

Review of Broads Forum
Report by Broads Forum Chairman

Summary: Following a conference/workshop which was held in November, the Broads Forum agreed to establish a small sub group to review the Forum and its work. The Sub Group met on 11 January and this report sets out the results of its deliberations, as subsequently debated and endorsed by the Forum at its recent meeting, together with a number of recommendations.

Recommendations:

- (i) That the amendments to the membership of the Forum, as set out in paragraph 2 below, be approved.
- (ii) That the amended Terms of Reference, as appended, be approved.
- (iii) That the other matters discussed, all of which are of a procedural nature, be noted.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Broads Forum held a conference/workshop on 2 November 2007 at which the members present discussed in detail a number of issues relating to the operation of the Forum. A report back from the workshop was considered by the Forum at its meeting on 15 November, at which time it was decided to set up a small sub group to draw up recommendations.
- 1.2 The Sub Group met on 11 January. It comprised Keith Bacon, Barry Green, Steve Jones, Michael Knights and Anthony Wright, with the Chairman also in attendance together with two officers (the Head of Administration and Committee Services and Administrative Officer).
- 1.3 The Group's findings and proposals were presented to the Forum at its meeting on 14 February. These were discussed and debated and the recommendations arising are set out below.

2 Membership

- 2.1 A number of changes are suggested, which are aimed at improving the balance of membership between the different interest groups represented on the Forum. Details of the current and proposed membership are summarised in Appendix 1.

2.2. The specific proposed changes are set out below:

- Reduce Water Based Recreational interests to three – at the moment there are up to five representatives from this area and it was felt that there is a danger of these interests predominating in any discussions. It was felt that representation should be more in tandem with representation from other groups. (Some members of the Forum expressed concern at this proposal since they felt that water based recreational interest groups would not be adequately represented in future).
- Merge Commercial Boating interests and Tourism interests groups to form a commercial grouping, including Norfolk Tourism. This to have three members, one from commercial boating interests, one from commercial holiday let accommodation and one from tourism. The Chairman to explore with the East of England Tourist Board who an appropriate tourist representative would be.
- Increase the membership from Land Based Recreation interests from one to three, with the addition of a representative from the Broads Local Access Forum.
- Retain the existing membership of two for Fishing/Angling groups.
- Maintain the existing membership of three from Wildlife and Conservation groups, with one to come from Norfolk and Suffolk Wildlife Trusts, one from the RSPB and one from Friends of the Earth and BCTV.
- Merge Farming/Landowning interest groups with Drainage/Flood Prevention interest groups with a membership of three (currently one each).
- Education interest groups – area too diverse to be adequately represented by one member. Suggest two members with advice to be sought from David Holmes of the How Hill Trust on categories – one suggestion that it be on the basis of curricular and extra curricular activities. Add the Museum of the Broads to this group (from the Local Charities group).
- Cultural Heritage/Landscape interests – retain membership of two. It is proposed that a number of organisations be removed from the list on account of the fact that their functions mean that they are not appropriate in terms of membership. Broads Society to have a member in its own right.
- Local Charities – move Nancy Oldfield Trust and possibly Museum of the Broads to Education and move Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust (and possibly Museum of the Broads) to the Cultural Heritage category. The Whitlingham Charitable Trust has indicated that it is happy to be notified when the agenda is published and will raise any issues if and when it needs to.

- Local Communities – retain membership of two but discuss with the Norfolk and Suffolk Associations of Parish Councils how the local community representatives should be appointed in future.
- 2.3 These changes will increase the total membership of the Forum from 22 to 24, in addition to the independent Chairman.
- 2.4 It was agreed that the Terms of Reference should be amended to provide flexibility to delete bodies where they cease to exist and to add successor bodies or new bodies where it is appropriate to do so, through the agreement of the Chairman of the Forum and the Chairman of the Broads Authority.
- 2.5 The Terms of Reference are appended (Appendix 2) with proposed changes highlighted in bold type.
- 2.6 The issue of attendance would be kept under review and if necessary addressed by the Chairman.

3 Agenda

- 3.1 The Forum agreed a number of changes in relation to the agenda and procedure at meetings. These included:
- moving the minutes to the beginning of the agenda;
 - encouraging members of the Forum to be more proactive in both suggesting items for the agenda and giving presentations on areas of interest;
 - encouraging officers to prepare shorter, more focussed reports, and keep presentations to a minimum; and
 - including as standing items on the agenda 'Matters for Chairman to raise at next Broads Authority meeting' and 'Matters to be discussed at the next meeting'.

4 Other Matters

- 4.1 With regard to a suggestion that a Grand Forum be held once a year, it was agreed that a better alternative would be to encourage Forum members to attend the Authority's annual public meeting.
- 4.2 The Sub-Group had expressed disappointment that meetings of the Broads Research Advisory Panel appeared to have ceased. The Chief Executive stressed that research was still very much at the heart of the Authority's work, and that he was in discussion with the Chairman of the Authority and the Director of Planning and Strategy about the future of BRAP.
- 4.3 It was noted that meetings of the Forum would be held in the Authority's new offices when it relocates later in the year.
- 4.4 Meetings will continue to be held during the afternoon.

- 4.5 The question of communication – both to Broads Forum members and the wider public – was discussed. Regarding the former officers agreed to investigate means of ensuring that Forum members receive copies of Broads Authority minutes and, if possible, the Authority’s press releases.
- 4.6 Regarding the latter members asked that the Authority investigate means of communicating its achievements to a larger cross-section of the public, both within the Authority’s executive area and beyond. Concern was expressed at some of the negative articles and letters which had appeared in the press recently, especially since many of the comments were misinformed and inaccurate.
- 4.7 The Chief Executive agreed that this was an area in which improvements could be made. He stated that he would like to be able to distribute a newsletter to every household in the Broads and surrounding district, but there were difficult logistical and resource issues involved. However he pointed out that funding had provisionally been set aside to make improvements to the Authority’s website during 2008/09. He explained that this was an issue with which the Authority was currently grappling – both at member and officer level – and would redouble his efforts to find ways of addressing this issue.

Background papers: Nil

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Appendices: Appendix 1: Broads Forum Membership: Proposed Changes
Appendix 2: Broads Forum Terms of Reference

Broads Forum Membership: Proposed Changes
Independent Chairman: Jonathan Bowman

Current Membership	Proposed New Membership	Summary of Changes
<p>Boating/Water Based Recreational Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Yachting Association • Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association • Inland Waterways Association • East Anglian Waterways Association • Oulton Broad Users Association • Yare Users Association • Amateur Rowing Association • British Canoe Union • Canoe Committee of Suffolk Water Sports Association • Eastern Rowing Club • Sport England • British Water Ski Federation • Eastern Rivers Ski Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Royal Yachting Association • Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association • Inland Waterways Association • East Anglian Waterways Association • Oulton Broad Users Association • Yare Users Association • Amateur Rowing Association • British Canoe Union • Canoe Committee of Suffolk Water Sports Association • Eastern Rowing Club • Sport England • British Water Ski Federation • Eastern Rivers Ski Club 	<p>No change to list of interest groups, but reduce representation from 5 members to 3.</p>
<p>Commercial Boating Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Marine Federation • Broads Hire Boat Federation • Norfolk and Suffolk Pleasure Boat Owners Association 	<p>Commercial Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • British Marine Federation • Broads Hire Boat Federation • Norfolk and Suffolk Pleasure Boat Owners Association • East of England Tourist Board • VisitNorwich Ltd • Norfolk Tourism 	<p>Commercial Boating and Tourism interest groups merged to form a Commercial interests group. Representation increased from 2 (1 from each) to 3.</p>

Current Membership	Proposed New Membership	Summary of Changes
<p>Land Based Recreation Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramblers Association • SUSTRANS • British Horse Society, Norfolk Branch • East Anglian Trail Riders Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ramblers Association • SUSTRANS • British Horse Society, Norfolk Branch • East Anglian Trail Riders Association • Broads Local Access Forum 	<p>Broads Local Access Forum added. Representation increased from 1 member to 3.</p>
<p>Tourism Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East of England Tourist Board • VisitNorwich Ltd 		<p>Merged into new Commercial interests group.</p>
<p>Fishing/Angling Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broads Angling Strategy Group • Anglers Conservation Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broads Angling Strategy Group • Anglers Conservation Association 	<p>No change (2 representatives)</p>
<p>Wildlife and Conservation Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Wildlife Trust • Suffolk Wildlife Trust • RSPB • Friends of the Earth • BTCV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Norfolk Wildlife Trust • Suffolk Wildlife Trust • RSPB • Friends of the Earth • BTCV 	<p>No change (3 representatives)</p>
<p>Farming/Landowning Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Landowners Association • National Farmers Union • British Association for Shooting and Conservation • Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters Association 	<p>Farming/Landowning Interest Groups and Drainage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country Landowners Association • National Farmers Union • British Association for Shooting and Conservation • Broads Reed and Sedge Cutters Association • Association of Inland Drainage Authorities 	<p>Merge Farming/Landowning and Drainage/Flood Prevention interest groups. Representation increased from 2 (1 from each) to 3.</p>

Current Membership	Proposed New Membership	Summary of Changes
<p>Drainage/Flood Prevention Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association of Inland Drainage Authorities 		<p>Merge with Farming/Landowning interest group.</p>
<p>Education Interest Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Hill Trust • Easton College • Norwich City College • Norfolk Schools Sailing Association • Barton Turf Activities Centre • Horstead Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How Hill Trust • Easton College • Norwich City College • Norfolk Schools Sailing Association • Barton Turf Activities Centre • Horstead Centre • Nancy Oldfield Trust • Museum of the Broads 	<p>The Nancy Oldfield Trust and Museum of the Broads have been added. Representation increased from 1 member to 2.</p>
<p>Cultural Heritage/Landscape Interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Trust • Suffolk Preservation Society • Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) • English Heritage • Norfolk Archaeological Unit • Suffolk Archaeology Unit • Norfolk Archaeological Trust • Norfolk Windmills Trust • Wherry Yacht Charter • Norfolk Wherry Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Trust • Norfolk Archaeological Trust • Norfolk Windmills Trust • Wherry Yacht Charter • Norfolk Wherry Trust • Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust 	<p>Number of interest groups reduced from 10 to 6, with the deletion of 5 groups and one addition (Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust). Representation remains at 2 members.</p>
<p>Charities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broads Society • Nancy Oldfield Trust • Museum of the Broads • Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust • Whitlingham Charitable Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broads Society 	<p>The Local Charities group has been replaced by a Broads Society only group. 3 of the 4 other groups have been relocated. Representation reduced from 2 members to 1.</p>
<p>Local Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Broads • Southern Broads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Broads • Southern Broads 	<p>No change (2 representations).</p>

Broads Forum

1 Terms of Reference

- 1.1 To act as a reference group to offer advice and comment on the Broads Authority's strategic aims and objectives and other key issues as they arise, including the Broads Plan, Broads Local Plan and Business Plan.
- 1.2 To provide a consultative forum to facilitate two-way communication between the Authority and other bodies and organisations which have an interest in the Broads and its wider catchment area.
- 1.3 To provide a forum for discussion on conservation, navigational, recreational, cultural and built heritage and planning policy issues related to both land and water based activities within the Broads and its wider catchment area.
- 1.4 To promote closer liaison and understanding between the various interest bodies and organisations which have an interest in the Broads and its wider catchment area.
- 1.5 In providing advice and comment the Forum shall have regard to the general duty of the Authority to manage the Broads for the purposes of:
 - (a) conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
 - (b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and
 - (c) protecting the interests of navigation.
- 1.6 In providing such advice and comment the Forum shall also bear in mind the Authority's requirement to have regard to:
 - (a) the national importance of the Broads as an area of natural beauty and one which affords opportunities for open-air recreation;
 - (b) the desirability of protecting the natural resources of the Broads from damage; and
 - (c) the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interest of those who live or work in the Broads.

2 Principles

- 2.1 The Forum will consider strategic/significant issues only and will not be asked to consider detailed operational matters such as individual planning

applications, except where they may have significant strategic or policy importance.

- 2.2 Members of the Forum may propose items for discussion at future meetings.
- 2.3 The Forum will be a truly consultative body and its advice and views will be sought in advance of matters being considered by the Authority. It will not be used merely as a rubber stamping exercise or to endorse decisions already taken.
- 2.4 Meetings of the Forum will be open to the public. Members of the public may ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda by prior agreement with the Chairman.
- 2.5 The Forum will be accountable directly to the Broads Authority and a record of its proceedings will be received by the Authority.
- 2.6 In addition the advice or comments of the Forum will be reported to and taken into account by the appropriate committee(s) of the Authority in the decision making process.
- 2.7 The Forum will meet quarterly as part of the Authority's regular cycle of committee meetings, and on other occasions as may be required.
- 2.8 The role of the Forum will be advisory only.

3 Membership

- 3.1 The Chair will be an independent person appointed by the Broads Authority who is able to command the respect of the conservation, navigational and recreational interest groups in the Broads area.
- 3.2 The Chair will be appointed for a term of three years.
- 3.3 The balance of the membership will fairly and equitably reflect the three duties of the Authority as set out in paragraph 1.5 above.
- 3.4 The membership will fairly and equitably reflect the various interest groups on the Broads which do not have direct representation on the Broads Authority itself, and will give due weight to those interest groups with large membership.
- 3.5 Persons who are already members of the Broads Authority will not be eligible for membership of the Forum.
- 3.6 The membership will be of sufficient size to ensure that all the various interest groups are adequately represented and there is sufficient experience and knowledge of the various issues which relate to the management of the Broads, but will not be so large as to become unwieldy. ~~It is suggested that the maximum number of members should be 22.~~

3.7 The Forum will comprise representatives of the various categories of interest groups ~~as set out in the Appendix~~ **which have an interest in the Broads and the work of the Broads Authority.**

3.8 The members will be appointed to the Forum by the nominating groups themselves. Where the groups are unable or unwilling to decide upon a person to represent them, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Forum and the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Broads Authority for determination.

3.9 Groups/organisations will be entitled to appoint named substitutes to attend meetings in the event that their representative is unable to attend.

3.10 The nominating organisations will be invited to review their membership every three years, and in so doing will be invited to consider the member's attendance record and the extent to which he/she has liaised with and reported back to the organisations which he/she represents.

3.11 The Chair of the Forum and Chairman of the Broads Authority may delete organisations from the lists of interest groups where they cease to exist, and add successor and new organisations where it is appropriate to do so. However any wide-ranging review of the membership or list of nominating organisations must be reported to and agreed by the Broads Authority.

~~3.124~~ The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Authority ~~will if available~~ **may** attend meetings of the Forum, but in a non-voting capacity.

~~3.132~~ The Chief Executive, together with other officers of the Authority as appropriate, will if available attend meetings of the Forum to present reports and answer questions.

~~3.143~~ The Forum may, in respect of any particular matter or more generally, invite other persons or representatives of other organisations to attend meetings of the Forum and participate in discussions, but not to vote.

4 Amendments

4.1 Any amendments to the Terms of Reference, Principles and Membership of the Forum, ~~to reflect changing circumstances~~ **(other than changes to individual changes to the lists of nominating groups as set out in paragraph 3.11)**, must be agreed by the Broads Authority following consultation with the Chair of the Forum and the Forum itself.