

Minutes of Meeting held on 16 November 2023

Microsoft Teams



In attendance:

DB	Cllr	David	Beavan	Chair		TB		Tim	Beach	AOCP
DK		David	Kemp	EA		RS		Richard	Steward	BEP
VG		Vanessa	Gouldsmith	NE		NC		Nick	Christo	BMSDC
SO		Simon	Odell	NE				Joe	Fisher	BMSDC
CF		Chloe	France	NE		CKR		Charles	Krolik-Root	CPE
JCI		Jonathan	Clarke	NE		SR		Sharon	Richardson	CPE
AR		Adam	Rowlands	RSPB		AS		Alysha	Stockman	CPE
RC		Russell	Clement	NT		JCo		James	Cochrane	CPE
LF		Louise	Feavyour	MMO				Tom	Chalker	CPE
GB		Giles	Bloomfield	ESWMB				Sara	Barratt	CPE
JF		Jaap	Flikweert	RFCC				Chris	Finbow	CPE
RP		Richard	Powell	RFCC				JP	Farthing	CPE
JG		Julian	Gregory	EIFCA				Siân	Platt	CPE
LG		Luke	Godwin	EIFCA				Lisa	Mills	CPE
SA		Simon	Amstutz	SCH AONB				Madeline	Fallon	CPE
TY		Thomas	Yeung	DEP						

Apologies: Sally Minns (Ipswich Borough Council), Keith Martin (SCAR), Alison Andrews (AOCP/AOA)

1.	Welcome and introductions	The Chair shared a round of introductions.
2.	Election of Vice Chair	TB nominated himself for the role of Vice Chair. TY, AR and RP seconded. TB was elected as Vice Chair.
3.	East Anglia Coastal Group Chair Update	Charles Krolik-Root, Coastal Manager at CPE updated the Forum on the East Anglia Coastal Group's activities since the last meeting and shared some highlights from the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, Coastal Group Network, and CPE. The Chair asked if the different groups and how they link could be mapped. CKR agreed. ACTION: CKR to map the groups mentioned in presentation
4.	East Anglian Coast & Estuaries Conference	James Cochrane, Engagement Officer at CPE shared that the conference was held on 12 th October and featured five main speaker sessions, with workshops and an exhibition. JCo demonstrated the online side of the conference. The conference received 217 in person attendees and over the days there were 513 views online. JCo shared that the feedback report is still being collated but shared a few highlights and things to work on for next year. JCo asked the Forum to share ideas for potential speakers, sponsors, and exhibitors. TB asked for the specific feedback from the students to see how they felt about the event. JCo ran the student workshop, which they enjoyed and the formal feedback will be included in the feedback report.

		ACTION: CPE to provide feedback report and include student feedback
5.	England Coast Path Update	<p>Jonathan Clarke, part of the King Charles III England Coast Path Delivery Team at NE gave a brief overview of the background and process for the Coast Path and shared current progress. JCI shared Suffolk County Council's Project Officer has been working on tree safety surveys, design and construction of structures (e.g. steps and culverts), new interpretation boards, heritage signs as well as the usual waymarks etc. normally found on footpaths. All the routes have been open for discussion and where objections have been raised, they are being considered and NE are waiting on Secretary of State approval to proceed with implementing the trail.</p> <p>Chloe France, part of the National Trail Team at NE, which funds local authorities to maintain the Coast Path at a 3:1 ratio on an annual basis. The maintenance of the Coast Path is supported financially by NE. NE understand the coast is not a static entity and therefore neither is the Coast Path and it can move if, for example, there was erosion. Rollback allows the local authority to move the line of the trail back as the coast is lost, keeping NE in updated. There may be temporary alterations to the route to allow for things such as works.</p> <p><i>TY asked in the chat: some of the proposed route along the Deben is private land - if they object and cannot be persuaded, can the Secretary of State override them (if considered to be in the public interest)?</i></p> <p>JCI added it is a matter of what stage they refuse to be involved. They can object early on to the proposals. Once a route has been approved, there is no further route to make objections. There have been cases where people have refused to allow work to happen on their land and a further process involving the Planning Inspector.</p> <p><i>NE response by email after the meeting: A formal objection to the route proposals is considered by an independent planning inspector. The Inspector will normally do a site visit to see the situation.</i></p> <p><i>The Inspector then makes a recommendation to the Secretary of State based on the 'test' of whether Natural England has 'struck a fair balance between the interests of the public in having rights of access over coastal land and the interests of owners and occupiers of any land over which any coastal access rights would be conferred'.</i></p> <p><i>The Secretary of State then decides whether or not to approve the route as proposed.</i></p> <p><i>If it is approved as proposed then Suffolk County Council will work towards opening the route in that location. We do have powers but there are also further limited ways in which the objector could raise further issues, which would again involve a planning inspector. If the route isn't approved as proposed then we would consider the decision and make alternative proposals.</i></p> <p><i>So, in brief the Secretary of State can approve a route even if the landowner has objected to it.</i></p> <p><i>There were objections on our route around the Deben and the Inspector has done the site visit. We are now waiting to hear the conclusions. When there's any change it will be put on the stretch webpage King Charles III England Coast Path: Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</i></p> <p>SA asked if there has been any consideration around the interpretation and waymarking to coordinate that or work in partnership with others as a number of organisations already have interpretation and signage within that area. SA</p>

		<p>also asked if NE are aware of the existing Suffolk Coast Path on current public rights of way between Lowestoft and Felixstowe which has voluntary wardens. CF added if there is existing signage on the ground in certain areas there's no reason why that would have to be replaced but it could have England Coast Path branding on it. CF added anything about stretches that haven't opened yet should be directed to JCI and that NE would hope the voluntary wardens could continue to support.</p> <p>Due to time constraints SA agreed to follow up the questions with NE outside of the meeting.</p> <p><i>TY asked in the chat: Is your roll-back process different from the normal process for changing / updating public footpaths? Here on the Deben, some of the footpaths were on the top of a river wall which has now disappeared - but the footpath is still shown on maps even though it is clearly not passable. Is your roll-back process faster than the normal updating process?</i></p> <p><i>NE response by email after the meeting: There are two kinds of rollback – the first is where, for example the route is on an eroding clifftop. In that case the path would automatically (and immediately) move inland, keeping its position on the clifftop. This is different to a public footpath which would be lost in that location.</i></p> <p><i>The second form is called complex rollback and is where the route cannot incrementally move inland, for example if there is a building or other land unsuitable for the route. In that case we would work with the County Council who would negotiate a new route further inland. The time needed would vary with the individual case but it would be much quicker than moving a public footpath.</i></p> <p>TB added in Snape there has been conversation about creating a boardwalk which will follow the path TB understands the Coast Path is and asked who to speak to about progressing that.</p> <p>JCI confirmed it would be Suffolk County Council's Project Officer, Ian Thompson.</p>
6.	Look back at and commemoration of 2013	<p>David Kemp, Coastal Team Leader at the EA shared the weather patterns leading up to the 2013 surge, a comparison of the impacts between 1953 and 2013, how the EA responded to 2013. DK highlighted that a lot of the 2013 flooding happened in darkness, making it more dangerous and affecting the wider perception of it. The biggest impacts were on the Suffolk estuaries including the Blyth, where properties and the A12 were flooded; damage to the landscape at Dunwich Dingle Marshes; on the Alde and Ore, Sudbourne, Eyke, and Hazelwood marshes flooded; in Snape 26 properties were flooded; Woodbridge saw higher water levels than in 1953 because in certain conditions the estuaries act as funnels to amplify the surges; and flood boards were put in place at Felixstowe Ferry. DK noted that for the people who are impacted by flooding it is a life changing event and continues to affect them for months afterwards. DK explained the recovery process including evacuation, housing, clearing up, and repairs.</p>
7.	Fisheries Management Plans	<p>JG noted that the fisheries management plans (FMPs) are a significant piece of work brought about by the exit from the European Union (EU).</p> <p>Luke Godwin, leading on FMPs at Eastern IFCA, shared that fisheries in England are managed collectively by Defra who set national legislation and policy. The Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) have a remit out to six nautical miles within their district to do research, carry out assessments, developing marine management measures, and enforcing those</p>

		<p>measures. EIFCA's committee is made up of councillors from the three county councils, and stakeholders including recreational fishermen, commercial fishermen, those with conservation interests, and scientists. The IFCA model has embedded within it a co-management approach.</p> <p>The Common Fisheries Policy manages EU fisheries as a whole. Following the exit from the EU, the Fisheries Act 2020 came in force, which sets out eight objectives for managing fisheries and a legal requirement to meet those objectives. It also required the development of the joint fisheries statement to outline how the objectives would be met and set out that 43 fisheries management plans are to be developed. The outcome will be to replace the EU legislation with national legislation that is going to manage fisheries effectively.</p> <p>FMPs are about delivering the Fisheries Act objectives, which include sustainability, long-term economic and social employment benefits, precautionary objective, ecosystem approach to recognise the complexity of the ecosystem, scientific objective (collect information and share with partners and evidence based decision making), by-catch objective (discard ban), equal access objective (any vessel from the UK should be allowed to fish anywhere in the UK), national benefit, and climate change (fishing activities should not contribute to climate change and fisheries should adapt to climate change as it happens). The FMPs are fisheries specific and the Government is committed to not taking a one size fits all approach. The Government has emphasised stakeholder participation in the development of the plans. Each FMP has an environmental report that looks at all the evidence including how well the fisheries are performing in relation to the objectives.</p> <p>The FMPs are phased and the list of this can be found online including the six frontrunner FMPs. The list also sets out who is ultimately responsible for the FMPs which is the fisheries policy authorities (Defra in England). This does not mean they are going to be doing the work on the FMPs. All the FMPs will be consulted on including when they are reviewed every six years. LG shared some key learning from the frontrunner FMPs, including that the FMPs would benefit from a clearer distinction between smaller scale inshore fisheries and larger scale operations (notably for bass in Suffolk); could be informed more by the work the IFCAs have done already (e.g. the whelk permit scheme); more emphasis on the cultural importance of local fisheries; and that the consultation package was inaccessibly huge (concern that not all stakeholders would have had time to go through all the information and respond effectively).</p> <p>Defra are considering the responses to the consultation on the frontrunner FMPs and are aiming to publish final FMPs for those in 2023. The next step is the development of new management measures that will need to be consulted on. The next tranche of FMPs are in development.</p> <p>The Chair asked if Eastern IFCA are sure they are engaging with the local fishermen. LG confirmed yes and added the authority members were involved in the consultation and there is a constant dialogue with the local industry. It is something Eastern IFCA are keen to provide.</p>
8.	East Marine Plan Refresh update	No update due to change in Secretary of State.

9.	Updates from Partners	<p>AR shared that Harwich Harbour Authority are looking for opportunities for beneficial use of dredgings and have been doing a feasibility study on sites in the Stour and Orwell estuaries. That is suggesting there are opportunities for saltmarsh restoration projects in those areas. RSPB have successfully secured NE seed funding for a project looking at possible beneficiary use of excess winter freshwater for habitat creation and improvement and agricultural benefit. RSPB have appointed Sustainable Water Solutions to do that research. The World Heritage Site bid is now officially on the Tentative List.</p> <p>TY shared the DEP have expanded their Steering Group membership to include a youth representative and meetings with school groups have now been scheduled.</p>
10.	Suggested agenda items for future meetings - discussion	<p>TB requested a discussion on the RAMS work and the current progress on the project.</p> <p>SA shared the vacant post for RAMS is currently being advertised and there is talk of three wardens and a dog warden associated with that post.</p>
11.	Previous minutes	The Forum approved the minutes of the previous meeting.
12.	Any Other Business	None.