



**East of England Biodiversity Forum Meeting Minutes Tuesday 25 March 2014  
British Trust for Ornithology offices, Thetford**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
<p><b>Steve Scott</b> ~ Forestry Commission  <b>Mark Iley</b> ~ Essex LBAP  <b>Catherine Weightman</b> ~ Natural England  <b>Nick White</b> ~ Natural England  <b>Richard Barnes</b> ~ Woodland Trust  <b>Liz Anderson</b> ~ Central Bedfordshire Council/Alge rep  <b>David Hooton</b> ~ Deer Initiative  <b>Dominic Coath</b> ~ Environment Agency  <b>Philip Pearson</b> ~ RSPB  <b>Mike Drew</b> ~ Anglian Water  <b>Rachael Donovan</b> ~ Hertfordshire County Council  <b>Martin Hicks</b> ~ Hertfordshire County Council  <b>Kieren Alexander</b> ~ Essex LBAP  <b>Chris Soans</b> ~ National Trust  <b>Deb Howard</b> ~ Essex Wildlife Trust (minute taker)</p>	<p><b>Simon Odell</b> ~ Greenarc  <b>Rebecca Banks</b> ~ Norfolk Wildlife Trust  <b>Gen Broad</b> ~ Suffolk LBAP  <b>Henry Bexley</b> ~ National Trust  <b>Stuart Warrington</b> ~ National Trust  <b>John Sharpe</b> ~ RSPB  <b>Deborah Marchant</b> ~ Cambridgeshire County Council  <b>Haidee Bishop</b> ~ Wild Anglia  <b>Stuart Banks</b> ~ National Trust  <b>Anne Casey</b> ~ Norfolk LBAP  <b>Stuart Banks</b> ~ National Trust  <b>Andrea Kelly</b> ~ Broads Authority</p>

	<b>Action</b>
<p><b>Minutes from the last meeting</b>            Action from last meeting Mark spoke to Phil Ling who confirmed the hosting and any changes made to the website is £180 per year, fixed price includes monthly inclusive of 30 minutes for updates ie 6 hours per year. The possibility of asking for a reduction per year and an hourly rate for any updates was discussed.            Minutes of the meeting from 8 October 2013 were agreed  <b>Update from secretariat</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mark informed the forum that the following had been spent since the last meeting:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ £391.00 for Tony Juniper and £840 for catering at the Fens for the Future partnership in November</li> <li>○ £140.00 for refreshments at the Cambridgeshire regional LOWs practitioner's event in October.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• £10,527 remains in the account. If anyone has a regional project that would benefit from support of these funds please put forward an A4 side proposition to Steve for the Forum to consider.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Biodiversity 2020 and Mosaic approach (see attached presentation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nick White from Natural England gave a 1 year on update presentation to the forum (presentation attached to the minutes)</li> <li>• Please find some useful links from Nick White for your information</li> </ul> <p><a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/biodiversity2020.aspx">http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/biodiversity2020.aspx</a></p> <p><a href="http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5856835374415872">http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/category/5856835374415872</a></p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2020 vision is an ambition focussing on SSSIs. Concerns were raised regarding the 50% target and capturing the sites that are now declining.</li> <li>• The 48 Local Nature Partnerships (LNP) will be linking to the 2020 targets. Many now have an accounts manager in place, however each LNP structure varies and all have limited resources.</li> <li>• The BARs system will stop sites being double counted.</li> <li>• Concerns were expressed regarding the fudging of figures to achieve targets.</li> <li>• There are commercial pilots and initiatives in place that are feeding back to improve habitats, such as Woodfuel East and Orchards that are now producing apple juice.</li> <li>• Natural England would like mechanisms to feed back to the government, for example information exchange and lobbying.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Chalara update – Steve Scott</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steve produced a map for the forum to show the distribution of Chalara around the British Isles.</li> <li>• The disease has not spread as much due to the dry summer; however, Steve does feel that it will be across the whole country in years to come.</li> <li>• An App call ASHTAG is available to report and upload photos, there is also a facility to revisit trees to check on progress over several years.</li> <li>• The disease is wind born.</li> <li>• Regeneration is more susceptible to the disease and a no new planting rule is still in force.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Catchment Based Approach Mark Iley (see attached presentation)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essex is hosting Combined Essex catchment Partnership and key partners in South Essex Catchment Partnership working together to improve water quality.</li> <li>• All partnerships receive the same amount of funding regardless of the size of the catchment, £11,800 already received and potentially £12,000 in March.</li> <li>• Almost all rivers in the Essex catchments are currently in poor or moderate WFD status condition.</li> <li>• A group of stake holders including Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust, Rivers Trust, Water companies, National Farmers union and more have been set up to look at issues and map out a way forward.</li> <li>• A website has been set up to give information and report projects <a href="http://www.essexrivershub.org.uk/">http://www.essexrivershub.org.uk/</a></li> <li>• Stakeholder workshops are planned for later in the year.</li> <li>• Mark stressed that it is not all about Water Framework Directive (WFD) but the work will contribute to it.</li> <li>• Mark Phillips (seconded from NE) is the person to speak to a DEFRA regarding water related issues.</li> </ul> <p>Broadlands CaBa are more advanced and have had 3 workshops already looking at actions and seeing what is needed to go forward. Neil Punchard is head of the group. On the Wissey a collection of landowners are working together.</p> <p>Possible future visit to River Wensum looking at Woodland cropping in the pilot catchment</p>	<b>DH</b>
<p><b>National Character Areas (NCA) – Catherine Weightman (see attached presentation)</b></p> <p>These are all now complete – last 5 should be finished April/May 2014</p> <p><a href="http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/">http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications/nca/</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A useful resource for background information when applying for funding, especially</li> </ul>	

<p>for HLF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Containing latest evidence, information on ecosystem services, useful and relevant information which will continue to be updated.</li> <li>• Catherine urged the Forum to look at NCAs and use where possible.</li> <li>• There are no expectations on Local Authority planning departments to use them</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Update from DEFRA family restructure</b></p> <p><b>Environment Agency (EA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delays due to the floods, regions will cease and there will be 3 national hubs North, South and West with directors managing area teams to be final in October 2014.</li> <li>• Trying to develop an integrated flood risk environment program for DEFRA by the end of March. EA will have to ask for help from partners to complete projects.</li> <li>• EA website will cease to exist by the end of March and switch to GOV.uk</li> </ul> <p><b>Natural England</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Returning to 14 local teams on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.</li> <li>• Norfolk and Suffolk – Area Manager Pamela Abbotts</li> <li>• Herts, Beds, Cambs, Essex and Northants – Area Manager John Torlesse (acting)</li> <li>• Approx 150 applied for redundancy, approx 100 accepted for redundancy</li> <li>• Natural England has begun to advertise for the role of Chief Executive of Natural England. Dave Webster has had the post on an interim basis since March 2012. Now that that Triennial Review has confirmed the independent role and status of Natural England, and Andrew Sells been appointed Chairman, they can now begin the process of recruiting a permanent Chief Executive. Andrew Sells will lead the appointment to bring a CEO to Natural England, in line with the Cabinet Office requirements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Forestry Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Still uncertainty, sub national area teams likely to continue.</li> <li>• 168 staff in England which may be cut to c130 which will be made up of transfers to Rural Payment Agency (RPA) or redundancy.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>NIA/LNP/LEP updates</b></p> <p><b>Bedfordshire NIA (see attached document)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• see attached to download the Developing Ecological Evidence Base Document for information</li> <li>• Board members and steering group have been formed and the LNP AGM is on 1<sup>st</sup> May Chairman is Cllr Richard Stay and Vice Chair is Jon Balaam . NIA is hoped to be launched late summer / early autumn.</li> </ul> <p><b>Hertfordshire LNP (see attached document)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently not good dialogue between the LNP and LEP.</li> <li>• Resources and administrative support are an issue.</li> <li>• Catherine Wyatt has now left which leaves a vacancy.</li> <li>• An event is planned to review and celebrate the work to date.</li> </ul> <p><b>Wild Anglia</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Haidee Bishop's hours have been cut to 2 days a week.</li> </ul> <p><b>Cambridgeshire</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new chair has been appointed, Richard Astlee</li> </ul> <p>LNPs are disappointed by DEFRA's lack of response to their work. DEFRA feel that if LNPs fail there is not a local need.</p>	

<p><b>AOB</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anglian Water has a change of manager from Andy Brown who is now Head of sustainability to Chris Gerrard Climate Change and Biodiversity Manager.</li> <li>• SITA panel has 10 applications, Catherine asked for volunteers to sit on the panel and a date for the meeting was set for Tuesday 6 May 2014</li> <li>• Keep bids coming in to the WREN panel. Successful bids funded last week.</li> <li>• Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership (SBP) report from Gen Broad (<b>see attached document</b>): is now in a much stronger position as we have been incorporated into the work of Suffolk Biodiversity Records Centre (SBRC). This makes good sense as Martin Sanford, the manager of SBRC, has always been my line manager and the Record Centre has always hosted the Partnership. In this way, SBP is able to provide support particularly to the planning departments with whom we now work much more frequently. The main change is probably the steering group. SBP now reports to the new SBRC steering group which had its first meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March – the details are in the document. We will continue to work with existing partners in the same way as before and seek out new partners and projects with our focus clearly on the Suffolk BAP species and habitats.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Dates and venues for 2014 meetings</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 8 July 2014 – Working Woodlands Centre next to Maulden Woods SSSI Bedfordshire</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 7 October 2014 – saltmarsh restoration project at Falkenham</b></p>	
<p>The meeting closed at 13.15 p.m. followed by lunch, and a guided walk around Snake Wood in Thetford Forest led by Steve Scott</p>	