

## Natural Cambridgeshire Board Meeting

### Minutes

**Tuesday, 13th April 2021 via zoom**

**Present:** Richard Astle, Chair (Athene Communications), Martin Baker (WLT), Matthew Bradbury (Nene Park Trust), Tim Breitmeyer (Landowner), Becca Britton (Urban and Civic), Adrian Cannard (CPCA - Advisor), Helen Dye, Co-ordinator (Natural Cambridgeshire), Professor Peter Landshoff (Independent Trustee), Carly Leonard (PECT), James Littlewood (Cambridge Past Present and Future - Advisor), Roger Mitchell (Independent Trustee), John Torlesse (Natural England), Hannah Ward (RSPB), Rob Wise (NFU), Cllr Tim Wotherspoon (Cambs County Council).

**Apologies:** Sarah Smith (National Trust)

#### **Record of Actions/Decisions:**

- ACTION 1: RM and RA to progress next steps towards alignment of various initiatives across the north of the county, in liaison with the Cambridge Zero project team.
- ACTION 2: To aim for good Natural Cambridgeshire attendance at the WRE webinar on 27<sup>th</sup> April, and get a small group together after that to look at the co-ordination of mapping initiatives going forwards.
- ACTION 3: MBkr to come back to the June/August board with a paper addressing points raised in the Evaluation and Measurement discussion and including a further developed prospective State of Nature Report for Cambridgeshire proposal.
- ACTION 4: HD to work with RA to set up Finance and Ops Group, to be reviewed October 2021.
- ACTION 5: Proceed with Metro Bank as the Natural Cambridgeshire banking provider; CL to action this with Metro Bank.
- ACTION 6: PL and HD to finalise paper to forward to Anthony Browne MP.
- ACTION 7: Finance and Ops Group to focus on priority audience list, and develop fully costed propositions for each audience; public sector to be targeted as a priority.
- ACTION 8: JL to pull together a meeting of landscape partnership leads ahead of the next board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June with a view to providing a fuller update.
- ACTION 9: A short statement of words on each of the priority landscapes to be provided for the weekly news update.
- ACTION 10: TW to circulate link to recording of Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure into the Planning System Conference.

## Record of Discussion

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

RA welcomed all to the meeting.

### 2. Minutes of last meeting

**Minutes of last meeting** were approved as a true and accurate record with actions dealt with or in progress. There were no matters arising.

### 3. A Focus on Measurement & Evaluation

#### 3.1. Landscape Restoration Solutions to the Interlinked Extinction and Climate Crises (with a focus on the Fens) – NERC Bid – Invitation to collaborate from Cambridge Zero, the University of Cambridge's Climate Change Initiative

Dr Emily Shuckburgh, Director, Cambridge Zero and Dr Laurie Friday gave a presentation (see slides attached) on their second stage application to the Natural Environment Research Council's ['Changing the Environment'](#) programme, which has a deadline of early June 2021. The aim of the programme is to support solutions to key environmental challenges by creating a critical mass of inter-disciplinary expertise within the applying research organisation, with the ability to leverage a wide range of inputs from other stakeholders and partners, and to access other funding opportunities. Cambridge Zero's geographic focus of the application is the Cambridgeshire peatlands, and Natural Cambridgeshire is seen by Cambridge Zero as a 'key nexus' in communicating and drawing together the labyrinth of organisations operating in the area. Natural Cambridgeshire was invited by Emily to collaborate in the development of the second stage application.

Questions, answers, comments and discussion that followed the presentation included: *the first meeting of the Combined Authority's Peat commission is due to meet this afternoon – it's important that we all join up; commitment to and enthusiasm of District Councils to these ambitious agendas and initiatives will be critical to their success; we will all benefit from an holistic approach underpinned by evidence; important to get complementarity between this and other initiatives that are going on in the Fens; how do we deal with all these layers?; food production and involvement of farming community is key; mitigation and adaptation vs restoration and recreation are going to be important themes for discussion for the future of peatland in relation to climate change and biodiversity going forwards; what would the project be looking to deliver on the ground?; the initiative very much would want to link into the work NC is developing with communities; absence of HDC in the mapping.*

It was recognised that the risk of not getting an appropriate structure to support the work in the Fens right, now, is that it puts at risk all other initiatives both existing and in development; by all knocking on the same stakeholders' and politicians' doors and attending different meetings which have essentially got all the same outcome-based agenda. It was felt that the LNP has a duty of care to the communities it seeks to serve, to minimise creating a labyrinth of organisations and acronyms. It was agreed that RA would work with RM to bring together a group of relevant leads, including Cambridge Zero, to co-ordinate the joining up, ensure complementarity and mutual support.

**ACTION 1:** RM and RA to progress next steps, in liaison with the Cambridge Zero project team.

#### 3.2. Water Resources East – an update on the Systematic Conservation Planning (SCP) project

Dr Robin Price, Managing Director, WRE and Dr Sam Sinclair, the consultant working on the Systematic Conservation Planning project, gave a presentation on the regional East of England mapping project being funded by the WWF with support from The Coca Cola Foundation. WRE is an organisation that seeks to facilitate an integrated approach to water resource management including water resources, water quality and flood risk, and now has 150 members across the East of England. The current phase of the SCP project is due to complete on June 2021, and WRE will be hosting a webinar to report on the project at 2pm, 27<sup>th</sup> April, to which all WRE members will be invited.

Questions, answers and discussion that followed the presentation included: *a lot of mapping products out there at the moment, how do we know what's doing what?; how do we understand the different purposes and outcomes of these tools to work out what's most useful in different situations and for what purposes?; what seems to be different about this product is it seems to add a level around social engagement around what it is that we, collectively, want to achieve, on top of the evidence-based mapping work that has been produced by various organisations; how do we navigate what's best in what situation?; LandApp produces maps of where stuff is e.g. soils and natural capital, what SCP does is help you to make decisions on the basis of where stuff is and reflects back to stakeholders the consequences of their decisions; do the people who are putting together land management schemes and policies understand the risks of utilising this approach i.e. that you can end up with the lowest common denominator?; SCP is a brilliant tool, when it is used well; how do you consider social and economic growth, or is it nature-based objectives that you put in?; it's things that people want from or for nature; there seem to be an awful lot of mapping initiatives either existing or emerging, how do we manage these?*

Further comments included: *how do we all work towards a single framework into which we can all link? By optimising one aspect, you can put the rest of the system out of kilter; mapping on such a vast scale, such as WRE are doing, involves making huge assumptions, and there are risks in that; that said, having data available on that scale can be enormously useful as any conversations about sustainable growth and development have to look at water resources on the broad geographic scale.*

The next phase of the SCP project is approaching, and WRE would welcome an opportunity to draw upon the collective expertise of the Natural Cambridgeshire board to inform how best to fully utilise and exploit the data for Cambridgeshire going forwards, after the general sharing webinar on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2-4pm. It was agreed that Natural Cambridgeshire would stay very much engaged with WRE, Robin and Sam, and the SCP project, going forwards.

**ACTION 2:** To aim for good Natural Cambridgeshire attendance at the WRE webinar on 27<sup>th</sup> April, and get a small group together after that to look at the co-ordination of mapping going forwards.

- 3.3. An invitation from **Stockholm Environment Institute, University of York** to participate in an interview for the NERC funded **DECIDE** study was noted, and anyone interested in being interviewed was please asked to let HD know.
- 3.4. Receipt of **Future Parks Accelerator Natural Capital Account Specification** commission was noted, including comments about the importance of joining up all the mapping initiatives that seem to be happening. Please speak to RA/MBry if any questions.
- 3.5. Items 3.5 and 3.6 were rolled together. An update of the ongoing discussions with **LandApp** was provided by RW. Discussions are taking place with a view to assessing the apps' ability to

map agri-environment agreements at a landowner level of management. The **Measurement and Evaluation Working Group** have to work through some of the available data to access the apps' utility in helping to establish a baseline from which to calculate Doubling Nature. PL had provided a paper on a State of Nature Report for Cambridgeshire, and it was proposed by MBkr to come back with a fuller paper to the board, taking into account that which had been provided by PL and including the work that RW has described, with a view to putting a proposal together to establish the baseline for Doubling Nature and securing resource to enable that work to take place.

**ACTION 3:** MBkr to come back to the June/August board with a fuller paper addressing points raised in the discussion and including a further developed prospective State of Nature Report for Cambridgeshire proposal.

#### 4. **Co-ordinator's Update**

RA thanked HD for the written report. CL said she found the update useful and concise and covered a lot of ground and was useful. Any further comments/questions please email HD.

#### 5. **Governance**

RM spoke to the minutes of the group of trustees who had met to discuss governance matters on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021, which included a proposal to establish a Finance and Ops Group; revising Terms of Reference including for Working Groups; ensuring appropriate organisational policies are in place, including GDPR compliance; and that charity commission reporting requirements are clear and diarised.

The proposed Finance and Ops Group would not make decisions but co-ordinate and track, and make recommendations to the board, and would include 3-4 trustees and the co-ordinator. CL to send relevant PECT policies. CL reported that Working Groups worked well in practice for PECT and MBbry also saw the value for Working Groups in keeping the business of Natural Cambridgeshire streamlined and on track. , another layer under that about how Natural Cambridgeshire produces its accounts, which Nene Park Trust is doing that at the moment, and is happy to continue to do that for the time being. While an annual report to the Charity Commission is due in February 2022, it was felt that a Natural Cambridgeshire organisational annual report would be best scheduled for summer 2022, with an event.

It was agreed that signatories for the Metro Bank account would be RA, CL and MB, of which two out of three would need to sign at any one time. RA needs to update Charity Commission website once this is finalised.

Under this item, the Terms of Reference for the **Policy and Planning Forum** were also discussed, including how do we/should we respond e.g. to Dame Fiona's recent request to consider the proposal of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, given that the decision would largely be down to individual local authorities to engage? PL clarified, by saying that Dame Fiona had asked if local authorities would be willing to continue the conversation, so not engaging with a project as such, more continuing discussions. It was felt that the value of the Policy and Planning Group is in facilitating discussions, so not sure what it means to be a working group in this instance. Some of the decisions will be the local authorities, but there may be instances where there are some initiatives or decisions that Natural Cambridgeshire may be recommending or endorsing. There are things to think through and evolve.

There were no further actions in regard to the two trustees in waiting, and it was agreed to review this after local elections had taken place in May.

**ACTION 4:** Finance and Operations Group set up as an interim straight away to include chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, so RA, MB, RM and CL. HD to work with RA to set this up with a 6-month review date, October 2021. To note date of October board meeting, 5 October 2021.

**ACTION 5:** It was unanimously agreed to proceed with Metro Bank as the Natural Cambridgeshire banking provider; CL to action this with the Bank.

## 6. Funds and Funding

Further to a recent meeting with Anthony Browne MP, a paper was requested to enable him to lobby on Natural Cambridgeshire's behalf; the prepared paper also plays into wider piece about how we make the case for the funding required to develop and implement the Doubling Nature Vision. It was noted that the IPCC had recently given £50k to the Fenland Peat Committee.

In developing the 'case for support' the following comments/observations were made:

- Natural Cambridgeshire has always taken the view that development can be both an opportunity and a threat, and it is our role to ensure balance between the environmental and growth agendas.
- Given the low base of wildlife rich areas in Cambridgeshire, and given the preparation required to respond to funding calls with shovel ready projects, it was felt there may be merit in augmenting the proposal document to include local capacity for bidding, which could lead to discussions about staffing, capacity building and project development that would enable a more prepared response to time-limited shovel ready funder requests.
- While the arts and heritage were seen as a focus of the Fens Biosphere, it was also recognised that they were an important feature in the programmes of many partner organisations and should therefore also be expanded upon and included in the Natural Cambridgeshire remit.
- A document that puts us in front of people is a good move forwards, and time will be of the essence if we are to capitalise fully on the current recognition of the value of nature; we should move quickly on this, drawing upon the Marketing and Fundraising strategy document that was prepared last year.
- Various points were made about targeting funders, which broadly fall into three categories: public bodies, businesses and philanthropists. The document prepared was solely to continue discussions with Anthony Browne and it was recognised that merit would lie in further defining audiences and tailoring clear asks to individual funder interests, which would sit with the Finance and Ops Group to take forwards, including estimating and deciding the detail of how much we need and what for.
- It was felt that more could/should be made of Natural Cambridgeshire's charitable status including anticipated charitable outcomes i.e. the impact and likely/projected impact of our work for both nature and public benefit. In an increasingly competitive market place, there will be merit in getting really good at making the ask upfront and clearly, and being specific about the difference we are making.
- With regard to our support for communities, consideration be given to a fund that parishes could bid into.
- With regard to BNG, there is a strong argument to go to district councils to say we are a focal point to deliver BNG to you, and can we seek a regular undertaking from you for that?
- Do we need to be smarter? As seen from the presentations given earlier today by Cambridge Zero and WRE, we are being seen by other organisations as valued partners. Should we be seeking funding from partners we are being asked to collaborate with?

**ACTION 6:** PL and HD to finalise paper to forward to Anthony Browne MP, without delay.

**ACTION 7:** Finance and Ops Group to focus on who is priority audience list, and develop fully costed propositions for each audience on the basis that every source of funding will require a different document tailored for them; public sector to be targeted as a priority.

## 7. **Partnership Forum Update**

PL reported that a response is awaited from the Leader of Fenland District Council who has been invited to provide the summing up at the next Forum meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> June. AC reported that the Combined Authority is in dialogue with local authorities about what they are doing about climate change and offered to provide an overview about how climate strategies are shaping up across the county at the next Forum.

## 8. **Policy Update**

JT had had to leave the meeting early, so a policy update will be provided at a later date.

## 9. **Working Group Reports**

### 9.1 **Priority Landscapes**

JL reported the priority landscapes are moving forwards slowly, largely as a result of limited resources. What is needed is money for time spent with partners to work up some shovel ready projects on the ground, and that this is actually mission critical. Capacity issues mean that we (Cambridgeshire/Natural Cambridgeshire) is missing out, and is likely to continue to miss out because we don't have capacity to respond to funding opportunities as/when they are announced. We need the capacity to deliver what the politicians espouse and want to see happen.

- A bid to the Green Challenge Recovery Fund is currently being prepared by JL to support the development of the **Cambridge Nature Network**. TB reported that through the Cambridge Sustainable Drainage Team, an application to the Environment Agency for a Water Environment Improvement Fund grant had been successful with £80k awarded for Granta related projects for the financial year 20/21. The grant needs to be spent in the financial year in question and so is for shovel ready, mainly river ecology orientated, projects only, for which there is a long list being put forward by The Rivers Trust with one or two other suggestions included, as well. A bid by has been submitted by Cambridge Water to the Ofwat Innovation for Water (which has subsequently been reported as unsuccessful), and will be looking to apply for the ELM Pilot for Local Nature Recovery (Tier 2) or Landscape Nature Recovery (Tier 3) in 2022.
- A positive first meeting of the **Great Ouse Valley** partnership meeting was reported by HW, with lots of enthusiasm from organisations working together and shared interests identified, including concept of Ouse Valley as sense of place, habitat creation as a priority and habitat delivery through farmer advice. What's needed next is to pull together the vision so that it becomes a coherent and publicly recognised programme of work. The challenges around resources are recognised and some development resource might be needed to co-ordinate and develop the partnership. It was recognised there are opportunities for the developing partnership to influence some important strategies e.g. EA Flood Storage Strategy.
- MBkr reported that the 20 farmers involved in the **West Cambridgeshire One Hundreds** meet only twice a year, and we have to work at the partners' pace. It was reported that Wimpole have secured funding for woodland management/creation. This project is an

important part of our agenda and one where we can get communities engaged and enthused.

It was commented that a short statement of words on priority landscapes for the weekly news update would be welcomed.

**ACTION 8:** JL to pull together a meeting of the partnership leads ahead of the next board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> June, with a view to providing a fuller update.

**ACTION 9:** A short statement of words on each of the priority landscapes to be provided for the weekly news update.

## **9.2 Community Projects**

CL reported there is a recurring monthly communities meeting, which is open to trustees and partners. A one-page summary of toolkit which will be sent to parish and town councils via Cambs Acre and CAPALC networks is finalised and available on the Natural Cambridgeshire website (<https://naturalcambridgeshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Local-Nature-Recovery-Toolkit-summary.pdf>). CL spoke of the value of bringing in research and examples to target and hone different messages to different audiences. Ultimately, where we want to get to is an online platform where all the parishes, organisations and communities can input into, network with each other, access resources and share learning. Time and dedicated resource is required to make this happen.

## **9.3 Planning and Policy Forum**

MBkr reported he had been invited to attend the Local Authority Planners Group, at which they talked about setting up a group to look at the technical practicalities of how you set up and administer BNG – including assessing the relative merits of single authority administration or a more strategic collective approach, and resources to scope options. It is recognised that Natural Cambridgeshire can help to facilitate discussions with politicians.

## **10. Developing with Nature Forum**

While the Terms of Reference for the Forum are currently under review, the next forum is Wednesday 21 April. A fuller report will be provided at the next board meeting in June.

## **11. AOB**

TW offered to circulate the recent Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure into the Planning System Conference recording and paperwork.

With reference to the format of future meetings, it was suggested one of the working groups to own each board meeting, so either Priority Landscapes, Communities or Audience(s), and then have for the second half of the meeting focussed on governance and funding.

**ACTION 10:** TW to circulate link to recording to recent Mainstreaming Green Infrastructure into the Planning System Conference.

## **12. Dates of next meetings:**

Tuesday 8th June, 10-12:30pm

Tuesday 3th August, 10-12:30pm

Tuesday 5th October, 10-12:30pm

Tuesday 7th December, 10-12:30pm

Meeting closed at 12:32

Minutes prepared by Helen Dye