

The North Norfolk Kitters' Working Group

An experiment in voluntary
management

Janice Howell - Working Group Chair

Working Group members

- National Trust
- Parish Council
- Kilters
- English Nature
- RSPB
- Common Right Holders
- Wash & North Norfolk European Marine Site
- Norfolk Coast Partnership

The European Marine Site (EMS) boundaries:

The map below shows the European Marine Site (EMS) boundary, which runs from just north of Gibraltar Point to the North Wells buoy and then extends eastwards to the West Sheringham buoy, from here it goes south to the shore and along the sea bank or the landward edge of the saltmarsh.

The EMS site covers more than 107,000 hectares of marine environment.



Brancaster Beach

- Located between Brancaster and Titchwell
- One of the busiest rural beaches in Norfolk
- In excess of 30,000 visitors per year
- High family usage, especially in summer
- High potential for conflict between activities
- Potential health & safety concerns
- Potential disturbance to wildlife, especially in winter

Ownership and access

- The eastern two thirds of the beach is owned by the National Trust.
- The western third is leased from Crown Estates by the RSPB.
- Access to the beach car park from Brancaster



Designations:

Wash & North Norfolk European Marine Site

Special Protection Area for Birds

Site of Special Scientific Interest

Part of the Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Heritage Coast

In the beginning

- In addition to the existing usage of Brancaster beach, a new activity appeared in 2000.
- Which caused some concern locally.

Kite Buggies !!



This new activity seemed threatening

- It was fast
- Carried out by young people
- Outsiders
- Who were these masked riders??

The first impulse was to simply ban the sport, as had happened elsewhere, and a site meeting was called

Local representatives met the buggiers, and despite our concerns it was obvious that:

- The buggiers understood the issues
- Were more organised than it might have first appeared
- Were prepared to co-operate in order to manage the situation
- That first meeting led to an interim agreement and the formation of the working group

The management

- National Trust byelaws prohibit wheeled vehicles on their part of the beach.
- An agreement was drawn up between what became the buggy club and the RSPB restricting the activity to the west end of the beach
- The buggy club agreed to self regulate
- Monitoring was instituted
- The agreement was subject to yearly review by the working group

So far so good And then

*We not only have kite buggies,
we have kite surfers, and power kites too!!*



Kiting activities

These kites are large aerodynamic canopies, not small children's kites:

- Kites on wheels – buggies and skate boards
- Kites on the water – like wind surfing, but with kites and surf boards
- Kites on the beach - power, or static, kites – large canopies flown by individuals, who, occasionally, become airborne



More management

- There was concern that these activities were spiralling out of control
- The choice was to continue to try and manage it, or to try and ban it
- We decided to continue to try and manage and this is ongoing

 - Restrictions on certain aspects of kite surfing
 - Attempts to improve monitoring and wardening at peak periods
 - Awareness raising and education

Protected Areas

- All protected areas, like North Norfolk, are experiencing increased human usage
- The way this activity is managed will have an impact on users and on the environment
- Currently landowners and managers are not resourcing the management of people in open areas, away from reserves and conservation areas
- Therefore management has to be voluntary

The Future

- There has to be a concern that we will find ourselves in the position of banning certain activities, not because they are intrinsically damaging, but because land managers will not find the resources to prevent them becoming so.
- It is in our interests to try and prevent this happening by experimenting with methods of voluntary control, which, although not perfect, do at least allow compromise.

And finally

As Chair of the Working Group I would like to thank all those involved for their willingness to seek agreement. To the National Trust and RSPB for agreeing to wider management of their land. To English Nature for their patience and to the kilters themselves, for their co-operation.

We may not achieve perfection, but we may provide a useful demonstration of voluntary management in an important area

Watch this space