

Review of Broads Local Access Forum Membership

Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer

Summary:	This report considers the issue of membership of the Broads Local Access Forum (BLAF) and puts forward a proposal for recruiting new members to represent the interest groups that were identified as priorities for future recruitment by the BLAF at its meeting on 10 September 2014.
Recommendation:	That members support the proposal for the recruitment and appointment of members to the BLAF outlined in this report.

1 Background

- 1.1 The BLAF considered a report on membership at its meeting on 10 September 2014. At that meeting members agreed that when seeking to recruit new members to ensure that a balance of interest groups is represented on the BLAF applicants representing canoeing, angling, cycling, boating, Broads Tourism, Norfolk Geodiversity, RSPB, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and interpretation should be given priority.
- 1.2 Local access forums are statutorily prescribed bodies under Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 1990 (CROW). Their main function is to advise their appointing authority, ie. either a local highway authority (LHA) or a national park authority (NPA) for their area, as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. The regulations governing the composition of local access forums state:

“forums should have at least 10 and a maximum of 22 members, and that these should be people who appear to be representative of:

- a) Users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers);*
- b) Owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way subsist; or*
- c) Any other interests especially relevant to the appointing authority’s area.”*

- 1.3 Terms of membership are also covered by the regulations and state that “a member of a local access forum shall be appointed for not less than one and not more than three years”. However, the regulations also make it plain that an appointing authority may reappoint a person to membership of a forum on the expiry of his or her term. As the BLAF currently has 16 members

representing a range of interest groups members agreed that there is scope for increasing the membership.

2 Recruitment and Appointment of Forum Members

- 2.1 Guidance from Government in the regulations regarding the recruitment and appointment of new members to local access forums is detailed. Appointing authorities are obliged to advertise vacancies in local or regional newspapers and consult with such bodies or individuals that they consider appropriate prior to the appointment of members.
- 2.2 The appointment process should also be fair and transparent and comply with any relevant policies on social inclusion and diversity that the authority may have. The Regulations advise appointing authorities to adopt a creative and proactive approach in advertising vacancies in order to attract applicants from as wide a background as possible. The appointment process should also take account of the needs of young people, women, people on low incomes, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minorities.
- 2.3 Appendix 1 shows the list of current members of the BLAF including the date their term of membership ends. Government advice to appointing authorities is that they should ensure there is a reasonable balance of representation between the interest groups defined in the Regulations. Officers consider that the current membership broadly achieves this balance. However, as members of the BLAF have previously recognised, there are obvious gaps in representation under the third category of membership which covers “other interests especially relevant to the appointing authority’s area.”
- 2.4 This situation has been exacerbated by the fact that there have been a number of resignations from the BLAF in the past year which have resulted in further interest groups being unrepresented. In particular canoeing, angling and recreational boating are major recreational activities in the Broads that are now either not represented at all or under- represented on the BLAF.
- 2.5 Officers have also recently been approached by a number of people expressing an interest in becoming members of the BLAF. If all of these individuals were appointed and additional members were appointed to represent canoeing and angling the membership number would exceed the maximum of 22 defined in the Regulations.

3 Proposal for Recruitment and Appointment of Members to the Broads Local Access Forum

- 3.1 The members of the BLAF have recognised that there are gaps in representation on the BLAF and identified interest groups that should be prioritised for recruitment. As mentioned at paragraph 2.5 there are also individuals actively seeking to become members of the BLAF.
- 3.2 Given the fact that so many members’ appointments come to an end this year officers consider that the fairest, most open and transparent way of recruiting

members to the BLAF would be not to simply reappoint the existing members but to advertise all potential BLAF vacancies using the Broads Authority's adopted appointment process and application form (attached at Appendix 2).

- 3.3 In this way all the organisations representing the interest groups that the members have prioritised can be consulted and, as advised in the Regulations, applications encouraged from people from as wide a range of interests and backgrounds as possible. This will enable the Authority to demonstrate that the membership of the BLAF meets the requirements of the Regulations and ensure that members are appointed who cover all the interests that are relevant to the Broads potentially contributing additional skills and perspectives to the work of the BLAF.

4 Appointment Process

- 4.1 The Chief Executive has delegated powers to appoint and re-appoint members to the Broads Local Access Forum, in consultation with the Chairman of the Forum. This process is fine for the filling of casual vacancies but it is suggested that a more robust process is necessary this time round when all members are being asked to reapply.
- 4.2 The following draft process was put forward for the BLAF's consideration at its meeting on 9 of September. The members unanimously agreed with the process and recommended that the Broads Authority be asked to ratify the process at its meeting on 25 September in order to enable the recruitment process to be completed before the December meeting of the BLAF.

Step 1	Consideration of the categories and size of the membership
Step 2	Contact all the relevant organisations inviting nominations. Advertisement of vacancies in the local newspaper and proactive approach to seeking new members
Step 3	Chief Executive to match applications to categories and appoint where there is only one candidate and invite to interview where more than one candidate
Step 4	If required, interview by Chair and Vice-Chairman of the Broads Authority
Step 5	Appointment to the BLAF following interview
Step 6	Chief Executive reports back to Broads Authority meeting

4.3 Draft Timescale

9 September 2015	BLAF considers process
25 September 2015	Broads Authority approves process
October 2015	Consultation with relevant organisations and advertisement in local press
November 2015	Interviews where necessary and appointment
9 December	New BLAF meets

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The BLAF provides valuable advice to the Broads Authority on access related issues and contributes greatly to the delivery of the Authority's Integrated Access Strategy. Officers are therefore keen to complete the recruitment and appointment of members before the date of the next meeting scheduled for the 9 of December. Officers also recognise that it is important to ensure the expertise, knowledge and collective experience of the current membership is not lost and while invited to support the appointment process set out in this report members should note that the existing members of the BLAF will be encouraged to reapply for membership.

Background papers: Nil

Author: Adrian Clarke

Date of report: 16 September 2015

Broads Plan Objectives: TR1, TR2

Appendices: Appendix 1 List of current BLAF members
Appendix 2 Application for membership of the BLAF

APPENDIX 1: List of current Broads Local Access Forum Members

Broads Local Access Forum – Membership Terms			
Name	Years	Date	Representing
Mr G Simons	three	30 November 2015	People with disabilities/ Access for all
Mr C Swan	three	30 November 2015	Parish Councils
Mr C Yardley	three	30 November 2015	Nature conservation/ Cycling
Mr G Saunders	three	30 November 2015	People with disabilities/ Access for all
Mrs H Llewelyn-Davies	three	30 November 2015	Walking
Dr K Bacon	three	30 November 2015	Archaeology and landscape heritage
Ms L Brooks	three	30 November 2015	Horse riding
Mr R Walpole	three	30 November 2015	Walking
Mr R Buxton	three	30 November 2015	Landowners and managers
Mr M Flett	three	28 February 2016	Landowners and managers
Mrs J Parmenter	three	28 February 2016	Nature conservation
Mr L Baugh	three	28 February 2016	Landowners and managers
Mr S Read	three	28 February 2016	Tourism and local business/ Water borne recreational
Mr A Hartley	three	28 May 2016	Wensum River Parkway Partnership
Mrs L Hemsall	three	09 September 2018	Broads Authority
Mr P Warner	three	09 September 2018	Broads Authority



Application for Membership of the Broads Local Access Forum

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Home Phone _____ Mobile Phone _____

E-mail address _____

Background

Occupation _____

Any relevant professional qualifications

APPENDIX 2 Application for membership of the BLAF

Which interests would you be representing?

Please do not indicate more than 3 interests. Please rank your primary interest as 1, and the others as 2 and 3.

- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Cycling
- ☐ Equestrian riding and driving
- ☐ Motorised vehicle use
- ☐ Tourism and local business (Economic development)
- ☐ Nature conservation
- ☐ Archaeology and landscape heritage
- ☐ Angling
- ☐ Waterborne recreational users
- ☐ Landowners and managers (including farmers, large, small and tenant.)
- ☐ Educational establishments
- ☐ People with Disabilities/Access for all
- ☐ Ethnic/Minority groups
- ☐ Local Authorities
- ☐ Wildfowlers/Field Sporting users
- ☐ Other (Please specify)

Experience

Please detail the relevant skills, knowledge and experience that you would bring to the Broads Local Access Forum. Please include details of the length and nature of your involvement with any interests and memberships of any relevant organisations.

APPENDIX 2 Application for membership of the BLAF

Do you have any knowledge of rights of way issues? (please detail)

Please include anything else of relevance.

Why do you want to be a member of the Broads Local Access Forum?

What qualities would you bring to the Broads Local Access Forum?

What do you see as the most important issues for the Broads Local Access Forum to tackle?

APPENDIX 2 Application for membership of the BLAF

Communication

Please give an outline of how you would seek the views of your interest group on items considered by the Broads Local Access Forum, and how you would publicise the work of the Forum.

Other Information

For how many years would you initially be willing to serve on the Broads Local Access Forum?
(Please circle)

1 2 3

Are you a member of a district/borough/parish council?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give details

Do you have any connection with the Broads Authority?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please give details

APPENDIX 2 Application for membership of the BLAF

Statement

I am applying to be a member of the Broads Local Access Forum and certify that the information given on this form is correct. I have read the members roles and responsibilities and if appointed will agree to undertake all duties as described in the constitution.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return to:

Lottie Carlton
Secretary to the Broads Local Access Forum
Yare House
62-64 Thorpe Road
Norwich
NR1 1RY