

# HOLME-NEXT-THE-SEA

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2016-2036

An Ecosystem Services Perspective



Working Document

Prepared in consultation with Natural England

January 2018 (updated April 2018, May 2018)

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**Acknowledgement:** *The Neighbourhood Plan Team would like to thank Natural England for their support and encouragement in developing the ecosystem services approach to the Neighbourhood Plan. Thanks in particular go to Debbie Gosman, Lead Adviser, Landscape and Natural Capital Team for North Norfolk for the idea of producing this paper and her particular enthusiasm and hard work in bringing together the various sources of information that it contains.*

# SECTION A: INTRODUCTION

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## BACKGROUND

### Purpose of report

This document is a working paper, originally put together by Natural England's Landscape and Natural Capital Team for North Norfolk in advance of a site visit to Holme-next-the-Sea. The visit was made at the suggestion of Natural England following earlier discussions with the Neighbourhood Plan Team organised in connection with the NDP consultation process.

The purpose of the visit was to view at first hand some of the issues and opportunities facing the Neighbourhood Plan and to provide a better understanding and context for the Ecosystems Services and Natural Capital approach adopted as the basis for Neighbourhood Plan policies. Two Natural England representatives attended the visit and subsequent meeting, together with a representative of the Norfolk Coast Partnership and four members of the Neighbourhood Plan Team. The itinerary for the visit, along with the notes taken during the course of the day can be found in Section D of this document.

This paper should be viewed very much as part of the consultation process. It's main purpose is to inform the approach taken in the Neighbourhood Plan and to provide a direct link into the responsibilities and relevant work carried out by Natural England, notably that on the National Character Areas. At the same time it draws on feedback from the community, highlighting in particular their views and concerns about their local environment. The paper formed a basis for lively and productive discussion with Natural England's team. It has generated a large number of ideas – some of which have contributed to the NDP, some of which will need to await the first review of the Neighbourhood Plan or the outcome of further research / monitoring – and some of which might be taken forward as actions to be pursued by the Parish Council. Prior to the site visit, the ecosystems and natural capital approach was little more than an idea – the “perspective” advanced in this paper provided the confidence to take the idea further and together with the relevant National Character Area Profiles provided a basis for developing key NDP policy.

Holme-next-the-Sea is covered by two of Natural England's National Character Areas. In this document, the links to Natural England's work have been made specifically with reference to National Character Area 77 (NCA 77 - North Norfolk Coast). Detail aside however, the basic principles also apply to National Character Area 76 (NCA 76 – North West Norfolk).

### Policy relevance / drivers

The Parish economy depends very heavily on ecosystem services and the quality of the environment. This is explained in the report on The Parish Economy (NDP Evidence Base Report, January 2018).

Also, NPPF 109 requires that “The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils;
- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity
- where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”

## **ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES AND NATURAL CAPITAL**

### **What are Ecosystems & why should the Neighbourhood Plan worry about them?**

An ecosystem includes all living things in a given area (plants, animals and organisms), interacting with one another and with their environment (earth, sea, sun, soil, atmosphere and climate). Ecosystems underpin the health of our entire earth system.

Within any ecosystem every organism has a particular niche and role to play. If any part of the ecosystem is damaged or removed, the health of the system and the benefits that it provides will suffer. This includes the benefits that our community depends upon for its existence.

A good look around Holme-next-the-Sea reveals some of the ecosystems damage that is taking place. We want to address this situation through the Neighbourhood Plan so that future generations can continue to benefit from living things in Holme-next-the-Sea in the way that our generation and our ancestors have done.

### **What are Ecosystem Services?**

Ecosystem services are the benefits that ecosystems contribute to making human life both possible and worth living.

Examples of ecosystem services include products such as food and water, regulation of floods and soil erosion. They also include intangible benefits that affect our welfare such as recreational and spiritual benefits derived from natural areas.

### **Why are Ecosystem Services relevant to our Plan?**

The outstanding natural and physical environment of Holme means that our Parish has enormous potential to deliver ecosystem services. Indeed these services drive the whole economy of the Parish – supporting agriculture, special habitats and wildlife as well as attracting visitors and supporting a diverse range of tourism and business activities.

All of this generates income for the regional economy and for this reason ecosystem services are a fundamental consideration for the Neighbourhood Plan and this is recognised through our most basic plan policies.

### **What is Holme's Natural Capital?**

The term "Natural Capital" refers to the Parish's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things.

It is from this natural capital that we derive the ecosystem services which make our lives possible.

## **Information sources**

The information presented in this paper is based on a number of sources:

- The NDP Questionnaire Survey
- Consultation feedback documents posted on the NDP website
- NDP Environmental Designations Report
- National Character Area 77 North Norfolk Coast and 76 North West Norfolk (Natural England)
- Section 2 - Ecosystem Services in Holme – Based on NCA 77  
<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5490707397607424>

## Structure and presentation of report

The paper is divided into four main sections:

- A Introduction
- B Views of the community
- C Ecosystem services in Holme
- D Site visit and meeting notes

Text has been coloured according to the following convention:

### Key

- **Black** Text generated by Natural England / drawn from NCA 77 (see <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5490707397607424>)
- **Grey** Text generated by the NDP Team or extracted from Neighbourhood Plan reports and consultation documents (see <http://www.holme-next-the-sea-plan.co.uk>)
- **Green** Areas covered by Natural England's responsibilities
- **Purple** Areas where further information is required
- **Red** Highlights recreational disturbance issues

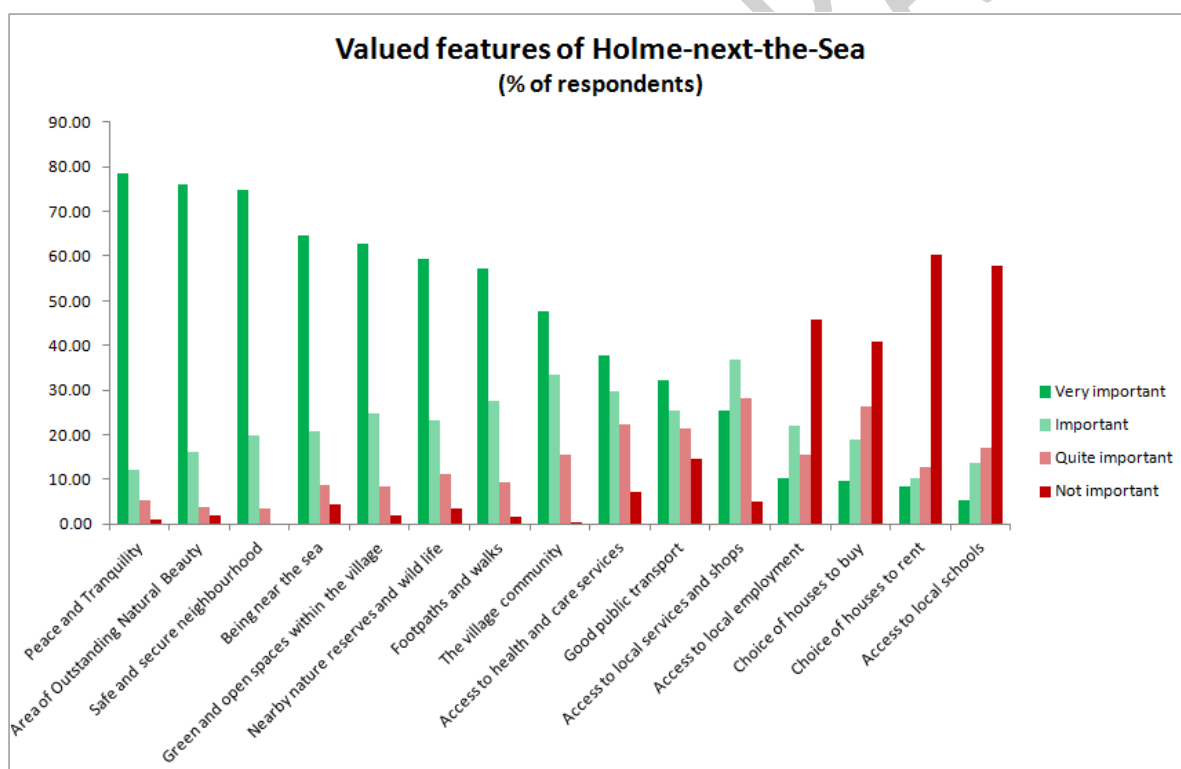
# SECTION B: Views of the Community

## CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

### Results of the Holme-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan Survey

The importance of the natural and cultural environment is nowhere more evident than in the comments received from those who participated in the survey and explained the value they attach to the wonderful views across the local landscape.

Along with its high quality agricultural land, the environment is Holme’s single biggest asset and the concern that our environmental capital will be damaged by inappropriate development in the future is widely shared – for not only does the natural environment underpin our local economy, a common love and respect for habitats, wildlife, our nature reserves and all things green explains the unusual degree of social cohesion found in this small community.



## SWOT ANALYSIS

### About the SWOT

The SWOT analysis was undertaken as part of the January 2017 Consultation Event held in the Village Hall. The last stand at the exhibition offered a poster-sized sheet of paper pre-formatted to allow consultees to record their own ideas about the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats characterising Holme today.

The information was summarised and posted on the internet following the consultation and subsequently taken back to the consultation on policies in 2018 so that individuals could see how their own comments had influenced the development of draft policies.

### **Strengths to Build on**

- Outstanding landscape and natural environment - AONB
- Special planning designations
- Wonderful wildlife
- Small but strong and active resident community - could help with educating visitors and residents
- Common values and shared interests
- Age structure of population conducive to community involvement
- Traditional buildings and rich history
- Green residential environment
- The VIN – to communicate even more

### **Weaknesses to Overcome**

- Second homeowners outnumber residents
- Too few younger residents
- Too many holiday homes
- Unbalanced housing stock
- Over-dependence on car not sustainable - would alternatives be attractive – consider barriers and incentives/ car share promoting cycling etc
- Not enough footpaths or cycleways – could new ones be considered?
- No car parking for Village Hall or Church- could this alleviate problems elsewhere?
- Poor access to community facilities and Parish shopping
- Over-dependence on retail employment
- Poor broadband / IT communications

### **Opportunities to Grasp**

- Village Hall available for more community activities
- Improve green infrastructure / biodiversity network
- Improve footpath network/pedestrian safety – with landowner help – what ideas are being suggested?
- PC owns land in village & could purchase more for principal homes
- PC could purchase land for footpaths / negotiate permissive routes
- Many existing houses suitable for home-based working
- Rich heritage to protect / exploit
- Good location for a combined heritage / community centre
- Participate in Neighbourhood Plan process!

## Threats to be addressed

- Falling resident population and increase in holiday homes
- Replacement dwellings – loss of traditional village homes
- Poor development control
- Impact of development and visitors on protected habitats and species – a key issue to discuss
- Impact of dogs on wildlife – current work being undertaken – EMS/NCP/NE
- Developer tactics / “planning blight”?
- Too many caravans and mobile homes
- Creation of “Shopping Mall” at Drove Orchards
- Traffic volumes increasing (indirect development impact) – impact and how this can be monitored
- Road safety - Speeding cars, parking, lack of footpaths / safe pedestrian routes – impact and how this issue can be addressed – learn from Horsey Seals?
- Cars parking everywhere – especially in tourist season – see above
- Water pollution
- Flooding
- Loss of agricultural land - Protect agricultural and traditional grazing land

## CONCERNS

### Feedback from the community

- Traffic growth and road safety – especially A149 and Broadwater Road – **discussions with NCP, NCC**
- No pavements – as above as part of a wider transport visitor management strategy?
- A149 is a barrier to social interaction / splits the village
- Flooding from the Sea / the River Hun
- Non-adherence to planning conditions / enforcement
- Too many expensive new houses
- Too many second homes and too many empty homes
- Occupancy conditions on new homes
- Residential spaces disguised as garages / outbuildings
- Growth needed to sustain the village
- Too many caravans and too many holiday homes = too many empty spaces
- Speculative development / investment = empty spaces
- Short term gain = long term pain (variety of comments)
- The Parish Council isn't up to the job of the Neighbourhood Plan
- The Borough Council doesn't listen to local views
- Poor broadband and mobile communications are hindering home-based working
- **Lack of control over biodiversity impacts in local planning policy**
- Dark skies initiative to mitigate against light pollution
- Buffer zones to be demarcated and controlled
- Improvements to The Hun and associated habitats



- Green Corridors
- **Exploit the environment through ecosystem services**
- Promote small-scale self-build opportunities
- Better car parking for beach visitors – **to be discussed as part of overall visitor management plan**
- A day pass for those who don't use public transport / slow modes (traffic-free zone?) – **see above**
- Traffic calming on Beach Road – **see above**
- Provide a footpath to Drove Orchards – **what are the barriers?**
- Provide a footpath / cycleway along the main road to Old Hunstanton – **is a transport audit needed? (previous projects undertaken: Norfolk coast road foot and cycle links project (2006-2008) with NCC and Norfolk Coast Partnership, with detailed work on missing foot links in villages, smaller missing foot links outwith villages, and a potential Cromer-Sheringham cycleway (linked to N Norfolk Active Travel Project), some of which have gone to feasibility study and (to date) one footway is about to be installed (in Titchwell).**
- **Installation of new footway along verge between Thornham and Titchwell by NCC.**
- Access to the pub for wheelchair users
- Provide units for hire – tea rooms, crafts, art gallery, maps etc to help tourists / walkers

# SECTION C: Ecosystem services in Holme

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## FOOD PROVISION

### Analysis

There is a small area of pasture and arable on the coastal plain where the land has been artificially drained. Inundation from the sea as a result of sea level rise and failure of the drainage network puts these arable and grazing areas at risk. The most valuable arable areas are found between Old Hunstanton Golf Course to Thornham.

There is likely to be a big increase for agriculture water is taken from groundwater or rivers during the summer which will affect river flows and other water supplies. Future changes in water quality and sediment movement and supply may threaten fish and shellfish stocks as a result of sea level rise.

### Assets

Grazing marsh – how much- how is it managed?

Tidal waters supporting lobster and crab. Intertidal habitats supporting shellfish populations?

Arable crops grown?

Land holdings in HLS, ELS & CSS – any arable reversion (NE information)

Common rights – wildfowling & samphire or game shooting?

### Opportunities

Opportunities from Holme Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) - suggestions included *allotments and a community garden*.

Drove Orchards – creates jobs and attracts visitors

Work in partnership with local farmers and food producers to promote connections between produce and place to increase value and market recognition if high quality local produce – *make this available to the local population and visitors?* (see below)

A *small village shop* is at the top of the parish wish-list. In fact the Parish is already home to a wide range of shopping facilities at Drove Orchards. This is however not easily accessible / driving distance from the main settlement areas of Holme and is widely believed to be in neighbouring Thornham (which is much closer and linked by a permissive footpath). The village shop in Holme closed down many years ago due to lack of support (when the resident population was more than 30% larger than at present) but given the apparent strength of support in the survey it is a possibility to be explored.

Work with wildfowling to ensure a good ecological balance is maintained, protecting continued local specialist food products and ecological integrity. *Current contact with them?*

*Manage land sustainably to improve the ecological carrying capacity of rare freshwater flooded grazing marsh habitat, and allow grazing to take place – is it currently being grazed by beef cattle and sheep?*

## TIMBER PROVISION

Scrub which is encroaching on sand dunes at Holme can be considered a source of local wood fuel.

The footpaths and many trees and hedgerows throughout the village, form part of Holme's characteristic green landscape.

## **WATER AVAILABILITY**

### **Analysis**

Rainfall is low with approximately 570 mm falling along the coastal strip and 670 mm falling on higher ground, per year. Principal surface water resources include the catchments of the chalk river of the Hun which is heavily influenced by farming practices in the adjoining NCAs from abstraction and water treatment. – Report on the pollution of the Hun is relevant here

Consumption of water from households in unmetered properties is high in the area.

All freshwater outlets are used as important roost sites for migratory birds. The fresh water marsh and freshwater wet grassland attract numerous wintering and breeding wildfowl and waders. Water abstraction, already close to what is considered to be sustainable, will be a growing problem, causing challenges for wetland habitats.

Summer drought could result in the drying out of valuable wetland habitats. Water will need to be conserved and used more efficiently, to enable the protection and restoration of wetlands and river habitats. There is increasing demands for water abstraction for public water supply for new development. Seasonal and temporary increases in the local population will impact upon water resources.

**Challenges - Second homeowners outnumber residents. There are too many holiday homes caravans and mobile homes – are these properties unmetered and if they are can they be persuaded to fit meters/ consider water conservation?**

### **Opportunities**

Promote more efficient use of natural water sources, such as through rain water harvesting, to support business and residential use. Promote conservation of water resources by raising awareness of the issues associated with climate change and drying out of habitats, and household consumption – **for residents and holiday makers**

## **GENETIC DIVERSITY**

### **Analysis**

Norfolk Royal Russet apples originate from Burnham Over Staithe. 12 hectares of orchard in Holme & Thornham contain 150 varieties of apples;100 come from East Anglia. Pears and soft fruit are also grown. The genetic resources contained within traditional orchards are under threat, but maintained where orchard restoration and management initiatives are in place.

### **Opportunities**

Raise awareness of the need to retain the generic resource of these plants for wildlife and people. Encourage people together plants wisely and to be aware of wildlife considerations – **The creation of "Shopping Mall" at Drove Orchards could provide educational opportunities and provide incentives to restore and manage the orchard correctly?**

## **CLIMATE REGULATION**

The shallow water ecosystems of the coast are important sites for carbon storage. The geomorphic and ecological stability is driven by interactions between the flow of water, vegetation growth and sediment

transport. The change from arable land management to grasslands and from drained marsh to wet marsh and saltings over recent years has increased carbon storage.

The shallow waters off the NCA contain beds of seagrass which store 10 times as much carbon as a temperate forest. Work with the farming community on the agricultural land of the coastal plain to establish sustainable grazing regimes to allow for enhanced carbon storage in the form of increased organic matters in soils.

Align sea defences to maximise the creation of marsh and thus carbon storage capacity and flood management benefits where habitats buffer flood walls. Rising sea-levels and coastal squeeze will create challenges around the need to maintain intertidal and coastal habitats in situ (such as dune systems) and the need to allow the natural dynamic movement of coastlines.

Coastal grazing marshes, reedbeds and saline lagoons, in their current locations, will in the long term be transient due to inundation of sea water during storm tides and flooding, and seepage through shingle ridges and dune systems. This will ultimately cause their transformation into salt marsh or other intertidal habitat.

Salt marsh sequesters higher levels of carbon and emits lower levels of methane and can be 'more' stable in the long term.

#### **Opportunities**

Continue to liaise with key local landowners to encourage an understanding of carbon storage and sequestration – is this something that has been discussed already?

## **REGULATING WATER QUALITY**

#### **Analysis**

The ground water chemical status on the NCA is generally poor. The ecological potential status of all the rivers in the NCA is 'moderate'. Water dependant Special Areas of Conservation on land are in favourable condition whereas the marine areas are in unfavourable condition.

The North Norfolk Rivers is a priority catchment under the England Catchment Sensitive Farming Delivery Initiative (ECFDI). The rare and ecologically valuable chalk rivers of the Norfolk coast have been subject to increasing pressures with poor water quality and quantity resulting in degradation of habitats and ecology, siltation, invasion from non-native species and reduction in fish stocks.

There is a risk from pollution from agricultural activities can easily enter the marine habitats either through groundwater absorption or more directly via run-off into rivers.

Pollution has been discovered in the River Hun due to sewage and there are no fish – brown trout present currently. It has also been found to be full of nitrates after work was carried out by the Norfolk Rivers Trust – see report for full details. How does this link to catchment sensitive farming and SSSI condition of marine lagoons?

There is growing evidence that poor air and water quality is having a negative impact on the environment. – air pollution is not included as an ecosystem service in the NCA – it would be helpful if this was included

#### **Opportunities**

Investigate innovative ways to make arable farming on the coastal strip more sustainable and reduce pollution of water courses, by for example using seaweed as a source of fertiliser, where appropriate.

Monitor and review changes in water quality and sediment movement to maintain fish production and to ensure management changes can be made if necessary. Work with farmers and landowners to reduce diffuse pollution from land management.



### **Nitrogen vulnerable zones**

With the exception of the immediate coastal zone all of the Parish of Holme next the Sea is classed as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone. This is because the ground water beneath the parish is considered to be vulnerable to Nitrate pollution. In parts it may be abstracted for drinking water and it also feeds freshwater springs and the Hun which have the capacity to pollute the environmentally sensitive protected sites along the North Norfolk Coast.

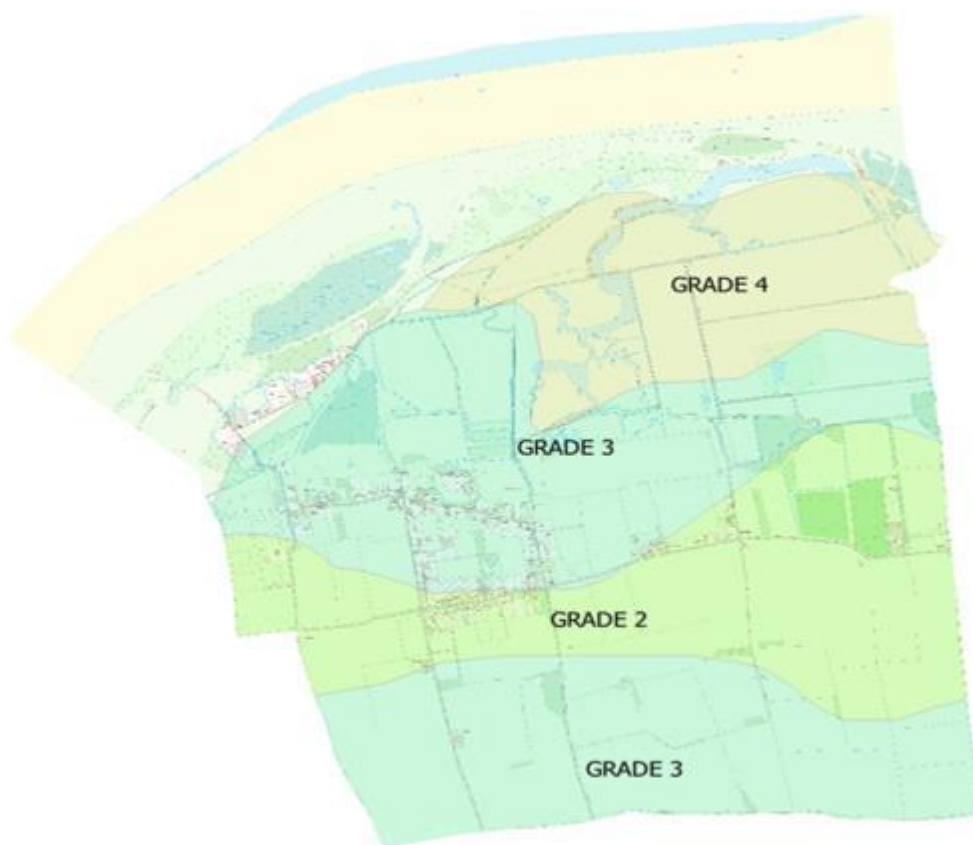
**Other solutions to this issue as a result of the Hun River report could be included – better liaison between NE &EA is also needed.**

## REGULATING WATER FLOW

The River Burn and Hun can suffer from low flows of water during the summer months. Land which is susceptible to flooding from the sea due to sea level rise includes semi-natural habitats, golf courses and grade 4 agricultural land. Creeks are also likely to silt up making navigable access (via dredging) impossible and unsustainable.

Low flows resulting from abstraction for public water supply and irrigation have been identified as a cause for concern for the Burn and the Hun increasing infiltration and slowing the flow of water - *Is this an issue that could be discussed with landowners to find solutions?*

## REGULATING SOIL QUALITY



These soils are increasingly under threat of loss from sea level rise where there is a combination of high silt and fine sand content this can result in compaction or soil capping. The grazing marsh which was arable land in 1997 has been supported by agri environmental schemes enabling improved soil quality by encouraging deeper root penetration, increased organic matter and improved soil flora and fauna. There is a risk of potential degradation of soil quality through intrusion from the sea.

Where appropriate support an increase in the proportion of wetland habitat with conversion from arable farmland to pasture and grazing marsh so that the coastal marshes gradually become more natural, resulting in improved soil quality – are there any other solutions that could be included?

## REGULATING SOIL EROSION

The sand dunes and sandy soils are mobile; in some respects it is in their very nature to move. Wetter clay and loamy soils, particularly those with long-standing vegetative cover, such as grazing marsh are less prone to erosion. Sandy and lime-rich soils over chalk are prone to water erosion if left exposed.

The lightest soils comprise over 18 per cent of soils and these are more vulnerable to both wind and water erosion. During the Second World War, the majority of dune systems were used for the construction of defensive installations, for military training or both. The resultant widespread erosion had a severe effect on dune vegetation which has since been reversed by protective measures and natural recovery. These impacts are still noticeable at Holme.

### Opportunities

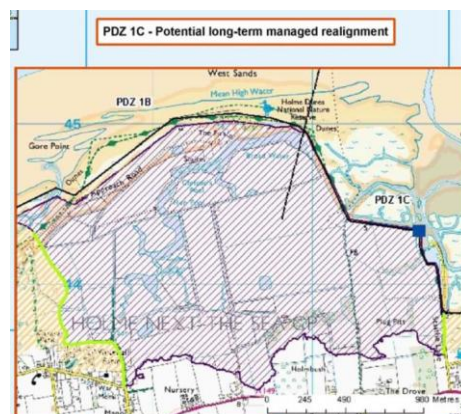
Identify and provide appropriate management of visitors and visitor guidance on dune systems to prevent damaging and erosive trampling and excessive recreational use of old static dunes.- what advice do NWT currently give to visitors? In certain areas where there is high footfall the distinctive dune system and salt marsh, are both fragile habitats and can suffer accelerated erosion by trampling and recreational pressure.- what evidence is there of any damage? What is the best practice evidence from NE? <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5164654430519296?category=4891006631149568>

## POLLINATION

Lowland meadows and flood plain grazing marsh support a variety of nectar sources for pollinating insects. Management for improving nutrients and biodiversity is likely to increase sward diversity. The orchards in Holme are an important source of nectar for pollinating insects

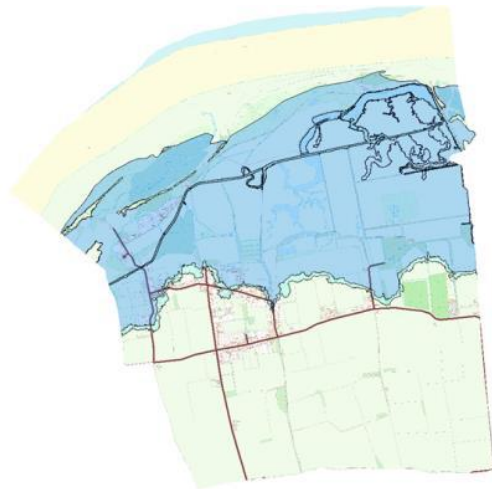
## REGULATING COASTAL EROSION AND FLOODING

Without any further active intervention the built sea defences will stop functioning within 20 years, but maintaining them in their current position will become unsustainable threatening coastal settlements, archaeology and buildings and potential damage to characteristic and designated coastal habitats. Realignment could lead to the creation of other valuable and characteristic habitats. Maintain navigation channels to ensure the long term future of settlements and tourism income on the coast as a whole.



40% of the Parish is in Environment Agency Flood Zone 3

Flood Zone 3 (dark blue on the map below) represents areas where there is a high risk from flooding in any year – 1 chance in 100 from rivers or 1 chance in 200 from the sea – *assuming that there were no flood defences*. Similarly flood zone 2 (light blue fringes around zone 3 on the map) shows areas that would be affected by an extreme flood event with a 1 in 1000 chance of happening in any year. A significant part of Holme next the Sea is in Flood Zone 3 and is thus at significant risk of flooding. In addition to affecting property, access for emergency services may also be an issue in the event of serious flooding. To date, there is no formal Emergency Plan for Holme.



Without any further active intervention the built sea defences will stop functioning within 20 years, but maintaining them in their current position will become unsustainable threatening coastal settlements, archaeology and buildings and potential damage to characteristic and designated coastal habitats. Projected rises in sea level will have significant impacts by accelerating the natural erosion of coastal and intertidal habitats, and changing the pace and nature of natural geomorphological processes. Realignment could lead to the creation of other valuable and characteristic habitats. Accretion is occurring at Old Hunstanton dunes.

## A SENSE OF PLACE/INSPIRATION

The dual influences of the sea and land combine to create a truly distinct and inspirational place. A wild, often tranquil and beautifully remote coastal landscape with great variety and texture but which is under increasing pressure. **The NCA is a popular visitor destination both for local residents and with people prepared to travel long distances for example, holiday makers and for rare sightings of birds.**

**Traffic and congestion during peak tourism periods is one of the key complaints of locals and visitors alike.** Traffic and parked cars from visitors is one of the key issues raised by the HNP survey. Use of public transport/cycling is also low.

Development of further car parking areas at key coastal sites poses significant threats to the maintenance of the highly sensitive character of this landscape.



There are settlements along the coast which are very sensitive and any additional development beyond their current boundaries could begin to severely erode their character and the character of the landscape. Over development and 'gentrification' of the few isolated farm dwellings may have a detrimental effect on the NCA character.

Conserve the strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity and consider whether any further development of visitor infrastructure will detract from landscape character, causing further damage to fragile habitats which are already at risk from visitor pressure. Use local materials characteristic of the area in new development, and make reference to local vernacular.

Work in partnership with tourism and recreational providers and users to find innovative ways to manage visitor pressure and congestion so it does not detract from its sense of place and landscape character

People are drawn to the area for recreational activities, the quality of light and the remote, wild and untamed nature of the landscape, and local traditions of fishing, wildfowling and samphire picking. These are now important locations for tourism businesses, second homes and retirement homes.

85% of people are concerned about inappropriate future development, particularly possible damage to the environment, the character of the village, traffic growth and road safety.

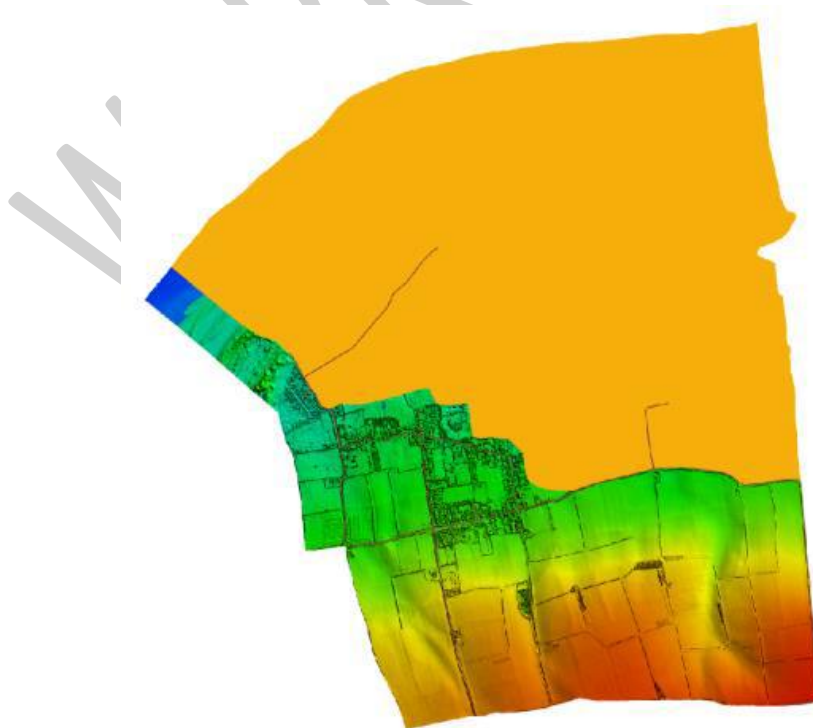
More than 70% of respondents are not concerned about the supply of new houses. Large, tall and expensive homes, along with second homes that stand empty for long periods of time, are particularly unpopular and attract a lot of criticism.

The need for smaller and more affordable market homes suitable for younger families and down-sizers is however recognised and 85% of respondents see at least some need for semi-detached homes. The majority think there are not enough younger people in Holme.

Most people favour traditionally designed houses constructed with local building materials.

100% of the parish is in the NCP AONB

60% of the parish is Heritage coast



Measured by any standards the Parish of Holme next the Sea has an exceptional landscape, unusually high levels of biodiversity and remarkable wildlife. Its location, on the north east corner of the Wash facing the continent, makes it a key landfall site for migrating birds. The result is an environment of international significance. Each year the Norfolk Ornithologists Association (NOA) Annual Report provides counts of the astonishing range and numbers of migrant and native species seen at Holme.

Not surprisingly, this environment is heavily protected and within the Parish there is an exceptionally large number of environmental designations. With some 42% of the Parish protected under International, EU and National law it is critical that the Neighbourhood Plan takes account of this and works in harmony with the objectives of the legislation. This point is reinforced by the importance that the Parish attaches to the environment.

Many of the designated areas overlap and have a degree of similarity in their objectives and this leads to some complexity in understanding and satisfying the demands of each (especially for developers). So a further aim is to understand the common ground between them and to try and use this as a simplified, common basis for approaching the environment in the Plan.

Whilst other settlements along the North Norfolk Coast also have close proximity to protected/designated sites, Holme is relatively unusual because the form of the settlement is such that its northern extremity (Broadwater Road) is almost surrounded by European protected sites and the northern boundary of properties along the axis following Westgate and Kirkgate shares boundaries with them

## SENSE OF HISTORY

There is a long history of settlement. The bronze-age relict 'Seahenge' which is of international importance was discovered at Holme-next the- Sea on Holocene peat beds in 1999 as dunes eroded. It is believed to be a ceremonial structure once situated in woodland. Saxon fish traps of great significance have also been found in Holme.

There has been and will continue to be a loss of heritage assets as a result of coastal erosion. **The Holocene peat at Holme is vulnerable as it is not protected from recreational access although it has been recommended that it should gain protection by becoming a marine conservation zone.** The Norfolk Archaeological Survey of the Norfolk coast suggests that structures associated with maritime industries have been 'much neglected and poorly studied and there are sites which require further study, due to decline in maritime connections and expansion of tourism facilities.'

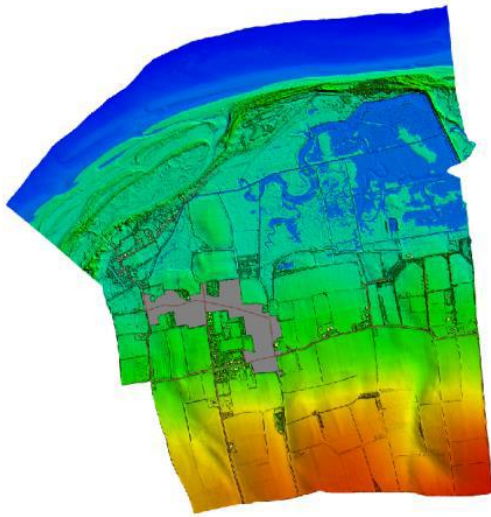
### Opportunities

Raise awareness of the value of the rich archaeological and maritime history associated with the area and the strong links to agricultural improvement and fishing.

3% of the parish is a Conservation area

Traditional design and materials are clearly more popular amongst parishioners than the modern equivalents. It appears however that it is contemporary materials, as opposed to modern design that are most unacceptable.

- More than 70% respondents feel that buildings of traditional design are *most appropriate*, along with walls featuring locally found materials (65%) and clay roof pantiles (50%). These materials give this part of coastal Norfolk its distinctive style



- Two-thirds of respondents find the use of contemporary building materials *unacceptable*, though most find the use of sustainable materials and features such as solar panels, eco-roofing and timber clad walls (the latter also a feature of traditional single-storey homes in the village) *acceptable*.

## TRANQUILLITY

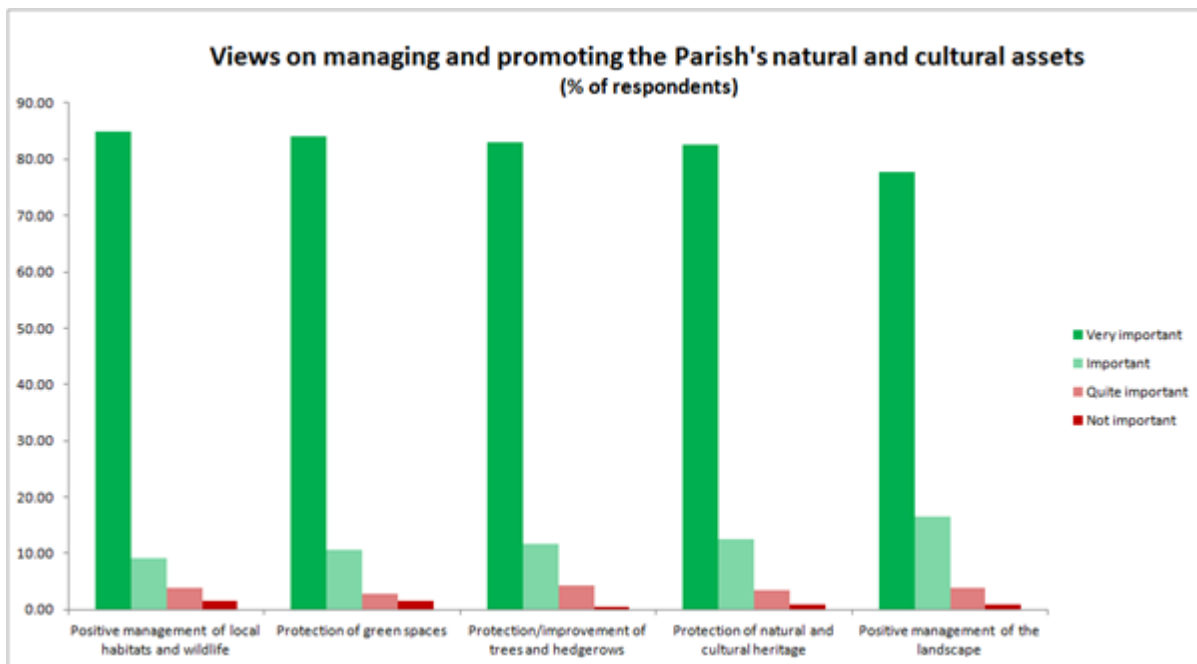
With the exception of the areas around the settlements on the coast road, which is very busy during the summer and at weekends, this is an area of very high tranquillity and one of the most tranquil areas in the county. A sense of tranquillity and dark skies at night are particularly associated with the remote areas of salt marsh, sand dunes and mudflats

The number of people visiting the area has a profound effect on its tranquillity particularly in the summer months, and although alternatives to car use are available only 5 per cent use the Coasthopper bus, walk or cycle.

High seasonal traffic levels makes it difficult for walkers and cyclists and has significant visual impacts on landscape and tranquillity. Outside the settlements there is very little light pollution which adds to the tranquillity of the area although lights from the offshore wind farms are changing this. The increasing pressure on the landscape from visitors, boat noise, erosion, cars, and disturbance to nesting birds are a threat to open coastal marshes which is a highly sensitive component of the landscape.

Consider reducing the environmental impact of travel and increase tranquillity by reducing the number and length of trips made by car. Make it easier for people to use sustainable modes of transport, such as the CoastHopper bus, walking or cycling. Carefully consider lighting associated with roads, security and buildings to reduce the negative effect on the sense of remoteness

80% of survey respondents value Peace & Tranquillity, the AONB setting and a safe and secure neighbourhood. Amongst the things most people (c80%) value most about Holme are Peace and Tranquillity, the AONB setting and the safe and secure environment.



The result was an overwhelming vote in favour, once again underlining the importance that the community places on the environment of the Parish.

- 85% of respondents consider it *very important* to adopt a positive approach to managing local habitats and wildlife.
- More than 83% consider it *very important* to protect or improve green spaces, trees and hedgerows and a similar percentage (83%) think it very important to protect our natural and cultural heritage.
- 78% consider it *very important* to adopt a positive approach to managing the landscape
- Less than 1.5% of respondents answered *not important* to any of these questions.

The *protected nature reserves, wildlife sites, marshes and meadows* all feature as important both as sites to protect and for the *open space* and views they afford.

## RECREATION

Along the coast is a continuous series of National Nature Reserves and nature reserves, some with visitor centres. All have beach access and are important for volunteering, bird watching and education and are used equally by locals. Around 700,000 people visit the reserves each year, these are the best available estimates. Volunteers contribute just under 3,000 days of work a year on the nature reserves.

The Nature Reserves attract thousands of visitors and are vital to the local economy, but tension exists between visitor pressure and the environment that attracts the numbers of visitors. The Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine site recommend that the number of car parking places at fragile sites should be reduced along with the level of promotion<sup>15</sup>. Commission research to improve understanding of the travel habits of visitors and residents to understand how to increase the level of sustainable travel options available for recreational users and tourists. Consider undertaking a leisure travel plan for the whole NCA in consultation with key stakeholders. Extend awareness of access and recreational opportunities available outside the NCA which provide alternative attractions for people away from coast.

Research indicates that only 3 per cent of visitors to the reserves use the bus, 4 per cent walk and only 1 per cent cycle, and the main reason for visiting was bird watching (86 per cent). The Norfolk Coast Path national trail runs the length of the coast and 87,000 walkers used the trail in 2011 and it was voted Best

Coastal Path in Britain. Recreational activities include sailing, boating, seal trips, water and jet skiing, and kite flying, horse riding, dog walking, bird watching, and sunbathing. There are increasing noise and disturbance from some recreational activities for example aircraft and jet-skis, and increased litter, with conflicts arising between different recreational activities. Provisions for improving public access to and along the coast will be possible in future through the England Coastal Path. In order to become a sustainable tourism destination, the behaviour and impact of visitors, both positive and negative, needs to be fully understood and reflected in visitor management plans and policies. The Coasthopper bus, which runs along the A149 and links to the mainline rail services, has become a vital transport link for locals without access to car particularly older residents, walkers and visitors. It is one of the most successful recreational routes in England but is under threat as it is not financially sustainable without grant support.

Explore opportunities for sustainable tourism initiatives that increase visitors' environmental awareness and increase profitability and environmental credentials of local businesses, while protecting the special qualities of the area. Maintain the Coasthopper bus service, which provides a crucial service in the NCA, to help reduce car use. Plan for and manage potential increases in visitor numbers realising the potential of the coastal access path.

All of the nature reserves are sensitive sites such as Holme, are categorised in the AONB Visitor Management Plan as being the most fragile sites and under considerable visitor pressure from current levels of use and should not be promoted and car parking should be reduced. There are common rights for bait digging, samphire harvesting and wildfowling. It is a prime area for walking and very popular with ornithologists, most of whom arrive by car which increases exponentially with the arrival of a rare bird. The social demographic of this area is significantly skewed to an ageing population and there are some disabled access routes.

- In 2010 Holme Dunes NNR attracted more than 100,000 visitors. Current numbers are expected to increase by 9% from Norfolk residents alone due to new housing allocations.
- 75% of NNR visitors arrive by car and the only vehicle access is through the narrow roads of Holme village.

Mode of transport resident use every week.

- The results are not significantly different for the two main groups of respondents and indicate that more than 99% respondents use a car and almost 70% walk.
- Almost 30% also indicated that they use the bus every week with smaller proportions using the other modes.

The dominance of car use is consistent with data on car ownership and travel to work found in the analysis of the 2011 Census (Socio-Economic profile of the Neighbourhood Area, *op cit*).

However the result for bus use is not consistent with answers to an additional survey question which indicated that only 6% respondents use the bus once a week (52% occasionally and 29% never).

Also very popular - permissive *footpaths linking Holme to the larger neighbouring villages of Thornham and Old Hunstanton* plus a cycleway - along the A149

There are problems with beach users, dog walkers and birdwatchers, and the NWT warden has to fence off areas of the beach. There is no information for dog walkers available. Windsurfing is also popular, so is golf

55% of the house in Holme are in second home ownership and 40% are registered holiday lets. There is a growing demand for mobile homes/caravans and planning permission is being sort on grazing land. These lodges include hot tubs. **There is open access areas on the NNR but also permitted areas which NWT manage. Composting loos which the NWT manage have been causing problems. The North Norfolk National Trail is being upgraded to the English Coast Path and consultations are still ongoing. 12 landowners have**

responded so far. Drove Orchards generate a lot of traffic and the HPNP is working closely with the landowner who is also an NCC councillor to try and alleviate some of the issues.

## BIODIVERSITY

The area's important habitats are vulnerable to the direct impacts of climate change particularly from sea level rise. Evidence from the Wash and North Norfolk Coast European Marine site suggest that certain recreational activities are having an adverse effect on the most fragile habitats and species causing disturbance to wildlife and seals, and damage to salt marsh. Decline in some key bird species in the North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) may be linked to recreation pressures. There are also impacts on ground nesting, feeding and roosting birds, particularly little terns and ringed plovers that are vulnerable to disturbance from dogs, light aircraft users or beach users.

### Opportunities

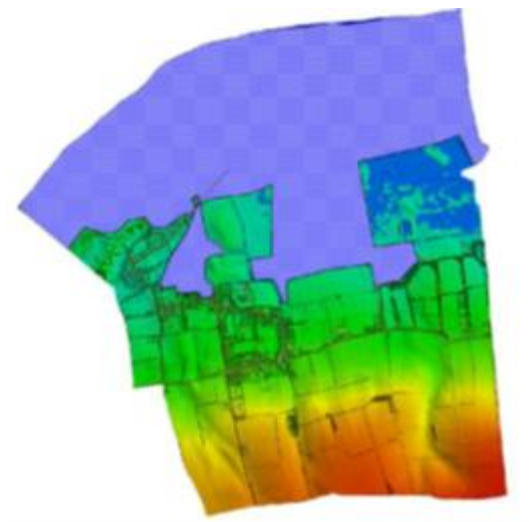
Restore dune slacks at Holme to ensure that there is a succession of dune slacks at different stages of re-colonisation to provide a habitat for natterjack toads and other dune slack species. Explore in partnership the possibility of Consider introducing a voluntary visitor contribution scheme that raises awareness of the link between the high quality landscape of the NCA and the pressures presented by visitors, and enabling visitors and locals to contribute directly towards the conservation and enhancement of the landscape.

The intent of the Shoreline Management Plan 2 policy is to allow the coastline to develop naturally while defending the integrity of settlements, the navigability of channels to a number of harbours and the A149 coast road. There may be losses and gains of designated habitat as a result.

There are potential conflicts between National Nature Reserve ecological status and visitors, and consequently the carrying capacity of this landscape in relation to its ecological and visual importance and sensitivity needs to be carefully considered. A choice may need to be made to sacrifice one or the other in any further development proposals. The landscape is highly sensitive and has reached a critical point in its development. Consider creating habitats inland to reduce the effect of rising sea levels, and identify larger areas for rollback.

There are strong views about the approach to the environment and extremely strong support (80%+) for positive management of most aspects of the environment and wildlife.

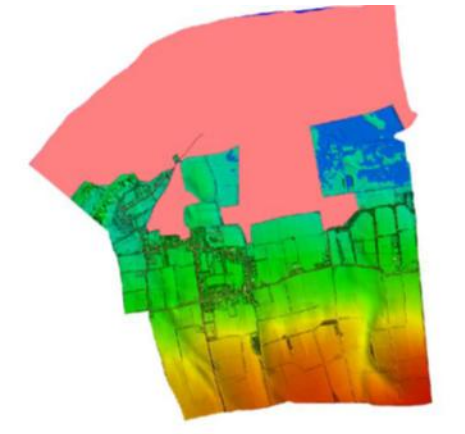
RAMSAR 42% of Neighbourhood Area



The information sheet provided to the Ramsar organisation (RSIS) was last updated in 1990 and identifies both key habitats (intertidal mudflats, beach/shingle ridges, dunes, salt marshes, grazing marshes and brackish lagoons) and important species (see <http://regis-solutions.co.uk/hnts/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Ramsar-for-North-Norfolk.pdf>). Holme Dunes is noted as an 'outstanding example' of these features within the site.

The RSIS also notes as long ago as 1990 that the site was under considerable visitor pressure and that visitor surveys were to be undertaken to provide the basis for a management plan.

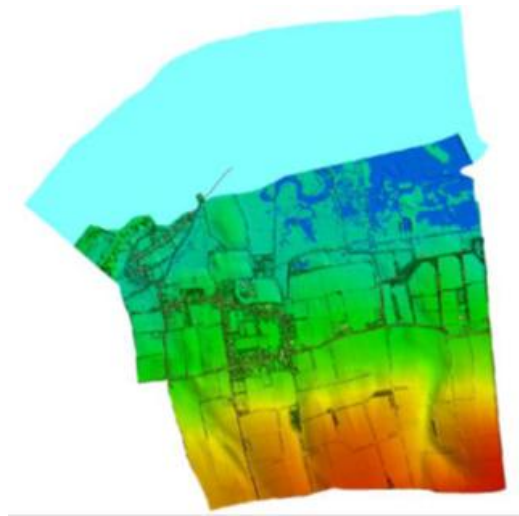
#### SSSI (42% of Neighbourhood Area).



Natural England monitors the environmental health of all SSSIs and classifies them on a scale ranging from 'favourable' to 'destroyed'. The last monitoring data available for the North Norfolk SSSI recorded it as 'Favourable' with just 0.6% being unfavourable. That tiny area was recorded as 'unfavourable – recovering' and was within the Neighbourhood Area. The concern related to spread of potentially invasive species (mainly Sea Buckthorn, *Hippophae Rhamnoides*) in the Dunes. As suggested by the 'recovering' classification made in 2010 the issue was then addressed by effective management. An up to date review is now required.

Clearly the SSSI covers the same 42% of the Neighbourhood Plan Area as the Ramsar site and its protection applies within this area. In North Norfolk the SAC coincides closely with both the Ramsar site and the SSSI – but it is actually much more extensive because it stretches out into the sea and covers the whole of The Wash (see over). As far as the Neighbourhood Plan Area is concerned its boundary coincides with that of the SSSI with the rather surprising exception that Redwell and Holme Marshes are excluded. This may, in part be due to the fact that its reason for designation is focused mainly on the intertidal mud flats, beaches, shingle and lagoons which provide an outstanding habitat for marine life and migrating sea birds. Nevertheless, the reason for these exclusions is not completely clear.

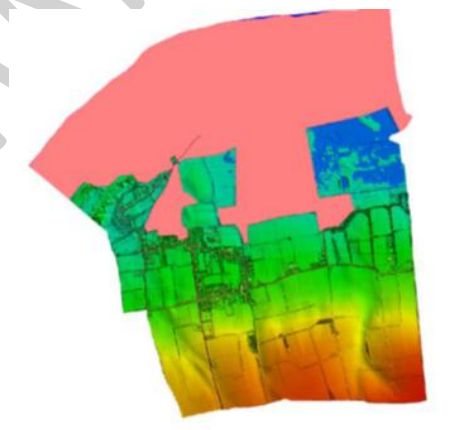
### Special Area of Conservation (34% of Neighbourhood Area)



Ensuring a coherent network of habitats for all species, but especially migrating birds, across the continent is a key feature of the rationale for the SACs. Damage to any major link in the chain of sites holds the potential to have a massive impact on migrating species and this is a particularly important feature of SACs. Providing and maintaining excellent habitats for migrating bird species is of key significance to both the Neighbourhood Plan and indeed the entire region in economic, social and environmental terms.

***Of particular significance to the Neighbourhood Plan is the need to demonstrate that the plan will not damage the SAC otherwise it could be challenged in law and prevented from going ahead.*** The SAC covers 34% of the Neighbourhood Plan Area.

### North Norfolk Special Protection Area (41% of Neighbourhood Area)



SPAs were created to ensure the protection of European Birds species under the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds (79/409/EEC) – the ‘Birds Directive’ which came into force in 1979. They thus pre-date the SACs. For further information see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/legislation/birdsdirective/index_en.htm)

Technically the site is separate to the Wash SPA but taken with that site it covers a very similar area to the SAC described above. However, in the Neighbourhood plan area it includes both Redwell and Holme Marshes – as well as coinciding with the boundary of the Ramsar site.



The single largest reason for damage to bird populations is habitat fragmentation caused by urban sprawl and transport network growth. These two key factors are compounded by loss of hedgerows and woodland, intensive farming using agro-chemicals and use of pesticides.

The bird species which are 'qualifying species' for the North Norfolk site are listed in <http://regis-solutions.co.uk/hnts/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Natura-data-formUK9009031-norfolk-.pdf>. There are considerably more than in the Ramsar designation.

### Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (100% of Neighbourhood Area)

In a recent broad assessment the AONB management team have a positive view of the 'state of the landscape' in North Norfolk with no assessment category being red, several being green and slightly more registering as amber. The main issues identified as needing attention and management in the area around Holme are the impact of Sea Level rise and climate change alongside **increasing recreational pressure from visitors and development.**

### North Norfolk Heritage Coast (60% of Neighbourhood Area)

The North Norfolk Heritage Coast was established in 1975 and was one of the first areas to receive the designation.

Strictly, Heritage Coasts are defined by agreement between Natural England and relevant national maritime authorities rather than formally designated. This means they have no statutory significance. Their role is to conserve, protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coastline; the terrestrial, coastal and marine flora and fauna; and its heritage features. The remit also extends to promoting public enjoyment of the coast and conservation of its appearance/quality – including bathing water quality.

Natural England evaluated the effectiveness of Heritage Coasts in 2006 and found that many of its functions overlapped strongly with AONBs. Further, most of the established Heritage Coast areas overlapped with AONBs. In practice, it appears that AONBs have more or less 'taken over' the initial remit though the 'Heritage Coast Brand' still has a degree of cache in the eyes of the public.

NPPF contains specific policies relating to Heritage Coasts – in particular NPPF 114 requires that Local Planning Authorities should *"maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast"*.

### Holme Dunes National Nature Reserve



Holme Dunes is managed by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust on behalf of Natural England. It had 100,000 visitors in 2010 according to a recent report (Wild Frontier Ecology, 2015). This figure pre-dates the expansion of the Visitor Facilities to include a cafeteria and toilets alongside its 100 car parking spaces.

Increasing visitor pressure is making the balancing of conservation and tourism functions increasingly difficult and a more recent study (Panter, Liley and Lowen, 2016) has estimated that visitor numbers based on Norfolk residents only are likely to increase by 9% for sites on the North Norfolk Coast largely as a result of new housing development.

The visitor centre and access track are also *within* the other designated sites described in this report (Ramsar, SSSI, SAC and SPA).

The Holme Dunes reserve has enjoyed considerable success in conservation of rare species – in particular – Natterjack Toads – a rare, European Protected species has been introduced here by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and established a small local population throughout the reserve which has now spread throughout Holme Village.

### The Wash and North Norfolk European Marine Site



The Wash and North Norfolk Coast was designated a European marine site under UK and European law in 1996. The site effectively draws together a number of SPAs, SACs and SSSIs in and around the wash to provide the entire area with protection under the relevant European Directives. Whilst all of these sites have existing protection, the EMS allows focus on their collective set of qualifying features in relation to specifically offshore, marine activities that might impact on them. These include shipping, offshore energy, marine recreation, fisheries and MOD training. The EMS brings together both users and managers of the sites under a coordinated management framework thereby ensuring the best possible approach to conservation.

### GEODIVERSITY

Holocene peat beds are exposed at the western end of the coast due to coastal erosion. **The peat beds at Holme, Thornham and Brancaster are fragile and easily damaged by beach users. Educate recreational users about the Holocene peat and its historic importance to ensure it is not damaged. Consider initiatives to avoid high human foot-fall on the dunes at Holme NNR which may lead to dune erosion, especially in fore-dunes.**

# SECTION D: APPENDIX – SITE VISIT

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## APPENDIX A: ITINERARY

Holme-next-the-Sea Neighbourhood Plan  
Site Visit by Natural England and the Norfolk Coast Partnership (01.12.17)

### Proposed Itinerary for Tour of Parish

Attending: Debbie Gosman, Scott Hardy (Natural England), Estelle Hook (Norfolk Coast Partnership), Lynn Devereux, Gill Morley (HNTSPC and NDP), Bernard Devereux, Christina Jones (NDP Team)

#### 1 Village and Holme Marsh (drive & walk)

- Historic Core, St Mary's Church (Views) and Listed Buildings
- Holme Marsh SSSI / SAC/SPA/ Ramsar - Access via Eastgate to Hides (Dark Skies)
- Eastgate Mobile Homes - Traditional grazing, Appeal Site & Response to BC Sites Call
- Central Village Site – Linear Form (Application held, Response to Call)
- Barn, Chalk Pit, Park Piece

#### 2 Proposed Local Green Spaces / Circular Village Walk (drive around)

- Historic Core - Park Piece-Village Green-Orchard land (Coast Path) -The Triangle (NNR / Coast Path) and return via Hun Bridge over Redwell Marsh - Busseys Lane-White Horse -Park Piece

#### 3 River Hun

- Source / Headwaters (Hunstanton Park – “Thursday Walks” - links to Holme & Ringstead Downs)
- New, large scale development in Hunstanton (in Hun catchment on A149, opp Old Town Way)
- Sewage Outfall – Smugglers Lane, Old Hunstanton
- Beach Road Bridge (Water Voles, WQ Test Site, Unauthorised works?)
- Footpath east along Hun to NNR and to west to Old Hunstanton

#### **4 Permissive Path & EIC Proposals (drive)**

- West from village to link into Peddars Way / National Trail / Local Green Spaces
- EIC – new car park
- East from Village to Drove Orchards

#### **5 Peddars Way South to Green Bank (drive)**

- Drive to reach Green Bank / Courtyard Farm walks Jct)
- Pass footpath to the east (before Freebridge Housing)
- Drive along north of Parish boundary – links to Courtyard Farm

#### **6 Proposed Adaptation & Resilience Zone (Dark Skies)**

- Dissipation of visitor pressure
- Views from top of Green across ARZ back towards the Village and across The Wash / Night Skies
- Footpaths from Green Bank west back towards Peddars Way / National Trail
- Link into Courtyard Farm (Biodiversity) Footpath Network and Ringstead Walks
- Existing reservoirs

#### **7 Drove Orchards Employment & Retail Zone**

- Alternative EIC proposal
- Advertising
- Possible proposed ARZ Walk up to Green Bank via Chalk Pit Lane (short term land availability?)

#### **8 Holme Dunes NNR - Protected Sites Zone (Dark Skies) / proposed Inter-Tidal Zone**

- Golf Club Car Park- Triangle Land, access to Coastal Path and beach
- Vehicular access to NNR via Broadwater Road (> 2 kilometres via private road & track )
- Replacement dwellings – cumulative impacts / loss of more modest homes
- Dunes (SMP Managed Realignment frontage / roll back of dunes)
- Redwell Marsh (SSSI / SPA), NOA – managed bird reserve, natterjack, invasive species
- Entrance to Reserve, small car park and access to Coastal Path
- Views of Coast and towards St Mary's
- Line of SMP-proposed indicative sea defence wrt SMP Inter-Tidal Zone
- Firs Visitor Centre / Beach car park
- NOA Visitor Centre and Broadwater Lagoon

## **APPENDIX B: NOTES OF MEETING**

### **HOLME-NEXT-THE-SEA (HNTS) PARISH COUNCIL**

### **NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)**

**Notes of a Meeting Site Visit with Natural England (NE) and Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP)**

**held in Holme-next-the-Sea (HNTS) on Friday 1st December 2017 at 11 am**

**PRESENT:** Lynn Devereux [LD] Parish Council Vice Chairman and NDP Working Party

Bernard Devereux [BD] NDP Working Party

Gill Morley [GM] Parish Councillor & NDP Working Party

Estelle Hook [EH] Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP)

Debbie Gosman [DG] Natural England (Landscape & Natural Capital)

Scott Hardy [SH] Natural England (North Norfolk Coast Report)

Christina Jones [CJ] NDP Admin Support

#### **1. SITE VISIT.**

The Site Visit encompassed:

##### **(1) Village and Holme Marsh.**

- Historic Core, St. Mary's Church (Views) and Listed Buildings.
- Holme Marsh SSSI / SAC / SPA / Ramsar - Access via Eastgate to Hides (Dark Skies).
- Eastgate Mobile Homes - Traditional grazing, Appeal Site & Response to Borough Council (BC) Sites Call.
- Central Village site - Linear Form (application held, Response to Call).
- Barn, Chalk Pit Lane, Park Piece.

##### **(2) Proposed Local Green Spaces and Circular Village Walk.**

- Historic Core - Park Piece - Village Green - Orchard land (Coast Path) - the Triangle (NNR / Coast Path) and return via Hun Bridge over Redwell Marsh - Busseys Lane - White Horse - Park Piece.

##### **(3) River Hun.**

- Source / dried up Headwaters (Hunstanton Park - 'Thursday Walks' - links to Holme & Ringstead Downs).
- New, large scale development in Hunstanton (in Hun catchment on A149, opposite Old Town Way).

- Sewage Outfall - Smugglers Lane, Old Hunstanton.
- Beach Road Bridge (Water Voles, Water Quality Test Site, Unauthorised Works?).
- Footpath east along Hun to NNR and west to old Hunstanton.

**(4) Permissive Path & Environmental Information Centre (EIC) Proposals.**

- West from village to link into Peddars Way / National Trail / Local Green Spaces.
- EIC - new car park (NCP likely to oppose location on / close to A149).
- East from Village to Drove Orchards.

**(5) Peddars Way South to Green Bank.**

- Drive to reach Green Bank / Courtyard Farm walks Junction).
- Past footpath to the east (before Freebridge Housing).
- Drive along north of Parish boundary - links to Courtyard Farm (wildlife promotion area).

**(6) Proposed Adaptation & Resilience Zone (Dark Skies).**

- Dissipation of visitor pressure.
- Views from top of Green Bank across ARZ back towards the Village and across The Wash / Night Skies.
- Footpaths from Green Bank west back towards Peddars Way / National Trail.
- Link into Courtyard Farm (Biodiversity) Footpath Network and Ringstead Walks.
- Existing reservoirs.

**(7) Drove Orchards Employment & Retail Zone.**

- Alternative EIC proposal site.
- Advertising along A149 vs NCP Guidance.

**(8) Holme Dunes NNR - Protected Sites Zone (Dark Skies) / Proposed Inter-Tidal Zone.**

- Golf Club Car Park - Triangle Land, access to Coastal Path and beach.
- Vehicular access to NNR via Broadwater Road (> 2 kilometres via private road and track).
- Replacement dwellings - cumulative impacts / loss of more modest homes.
- Dunes (Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) Managed Realignment frontage / roll back of dunes into properties.
- Redwell Marsh (SSSI / SPA), NOA - managed bird reserve, natterjack, invasive species.
- Meet Sophie Barker (NOA Warden)
- Meet Gary Hibberd (NWT Warden)
- Entrance to Reserve, small car park and access to Coastal Path.
- Views of Coast and toward St. Mary's.
- Line of SMP-proposed indicative sea defence wrt SMP Inter-Tidal Zone.

- Firs Visitor Centre / Beach Car Park.
- NOA Visitor Centre and Broadwater Lagoon.

## 2. REVIEW OF VISIT.

- DG and SH in particular had found the site visit extremely useful. EH had also found it very informative.

## 3. REVIEW OF NE PAPER / RECREATIONAL IMPACTS.

- LD said General Policy 1 (Sustainable Development) had been really difficult to write.

*(Copies provided and comments invited from NE and NCP.)*

- Background from the NCP Management Plan had been used.

- Difficult to find NDPs with environmental issues and some NDPs ignore them.

*(Policies therefore to be very specific to HNTS, influenced by community consultation feedback)*

- Environment is often ignored in planning.

- EH wondered if a working group to include Richard High, the Planning Consultant, would be useful.

- DG indicated that sustainable development is essential although there has been a movement away in the past. The NCA 77 report had been paid for by DEFRA (a small government department so its influence is not as great as may be expected) but this approach is useful to show how it can work.

- DG felt access and tourism are the over-riding issues creating conflict. The NWT has issues arising from numbers of visitors and is trying to balance funds with the protection of the site.

- LD believed some of the parish is being damaged eg River Hun.

- BD really appreciated DG's input to report which could be used as part of the evidence base. It will help with policies and the statements of opportunities in character assessments.

- There had been interesting conversations with Alan Gomm (BC) who felt that if a policy does not translate into development control there is no need for the policy. This had agreed in respect of land use and the footpaths policy had been dropped but NE questioned.

- An advice document relating to NDPs had been located in the Cotswolds AONB.

- The refusal of the Ocean Breaks appeal had stated that the benefits of the AONB outweighed the economic benefits - amazing!

- The status of the environment in HNTS is higher than usual and there are concerns about the Examiner's approach to General Policy 1.

- DG felt the undeveloped element of the landscape is unique. She felt that great weight was attached to it in the NPPF although often not in practice. There is a need to define 'major development' which is not defined in the NPPF.

- LD felt policies DM2 and DM3 in the SADMP were confusing.

- The BC are introducing Development Boundaries and HNTS is using a zoning system. It seems that planners like 'grey' wording and there are concerns about development outside development boundaries.
- BD confirmed the overall approach is zoning with infill and possibly one small site allocated for local people.
- LD indicated the Adaptation Resilience Zone is a response to the protected sites and compensation for potential loss.
- BD felt it would be helpful if statutory consultees stated a SEA was required as this would put down a marker. (NE is a statutory consultee.) There is an evidence gap regarding recreational disturbance (100,000 visitors to NWT in 2010) but the problems in HNTS are being repeated all along the coast. SH has some visitor numbers although it is not clear who published them but they will be included in his report from the Questionnaire he has recently carried out.
- SH thought there was an opportunity to tackle issues together giving a more coherent approach. In the questionnaire all the responses are overwhelmingly for the natural environment but it is also seen as a resource for tourism. Results from the questionnaire indicate tourism is seen as both a benefit and a detriment for the area. How visitors understand their impact on the environment to be of prime importance.
- The NCC needs to be behind any support for visitor management and recreational disturbance. The EA should have available information on proposed compensatory habitat.
- The NCP exists to achieve co-ordination and perhaps a Management of People Strategy should be a priority for the AONB. The coast system information needs to be integrated and tied into the AONB aspects using evidence with potentially a visitor zoning system - where visitors should and should not go. LD will send the NDP Zoning System to EH.
- BD gave the breeding birds report from Courtyard Farm to DG who considered it an interesting idea to work with farms.
- Funding was discussed. Strategic Mitigation Funds might not be available now but perhaps in five years. The Visitor Centre idea is dependent on the closure of The Firs. The BC is requesting local mitigation by developers for a compensation fund although the requirements in other areas are more stringent.
- Loss of amenity and related health and well being issues for the older population should be incorporated in NDP policy.
- The NCP Hun Project 'Hunstory' may tie in with the Hun Catchment Report proposals in which case it would not be supported by the community due to fears of impacts on homes.
- BD agreed to turn DG's document into a working document for evidence to support biodiversity / ecosystem services.

Everyone was thanked for their attendance at the meeting and all the input.

The meeting closed at 4 pm.

21.02.18.

C.M.J.