

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>21 July 2016</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Noelle Gore / Sophie Morling</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>SALC Offices – Claydon</b> <a href="http://www.salc.org.uk/uploads/salc-map.pdf">http://www.salc.org.uk/uploads/salc-map.pdf</a>

		<b>Paper Number</b>
1.	14.00 Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.	Minutes of previous meeting	<b>LAF 16/10</b>
3.	Declaration of interest	
4.	14.15 Presentation on coastal access by Kim Thirlby, Lead Advisor, Natural England	
5.	Coastal Access Update (paper)	<b>LAF 16/11</b>
6.	Network Rail Level Crossings (paper)	<b>LAF 16/12</b> <b>Appendix A,B &amp; C</b>
7.	Ipswich Docks & Upper Orwell Crossings (paper)	<b>LAF 16/13</b>
8.	Rights of Way Improvement Plan (paper)	<b>LAF 16/14</b>
9.	SLAF Annual Report (paper to follow next week)	
10.	General Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Letter to the Ipswich Society</li> <li>b. Local Access Forum Newsletter Issue 9</li> </ul>	<b>LAF 16/15</b> <b>Appendix 1</b> <b>Appendix 2</b>
11.	Public Question Time	
12.	Next meeting – 20 October 2016, Venue TBC	

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting held at SALC, Claydon on 21 April 2016</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>21 July 2016</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Sophie Morling</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>TBC</b>

### 1. **Welcome, apologies and housekeeping**

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), David Barker (Vice Chair) (DB) – Late arrived 2:45pm, Annette Ellis (AE), Monica Pipe (MP), Anthony Wright (AWR), John Wayman (JW), Margaret Hancock (MH), Diana Kearsley (DK).

SCC Officers Present: Sophie Morling (SM) (minutes), Andrew Woodin (AW), Ellie Tudor (ET), Steve Kerr (SK)

Guest Speakers: Peter White (PW), Steve Day (SD), Andy Kenning (AK), Nick Eddy (NE)

Member of the Public: Gordon Crosby (GC), Rosie Carter (RC).

Apologies: Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Jane Hatton (JH), Roland Wilson (RW), Gordon Merfield (GM), Claire Parker (CP)

### 2. **Minutes of previous meeting (LAF16/05)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016 were reviewed and confirmed to be an accurate record.

### 3. **Declaration of interest – None**

### 4. **Presentation on Planning and Green Access – West Suffolk Council**

PW went through a presentation regarding the site allocations process within Bury St Edmunds., starting with a summary of the 2010 local plan, adopted in 2015.

In 2007 there was a call for sites, this then followed the process of Submissions, Assessment, Consultations, EIP, Allocations and Policies.

PW advises all current site allocations are done. He also noted the impact of the Breckland Special Protection Area on Bury, and the need to avoid the generation of new trips into the SPA. This plays well for improving and protecting green access nearer the town.

AWR queried that the Bury to Horringer access has had no progress for 20 years. AW advised that this is now in hand.

JW mentioned that Bury St Edmunds town centre is full to capacity. PW advises that changes are in progress and especially at junctions and looking at the traffic impact coming

in and out of Bury, hence the progress of the Eastern Relief Road by Moreton Hall and Residents can now go this way straight to Ipswich.

PW went through the Joint Policies procedure.

PW advises there are 1250 new homes going near Nowton Road and another relief road is being looked at for this development. With possible employment of 14,000 people at a nearby Industrial site. This leads onto to access and making route to schools traffic free, by making paths accessible to schools, hospitals, etc so cars are not needed and to promote walking and cycling.

Allocations also include a new site for the Hospital and also a garden centre.

AWR was concerned about the allotments and need to speak to the Secretary of State. PW advised this was in hand.

PW went on to speak about the Masterplan in North East. This includes bridleways through a route through Great Barton, and working with Network Rail with the possibility of re-opening the underpass.

JW asked if Industrial Employment has been approved by Central Government and Suffolk Government. PW responded that Central Government still has a plan.

BH asked about RAF Mildenhall. PW advised that it will be another 4 years before we know and they are in discussions with the MoD.

MP asked if new PRoW could be included in the call for sites. PW responded this is considered through the whole planning process, but yes, the earlier the better.

In concluding, PW advised to look for opportunities, not problems; work with developers and be prepared to compromise requirements.

The forum very much welcomed the informative and lively presentation and thanked PW. DB advised that other Local Authorities do not think about Rights of Way and maybe SLAF/West Suffolk can influence others in Suffolk.

## **5. Presentation on Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy and Use of the Transport and Works Act Level Crossing Closure – Network Rail**

NE explained level crossings are the highest safety risk for Network Rail (NR), and they are also a maintenance liability. Different powers can be used to close and divert PRoW level crossings, namely the Highways Act 1980 and the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA), which NR is looking at using increasingly.

National Rail are looking at 140 level crossings using multiple TWA orders in the eastern region, with 33 crossings in Suffolk. Mott MacDonald are being used to consult land owners and doing various environmental works. Works still going on with consulting with private land owners. This work is at phase 1, with public consultation starting in

late May/June with 12 sessions countywide. A second round of consultation with more detail will start July/August.

**ACTION:** Network Rail to invite SLAF via SCC, AW and SK, with the relevant dates and times of the meetings.

## Q&A

DK noted she is the district councillor for Mellis, where there had been a very negative response to level crossing closures. SD explained this was due to a misunderstanding about NR's intentions.

BH asked how many proper accidents have been recorded? SD advised 12 non suicides nationally last year, where it was 10 the year before.

JW asked if an accident on a branch line was as important as on a main line and SD replied they are scored and this determines priorities.

MH asked how weather affected user censuses? AK confirmed that census is used at the crossings and normally a camera is placed for 9 days 24 hours a day or some have 31 days, school holidays and term time use is monitored as well.

MH asked if Network Rail are considering any future planning related developments when looking at the crossings? AK advised NR plans for current not future use. AW said he felt this misses the point and could result in solutions which quickly become out of date. He felt the local authorities could object to closures on this basis.

In response to a query from SK, NE agreed level crossing closure is not just about safety but also liability reduction.

BH asked who maintains new highway links? AK advised that will be the highway authority, and the budget for this has yet to be decided.

AWR asked if divisions will be surfaced? SD advised this will depend on use.

AWR asked which ones have already been closed? SK advised Cotton's 13 and 15 Steggles and Finnins, plus Great Barton Bridleway 12.

In response to questions from GC, SD noted there would be no new level crossings, although bridges and subways might be provided, and consultations would run for 6 weeks.

RC (MoP) advised that there has been lack of information and consultations regarding some possible closures? SD advised he will speak about this after the meeting.

PW asked how the local planning authority would be consulted, AK responded they would be but not much ahead of the public. SK responded NR had said it would engage with LPAs at an early stage to inform possible options. SK also noted the affected LPAs had been invited to NR/SCC TWA meetings where individual level crossings were under discussion.

Network Rail also discussed the early stages of crossing closures at Trimley and all bar 2 crossings will be closed. Network Rail are looking at linking connections with a possible bridge. These work are timetabled to take place in 2019, with some improvements taking place asap.

**ACTION:** Network Rail to forward the plans for this scheme and to be shared with SLAF members.

## 6. Network Rail Level Crossings Paper

Gypsy Lane – More flood modelling is taking place, with 2 options put forward for culvert height. BH confirmed that SLAF's position has not changed and it does not accept the current options of 1) raise the footpath by 350ml and 2) raise the footpath by 150ml. SK stated that that the standards show that a coverage of 2.3 metres or 2.1 at a push. Network Rail will be doing the research over the next 3 months – GC advised this affected results as we are into the drier summer period. NE noted the trial could be extended.

Cotton – 2 closures have been confirmed.

Halesworth – This is not a public right of way, and it is actually a barrow crossing. AWR challenged this by saying at least 10 people a day use it, NE advises census not completed yet and acquiring additional options, modelling systems and speaking to station. Another consultation will take place with the right solution. AWR advises the new bridge will come right out onto a cycle road/route and this will need to be taken into consideration.

**ACTION:** JW asked for the maps to be printed bigger.

## 7. Coastal Access Update

AW advised the first part is for information and Natural England are continuing to scope out paths and speak to land managers and taking sensitive sites into consideration.

Regarding future promotion, AW asked for thoughts on what a regional coast path might include. MH though Norfolk and Suffolk, but on the other hand a lot of European visitors start in Harwich, which of course is in Essex. AW noted Natural England will not be funding promotion, that would be down to interests like the local LEPs.

AE advised to AW to contact Pete Waters, Chief Executive at Visit East Anglian, who will be able to help with this.

**ACTION:** AE to provide AW with Pete's email address

AW asked for volunteer's to attend the Workshop being hosted by Norfolk County Council for 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016 in the Beccles/Bungay area – BH, MH and possible AE will attend.

## 8. National LAF Conference

BH went through his paper regarding the conference in Leeds.

BH advised the group that Broads Authority wanted a meeting between them and SLAF members.

## 9. General Paper

Draft Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy – AW urged everyone to look at this document produced by Central Government. AW attended a briefing yesterday (20<sup>th</sup> April) regarding this and it seems more urban dominated. AW asked the SLAF members if they would like him to respond with a letter and endorse it – this was agreed. Also AE mentioned about adding the document regarding the end of the year of cycling. DB advised to add the names of the members of parliament to the response.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan – ET asked if any further ideas of the user group or any local businesses want to be involved, and asked SLAF to promote the consultation, which will be Survey Monkey, with their members.

### **Any other business**

SK attended a conference yesterday (20<sup>th</sup> April) regarding a 3<sup>rd</sup> crossing at Lake Lothing, Lowestoft and Wet Dock crossing, Ipswich. Lake Lothing crossing has been agreed and signed off and works to commence in 2019. Wet Dock crossing, Ipswich is still on-going.

MH asked for a future SLAF meeting to be held along the Waterfront, this is so the Wet Dock crossing and the possible planning permission for the old Tolly Cobbold brewery can be reviewed by SLAF members.

MH also asked about making the parking bays blue badge holders, taxi rank and business delivery and drop off only – SK advises he is in conversation with Ipswich Borough Council regarding this.

MH advised that there is a document in the latest Ipswich Society Newsletter with regards to Safer Route to Schools, and asked if she can respond to this and send a letter to the Editor and use CP's document for this. BH and AW agreed to this and asked that MH send the letter to CP and copy BH and AW in.

**Public Question Time – No questions from the public.**

**Dates and Venues of Future Meetings - 21 July 2016, Venue TBC**

END

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: The England Coast Path</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 21<sup>st</sup> July 2016</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue: Suffolk Association of Local Councils Offices, Claydon</b>

### Background

The Government has put additional funding in place over the next 5 years, to make sure that the England Coast Path (ECP) is completed by 2020. Natural England (NE) has a duty to create a continuous walking trail around the entire coast of England, with wider access to beaches and open land as appropriate.

#### 1. Progress on Establishing The England Coast Path

Kim Thirlby, Lead Advisor with Natural England, will attend the meeting and update members on how work is progressing to establish the England Coast Path in Suffolk. The latest newsletter from Natural England (June 2016) states:

<b>Location</b>	<b>Current Activity*</b>	<b>Further Detail</b>	<b>Next Milestone</b>
<b>Essex</b> Harwich - Shotley Gate	Stage 2 & 3: Develop and Propose	Site visits and meetings with landowners to discuss alignment options.	Finalise and publish our proposals in spring 2017.
<b>Suffolk / Norfolk</b> Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea	Stages 2 & 3: Develop and Propose	More detailed site visits and meetings with stakeholders and landowners to discuss alignment options and protection of sensitive features.	Finalise and publish our proposals autumn 2017.

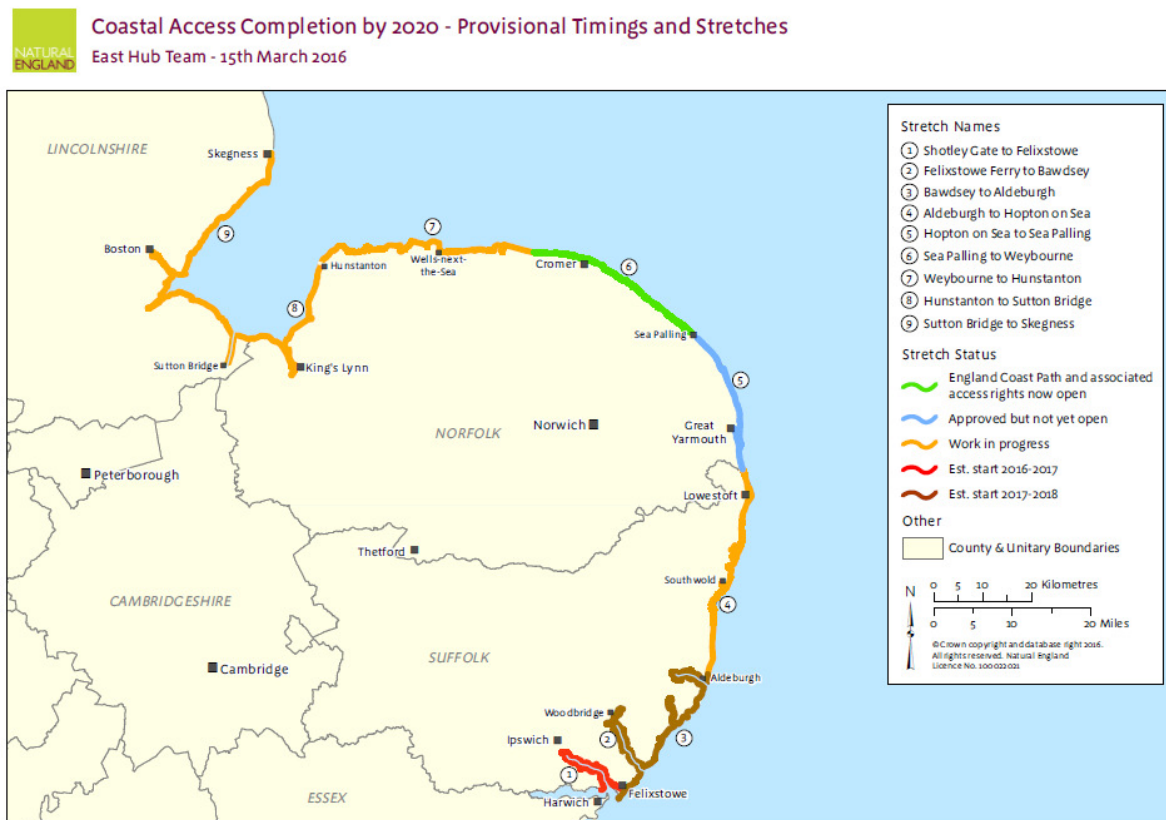
#### 2. Promoting the England Coast Path

The joint local access forum, involving Norfolk, Suffolk and the Broads Authority and hosted by Norfolk County Council, took place on 27<sup>th</sup> June in Beccles. Barry Hall, Margaret Hancock and Annette Ellis attended for SLAF. The main business addressed how the ECP in the east of England might be promoted once established, and the minutes are attached.

Overall:

- Attendees felt it was a productive meeting and useful for the three LAFs to meet,
- An East Anglian Coast Path, rather than individual councils doing their own thing, was agreed as the best way forward,
- A theme needs to be developed that is unique to East Anglia and attractive to visitors from near and far,
- A unified team should be established to managing and promote an EACP,
- Political buy-in is needed from councillors (there were none at this meeting),
- An EACP would be a great project for devolution and a new mayor, if that happens for Norfolk and Suffolk.

## Coastal Access Map – East Coast

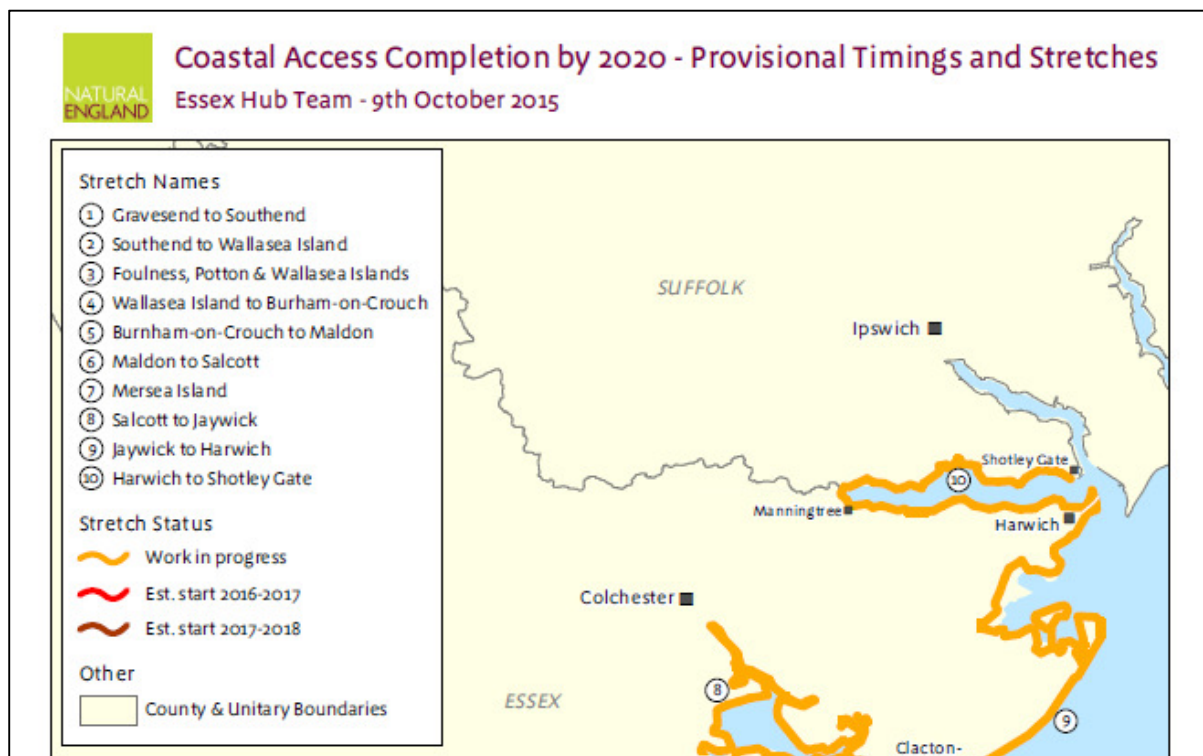


Further information here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/england-coast-path-in-the-east-of-england>



Cont.

Coastal Access Map – The Stour



Miscellaneous

The Scheme (methodology) for establishing coastal access can be found here:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327964912746496?category=50007>

END  
AW/SCC July 2016



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<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings</b>
<b>Meeting: 21 July 2016</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Steve Kerr</b>
<b>Venue: SALC offices, Unit 11a Hill View Business Park, Old Ipswich Rd, Claydon IP6 0AJ</b>

## Introduction

This paper updates the Forum on the main level crossings being addressed by Network Rail (NR) and Suffolk County Council (SCC), and progress on their Transport and Works Act proposals.



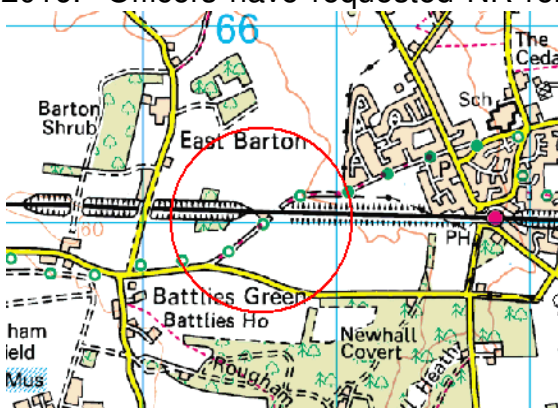
### Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6

The county council awaits the results of the flood modelling gauging study, which NR have previously advised is expected to be concluded by the end of July.

Officers continue to work with Suffolk Highways on scoping the necessary works and associated costs relating to the proposed upgrading of the diversionary route proposed by NR (Option E) and FP3 Creeting St Mary, to allow for cycling connectivity between Needham Market, Creeting St Mary and Stowmarket.

### Great Barton Bridleway 12

This case will shortly be concluded with the High Court objection period due to expire on 27 July, following confirmation of the Rail Crossing Extinguishment Order (RCEO) on 8 June 2016. Officers have requested NR remove this crossing from their Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) proposals for Suffolk.



## Cotton Footpaths 13 and 15



This case has now been concluded. Following confirmation of the RCEOs on 27 April, the High Court objection expired on 15 June 2016. These two paths have now been removed from the Definitive Map and Statement. Officers have requested NR remove this crossing from their Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) proposals for Suffolk.

## Halesworth Station - Barrow crossing



A site meeting was held on 23 June, involving the Assistant East Area Highways Manager, the East Area ROW Manager and Nick Eddy from Network Rail. The site meeting was then followed by a separate meeting with Councillor Tony Goldson.

The outcome of the site meeting was:-

- SCC confirmed that both paths (recorded as Public Footpath 20 Halesworth on the western side of the railway corridor and a footway on the eastern side) would fall under the continued management and control of SCC, as the Highway Authority.
- SCC confirmed that both walking routes are in line with Council standards and do not have any actionable defects that would currently require intervention by SCC. The footpath / footway need skirting and adjoining hedges cut back. The hedges are the responsibility of the adjacent landowner, including Network Rail on the relevant side.
- It was confirmed that both paths are metalled to a minimum width of 1.2m, as far as could be ascertained without cutting back the overgrowth and re-measuring.
- It appears the routes were surfaced 10 – 15 years ago but both are in a suitable condition. If the paths were widened to 2m this would still be within the legal limit allowed for public highways and therefore, no further legal application would be required. 2m would reflect the recorded definitive width for Footpath 20, on the western side of the line. On the north side, the path is recorded highway but forms part of the List of Streets.

- SCC confirmed the existence of 2/3 lights on the western side and one new LED light on the eastern side.
- SCC confirmed that Kiers are the designers and installers for the Council.
- NR confirmed that any works undertaken / paid for by them would then be the sole responsibility of the Council on completion (subject to the works being of an acceptable standard to the Council).

## General/Countywide

### NR's Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Strategy - Transport and Works Act Order

As Forum members will already be aware, NR are undertaking a nationwide project to reduce the number of level crossings on the operational railway network. For the Anglia region, NR have stated the following in support of this major initiative:

*'Network Rail has been working hard to better manage its level crossings and the risks they pose, and has developed proposals for the possible closure or change to public rights of way at over 130 of its level crossings in Anglia. Closing or modifying level crossings can help to bring about a number of benefits:*

- *Improve the safety of level crossing users.*
- *Deliver a more efficient and reliable railway, which is vital in supporting the regional and UK economy.*
- *Reduce the ongoing operating and maintenance cost of the railway.*
- *Reduce delays to trains, pedestrians and other highway users.*
- *Improve journey time reliability for all railways, highway and other rights of way users.*

*The level crossings in this initial phase of the Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy do not include any new bridges or underpasses, and offer benefits which are currently affordable and deliverable.'*

As part of the initial phases of this project, NR are proposing to close/divert 31 level crossings in Suffolk, the vast majority of these recorded as public rights of way.

Through their consultants (Mott Macdonald) and land agents (Arden), they have consulted with user groups, parish councils and landowners and have undertaken a series of public consultation events across the region, including Suffolk. There has been criticism of the way NR has managed communications relating to the consultation.

For further information on NR's proposals for the wider Anglia region and Suffolk, please see the link below. Confusingly, the end dates for the consultation are shown variously on NR's website (<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/anglialevelcrossings/>) as:

Online Survey Key Dates: Status: Open Runs from 6 Jun 2016 to **23 Jul 2016**  
 Bury St Edmunds: This survey will be open for completion until Saturday **9nd July**  
 Stowmarket: This survey will be open for completion until Tuesday **12th July**  
 Ipswich: This survey will be open for completion until Wednesday **13th July**



Officers consider it would be difficult for NR to eliminate a response from Suffolk received after 13<sup>th</sup> July but before 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

SCC will be responding to the consultation and a letter is attached (Appendix A) that both sets out the county council's current position and lodges a holding objection to NR's proposals.

A SLAF working sub group met on 28 June to assess NR's individual level crossing proposals and an interim response was subsequently sent to NR in response to the consultation – see Appendix B. SLAF members are to note this response is subject to agreement by all its members. A second round of consultations is proposed for September/October and SCC officers and District/Borough planning officers are meeting NR on 27 July to review the results of the consultation feedback and census information.

Margaret Hancock has submitted comments to the forum, which are attached at Appendix C.

END – SK & AW/SCC July 2016

#### Appendix A



Appendix A  
2016-06-23 SCC TWA

#### Appendix B



Appendix B  
2016-07-06 SLAF TW

#### Appendix C



Appendix C  
2016-07-06 SCC TWA

Your Ref:  
Our Ref:  
Date: 29 June 2016  
Enquiries to: Kerry Allen  
Tel: 01473 264429  
Email: [Kerry.Allen@Suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:Kerry.Allen@Suffolk.gov.uk)

Richard Schofield  
Route Managing Director (Anglia)  
Network Rail  
One Stratford Place  
Montchichet Road  
London  
E20 1EJ

Dear Richard,

## **NETWORK RAIL LEVEL CROSSING REDUCTION STRATEGY**

We are writing to you to express our concern about the way councillors and the wider community have been engaged in Network Rail's consultation on 31 level crossings in Suffolk.

We are aware that Suffolk County Council (SCC) officers have been working closely with Network Rail officers since January 2014 to discuss over 60 level crossings across Suffolk - we understand that the collaborative working has been very useful. During these meetings, SCC officers spoke frequently of the need for Network Rail and their consultants to inform councillors before issuing letters to parish councillors and landowners. This would allow all councillors to be fully briefed and in a position to help assist resident's understanding about the project – which we are sure you will agree also assists Network Rail.

However, this advice was not followed by Network Rail and has resulted in councillors being left in difficult situations where inflammatory letters have been sent to land owners and parish councillors without the knowledge of councillors or SCC officers. This in turn has led to a great deal of backlash from local residents, understandably, who have been given the message that their level crossing was about to close. We both know that closure is one of the options and not the only option, but the content of the letters to landowners and parish councils sent by Network Rail's consultants did not reflect this. Had SCC been informed and provided with a copy of the letters before they were issued, Network Rail could have been advised on the best language to use and how to communicate effectively with local residents.

In addition to this, the timescale for the public consultation events was also unsatisfactory, providing less than three-week's notice that events were due to take place. We are pleased to say though that Network Rail officers have listened to SCC advice that the second round of consultation events should move from August to September, which avoids the holiday period. There have also been other issues in terms of inconsistency of the messages being given: the number of level crossings being proposed for consultation has fluctuated from 29 to 31 depending on which Network Rail literature you read, and the deadline for the consultation also varies. A 21-day period of consultation is given for each area: West Suffolk, Mid Suffolk and Ipswich in the Network Rail flyers and on the project consultation website, however survey questionnaires and Network Rail's consultation hub webpage states different consultation deadline dates. As you can appreciate, such inconsistencies add to further confusion and frustration. SCC has informed Network Rail about this on a number of occasions.

Having between us committed to partnership working, we are sure you will agree that the way this process has been carried out is unacceptable. We want to work with Network Rail to move this process forward in a way where residents are given the correct information; have the opportunity to respond and feel that Network Rail is listening to their views.

We have asked SCC officers to work with Network Rail to construct a communications plan which will see the second round of consultations running more smoothly. Integral to this will be a range of workshops for county, district and borough and parish councillors to attend prior to the second round of consultations. This means they are suitably informed and can help deliver the message at parish council meetings. It would be useful if we could arrange a meeting with you to discuss this further.

We appreciate that funding for this work has a tight deadline and as such is dictating timescales and the resource available, but it is imperative that Network Rail undertakes this process correctly and that it works with SCC, recognising its highways authority role.

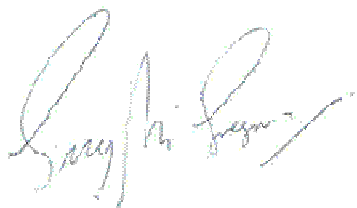
Until officers and councillors have properly considered each level crossing proposal, please treat this letter as a holding objection from Suffolk County Council. We (either SCC councillors or officers) will be writing to you again to set out the county council's position in full, once the public consultation feedback has been received and reviewed. A copy of this letter will be sent under a separate cover to the consultation response address.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**Cllr James Finch**  
**Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**  
**Suffolk County Council**



**Cllr Guy McGregor**  
**Suffolk County Councillor with Special Responsibility for Rail**

**CC, Level Crossing Reduction Strategy Consultation**

**SLAF**  
**Suffolk Local Access Forum**SLAF  
PO Box 872  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP1 9JWNetwork Rail  
Anglia Level CrossingsTel: 01473 264452  
Fax: 01473 216877  
Email: [slaf@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:slaf@suffolk.gov.uk)  
Web:  
<http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum/>Your Ref:  
Our Ref: SLAF/NR  
Date: 6 July 2016

Dear Sir/Madam

**Suffolk Local Access Forum's (SLAF) response to Network Rail's consultation on level crossing closures.**

Please note that this interim response is subject to agreement by a full Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) meeting later in July. SLAF reserves the right to comment further, following the results of the public consultation.

SLAF would expect Network Rail to assess all individual crossing proposals, taking full account of the following principles:

- The impact it would have on the use of the local network,
- Whether there are mitigation measures that could be put in place to allow the crossing to remain open,
- No crossing should be downgraded to less than a bridleway status,
- Consideration of the impact on field headland diversions, where margins are being managed positively for nature conservation and wildlife purposes,
- Its impact on local businesses and tourism,
- Thorough assessments need to be undertaken on the impacts on road safety and environmental and archaeological interests, resulting from the proposals,
- Any development proposals in the vicinity which could provide opportunities to construct footbridges or underpasses, to take into account future usage by walkers, cyclists and horse riders,
- Opportunities should be sought to enhance local access networks to mitigate level crossing closures, for example upgrading footpaths to bridleways or providing circular walks,
- The extents of the 'limit of deviation' proposed as part of the Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) must encompass all offsite mitigation routes.



SLAF members are also concerned about the confused messages that have been issued by Network Rail regarding the consultation response deadlines and the limited time that has actually been allowed for the consultation process. The Forum challenges the inadequate length of the 9 day survey period and questions the credibility of the usage data that will result. Additionally, the Forum notes that at least one crossing has already been physically closed to the public without authority, S23 - Higham FP1. Furthermore, it requests that any Road Safety Audit (RSA) should be shared, and the results agreed, with the highway authority.

SLAF seeks reassurance that all landowners are being consulted, including those that are currently affected by existing recorded rights of way and not just those affected by any proposed alternative route.

Where there is more than one alternative route for a crossing proposal, the Forum reserves the right to select all the options, pending further investigations. Where this is the case, I have marked the individual entry with "No comment at this stage".

A small working sub-group has looked carefully at each proposed diversion/closure and make the following comments.

#### SO1 - Sea Wall, FP13 Brantham

As Babergh District Council recently gave outline permission for the development of the old BX plastics site, engagement is needed with the developers for a green corridor route through new development. Both alternative routes should be pursued.

#### SO2 – Brantham High Bridge, FP6 Brantham

Closure of this crossing would have significant impact on the local footpath network west of the railway as no attempt has been made to link back from the crossing site to the A137. To the east, re-routing alongside the busy A137 (blue route) is not a good alternative unless it is on the field side of the highway boundary. The red or green route is preferred subject to a link on the west side.

#### SO3 – Buxton Wood, FP22 Bentley

No comment at this stage.

#### SO4 – Island, FP18 Bentley

Although the diversion is not too long, the road bridge is narrow and we would expect a Road Safety Audit to have been carried out and the results agreed with the highway authority.

#### SO5 – Pannington Hall, FP34 Wherstead

Closure of this crossing would have an impact on the local network. Both red and blue diversion routes are long, and the narrowness of the road to Belstead would involve the use of field margins for the latter. The green route seems the best of the options, but we would also welcome the inclusion of the red route alongside Hill Covert as this would add to the network, particularly if this were upgrade to a bridleway. This right of way leads to Jimmy's Farm and is an example where NR must consult with all affected landowners and businesses.

#### SO7 – Broomfield, FP12 Barham

This closure is not challenged as the green alternative wouldn't be too inconvenient.

S08 -Stacpool, FP33 Barking

Object. This crossing should remain open as it provides a link to the Gipping Valley River Path at Pipp's Ford, the diversion would involve walking alongside the busy B1113 and a dusty track used by aggregate lorries.

S11 – Leggetts, FP6 Old Newton & Dagworth

Although lengthy, the proposed alternative using existing rights of way and the Wassicks crossing is considered a reasonable alternative.

S12 – Gooderhams, FP14 Bacton

Object. This crossing should remain open, as the diversionary route along the busy B1113 is considered unacceptable due to the narrow footway and speeding traffic.

S13 – Fords Green, FP19 Bacton, S69 – FP13 Bacton

No comment at this stage. These together with S12, cannot be looked at in isolation as the proposals are focused on the Cow Creek and Church Road crossings as the alternatives. These all show significant diversions alongside the railway, or even greater use of road walking alongside the busy B1113. Further investigations are required on the part of NR and a holistic view taken of both the PRow level crossings and private accommodation rights, in seeking a wider solution for these crossings. This may need a new bridge and therefore best addressed during the later phases of the project. Furthermore, local knowledge suggests that historically there was an underpass in the locality that was used by agricultural machinery, which has since been stopped up. NR are asked to investigate this as a possibility.

S14 – Steggals, FP13 Cotton

Already extinguished.

S15 – Finningham, FP15 Cotton

Already extinguished.

S16 – Gislingham, BR10 Finningham

The red route to the west of the railway provides a reasonable link between the bridleway to the north and the byway to the south. This route would need to be at least bridleway status.

S17 – Paynes, FP26 Gislingham

Closure of this crossing would impact on the local network, particularly west of the railway. As mitigation both the red route and the blue route past Coldham Grove should be included as it would enhance the network.

S18 – Cow Pasture Lane, Byway 11 Mellis

No issue with this proposal.

S19 – Rectory Road, Mellis

Object. If closed, the crossing should only be downgraded to bridleway, and not footpath status. An RSA needs to be undertaken to assess the implications of displacing road users.

S20 – Beecroft, Mellis

No objection, subject to a satisfactory RSA audit on the impact of the closure, as this could cause large delivery vehicles to access the narrow road to supply the nearby poultry unit.

S21 – Abbots, Mellis

No comment.

S22 – Weatherby, Newmarket

Object.

S23 – Higham, FP1 Higham

Concerns are expressed about the current closure of this crossing and the fact that it is still subject to a camera census. As the right of way stops at the A14 dual carriageway, with the obvious link across being the grade separated crossing to the east, the Forum does not object to the closure, subject to the findings of the RSA.

S24 – Higham Ground Frame, FP6 Barrow

Closure of this crossing and using the red route would again move the footpath crossing of the A14 to the overbridge. The proposed blue route, if designated a bridleway, would be a valuable addition to the network. Additionally, the Forum requests RSAs are undertaken for both S23 and S24 and all diversionary options relating to S24 are upgraded to bridleway status.

S25 – Cattishall, Great Barton

Object. The Forum understands that, as part of the development to the north east of Bury St Edmunds, plans are already in place by the developer (under a Section 106 agreement) to replace this crossing with a stepped footbridge for pedestrians. The diversion of the National Cycle Route 19 would be routed to the existing underpass to the west of the crossing. Until these alternatives are in place the crossing should remain open.

S26 – Great Barton, BR12 Great Barton

Already extinguished. Diversion in place.

S27 - Barrels, FP5 Thurston, S28 – Grove Farm, FP 11 Thurston

No comment as this stage, but these two crossings need to be considered together as the opportunity exists to create circular walks.

S29 – Hawk End Lane, FP12 Elmswell

The Forum understands that the development of the former factory site for housing includes an agreement to provide the red link north of the railway to the Parnell Lane underpass at Hall Farm. The Forum objects, pending the successful outcome of the diversion to Parnell Lane.

S30 – Lords No29, FP9 Elmswell

No comment at this stage.

S31 – Mutton Hall, FP35 Wetherden

Object to the closure of this crossing if the diversion is to the narrow road bridge by Batts Farm but would accept closure if the diversion went westwards to use the road underbridge.

S32 – Haughley Green, FP1 Haughley

If this crossing were to close, although certainly not ideal, the red route either side of the railway would be preferable to the blue route which involves considerable road walking and for which an RSA is needed.

S33 – Westerfield, FP18 Ipswich (Not Haughley)

Object. Closure of this crossing is not accepted as it is considered premature at this stage. The development of the Ipswich Garden Suburb with the Green Access Bridge linking across to Westerfield is now the subject of an outline planning application and should be fully taken into account.

I hope that these comments are looked at carefully along with those from the other consultees and members of the public. Any further consultations need to allow ample time for consultees to submit their comments. Representatives from Network Rail are invited to attend a future SLAF meeting to discuss any updated proposals.

Yours sincerely

Barry Hall  
Chair of Suffolk Local Access Forum

## **General comments on Network Rail Consultation re. Anglia Level Crossing Proposals**

It is essential that all closures take into account identified proposals for future developments which will impact on level of usage at some locations. (e.g. Northern Fringe development of Ipswich – see below)

Many alternative routes mention “new footpaths”. In my view, if such options are identified after consultation as being the preferred route, the existing level crossing should not be closed until the new footpath is confirmed as a PROW with landowner and SCC. Responsibility/funding for future maintenance of any route must also be agreed.

Wherever appropriate (i.e. there are currently no steps to access an existing level crossing) any alternative must also be on a level i.e suitable for parents with buggies and all terrain mobility scooters. All new routes should be subjected to Network Rail’s Diversity Impact Assessment to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 which requires public bodies to ‘advance equality of opportunity’.

It would be helpful for literature explaining alternative routes to include length and average walking time of existing and proposed new routes to allow members of the public not necessarily conversant with scale drawings to consider additional distance/time necessitated by diversions.

-

### **S33 – Westerfield**

It is difficult to understand why NR has included closure of this crossing at this stage. Efficiency of service will not be improved as the crossing is only about 100m from the road crossing gates which necessitate goods & passenger trains to slow or stop. Developers of the Northern Fringe have already agreed use of this route as part of a walking & cycling route from Witnesham via Westerfield into the centre of Ipswich (known as The Fonnereau Way) and it is included in the Ipswich Plan.

I note that in NR literature and on the consultation website this is wrongly shown as being in the Parish of Haughley and have concerns that consultation with the relevant local council has not been done and that leaflets publicising the consultation have been distributed in the wrong area.

Margaret Hancock  
SLAF  
15<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Title: Ipswich Docks and The Upper Orwell Crossing

## Background

Suffolk County Council has received a provisional funding agreement of £77million from the Department for Transport for the Upper Orwell Crossings. The council has launched a consultation so that residents, businesses, community representatives and visitors to Ipswich can have their say.

Members have already received notice of the consultation:

**From:** The Upper Orwell Crossings  
**Sent:** 01 July 2016 13:14  
**To:** The Upper Orwell Crossings  
**Subject:** The Upper Orwell Crossings - consultation

Dear Sir or Madam

Please find details below of the launch of a consultation in respect of the Upper Orwell Crossings, which provides for three new crossings over the upper reaches of the River Orwell in Ipswich.

The project has been confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and Suffolk County Council is now undertaking a first round of non-statutory consultation on the project.

We would be grateful for feedback from your organisation and the details of how to do so are provided below.

### **Consultation begins on three new River Orwell crossings**

Suffolk County Council has launched a consultation with residents, businesses, community representatives and visitors to Ipswich about its proposal for three new River Orwell crossings close to Ipswich town centre – the Upper Orwell Crossings. The three crossings proposed are:

- A new road crossing to the south of the Wet Dock Island, which would connect the east and west banks. The crossing would be for all road users including cyclists and pedestrians
- A new road crossing of the New Cut, which would connect the west bank to the Wet Dock Island. This crossing would be for all road users including cyclists and pedestrians
- An improved crossing over the Prince Philip Lock, which would connect the east bank to the West Dock Island. This bridge would be for cyclists and pedestrians only.

In March 2016, Suffolk County Council received a provisional funding agreement of £77million from the Department for Transport for the Upper Orwell Crossings. This followed the approval of its Outline Business Case which demonstrated how the proposed crossings would support investment, enterprise and regeneration in Ipswich, and would relieve congestion and improve connectivity for all road users.

The consultation will be open between Friday 1 July and Friday 12 August and will include several ways in which people can find out more and have their say. This includes a number of open 'drop-in' public exhibitions:

- **Sunday 3 July (12pm – 4pm)**
  - Ipswich Music Day, Christchurch Park, Ipswich, IP4 2BX
- **Thursday 7 July (12pm to 7pm) & Saturday 9 July (10am – 5pm)**
  - Ipswich Town Hall, Cornhill, Ipswich, IP1 1DH
- **Sunday 10 July (12pm – 4pm)**
  - Ipswich Mela, Christchurch Park, Ipswich, IP4 2BX
- **Friday 15 July (10am – 5pm) & Saturday 16 July (10am – 5pm)**

- Dance East, Jerwood Dance House, Foundary Lane, IP4 1DW
- **Sunday 17 July (10am – 2pm)**
  - Ipswich Wheels Festival, Chantry Park, Hadleigh Road, Ipswich, IP2 0BS
- **Monday 18 July (5pm – 9pm)**
  - St Luke's Church, Cliff Lane, Ipswich, IP3 0PJ
- **Friday 22 July (8.30am – 5pm)**
  - Ipswich Market, Cornhill, Ipswich, IP1 1DH

The public exhibitions are an opportunity for all those who are interested in commenting on the proposal to speak to a member of the project team and provide feedback. For those people that are unable to attend a public exhibition, information will be available at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/UpperOrwellCrossings](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/UpperOrwellCrossings) and at the following display exhibitions between 1 July and 12 August:

- **Between Friday 1 July and Friday 12 August (between 9am – 5pm)**
  - Suffolk County Council, Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX
- **Between Friday 1 July & Thursday 21 July (during opening hours)**
  - Gainsborough Community Library, Clapgate Lane, Ipswich, IP3 0RL
- **Between Friday 22 July & Friday 12 August (During opening times)**
  - Chantry Library, Hawthorn Drive, Ipswich, IP2 0QY

Anyone who wishes to give feedback should fill in the consultation survey at one of the public exhibitions, or online at [www.suffolk.gov.uk/UpperOrwellCrossings](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/UpperOrwellCrossings).

Requests for a copy of the survey and a return freepost envelope can also be made by calling 0345 603 1842. Completed surveys must be received by 5pm on Friday 12 August.

For further information please visit [www.suffolk.gov.uk/UpperOrwellCrossings](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/UpperOrwellCrossings)

If there is time at the meeting, it should be possible to view the proposals online, including watching a virtual fly-through to see where the proposed crossings would be located.

Members are requested to express their views on how the proposals might affect non motorised access around the waterfront and docks.

END  
AW/SCC July 2016

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Suffolk Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2</b>
<b>Meeting: 21 July 2016</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Ellie Tudor</b>
<b>Venue: SALC offices, Unit 11a Hill View Business Park, Old Ipswich Rd, Claydon IP6 0AJ</b>

## **Introduction**

This report summarises the progress to date and future plans for Suffolk's second Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), following on from public consultation that took place in June.

## **Consultation**

As the forum knows, three consultation surveys were drafted in order for us to get opinions of all those involved with the use and management of public rights of way (PROW). These surveys were directed at users and non-users, local businesses and Parish Councils.

The consultation went live on the 1<sup>st</sup> June and ran to the 1<sup>st</sup> July. In order to ensure that as many Parish Councils could feedback as possible their deadline has been extended to the 24<sup>th</sup> July.

As per the communications plan the surveys were hosted on the Suffolk County Council webpage and were advertised using Discover Suffolk social media.

Direct emails were sent to over 50 different groups involved with the use of public rights of way, 60 disability and minority groups, a selection of land managers and local businesses as well as the clerk to each parish council within the county.

## **Consultation responses**

The consultation appears to have been well received and over 800 members of the public completed the survey, the breakdown is as follows:-

- Users and non-users – 705 responses
- Local businesses – 20 responses
- Parish councils – 103 responses (as of 12.07.16).

On the whole feedback has been positive and it certainly provides a solid basis for the preparation of the ROWIP 2. Some of the main themes for each survey can be found below:-

### *Users and Non-users*



- 95.97% respondents were users of PROW and their main usage was walking or dog walking.
- Over 85% of respondents that identified themselves as users use PROW at least weekly, with over 78% preferring to use them for over an hour. Their main reason for use was to enjoy the countryside (88.59%), for exercise (77.66%) or for the enjoyment of the activity e.g. enjoy cycling or riding (65.16%).
- The main means of accessing PROW is on foot (79.47%) or by car (68.27%). This is not surprising when you consider the high density of footpaths that make up the network. The composition of Suffolk's PROW network is as follows:-
  - Total PROW – 3564 miles
  - Footpaths: 2916 miles (82%)
  - Bridleways: 392 miles (11%)
  - Restricted Byways: 97 miles (3%)
  - Byways Open to All Traffic: 159 miles (4%)
- 72.64% of users currently travel less than 5 miles but are also willing to travel over 5 miles to access PROW.
- Main routes looked for are local (85.40%), circular (82.57%) and routes avoiding busy roads (75.35%).
- Poor maintenance (50.23%) specifically overgrowth, poor signage (13.9%) and dog mess (9.59%) along with the disjointed nature (specifically bridleways) of the network put users off.
- Users think the following are the most important when considering the future of the PROW network:-
  - Maintain the network with signage and way markers (95.13%)
  - Publish online an accurate map showing all rights of way in Suffolk (91.09%)
  - Make it easier or safer to walk or cycle to school (81.18%)
  - Provision of short walks, which join up to create longer routes (79.80%)
  - Develop schemes to look after countryside paths (76.09%)
  - Develop and promote coastal access (75.82%)
  - Better understand how to make walking, cycling and horse riding more relevant to non-users (63.46%)
  - Plan for healthy communities in larger developments (62.77%)
- Non Users identified the following points in relation to using PROW:-
  - The main obstacle is confidence 32% stated that not knowing what to do and where to go put them off using PROW.
  - Being part of a group (40%) or being with friends and family (63.33%) would help them to be active on the PROW network.

- More available information on routes (50%), maps of easy local (50%), following a trail or a footpath (37.5%) or circular walks (53.13%) would encourage them to use them more.
- Respondents currently find information about PROW via leaflets (73.16%), Maps (89.70%), as part of a led group (88.15%) or recommendations from friends and family (95.54%). They would like to find information via village halls and notice boards (75.71%), Suffolk County Council Website (78.47%) and at Bus stops and train stations (80.81%)
- When asked for further comments the following themes emerged:-
  - Maintenance specifically cutting in summer months needs to be improved.
  - More off road (bridleways) routes for cyclists and horse riders due to the danger of roads. Many current routes have gaps, can these be joined up.
  - Ensure protecting and expanding the PROW network is considered during planning consultations.
  - Make network more accessible e.g. remove stiles or stepped bridges.
  - Several comments were made by 4x4 and motorcycle users who felt that the consultation was biased against them. They also highlighted a concern that they would not be included in the plan.

### *Local Businesses*

- The majority of respondents are involved in farming or agriculture.
- There is a general agreement that PROW has a benefit to both the local economy (42.86%) and local businesses (42.86%).
- The main problems involved with public access involve deliberate (64.29%) or inadvertent (71.43%) trespass by path users

### *Parish Councils*

- 91.8% of Parish Councils that have responded rated route conditions as either adequate or good and 86.89% of routes signage has been rated adequate or good.
- The majority (69.84%) of Parish Councils that responded are interested in maintaining and improving PROW, over half would like to work with SCC ROW&AD team to achieve this.
- The team needs to work with and educate Parish Councils to ensure PROW is properly considered when they respond to planning applications and prepare Neighbourhood Plans.
- Parish Councils have highlighted the need for well maintained, signed and promoted routes to encourage members of the public to use PROW both for leisure and utility processes.

### **Key milestones**

Moving forward the aspiration is for the ROWIP 2 to be written and adopted by the end of the year, in order for this to be achieved the following timeline will need to be adhered to:-

- End of July: Parish Councils survey to close and results analysed.
- July – August: ROWIP 2 draft to be written.
- September – November: ROWIP 2 draft out for consultation for 12 weeks.
- December: Any changes to ROWIP 2 made.
- December: ROWIP 2 presented to the Cabinet Committee
- End of 2016: ROWIP 2 adopted.

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title: General Paper</b>	
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> July 2016</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue: Suffolk Association of Local Councils Offices, Claydon</b>	

## Introduction

This paper summarises progress on other items of interest to the forum.

## Letter to the Ipswich Society

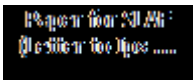
Margaret Hancock raised this at the last meeting and asked if she can respond on behalf of SLAF to a document in the latest Ipswich Society Newsletter regarding Safer Route to School. A copy of the response is attached at appendix 1.

## Local Access Forum Newsletter Issue 9

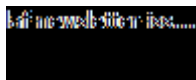
A copy of the latest newsletter is attached at appendix 2. This issue includes a report on the national conferences held earlier this year.

AW/SCC July 2016

Appendix 1:



Appendix 2:



To: Robin Gaylard, Editor, Ipswich Society Newsletter  
From: Margaret Hancock  
Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2016

Dear Editor,

I was particularly interested to read John Norman's comments on cycling in the last newsletter. I'm a keen commuting and touring cyclist myself and would echo most of his comments. As a member of Suffolk Local Access Forum (SLAF) I was very encouraged to learn about SCC's plans to encourage more children to cycle to school. I'm sure John is aware of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, a national initiative to improve the health and well-being of children by examining conditions around schools and conducting projects and activities that work to improve safety and accessibility, and reduce traffic and air pollution in the vicinity of schools. As a result, this program aims to make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing transportation choices thus encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age.

It's good to know that in Suffolk, Claire Parker, Green Access Manager is working alongside SCC Passenger Transport to identify ways in which Public Rights of Way might contribute to these efforts and a number of footpaths and bridleways have been identified as being potential options for a safer route to school. For SRTS to be delivered successfully will require collaboration between authorities' schools, passenger transport, highways, PRow teams and local politicians. A lot of this is budget driven now and as much work will need to be put into promoting healthy and sustainable travel to school amongst parents and children as ensuring off road routes are properly maintained and safe to use. The programme is complex and in some circumstances contentious and political but it's good to know that many of the issues raised by John in his article are at least on the agenda.

More details about SLAF, can be found at <http://publicrightsofway.onesuffolk.net/suffolk-local-access-forum/> and the full report (LAF16/04) entitled "Green Access Development Update" is available by clicking on SLAF meeting 28-01-16. The report summarises development projects that the Green Access Manager is either leading, scoping or involved with, and I think would make interesting reading for anyone keen to see an improvement in facilities for walkers and cyclists across the County.



Photograph by Jim Milner

# LAF NEWS

2015/16

Issue 9

## Welcome

Hello and welcome to issue 9 of the LAF newsletter – the first after the two national conferences in Leeds and Bristol and, I'd like to say straight away, how great it was to see so many LAFs and LAF members at the two events. I hope you found the talks and workshops as interesting and stimulating as I did and the article on the conferences in this edition summarises what went on.

In this edition we also have articles on: the effects of last winter's severe weather on access networks and possible new approaches to a changing climate and how a Heritage Lottery Fund project is helping to revitalise The Teesdale Way - once again highlighting the breadth and depth of interest and knowledge that resides within our forums.

From our side there is an update on the Coastal Access programme and there's also a reminder from Rob about completing your Annual Review Forms which do provide us and Defra with much useful information and help us keep in touch with what's going on throughout the LAF community.

So I hope you enjoy this issue but I'd like to make an early appeal for articles, or suggestions for articles, for the next edition since the more material there is from the forums the more that must reflect what LAFs consider newsworthy and informative.

Andy Mackintosh, Natural England

### In this issue...

[LAF conferences](#)

[Time to follow another path](#)

[River Tees rediscovered](#)

[Annual reporting](#)

[England Coast Path](#)

## National LAF conferences

After consulting LAFs via an online survey, Natural England organised 2 national LAF conferences for 2015/16 in Bristol and Leeds. The Bristol 'South' conference was held on Tuesday 23rd February 2016 at Natural England's Bristol office and the Leeds 'North' conference was held on 1st March 2016 at the Oxford Place Centre. All LAFs were asked to nominate a representative to attend a conference (in addition to members doing talks or running workshops).

In the online consultation we invited LAF members to suggest the topics of most interest to them and this resulted in a programme with a range of speakers and workshop facilitators from the LAFs, Defra and from other organisations with an interest in public access.

### Presentations



Jonathan Tweney - Defra presentation, Bristol

After an introduction by the conference Chairs (Matt Heard in Bristol and Liz Newton in Leeds), both conferences kicked off with a Defra presentation on the Deregulation Act, Rights of Way Reform Package. These presentations were delivered by

Jonathan Tweney in Bristol and Bryony Thorpe in Leeds. The talks included an overview of the progress of the Deregulation Act and information about the changes to the Definitive Map Modification Order process and regulations along with a lively Q&A session at the end.

Again at both conferences the second talk of the day to all delegates was by John Cuthbertson, Vice Chairman & Rambles Organiser for the Disabled Ramblers who spoke about the various barriers on the rights of way network which are encountered by the disabled. The presentation included many photographs and some videos of the use of 'Trampers' which some disabled ramblers are able to use to better get around in the countryside and John kindly brought a 'Tramper' along to both of the conferences for delegates to see in the flesh.

John writes:

*"The Disabled Ramblers helps the less mobile regain access to*

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*the countryside. To do this they have had to campaign for the removal of man-made barriers. While they have had some success with this, the disabled now find themselves thwarted by replacements which are just as effective in limiting the paths they can use; often due to the perception that the disabled wouldn't be able to or wouldn't want to go there."*



John Cuthbertson - Disabled Ramblers presentation, Bristol

After lunch, the first presentation in Bristol was by Nicola Greenwood, Access and Bridleways Officer, Wokingham who spoke about how stakeholders could try and influence their local authorities in order to try and improve their off-road networks, in this case, bridleways. Nicola gave a number of tips and steps to take to try and deliver new and improve existing rights of way.

The post-lunchtime presentation in Leeds was by Anthony Francis-Jones, British Horse Society Access Officer for Telford and Wrekin, and Telford and Wrekin Local Access Forum's Chairman who focused on what can be achieved in an urban/semi urban area.

Anthony writes:

*"My talk was a brief overview of what came to be achieved in an urban area by working closely with the local (highway) authority. The presentation explained successful methods to create multiuser routes and bridleways as well as how to reduce the backlog of Definitive Map Modification Orders. A case study in Telford, Shropshire was used as an example."*

In Leeds this was followed by a talk from Sue Taylor-Green from the British Horse Society and Ulnes Walton Bridleways Association on creating new peri-urban multi-user routes/bridleways. The presentation gave guidance and good practice on how the association managed to develop the bridleway network in their area.

Sue writes:

*"The presentation was about the development of Ulnes Walton Bridleways Association (UWBA) and its work with the local council and various funding bodies, both to overcome an initial 'horse*

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# LAF News

*hostility' attitude and to gain alternative finance to create new routes."*

At both conferences, the final main presentation of the day was delivered by John Dennis who gave examples to try and inspire LAFs to investigate potentially alternative sources of funding for their access projects including active living and other sports related examples.

## Workshops

John Richardson and Alan Kind from LARA (Land Access and Recreation Association) delivered a workshop on the use of



John Richardson and Phil Wadey, Bristol

recreational vehicles on the rights of way network at both conferences. The workshop focussed on the rapidly evolving influence of social media, and its impact on communication and behaviours, with relation to recreational vehicle use.

Also at both conferences, Phil Wadey and Sarah Bucks from the Open Spaces Society ran a workshop regarding the need to get paths recorded accurately on the definitive map of rights of way by 2026.

Dementia Adventure delivered a workshop at both conferences (Rachel Niblock in Bristol and Kath Pyke in Leeds) looking at the benefits of dementia inclusive walks.

Kath writes:

*"The workshops looked at the benefits and discussed how to take the fear out of supporting people living with dementia to go for a walk; drawing on the success of dementia inclusive walk programmes from around the country including a LAF project in Lincolnshire".*

The final workshop held at both conferences was from Peter McKay from Herefordshire LAF which discussed the topic of registering white roads to help increase the awareness of the legislation.

## Links

[Dementia Adventure](#)

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# LAF News

At the Bristol conference, Bekki Redshaw and Keeley Rolfe from respectively Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks ran a workshop on Devon's Naturally Healthy Project.

Also just at the Bristol conference, Seamus Elliott and Martin Sullivan from Norfolk LAF ran a workshop on setting up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation which have the potential to raise funding for Rights of Way Improvement Plan projects and other outdoor access.

The final Bristol only workshop was delivered by Richard Holmes from Gloucestershire LAF looking at the subject of disability access and the experiences of the Gloucestershire Disability Access sub-group.



Jane Beech and Richard Holmes, Bristol

Richard writes:

*“The workshop aimed to build on the LAF Toolkit (Disability Access) and to share achievable and practical ideas to enable LAFs to improve access for people with disabilities.”*

For the workshops only held in Leeds, Audrey Christie, Durham County Council; Geoff Hughes, Durham LAF and Jim Philips from Ethos Enviro Planning ran one looking at access prioritisation, a strategic approach to managing local paths in County Durham.

Also just at the Leeds conference, Ted Liddle from Northumberland LAF lead a workshop on how the mountain biking route the Sandstone Way was created and developed

Another Leeds only workshop was ran by John Sugden from Redcar & Cleveland LAF on the subject of whether it's really trespass to ride or cycle on a footpath.

Mary Mills and Brian Cluff from Nottinghamshire LAF also ran a workshop in Leeds on Nottinghamshire Guided Walks Partnership and their programme of walks.

In addition to the talks and workshops there was a final session in the conference main rooms led by the conference Chairs: in Bristol this comprised of a workshop roundup where all the workshop leads gave a brief overview of what was covered at their

## Links

[Naturally Healthy](#)

[Sandstone Way](#)

[Nottinghamshire Guided Walks](#)

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# LAF News

workshops; in Leeds there was a Q&A session where delegates were able to ask questions of the various speakers and Natural England.

Many thanks to all of the speakers and workshop leads who kindly gave their time and brought their expertise and enthusiasm to both of the LAF conferences.

## Feedback

130 delegates in total attended the conferences with representatives from 72% of the LAFs.

Feedback forms were produced and circulated to the delegates of both conferences and from them 96% reported that the content did meet their expectations (4% reported neither yes or no).

Additionally 96% reported on the feedback forms that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the conference organisation with 4% saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

The lively discussions within the workshops and informally in the margins of the conferences, along with positive feedback from delegates, clearly demonstrated that the events were worthwhile and appreciated.

For more information about both of the conferences including all of the presentations used, notes collected, statistics, feedback and audio recordings, please follow the link to the right:

## Time to follow another path?

By Ian Jackson, geologist and member of the Northumberland Joint Local Access Forum

The consequences of this winter's flooding for people of northern England have been devastating. Water and debris from overflowing rivers and streams have wrecked homes and businesses. Major road and rail transport links have been severed and will take months and millions to repair. But in this largely rural landscape there is another casualty.

For sure it's not one with such an awful personal cost, but as spring and summer follow winter, it is one that will affect many of us who take our time-out in the countryside. Across all the northern counties paths and bridges have been swept away by water and landslides.

In Northumberland the storms of December have caused

## Links

[LAF Conferences](#)

[Article originally published on the Northumberland National Park website](#)

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# LAF News

significant damage; over 34 rights of way are at best interrupted and at worst impassable.



Allen banks bridge damaged in the flooding

The cost of repair of this winter's destruction is estimated to be almost half a million pounds, far exceeding budgets the Council and the National Park set aside for dealing with their existing (and long) list of paths needing maintenance. The loss of local amenity is bad enough but the economies of these northern rural counties depend on tourism, and access to the countryside is, fundamentally, why the tourists come.



Access interrupted due to a damaged bridge in the Northumberland National Park

As with the response to damage to buildings and transport in northern England, there has been no crying over spilt milk. A short-lived period of shock has quickly been followed by stoic, down to earth and practical action. Paths have been walked, damage has been surveyed, repairs are being costed and bids for emergency funding made to central government. In the months ahead Council and Park personnel, reinforced by volunteers, will start to prioritise and mend the damage. It will however take a long time and in some cases decisions may be taken that maintaining a particular

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route is no longer tenable.

This begs a more fundamental question, one which is taxing the minds of Rights of Way professionals and those who advise them in local and national bodies. That question is: if these extreme weather events are, as predicted, likely to become more common, then do we need to recognise that some of the paths we have come to know and love may no longer be sustainable?

It is obvious that the nation cannot afford to waste money on restoration schemes that may be washed away in the next storm. The bottom line is that our future strategies for access to the countryside must now also consider alternative routes as well as protection and repair. Our Rights of Way may be much less high profile than disappearing ice caps and glaciers but this winter shows that they are no less vulnerable to a climate which is changing.

## River Tees Rediscovered

By Beryl Bird, Tees Valley Local Access Forum Development Officer



River Tees in Darlington Borough

The Teesdale Way is a 92 mile walking trail, rising in Cumbria to the west and from Cow Green Reservoir in Upper Teesdale through County Durham and Teesside to the North Sea coast at Warrenby in Redcar. For much of the trail it follows the River Tees.

The development and promotion of the Teesdale Way is a key component of River Tees Rediscovered; a £3.7m programme supported under the Heritage Lottery Fund's Landscape Partnership Programme. The programme is managed by Groundwork North East in conjunction with the Local Authorities of Darlington, Stockton on Tees, Middlesbrough, Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland, and several other project partners. The Tees Valley Local Access Forum is also contributing to this work which began in earnest in 2014.

The Teesdale Way and Heritage Trails Project will deliver improved signage, surfacing and path furniture on the Teesdale Way and along a series of linked countryside and urban trails. The project will also help to interpret and celebrate the fascinating local industrial and natural heritage of the area, and promote the Teesdale Way to local residents and visitors.

The vision for the wider River Tees Rediscovered programme is impressive:



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Re-surfacing work in Darlington Borough on the Teesdale Way

to alter how the hundreds of thousands of people who live by the Tees from rural Piercebridge, near Darlington to the steelworks at Redcar, interact with the river.

The River Tees Rediscovered programme runs over 5 years. A diverse range of projects is being delivered, including schemes which will conserve and enhance natural environment and heritage features, improve public access to nature and heritage, celebrate and provide opportunities for

and interpret the area's heritage, people to get actively involved.

Graham Clingan, Greenspace Strategy & Partnership Manager at Stockton on Tees Borough Council brought the TVLAF AGM in March 2016 up-to-date with improvements along each section of the route as it passes through each Local Authority area; from the open scenic views through Darlington through to industrialised Middlesbrough and Redcar.



Permissive footpath near Middlesbrough FC training ground

In Darlington a new permissive footpath has been created at the Middlesbrough Football Club's training ground at Rockcliffe, linking the riverside path to the existing RoW network; in addition some 550 metres of footpath have been re-surfaced at Carlbury and Broken Scar. Future plans include new finger posts with the agreed livery of a Teesdale Way Dipper, 25 new gates or kissing gates and three sections of new boardwalk.



Princess Diana Bridge at Stockton on Tees

At Stockton on Tees new kissing gates, signage and boardwalks have been installed on sections of the Teesdale Way near Yarm and

Aislaby, and the route taken from the Princess Diana Bridge to the Tees Barrage now boasts LED lighting. Planned works include new boardwalks at Newsham Wood and Newsham Park.

Two major projects have been completed within Redcar and Cleveland Borough; the steel footbridge at the Wilton Steel Works (costing £100K) crossing the main east coast railway line safely, and could not have been achieved without considerable financial assistance from the Coastal Communities Fund and Tata Steel. This is an example



Wilton Steel Works – new Tata Steel Bridge on Teesdale Way in Redcar and Cleveland Borough

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of the joined up thinking that has that has led to the enormous improvements in public access to and beside the river.

The regular flooding that has taken place at Dabholm Beck in Redcar has also been addressed with the dredging of the beck at this point by the Environment Agency.



New stepped path down to the River Tees

In total more than 20 Heritage Trails are to be developed linking into the Teesdale Way. The route also links onto the England Coast Path at the Newport Bridge on the Stockton/Middlesbrough boundary. Plans are also being developed to extend the Coast Path northwards from Newport Bridge and the Transporter Bridge towards Hartlepool, again with support through the River Tees Rediscovered programme.

At Middlesbrough re-surfacing works have taken place between the riverside Teesaurus Park and the iconic Newport Bridge, and more than 20 new Teesdale Way Dipper signposts/waymarks will be installed, as the route passes through Middlesbrough, in the next few weeks.

Naturally the Forum members were delighted with progress, some having actively played a part in the initial bid, and others having help devise the most appropriate route for the walks already underway. But the project is a long way from completion and much good work will continue, to share the story of the River Tees with the people of Tees Valley.



Teesdale Way Dipper Sign

## LAF Annual reporting for 2015-16

The new annual reporting process and Annual Review Form (ARF) to cover the financial year April 2015 to March 2016 was circulated to all of the LAF Secretaries on the 26th April and was also uploaded to the LAF Huddle workspace on the same day. This year's deadline for submitting either a completed ARF, annual report, or both to Natural England is 31st July.

Please encourage your LAF to submit an Annual Review Form as the more LAFs do this, the stronger the resulting national report will be that is submitted to Defra and the Minister in order to help demonstrate the value of LAFs and their work.

## England Coast Path update

By Sue Shipston, Natural England

Natural England is currently establishing a 2,700 mile continuous path around the entire English coastline by 2020. Work is already under way on more than half the path.

In March some of Somerset's most spectacular coastline opened to the public for the first time – 58 miles of new and improved coast

## Links

*Huddle specific links*

[Annual Review Form 2015 - 16](#)

[Previous National LAF Annual Reports](#)

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path from Brean Down to Minehead. The longest section to be added to the national route so far was opened by Natural England's Chairman, Andrew Sells, at a ceremony in Doniford.

A further 134 miles of new routes are due to open in Kent and North Yorkshire this summer.

Neil Constable ECP Programme Manager said:

*"The 'Somerset' stretch of the England Coast Path has been challenging and satisfying in almost equal measure. As the first 'long' stretch to be taken on, it presented a host of interesting features: the 9 km of Brean Sands, the realignment at Steart to create more than 400 hectares of new wetland habitat, preparation and planning for Hinkley C, and even a steam railway to name but a few - all topped off with the second highest tidal range in the world.*

*The satisfaction comes from literally plotting a way through a remarkable and varied length of coast so that it does not impact on business, privacy or wildlife but does establish a genuine coastal footpath. Needless to say this takes time. We worked with nearly 300 owners and occupiers to draw up the proposals which come to fruition today and which will see a true coast path from Brean Down near Weston all the way to Minehead, including some five miles of new route where existing paths have historically turned inland."*

In Doniford, as part of the new route, a 15-metre footbridge has been built over the river Swill. For the first time, this provides an easy-access walking route between the two sides of the village, allowing those staying at several nearby caravan sites to walk safely to Doniford Farm shop and café, the nearby halt for the West Somerset Railway or onwards down the coast. It is also the first time such a major piece of infrastructure has been built for the England Coast Path.



Burnham-on-Sea Low lighthouse  
© Sarah Littler

Walkers can enjoy several new sections of path between Watchet and East Quantoxhead, which opens up spectacular new views over the Bristol Channel. Somerset Wildlife Trust has also provided seven new interpretation boards along the stretch, to reveal more about the stunning wildlife and landscape features that walkers will be able to see and enjoy along 'Somerset's brilliant coast.'

This new access joins existing coastal footpaths to create a stretch of high-quality, well-signposted coastal National Trail. Natural England consulted local landowners, businesses and local people, working closely with Somerset County Council to plan and create the route.

### Find out more about the England Coast Path

The eight Natural England delivery teams around the country work closely with local authorities, land owners and occupiers, communities, interest groups and others to ensure the best and most appropriate alignment for the new coast path.

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# LAF News

You can see what our teams are working on and check the latest progress in your area on [GOV.UK](#)

Or contact your local delivery hub:

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[South West](#)

[South](#)

[South East](#)

[Essex](#)

[East](#)

[North East](#)

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<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Minutes of meeting held at SALC, Claydon on 21 July 2016</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>20 October 2016</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Sophie Morling</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>TBC</b>

### 1. **Welcome, apologies and housekeeping**

Present: Barry Hall (BH) (Chair), David Barker (Vice Chair) (DB), Annette Ellis (AE), Monica Pipe (MP), Anthony Wright (AWR), John Wayman (JW), Margaret Hancock (MH) , Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Jane Hatton (JH), Gordon Merfield (GM)

SCC Officers Present: Sophie Morling (SM) (minutes), Andrew Woodin (AW), Steve Kerr (SK), Claire Parker (CP)

Guest Speakers: Kim Thirlby (KT)

Member of the Public: Gordon Crosby (GC), Mervyn Holden, Jim Richards (JR), Tony Fayers (TF)

Apologies: Roland Wilson (RW), Diana Kearsley (DK).

### 2. **Minutes of previous meeting (LAF16/05)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2016 were reviewed and confirmed to be an accurate record.

DB advised whilst it was good that SLAF had West Suffolk Council give an informative presentation at the previous meeting, we need this from the other Local Planning Authorities in Suffolk. AW advised that it was a case of juggling meeting time and other presentations, eg on Network Rail's level crossing proposals, but agreed it is a priority.

### 3. **Declaration of interest – None**

### 4. **Presentation on Coastal Access – Natural England**

TK updated everyone with the progress of the Coastal Access Scheme:

Cromer to Sea Palling agreed, Sea Palling to Great Yarmouth is approved but not yet in operation, and in Suffolk Hopton to Aldeburgh and Harwich to Shotley sections are in progress [the report accompanying this item had more information]. Each section takes around 3 years from start to finish.

KT expanded upon the section of coast path west of Harwich and the issues faced.

KT advised stakeholder engagement tends to focus on 4 items:

- a) Ferries – people are asking why they are not spending money on this,
- b) Lack of available detail,
- c) Land manager information on sensitive sites and keeping disruption to a minimum.
- d) Dogs – control and walking of dogs and needing to find the right solution for this, including clear signs.

KT noted whatever NE propose has to fit with the scheme.

Discussion took place around dogs and owners and how the legislations are sending mixed messages and how dog owners are confused as to what they should and should not be doing. Also the signs are not clear enough, especially in sensitive areas and are putting children, elderly and other animals at risk. KT advised that he has a document with strict guidelines he has to follow regarding this.

AW raised the issue regarding arson at the Wrabness cabins and how with more walkers in the area in the winter, this might deter people from doing this.

SK asked about if any landowners have objections, how are these dealt with. KT advised that in the report they have to submit to the Secretary of State to approve the route, everything from objections to approvals are included. DEFRA make sure the report matches the criteria and can either approve, reject or approve with conditions. Only landowners can object formally to the proposals.

## **5. Coastal Access Update**

BH, AE and MH attended a meeting with Norfolk and The Broads LAFs in Beccles last month to discuss matters of mutual interest, including management and promotion of the coast path. AE said more promotion of the coastal access needs to be done. The note of this meeting will be circulated with these minutes.

## **6. Network Rail Level Crossings Paper**

Gipsy Lane – SK advised that Network Rail's flow monitoring within the culvert and modelling works has now finished and SCC is awaiting the results. Suffolk County Council are working with their own engineers for costing improvements it believes are required to the route connecting to the culvert.

TF, land owner, mentioned to the group that more needs to be done with the upkeep of the River Gipping, as it is blocked with fallen trees, branches, rubbish. Expensive equipment has been used, but this has not solved the problem.

DB asked TF if the River Gipping was cleared out properly, would this prevent the flooding – TF answered yes it would. GC said that this is not maintained enough and due to rules and regulations the Environment Agency claim they cannot touch this.

BH agreed that Great Barton and Cotton are to be removed from future versions of the report as these have been approved now.

Halesworth – SK liaising with Highways with regards to the proposal to close the private crossing at the statin and using alternative routes on public highway.

Trimley – SK said that the proposal so far is that 6 PRoW crossings be extinguished and replaced with a bridle bridge built. SCC is also working with Network Rail with regards to alternative footpaths in the location. So far, SCC believes this scheme demonstrates that PRoW level crossings can be closed and replaced with acceptable alternative routes, if the investment and commitment by NR is there.

AWR asked that bridleways are upgraded to include easy accessibility to cyclists, mobility users and equestrian. SK said that Network Rail would pay for the upgrades, but regarding some this would be 1 in 15 with landing, where it should be 1 in 20 with no landing to meet with the DDA act.

AW said these are early days with Trimley and have not been made public as yet. BH said that when they have been made public he will do a response on behalf of SLAF.

Appendices A and B on the current Transport and Works Act Order were discussed – BH, DB, DK, AW and SK met in Bury and went through every single crossing and made comments regarding each one. SK said that if it says 'no comment' this means further information is required before making comment. BH asked the members in attendance if he has missed anything off the list, object or would like to add anything – everyone happy with this.

Discussions took place around the Parnell Lane crossing at Elsmwell.

Somerleyton – AW mentioned a consultation NR are undertaking to improve or replace the swing bridge at Somerleyton. There are various options, but if any members knew the area and would like to comment on the proposals would they please let him know.

**Actions:** 1. SCC to confirm SLAF's interim TWAO response is now final, 2. Members to let AW know if they have any interest in the Somerleyton proposals.

## 7. Ipswich Docks & Upper Orwell Crossings

SK showed the information via the Suffolk County Council website to the members, which involves three new crossings, one of which will accommodate private vehicular use, and all three will have access for pedestrians and cyclists.

AW advised that if members would like to comment, please email the SLAF mailbox and AW will collate the responses and pass it on - [slaf@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:slaf@suffolk.gov.uk)

## 8. Rights of Way Improvement Paper

CP reminded members that the second ROWIP paper is due in December, and SCC will shortly start to draft it.

CP said that the consultation has been a success with over 800 responses to the survey and Ellie Tudor is collating the information.

BH asked that this is discussed at the October meeting for members to make comments, and thanked CP and Ellie Tudor for the work.

JS said how pleased she is with the responses to the consultation, and how impressive it is compared to other consultations.

**9. SLAF Annual Report**

CP went through some missing data on the report with the members. The report will be submitted to SCC's Cabinet in September. JH commented how many new developments can impact negatively on bridleways and JS wondered whether LPAs should consult SLAF on some consultations.

**10. General Paper**

There were no matters arising.

**11. Any Other Business**

MH mentioned the new ferry for the Felixstowe area to get to Harwich for the crossing to Holland. The new ferry is not DDA compliant and asked if Suffolk County Council has agreed any funds for this, as it is mentioned on the leaflet? This also included Babergh District Council's logo.

**Action:** AW to find out if funds had been agreed?  
AE will forward to Babergh District Council

**Public Question Time – No questions from the public.**

**Dates and Venues of Future Meetings - 20 October 2016, Venue TBC**

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