

**Natural Cambridgeshire Board Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**Tuesday, 8th June 2021 via zoom**

**Present:** Richard Astle, Chair (Athene Communications), Martin Baker (WLT), Matthew Bradbury (Nene Park Trust), Matthew Bullock (Advisor), 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), Hannah Phillips (RSPB), Rob Wise (NFU - Advisor). **Apologies:** Sarah Smith (National Trust), John Torlesse (Natural England).

**Record of Decisions, Actions and Discussions:**

**Decisions**

1. Habitat Improvement Information proposal endorsed by the board, and can now be taken forward.
2. MoU to be signed, with caveat there is co-ordination between NC partners to attend FWP stakeholder meetings.
3. Partners recognised via participation, and logo on website.

**Actions:**

1. Natural Cambridgeshire to be registered as an organisation that can award grants (RM).
2. A small working group to be established to take forward the DNF work, including furthering an outsourcing agreement with an organisation. Group to convene before the end of August (RA, MBrby, MBilk, PVL, MBkr).
3. A panel of independent project experts who can give impartial and objective advice to funders to be identified and pulled together (MBkr, CL, HP, SS, RW).
4. Letter to stakeholders seeking in principle support for DNF concept to be redrafted and circulated for review by the board (RA).
5. To seek DNF support from CPCA Environment lead, further to lining up meetings with MPs (RA).
6. To seek a meeting with Greater Manchester Combined Authority lead who helped to set up the Greater Manchester Environment Fund (MBrby).
7. To seek support for the Habitat Information Improvement proposal from the new CPCA Environment Lead, further to seeking set-up and implementation funding (RA/HD).
8. MBkr to liaise with MBilk and the DNF working group to ensure alignment between DNF and BNG developments (MBkr, MBilk)
9. Three projects to be identified for each landscape that can be worked up to form a portfolio of shovel ready projects (JL, HD). Landscape leads to provide the information required for each landscape together (HP, MBkr, SS, CL, MBbry/OB)
10. Comms workshop to be organised with partners, including press and media teams, to showcase county work, promote shared objectives and continue to promote actions required and being undertaken to double nature across the county (HD, RB, HC).
11. Nature Recovery Now to be costed up, and to include case studies to demonstrate how it's working on the ground. Approaches to potential funders to be co-ordinated (CL, HD, HC)
12. Meeting to get DwN Forum on a firm footing (RB, HD, RA).
13. Updates on CPICC, CPCA, Biosphere to be provided by email (RA, AC, RM).
14. With a view to future board meetings, working group updates to be provided in advance into a central word document by working group leads (HD & working group leads).

## Discussions

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

RA welcomed all to the meeting, including new trustee Cllr Hilary Cox-Condron, representing Cambridgeshire County Council, and advisor, Matthew Bullock.

### 2. Minutes of last meeting

**2.1 Minutes of last meeting** were approved as a true and accurate record with actions dealt with, in progress, or covered in the meeting agenda (see below). Hannah Philips kindly volunteered to be the trustee GDPR Champion. There were no other matters arising.

### 3. Presentations, discussions and strategic updates

**3.1** Matthew Bullock spoke to his paper on a Doubling Nature Fund. The paper is built around a model that would support those who want to be funders not borrowers. Key to that is a mechanism would support projects and also service the needs of funders including monitoring and providing reports. Backoffice support is important, and the paper speaks to an outsourcing arrangement that would provide this function initially. Core to the whole operation is a bank of suitably qualified independent project assessors.

A discussion followed covering the themes of BNG; lead gifts to a fund; previous workshops with businesses who were supportive of NC objectives; examples of corporates who wish to be strongly associated with a specific project; integration with existing initiatives e.g. Future Parks; relationship with central government departments including funding; the importance of sound structures and robust processes; longevity of projects supported; the role of LNPs in the eyes of central government; lobbying our MPs; clarity of messaging; the Greater Manchester Environment Fund (<https://gmenvfund.org>) as a model; the uniqueness of Cambridgeshire to UK economy given the knowledge-based industries based here, and in the region; amounts spent on grey infrastructure versus green infrastructure; bringing Local Authorities into arrangements; consideration of language inclusive of contractors and construction companies, in addition to developers; importance of identifying what the proposed projects are delivering against e.g. flood risk mitigation; biodiversity; air quality; climate adaptation, etc.

USEFUL REFERENCE: [Greater Manchester Environment Fund Briefing Paper](#)

**3.2 Food Farming and Countryside Commission** update – Dame Fiona Reynolds is convening a meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September, about which a proposal and invitation have been circulated.

### 3.3 Natural Cambridgeshire Work Programme

HD ran through the work programme which is driven by the work outlined above including securing NC's own sustainable funding. NPT are administering payroll and accounts, and given there's a need to bridge the gap between where NC would like to be and where it currently is, and the organisation is not currently eligible to lead for grants from established charitable trusts such as the Esmée Fairburn Foundation, it was suggested a call to partners be made to meet organisational running costs in the short term.

## 4. Working Group Reports

### 4.1 Measurement & Evaluation

MBkr spoke to the proposal on **Priority Habitat Data**, which has been put together with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Office, is consistent with the work being progressed for the OxCam Arc, and which will also provide a coherent and confident

baseline against which to measure doubling nature. The proposed work would update out of date data sets and set a new baseline. Initial discussions have taken place with the CPCA, and with the NC board's endorsement the next stage is to seek support from the new CPCA Environment lead and approach public sector partners to get the project going and set up.

A brief discussion followed about how the proposed work package might be funded, including by LNRS when they come through. It was thought unlikely that funding would be available through LNRSs as they aren't designed to update existing data sets. However, given Local Authorities have a duty to base Local Plans on up-to-date data, it was felt that a not unreasonable amount may be requested from each authority to enable the work, which would provide them with reassurance that Local Plans, when they are produced, are based upon accurate and reliable data.

Given that the current data sets are radically out of date, the proposal is about planning and development as much as it is about the DN agenda. When a baseline is established, merit will lie in ensuring that data gathered from landowners, including from LandApp, is compatible, and that updates are made little and often, rather than leaving it for long periods of time.

It was noted that data collected by DEFRA stewardship schemes about priority habitats and the priority habitat layers is often based on what was going to be created through a stewardship agreement, when the outcome of what may have been delivered may not have been the outcome intended when the scheme was designed.

The point was made about valuing the role that agri-environment schemes can and will play in monitoring, which needs to evolve into an annual monitoring programme, which might include randomised sampling and spot checks on the quality of habitat, etc.

MBkr also reported that further to a meeting with the LA planners, the **Biodiversity Net Gain paper** is being developed to focus on the delivery aspects rather than the policy aspects, and that has overlaps with the DNF, so will draw them together working with MBllk.

## 4.2 Priority Landscapes

JL reported that, in terms of proof of concept, the Cambridge Nature Network have received a grant of £250k from the Green Recovery Fund and the John Clare Countryside has received a similar amount. WLT are in the process of securing £8m for the Great Fen Project from Lottery funds and the Nene Park Trust has also received a significant lottery grant for a parks project. The Ouse Valley Partnership have a meeting tomorrow and the landowners for the West Cambridgeshire 100s are due to meet in the autumn.

RB reported that £330k had been secured for the Great Fen project from section 106 at Alconbury to establish a connection, and provides a good example of how having a shovel ready scheme can secure funding.

TB reported that work is progressing with CC and CW on drawing up the list of projects on which £80k awarded by the EA for water body improvements on The Granta will be spent. This will probably include re-profiling of the river bed in places to create healthier flows, riparian clearance to let light into the river in places and some track improvements on farm to reduce the run off into the water body, and the creation of some wetland scrapes for water storage and biodiversity. In addition, CW have been awarded £28,000 to model and measure water storage ideas, with the intention to assist with NFM and also aquifer recharge.

TB also reported that the creation of the Queens Green Canopy, is well under way with the Lord Lieutenancy and local authorities formulating a plan that will entail every Parish in the county being involved along with the local schools, to plant a set number of trees per Parish, by next summer. This has the potential for upto 50k trees to be planted in the next 12 months.

#### **4.3 Community Projects**

CL reported that the working group continues to meet regularly, with in principle buy-in and supportive words from some local authorities for what is loosely being called, 'Nature Recovery Now'. In addition, driven by the community, John Clare Countryside has secured funds to deliver things that wouldn't have been happened otherwise. A further nine Communities are on board as part of the New Life on the Old West project being delivered by CambsACRE. Communities around Huntingdon and St Ives are showing an interest in taking steps towards developing local nature recovery plans. EELGA meeting on Wednesday. In terms of fundraising, it was felt that who is targeted for what is really important, and list that RB is working on, which can help to target asks, can be shared in due course.

#### **4.4 Planning and Policy Forum**

Continues to meet. Mindful of links with CPCA environmental working group in due course.

#### **4.5 Partnership Forum**

CLlr Bridget Smith has agreed to summarise and has also been asked to chair. RA to speak with BS about chairing when he meets her next week.

#### **4.6 Developing with Nature Forum**

RB reported that the July forum had been cancelled because attendance was low due to holiday period. Members are being consulted about what that want to see going forwards, and with a view to forming a Steering Group to guide the programme, including having a session with MBkr, JT and others about what's coming down the policy timeline. Key things that developers are trying to get their heads around is just what's going on in terms of the environment, and getting information flows to them about where this information can be found would be helpful.

#### **4.7-9 CPICC, CPCA and Biosphere**

Updates on CPICC, CPCA, Biosphere to be provided by email.

### **5. Governance**

The newly formed NCs Finance and Operations committee now meet regularly between board meetings. Two items for the board are in relation to signing of MoU from Anglian Water and response to guide requests for partnerships.

### **6. AOB**

There was no further business.

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

Tuesday 5th October, 10-12:30pm

Tuesday 7th December, 10-12:30pm

### **8. Meeting closed 12:24pm**

Minutes prepared by Helen Dye