



Caen Meadow Working Group (CMWG) meeting notes

Thursday 18th January 2024, 6.30pm at The Hub (URC), Norwich Road.

- Attendance** – Noted those present - Bill Dashley, Cllr Ionie Lyons-Clayton (Chair), Nicky Nicholls. Apologies from Laura English, Angela Ireland, Ruth Rhead.
- Minutes of the last meeting** – agreed. Noted that the residents of the property to the left of the gate have planted hedge whips, as agreed. All agreed that it looks very good.
- Winter update** – feedback on the last few months. Usage is low, coinciding with the season. Mostly dog walkers. The number of wild swimmers seems to have reduced. Large number of molehills. Agreed to leave as is. No other issues.
- Notification from Broads Authority (BA) of **closure of the Staithe**. Email before Christmas from BA advising the PC that the quay heading is unsafe and quotes for repair are c£25K. BA say they cannot afford this and therefore they will remove their signage and close the area as a Broads Authority mooring before the new season starts in April 2024. Group questioned what “closure” means exactly. BA have sent a condition report dated May 2023 which deems the mooring as unsafe. Question over why it has taken so long to make this decision and their culpability in keeping the staithe open last summer when their staff had declared it unsafe.
Discussed the history – BA took over the staithe from the PC in 2019 and replaced the capping and did works to infill the bank. At the time they were keen to adopt it because it fulfilled a need to have moorings at certain intervals for navigation.
Agreed that there was negligence on behalf of the BA. Having taken over the running of the site in 2019 a costed maintenance programme should have been in place and been budgeted for. The points they have made about the land being subject to a claim by a third party appear to be entirely unfounded.
Discussed the BA’s proposal to work collaboratively to fund a project to replace the quay heading and the group would like to know more about what that proposal might look like.
Clerk briefed the group on a meeting earlier in the week with Trafford Estate whereby they agreed to raise the issue in a phone conversation with John Packman.
Discussed how much benefit residents get from the staithe. Most boats moored there are tourists. The slipway is of more use to parishioners. The staithe needs to be safe for land users – i.e. to stand on for fisherfolk, walkers, swimmers etc. Could/would BA remove the staithe structure and then the area returns to its natural state? NCC footpath Malthouse Lane finished at the top of the slipway, thus assuming that the slipway is the responsibility of the BA. (**Post meeting note** – correspondence from 2021 with BA shows that the staithe sits in the same parcel of land as the staithe and is therefore common, unregistered land without an owner or maintainer).
Noted that there has been a staithe on this spot for hundreds of years, serving the Malthouses and the old village of Wroxham when it was based around Church Lane.
Clerk to feedback to Council.
- Management plan** – ILC met with Colin Studholme last year at Caen Meadow. He is currently a Clerk but was formally Director of Policy & Research at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and writes management plans for open spaces. Reviewed his proposal and agreed it was exactly what was required. Wants to meet the group and work together. Would break the area down into manageable chunks to maintain on

a rotational basis. Nice balance between managing the area whilst keeping it natural. Clerk to add this to the agenda for the next Full Council meeting. Talked about possibilities of engaging with pupils from Broadland High School.

6. Maintenance issues:

- a. Main gate post replacement (inc key for padlock). Gate post is rotten, and the gate is not shutting properly. Danger that the heavy gate could fall and hurt someone. Clerk has a quote from the local handyman, agreed work needs doing asap before further damage occurs and can easily be funded from the current underspend. Clerk to order work. Need to pick up a working key.
- b. Riverside footpath between the staithe and the meadow – request to lay woodchip down to absorb mud. Agreed that when the next tree works happen to get the trees chipped and then lay that down on the path. To discuss it as part of the management plan.

7. **Signage.** Talked about the importance of giving the site a sense of place and a sense of history to encourage identity and belonging and therefore encourage people to treat it with more respect. The new signage that encourages people to do the right thing by putting their litter in the roll top bin rather than a list of DON'T's seems to be working better. Work towards a series of information boards as part of the management plan. Highlight nature and history and the Meadow as an asset to the community. Noted that Colin had said that the Police notices gave the space an urban feel and didn't have any impact on ASB.

8. AOB – none.

9. **NEXT MEETING DATE** – agreed to procure the management plan and then organise a spring meeting to either to discuss a first report or to meet with Colin on site. Clerk to report back when a programme is in place.

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