

Broads Authority

29 July 2022

Agenda item number 20

Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2022

Report by Waterways and Recreation Officer

Purpose

This report presents the Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report for 2021/22 on the development and improvement of public access within the Broads.

Recommended decision

To note the Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/22.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/22 is at Appendix 1.
- 1.2. The Forum held four public meetings in the year to consider and agree its advice to the Broads Authority on access matters and potential improvements. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all meetings were held remotely and live streamed on the Authority's website

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Date of report: 13 July 2022

Background papers: Appendix 1

[Broads Plan](#) strategic actions: 6.1, 6.2

Appendix 1 – Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/22



Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/22

June 2022

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www.broads-authority.gov.uk

Contents

Statutory purpose	3
The Forum's Vision	3
What has happened during the year?	3
The Forum at work	3
Challenges faced by the Forum	3
Access reports and presentations	4
Working in partnership	5
Observers and advisors to the Forum	5
Who makes up the Broads Local Access Forum?	5
Chair and Vice Chair	5
Members and representation	5

Statutory purpose

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.

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 the environment, communities and the economy.

What has happened during the year?

The Forum at work

The Forum delivered its purpose in a number of ways between April 2021 and March 2022:

- (i) Four public (virtual) meetings held to agree its advice to the Broads Authority and other organisations.
- (ii) Representation and guidance to the Norfolk Local Access Forum.
- (iii) Provision of suggestions and advice on a number of projects being delivered.
- (iv) Presentations by members, giving their opinions and suggested ideas on behalf of their relevant interest groups. By doing so, they have helped to bridge the gap between Broads Authority staff and the relevant user groups.

Challenges faced by the Forum

The Forum has faced some major challenges over the last year, particularly as Covid-19 has meant that face-to-face meetings and site visits have not been possible.

There is a continuing need to increase the diversity of representation on the Forum and work will continue to recruit and hear more diverse voices.

Advising the Broads Authority and other bodies

The Forum has given advice to a number of bodies over the year:

- Norfolk County Council, general Public Rights of Way (PROW) improvements and recommendations.

The Forum has also advised the Broads Authority on:

- The Integrated Access Strategy prioritisation plan
- Open Water Swimming development in the Broads
- The issues around paths 'Lost to the river'
- The current status of unregistered rights of way.
- A number of individual projects for access improvements

Access reports and presentations

The Forum received the following access reports and presentations:

- Paul Saunders (BLAF member) presented open water swimming to the Forum. The presentation included how swimming 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 those risks
- Richard Atkins (BLAF member) presented a report highlighting two footpaths within the Broads National Park currently regarded by Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways as being "lost to the river" [Lost-Paths-in-the-Broads.pdf \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](#)
- Andrea Kelly, Environment Policy Adviser for the Broads Authority provided a presentation on Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) to the Forum. The three-year funded programme will provide financial support to farmers and other land managers. The Broads Authority will be working with Norfolk Coast Partnership for a joined-up approach
- Integrated Access Strategy update presented Waterways and Recreation Officer [Integrated Access Strategy update \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](#)
- Carbon Reduction in the Broads - Harry Mach, Carbon Reduction Officer at the Broads Authority presented an overview of carbon reduction measures taking place within the Broads, and to update the Forum on key data that has been gathered.

- MONUMENT Project - Matt Hayward, Lead Projects Managers for Norfolk County Council (NCC) Environment team presented the MONUMENT project to the Forum. The MONUMENT project aim is to support informal carers of people living with dementia by providing professional and structural support to these carers and tailor-made technological solutions.
- Andrew Farrell, Programme Manager for Water, Mills and Marshes Project presented the report which provided an update on countryside access related projects within Water, Mills and Marshes including the Broads Mills Trail project and the Improving Access Projects; Angles Way Feeder Paths and Waveney Marsh Observatories.
- Ken Hawkins (Norfolk LAF) provided a presentation on unregistered Rights of Ways, why they may have occurred and the process to record them on the Definitive Map.

Working in partnership

The Forum worked with the following partner organisations:

- Norfolk County Council
- Norfolk LAF
- Environment Agency
- Norfolk Trails

Observers and advisors to the Forum

- Matt Hayward, Norfolk County Council
- Ken Hawkins, Norfolk Local Access Forum
- Martin Sullivan, Norfolk Local Access Forum
- Marie-Pierre Tighe, Broads Authority
- Dan Hoare, Broads Authority
- Lewis Treloar, Broads Authority
- Kylie Moos, Broads Authority

Who makes up the Broads Local Access Forum?

Chair and Vice Chair

In June 2021, the Forum re-appointed Keith Bacon as Chair. Peter Dixon was appointed Vice Chair of the Forum in September 2021.

Members and representation

Chairman: Keith Bacon – Catfield

Representing archaeology and landscape heritage

Vice Chair: Peter Dixon - Hickling

Representing waterborne recreational users

Linda Aspland – Wroxham

Representing waterborne recreational users and paddle sports

Louis Baugh – Neatishead

Representing landowners and managers

Harry Blathwayt – Ludham

Representing Local Authority (District Council), tourism and local business

Tony Gibbons – Norwich

Representing angling

Tim Harris – Catfield

Representing nature conservation, archaeology and landscape heritage

Peter Mason - Catfield

Representing walking, tourism and local business

John Murray – Lowestoft

Representing walking, people with disabilities and access for all

Stephen Read – Oulton Broad

Representing walking and waterborne recreational users

Richard Webb – Norwich

Representing walking and sailing

Christopher Yardley – Burnham Thorpe

Representing waterborne recreational users and nature conservation

Richard Atkins - Surlingham

Representing paddle sports and walking

Katie Baxter - Wroxham

Representing paddle sports, tourism and local business

Christine Cane - Wymondham

Representing equestrian riding and driving

Martin Rendle – Norwich

Representing paddle sports, tourism and local business

Paul Saunders - Norwich

Representing open water swimming