

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Anna McGowan</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Walberswick Village Hall</b>

			<b>Paper Number</b>
1.	14:00	Welcome, apologies and housekeeping	
2.		Minutes of previous meeting	<b>LAF 18/11</b>
3.		Declaration of interest	
4.	14:10	Recruitment	<b>Verbal - DF</b>
5.	14:15	LAF Regional Meeting	<b>LAF 18/16 - BH</b>
6.	14:25	Norfolk LAF Meeting 18 <sup>th</sup> July	<b>Verbal - BH</b>
7.	14:35	The Future For Food, Farming And The Environment	<b>LAF 18/12 - AW</b>
8.	14:45	Network Rail - Public Rights of Way Level Crossings	<b>LAF 18/13 - AW</b>
9.	15:05	The England Coast Path	<b>LAF 18/14 - AW</b>
10.	15:20	Sizewell C	<b>Verbal – AW &amp; AR</b>
11.	15:40	SLAF Annual Report	<b>LAF 18/15 – DF</b>
12.	15:50	Public Question Time	
13.	16:00	Dates & Venues of Future Meetings	

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	<b>26<sup>th</sup> April 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Anna McGowan</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Playford Room, Phoenix House, Ipswich</b>

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

Present: Barry Hall (Chair) (BH), David Barker (DB), Jane Hatton (JH), Monica Pipe (MP), John Wayman (JW), Roland Wilson (RW), Anthony Wright (AWR)

SCC Officers Present: Andrew Woodin (AW), David Falk (DF), Steve Kerr (SK), Alex Maher (AM), Anna McGowan (AM) (Minutes)

Apologies: Cllr Diana Kearsley (DK), Cllr Jane Storey (JS), Gordon Merfield (GM)

### 2. **NE Review of CROW Restrictions (closed session)**

DF fed back Webinar 10/01/18 and NE email summary 30/01/18. The issues at the Norfolk sites – lacking data, have now been resolved. Data has been received and restrictions will continue until future reviews. There have been improvements made to encourage breeding.

### 3. **Minutes of previous meeting (LAF18/06)**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed with following updates:

DF has no direct involvement in ECP yet.

AW has had response from Essex for the Regional LAF with a date for next meeting 21/06/2018. BH is free to attend on this date.

**Action point** - AW to check the venue

### 4. **Declaration of interest**

DB declared an interest in The Future For Food, Farming And The Environment Consultation.

### 5. **Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings**

SK presented the main Network Rail cases.

Gypsy Lane – very complex and time consuming for county council staff. Proposed to divert and widen the footway and the county council may seek a bridleway upgrade in future.

Mitigation with NR has secured support for future improvements. Landowners have been objecting and compensation is disputed as there are impacts on property values in widening footpaths.

(JH arrived at 14.20.)

Felixstowe – SCC not objecting to this TWAO, and will assist with delivering diversions. BH noted he responded to SCC on behalf of SLAF, that it would not be objecting.

Countywide TWAO – SK and AW gave an update on progress in the public inquiry, which started in mid February and is still sitting, and due to complete towards the end of May. DB briefed members that he gave evidence to the inquiry for SLAF and that closing a crossings means that road users will use unsuitable and possibly unsafe roads through the displacement. DB enquired if Inspector's Report will be available pre Decision. SK said yes. DB felt SLAF could lobby MPs, write joint letters, relay views on Inspectors Report. AW said this would be a very useful and positive approach from SLAF.

**Action:** DB/BH to consider writing to MPs and contest.

SCC has made Orders and sought three things: Costs reimbursement in certifying new highways; payment of a commuted sum to cover 60 year's maintenance and transparency on any side agreement entered into by parties. SCC's appointed barrister said that Inquiry has gone better for SCC than NR, and SCC arguments are being taken on board by the Inspectors.

SCC may have to wait for a decision until all 3 Inquiries are finished - that is after Essex Inquiry.

AW said that Newmarket was by far the most contentious crossing, there is opposition to closing this crossing. The District and Town Councils are objecting as well as many from the local community. The public status of the crossing is disputed but the inquiry will not address this.

AWR noted that at S25 Cattishall he had observed in last 3 weeks that developers keep closing the track between Mount Road and unclassified road south of crossing.

**Action** AW to look into it.

AW thanked SK for doing a sterling job. Other high priorities have taken a back seat due to the volume of time and work inputted into the Inquiry.

## 6. The England Coast Path

AW provided updates on the 5 Suffolk stages. Compromises with landowners has meant not always following the coast ie. at Stutton. Natural England will publish the route in Summer. There have been a number of digital mapping issues.

Routes will be proposed to the Secretary of State and the earliest any decision on a stretch is likely to be made is 18 months.

24<sup>th</sup> April 2018 saw another meeting with Norfolk and Essex to develop an East of England Coast Path. This is a promotional opportunity. It was noted the Essex Path stops in Tilbury and picks up again in Kent (does not go through London). SCC need to establish partnerships in time – could be up to 2-3 years. This would need a Funding Development Officer – to be internally or externally funded.

NE fund 75% of costs of maintaining, in partnerships with Local Authorities.

**Action** point – Natural England to be invited to July's meeting to present.

## 7. Consultation on DEFRA's Report – Health and Harmony

RW and DB both presented discussion papers. There are concerns about not the paper not being joined up enough – eg. the value of forests with role on enhancing access. There are opportunities to create new Public Rights of Way, and payments made to maintain these; with checks and balances for grants to be paid to upgrade paths eg. for disabled access.

DB sometimes meets DEFRA about these issues, as this is a move away from the CAP to a new process, whereby more faith will need to be put into farmers. It is agreed that there should more emphasis on Bridleways, Cycle paths and avoidance of road usage. Payments to be made for better networks SLAF still in favour of Permissive routes. Money should not all go to Local Authorities, but to landowners.

SLAF to respond, or individuals. MP said it is notable that there is greater emphasis on conservation than access and this is institutional bias. Dogs are still an issue. DB summed up that access to be enhanced where there will be a public benefit, including around the urban fringe. Money for creating new PROW needs to be significant for compensation. JH informed that Essex farmers can opt in to be paid to give access.

it was noted this paper is not a definite policy. It is trying to keep every one happy before UK leaves EU. AW said that Michael Gove brings a different approach to farming and replacing the CAP. A lot of emphasis on diversifying and less reliance on true farming subsidies. The 'Natural Capital' puts value in land management as well as land for crops. There will be ways of making money out of better access. Dogs need to be monitored – small payments given for dogs to be allowed on land.

Payments to be made for the removal of barriers to access.

**Action:** SCC to enter a response by SLAF onto Defra's website.

## 8. The Future For Food, Farming and the Environment

The above points were captured and to be crystallised on a separate paper, and circulated to SLAF members for agreement before being submitted online to DEFRA – before 8<sup>th</sup> May. Action point – Green Access Team to submit points once agreed and tidied up by 8<sup>th</sup> May.

## 9. Ramblers Urban Manifesto

RW gave verbal update on this campaign entitled 'Paving the Way' to improve urban walking, for routes giving access to the countryside linking greenspace, with safe links to transport hubs, encouraging towns and cities to 'green up' their walking routes.

Greenspaces to be linked with friendly walking groups.

Ramblers have always supported urban walking, and the campaign demists their image of preferring muddy fields. Launched to coincide with Local Elections, it will be pushed at national levels and receive attention at their National Conference. These ideas to be promoted to politicians, and to link with new developments. Ramblers in Suffolk are to influence local politicians.

SLAF members supported this initiative.

## 10. ROWIP

The draft ROWIP was presented by DF, and ties in with SCC's priorities, encompassing issues arising in the County and how access is so important to the changing dynamics. DF talked through the 5 themed headings. There will be more case studies built in. Cllr Jane Storey will sign it off on Page 3.

DB requested that 'Greenest County' needs referencing, and that farmers and other land managers are working in partnership.  
There needs to be more photos.

**Action** point – SLAF members to provide feedback to DF by end of June at the latest.

#### **11. SLAF Recruitment**

SCC hasn't advertised yet but has been putting the feelers out. The timescale is to have new members in place by the October Meeting.

##### **SCC Green Access Team**

Alex Maher has been appointed Green Access Officer.

#### **12. Correspondence**

##### **RSPB Woodland Management**

Hintlesham/Wolves Wood enquiry about possible ROW running through this site. There are no ROW.

##### **Broads LAF**

BLAF want an officer from SCC to attend their meetings, regrettably SCC does not have officer time to spare at the moment.

#### **13. Public Question Time**

There were no members of the public for questions.

#### **14. Any Other Business**

DB noted a contact in Wortham was issued with an Enforcement Letter which may have been a bit heavy handed.

**Action** point – AW to speak to Glyn French.

#### **15. Date & Venue of Future Meeting**

26<sup>th</sup> July venue tba, (possibly Walberswick/Westleton with a morning trip out on site to showcase ECP followed by lunch and then meeting).

END

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: The Future For Food, Farming And The Environment</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 14.00</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue: Walberswick Village Hall</b>

This is the text of the response to the Government's consultation on the future of farming, as discussed at the forum's last meeting.

SLAF comments in response to the Consultation:

SLAF is Suffolk Local Access Forum established by the CROW Act and made up of landowners, users etc. SLAF welcomes the opportunity to comment and the thinking behind the Consultation.

The Consultation should be bolder, especially in terms of joining up of new habitats and the creation of sensitive access for public benefit and enjoyment.

Urban access to the countryside is particularly important and should be supported.

Diverting/creating/upgrading/extinguishing Public Rights of Way where the Highway Authority agrees there is an overall public benefit to access, should be supported through payment.

Payments should be made to remove barriers on Public Rights of Way and to improve surfaces.

The principle that payments should be made available where land managers can add value to the access network, and in managing Public Rights of Way, creating new public and open access, and permissive access is supported by SLAF. More and improved bridleways are needed for use for all public, on foot, horse and bicycle for public health and wellbeing and enjoyment, in light of continued increase of road traffic. Money should be made available for payments to encourage landowners to open up land for bridleways

With high density development encircling small market towns and some villages the need to access the countryside through RoW that penetrate into the built up areas is vital as it helps with the health and well-being of the residents.

The law for dogs on leads should be reviewed, with the potential for small payments made where dogs can run freely.

Role of Local Authorities is important.

26/04/2018

Any new Post Brexit Agricultural Support Scheme should provide payments to Land Managers to maintain and enhance the Public Rights of Way on their land.

END

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: Network Rail – Public Rights of Way Level Crossings</b>
<b>Meeting: Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Steve Kerr</b>
<b>Venue: Walberswick Village Hall</b>

## Introduction

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



### **Needham Market Gipsy Lane and FP6**

Further to the update provided at the last Forum's meeting, the Orders were made on 4 April and advertised on 12 April 2018. By the end of the objection period on 10 May 2018, 14 objections had been received to the Gipsy Lane rail crossing diversion order and 5 to the rail crossing extinguishment order affecting FP6 Needham Market/FP36 Creeting St Mary

(Willow Walk). One letter of support (from SLAF) was received in relation to both Orders. The diversion order affects two land holdings. North of the operational railway, the landowner's family has submitted several objections to both Orders. The landowner has put forward an alternative alignment that would take the proposed footpath off his private agricultural track and be located hard up against NR's boundary fence. This would also then be fenced on its northern side.

In addition, the landowner has requested a reduction in the footpath width, from the 3 metres proposed in the Order to 2 metres, but has also made it clear that he will not allow NR to erect a vehicular gate in the secondary fence line, which NR would require to allow them to maintain the culvert structure.

The landowner is also currently challenging the validity of a private Deed of Grant (DoG) that was entered into with NR several years ago, which allows NR to use his track in order to undertake maintenance of the culvert and the operational railway above.

This landowner is also objecting to the closure of the Gipsy Lane crossing and to use of the culvert as part of the diversionary route. This is largely based on the impact the diversion would have on their agricultural operations, wildlife, environmental and security concerns, and the impact the closure would have on their current access and emergency access requirements



NR have time limited funding for this project under the current control period (CP5). This funding terminates in March 2019 and as a result, there is a need to program these opposed orders with the Planning Inspectorate (PINs), as it is highly likely this case will be determined by way of a local public inquiry. Re-consulting on the landowner's suggested alternative will introduce further delays and there is no guarantee that those consulted will agree to the re-alignment. In addition, it is likely NR would require a variation of their planning permission for the culvert and the current diversionary route. It is also worth remembering that through the Design Panel meetings held in 2015 and 2016, from the outset use of the agricultural track was discussed with the landowner as part of the diversionary route.

The Council had agreed to prepare all the necessary paperwork required by the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) for opposed orders, for submission by the 11 July. The submission was, however, delayed at the last moment, at the request of NR. It is expected the Council's bundle of documents will now be sent to PINs by 23 July and these documents will be available for public inspection at Phoenix House from the date of submission.

The Council considers that some of the concerns the landowner and his family have stated in their objections, can be adequately addressed by way of statutory compensation. At the appropriate time, the Council still intends to undertake this compensation assessment.

The landowner has raised his concerns with the local county councillor, Anne Whybrow (and her nominated substitute, Jessica Fleming) and with Jo Churchill MP's office. A site meeting with the landowner has now been arranged for 7 September. NR and Council officers will be in attendance, together with a representative from the MP's office.

It has also been brought to the Council's attention that several weeks ago the landowner partly obstructed FP 39 Creeting St Mary, just north of the Gipsy Lane crossing, with wire fencing. To date, the Council has not received any complaints from the public and is currently considering what action to take. It is further understood that the landowner has more recently fenced off access to the culvert from his agricultural track, presumably to prevent NR from exercising their right of access as provided by the DoG

Unfortunately, on 11 July a further fatality occurred at the crossing. It is understood this was a deliberate act ie a suicide. NR confirmed this was not in any way linked to the delay in submitting the documents to PINs.

## Felixstowe Branch Line Improvements – Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO)



Further to the update at Forum's last meeting, the Council is still awaiting the Inspector's report and Secretary of State's (SoS) decision.

## General/Countywide

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

Further to the Forum's last update, the public inquiry for Suffolk finished on Friday 25 May 2018 at the Ipswich Town Hall and Corn Exchange. A side agreement (SA) was finally entered into between the Council and NR two days before the Inquiry closed. This SA addressed some of the Council's outstanding objections but is confidential between the parties.

It is difficult to estimate when the Inspector will issue his report to the SoS, who of course has the ultimate decision on whether to confirm the order as made, decline to confirm it, or confirm it with modifications.

Officers think it more likely that the SoS will wait for all three Inspectors' reports on the Cambridge, Suffolk and Essex inquiries (the latter due to start at the end of September 2018), before issuing his decision.

END – SK & AW/SCC July 2018

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>
<b>Title: The England Coast Path</b>
<b>Meeting Date: 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018 14.00</b>
<b>Author/Contact: Andrew Woodin</b>
<b>Venue: Walberswick Village Hall</b>

### 1. Progress on Establishing The England Coast Path (ECP)

The latest information from Natural England's (NE) on its progress for the ECP in Suffolk and Norfolk is shown on their website. The links in the table below give access to more detail, but please note the website was last updated on 21 March 2018.

A Natural England representative may be attending the morning site visit and if so will give more information on staff changes since the last meeting.

<b>Stretch name</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<a href="#">Harwich to Shotley Gate</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Bawdsey to Aldeburgh</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Hopton-on-Sea to Sea Palling</a>	Open to the public
<a href="#">Sea Palling to Weybourne</a>	Open to the public
<a href="#">Weybourne to Hunstanton</a>	Stage 4: Determine
<a href="#">Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge</a>	Stage 2 and 3: Develop and Propose
<a href="#">Sutton Bridge to Skegness</a>	Stage 4: Determine

Natural England's website shows the sections being developed in Suffolk including the estuaries.

The stages to establish Coastal Access have been simplified as follows:

#### **Stage 1: Prepare**

Initial preparations will begin for the implementation of a new stretch. Natural England will:

- define the extent of the stretch
- ask key organisations about their ideas or concerns about the stretch
- consider the current public access use and the options for the route

#### **Stage 2: Develop**

At this stage, Natural England will:

- speak with local landowners and other legal interests on land that may be affected to:
  - ask for views on where they think the route should go
  - offer to 'walk the course' and explain initial ideas
  - discuss any local issues that might need to be addressed
- speak with relevant organisations to make sure that any important sensitive features are protected

### **Stage 3: Propose**

Natural England will finalise proposals for the England Coast Path on this stretch and publish them in a report to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

### **Stage 4: Determine**

After the report has been published, there's an opportunity to comment on the proposals. At this time:

- anyone who wishes to comment can make a representation on the report
- owners or occupiers can submit an objection relating to particular aspects of the proposals

See the guidance about how to comment for more information.

Once the period to comment on the proposals has ended, the Secretary of State will decide whether to approve the proposals in Natural England's report. When making a decision, any representations or objections that have been submitted will be considered along with the recommendations from the Planning Inspectorate.

### **Stage 5: Open**

The Secretary of State approves the route of the England Coast Path on this stretch.

Preparations are then made on the ground and the necessary legal paperwork is completed. Once complete, the new public rights of access will come into force on the stretch.

The the link to the relevant part of website is [here](#).

## 2. The Stretches in More Detail

Fiona Taylor from Natural England has kindly provided the following update for the whole of the ECP in the east of England.

*Note that issues as a result of Sweetman 2 affect all stretches (see Harwich to Shotley Gate notes) [Sweetman is a challenge to process and relates to the Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRAs) required by the ECP project.]*

**Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry** – Laura Chellis & Minty Jackson. Last updated 18.06.18

Stage 1 (Prepare) complete

Stage 2 (Develop) - underway

- Walk the course visits are almost finished – over 90% of landowners seen
- Trimbling has begun at the sites where routes are straightforward.
- Highways assessments are needed to understand the suitability of route options that use or cross public highways.
- Sensitive Features Assessment now the main focus - site visits and calls with ROs.
- There are some large and complex sites with multiple stakeholders where discussions about route options continue.

**Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey** - Minty Jackson & Giles Merritt. Last updated 19.6.18

- Claire Cadman has now left NE for a role with the Suffolk Coast AONB. Her role is to be taken over by Giles Merritt (GM), currently working on the Essex coast.
- GM will complete ongoing obligations to the Essex coast and move across to this stretch incrementally over the coming weeks.
- Familiarisation of stretch nearly complete – a few areas with no existing public access still to visit
- Walk the Course with landowners – one of main tasks for next few months. Efforts focussing on those areas with no/poor existing access.
- Access and sensitive features appraisal – another one of main tasks over next couple of months. Working with internal colleagues as well as gathering external advice and opinion to help inform route alignment.
- Ongoing consideration of ferry & estuary discretion
- Publication date moved to Dec 2018

**Bawdsey to Aldeburgh** – David Waldram, Fiona Taylor and Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 19.6.18

- ASFA [?] started with RO [?] collecting and collating data
- Gathering info from stakeholders
- Letters sent out to all landowners and occupiers.
- Walk the course visits taking place
- Investigating issues arising from walking the course
- Two sections Trimbled
- Publication due spring 2019

**Aldeburgh to Hopton-On-Sea (AHS)** – David Waldram and Fiona Taylor. Last updated 27.06.18

- Stage 2
- Letters sent to landowners with outline of emerging proposals and maps - dealing with issues that have arisen
- Resolving alignment issues including landward margin
- Discussing options for Optional Alternative Route around Benacre, Covehithe and Easton Broads; working through nature conservation concerns at Easton Broad
- Preparing legal restrictions, exclusions and dedications where required
- Working on protection of designated sites with Responsible Officers
- Writing Chapters for report aiming for publication autumn 2018
- Project Board part 3 to look at whole stretch prior to publication

**Harwich to Shotley Gate (HSG)** - Kim Thirlby and Patrick Welsh. Last updated 21.06.18

- Initial proposals letters sent to landowners in autumn 2017, outlining what we propose to include in report to Secretary of State.
- Following realignment of the route in 3 places, revised proposals letters were sent out in May 2018, with no new issues arising.
- Report Overview being QA'd by senior specialist.
- Report Chapters partially drafted. Completion dependent on data entry to chapter tables when revised mapping and data available (in hand – see below).
- Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal is virtually complete (just awaits final comments from one of two protected sites seniors), but...
- Uncertainty caused by *Sweetman* court ruling (applies to all yet to be approved stretch rpts).
- While we await further instructions we are reviewing:
  - proposals for exclusion of access under S25A to ensure they are based on sufficient evidence;
  - some of our early Trimble/ GIS data to improve accuracy.
- Report publication is theoretically due summer 2018, but above factors (especially the change in the way we deal with protected sites and species) will delay publication.

**Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge** – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 9.5.18

- Alignment still to be agreed with some landowners
- Publication due before 2020

**Weybourne to Hunstanton** – Diana Curtis, David Waldram & Sal Fishwick. Last updated 9.5.18

- Report published on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018.
- Period for objections and representations closes at midnight on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**Hopton-on-Sea to Sea Palling** – David Waldram & Sal Fishwick. Last updated 9.5.2018

- Final establishment works completed and signed off.
- This stretch is now complete and open as part of the ECP

### **Sutton Bridge to Skegness – Roger Gerry**

- Report published and objections are now being considered.

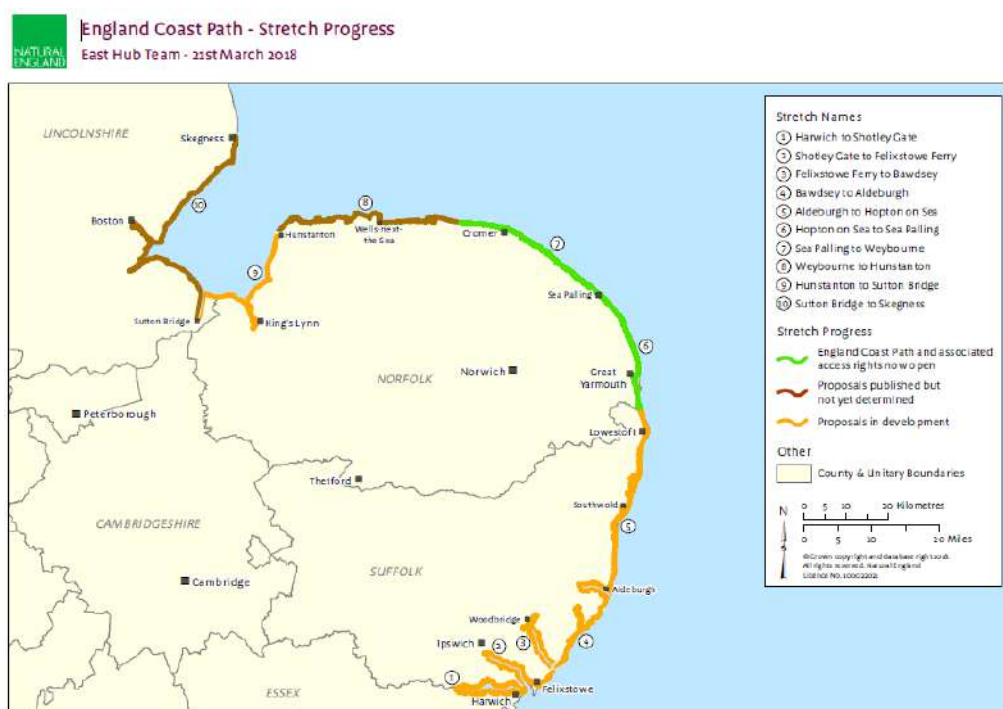
### 3. SLAF's Role in Influencing Route of the Coast Path

The local access forum still has an opportunity to influence the route the coast path takes in Suffolk, for example seeking estuarine routes rather than rely on ferries, closing PRoW access gaps and seeking a route that as far as possible is close to the water. **Members should consider how they want to address this** (and may choose to delegate this to the working group).

### 4. Future Management of the England Coast Path in the East of England

Officers from Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex met in June to discuss future management of the ECP. Delays in progress on the coast path were noted and the meeting had concerns over future funding once the ECP is established, and the claims process to deliver the establishment works. These points will be raised with Natural England by the county council.

### 5. England Coast Path – Progress Map for the East



END  
AW/SCC July 2018

<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>SLAF Annual Report</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Thursday 26 July 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>David Falk</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Walberswick Village Hall</b>

The SLAF Annual Report will be presented to SCC Cabinet on Tuesday 11 September 2018 by the SLAF Chair.

The Annual Report will contain details on key areas of work and decisions made by SLAF between August 2017 and July 2018.

The key areas to consider within the report are:

- Coastal Access and The England Coast Path
- Network Rail Level Crossings
- National LAF Conference
- Sizewell C
- Open Access Site Restrictions
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)
- DEFRA Report – The Future for Food, Farming and the Environment

SLAF are requested to advise if there are any additional areas to be included or changes to the above list.

END



<b>Suffolk Local Access Forum</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>LAF Regional Meeting</b>
<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> June 2018</b>
<b>Author/Contact:</b>	<b>Barry Hall</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Walberswick Village Hall</b>

East of England Local Access Forums  
Chairs and Vice-Chairs Meeting – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018

**East of England Local Access Forums  
Chairs & Vice-Chairs Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018**

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**Actions from the meeting**

- i. A letter, accompanied by a list of topics, to be sent to Natural England (Pippa Langford, Principal Specialist - Commons and Public Rights of Way [Pippa.Langford@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Pippa.Langford@naturalengland.org.uk) ) identifying the topics on which the Local Access Forums in the East of England would appreciate additional advice. Those topics are:
- ROWIP: What should be the content of a ROWIP and does guidance on its content exist for England?
  - ROWIP: Should each local highway authority be producing an annual report on the delivery of their ROWIP?
  - What are the access authorities' responsibilities to their LAF?
  - Is there a requirement for the access authority to appoint both county and district councillors? (presumably with the exception of unitary authorities)
  - A LAF Annual Report - is one required and/or needed?
- ii. The above letter and list of topics to be uploaded to Huddle by the Cambs LAF Secretary.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Attendance

<b>Person</b>	<b>LAF / Organisation</b>
Barry Hall	Suffolk
Clive Beckett	Central Bedfordshire & Luton
Fiona Taylor	Natural England
Katherine Evans	Essex
Keith Bacon	Broads
Liddy Lawrence	Hertfordshire
Martin Sullivan	Norfolk
Mary Sanders (Chair)	Cambridgeshire
Ray Booty	Essex
Roger Buisson (Notes)	Cambridgeshire
Sue Dobson	Thurrock

**2. Apologies**

No response to the invitation had been received from Peterborough LAF.

**3. Round-up of issues affecting your LAF**

**Bedford Borough:** Not attending.

**Broads:** Meet in BA office, have secretarial support. Issue of access to water via 'staithe's' - historic landing stages of uncertain status, currently being reviewed by UEA. Norfolk Council

**East of England Local Access Forums**  
**Chairs & Vice-Chairs Meeting 21<sup>st</sup> June 2018**

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officers told to take a 'neutral' stance at Hearings and Inquiries, not fighting the case for rights of way users but providing evidence only - a cost saving measure. This policy is being contested by LAF.

**Cambridgeshire:** Do have budget and secretarial support, rotate locations for meetings. Key issues are development pressures and transport infrastructure. A14 experience – attended Hearing, positive outcomes include NMU route alongside local access road and the creation of a 'legacy fund'. Level crossing closures – attended Public Inquiry to give strategic evidence. Expect more crossing closures to be proposed across East Anglia – Network Rail policy is to have no level crossings on the rail network. Future transport infrastructure likely to create severance – East-West Rail and Oxford to Cambridge 'expressway'.

**Central Beds & Luton:** Meet at various locations, including countryside sites. Now have very limited secretarial support. No councillor representation. LAF is only body with strategic overview. Have agreed with LPA that will be consulted over major developments. Vegetation cutting is the one area where resources have been maintained – it comes from the highways maintenance budgets. Transport infrastructure – as Cambridgeshire – East-West Rail and Oxford to Cambridge 'expressway'.

**Essex:** Limited secretarial support and officer support, not clear what is the budget for LAF. No councillor appointments to LAF. Vegetation cutting only once per year, lots of complaints. Still have P3 scheme running, parishes are putting extra money in to budget for vegetation cutting. ROWIP is up for renewal, being told that update should be minor. New/garden town proposals - currently on hold.

**Hertfordshire:** No secretarial support, no known budget, expenses are paid. Council restructuring and post losses has caused difficulties for LAF and access issues. New town developments - planning a seminar on access provision. Vegetation cutting - reduced, at two cuts per year. 60th LAF meeting upcoming. Lack national feedback, this regional meeting is welcome.

**Norfolk:** Well supported by council. Vice-chairman was farmer, only one councillor attends. LAF constitution currently does not allow for district councillor representation - that is to be changed. Coastal access. Norfolk Access Improvement Plan was open to consultation up until mid-June (<http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/naip>), LAF heavily involved in its development. Long distance paths/trails. Established 'Pathmakers' charity (<http://pathmakers.org.uk/>), first project implemented, been able to source geovation funds (from Ordnance Survey), landfill and lottery funding and used volunteer time value as matched funding.

**Peterborough:** Not attending.

**Suffolk:** Do receive officer support. ROWIP development stalled by need to put resources into contesting level crossings inquiry. Definitive map is not digitised.

**Thurrock:** Small unitary authority, major infrastructure proposed (Lower Thames Crossing), housing pressures. LAF is supported by rights of way officer. ROWIP will have a light touch review.

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**4. Update from Natural England**

Fiona Taylor provided an update on the following topics:

- Are there any statistical measures of users of the countryside?
- Access post-Brexit
- Future of farming
- Resources invested in Country Parks and their management
- Huddle
- Current funding for newly-opened stretches of England Coast Path
- Coastal access: stretch by stretch update

A copy of this update is attached as an Appendix to this meeting note.

Discussion resultant on the Natural England update included:

**Stewardship agreements:** LAF members are hearing that farmers are not hearing back about new agreements (noting that such agreements currently have no access components). LAFs are concerned that most of the permissive links in the network created by stewardship agreements will not be carried carry forward.

**Future of Farming:** Essex and Thurrock had followed up the consultation with letters to MPs. A diversity of approaches to policy makers was recommended.

**Resources invested in Country Parks and their management:** Herts: Panshanger Country Park is a good example of local community involvement in setting up a country park.

**Huddle:** only sporadically used by LAF members. Non-users would like access to an introduction to it.

**Coastal access funding:** Access authority is eligible for 100% funding for establishment of the route and 75% grant funding for maintenance under "*The New Deal: Management of National Trails in England from April 2013*". That information contradicts what some access authority officers are telling LAFs - that there is no maintenance funding. LAFs seek information on this so that they can check with officers that they are receiving the funds. [The link to the relevant Natural England publication is included in Natural England update]

**5. Network Rail level crossing closures**

**Cambs LAF:** Appeared at Public Inquiry to make strategic points. Two LAF members were also expert witnesses for the county council on specific level crossings. Worked closely with county council officers.

**Herts LAF:** Closely involved with county council officers.

**Essex LAF:** Have not had close contact and dialogue with county council officers.

## 6. Sharing good practice

**Involvement of volunteers and Parish Councils in ROW:** Volunteers - patchy operation of P3 scheme, no examples known of where a parish council has increased its precept to fund access improvements. Parish neighbourhood plans can lead to funds being drawn down from CIL funds.

**NMUs and open spaces attached to new developments:** In a number of LAF areas the local highways authority is not promoting access for the full range of potential non-motorised users when negotiating access improvements related to new developments. There appears to be a bias in favour of 'cycleways' and the source policy for this is that the NPPF mentions cycleways but not NMUs. Suggested best practice was for LAFs to press for NMU routes through the status of bridleway and not a footpath or cycleway. Norfolk have promoted restricted byways as the mechanism. It was noted that there were examples of good practice in the creation of circular bridleways and contrasting cases where there was an absence of taking that opportunity where it appeared to a LAF to be suitable location.

## 7. Fault reporting to Highways Authority

**Fault reporting:** In Norfolk and Hertfordshire the reporting systems work well. In Hertfordshire action is taken on reported faults. The system in Essex was judged not fit for purpose.

**Gates and stiles:** It is not a simple matter to find out which are legally present because this information does not appear on the web-based interactive versions of the definitive map. The gate and stile information can only be obtained by inspecting the paper copy.

**Temporary Restriction Orders (TROs):** In Essex there have been TROs that completely close a PRoW over an eighteen month period. Many of these are applied at level crossings, some are on land that is being developed. Resultant issues include no alternative route provision and no means to object. After 18 months such TROs have gone on to be 'rubber stamped' by the Secretary of State. Essex LAF is seeking ideas of how to fight this. This type of use of TROs is not known about in other counties. It was suggested by a neighbouring LAF that in Cambridgeshire where a seasonal TRO was placed on a byway that the gates were remaining closed because CCC does not have staff to reopen them. MS to follow up with CCC.

## 8. ROWIPs

**What should be content of a ROWIP?:** Some local highways authorities and LAFs have been referred to the Welsh government guidance published in 2016 (<https://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/160711rights-of-way-improvement-plans-en.pdf>). Across East of England differences had been noted in the emphasis in ROWIPs between those that are policy led and others that are more scheme/project led. Suggested good practice from LAF members is that a ROWIP should be policy up-front and an appendix of aspirational schemes and 'shovel ready' projects awaiting available funding.

**Should an Annual Report on the ROWIP be produced?:** Such reporting was not being consistently done across local highways authorities.

Advice and guidance on the above two topics to be sought from Natural England.

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**9. AOB**

**LAF admin/secretarial support and budgeting:** See Item 3 above.

**Resources to respond to complaints about PRoWs and infringements/enforcement:** Essex has a 'user group' that focuses on seeking action on specific PRoW issues and follow up by the enforcement officer, this complements the LAF strategic role.

**Lost Highways:** Essex Bridleways Group employs a professional researcher; Cambridgeshire no current activity. View was that ultimately it is quite likely that the cut-off date will be extended.

**Use of S106 funds for developing ROWs:** Cambridgeshire: concern that money may have been allocated but not spent through lack of staff resources to prepare projects/schemes. Essex: in the absence of an up to date Local Plan there is no delivery of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and as a result money is not allocated to, inter alia, rights of way projects/schemes.

**The definitive map – is it up to date?:** Essex: the web based interactive map is well maintained. Norfolk: the accuracy of the hand drawn lines on the map is now being questioned following local site investigations where the line was found to follow the centre line of the drain/dyke/watercourse and not its bank.

**'National Street Gazetteer' and 'List of Streets':** Access by the public to the National Street Gazetteer may become possible, noting that this is a different category to those streets that are maintainable, or not, at public expense in the 'List of Streets' held by each local highways authority. Cambridgeshire LAF has proposed to its county highway authority that they should have a policy toward the recording of the reason why a street has been removed from its list of streets maintainable at public expense.

**Other Routes with Public Access (ORPAs):** These are shown on the OS maps as white roads with, eg green dots as on the Explorer Series. They were derived through a series of visits to local highway authorities in the 1990s. There was proposal to drop this mapping from the OS map but that idea has now been dropped and OS is to work with the local highway authorities to update their legal status.

**Tourism interest representation on LAF:** Was viewed as a good idea.

**LAF Annual Report:** Is one needed? FT to check if it will be needed in 2018 or 2019.

**The access authorities' responsibilities to their LAF:** Can Natural England set out clearly what are the access authorities' responsibilities to their LAF? Including for instance that the access authority should be appointing elected members (county and district where relevant).

**10. A repeat of this meeting?**

Yes, it has been very useful and should be repeated. Cambridge is a good and accessible venue. Proposed for next meeting:

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at the Natural England Cambridge office.**

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**Appendix: Copy of the Natural England Update provided by Fiona Taylor**

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**Update from Natural England**

- Are there any statistical measures of users of the countryside?
- Access post-Brexit
- Future of farming
- Resources invested in Country Parks and their management

**Are there any statistical measures of users of the countryside?**

MENE or the [Monitor of the Engagement with the Natural Environment](#). It captures:

- type of destination
- duration
- mode of transport
- distance travelled
- expenditure
- main activities
- motivations
- barriers to visiting

Annual reports are published:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/monitor-of-engagement-with-the-natural-environment-2015-to-2016>

Data is back online (years 1-7). The 16/17 and 17/18 data and reports should be available by September. We are hoping to use the data to inform us about a number of measures from the Defra 25-year plan.

In addition to this are more local measures to monitor the use of for example, National Trails (e.g. using people counters and analysing findings). Norfolk have managed to secure funds by using the evidence they gather in this way.

For ECP work, we have a number of mobile counters which are placed as needed around the country.

This is the Online tabulation viewer for you to interrogate as you choose:

<http://naturalengland.tns-global.com/>

**Access post-Brexit**

Defra is working on the analysis of the responses to the consultation "Health and Harmony". Michael Gove has said many times that he wants post Brexit schemes to improve public access to the environment.

Although there isn't any more detail to share yet, if LAFs have any comments or suggestions to make about post Brexit schemes, please post them on the LAF Huddle. It is particularly helpful as it enable our Principal Specialist, Pippa Langford, to read your views and ideas.

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### **Future of Farming**

The [consultation](#) on the future of food, farming and the environment post Brexit closed on 8 May and Defra have not yet published a formal response. There were [44000 responses](#) to the consultation which demonstrates the level of interest in the subject.

The Defra proposal at the moment is for phasing out the current system of direct payments and replacing it with a system whereby land managers are paid for public goods (public money for public goods).

While the consultation is assumed to be with farmers, Defra are keen to talk to everybody who manages land. This is a key difference as post EU exit eligibility for these funds may change allowing a wider range of organisation and individuals that manage land to access it.

Have any EE LAFs submit a response to the consultation? Many LAFs will have, as access that improves engagement with the natural environment is regarded as a public good, as is health and wellbeing. You may want to think about exploring new opportunities for accessing these and other funds.

Timing is very important: the new scheme will not be launched before 2022 at the earliest so we have at least another three years of the existing schemes.

### **Resources invested in Country Parks and their management**

Natural England hosts and manages the [Accreditation Scheme for Country Parks](#) as the national typology standard for all a country park should provide.

Beyond that, Natural England has no involvement in the management of these spaces or decisions around their provision. The power to call a country park rests with local authorities and decisions on management and resourcing rests with site owners and managers.

### **Huddle**

To get onto this forum where you can share ideas and concerns, contact [Andrew.Mackintosh@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Andrew.Mackintosh@naturalengland.org.uk)

### **Current funding for newly-opened stretches of England Coast Path**

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6238141>

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**Coastal access: stretch by stretch update****Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Laura & Alice. Last updated 18.06.18**

Stage 1 (Prepare) complete

Stage 2 (Develop) - underway

- Walk the course visits are almost finished – over 90% of landowners seen
- Trimbling has begun at the sites where routes are straightforward.
- Highways assessments are needed to understand the suitability of route options that use or cross public highways.
- Sensitive Features Assessment now the main focus - site visits and calls with ROs.
- There are some large and complex sites with multiple stakeholders where discussions about route options continue.

**Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey - Minty & Giles. Last updated 19.6.18**

- Claire now has left NE for a role with the Suffolk Coast AONB. Her role is to be taken over by Giles Merritt (GM), currently working on the Essex coast.
- GM will complete ongoing obligations to the Essex coast and move across to this stretch incrementally over the coming weeks.
- Familiarisation of stretch nearly complete – a few areas with no existing public access still to visit
- Walk the Course with landowners – one of main tasks for next few months. Efforts focussing on those areas with no/poor existing access.
- Access and sensitive features appraisal – another one of main tasks over next couple of months. Working with internal colleagues as well as gathering external advice and opinion to help inform route alignment.
- Ongoing consideration of ferry & estuary discretion
- Publication date moved to Dec 2018

**Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – David, Fiona and Jonathan. Last updated 19.6.18**

- ASFA started with RO collecting and collating data
- Gathering info from stakeholders
- Letters sent out to all landowners and occupiers.
- Walk the course visits taking place
- Investigating issues arising from WTC
- Two sections Trimbled
- Publication due spring 2019

**Aldeburgh to Hopton-On-Sea (AHS) – David and Fiona. Last updated 15.06.18**

- Stage 2
- Letters sent to landowners with outline of emerging proposals and maps - dealing with issues that have arisen
- Resolving alignment issues including landward margin

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- Discussing options for Optional Alternative Route around Benacre, Covehithe and Easton Broads; working through nature conservation concerns at Easton Broad
- Preparing legal restrictions, exclusions and dedications where required
- Working on protection of designated sites with Responsible Officers
- Writing Chapters for report aiming for publication summer 2018
- Project Board part 2 to look at whole stretch prior to publication

**Harwich to Shotley Gate (HSG)** - Kim Thirlby and Patrick Welsh. Last updated 09.05.18

- Initial proposals letters sent to landowners in autumn 2017, outlining what we propose to include in report to Secretary of State.
- Following realignment of the route in 3 places, revised proposals letters are being sent to landowners now.
- Recent delays have primarily been due to changed situations on the 3 development sites through which the proposed trail passes, difficulty in establishing the status of roads and pavements on Mistletoe Quay, and reaching agreement with a landowner whose commercial shoot could be affected by our proposals. All these are now resolved.
- Report publication now postponed to summer 2018.
- First draft of Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal ready for sign off by Protected Sites colleagues (Essex and Suffolk).
- Report Overview being QA'd by senior specialist now.
- Report Chapters partially drafted. Completion dependent on data entry to chapter tables when revised mapping available.

**Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge** – Jonathan Clarke. Last updated 9.5.18

- Alignment still to be agreed with some landowners
- Publication due before 2020

**Weybourne to Hunstanton** – Diana, David, Sal. Last updated 9.5.18

- Report published on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018.
- Period for objections and representations closes at midnight on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2018

**Hopton-on-Sea to Sea Palling** – Diana, David, Sal. Last updated 9.5.2018

- Final establishment works completed and signed off.
- This stretch is now complete and open as part of the ECP

**Sutton Bridge to Skegness** - Roger

- Report published and objections are now being considered.