

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 July 2014</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>David Falk</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Westleton Village Hall</b>

			Paper Number
1.	10.00	<b>Site Visit – Sizewell and Countryside Access, Sizewell Beach Car Park</b>	
2.	12.30	<b>Lunch – The Crown, Westleton</b>	
3.	2.00	<b>Welcome, apologies and housekeeping</b>	
4.		<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>	LAF 14/13
5.		<b>Declaration of interest</b>	
6.	2.10	<b>Sizewell C</b> <b>Lisa Jenkinson, Associate LDA Design</b> <b>Alister Kratt, LDA Design</b>	Presentation
7.	2.40	<b>Coastal Rights of Way Update</b>	LAF 14/14 - AW
8.	2.55	<b>Network Rail Update</b>	LAF 14/15 - AW
9.	3.10	<b>National LAF Conference 2013-14</b>	LAF 14/16 - AW
10.	3.20	<b>Suffolk LAF Annual Report 2013-2014</b>	LAF 14/17 - DF
11.	3.30	<b>Cavenham Heath National Nature Reserve</b>	Verbal - DF
12.	3.40	<b>Influencing the Future of Forestry</b>	LAF 14/18 - DF
13.	3.45	<b>Updates/correspondence</b> • <b>A11 Underpass</b>	Verbal - AW
14.	3.50	<b>Member’s Topic/Any Other Business</b>	
15.	3.55	<b>Public question time</b>	
16.	4.00	<b>Dates &amp; Venues of Future Meetings</b>	

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting held at Walberswick Village Hall on Thursday 10 April 2014</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 July 2014</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Jill Christley</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Westleton Village Hall</b>

### 1. Site visit.

Members visited the Walberswick area to see the damage caused, and repairs made to public rights of way by the December storm surge.

### 3. Welcome, apologies and housekeeping

Present: Bryan Collen (Chair) (BC), David Barker (Vice-Chair) (DB), Annette Ellis (AE), Margaret Hancock (MH), Barry Hall (BH), Cllr Diana Kersley (DK), Gordon Merfield (GM), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), John Wayman (JW), Roland Wilson (RW), Anthony Wright (AWR), Mike Taylor (MT).

SCC Officers Present: Jill Christley (minutes), David Falk (DF), Andrew Woodin (AW), Annette Robinson (DAR).

Guest Speakers: Trazar Astley-Reid (TAR), Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. Alistair Kratt (AK), LDA Design, Tony Free (TF), EDF Energy, Tom McGarry (TMG), EDF Energy.

Apologies: Melinda Appleby (MA), Jane Hatton (JH), Alan Moore (AM), Monica Pipe (MP),

### 4. Minutes of previous meeting (LAF 14/08)

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

### 5. Declaration of interest

AWr expressed an interest from Sustrans in agenda item 8.

### 6. Suffolk Estuary Defence and Right of Way Trial (LAF14/09)

Trazar Astley-Reid (TAR), Suffolk Estuaries Officer, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB was welcomed to the meeting.

TAR gave a presentation outlining the effect of the December storm surge on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, highlighting its impact along the coastline of East Anglia.

TAR presented a report 'Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial'. The report proposed a series of trials at a number of locations on the coast of Suffolk. The objective of the trials is to assess the suitability of different engineering options to provide resilient coastal defences with acceptable and long-lasting public right of way surfaces in a cost effective way.

TAR explained the effect of a previous trial at Orford (seen by SLAF members on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2012). This had not performed as hoped with the right of way surface receiving more adverse impact than non-trial sections.

TAR explained the criteria for these trial options and site locations, explained the stages for delivering trails and described how they would be monitored.

**ACTION** SLAF endorsed the Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial.

*AE left the meeting. AW joined the meeting.*

## 7. Sizewell C

Alistair Kratt (AK), LDA Design, Tony Free (TF), EDF Energy and Tom McGarry (TMG), EDF Energy were welcomed to the meeting.

AK, TF and TMG gave an overview of the current position regarding the proposed new reactor at Sizewell C:

Reason for development: Existing generation across the country is coming to the end of its life. New energy infrastructure is required that will provide security of supply without the need for importing energy from other countries.

The Government's consultation has established the need for renewable generation such as wind farms and nuclear in order to meet their commitment to low carbon emissions, and to 'plug the energy gap'.

Sizewell C is a potentially suitable site as it is next to an existing nuclear generating operation. There is sufficient land to provide the required infrastructure. It can easily be connected to the National Grid high voltage transmission network. It is coastal and seawater is available for direct cooling.

The Planning Process: Due to the nature of the development the planning application must be submitted directly to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Prior to submitting their application EDF are responsible for consulting with local authorities, the Environment Agency, Natural England and others. PINS will then have 14 months to consider the proposal, it will then be passed to the Secretary of State for climate change.

The next stage of formal consultation will give more detail.

The Development: It is proposed to build an Evolutionary Pressurised Water Reactor (EPR) which will generate 3.2 gigawatts. The development area will be 35 hectares, provide permanent employment for 900 people, with up to 3000 during the building phase.

It is recognised that the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a landscape of strategic importance.

France have built several EPRs, and EDF will benefit from their experience.

The logistics of bringing in and removal of materials from site, staff accommodation and transport, and the effect these will have on the local community and transport links were outlined.

In order to reduce volume of traffic in the area a Park and Ride for staff, a rail link for transport of materials and transport of materials by sea are proposed.

Visual impact in the area will be reduced by leaving the woodland on Goose Hill intact.

It is expected that the main development phase will take 7 to 9 years. During this time it will be necessary to make some temporary closures to BR 19 and to the permissive Sandlings Walk. However, it is hoped that access along the beach will remain open throughout construction.

It is proposed to widen the tight corner on the A12 at Farnham, or to put in a bypass.

The effect on Public Rights of Way and the local environment: For the construction phase AK is drawing up a scoping report that will consider the impact on amenity/recreation within a 2km radius of the site. It is hoped that diversions of rights of way will be kept to a minimum. Any diversions will be discussed with SLAF and Suffolk County Council.

A further assessment of the impact on public rights of way, amenity and recreation use within 15km will be carried out with focus on a north/south link if BR 19 is closed, an east/west link, disruption of permissive paths and the effect of residents of Leiston walking/cycling in the area.

After the construction phase the area adjacent to the site (used during construction) will be returned to more naturalised environments of grassland, heathland and marshland. BR 19 and the Suffolk Coast Path will be reinstated and permissive paths will be explored.

AK and AW have already begun discussion on the public rights of way network post-construction.

Discussion: When asked whether material could be used locally to eg. improve flood protection AK explained that the quality of material on site would not be useful for flood defences or farming, and would be shipped to other construction sites.

In response to questions regarding consultation AK and TMG explained that consultation must be carried out prior to the application being submitted to PINS. Consultation and feedback between EDF and local authorities and communities will take place throughout the process.

AWr was concerned about the effect on transport in the area.

TMG advised that:

- There could be between 2000 and 3000 staff accommodated on site.
- There will be about 1000 parking spaces at the Park and Ride site for staff commuting to site.
- It is expected that materials movement will take place 7 days a week, but it is unknown at this stage how many lorries there will be, it is hoped that these figures will be available in the autumn.

- It may be possible to reach the site by rail via Campsey Ash.

MH asked whether people would have the opportunity to visit the site during construction. AK said yes, EDF was considering where this could be sited.

Feedback: EDF will consult with SCC on a monthly basis, and will report on progress to SLAF at the July meeting. Both SLAF and EDF were keen to maintain an ongoing dialogue. BH suggested a site meeting would be helpful.

**ACTION** SCC to consider possible site visit for next meeting.

*AK, TF, TMG and TAR left the meeting.*

## 8. Network Rail (LAF 14/10)

AW outlined paper LAF14/10 and noted:

Needham Market (Gipsy Lane) – following the meetings with SCC and the SLAF chairman, Network Rail had agreed to commission a feasibility study into an underpass at Gipsy Lane. They are in dialogue about this.

Gt Barton - SCC had written to Network Rail stating that they will not object to a 1:12 ramp. AWR said that the size of the turning landing must be almost 4m to accommodate horses, cycles, tandems and buggies.

Cattishall – Network Rail had assessed the site and passed it as being safe. The crossing will be retained until a suitable replacement has been installed.

The lack of active support from Natural England on the matter of level crossing closures was noted by SLAF, with disappointment.

*AWr left the meeting.*

## 9. Update/Correspondence (LAF 14/11 and LAF 14/12)

National LAF Report DF outlined papers LAF 14/11 and LAF 14/12, adding that he was disappointed SLAF had not been mentioned in the National LAF Report.

Regional LAF Meeting The regional LAF meeting had been postponed.

**ACTION** DF to find out rescheduled date.

Natural England Open Access statutory Review DF will ensure that SLAF is fully involved in the Open Access Statutory Review.

NNR Westleton Heath DF is looking at upgrading to higher status footpaths on Westleton Heath Open Access land. It has been suggested that a permissive route could be created, making a circular route.

JW said that Natural England should be doing what the electorate want.

**ACTION** – SLAF to write to Natural England.

*MT left the meeting.*

Letter from Dan Rogerson MP, DEFRA(LAF 14/12) mentioned above.

## 10. Member's Topic/Any Other Business

MH asked when the footpaths closed for the Ipswich Chord work would be opening.

**ACTION** DAR will chase up, and let MH know what is happening.

*DB left the meeting.*

**11. Public Question Time** – no members of the public attended.

**12. Dates and Venues of Future Meetings**

17<sup>th</sup> July 2014      Venue TBC

16<sup>th</sup> October 2014    Venue TBC

End

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Coastal Rights of Way Update</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 July 2014</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Westleton Village Hall</b>

### **Tidal Surge**

Annette Robinson, Area Rights of Way Manager and her staff continue to work with the SCC floods manager, the Environment Agency, colleagues in the AONB and land managers to repair the outstanding breaches:

- Breaches on the Stour & Orwell footpath at Levington – the footpath is closed and the breaches are in the process of being repaired by the landowner. The footpath surface will then be restored by the ROW team,
- Breach on the south side of Martlesham Creek – the large breach in the wall has been repaired by the landowner and this part of the path will be closed to allow the repair to stabilise and re-vegetate. The footpath on the rest of the wall (the Martlesham circular walk) is now open.
- Breach on the north side of Martlesham Creek – this path remains closed until our discussions with the landowner are concluded,
- Snape – the footpath wasn't closed after the surge but the Environment Agency are planning repair work and a closure is anticipated,
- Waldringfield – the river wall footpath will be closed from July to December to allow the Environment Agency to build a new flood defence wall,
- Walberswick – footpath from car park to the Bailey bridge – this was breached but was quickly repaired and we installed a boardwalk as a temporary alternative whilst the repair dried out. The footpath remains open but further work from EA is likely.
- Walberswick marshes – the footpaths were initially closed whilst we assessed the damage. These paths are now open but surfacing work is planned for the end of the summer,
- The river wall between Shotley and Chelmondiston (from Orwell Cottages to Cranes Hill) was badly damaged and temporary repairs have been done by the landowner. This part of the Orwell Estuary has been identified as a site for managed realignment of the estuary. The intention is for the wall to be breached in two locations allowing the grassland behind to become a new habitat of mudflat and saltings. The access in this area will be safeguarded with paths being diverted and new ones created.

Following SLAF's letter of 4/2/14 to Therese Coffey MP a response was received - SEE APPENDIX 1

Earlier this month, the Anglian (Eastern) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee compiled a list of projects benefitting from the flood recovery programme. Of the projects in Suffolk, 14 are on defences with public rights of way and include:

- Martlesham sluice permanent rebuild – head of Martlesham creek, sluice totally washed out in December and was put back temporarily,
- Waldringfield – a short but expensive section of flood defence being built in front of the houses on the quay which had flooded,
- Snape river wall –EA to do repairs this year and then look at a bigger scheme once they have done the research,
- Felixstowe Ferry – the walk from Felixstowe down to the ferry along the sea wall, more repair and strengthening works,
- East Lane Bawdsey –sea wall repairs,
- Walberswick Robinson Marsh wall (Southwold FP7) – breached and temporarily plugged with a temporary route put in place by SCC. Small breach but enormously popular path from Walberswick to Southwold.

### **Coastal Defence Trial**

At the local access forum meeting in April 2014, Trazar Astley-Reid (TAR), Suffolk Estuaries Officer, Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, presented a report 'Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial'. This followed work to raise the sea wall south of Orford quay, whose grassed finish was not entirely satisfactory as a walking surface. The report proposed a series of trials at a number of locations on the coast of Suffolk. The objective of the trials was to assess the suitability of different engineering options to provide resilient coastal defences with acceptable and long-lasting public right of way surfaces in a cost effective way. SLAF endorsed the Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial.

Since the last meeting, the county council has received two proposals for surfacing for defences carrying public footpaths, one an interlocking concrete product (Hawes Associates) and one a strong plastic honeycomb product filled with hoggin (Jackson civil engineering). The county council is looking for a suitable location to test the products, and may use another section of the Orford wall. The intention is the work will test the surface and methodology rather than its contribution to the defence, and to complete the trial this year. The proposals are attached.

Depending on the outcome, a further trial may be considered where the wall itself needs improvement and/or where the surface is more likely to be overtopped at times. There will be many issues to finalise before the county council proceeds further – costs and who pays; who will actually do the work/supervise it; consents; liabilities and contingency in the event of the surface needing to be removed in future; review/public feedback etc...

The local access forums thoughts on the trial are an important part of stakeholder consultation.

Hawes Associates' proposal – SEE APPENDIX 2  
Jackson Civil Engineering's proposal – SEE APPENDIX 3





**DR THERESE COFFEY MP**

*Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal*

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020 7219 7164 therese.coffey.mp@parliament.uk

Mr Bryan Collen  
Suffolk Local Access Forum  
PO Box 872  
Ipswich  
Suffolk IP1 9JW

30 May 2014

*Dear Mr Collen*

Following our recent correspondence please find enclosed the reply I have received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as a result of the enquiries I made on your behalf.

*A fresh start letter overleaf but it looks like back to the local councils -*

Yours sincerely,



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

T 08459 335577  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
[www.gov.uk/defra](http://www.gov.uk/defra)

Dr Therese Coffey MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC338362/SH

28 May 2014

**From Dan Rogerson MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management

Thank you for your letter of 7 February to Eric Pickles on behalf of Mr Bryan Collen, Chairman of the Suffolk Local Access Forum, about the Bellwin Scheme and damage to public rights of way caused by the storm surge in December. This was passed to Defra and I am replying as the Minister responsible for rights of way policy. As I am sure you will appreciate, Defra received exceptionally high levels of correspondence about this winter's flood events and I am sorry for the long delay in replying to your letter this caused.

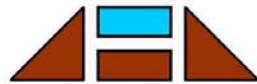
The Environment Agency is conducting a national assessment of the damage caused by the tidal surge, including to local authority assets, and considering the necessary measures to take.

In regards to flood defence funding, Defra will not be looking at bids from individual authorities. The main financial support from Government is through the Bellwin Scheme. The Scheme provides emergency financial assistance to help local authorities meet uninsurable costs they incur when dealing with the aftermath of an emergency in their area. Decisions on Bellwin will be for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Ministers. Therefore, I would advise you to contact DCLG for further information on funding available to local authorities through the Bellwin Scheme.

**DAN ROGERSON MP**



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**



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April 26, 2014

### **Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial.**

#### **Proposal – Ankalok, fully interlocking cellular concrete.**

##### **Introduction.**

The product above has been used extensively on the Alde and Orwell Estuaries in its more usually application of a revetment on the upstream face of the estuary flood banks or levees.

It has been proposed for the following reasons:

- a) Overtopping and walking performance.
- b) Sensitive to the landscape.
- c) Ease of application.
- d) Recyclable and inert.
- e) Low cost, low maintenance.

##### **Overtopping and walking performance. (Ref. CIRIA 116)**

Interlocking revetment of this type can withstand overtopping velocities of up to 8 m/s. Due to its interlocking nature it outperforms non interlocked block systems such as grasscrete. Due to its ability to freely drain water logging or icing should not be a problem, this and its durability should provide a weather proof walking surface.

The enclosed proposal includes the use of a turf reinforcement mesh which will also form the foundation of the interlocking blocks thus preventing differential settlement which could lead to trip hazards developing. If required the turf reinforcement could be extended down the landward slope.

##### **Sensitive to the landscape.**

The concrete will be coloured brown similar to the normal path colour, grass is able to grow through it and along its margins. Buff or brown colours are available at no additional cost.

##### **Ease of application following small scale trial.**

Laying trials have been conducted to ascertain the merits of both Grasscell and Ankalok when being placed by hand. Each block of Ankalok is only 12 kg making laying of large numbers by one man possible, in contrast the Grasscell has a block weight of 30kg requiring two men to lay it.

**Andrew Hawes**  
 BSc Hons Eng Geology & Geotechnics  
 FGS CEng MICE Supervising Panel 1975 Reservoirs Act

An interlocking system such as Ankalok can be applied on a surface which has been roughly graded, a non interlocking block system has less tolerances to irregularities in the sub grade and as a result takes longer to prepare and lay.

An interlocking system such as Ankalok only requires 25 kg of suitable hoggin per square metre unlike a non interlocking block system which requires 45 kg of suitable hoggin per square metre.

#### **Footpath width.**

It is likely that the width available for the trial will be very much site specific. The proposal allows for a footpath up to 2.0m wide, increased in 400mm increments. The Suffolk County Council preferences with regard to width have been noted (ref. Guidance on Coastal Change affecting ROW), it is clear however that the treatment width will be governed by the existing space available and the funds available.

The costs below can be applied to any width up to 2.0m.

#### **Costs.**

##### **Materials.**

For the trial it is proposed to provide the Ankalok and double twist mesh at cost direct from manufacturer, these costs are itemised below :

Ankalok 90	RPC Contracts Ltd.	£19 / m <sup>2</sup>
PVC Zinc Galvanised Rock fall Netting	Maccaferri Ltd.	£ 6 / lin. m

**Note:** The above Ankalok cost is per square metre as treatment width will be site specific, unlike the mesh which will be laid along the line of the footpath at a 2.0m width.

##### **Labour to prepare site and lay Ankalok footpath.**

To prepare crest of levee, lay mesh and pin, place Ankalok, wash in hoggin and finally replace any removed turfs along boundary with grass seed.

Stephenson Bros. Ltd.	£ 14.5 / m <sup>2</sup>
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As an example if a 1.2m wide trial was required along a length of 200m the costs would be as follows:

$$200\text{m} \times 1.2\text{m} \times £19 = £4560 \text{ Ankalok} \quad 200\text{m} \times £6 = £1200 \text{ Mesh}$$

$$200\text{m} \times 1.2\text{m} \times £14.5 = £3480 \text{ labour. Total cost } £4560 + £1200 + £3480 = £9240$$

This format giving a total cost of £38.50 / m<sup>2</sup>

**Note:** Labour costs assume road access for off loading is close by, this may not be the case.

##### **Maintenance over a 50 year lifetime.**

With the exception of grass cutting no maintenance is anticipated.

**Engineering support and VAT.**

Hawes Associates can provide engineering and design support to integrate the Ankalok trial into the Estuary Partnership design upgrade proposals and provide construction supervision. This would be costed at £1500. All costs quoted are without VAT.

**Recyclable and inert.**

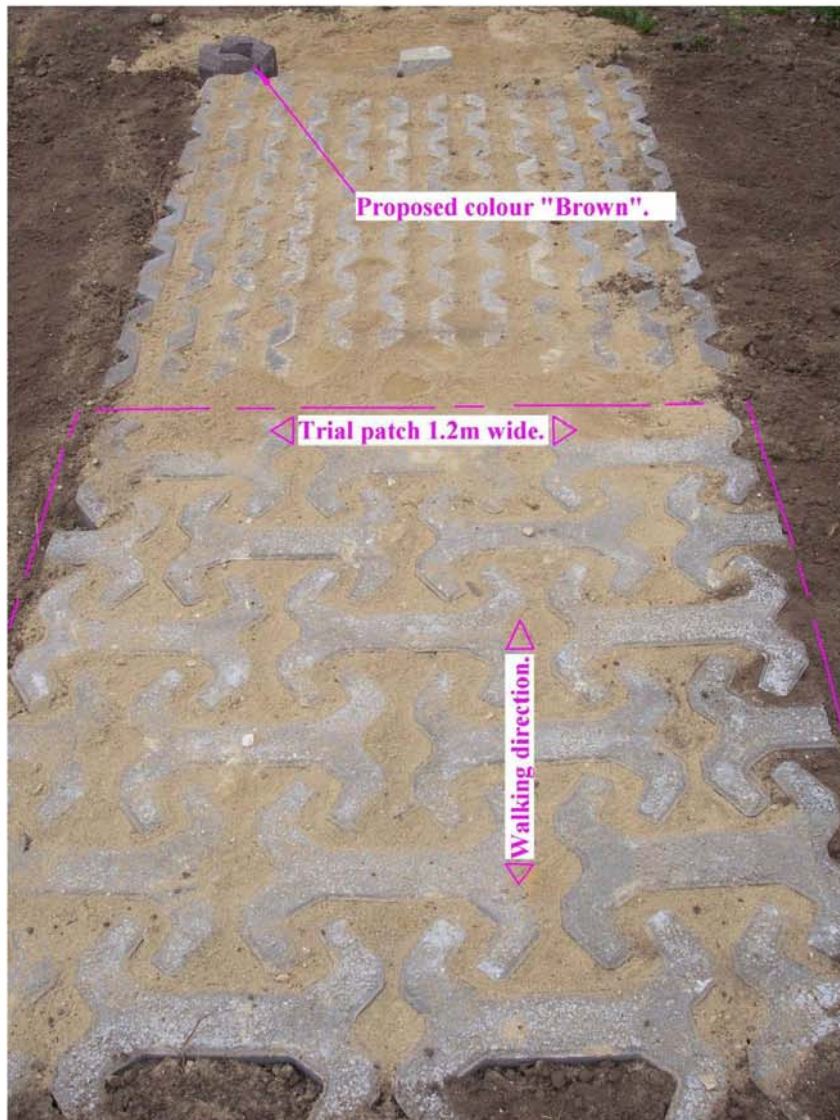
Ankalok can if required be simply lifted and used as a front face revetment system of placed in a low pile at the toe of the saltings to provide an inert energy attenuation barrier, there are numerous examples of similar such barriers on both the Deben and Alde where derelict revetment systems have been removed from the upstream face.

The mesh can be reused if required as a turf reinforcement to the landward levee slopes, this application has already been successfully trialled on the Alde Estuary at Chantry south of Orford.

It can be seen from the above that every component of the proposal can be recycled and reused for the benefit of the estuary.



*A low energy attenuation/saltings protection bund constructed from Ankalok remnants, this can be found along the Hazlewood frontage of the Alde Estuary.*



*Trial patch available for inspection at Gedgrave.*

Andrew Hawes

Enclosed: Cross section example of Ankalok proposal.  
Ankalok 90 brochure.

Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence Right Of Way Trials Proposal 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014



## Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial

### Introduction

Jackson Civil Engineering are a regionally based civil engineering contractor with offices throughout the UK with a long established head office in Ipswich. We have for twelve years been delivering high quality civil engineering flood defence projects and solutions to one of our key clients, the Environment Agency, our services have been delivered over the NCF, NCF2 and now the WEM Framework.

We are currently delivering many embankment repairs around Suffolk and Essex and believe we can add benefit to carrying out trials concurrently with our existing workload to reduce cost.

### Approach

Our approach recognises that significant benefits often available at the beginning of a project life cycle and development are lost as the scheme develops. In order to ensure ideas and innovations are brought forward early, we have developed a method of working to maximise the effectiveness of our involvement.

We believe that for the purposes of this trial it may be better to undertake a variety of types of products and have different solutions along the trial area. These trials can then be subject to monitoring over a given period of time to establish which is the most appropriate.

We have spoken to our supply chain and we believe we can offer different solutions with a range of costs, the solution may well differ from one embankment to another dependant on the type of usage it may be subjected to, for example a more robust solution may be required in an area that is subject to cattle.

We have dedicated teams for both the early activities and the construction process, this ensures we understand the problem and can implement an appropriate solution. By having dedicated teams we ensure that lessons learnt are carried forward, we fully appreciate the difficulties with entering and working on private land and the required consultation. Good, early communication is a key requirement to ensure successful delivery of any scheme large or small.

We are able to offer a full design and construction services utilising our Joint Venture with Hyder Consulting, we currently deliver all of our WEM Environment Agency projects as JacksonHyder.

### Innovation

For the last 12 years we have been working with many clients and developed an approach that has matured over a number of framework contracts and has proved so successful we now offer it on a consultancy basis to a wide range of clients and

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consultants. Last year, our specialist ECI division Jackson Solutions advised on £1.9billion of construction work, identifying £22million of cost savings on ten of these schemes.

On the Suffolk Estuary Trials we would like to investigate the potential to deliver savings by linking these trials with other works we are currently delivering in the local area. We are currently undertaking various works along embankments as part of the Asset Recovery Programme following the storm surges over the winter.

If a trial are could be undertaken as part of, or local to our other works we would be able to offer savings on the trial installation on staff and prelims costs, if we were successful we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.

Minimal design, as the development and design costs have been carried out by others, delivering savings going forward.

**The Problem**

Jackson Civil Engineering have been given the opportunity to compile and submit a proposal for a right of way trail to provide an innovative solution to a common problem, not just in the Suffolk Coastal Region but throughout the United Kingdom.

The problem of erosion occurs during surge or higher than predicted spring tides when overtopping of the footpath embankment / defence is encountered, this generally starts at a low point in the defence and small amount of water starts to flow over the defence this quickly starts to erode the embankment and creating a bigger and bigger flow path until the back of the structures washes away as shown in the pictures below.



*Embankment at Cattawade Marsh after overtopping*



*Coastal Path Erosion at Bawdsey after the December surge tides*



*Bawdsey Completed*



*Bawdsey coastal path re-opened*



Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence Right Of Way Trials Proposal 11<sup>th</sup> June 2014



### The Solution

Through our close relationships with our supply chain, we have, over the years, developed a library of standardised solutions to many problems. We have had preliminary conversations and meetings over the issues of scour on rights-of-way on flood defences.

We have access, through Defencell, to many anti scour systems / products such as Macafferri, they have over the years developed and installed many anti scour matting solutions that once covered with topsoil and seeded give a robust surface and provides excellent anti scour properties when trafficked by pedestrians or when overtopping occurs.

We believe one possible solution that could be implemented in many areas quickly and efficiently could be Defencell, this is a hollow cellular material that is filled with type 2 footpath hogging, the cellular structure contains the fill material and will prevent it being washed away. We would propose the Defencell is 100mm in thickness laid on top of a Terram 1000 membrane. Minimal excavation would be required it would be more of a levelling of the existing embankment height, during installation no loss to the standard of defence will be encountered.



*A lightweight system that has been developed from the military for use in flood defence.*



*In extreme circumstances the above system could be implemented, it is incredibly strong and durable to allow construction traffic to pass over it. Large areas can be covered in a day.*

The same material will be laid on the back face of the embankment to introduce bank reinforcement, this would be filled and covered by topsoil to allow grass to grow, this would prevent scour on the back face of the embankment.

Defencell and Macafferri matting would be easy to install with all of the components being light weight and transportable in a very linear environment with difficult access on many sections. With systems of this nature the impact of closures to the footpaths would be minimal due to the speed that it could be installed.

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Once installed, our construction plant would be able to travel over the newly placed ground reinforcement and keep working on the embankment.

Visually and aesthetically it would not change the current landscape and over a short period of time would blend totally into it's surroundings as the grass cover re-establishes.

Prior to any installation we would recommend that a phase 1 habitat survey is carried out to ensure the access routes and working areas will not affect the local wildlife or reptiles.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with you to develop the most appropriate and cost effective solution.



*An example of Defencell in use on British Waterways projects*

### **Cost**

The cost of any trial will be influenced by the option chosen and the ability to potentially utilise any locally site-won material. For example; if we can reuse the material we have removed to level any ground before installation of the anti-scour system. We will work with you to reduce cost where ever possible and to deliver cost effective solutions.

As previously described, the cost will also be affected by the ability to be flexible with the timing and implementation of any trial. This would allow us to maximise efficiencies by utilising our staff currently delivering the Environment Agency's Asset Recovery Programme of works.

### **Summary**

We hope, from what we have set out above, we've shown that we are committed to trying to find innovative solutions to common problems, whilst bringing efficiencies from other engineering sectors.

We would welcome the opportunity to come and work with your team to develop and discuss our proposals further.

END



## DR THERESE COFFEY MP

Member of Parliament for Suffolk Coastal

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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Mr Bryan Collen  
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30 May 2014

*Dear Mr Collen*

Following our recent correspondence please find enclosed the reply I have received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as a result of the enquiries I made on your behalf.

*A fresh tip letter overleaf but it looks like back to the local councils -*

Yours sincerely,



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1P 3JR

T 08459 335577  
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
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Dr Therese Coffey MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MC338362/SH

28 May 2014

**From Dan Rogerson MP**

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Water, Forestry, Rural Affairs and Resource Management

Thank you for your letter of 7 February to Eric Pickles on behalf of Mr Bryan Collen, Chairman of the Suffolk Local Access Forum, about the Bellwin Scheme and damage to public rights of way caused by the storm surge in December. This was passed to Defra and I am replying as the Minister responsible for rights of way policy. As I am sure you will appreciate, Defra received exceptionally high levels of correspondence about this winter's flood events and I am sorry for the long delay in replying to your letter this caused.

The Environment Agency is conducting a national assessment of the damage caused by the tidal surge, including to local authority assets, and considering the necessary measures to take.

In regards to flood defence funding, Defra will not be looking at bids from individual authorities. The main financial support from Government is through the Bellwin Scheme. The Scheme provides emergency financial assistance to help local authorities meet uninsurable costs they incur when dealing with the aftermath of an emergency in their area. Decisions on Bellwin will be for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Ministers. Therefore, I would advise you to contact DCLG for further information on funding available to local authorities through the Bellwin Scheme.

**DAN ROGERSON MP**





April 26, 2014

## **Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial.**

### **Proposal – Ankalok, fully interlocking cellular concrete.**

#### **Introduction.**

The product above has been used extensively on the Alde and Orwell Estuaries in its more usual application of a revetment on the upstream face of the estuary flood banks or levees.

It has been proposed for the following reasons:

- a) Overtopping and walking performance.
- b) Sensitive to the landscape.
- c) Ease of application.
- d) Recyclable and inert.
- e) Low cost, low maintenance.

#### **Overtopping and walking performance. (Ref. CIRIA 116)**

Interlocking revetment of this type can withstand overtopping velocities of up to 8 m/s. Due to its interlocking nature it outperforms non interlocked block systems such as grasscrete. Due to its ability to freely drain water logging or icing should not be a problem, this and its durability should provide a weather proof walking surface.

The enclosed proposal includes the use of a turf reinforcement mesh which will also form the foundation of the interlocking blocks thus preventing differential settlement which could lead to trip hazards developing. If required the turf reinforcement could be extended down the landward slope.

#### **Sensitive to the landscape.**

The concrete will be coloured brown similar to the normal path colour, grass is able to grow through it and along its margins. Buff or brown colours are available at no additional cost.

#### **Ease of application following small scale trial.**

Laying trials have been conducted to ascertain the merits of both Grasscell and Ankalok when being placed by hand. Each block of Ankalok is only 12 kg making laying of large numbers by one man possible, in contrast the Grasscel has a block weight of 30kg requiring two men to lay it.

**Andrew Hawes**

BSc Hons Eng Geology & Geotechnics

FGS CEng MICE Supervising Panel 1975 Reservoirs Act

An interlocking system such as Ankalok can be applied on a surface which has been roughly graded, a non interlocking block system has less tolerances to irregularities in the sub grade and as a result takes longer to prepare and lay.

An interlocking system such as Ankalok only requires 25 kg of suitable hoggin per square metre unlike a non interlocking block system which requires 45 kg of suitable hoggin per square metre.

### **Footpath width.**

It is likely that the width available for the trial will be very much site specific. The proposal allows for a footpath up to 2.0m wide, increased in 400mm increments. The Suffolk County Council preferences with regard to width have been noted (ref. Guidance on Coastal Change affecting ROW), it is clear however that the treatment width will be governed by the existing space available and the funds available.

The costs below can be applied to any width up to 2.0m.

### **Costs.**

#### **Materials.**

For the trial it is proposed to provide the Ankalok and double twist mesh at cost direct from manufacturer, these costs are itemised below :

Ankalok 90	RPC Contracts Ltd.	£19 / m <sup>2</sup>
PVC Zinc Galvanised Rock fall Netting	Maccaferri Ltd.	£ 6 / lin. m

**Note:** The above Ankalok cost is per square metre as treatment width will be site specific, unlike the mesh which will be laid along the line of the footpath at a 2.0m width.

#### **Labour to prepare site and lay Ankalok footpath.**

To prepare crest of levee, lay mesh and pin, place Ankalok, wash in hoggin and finally replace any removed turfs along boundary with grass seed.

Stephenson Bros. Ltd.	£ 14.5 / m <sup>2</sup>
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As an example if a 1.2m wide trial was required along a length of 200m the costs would be as follows:

200m x 1.2m x £19 = £4560 Ankalok      200m x £6 = £1200 Mesh

200m x 1.2m x £14.5 = £3480 labour. Total cost £4560 + £1200 + £3480 = £9240

This format giving a total cost of £38.50 / m<sup>2</sup>

**Note:** Labour costs assume road access for off loading is close by, this may not be the case.

#### **Maintenance over a 50 year lifetime.**

With the exception of grass cutting no maintenance is anticipated.

**Engineering support and VAT.**

Hawes Associates can provide engineering and design support to integrate the Ankalok trial into the Estuary Partnership design upgrade proposals and provide construction supervision. This would be costed at £1500. All costs quoted are without VAT.

**Recyclable and inert.**

Ankalok can if required be simply lifted and used as a front face revetment system of placed in a low pile at the toe of the saltings to provide an inert energy attenuation barrier, there are numerous examples of similar such barriers on both the Deben and Alde where derelict revetment systems have been removed from the upstream face.

The mesh can be reused if required as a turf reinforcement to the landward levee slopes, this application has already been successfully trialled on the Alde Estuary at Chantry south of Orford.

It can be seen from the above that every component of the proposal can be recycled and reused for the benefit of the estuary.



*A low energy attenuation/saltings protection bund constructed from Ankalok remnants, this can be found along the Hazlewood frontage of the Alde Estuary.*







# Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial

## **Introduction**

Jackson Civil Engineering are a regionally based civil engineering contractor with offices throughout the UK with a long established head office in Ipswich. We have for twelve years been delivering high quality civil engineering flood defence projects and solutions to one of our key clients, the Environment Agency, our services have been delivered over the NCF, NCF2 and now the WEM Framework.

We are currently delivering many embankment repairs around Suffolk and Essex and believe we can add benefit to carrying out trials concurrently with our existing workload to reduce cost.

## **Approach**

Our approach recognises that significant benefits often available at the beginning of a project life cycle and development are lost as the scheme develops. In order to ensure ideas and innovations are brought forward early, we have developed a method of working to maximise the effectiveness of our involvement.

We believe that for the purposes of this trial it may be better to undertake a variety of types of products and have different solutions along the trial area. These trials can then be subject to monitoring over a given period of time to establish which is the most appropriate.

We have spoken to our supply chain and we believe we can offer different solutions with a range of costs, the solution may well differ from one embankment to another dependant on the type of usage it may be subjected to, for example a more robust solution may be required in an area that is subject to cattle.

We have dedicated teams for both the early activities and the construction process, this ensures we understand the problem and can implement an appropriate solution. By having dedicated teams we ensure that lessons learnt are carried forward, we fully appreciate the difficulties with entering and working on private land and the required consultation. Good, early communication is a key requirement to ensure successful delivery of any scheme large or small.

We are able to offer a full design and construction services utilising our Joint Venture with Hyder Consulting, we currently deliver all of our WEM Environment Agency projects as JacksonHyder.

## **Innovation**

For the last 12 years we have been working with many clients and developed an approach that has matured over a number of framework contracts and has proved so successful we now offer it on a consultancy basis to a wide range of clients and



consultants. Last year, our specialist ECI division Jackson Solutions advised on £1.9billion of construction work, identifying £22million of cost savings on ten of these schemes.

On the Suffolk Estuary Trials we would like to investigate the potential to deliver savings by linking these trials with other works we are currently delivering in the local area. We are currently undertaking various works along embankments as part of the Asset Recovery Programme following the storm surges over the winter.

If a trial are could be undertaken as part of, or local to our other works we would be able to offer savings on the trial installation on staff and prelims costs, if we were successful we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further.

Minimal design, as the development and design costs have been carried out by others, delivering savings going forward.

### **The Problem**

Jackson Civil Engineering have been given the opportunity to compile and submit a proposal for a right of way trail to provide an innovative solution to a common problem, not just in the Suffolk Coastal Region but throughout the United Kingdom.

The problem of erosion occurs during surge or higher than predicted spring tides when overtopping of the footpath embankment / defence is encountered, this generally starts at a low point in the defence and small amount of water starts to flow over the defence this quickly starts to erode the embankment and creating a bigger and bigger flow path until the back of the structures washes away as shown in the pictures below.



*Embankment at Cattawade Marsh after overtopping*



*Coastal Path Erosion at Bawdsey after the December surge tides*



*Bawdsey Completed*



*Bawdsey coastal path re-opened*

## The Solution

Through our close relationships with our supply chain, we have, over the years, developed a library of standardised solutions to many problems. We have had preliminary conversations and meetings over the issues of scour on rights-of-way on flood defences.

We have access, through Defencell, to many anti scour systems / products such as Macafferri, they have over the years developed and installed many anti scour matting solutions that once covered with topsoil and seeded give a robust surface and provides excellent anti scour properties when trafficked by pedestrians or when overtopping occurs.

We believe one possible solution that could be implemented in many areas quickly and efficiently could be Defencell, this is a hollow cellular material that is filled with type 2 footpath hogging, the cellular structure contains the fill material and will prevent it being washed away. We would propose the Defencell is 100mm in thickness laid on top of a Terram 1000 membrane. Minimal excavation would be required it would be more of a levelling of the existing embankment height, during installation no loss to the standard of defence will be encountered.



*A lightweight system that has been developed from the military for use in flood defence.*



*In extreme circumstances the above system could be implemented, it is incredibly strong and durable to allow construction traffic to pass over it. Large areas can be covered in a day.*

The same material will be laid on the back face of the embankment to introduce bank reinforcement, this would be filled and covered by topsoil to allow grass to grow, this would prevent scour on the back face of the embankment.

Defencell and Macafferri matting would be easy to install with all of the components being light weight and transportable in a very linear environment with difficult access on many sections. With systems of this nature the impact of closures to the footpaths would be minimal due to the speed that it could be installed.

Once installed, our construction plant would be able to travel over the newly placed ground reinforcement and keep working on the embankment.

Visually and aesthetically it would not change the current landscape and over a short period of time would blend totally into it's surroundings as the grass cover re-establishes.

Prior to any installation we would recommend that a phase 1 habitat survey is carried out to ensure the access routes and working areas will not affect the local wildlife or reptiles.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with you to develop the most appropriate and cost effective solution.



*An example of Defencell in use on British Waterways projects*

### **Cost**

The cost of any trial will be influenced by the option chosen and the ability to potentially utilise any locally site-won material. For example; if we can reuse the material we have removed to level any ground before installation of the anti-scour system. We will work with you to reduce cost where ever possible and to deliver cost effective solutions.

As previously described, the cost will also be affected by the ability to be flexible with the timing and implementation of any trial. This would allow us to maximise efficiencies by utilising our staff currently delivering the Environment Agency's Asset Recovery Programme of works.

### **Summary**

We hope, from what we have set out above, we've shown that we are committed to trying to find innovative solutions to common problems, whilst bringing efficiencies from other engineering sectors.

We would welcome the opportunity to come and work with your team to develop and discuss our proposals further.

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Network Rail Update</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 July 2014</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Westleton Village Hall</b>

## Introduction

This paper updates the forum on the main level crossings being addressed by Network Rail and Suffolk County Council, and progress on the Ipswich river path in the vicinity of the new rail chord between the Norwich and Felixstowe lines.

## Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6



The forum will recall the chairman Bryan Collen met with Gavin Armstrong (Director, Route Asset Management), Rob Bolton (Commercial Scheme Sponsor) from NR and Councillor Graham Newman, Alan Thorndyke and Andrew Woodin from SCC in February to lobby for an accessible structure to replace the two public footpath level crossings. The outcome of the meeting was that SCC's consultants would review the engineering detail behind NR's "GRIP 3" engineering report as to why an underpass at FP6 has been ruled out, and engage with the landowners whether they will accommodate the necessary works, in the interests of retaining access for the town. The meeting would then reconvene.

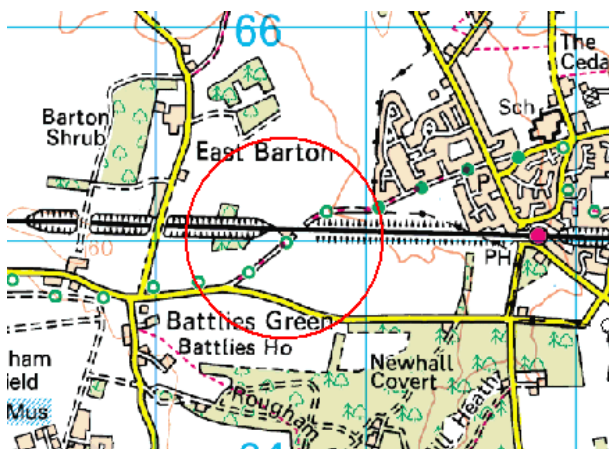
The reconvened meeting took place on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014, with Steve Day, Liability Negotiations Adviser, representing Network Rail. The outcome of the meeting was that Mr Day agreed NR would reconsider the underpass option at Gipsy Lane.

Following further correspondence and some delay, Sean Cronin, NR Commercial Schemes Sponsor emailed the county council on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2014 with a draft and unreviewed consultant's engineering feasibility report. The report is not for wider circulation at this stage but states an underpass is feasible and could be constructed

to the north west of the level crossing, and closer to it than the proposed steps only footbridge. Sean Cronin, however, states that at a cost of c. £3m, it is unaffordable.

Officers briefed Cllr Newman and his assistant Cllr Evans on the report earlier this month. Reference was also made to an underpass at Ingatestone Hall in Essex which was completed earlier this year, in seemingly a very similar location (ie giving access to a country footpath from a similarly sized small town on the other side of the railway) at a cost of £4.5m. The outcome of the meeting is the county council is sustaining its objection to a footbridge on grounds of lack of accessibility and visual intrusion. Further meetings will take place but SLAF will wish to consider how to respond.

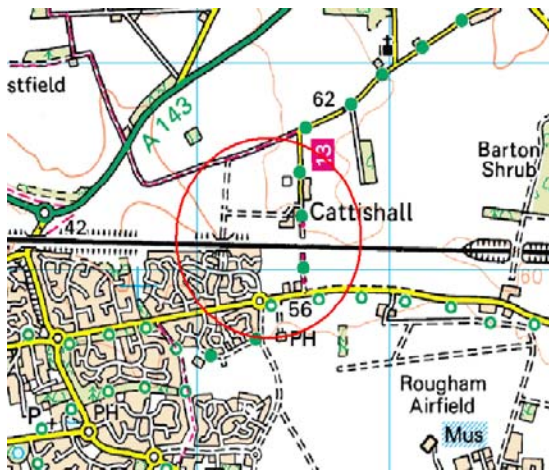
### Great Barton Bridleway 12



NR propose to replace the level crossing between Bury St Edmunds and Thurston with a ramped and stepped bridge. A planning application was submitted in November 2013 but subsequently withdrawn due to adverse comments from Sustrans and a local resident. The county council was concerned NR's proposed gradients of 1 in 12 are steep in a location close to Bury and Thurston, with its secondary school, and on a national cycle route. NR met with SCC in March to discuss its concerns and explain why it is so constrained on the gradient of the ramps. Since the last report to SLAF was written in April, the county council has advised NR that due to the constraints they face at this site, it will not object to 1 in 12 ramps on this occasion and without prejudice to its normal standards on ramps.

NR have resubmitted their planning application, which came late to the ROW office. As the application is broadly in line with the county council's expectations, it is unlikely to object.

## Cattishall

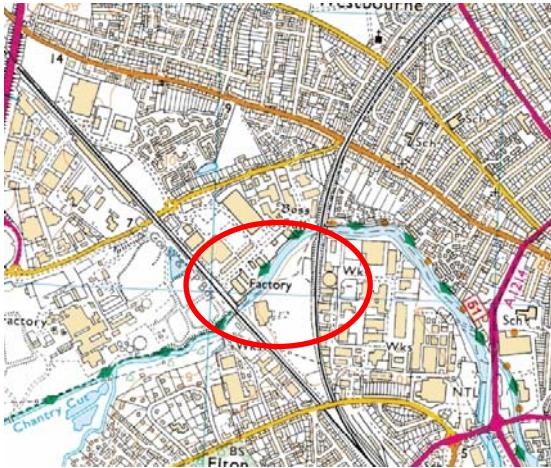


This crossing and the surrounding area, on the edge of Moreton Hall, is in St Edmundsbury's Vision 31 master plan as an area of continued housing and industrial expansion, and SCC and St Edmundsbury BC have been working together to ensure an accessible, on line structure is provided within the development brief to ensure the increasing numbers of users continue to have a convenient route to and from the Mount Road cycle path, whether travelling east or west, or south to the proposed future development on that side of the road.

NR's preference is to close the level crossing and divert users to an existing underpass c.420m to the west. Neither SCC nor SEBC consider the resultant dog leg diversion to be convenient or likely to encourage sustainable travel or healthier lifestyles.

At a meeting on 10th April 2014 between St Edmundsbury BC, Berkeley Homes, the county council and Network Rail, an agreement was reached to retain the Cattishall level crossing until such time as it is replaced by an accessible bridge, and to seek to open an underpass c. 400m to the west of it, linked by a surfaced licenced cycle path. This will reduce pressure on the level crossing, especially if the national cycle route is diverted to the underpass.

## Ipswich Chord and River Path



The construction scheme to link the Felixstowe and Norwich rail lines with a new chord is complete. River path access under the new railway bridge is to a good standard, which will accommodate cycling, and accentuates the poor standard of access under the Norwich line rail bridge.

SLAF may recall Sustrans wish to remove the former sluice-side steps near the Norwich line rail bridge and improve the width and height of the river path under the bridge, with the intention of allowing cycle access. Whilst this would give access to a rural public footpath to Sproughton only, Sustrans anticipate future development will enable the construction of a continuous cycle path from Ipswich to Sproughton, and the county council supports this principle.

Currently, Sustrans are modelling the improvements around the Norwich line rail bridge and effect on river flow, and seeking funding to deliver the scheme.



## Cotton Footpaths 13 and 15



These two footpath crossings are on the Ipswich to Norwich line and NR have written to the county council proposing to apply to close them on safety grounds. The line speed at this location is 100mph and both level crossings are near to public bridges providing alternative access over the railway. As use of the paths is believed to be low, and with convenient alternative crossings nearby, the county council is not intending to object to the paths' closure.

NR is now requesting the views of the local access forum.

END

AW/SCC  
July 2014

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>National LAF Conference 2013-14</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 July 2014</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Westleton Village Hall</b>

At the National LAF Conferences held in Bristol and Durham in February and March 2014, Network Rail gave a presentation on rail crossings and public rights of way.

#### **National LAF Conferences 2013 – 14**

##### **Presentation: Rail Crossings and Public Rights of Way**

Bristol Conference:

Darren Ward, Commercial Scheme Sponsor, Network Rail  
Chris Williams, Level Crossing Manager (and ex-ROW officer), Network Rail

Durham Conference:

Phil Graham, Commercial Scheme Sponsor, Network Rail

#### **Summary**

Network Rail is undergoing a closure programme of level crossings for safety reasons. They experience various issues with misuse, problems with sighting distances along the railway, carelessness from members of the public (lack of attention, use of headphones). There are now spoken warnings at some locations.

Of the 6,500 level crossings 2,547 are crossed by footpaths. Level crossings represent the largest single risk (excluding suicides and trespassers). There are dedicated personnel to look after about 100 crossings each. 76% are in the passive category, meaning people have to look, listen and judge whether it is safe to cross.

Crossings can be over roads and there are many rights of way crossings. They have achieved 750 closures across the country in the last 3-4 years, with some having been bridged or taken through underpasses, and others have been diverted to existing nearby crossings. In some cases one bridge has accommodated two at-grade crossings, in order to save money. In this time, £30 million has been spent towards closing crossings and £100 million on safety improvements.

Last year they installed 34 new footbridges, with some being ramped to accommodate disabled access. This can be problematic as ramps are shallow and can take up space that's often not available.

The budget for level crossing closures for 2014-19 is £100 million.

#### **Question and Answers**

**Q:** Do NR seek their bridges to be adopted by the local authority for future maintenance?

**A:** Solution is not always a bridge. Solution is site specific and decided during the negotiation phase. Responsibility for maintenance depends on a number of factors, but NR retains maintenance for structures.

**Q:** What about closures on community and heritage railways?

**A:** They help with strategy and advice, but are not involved with these lines.

**Q:** What is the position where the alternative route of a public footpath diversion is taken along a highway verge, which might be perceived as equally dangerous? How would a LAF engage with NR to discuss this?

**A:** It's all about negotiation and risk assessment. They will always try to resolve a situation by negotiation to find the optimal solution. NR will engage with relevant stakeholder groups and have to make application for closure to the highways authority who will also undertake consultation.

## National LAF Conferences 2013 – 14

*Observation: a LAF member had experience of working on the west coast mainline, and wanted to say the public usually perceive railway crossings as safe, and they don't take account of the high risks, especially the speed of approaching trains.*

Q: What is NRs policy on consulting with the local community and handling customer relations?

A: There are teams of staff that support the closure process in each area. The team will find the best way to engage with the community, to get them on board with the scheme and foster good relationships.

Q: How many cases a year involve crossings with rights of way?

A: No data available on this.

Q: Are the bridges suitable for mobility scooter users?

A: If they have a ramp and are DDA compliant

Q: Are NR able to compensate landowners for diverting rights of way across their land to the nearest crossing point, for example, to a cattle creep or underpass that does not hold public rights?

A: Yes, providing there is a proven need to take the public off the line, money can be made available to compensate landowners.

*Observation: A horse rider likes the phone system at level crossings – thinks these work well. Reassured that they won't be got rid of where effective.*

Q: How flexible would NR be in allowing a ROW within the fences of NR's property?

A: Yes flexible, and has happened at Tallington.

Q: Will faster lines (e.g. HS2) increase the distance people must go to level crossings?

A: HS2 will not have any level crossings, because they cannot be where a train exceeds 125mph

Q: What are the prospects of reinstating paths if they have been closed due to level crossings?

A: Prospects good if a level crossing is being replaced, but not if the closure was in the past – the safety budget would not be eligible.

Q: The LAF was involved with the Doncaster underpass – will LAFs always be consulted in such instances?

A: Yes

Q: As deaths are very low on level crossings, how is it possible to come up with predictive figures as statistically very small?

A: Partly by using a complicated formula, and partly because near misses are counted. Questioner concerned that removal of risk elsewhere might make more risk, which would be hard to analyse due to low figures.

*Observation: Concern that barriers which inconvenience the public might make people more reckless.*

*Observation: Agreed that the LAF profile needs to be raised, but added that LAFs were now on Network Rail's radar.*

END

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>SLAF Annual Report 2013-2014</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 July 2014</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>David Falk</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Westleton Village Hall</b>

Below is a draft for the Suffolk Local Access Forum Annual Report – August 2013 – July 2014

### **Introduction**

As required by the Local Access Forum (England) Regulations 2002 I have pleasure in submitting the eleventh Annual Report of the Suffolk Local Access Forum to Suffolk County Council as the highway authority.

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 countryside access. It is also a statutory consultee for Natural England on mapping of open access land and plans and policies produced by a wide range of organisations.

The forum is made up of individuals with a keen interest in rights of way and countryside access including users, members of community organisations, those with conservation interests, landowners and land managers.

Full membership for 2013/14 is listed in Appendix B (*this will be attached in the report to Cabinet*).

Suffolk County Council's Rights of Way and Access team administers the forum.

### **The Work of SLAF**

The Suffolk Local Access Forum is passionate about countryside access. Each of our members has a keen interest in developing access to the natural environment. Members represent interest in walking, cycling, horse riding, off-road driving, sport, disability, tourism, rural businesses, nature conservation, land management and land ownership. The forum works closely with Suffolk County Council and other agencies to protect and develop access for the benefit of all residents in, and visitors to, Suffolk.

The forum met at quarterly intervals in 2013/14 to discuss a wide range of issues that had arisen from consultations, presentations, papers, reports and site visits.

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. Local parish councils are alerted to SLAF meetings in their area and invited to attend.

## **Administering SLAF**

SLAF are an independent body with their own letter heading and PO address box, an independent email address and a dedicated website on One Suffolk; <http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum>

The cost for servicing SLAF for 2013-14 was approximately £1,500. This includes secretariat services, hire of meeting rooms, site visits and member travel expenses. To place this in context, the overall budget for Countryside Access is £1.1M.

## **Investment in Rights of Way and Countryside Access**

The forum commend officers on their continued success in securing external investment in non-motorised user (NMU) access, most recently £165k towards an NMU route between Mildenhall and West Row, and £2M for a new NMU bridge over the A14 in Bury St Edmunds.

The forum believes rights of way and countryside access are of increasing importance in delivering key objectives of the authority. The forum believes rights of way offer a cost effective means of delivering objectives and would like the authority to retain appropriate levels of investment in public rights of way to maintain front line use of this service.

Following the December 2013 tidal storm surge the forum were concerned that public access to coastal rights of way had become severely affected and wrote to Peter Aldous MP, Therese Coffey MP and Tim Yeo MP to express concerns and request funding be made available for repair work. SLAF notes that funding has been made available to address the most serious breaches by the Environment Agency.

## **EDF Energy – Sizewell C**

SLAF are keen that the development of Sizewell C has minimal impacts on the rights of way network but maximises enhancements as a legacy improving off-road connectivity between Aldeburgh and Minsmere. The forum have met with, received presentations from and held site visits with EDF Energy to understand the scale and scope of the development. The forum have impressed upon EDF Energy the need to mitigate closures of rights of way and permissive routes, with suitable alternative routes provided.

The Forum are equally concerned that the legacy of Sizewell C provides an access network that meets the future needs of residents and visitors to the area with positive outcomes for the local economy, employment and health and wellbeing. To this end the forum are key consultees to EDF Energy and are stressing the need for routes that meet the needs of all users from less mobile to more active users.

## **Network Rail and Rights of Way Level Crossings**

Amongst Local Access Forum's in England, the Suffolk LAF lead on severance issues. Throughout this year, the forum has focused on addressing proposals by Network Rail to close rights of way level crossings.

Specifically, the forum are greatly concerned that Network Rail intend to replace a level crossing in Needham Market with a steps only footbridge. The chair has written to the Director of Route Asset Management, Network Rail, and met twice with the Cabinet Member for Roads and Transport and with Network Rail to express concerns and lobby for alternative solutions. SLAF urge Suffolk County Council to continue to resist replacement of level crossings with alternatives which exclude significant sections of the population.

## Other Issues

**Public Forest Estate:** Following the work of the Independent Panel on Forestry, Defra invited the forum to participate in a workshop in May 2014 to identify pilot projects to implement some of the panel's findings. SLAF pressed that the Public Forest Estate should be managed to enhance access for all users including horse riders and cyclists, and become more cost effective by developing opportunities to generate income.

**Open Access:** The forum are statutory consultees to Natural England (NE) on matters relating to Open Access. In October 2012 the forum had challenged seasonal restriction on sites where ground nesting birds had not been observed. The forum were pleased that from 2013 restriction on those sites, Horn Heath and Little Heath, had been lifted.

The forum were also consultees on dedication of NE's National Nature Reserves and dedication of access rights for horse riders and cyclist. The forum were pleased that NE adopted their views on developing new circular routes at Westleton Heath and are currently assessing suggested routes at Cavenham Heath.

**Suffolk Walking Festival:** The forum support efforts by officers to deliver the Suffolk Walking Festival to promote countryside access and encourage use of public rights of way. The forum are very encouraged that the event has grown significantly and become established as a key Suffolk event supporting tourism and promoting physical activity.

## Meetings

SLAF members have held meetings on:

- a) 17 October 2013 – Elveden Village Hall;
- b) 30 January 2014 – West Suffolk House, Bury St Edmunds;
- c) 10 April 2014 – Walberswick Village Hall;
- d) 17 July 2014 – Westleton Village Hall.

SLAF members have attended meetings:

- a) Regional LAF Chair and Vice Chair Meeting, Cambridge – attended by David Barker, SLAF Vice Chair, to meet other LAFs to share best practice and discuss issues they are addressing and successes they have had;
- b) Influencing the Future of Forestry, Upminster – attended by Melinda Appleby to represent SLAF interests in developing the management of the Public Forest Estate for the benefit of all users;

- c) Cavenham Heath National Nature Reserve – attended by Barry Hall to assess opportunities to develop access for higher rights, including horse riding and cycling.

## **Presentations**

SLAF has received presentations on:

- a) A11 Improvement Scheme – Tim Betts, Construction Manager Balfour Beatty;
- b) Sizewell C – Tony Free, EDF Energy, Tom McGarry, EDF Energy, Alastair Kratt, LDA Design;
- c) Suffolk Estuary Defence and Right of Way Trial – Trazar Astley-Reid, Suffolk Estuaries Officer;
- d) Storm Surge Damage – Annette Robinson, Suffolk County Council Rights of Way East Area Manager;
- e) Wild Anglia – Richard Powell OBE, Chair of Wild Anglia Local Nature Partnership;
- f) Role of Regional LAF Coordinator – Michelle Gardiner, Natural England.

## **Consultations**

SLAF has been consulted on:

- a) Suffolk Estuary Flood Defence and Right of Way Trial;
- b) EDF Energy's Draft Access Principles for Sizewell C.

## **Site Visits**

SLAF members have had site visits to:

- a) Elveden – A11 Dualling and NMU underpass;
- b) Walberswick – impact of December Storm Tidal Surge on public rights of way;
- c) Sizewell – issues regarding public access during construction of Sizewell C and the legacy of development.

## **Membership of SLAF**

Three members resigned at the end of their membership terms and 5 new members were recruited collectively representing interests in walking, health, tourism, horse riding, conservation and rural businesses. One new member subsequently resigned due to other commitments. Membership currently stands at 16 members.

A full membership list for 2013/14 is provided in Appendix B.

**Training**

- a) 30 January 2014 – Induction for new members by Suffolk County Council Public Rights of Way Team;

**Looking Ahead**

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

Priorities for SLAF over the coming year include:

- a) Network Rail and rail crossing closures;
- b) Sizewell C and the impact of the development on access.

**Main Recommendations for Suffolk County Council to consider are:**

- a) The forum believes rights of way and countryside access are of increasing importance in delivering key objectives of the authority, including Health and Wellbeing, Most Active County and Greenest County, and would like the authority to retain appropriate levels of investment in public rights of way to maintain front line use of this service.
- b) The forum believes that the policy by Network Rail to close rights of way level crossings is at the detriment to access, potentially excluding large sections of the population. The forum would like the authority to lobby for alternative solutions and resist replacement of level crossings with alternatives which adversely affect access.
- c) The forum believes that Sizewell C should have minimal impacts on the rights of way network during construction and maximise enhancements to access as a legacy of the development. The forum would like the authority to press EDF Energy to mitigate closures of rights of way and permissive routes during construction, with suitable alternative routes provided, and seek as a legacy an access network that meets the future long-term needs of residents and visitors to the area with positive outcomes for the local economy, employment and health and wellbeing.

**Bryan Collen**

Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

**David Barker**

Vice Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

**July 2014**

END



<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Influencing the Future of Forestry</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>17 July 2014</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Melinda Appleby</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Westleton Village Hall</b>

The Forestry Commission held a workshop on 14 May 2014 at The Thames Chase Forest Centre, Upminster to explore ways of working with partners to manage the Public Forest Estate. Melinda Appleby attended the workshop representing SLAF. Her report is below:

**Purpose of Workshop:** To identify a number of pilot initiatives to develop and test methods to improve engagement, transparency and accountability in the strategic management of the public forest estate.

**Attendees** – no guest list but drawn from Local Authority (Bedford), Ramblers Association, Natural England (2), member of a local community engagement consultee group, local, to Thames Chase, user groups, local district councillor and landowner and business reps. – about 15 in all.

**Context:** Following the government response to the Independent Panel on the Public Forest Estate, there was a commitment to involve community in future planning and decision making. Forestry Commission (FC) staff felt humbled by the huge response to protect the estate and need to make the new body (when it is set up) more accountable, more transparent.

There is a draft bill awaiting Parliamentary time which will set up the new body, likely to be called *Public Forest England*. There appears to be little appetite for getting it through in the forthcoming Parliamentary session as set out in the Queen's speech. It will be arm's length from government but is now unlikely to be established until 2016 or 2017.

**Piloting greater community involvement:** Defra has established four pilot projects to roll out greater community involvement.

1. Forest Plans. These 100 year plans are not readily shared at present so how can this be done? Pilot will be in south and west forest district.
2. Digital media. How to involve people through this format. FC is currently weak here.
3. Volunteering. The community's practical engagement. Piloted in North Forest District.
4. Harnessing the energy of the community. Most exciting but the most complicated i.e. involving people in decision making. How can views be fed in at a strategic level? Being pilot in East of England District.

**Baseline:** the online questionnaire provided FC with a baseline of people's involvement and their required level of engagement. These views are being analysed and the pilot project being shaped up to be formally launched in the summer and to run until March next year.

Strategic decisions were described as being something that affects the whole District not just one local wood. Stakeholders were described as realistically the main representative bodies rather than small local groups.

155 questionnaires returned of which 61% were described as recreation; 31% environment and conservation; 5% timber and 3% business.

**Pilot based on three initiatives:** I found it rather ironic that in this new spirit of consultative engagement, the FC had already decided on three initiatives to use to test better stakeholder involvement.

These are:

1. Open Habitat Plan for Thetford Forest. The PFE will have to manage 10% of its estate as open habitat. Research has suggested that corridors are the best way of achieving this. This will be based on a planned felling regime but needs a consultative process to agree where and to help people understand the forest is not being cut down. This is a strategic question because Thetford Forest is so big.
2. Operational Site Assessments – these can involve stakeholders in planning but what about delivery? How to escalate engagement on sites where there is lots of recreational access and yet this will have to be restricted due to felling operations. Difference between local people who understand forest operations and visitors who may not.
3. Resilience in terms of disease threats and climate change. This originated with red needle blight.

Workshop groups discussed their views on the feedback on the questionnaire (as good as can be achieved without qualitative questions); the best way to engage stakeholders (we mentioned things like LAFs) and also discussed who should be involved in the three pilot subjects.

I suggested that a far more important strategic question was given the mismatch between forest income and expenditure on managing the forest – giving a shortfall of £22 million, stakeholder engagement should be employed in discussing the ways to balance the books e.g. extract gravel across the estate, sell off Thames Chase; charge for access etc. They conceded that this was quite a good point!

In short, interesting to be there but little opportunity to make the points about access to forests, higher rights etc.

Melinda Appleby  
July 2014

END