

Annual Report of the Broads Local Access Forum
Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary: This report presents for members' information the key matters considered by the Broads Local Access Forum during the last year relating to the development and improvement of public access within the Broads.

Recommendation: That the work of the Forum be noted.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the key matters considered by the Broads Local Access Forum during the last year relating to the development and improvement of public access within the Broads.

2 Annual Report

- 2.1 The draft Broads Local Access Forum annual report is attached to this covering report as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The key issues considered by the Forum included the review and adoption of the Integrated Access Strategy action plan which is delivering projects like the new 24-hour mooring recently built at Rockland Short Dyke and permissive paths and the County Council's review of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan and Cycling and Walking Action plan both of which present opportunities for partnership working to improve access in the Broads.

Background papers: Minutes of the Local Access Forum

Author: Adrian Clarke
Date of Report: 12 July 2017

Broads Plan Objectives: 6.1, 6.2

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – The Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2017

The Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2017

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1. Broads Local Access forum

1.1 Statutory purposes

The Broads Local Access Forum is an independent advisory body established by the Broads Authority in 2003 under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The Act states that the purpose of the forum is to be a statutory advisory body to provide guidance and advice to the Broads Authority and other organisations on the improvement of public access within the Broads and to contribute to opportunities for open air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. In providing advice, the forum will have regard to:

- The needs of land management
- The conservation of the natural beauty of the area
- The management and maintenance of recreational access whilst balancing this against the needs of nature conservation, agriculture, the interests of landowners and managers, navigation and countryside management projects within the Broads.

1.2 The forum's vision

The Broads is an unrivalled wetland of natural diversity, heritage and special character. It is a place where people come to explore, enjoy and find spiritual refreshment. Access to the Broads should be clear and easy to use, respectful of wildlife and land management, meet users' needs and promote responsible and harmonious behaviour. The Broads Local Access Forum will champion access improvements and management, represent a wide range of interests and contribute to sustainability for environment, communities and the economy.

2. What has happened during the year?

2.1 The forum at work

The forum has delivered its purpose in a number of ways:

- i The forum has held four public meetings to agree its advice to the Broads Authority and other organisations.
- ii The forum provided representation on the Broads Forum, the Norfolk Local Access Forum, the Joint LAF meeting (Broads and Norfolk) and at Regional and National LAF meetings.
- iii Forum members provided advice by individual correspondence on consultation documents.
- iv Forum members are expected to use and develop their own networks of contacts to gather information and opinion, and to offer advice and information on access.

2.2 Challenges faced by the forum

The forum faced the following challenges:

The main challenge faced by the Forum has been the continuing pressure on public funding for countryside access across all local authorities which has meant some paths have received little maintenance. Additionally as Agri-Environment Access payments to landowners have come to an end some permissive paths have closed resulting in a more fragmented access network.

2.3 Advising the Broads Authority

The forum has given advice on the following issues:

The Forum has given advice to a number of bodies over the year. The Forum has advised Norwich City Council on the proposed River Wensum Strategy. Further advice was given to Norfolk County Council on its review of the County Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the proposed Norfolk Countryside Access Improvement Plan and the Norfolk Cycling and Walking Action Plan particularly regarding the importance of recognising the benefits of access in the Broads National Park and opportunities for partnership working with the Broads Authority on strategic routes in the Broads like the 3 Rivers Way and Wherryman's Way.

The forum has also given further advice to the Broads Authority on its Integrated Access Strategy Action Plan and the Hickling Broad Enhancement Project.

2.3 Responding to consultations

The forum has responded to the following consultations:

- PROW Improvement Plan (Norfolk County Council)
- Cycling and Walking Action Plan (Norfolk County Council)
- Countryside Access Improvement Plan (Norfolk County Council)

2.4 Access reports

- Wherryman's Way - River Chet
- Draft Integrated Access Strategy Action Plan
- Hickling Broad Project Update
- Norfolk County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan Strategic Review
- Wherryman's Way Update
- Access All Areas
- Registration of Unrecorded Rights of Way – Deregulation Act 2016
- River Wensum Strategy Update
- Staithes Research project
- Blue Book for Roads
- British Horse Society – Auditing the List of Streets
- Proposal for new Town and Parish Councils for Lowestoft and Oulton Broad
- River Chet Condition Update Including Wherryman's Way and Water Level Monitoring
- Broads Forum updates
- Norfolk County Council Access Updates

2.5 Partnership working

The forum has worked with the following organisations:

- Norfolk County Council
- Wensum River Parkway Partnership
- Norwich City Council
- Natural England
- River Wensum Strategy Group

2.6 Observers and advisors to the forum

- Andrew Hutcheson, Norfolk County Council
- Karen Sayer, Broads Authority
- Martin Sullivan, Norfolk Local Access Forum
- Kevin Hart, Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Kirsty Webber-Walton, Norfolk County Council
- Russell Wilson, Norfolk County Council
- Andrea Long, Broads Authority
- Adrian Clarke, Broads Authority
- Rob Rogers, Broads Authority

3 Who makes up the forum?

3.1 Chair and Vice-Chair

In December 2015 Keith Bacon was re-appointed as Chair and Alec Hartley was appointed as Vice-Chair of the Broads Local Access Forum.

3.2 Members and representation

Membership of the Broads Local Access Forum was reviewed and the following members were appointed in December 2015:

Keith Bacon – Catfield

Tel: 01692 581314

keithbacon@keme.co.uk, keithbacon@broadland.net

Representing: Archaeology and landscape heritage

Keith a native of Catfield, is a retired teacher and runs the family holiday business at Potter Heigham. He is a member of the Broads Forum and a former member of the Broads Authority. He is Vice-Chairman and former Chairman of the Broads Society and is a committee member of the North Norfolk group of CPRE. He has been Chairman of Catfield Parish Council for over 20 years and has been a district councillor. His other interests include local history (with a PhD in agricultural history), fen conservation in Catfield and being church warden of Catfield church.

Olly Barnes – Bungay

Tel: 01986 892074

barnes@cockrill.fsnet.co.uk

Representing: Local Authority / Waterborne recreational users

Louis Baugh – Neatishead

Tel: 07785 224589

lbaugh@netcom.co.uk

Representing: Landowners and managers

Louis farms a mixed arable and dairy unit on the River Ant neighbouring the How Hill and Alderfen nature reserves. He is a Trustee of the Village Pools Trust, a member of the Broads Internal Drainage Board and a Trustee of the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association. He has an extensive Countryside Stewardship Scheme in place on his farm, which includes a network of permissive footpaths which connect the statutory public rights of way and the communities of Horning and Neatishead. Louis is a member of the Broads Authority.

Liz Brooks – Ludham

Tel: 01692 678674

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Representing: Equestrian riding and driving

Liz has lived in the Norfolk Broads all her life where she has owned and ridden horses from a young age. She believes that every equestrian should have access to safe, enjoyable, off-road routes. Her work with older people and interest in conservation, wildlife, walking and cycling gives her an insight into the needs of other user groups.

Tony Brown – Lowestoft

Tel: 01502 740639

tonybrownrwt@gmail.com

Representing: Nature conservation

Robin Buxton - Lingwood

Tel: 01493 750102

robin.buxton@ukgateway.net

Representing: Landowners and managers / Tourism and local business

Robin is a chartered surveyor involved with land and property management, particularly in the Broads. He is a member of the Broads Internal Drainage Board and Upper Thurne Working Group. He is also Chairman of the British Reed Growers' Association.

Nick Dennis – St Ives

Tel: 01480 382731

nickdennis1@virginmedia.com

Representing: Waterborne recreational users (canoe users)

Nick is a self-employed Chartered Surveyor based in Cambridge. He spent many a summer holiday as a child fishing and exploring the Broads at Barton Turf, Wroxham, Hickling. More recently he has become involved with canoeing as Head of the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association for the UK. Nick regularly organises trips and meetings on the Broads for members of the Open Canoe Association seeking out new areas and canoe routes.

Mike Flett – Ludham

Tel: 01692 678560

mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com

Representing: Local Authority (Parish Councils)

Mike, although born in Surrey, has been resident in Norfolk since 1974, mostly in Ludham. He has been a Parish Councillor for more than 25 years, Chairman for more than 15 years, and a past Chairman and Governor of Ludham First School. He is Chairman and a founding Trustee of the Womack Charitable Trust, set up in 2001, operating a substantial mooring facility in the village of Ludham. He was appointed Trustee of the How Hill Trust in 2014 whose primary objective is to promote, maintain, improve and advance public education in Broadland by the provision of education facilities at How Hill in Norfolk and the conservation of How Hill House for the benefit of the public. His recreation activities include walking, boating, railways and 20th century military history.

Tony Gibbons – Norwich

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Representing: Angling

Dawn Hatton – Norwich

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stock.dawn@gmail.com

Representing: Walking / People with disabilities and access for all

Dawn has lived in Norwich for over 30 years and as a frequent visitor the Broads, she has experienced changing access requirements as her family has grown; from pushchairs and child friendly walks, safe cycling routes, boat and canoe leisure activities 'teen trudges' and wheelchair mobility access. Dawn hopes her experiences will help with the planning and improving of access to the Broads for others. Dawn is an active member of several local charities.

Alec Hartley – Norwich

Tel: 01603 452884

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Representing: Wensum River Parkway Partnership

Alec is a former Chairman of the Norwich Society, a Director of the Norwich Preservation Trust and Chairman of the Wensum River Parkway Partnership which aims to bring back life to the river in Norwich between Whitlingham and New Mills. He is a keen walker and campaigner for public access to both Norwich's unique heritage and the river which runs through the city.

Lana Hemsall – Acle

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lana.hemsall@broads-authority.gov.uk

Representing: Broads Authority

Peter Mason – Catfield

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Representing: Walking / Tourism and local business

Stephen Read – Oulton Broad

Tel: 07720 808715

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Steve is a chartered civil engineer with extensive experience providing infrastructure within the

public sector and promoting new public rights of way. He takes a keen interest in sustainable issues but recognises the importance of commercial enterprise to support tourism within the Broads. He is a walk leader with the Waveney Group for 'Go Active Health Walks' and is also enthusiastic in promoting cycling facilities within the Broads area. He has a strong affiliation with the Broads, is a Friend of the Hunters Fleet and became a member of the Broads Local Access Forum in 2010.

George Saunders – Norwich

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Representing: People with disabilities and access for all

George came to Norfolk in 1989 after becoming disabled and joined the disability movement. He works for various charities which champion greater equality for disabled people including the Norwich Access Group and Norwich Shopmobility. Having been a keen walker he became interested in wheelchair access to the countryside and has worked in a number of ways to promote this over the years.

Charles Swan – Oulton Broad

Tel: 01502 588915

clerkoultonparishsuffolk@hotmail.co.uk

Representing: Local Authorities (Parish Councils) / Educational establishments

Charles has been involved with the Broads Authority for many years, starting with the Consultative Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr James Hipwell. He is a parish councillor for Oulton (Suffolk) dealing with footpath and access matters. He is the Pools Trustee for Oulton Marshes, a keen angler and walker and also a boat owner. As a supporter of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, he works with primary school nature projects in the parish.

Martin Symons – Poringland

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Representing: Cycling / People with disabilities and access for all

Ray Walpole – Norwich

Tel: 01603 300221

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Representing: Walking / Cycling

Ray was born in Reedham and has spent most of his life around the Broads before moving to the Greater Norwich fringe. He is a member of the Norfolk Ramblers, Norwich Cycling and Norfolk Workers Education Association (WEA). He is particularly interested in promoting adult education in the Broads environment and heritage.

Peter Warner – London

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Representing: Broads Authority

Richard Webb – Norwich

Tel: 01603 505362

dickwebb@talktalk.net

Representing: Walking

Christopher Yardley – Burnham Thorpe

Tel: 01328 738705

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Representing: Waterborne recreational users / Nature conservation

Chris has been intimately involved with the Broads for many years. He was a former Countryside Officer with local government and continues to be involved with the ecology, history and wider land management of the area through his interests in wildlife conservation, cycling, walking and sailing. He is a member of a practical countryside management group which maintains footpaths and undertakes some conservation management works for landowners and local authorities. He has a special interest in access for all issues.

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