

Natural Cambridgeshire Board Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, 8th June 2021 via zoom

Present: Richard Astle, Chair (Athene Communications), Matthew Bradbury (Nene Park Trust), Tim Breitmeyer (Landowner), Adrian Cannard (CPCA - Advisor), Helen Dye, Co-ordinator (Natural Cambridgeshire), Cllr Pippa Heylings (South Cambs DC), Professor Ian Hodge (University of Cambridge – presenter); Professor Peter Landshoff (Independent Trustee), James Littlewood (Cambridge Past Present and Future - Advisor), Roger Mitchell (Independent Trustee), Hannah Phillips (RSPB), Gavin Shelton (CoFarm - presenter); Sarah Smith (National Trust), John Torlesse (Natural England), Rob Wise (NFU).

Apologies: Martin Baker (WLT), Carly Leonard (PECT), Becca Britton (Urban and Civic).

Record of Actions/Decisions

DECISION 1: To build a workstream/roadmap that allows Natural Cambridgeshire to make an announcement of the intentions to launch the Doubling Nature Fund and to advocate for a single environmental governance framework.

DECISION 2: NC to champion CoFarm concept, with a view to having at least one such or similar initiative in each landscape and/or district.

ACTION 1: See minutes of last meeting and matters arising

ACTION 2: MBry to take forward conversations with GS with a view to facilitating a roundtable/workshop to promote CoFarm concept, and look at how CoFarm model might fit into landscapes. GS to advise CoFarm projects for each of the landscapes

ACTION 3: LNP to meet formerly with Bridget Smith and Liz Watts, with a view to ensuring alignment of priorities and approaches between Arc and wider Cambridgeshire.

ACTION 4: RA to work with HD to start to pull together a work programme, including a comms plan, to prepare for the launch in the intention to establish a Doubling Nature Fund.

ACTION 5: All relevant parties to do more work on the Landscape spreadsheets, including submissions from the three landscapes yet to submit. JL to co-ordinate.

ACTION 6: To circulate summary analysis of the three landscapes that have submitted with the minutes.

ACTION 8: RA/HD/CL to finalise a two-sider for the Communities work stream, which can be bid for separately, and/or rolled it into the fund.

ACTION 9: RA/HD/CL to develop and implement plan for Future Parks Community Engagement Commission.

ACTION 10: PL to resend email request to conservation organisations for contributions to State of Nature report.

ACTION 11: RA to speak with MBkr to ask to get Evaluation and Measurement paper written with a view to the paper being agreed at the next board meeting.

ACTION 12: Any trustee who wishes to volunteer as GDPR champion to please email HD.

Record of Discussions

1. Welcome and Introductions

RA welcomed all to the meeting, including guests Gavin Shelton and Professor Ian Hodge.

2. Minutes of last meeting

2.1 Minutes of last meeting were approved as a true and accurate record with actions dealt with or in progress (see below).

ACTION 1: Alignment of initiatives. RM reported it's currently still a very busy space, particularly in the north of the county, and agreed to provide a review for next board meeting. **ACTION:** RM to pull initiatives together for review at next board meeting.

ACTION 2: HD reported good attendance at WRE Systematic Conservation Planning webinar, and subsequently at an NC facilitated meeting with WRE, with discussions ongoing. See matters arising below.

ACTION 3: Evaluation and Measurement and the proposed State of Nature report are important parts of our agenda and are ongoing. **ONGOING.**

ACTION 4: Finance and Ops Group (RA, RM, MBry, CL and HD) has now met and minutes circulated to board, and will form a great adjunct to our work.

ACTION 5: RM has a meeting with Metro Bank next Tuesday to finalise banking arrangements. **ACTION:** RA to send details to RM, to log with Charity Commission.

ACTIONS 6-9: Will form part of discussion later in the meeting.

ACTION 10: Had not been circulated by TW, and given recent change of administration NC will be looking for a new representative from the County Council in due course.

2.2 Matters Arising: PL reported he had attended a further WRE Strategic Planning, where participants were asked to feed in their suggestions for how they would actively contribute to WRE's work to ensure there is sufficient water for the area. It was felt important for NC to stay close to the water sector as it's a strategic part of the NC agenda and we need to be building the right relationships for that.

ACTION: PL to send an email to Robin Price saying we are keen to help.

3. Presentation, Gavin Shelton, CoFarm

The board received a presentation by Gavin Shelton (GS), Founder and Director of the CoFarm Foundation. Last year, CoFarm produced over 4 tonnes of produce for distribution to hubs in Cambridge City for people experiencing food insecurity from their 7-acre site, and this year plans to produce 10 tonnes for similar distribution.

PROPOSAL: RA proposed NC seek to champion CoFarm concept, with a view to having at least one such or similar initiative in each landscape and/or district. The proposal was supported by RM, RW and SS.

ACTION: MBry to take forward conversations with GS with a view to facilitating a roundtable/workshop to promote CoFarm concept including other similar local projects, and to identify pilots, and this be embedded into existing NC agenda, with particular resonance with nature recovery and communities work streams. Considerations to include Parish owned land and also to demonstrate to farmers and landowners the biodiversity, social and economic value that can be derived from a relatively small site.

4. Next Steps for Natural Cambridgeshire

4.1 RA provided a broad summary of the current land management and environment initiatives in which to frame a discussion about NC strategy, including

developing a framework within which to achieve the Doubling Nature vision and the governance of nature recovery in Cambridgeshire.

Current initiatives include:

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Independent Climate Commission's Final Report (due in October)
- the work of the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission, which is being championed in Cambridgeshire by Dame Fiona Reynolds,
- the OxCam Arc
- and the planning landscape, which will be influenced by the Environment Bill once it receives Royal Assent, anticipated later this year.

AC provided an **update from the Combined Authority** to say that two new roles, including a lead for the Environment and a lead for Health, have been created within the overall CA structure; and these are political posts.

In relation to the Arc, it is understood an outcome of Arc framework will be a policy statement that will have material weight in planning, and local plans will have to be adjusted if they are odds with the statement, although level of detail it will go into is unclear at present.

ACTION: LNP to meet formerly with Bridget Smith and Liz Watts, with a view to ensuring alignment of priorities and approaches.

TB said it is important to be clear about what the objectives to be achieved are within each priority area, and who is going to be the lead landowner. RA was clear to point out that absolute clarity about all bits of the jigsaw will be required.

Professor Ian Hodge spoke to his paper on Natural Cambridgeshire as a **Local Environmental Governance Organisation (LEGO)**, and declared an interest in that he is also on a DEFRA Economic Advisory Panel and a DEFRA Biodiversity Advisory Targets Group.

A Local Environmental Governance organisation (LEGO) as outlined by Professor Hodge would act as a trustee of the local environment, would be looking for opportunities to enhance the delivery of ecosystem services, and have the interests of the local community who value that environment in the long term at its heart. A LEGO needs to ensure long-term and it needs to be assured it can provide this security. It also needs to be democratic, in the sense that society can see it as representing a wider social perspective, and it needs to be financially accountable.

4.2 **PROPOSAL**

RA outlined a proposal to announce an intention **to establish the Doubling Nature Fund** and also the desire to see established a **single environmental governance framework** (rather than an organisation) for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, that draws together all the various strands and provides a truly holistic approach to environmental policy in all its ramifications, be that biodiversity, be that through climate change; and it has a strategic trustee role. And this becomes a single voice in articulating local environmental priorities to central government and to the Arc.

Working towards these two objectives requires the **estimation of the cost to double nature** in Cambridgeshire, and **specification about what funds will be spent on**. And at the same time, there is a need for a **strategic framework for environmental**

improvement. It was proposed these two things then become Natural Cambridgeshire's input to the Climate Change Commission, and our message to the new Mayor, and to the new county administration is this is what we feel is the right way forward to address local environmental issues.

4.3 **Comments/discussion**

There was broad discussion about timing, complexity, relationship with other events and initiatives (COP26, UN Biodiversity Conference and CPICC Final Report), securing stakeholder support and buy-in, particularly local authorities, and being clear about what the framework would encapsulate and how it would work, and the governance of a Doubling Nature Fund.

Reference was made to an analysis of **Collective Impact Initiatives** (Stanford Social Innovation Review, 2011) which identifies the five conditions of collective success as: common agenda; shared measurement systems; mutually reinforcing activities; continuous communication; and backbone support organisations.

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact#

There was broad support for the proposal from trustees including from PH, RW, MBry and RM.

- 4.4 **DECISION:** To build a workstream/road map that allows towards an announcement of the intentions to launch the Doubling Nature Fund and to advocate for a single environmental governance framework later in the year, with a view to having these two items more clearly defined in the early new year.

ACTION: RA to work with HD to start to pull together a work programme to prepare for the announcement of the intention to launch a Doubling Nature Fund and single governance framework, with a view to further refinement in early 2022.

5. Working Group Reports

5.1 **Priority Landscapes**

JL reported on the establishment of a project pipeline into which currently three of the six landscapes have provided submissions. This is the start of a database that can be cut and presented in a number of ways for different funding schemes and/or purposes, e.g. revenue/capital, flood risk management/habitat creation/health and wellbeing etc. Initial analysis has been done to provide an overview. Currently there are a total of 57 projects, of which the majority are in development. The Cambridge Nature Network now has a website: <http://cambridgenaturenetwork.org>.

It is understood that Natural England has funding for a limited number of trial projects in nature recovery areas, and will be looking to identify five landscapes around the country, particularly where potential for early progress can be shown. A database that can identify projects that can take money quickly and early could be beneficial.

ACTION: To continue to work on the spreadsheets, including submissions from the three landscapes yet to submit, and to be clear about the benefits and co-benefits of individual projects within each landscapes, particularly relating to jobs and climate change.

ACTION: To circulate summary analysis of the three landscapes that have submitted with the minutes.

ACTION: GS to advise CoFarm projects for each of the landscapes.

5.2 Community Projects

In CLs absence, RA reported this can be put together as a straight forward project plan with the required funding against it. The intention is to establish a digital platform and advice service so that all communities have the potential to develop their own nature recovery plans and alongside that, an opportunity to bid to for small grants, for trees, hedging and tools etc. A Commission has been received from the Future Parks Programme (ANNEX 4b) for a pilot community engagement project. RA thanked MBry for his work on this programme.

ACTION: CL/HD to work up into a 2-side project proposal, which can be bid for separately, and/or rolled it into the fund.

ACTION: HD/CL to develop and implement plan for Future Parks Community Engagement Commission.

5.3 Planning and Policy Forum

The next meeting is early July, and agenda items will include Dame Fiona Reynold's proposal for a Land Use Pilot, and a presentation from Rebecca Moberly, who was until recently EA lead on the Arc and now works for the Local Government Association as their expert on the Environment Bill and in particular, biodiversity net gain. On the advice of Anthony Browne MP, a document has been put together saying what the local authorities have been doing or are planning to do to help nature, and all bar one local authority in the county has agreed to produce something. Conservation organisations have also been approached to ask about what they have been doing.

ACTION: Peter to resend email request to conservation organisations for contributions to State of Nature report.

5.4 Evaluation and Measurement Working Group

Establishing a baseline for and progress towards doubling nature is a critical part of any step change, and is a priority.

ACTION: RA to speak with MBkr to ask to get Evaluation and Measurement paper written with a view to the paper being agreed at the next board meeting,

5.5 Developing with Nature Forum

RB not present, no report was provided.

6. Co-ordinator's Update

Paper provided, with a particular focus on developing annual work programme, establishing Finance and Ops Group and a request for a GDPR champion from the trustee board.

ACTION: Any trustee who wishes to step forward as GDPR champion to please email HD.

7. Governance

Covered in main discussion items above.

8. Partnership Forum Update

PL reported that 75 people had signed up for next Partnership Forum on 15th June, and the Partnership Forum after that will be on September 14th, when we might wish to tie the programme into news of a prospective Fund launch. It was suggested that consideration be given to diversity and inclusion in the next speaker line-up.

ACTION: If any ideas for speakers at next Forum, 14th September, please email them to PL.

9. Policy Update

JT reported that Royal Assent of the Environment Bill is anticipated for Autumn, and the roll out of Peat Action Plan and Trees Action Plan is partly included in the funding spreadsheet

that was circulated (ANNEX 3c). Those two mechanisms provide really important ways to deliver nature and natural solutions. The main policy news relates to the Environment Bill, including the mandating of BNG. With the Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) and roll out of Nature Recovery Network, nothing additionally to report.

10. Other Updates

TB reported that the Lord Lieutenancy is providing a response for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and for the Green Canopy. TB and two others have been asked to draw up a strategy which will probably revolve around all parishes having their own individual allocation of trees for them to plant within their respective parish boundary.

11. AOB

- **CaBA Chalk Stream Consultation Strategy:** Cam Valley Forum are proposing that we join in with them to respond to the CaBA consultation.
- **Fens Biosphere:** Following FDCs rejection of Biosphere proposals, there is a meeting with the chair and deputy chair of the UK Man and Biosphere committee this afternoon to discuss next steps.
- **WildEast:** nothing to report.

12. Dates of next meetings:

Tuesday 3th August, 10-12:30pm
Tuesday 5th October, 10-12:30pm
Tuesday 7th December, 10-12:30pm

13. Meeting closed 12:29pm

Minutes prepared by Helen Dye