglia is focused on strengthening nature for the long-term in Norfolk and Suffolk, and we will develop the right structures and membership to take us there. We will have a transition year and our transition board is being formed now. It will meet for the first time this autumn and will be chaired by Richard Powell, Regional Director of the National Trust.

Some individuals are still being contacted so forgive us for not announcing a list of board members here, but it will include keen minds from the environment, business and ultimately the health sectors.

A Public face

We've started a short branding exercise and soon we'll have a visual identity. We don't want to agonise over logos and fonts for too long, and we're looking forward to seeing Wild Anglia's logo marking where we've been. The invitation to tender for this work will go out very soon.

Perhaps you'd like to recommend a company who has done some good branding work for you, if so please let Su know, by return.

Biodiversity

Norfolk and Suffolk have well-established Biodiversity Partnerships, and both are founding members of Wild Anglia. The trend in policy-makers' language may have moved away from 'biodiversity' towards 'nature', but Wild Anglia will still work to prevent the loss of species and habitats and will develop a strong working relationship with the biodiversity partnerships.

Early actions

We have made some good progress already:

Wild Anglia Manifesto

We will publish a short manifesto document in early 2013 and are busy drafting this now. It will clarify Wild Anglia's aims, explain our ways of working and encourage participation.

Progress with Green Infrastructure

David White has been appointed to a short-term post to drive the green economy work in the Greater Norwich Development Partnership area. This is a key area for Wild Anglia and our steering group partner Norfolk County Council has been instrumental in making this happen.

Capacity in Communities

Wild Anglia is running a workshop for community environmental action groups on 22 September in Suffolk, which is now full but has seen interest from both counties.

People at the heart of nature

His talk on the importance of people when we consider nature was challenging and compelling, and we have continued to work with Professor Tim O'Riordan since the Springboard event at Ickworth House; more in a later news update.

Green Economy Manifesto (GEM)

The New Anglia LEP created a bespoke Pathfinder board last year, and the Green Economy manifesto was launched this summer. Wild Anglia will lead on specific actions, starting now with a new baseline of biodiversity and natural capital for Norfolk and Suffolk.

For more information on Wild Anglia please contact Haidee at Haidee.bishop@norfolk.gov.uk.

To join, or leave the mail list please contact Su at su.waldron@norfolk.gov.uk.

The following refers to queries SCC has raised in relation to local access forum representation on the Norfolk/Suffolk Local Nature Partnership – Wild Anglia.

From: Andrew Woodin
Sent: 24 September 2012 17:08
To: 'Waldron, Su'
Cc: David Falk; Gen Broad
Subject: RE: Wild Anglia News Update

Hello Su – thank you for the update, I have a couple of questions:

- How are Norfolk and Suffolk local access forums being represented (something I have asked previously, including to Haidee)? SLAF will be interested in your update and will be interested in the response. They meet next month.
- I know it's early days but have you had any thoughts about how Wild Anglia will engage with Norfolk and Suffolk planning departments, especially to lever in improved greenspace through the community infrastructure levy?

Regards,

Andrew Woodin

From: Thompson, Heidi
Sent: 25 September 2012 15:30
To: Andrew Woodin
Cc: Waldron, Su; Bishop, Haidee; Gen Broad
Subject: RE: Wild Anglia News Update

Andrew

Thanks for your enquiry, which has been passed on to me by Su Waldron.

These are indeed very early days for Wild Anglia, and we have yet to get down to the level of detail that your question demands. However, I can confirm that both access and developer contributions will both be an important part of the Wild Anglia agenda.

The new government steer is very much about protecting and enhancing nature for the benefits that it brings to humans, and therefore access to the countryside to enjoy the new landscape scale changes we hope to bring about, is going to be key. In Norfolk, we have not gone beyond engaging at an officer level, and John Jones (who is my manager, and also manages the Norfolk trails network) is very involved in the development of Wild Anglia. I imagine he will be wanting us to give a presentation at the NLAF as soon as we have something more detailed to say. Maximising the economic benefits of a high quality natural environment, will also be a major part of wild Anglia. Again, there's that synergy with access and rights of way.

Delivering nature through the planning system, and CIL is something that is very close to my heart. Resourcing and delivering green infrastructure is pretty much the raison d'être of Wild Anglia, and CIL will undoubtedly need to play a part. We are also involved in one of the Biodiversity offset pilots in the greater Norwich development partnership area. We hope that Suffolk will be able to learn from our experience under this pilot, and perhaps also consider Biodiversity offsetting when/if this scheme is rolled out nationally.

Both these issues will be covered in the manifesto which we hope to produce within the next six months.

Thanks again for your question

Best wishes

Heidi

From: Andrew Woodin
Sent: 26 September 2012 08:21
To: 'Thompson, Heidi'
Cc: Waldron, Su; Bishop, Haidee; Gen Broad; David Falk
Subject: RE: Wild Anglia News Update

And thank you for your response to the investment question Heidi, which is encouraging.

But can I come back to the LAF query – is it the intention to have a LAF representative as an LNP member or not. I recall a LAF was referred to in the LNP Fund application as a potential new member.

Regards,

Andrew

From: Thompson, Heidi
Sent: 27 September 2012 15:45
To: Andrew Woodin
Cc: Bishop, Haidee
Subject: RE: Wild Anglia News Update

There will be limited places on the Board (probably 12 for logistical reasons). Once we have included reps from both county councils, wildlife trusts, the EA the RSPB and health and private business representatives that is already approaching capacity. So, no, the LAF is not in scope for representation on the board specifically at this time. However we will have many partners who will not be on the Board, so board members will need to be "multi-disciplinary". For example the Assistant Directors from the County Councils will both manage the Public Rights of Way teams within their respective organisations (trails in Norfolk), and may also be LAF members in their own right, so can represent the views of the LAF.
Heidi

From: Andrew Woodin
Sent: 28 September 2012 11:23
To: 'Thompson, Heidi'
Cc: Bishop, Haidee; Gen Broad; David Falk
Subject: RE: Wild Anglia News Update

Noted Heidi.

I don't know why you say the AD for SCC will manage the ROW team – do you have an AD in mind? My AD is a highways and transport man, and officers are not members of LAF's (if I understood you correctly).

David – please make sure this is on the agenda for SLAF next month.

Regards,

Andrew

END

Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Ipswich Waterfront
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	Andrew Woodin
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

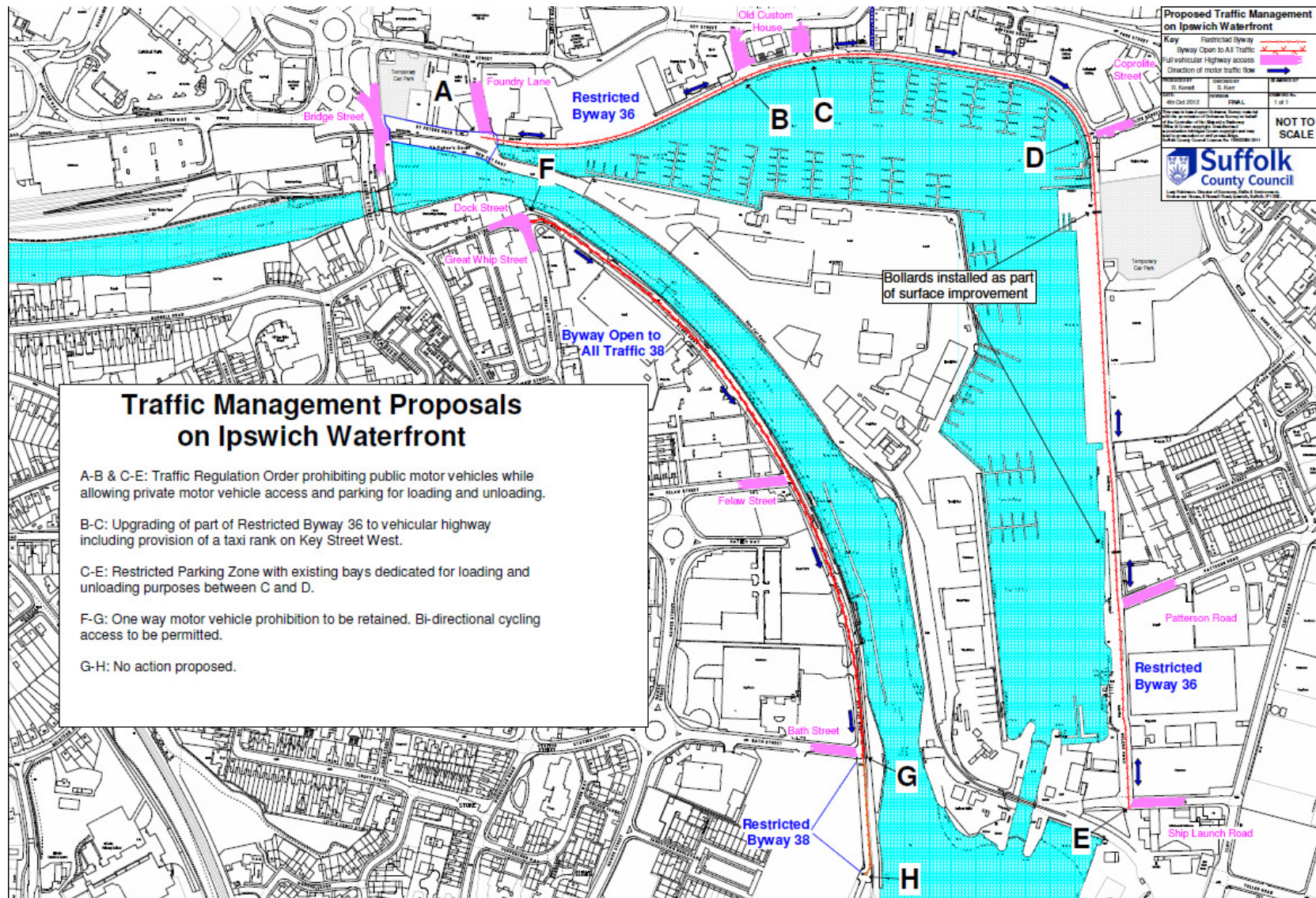
The following proposals have been made with regard to public access along Ipswich Waterfront (see map below).

- Make a traffic regulation order between Old Foundry Lane and Shiplaunch Road, excluding the short section of quayside road opposite the Old Custom House, that has the effect of reinforcing the prohibition of public motor vehicles (including parking), whilst allowing private motor vehicle access and parking for loading and unloading purposes.
- Provide a taxi rank outside Pizza Express on Key Street West;
- Revise the restricted parking zone (RPZ) between the Old Custom House and Coprolite Street and introduce a RPZ between Coprolite Street and Shiplaunch Road, with dedicated bays for loading and unloading along the northern quays.
- Upgrade the section of restricted byway opposite the Old Custom House to a full vehicular highway. This will allow public motor vehicles to continue to circulate around the Old Custom House lawfully.
- Revise the existing traffic order for Stoke Quay (New Cut West) so as to allow bi-directional access for cyclists.

An article appeared in the Ipswich Evening Star on October 2nd, highlighting the proposal to provide an official taxi rank on the Waterfront.

SCC will commence formal consultation to effect proposals in the next few months

Further information is available on the Travel Ipswich website
<http://www.travelipswich.co.uk>



Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Forest Heath DC Dog Control Order
Meeting Date:	18th October 2012
Author/Contact:	David Falk
Venue:	Town Hall, Beccles

2/10/2012

David Falk
Suffolk Local Access Forum
Environment and Transport
Endeavour House
8, Russell Road
Ipswich
Suffolk
IP1 2BX



My Ref: 3.4.3 (2)
Your Ref:
Ask for: Matt Vernon
Direct Line: 01638 719261

Email: matt.vernon@forest-heath.gov.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Proposed Dog Control Order at Aspal Close Local Nature Reserve

Forest Heath District Council is proposing to create a Dog Control Order under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005, to cover land at Aspal Close Local Nature Reserve (LNR), in Beck Row. The land in question is off St Johns Street, Beck Row, Suffolk, IP28 8AB and is shown edged in red on the attached plan.

The Order will create the offence of failing to remove dog faeces on the specified land. An alleged offender may be offered the opportunity to pay a fixed penalty as an alternative to prosecution. However, if action is taken in a magistrate's court, the penalty for committing a dog control order offence is a maximum fine of level 3 on the standard scale. (This is currently £1,000).

This offence will apply when someone, responsible for a dog, fails to pick up and dispose of its faeces in an area to which a Fouling of Land by Dogs Order applies. This is with the exception of anyone (other than a deaf person) who makes use of a trained assistance dog.

The land in question is designated as Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It has also been designated as a Local Nature Reserve by Forest Heath District Council.

We are requesting the views of other Primary and Secondary Authorities within the area that the order will apply. In addition we are seeking the views of Natural England, the Local Access Authority and the Local Access Forum as the land in question is designated Open Access Land. We would request that any responses are received no later than 28 days from receiving this letter.

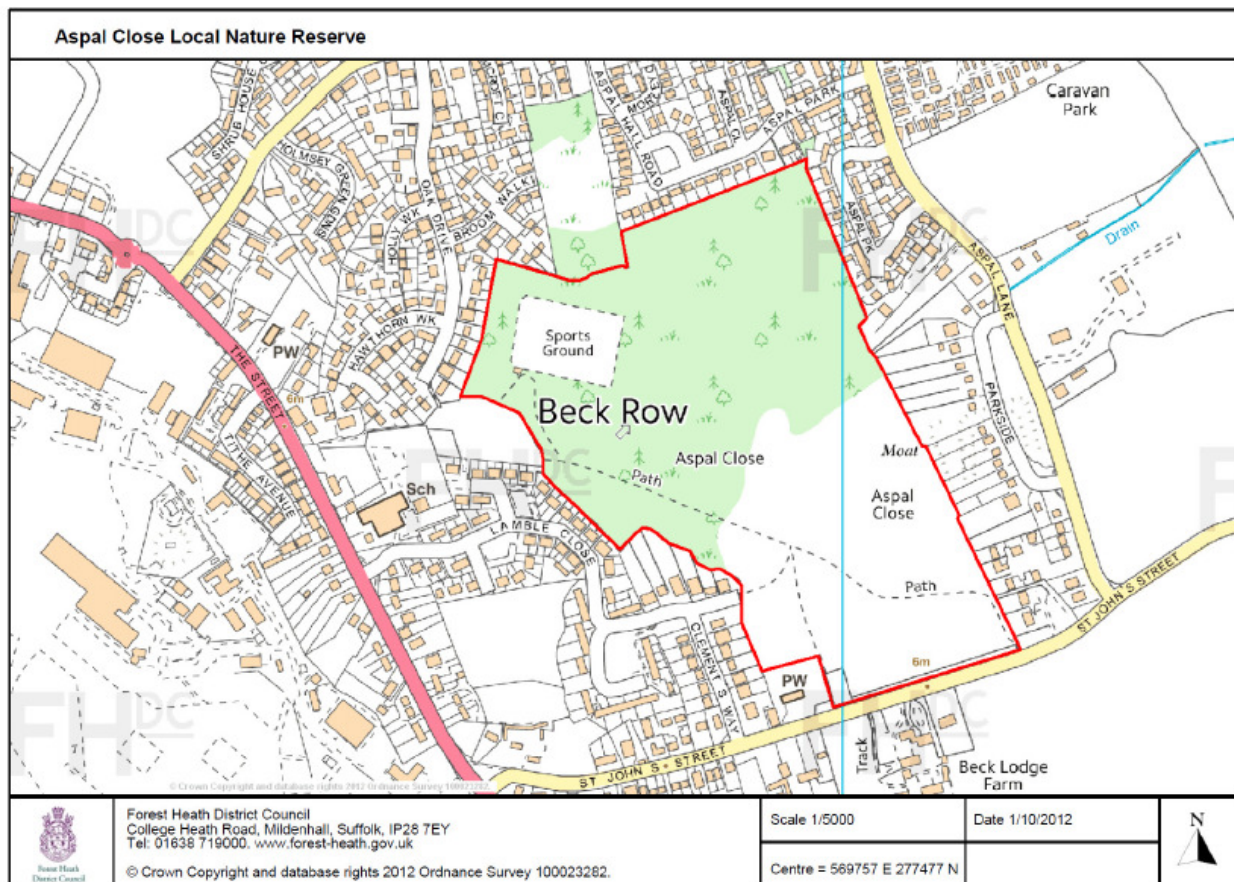
Reponses should be made to:

Countryside Section
 Forest Heath District Council
 College Heath Road
 Mildenhall
 Suffolk
 IP28 7EY

Or by email to countryside@forest-heath.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

Matt Vernon
 Countryside & Open Spaces Officer



Suffolk Local Access Forum	
Title:	Minutes of meeting held at Beccles Town Hall, 18th October 2012
Meeting Date:	24th January 2013
Author/Contact:	Jackie Gillis
Venue:	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds

1. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Bryan Collen (Chair) (BC), David Barker (Vice-Chair) (DB), Melinda Appleby (MA), Barry Hall (BH), Gordon Merfield (GM), Monica Pipe (MP), Norman Southgate (NS), Anthony Wright (AWR), John Wayman (JW), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Alan Moore (AM).

SCC Officers Present: David Falk (DF), Andrew Woodin (AW), Jackie Gillis (minutes)

Apologies: Mike Taylor, Ann Langley, Cllr Sandy Martin, Margaret Hancock

Guests: Carrie Kerry, Countryside Officer Norfolk County Council

2. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF 12/25)

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

Item 2: AW confirmed the Suffolk Coast paths undergo two cuts a year.

Item 6 Huddle: AW confirmed there are now 4 licensed users at Suffolk County Council; himself, DF, Jackie Gillis and Jill Christley. AW is finding Huddle useful and is circulating relevant information to members.

Item 7 Suffolk Road-Rail Partnership: AW commented that Network Rail had agreed to take forward the proposal for a new bridleway bridge at Heath Road Great Barton.

3. Declaration of interest

None declared.

4. Coastal Access

BC welcomed Carrie Kerry (CK) to the meeting.

CK introduced herself as Norfolk County Council Countryside Officer and gave a presentation on Coastal Access in Norfolk. Norfolk is a lead county for implementing coastal access.

The first stretch from Weybourne to Sea Palling has been walked and all information such as landowners, land condition and issues has been recorded on a Trimble GPS system. This information is then fed into a computer which produces a report

detailing the route to use. This report has now gone to public consultation with hard copies available for view at county council, district council and parish council offices as well as libraries.

CK noted spreading room had been a contentious issue with land managers. Natural England was tending not to pursue this on the landward side, but the seaward side was less contentious.

The final report, which is stage 5 of 10 of Implementation, is due by the summer of 2013, when landowners will be able to raise any objections. The Secretary of State will determine the final outcome.

Stage 8, preparation and commencement of rights will be funded by Natural England. Funding for Stage 9, maintenance, management and monitoring is under review.

The second stretch from Sea Palling to Hopton-on-Sea is due to start in 2012. Currently Natural England has programmed the next stretch from Norfolk into Lincolnshire during 2014-2017.

BC raised the issued of caravan parks and development.

CK reported that development takes priority. Caravan parks and golf courses are not exempted land. Norfolk have 14 caravan parks and CK found some park owners are happy for the coastal path to pass through their parks as they could see expected revenue from passing trade calling in at their shop/café. Although there are issues with some parks which are not operational through the winter months as they are secured.

JS questioned whether anything could be done beforehand where cliffs are at risk of erosion. CK explained the roll back system, which is to the next hard boundary.

JW and GM raised their concerns over the cost of implementation by local authorities, especially as there is 220 miles of Suffolk coastline.

5. Angles Way Project

CK then gave a presentation on The Angles Way Experience.

Norfolk County Council have received funding under the Rural Development Programme England (RDPE) for the Waveney Valley. The main objectives are to promote The Angles Way as the green corridor linking market towns from Great Yarmouth to Thetford; improving access and engaging local businesses. The key areas are to replace stiles with gates, improve waymarking and raising the profile of the route.

BC stated that he rated this interesting route highly and was keen that the paths were kept natural. CK confirmed there would be little change and the key priority was accessibility.

JS asked if QR code would be used and was advised this was being investigated.

MA asked how much of the 92 mile route was in Suffolk. CK advised approx 65%.

AW stressed the project would be a joint delivery.

BC thanked CK for both presentations, stating both were excellent and interesting.

6. The Suffolk Coast and Estuaries Community Conference 2012

BC fed back on his attendance at the conference stating his concerns of funding to allow access and the prediction that there was to be a 1953 type flood every 10 years in 100 years time. He felt there were issues that needed to be dealt with as soon as possible, and questioned NE's assertion that only 1% of spending on flood defences was spent on conservation.

7. Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report 2011-2012 (LAF 12/26, 27 and 28).

BC felt that the report was well received by Cabinet and commented that Suffolk County Council and SLAF have a very constructive relationship. He thanked JS for her support at the Cabinet meeting.

DF confirmed that a summary of the report (LAF 12/28) has been sent to Natural England. He also advised the forum that all papers are now available online via the SLAF website – <http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum>

8. Open Access

Natural England National Nature Reserves (LAF 12/29)

DF explained that Natural England are intending to dedicate their National Nature Reserves (NNR) as Open Access land. In Suffolk sites are Cavenham Heath, Westleton Heath and Suffolk Coast. Cavenham Heath and Westleton Heath are already designated as Open Access; the Suffolk Coast NNR lies between Walberswick and Dunwich including Westwood and Dingle Marshes.

NE will consult with SCC and SLAF and other stakeholders before discussing with the Senior Reserve Manager any opportunities for higher rights to allow cycling and equestrian use of the NNR. DF suggested there were opportunities for waymarked circular routes for horse riding and cycling in Cavenham Heath and Westleton Heath.

BC suggested a dialogue should be opened and was supported by GM. AWr asked if the car parks could cater for the provision of horseboxes, DF didn't see that as a problem. AW noted the process NE would need to follow wasn't entirely clear.

The response for Westleton Heath is due March 2013, Cavenham Heath by March 2014 and Suffolk Coast by March 2015.

ACTION: DF to draft response on behalf of SLAF identifying aspirations for higher rights to cater for horse riding and cycling and requesting further information on the process NE intends to follow.

Review of dog restrictions (LAF 12/30)

DF advised that current restrictions concerning keeping dogs on leads until end of August remains in place.

Access Restrictions

Restrictions are usually reviewed annually although this has not happened for a couple of years. There is a teleconference being held at Endeavour House, 1pm on Wednesday 24th October to assess current restrictions. BH and GM agreed to attend.

Mapping Review

DF advised that Natural England have stated their review would be a 'light touch'.

DB commented that Suffolk is the only place in the world that Stone Curlews are increasing and that the county pioneered the conservation success.

9. Independent Panel on Forestry (LAF 12/31)

AW confirmed that two letters were written to MPs but no response had been received. Both AW and BC felt this was disappointing.

There is no news on a formal response; this will probably be next year.

10. Local Nature Partnership – Wild Anglia (LAF 12/32)

The event was attended by AW and MA who felt there was a lot of enthusiasm.

AW provided feedback stating it would be a funded partnership eventually becoming a not-for-profit charity.

BC said it was full of good intentions but was concerned that with so many groups after funding, there wouldn't be much to go around. Whilst it had the support of SLAF, the forum was concerned at the lack of information on how it would be represented in the partnership.

JS questioned whether Norfolk had heard anything, CK believes Norfolk LAF is involved and will investigate.

ACTION: SLAF to write formally to Wild Anglia to request further information on representation.

11. Ipswich Waterfront (LAF 12/33)

AW discussed the proposals and explained that orders would be made on traffic management which would go out to public consultation. A taxi rank and disabled access are being considered at part of this.

AWr stated access to Bath Street would be advantageous and the proposals were a definite improvement for cyclists but there was still an anomaly at Foundry Street and Bridge Street, which was an accident hotspot.

BC asked if anyone had any issues with the proposals, he felt they made sense.

BC confirmed there were no objections to the proposals.

AW stated signing around the waterfront would need to be addressed once the outcome of the traffic order process was known.

12. Updates/correspondence

Trunk Roads - A11

The second project newsletter from the Highways Agency was handed out. AW stated the main works would commence early next year but the minor access work with the assistance of the Elveden Estate had already started.

The discussions about the diversion of the bridleway north of the memorial had already started with Elveden Estate and AW didn't expect any objections from user groups.

DB suggested a SLAF meeting at Elveden Village Hall next autumn and a site visit to review the works.

Trunk Roads – A14

AW stated the authority had concerns about the A14 crossing at Bramford and would be formally writing to the Highways Agency requesting funding into a feasibility study into providing a bridge.

AWr stated this had already been carried out a couple of times and Atkins had gone into considerable detail, one example was the bridge at Felixstowe.

ACTION: SLAF to write to Highway Agency concerning the A14 crossing at Bramford.

Regional LAF Chair Meeting

BC will attend the meeting on 15th November.

ACTION: DF to send details and agenda to BC.

National LAF Conference

The conference is to be held on 27th February 2013 at 9.30, venue to be confirmed but details should be available by the next SLAF meeting in January.

ACTION: DF to circulate details once issued.

Forest Heath DC Dog Control Order (LAF 12/34)

DF stated the paper was for information and concerned a proposed dog control order at Aspal Close Local Nature Reserve, which SCC and SLAF had no objection to.

13. Membership – renewal and recruitment

AW advised that a number of memberships were up for renewal in April, July and October 2013 and SCC was considering another round of recruitment. One or two expressions of interest have been received from the public.

BC stated it would be helpful if anyone no longer wishes to remain a member of SLAF to let DF/AW know.

ACTION: ALL Advise DF/AW if you don't wish to renew membership of SLAF.

DB said he felt attendance at the SLAF forum was very good and it was important that potential new members would support and attend the forum in the same way.

14. Any Other Business

AWr advised that Sustrans were meeting with Network Rail and The Environment Agency (EA) regarding the Ipswich Chord. EA no longer required the sluice, which meant a ramp would no longer be required on the path. EA are keen to have the sluice removed as soon as possible.

BC thanked CK for attending and presenting at SLAF.

15. Public question time

There was one member of the public, Gemma Marriage, present.

16. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings

24 th January 2013	West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds
18 th April 2013	tba
11 th July 2013	tba
17 th October 2013	Elveden Village Hall