

Broads Local Access Forum

Agenda 01 September 2021

10.00am

This is a remote meeting held under the Broads Authority's [Standing Orders on Procedure Rules for Remote Meetings](#).

Participants: You will be sent a link to join the meeting. The room will open at 9.30am and we request that you **log in by 9.45am** to allow us to check connections and other technical details.

Members of the public: Please email BLAF@broads-authority.gov.uk for joining details.

Introduction

1. Apologies for absence and welcome
2. Declarations of interest
3. **Appointment of Vice Chair**
4. **To receive and confirm the minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 9 June 2021 (Pages 5-15)**
5. **Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings- to note the schedule (Pages 16-17)**

Items for discussion

6. **Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)**
Presentation from Environment Policy Adviser
7. **Integrated Access Strategy: Update (Pages 18-20)**
Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer
8. **Opening access to EA owned banks: Update**
Update from Norwich and District Anglers Association

Other matters

9. Any other business
10. To note the date of the next meeting – **Wednesday 1 December 2021 at 10.00am**

Broads Local Access Forum membership

Member	Address	Phone number	Email	Interest
Linda Aspland	Quercus 229 Norwich Road Wroxham NR12 8SL	01603 951814	linda.aspland@icloud.com	Waterborne recreational users / Paddle sports
Richard Atkins	Riverview Cottage Off Church Lane Surlingham NR14 7DF	01508 538083	richard.p.atkins@btinternet.com	Paddle sports/ Walking
Keith Bacon	Woodcroft Wood Street Catfield NR29 5DF	01692 581314	keithbacon@keme.co.uk keithbacon@broadland.net	Archaeology and landscape heritage
Louis Baugh	Neatishead Hall Neatishead NR12 8XX	07785 224589	lbaugh@netcom.co.uk	Landowners and managers
Katie Baxter	18 Keys Drive Wroxham Norwich NR12 8SS	07917 785282	info@gopaddle.co.uk	Paddle Sports/ Tourism and local business
Harry Blathwayt	20 Broad Reaches Ludham NR29 5PD	01692 678644	Harry.blathwayt@north-norfolk.gov.uk	Broads Authority
Robin Buxton	Speedwell House South Burlingham Road Lingwood NR13 4ET	01493 750102	robin.buxton@buxtonpropertymanagement.co.uk	Landowners and managers/ Tourism and local businesses
Christine Cane	The Roundhouse 160 Tuttle Lane West Wymondham NR18 0JJ	01953 606019	bhs.southnorfolk@gmail.com	Equestrian riding and driving
Peter Dixon	The Smea Hickling NR12 0YL	078509 30486	Peterjbdixon@hotmail.com	Waterborne recreational users

Member	Address	Phone number	Email	Interest
Tony Gibbons	19 Blithewood Gardens Sprowston NR7 8PS	01603 400973	tonygibbons.ndaa@gmail.com	Angling
Tim Harris	Catfield Hall Catfield NR29 5DB	01692 580220	tim@catfieldhall.com	Nature conservation / Archaeology and landscape heritage
Dawn Hatton	c/o Broads Authority Yare House 62-64 Thorpe Road Norwich NR1 1RY	01603 433174	stock.dawn@gmail.com	Walking/People with disabilities/Access for all
Peter Mason	7 Brick Kiln Gardens Catfield Gt Yarmouth NR29 5DW	01692 583152	peter.mason51@sky.com	Walking/Tourism and local business
John Murray	33 Prospect Road Lowestoft NR32 3PT	07855 385041	john.campbell.murray@btinternet.com	Walking / People with disabilities / Access for all
Steve Read	The Anchorage Broadview Road Oulton Broad Lowestoft NR32 3PL	07720 808715	stevereadcon@btinternet.com	Walking/water borne recreational users
Martin Rendle	62 South Hill Road Norwich NR7 0NG	01603 339133	adventure@norfolkoutdoor.co.uk	Paddle sports/Tourism and local business
Paul Saunders	8 Heathside Road Norwich NR1 1TH	07557 018954	paulandrewsaunders@outlook.com	Open Water Swimming
Michael Scott	c/o Broads Authority Yare House 62-64 Thorpe Road Norwich NR1 1RY	01603 610734	michaeldorf@hotmail.com	Broads Authority

Member	Address	Phone number	Email	Interest
Richard Webb	9 Bek Close Norwich NR4 7NT	01603 505362	dickwebb@talktalk.net	Walking/sailing
Christopher Yardley	Thorpe Cloud Creak Road Burnham Thorpe PE31 8HW	01328 738705	Cj.yardley@tiscali.co.uk	Waterborne recreational users/ nature conservation

Kylie Moos – Broads Local Access Forum Secretary

Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich, NR1 1RY

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Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 09 June 2021

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Present

Keith Bacon – in the Chair, Linda Aspland, Richard Atkins, Louis Baugh, Katie Baxter, Harry Blathwayt, Christine Cane, Peter Dixon, Tony Gibbons, Tim Harris, John Murray, Steve Read, Martin Rendle, Paul Saunders, Christopher Yardley.

In attendance

Jade Davies–Intern, Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Kylie Moos – Administrative Officer, Lewis Treloar – Waterways and Recreation Officer, Martin Sullivan – Norfolk Local Access Forum, Ken Hawkins – Norfolk Local Access Forum.

1. Apologies for absence and welcome

Apologies received from Dawn Hatton.

2. Declarations of interest

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered and set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

3. Appointment of Chair

Keith Bacon was nominated for the position of Chairman of the Broads Local Access Forum. There were no other nominations. Members voted unanimously to appoint Keith Bacon to this role.

4. Appointment of Vice Chair

The appointment of Vice Chair will take place at the next meeting. The position remains vacant for this meeting.

5. Minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 10 March 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Matters arising from the minutes

Reedham Permissive Path

The Broads Authority has written a press release which is currently with Reedham Parish Council to review before publishing.

7. Open Water Swimming

Paul Saunders presented open water swimming to the Forum. How it can be undertaken on the Broads in a safe and enjoyable way, as well as highlighting the risks and giving information on how to mitigate the risks.

History

- For many years the Broads Authority has said “Do not swim in the broads” The website displays the following:
 - “This is potentially very dangerous without the benefit of support from an open water swimming organisation”.
 - “The Broads Authority strongly advises against entering the water unless part of an organised event”.
- This mindset has changed recently, however, the message is currently along the lines of it being “discouraged”.
- There are a growing number of people who do swim in the Broads.
- Ongoing discussions are taking place with BA officers proposing a review of the Broads guidance.

Benefits

The unique properties of water make swimming perfect for people of all ages to exercise. There is increasing evidence that swimming is a cost-effective activity with positive impact for the NHS.

Physical benefits:

- Increases fitness and improves cardio vascular fitness
- Can help weight loss
- Cold water stimulates your parasympathetic nervous system (PNS),
- Lower heart rate and blood pressure
- Reduce stress hormone production
- Boosts the immune system
- Helps to deliver a better night's sleep

Mental benefits

- A feeling of relaxation
- A sense of contentment
- Deliver a better night's sleep
- Feel closer to nature
- Improve overall feelings of wellbeing

Who swims in the Broads?

- Immersers or dippers
- Social / casual swimmers

- Triathletes
- Open water swimmers
- People 'having fun' in the water

It's useful to think about the different groups and how the proposed guidance can keep them safe, and also how they can access the guidance.

Risks

Most open water swimmers know the risks and how to mitigate them, below is a list of risks which may occur:

- Cold water shock, hypothermia, cramp
- Boats (hire boats vs private)
- Scullers / Rowers
- Tides
- Weeds and plants
- Deep mud
- Hidden obstructions
- Exit and entry points
- Blue Green Algae
- Weils disease

Staying Safe

- Swim within own capabilities (distance, water temperature)
- Don't swim alone
- Navigation - Rules of the road
- Avoid areas with high traffic
- Be seen - Bright colored swim hat and a bright tow float
- Look – Be aware of other river users, boats, kayakers, anglers
- Have a kayak lead if possible
- Let people ashore know where you are and when you are out
- Charged phone, what three words app, in emergency 999 coastguard
- Be Bio-Secure and respect the environment
- Be respectful to all other users on the Broads

The Broads Authority have endorsed the Outdoor Swimmers Code, and a link has been included in the proposed guidance.

Benefits to the Broads

- Encourage more people to use them
- Local businesses will see new customers
- Maintain bankside entry and exit points
- Litter picking
- Help promote cleaner water and a better environment

Risks to Landowners

Landowners and authorities often believe that they could be liable if something happens to people who swim in water they manage.

The following legal position has been outlined by respected authorities such as RoSPA, the Visitor Safety Group and Outdoor Swimming Society; people willingly choosing to take the obvious risks of entering open water cannot make a claim if they are injured.

Are designated swim spots an option?

Advantages:

- Select areas where we know people already swim safely
- Signs
- Provide information (entry and exit points, hazards, obstructions, no right of way, etc).
- Website links – Best practice, tides, suggested routes
- QR code

Disadvantages

- What about areas that are not 'designated'?
- Could it give the impression that people shouldn't swim there?
- Is there sufficient parking?
- Could locations become overwhelmed?
- Costs

Insurance

British Triathlon Members are covered with the following:

- Public Liability cover
- Personal Accident Cover
- Legal Claims Service

Next Steps -points to consider

- Identify potential swimming locations

- Remove existing signage (if any) from agreed locations that currently state “no swimming”
- Add signage to agreed locations giving advice on swimming
- Consideration of buoyed off areas for swimming only
- QR code and web address
- “Warning swimmers” signs for boaters
- Add details of locations to the BA website
- Add details of locations to “Broadcaster”.
- Facebook and social media posts, especially where not to swim
- Add more locations

Comments and answers to questions

- A public risk assessment is carried out by Broads Authority rangers at each mooring before installing signs and displaying ‘no swimming’.

Dan Hoare agreed to discuss with Broads Authority rangers the consistency of signs and information displayed.

- Further investigation is required to confirm who would be liable in the event of a boat striking down a swimmer in the water. Whilst swimmers swim at their own risk, people could still make claims in the event of an accident, would hire boat companies be liable?
- If people enjoy swimming in one area, they are likely travel to other areas, not just designated swimming spots. Advice on swimming needs to be standardised across all areas of the of the Broads.
- In some areas of the Broads the risk of Weils disease will be higher than others, people need to be made aware of this, whilst keeping the messaging consistent.
- Honeypot locations such as Caen Meadow have seen an increase in casual swimmers. This has resulted in increased litter and blocked driveways for residents who live nearby. If open water swimming is going to be encouraged across all areas of the Broads than there needs to be an increase of facilities available.
- There have been instances of people jumping in and swimming from boats, but frequently are unable to climb back on the boat. This is more common with hire boat users.
- Increased visitors to honeypot locations may only benefit a select few stores rather than all businesses.
- People who have preexisting cardio vascular medical conditions should not be encouraged to take part in cold water swimming.

- Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth have large populations however their nearby swimming locations are not the safest options. Considerations need to be given for the tide at Great Yarmouth and the popular boating area of Oulton Broad.
- Encouraging swimming in the off season would be safer, especially if areas could be sectioned off for swimming only.
- Water quality is a concern, with some areas in the Broads, particularly the Wensum and places on the Yare, still recording high levels of mercury.
- All different types of exercise and activities should be encouraged, but risk assessments for each area need to be completed.
- The Environment Agency is responsible for water quality testing in the UK and carry out different testing for non-designated bathing waters and bathing waters. Bathing waters are specifically tested for levels of fecal bacteria. Once the testing has taken place the water is assigned a quality score, this must then be displayed at the bathing location during the bathing season. There is a risk that advertising swimming spots may be confused with bathing waters which have been water quality tested.
- An assessment of safe entry and exits to the water need to be carried out. Waterway access point change by the minute due the tide, as does the quality of water.
- The management and promotion of open water swimming would fit under the Broads Authority's responsibilities. Further development is needed to produce defined recommendations via a policy paper for the Forum.
- Requests are occurring more frequently for quieter stretches of the river to swim in and at what times of the day. People are willing to be advised when and where to go.
- Competitive open water swimming has been popular in the Broads for over 10 years, however there is now an increase in more leisurely swimming. A joined-up approach is required for all users to be safe on the water.
- A working group including Broads Authority officers, rangers, Head of Safety Management and relevant stakeholders is required to discuss potential sites, signage, mitigating risks and addressing the issues raised by Forum members today.

Lewis Treloar agreed to begin internal discussions at the Broads Authority regarding the policy review of open water swimming.

8. Lost Paths in the Broads Authority

Richard Atkins provided a report highlighting two footpaths within the Broads National Park currently regarded by Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways as being "lost to the river". Once the path has been "lost to the river", NCC Highways no longer have a duty to maintain them.

The two footpaths are Surlingham footpath 1 and Bramerton footpath 5. Both have been discussed for many years with input from the landowner, Highways officers, BA officers, the Environment Agency, the local parish councils and county councillors, without resolution.

The current NCC Highways policy means that Public Rights of way are silently disappearing without the scrutiny and opportunity to challenge afforded by the Highways Act extinguishment process. It is important to understand how many paths depicted on the Definitive Map are deemed to have been “Lost to the River” or at risk of being labelled so by NCC Highways.

Raising charitable funds for the restoration of the paths is proving difficult as the paths are still displayed on the Definitive Map. Each year the paths are worn away further and the cost of repairing is increasing.

Comments and answers to questions

- There is a similar concern within Norfolk Local Access Forum. The Rights of Way sub group is due to meet next week and proposes that this item is added to the agenda for further discussion and to provide support.
- Coastal paths have specific parts of legislation governing them whereby paths can be rerouted and maintained as a public right of way if eroded by the sea. This does not apply to riverside paths.
- The Broads Authority is responsible for the navigation, the Highways Agency are responsible for the surface of the footpaths and the Environment Agency will look after flooding issues. The responsibility of the riverbanks will lie with the landowner who may not want to pay for the repairs to maintain a footpath.
- Lewis Treloar met with NCC Highways Officers who are commissioning a contractor to survey the two footpaths at Surlingham and Bramerton and provide an indication of costs. An application for CIL funding has been submitted to complete the repairs.
- Four paths on the Wherryman’s Way and further paths on the Waveney have also been identified as needing riverbank restoration.
- There are many examples within the Broads where the status of the path and who is responsible for looking after the path is unknown. An example of this is along the side of Oulton Broad which almost links to Somerleyton footpath.
- Martin Sullivan suggested contacting Pathmakers to help with raising funds. The charity would welcome a trustee to join from the Broads Local Access Forum.

The Chair agreed to contact Norfolk County Council and Suffolk County Council to request a list of all paths which have been ‘Lost to the River’ and the reasoning behind each one.

9. Review of restrictions at Ludham and Potter Heigham Marshes

Lewis Treloar provided a report on the review of access restrictions at Ludham and Potter Heigham marshes. In 2016 Natural England opened up a short section (320m) of land across the National Nature Reserve (NNR) for public access. A restriction was placed on dog walking due to the continued sensitivity of birds breeding and feeding on the site.

The Broads Local Access Forum has a statutory role in both the initial and formal consultation stages. The report has been provided ahead of the public consultation to give members the opportunity to review the restriction and provide the Broads Authority with the Forum's initial feedback.

Comments and answers to questions

- Open access across other NNRs would need to be reviewed on a case by case basis. NNRs may not be eligible for open access due to the sensitivity of biodiversity in the area.
- The map in the report highlights a gap along the riverbank that is not registered as a public right of way. For the path to be registered, a public path creation order would be required from Environment Agency.
- Lewis Treloar has contacted the Environment Agency who own the stretch of path highlighted as a gap along the riverbank, and confirmed that they plan to keep permissive access in place.
- The current signage could be misinterpreted to allow dogs under effective control in the area. The message needs to be clear to avoid potential conflict.

The Forum supports the continued restriction of dog access on Open Access land at Ludham and Potter Heigham marshes ahead of the public consultation.

10. Any other business

Horning Little Staithe

Harry Blathwayt updated the Forum on the developments of Horning Little Staithe. The staithe has recently come up in discussions at a Horning Parish Council meeting. There is a right of way along an access road to the staithe, but there is no right of way on the parcel of land. The land and staithe are registered to North Norfolk District Council (NNDC) and costs £110 a year in maintenance. No fishing or mooring is permitted at the staithe and it needs repair.

Remote meetings

Subject to Covid-19 regulations, there is the opportunity for face to face meetings to resume for the next meeting. The meeting room at Yare House would not be large enough to allow all members, officers and members of the public to attend whilst remaining socially distanced.

Broads Authority officers agreed to investigate alternative venues.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum would be held on Wednesday 1 September 2021 at 10.00am, location TBC.

The meeting ended at 16.05.

Signed by

Chairman

Summary of progress

Outstanding actions	Meeting date	Assigned to
Begin internal discussions at the BA regarding the policy change of open water swimming.	10/06/2021	Lewis Treloar
Investigate venue options for face to face meetings in September	10/06/2021	BA officers
Investigate consistency of 'no swimming' signage in the Broads	10/06/2021	Dan Hoare
Contact NCC and SCC to identify 'Lost Paths'	10/06/2021	BLAF Chair
Contact the Environment Agency asking their opinion as a follow-up from the publication of the staithe report.	04/12/2019	BLAF Chair

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Broads Local Access Forum, 09 June 2021

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Broads Local Access Forum

01 September 2021

Agenda item number 5

Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Status
Open water swimming	09/06/2021	Lewis Treloar	Begin internal discussions at the BA regarding the policy change of open water swimming. Investigate consistency of 'no swimming' signage in the Broads	<p>July 2021 - Initial meeting held with Head of Rangers, Head of Safety management and representatives from BLAF to discuss current guidance and suggest ways to improve how we manage swimming safely in the Broads.</p> <p>Next meeting to be held in October</p>	In progress
Lost Paths in the Broads	09/06/2021		Contact NCC and SCC to identify 'Lost Paths'	Action for BLAF Chair	In progress
Staithes report	04/12/2019		Contact the Environment Agency asking their opinion as a follow-up from the	Action for BLAF Chair	In progress

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Status
			publication of the staithes report.		
Remote meetings	09/06/2021	Kylie Moos	Investigate venue options for face to face meetings in September	August 2021: Yare House meeting room capacity remains at 15 and unable to host a face to face meeting. External venues have been explored. September meeting will be held on Microsoft Teams.	In progress
Maintenance of riverbanks at Potter Heigham	10/03/2021	Dan Hoare	Contact the Environment Agency (David Horsfall) to discuss the maintenance of riverbanks in Potter Heigham	June 2021: David Horsfall advised that site maintenance/ public usage was not their role, but any potential for angling access would lay with the EA fisheries team.	Complete
Bank ownership on the River Ant	10/03/2021	Dan Hoare	Assist on identification of bank ownership on the River Ant with Tony Gibbons	June 2021: Information provided to Tony on the boundary between EA and their riparian neighbour between Ludham Staithe and Buttle Marsh	Complete

Date of report: 20 August 2021

Broads Local Access Forum

01 September 2021

Agenda item number 7

Integrated Access Strategy update

Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

For information

This report gives an update on some of the strategic priorities identified in the Integrated Access Strategy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Every year, as part of the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS), we identify a number of strategic priority projects to be delivered by the Broads Authority and its partners.
- 1.2. Setting these priorities helps us target resources and external funding sources. Many of these projects cannot be delivered without working with external partners and securing external funding. Where partnerships are already identified, the project will be scored higher in the priority scoring matrix.
- 1.3. A progress update on the highest priority projects is in Table 1.
- 1.4. It may be possible for a number of the identified IAS projects to be funded through the new Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) scheme, which is expected to run for three years. The list of potential projects for year 1 are listed in Table 2.

Table 1

Integrated Access Strategy priorities 2020/2021 – progress update Aug 2021

Project	Progress	Partners
Broads Mills Trail	Status: On track Initial project work will begin Sept 2021, with delivery expected Autumn 2022.	Broads Authority Norfolk County Council
Bure Valley Path	Status: On track Awaiting update from NCC BA involvement is advisory only, but ties in with other projects taking place in Hoveton.	Norfolk County Council Broadland District Council Broads Authority
Wherryman's Way Hardley Flood	Status: On track Dredging commences winter 2021, with the sediment being deposited onto the existing footpath ready to be re-shaped in 6-18 months. NCC, in partnership with the BA, has also submitted an external funding application to fund the new bridges and install the new bank stabilisation.	Broads Authority Norfolk County Council
Wherryman's Way – Bramerton to Surlingham	Status: On track External funding application submitted in partnership with NCC to stabilise the riverbank and restore the footpaths.	Broads Authority Norfolk County Council
Hoveton Riverside Park	Status: Delayed Dredge programme delayed as a result of Covid-19. Land raising will not begin until winter 2022/23.	Broads Authority
GIS Recreation Maps	Status: Delayed No further progress.	Broads Authority
Discovery Hubs	Status: Delayed External funding applications were not successful. Plans being	Broads Authority Broads Charitable Trust

Project	Progress	Partners
	developed to seek funds elsewhere, including FiPL.	
Geldeston Canoe Pontoon	Status: Delayed Project still progressing; however, additional bank work is required before installation can go ahead. Aim is to be completed by end of this financial year.	Broads Authority Broads Charitable Trust The Canoe Foundation River Waveney Trust

Table 2

Potential IAS projects to be funded through FiPL (subject to approval of the Board) (Year 1)

Project	Progress	Delivery
Additional permissive routes around Strumpshaw	Application submitted: No Discussions with land manager ongoing.	2021/2022
Restoration of Gillingham FP14	Application Submitted: No Application is being finalised; waiting for quotes.	2021/2022
Herringfleet Hills (new paths & furniture)	Application Submitted: No Discussions with land owner ongoing.	2021/2022
Halvergate – Wickhampton to Polkey's missing path	Application Submitted: No Initial discussions with landowner required.	2021/2022
Bungay Staithe – Re-instate circular walk	Application Submitted: No Requires a new access bridge and match funding due to the large cost. Likely to roll into year 2.	2021/2023

Author: Lewis Treloar

Date of report: 11 August 2021

[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 6.1,6.2,6.3,6.4