



Advisory Group: Terms of Reference - 14.02.2019

1. Background

The Wash and North Norfolk coast is celebrated for its remarkable natural heritage and has protected status under the EC Birds (1979) and Habitats (1992) Directives, and the UK Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). These marine reserves, collectively termed The Wash and North Norfolk coast European Marine Site, are part of a European wide family called the Natura 2000 series, protecting rare, endangered and endemic species and their habitats. The UK Regulations state that certain 'Relevant Authorities' have a statutory duty to ensure the protected features within these reserves stay in or are restored to 'favourable condition'. The Regulators Code (2014) provides legal representation for local livelihoods and lifestyles and states that Regulators must engage with those who are affected by management measures created to protected designated features, ensuring measures are proportionate and relevant to the local situation. These pieces of complementary legislation should in theory support and lead to the development of livelihoods and lifestyles that are conducive to the sustainable use of resources within the reserves of The Wash and North Norfolk coast.

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership (WNNMP) supports collaborative working between Relevant Authorities and the local community to ensure balanced protection for the remarkable nature and rich culture of this unique part of the great British coastline. The WNNMP funds three geographically distinct 'Advisory Groups' that act as a platform for collaborative working between Relevant Authorities, the local community and other interested parties, and ensures delivery of the Management Scheme for the site. The Advisory Groups and members are:

1. Boston Advisory Group: supporting collaborative working on the Lincolnshire coast between Gibraltar Point and Sutton Bridge.

Current community members			
Land owners	Farmers	Marsh graziers	Wildfowlers
Fishermen	Local business owners	Recreational sea-users	Interested local people
Relevant Authorities			
Natural England	Eastern IFCA*	MMO*	Environment Agency
Lincolnshire County Council	East Lindsey District Council	Boston Borough Council	South Holland District Council
Welland and Deepings IDB*	Witham Fourth IDB*	Black Sluice IDB*	Port of Boston
DIO*			
Other interested parties			
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	RSPB*	National Trust	National Farmers Union
Wildfowling clubs	Local Constabulary		

Table 1. Boston Advisory Group membership profile * IFCA – Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, MMO – Marine Management Organisation, IDB – Internal Drainage Board, DIO – Defence Infrastructure Organisation (RAF Holbeach), RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

2. King’s Lynn Advisory Group: supporting collaborative working on the Norfolk and Lincolnshire coast between Sutton Bridge and Hunstanton.

Current community members			
Wildfowlers	Recreational sea-users	Researchers	Fishermen
Interested local people	Ornithologists	Historian	Local business owners
Relevant Authorities			
Natural England	Eastern IFCA*	MMO*	Environment Agency
Norfolk County Council	Fenland District Council	King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council	King’s Lynn Conservancy Board
Water Management Alliance			
Other interested bodies			
Norfolk Wildlife Trust	RSPB*	Fenland Wildfowlers Association	King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Wildfowling Association
Norfolk Association of Parish Councils	Sutton Bridge Parish Council		

Table 2. King’s Lynn Advisory Group membership profile. * IFCA – Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, MMO – Marine Management Organisation, RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

3. Wells Advisory Group: supporting collaborative working on the Norfolk coast between Hunstanton and Weybourne.

Current community members			
Wildfowlers	Recreational sea-users	Anglers	Fishermen
Interested local people	Local business owners	Bait Diggers	Holders of Rights in Common
Relevant Authorities			
Natural England	Eastern IFCA*	MMO*	Environment Agency
Norfolk County Council	North Norfolk District Council	King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council	Wells Harbour Commissioners
Other interested bodies			
Norfolk Wildlife Trust	RSPB*	National Trust	Holkham Estate
Wells Town Council	Marine Conservation Society	Wildfowling clubs	Local Constabulary
Blakeney Harbour Association	Blakeney Channel Coastal Community Team		

Table 3. Wells Advisory Group membership profile. * IFCA – Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, MMO – Marine Management Organisation, RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

2. The aims of the three Advisory Groups are to:

1. Provide a platform for face-to-face dialogue with the local community for the two-way exchange of information to help meet requirements under the Regulators Code (2014)
2. Support Relevant Authorities in meeting their legal duties under the UK Habitats Regulations (2017) for the protection of designated features and monitoring of activities within The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site
3. Ensure land owners and relevant bodies are involved in discussions for new management measures
4. Provide a platform for wider public and transparent communication on how the natural and cultural heritage of The Wash and North Norfolk coast is being protected

3. Commitment

The three Advisory Groups of the WNNMP have a commitment from the Relevant Authorities, local communities and various interested bodies dating back to the formation of The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership in the Autumn of 1996 (then named The Wash and North Norfolk coast European Marine Site Management Scheme Project). The Advisory Groups meet three times a year with opportunity to form further focus groups to discuss specific issues on an *ad hoc* basis. All local community member time is given on a voluntary basis.

Reviews of the effectiveness of European Marine Site Management Schemes (Defra, 2012; WWF, 2017) noted The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership as an “exemplar” for the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing management scheme and extensive local community involvement in the management of the site.

A short summary of the roles of key participating organisations are given in the Appendices. Organisational role summaries include the WNNMP, Natural England, Eastern IFCA and the conservation bodies.

4. Roles and Ways-of-working

1. Provide a forum for face-to-face discussions at Advisory Group meetings
2. Act as a network linking people, issues, problems and solutions
3. Inform Relevant Authorities and coastal managers of any new and problematic activities that might affect site and feature condition
4. Provide public opinion and enable free participation in the development of site management
5. Provide input on new Plans and Projects and public consultations relevant to the site
6. Provide expert knowledge and experience to support Relevant Authorities and coastal managers
7. Group members will work together to ensure local issues and concerns are shared with Relevant Authorities and where possible solutions implemented
8. Supports the monitoring and management of non-statutory activities including recreational activities, traditional activities and the long-shore economy
9. Promote best practise and engage with people participating in non-statutory activities
10. Raise awareness and educate the public on the natural and cultural heritage of the region
11. Participate in Annual Management Plan development and identify gaps in management and research
12. Chairs attend WNNMP Full Management Board meetings to ensure full transparency and communication between all Relevant Authorities and the local community
13. Advice from the Advisory Groups to the Full Management Board should be reached though consensus at Advisory Group meetings or stated otherwise

5. Conduct of Business

1. The Chairman and Vice Chairman are the main point of contact for each Advisory Group in addition to the WNNMP Project Manager
2. Involvement in the Advisory Groups is on a voluntary basis
3. Meeting behaviour:
 - a. The Chairman's authority must be respected always
 - b. It is reasonable to expect cordial behaviour from all attendees always
 - c. All attendees have the right to be heard, understood and have the right to be treated with respect and dignity
 - d. Aggressive, abusive or offensive behaviour from attendees that is likely to cause any attendee to feel alarmed, distressed, abused or threatened is not acceptable and will result in exclusion from the meeting and possible expulsion from Advisory Group membership

6. Meetings and Correspondence

1. Three meetings are held formally for each Advisory Group every year at times and dates agreed by the groups at each meeting
2. Additional meetings/subgroups can be arranged by any member of each Advisory Group as required
3. The WNNMP, Natural England, Eastern IFCA and the coastal site National Nature Reserve site managers have fixed agenda presence with additional items/organisations included on an *ad hoc* basis
4. Any member may propose items for discussion pertinent to the site
5. A call for agenda items is sent to each Advisory Group distribution list four weeks prior to each meeting and upon the circulation of minutes after each meeting
6. Photographic imagery may be sent to the WNNMP Project Manager to support specific agenda items to be viewed in the meeting
7. All agendas are agreed by the Chairman prior to each meeting
8. Agendas and summaries of agenda items (summaries produced by Natural England, E-IFCA only and WNNMP) are sent out to the Advisory Groups two weeks before each meeting
9. Minutes are sent to groups within two weeks of the meeting, produced by the Secretary

10. Confirmation of attendance by Relevant Authorities must be within two weeks of each meeting
11. Advisory Group meeting correspondence are published in full on WNNMP website

7. Membership

1. Any person with an interest falling within the Advisory Group remit may attend and participate in meetings through agreement with the Chairman and WNNMP Project Manager
2. Full membership profiles are stated in Tables 1-3 in Section 1
3. Relevant Authorities are given membership to each Advisory Group that fall within their jurisdictional area as stated in Tables 1-3 in Section 1
4. Contacts lists are maintained by Advisory Group Secretaries and available to the Advisory Group Chairman and WNNMP Project Manager

8. Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary

Each Advisory Group Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary are agreed through election, annually,

- Boston Advisory Group
 - Chairman: Bryan Bowles – Farmer and cattle grazier
 - Vice-Chairman: Andrew Roughton –Farmer and NFU representative
 - Secretary: Rachel Marriott – Manager at National Trust Lincolnshire

- King’s Lynn Advisory Group
 - Chairman: Peter Welberry Smith – Wildfowler and local community member
 - Vice-Chairman: position open
 - Secretary: position open

- Wells Advisory Group
 - Chairman: Kevin Thatcher – Wildfowler and local community member
 - Vice-Chairman: position open
 - Secretary: Helen Owen – Wildfowler and local community member

9. Finance

- The Advisory Group Secretary is paid £50 per meeting to cover expenses
- Meeting room costs are met through the Partner Port Authorities including King's Lynn Conservancy Board and Wells Harbour Commissioners. Boston Advisory Group meetings are held at the River Witham sailing club in Boston through generous contribution.

10. Further information

- [Information Pack](#)
- [Website](#)

11. Acceptance and Amendments

This Terms of Reference is accepted through full WNNMP consultation dated 14.02.2019

12. Appendices: Organisational roles

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership is the organisation that manages and helps deliver Relevant Authority statutory duties to The Wash and North Norfolk EU network of marine protected areas through collaborative working between regulators, local communities, sea-users, businesses and conservation groups.

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership operates within four work areas;

1. Protecting Nature and Culture:

- Supporting Relevant Authorities in meeting their statutory duties to the site through the Annual Management Plan. The AMP synthesises Partner activities including, natural feature monitoring, human activity management, new plans and projects and complementary management plans
- Supports the three Advisory Groups to enable collaborative working and information exchange between coastal managers, local people and other interest bodies

2. Tourism and recreational pressure monitoring and management:

- Monitoring recreational pressures through the Incident Recording process in collaboration with local experts and coastal site managers
- Responding to incidents and investigating solutions to common disturbance issues
- Promoting best practise for recreation
- Engaging with the tourism industry via complementary initiatives

3. Communications and outreach

- The Project Manager provides a central communications reference point for contact and collaborative working with the WNNMP network
- Delivering public outreach initiatives such as 'Wild Seas Week' to celebrate the work of the WNNMP and the remarkable nature and rich culture of the coast

4. Research and education

- Engage in research projects to support the protection of natural and cultural heritage of the region
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with the WNNMP network

Natural England is the government's advisor on the natural environment.

Our purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development. In general, this includes:

- Promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity on land and sea;
- Conserving and enhancing the landscape and seascape;
- Securing the provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment;
- Promoting access to the countryside, open spaces and encouraging open air recreation; and
- Contributing in other ways to social and economic wellbeing through management of the natural environment.

More specifically, in relation to the local area, we work across Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk as part of a 'Southern North Sea' Network covering our marine and coastal remit. Our main work areas include:

- Designating protected sites;
- Through our agri-environment agreements we support environmentally friendly farming and habitat restoration;
- Writing conservation advice for protected sites;
- Providing advice to regulators such as the EIFCA, Local Authorities and MMO on activities carried out across the area (e.g. offshore windfarms; fisheries; aggregates);
- Monitoring - often in partnership - to contribute to understanding the condition of protected sites.
- Consenting/assenting/advising on activities within SSSIs with landowners, occupiers and other statutory bodies;
- Providing advice during marine pollution incidents to those with overall responsibility;
- Providing advice on coastal management, flood management and coastal change issues to both the Environment Agency and Local Authorities; and
- We also work alongside the NNR managers and with colleagues covering projects such as the England Coast Path.

We are only a small organisation with staff spread thinly throughout East Anglia. Hence, we commonly work through partner organisations and where possible engage with local communities to support this work. Part of this engagement is through The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership which forms an efficient way for all those authorities with an interest in the area to work together. The Advisory Groups aim to provide a forum for knowledge exchange between local communities and the statutory authorities.

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority's vision is to:

To lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (Eastern IFCA) is responsible for managing inshore fisheries in coastal waters (0-6 nautical miles) of Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk. We create and enforce our own byelaws and enforce national and European fisheries legislation. In The Wash, we have a distinct function as grantees of The Wash Fishery Order, through which we manage the public ("regulated") and private ("several") cockle and mussel fisheries.

Our work encompasses a wide range of activities to support the delivery of appropriate, evidence-based management and enforcement. Tasks include surveying stocks and setting quota, collecting shellfish and water samples for environmental monitoring, mapping seabed habitats, monitoring fishing activity, evaluating impacts of fishing on habitats and species, developing fit-for-purpose fisheries management, and enforcing fisheries regulations at sea and on shore. We have a particular focus on ensuring fisheries within marine protected areas (such as The Wash & North Norfolk Coast) are compatible with the conservation objectives for those sites. We also have a duty to ensure our own activities are in line with conservation objectives.

IFCAs also provide advice in relation to marine planning – for example by highlighting fisheries and conservation issues to the Marine Management Organisation in relation to its marine licensing function, or to the Planning Inspectorate for major offshore projects.

All this work is underpinned by our engagement with local stakeholders.

We value the views of local people, and the knowledge that they share with us about fisheries and the coastal environment. We believe that dialogue with stakeholders is essential to ensure we have the best possible understanding of activities and issues. This helps us deliver appropriate and supported fisheries management. In 2015-16, our Community Voice project, which we undertook with the Marine Conservation Society and The Wash & North Norfolk Marine Partnership, helped us identify values shared by stakeholders throughout our district; it served to reinforce existing relationships and develop new ones, and has shaped the way we communicate in our day-to-day activities.

Eastern IFCA (and its predecessor, Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee) has valued involvement with the three Advisory Groups for The Wash & North Norfolk Coast since their inception. The Advisory Groups enable a two-way sharing of information, discussion of issues or concerns, and provision of clarity over the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations involved in coastal management.

The RSPB manages more than 170 nature reserves around the UK, with four around The Wash and North Norfolk coast. We research causes for wildlife declines, run education programmes and advise and lobby government for stronger wildlife protection. We also work internationally, through Birdlife International, to strengthen protection for birds and other wildlife abroad.

The four nature reserves we manage in The Wash and North Norfolk at Freiston Shore and Frampton Marsh, near Boston in Lincolnshire, Snettisham, West Norfolk and Titchwell Marsh in North Norfolk have a variety of important wetland habitats, from extensive mudflats and saltmarshes, to saline and freshwater lagoons with islands for nesting birds and large areas of wet grassland and reedbed. The suite of habitats at the four reserves makes them among the best places to see wetland bird spectacles in the country. This makes them popular with visitors and we receive over 170,000 visits to the reserves a year.

Management of the nature reserves is via a comprehensive management plan process with due consideration of the various national and international conservation designations. Grazing livestock, provided by local graziers, are present on most saltmarsh areas, all wet grasslands and some other habitats. The livestock help keep the swards in good condition for breeding and wintering birds, botanical, invertebrate and other interests. Reedbed is managed by selected removal of scrub, to prevent the succession of this habitat into woodland and by rotational cutting of reed areas and opening channels to improve ecological diversity. Mowing with tractors on the wet grassland habitats is an important activity in autumn when islands are cleared of vegetation in preparation for the following spring. Raising and lowering water levels is also an important management tool on the terrestrial habitats as this helps to control vegetation and provides the right habitats each season.

Visitor engagement and management is face-to-face, via events programmes, self-guided activities, on-site interpretation and social and traditional media. Facilities maintenance of visitor trails, two visitor centres, including a café/shop and self-service catering offer, nine bird hides, five car parks and toilets ensures the best quality visitor experience we can provide.

Local community engagement is vital to the success of our nature reserves and wider work in The Wash and North Norfolk. In addition to paid staff we have over 100 local volunteers who help with a myriad of work, including practical habitat management, visitor facility maintenance, species research and face-to-face visitor engagement. To be successful across The Wash and North Norfolk coast we need to inspire people about the tremendously important wildlife the area holds and to inform people of what they can do to help. The role the Advisory Groups is very important to us because it enables us to speak with other organisations and groups with an interest in the management of our special coastline. The Advisory Groups help us agree collective and collaborative actions that could make a difference on mutually important subjects such as recreational access, fisheries management, development casework and research priorities. Working together makes it more likely we will identify the key priorities and deliver the best outcomes.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust manages two nature reserves on the North Norfolk coast; Holme Dunes National Nature Reserve and Cley and Salthouse Marshes.

Cley Marshes is Norfolk Wildlife Trust's oldest and best-known nature reserve. The shingle beach and saline lagoons, along with the grazing marsh and reedbed support large numbers of wintering and migrating wildfowl and waders, as well as bittern, marsh harrier and bearded tit. Salthouse Marshes is an area of small pools and extensive grazing marsh offering close views of waders and wildfowl. In the winter snow buntings usually take up residence and, in some years, rarer lapland buntings and shore larks also join them. Barn owls can regularly be seen hunting over the marshes, as well as marsh harriers.

As well as being a popular site for tourists, Cley and Salthouse Marshes are well used by locals for bird watching and walking. Beach fishing is also a popular recreational activity for tourists and the local population. The visitor centre and reserve are used regularly for education, mostly during the spring and summer and mostly with children and young people. There is provision at Cley for visitors with physical disabilities. The North Norfolk Coast long distance footpath runs along the shingle bank.

Cley and Salthouse Marshes are protected from saline inundation by the shingle beach and the West Bank. The North Norfolk Shoreline Management Plan advocates that wherever possible the North Norfolk Coast should be managed to encourage coastal processes to act naturally and the entire frontage of the Cley and Salthouse reserve is now functioning naturally.

Holme Dunes NNR is located at Norfolk's northwest corner, where The Wash meets the North Sea and is important for migrating birds. It also holds a variety of important habitats which support numerous other wildlife species including natterjack toads, butterflies and dragonflies, as well as many interesting plants. The North Norfolk Coast long distance footpath runs through the reserve.

Habitats present include intertidal sands and muds, saltmarshes, shingle banks and sand dunes. There are extensive areas of brackish lagoons, freshwater pools, reedbeds and grazing marshes. It is a key site for priority breeding shorebirds such as little terns, ringed plovers and oystercatchers, which are sensitive to disturbance.

Holme is popular with visitors, from local people walking to the site, birdwatchers travelling from around the country during bird migration times and holiday makers travelling to the site for the beach and walking. NWT developed a café in the visitor centre in 2014, and two eco-toilets have also been constructed for the use of café customers. The site is used on an informal basis by school groups, numbering around 12 per annum. Most are guided by NWT education staff.

NWT finds the information sharing aspect of the Advisory Groups very useful and is happy to engage with initiatives such as the disturbance monitoring work of the WNNMP.

Holkham National Nature Reserve covers a significant section of the North Norfolk Coast from Burnham Norton in the west to Blakeney in the east. The NNR is managed under a partnership arrangement between Natural England and Holkham Estate, with NE managing land below Mean High Water under agreement with Crown Estates. There is an informal arrangement with Natural England for Holkham NNR staff to undertake certain roles on the foreshore namely responding to incidents and maintenance works.

In 2017 Holkham achieved Approved Body Status where the estate committed to working to the principles of NNR management, including;

- Management planning;
- Exemplary management;
- Contributing to safeguarding and restoring ecosystems beyond the site boundaries;
- Providing opportunities for public enjoyment and quiet recreation;
- Undertaking, enabling and communicating research;
- Involving communities and stakeholders;
- Collaboration and networking with other organisations; and
- Demonstrating exemplary conservation management to others.

The NNR team consists of the General Conservation Manager and three full time wardens with assistance from volunteers. Monitoring work accounts for a significant amount of staff time, especially during the spring and summer with much of this work feeding into national surveys e.g. British Trust of Ornithology and Butterfly Conservation. There are also the long-standing monitoring commitments that contribute to data sets that have been on-going for over 25 years. Practical work and people management, including engagement, accounts for the rest of staff time. Much of practical work occurs on the dunes, pinewoods and grazing marsh.

Holkham NNR is a very popular visitor destination throughout the year and minimising disturbance and damage to sensitive feature is an on-going challenge.

Constructive engagement with the local community through the Advisory Groups is important as it is the only opportunity for such a diverse group to meet, especially to discuss over lapping land-based issues.