

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

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| Summary: | Since its inception in 2003 the Local Access Forum has, in accordance with the relevant government regulations, submitted a report to the annual meeting of the Broads Authority setting out its activities in the year. The draft annual report is attached and members are invited to consider it prior to its submission to the Authority. |
| Recommendation: | To approve the draft report for submission to the Authority. |

1 Requirement to Produce an Annual Report

- 1.1 Since its inception in 2003 the Local Access Forum has submitted a report to the annual meeting of the Broads Authority setting out its activities during the year. The relevant section of the recent Guidance sets out the statutory requirement as follows:

“Regulation 13 requires every forum to produce an annual report on the discharge of its functions. The report should set out the main issues and occasions on which the forum has given advice during the year, and indicate the bodies to whom advice was given. The report may also:

- review how effective the forum was in meeting its own criteria for measuring success or effectiveness and completing its forward work programme;
- identify the forum members and the interests they represent;
- give information on the meetings held and the main issues discussed;
- give information on any training events held;
- summarise any feedback received from section 94(4) bodies;
- identify issues which posed a particular challenge for the forum; and
- address other issues relevant to the work of the forum.”

- 1.2 The Regulations require the appointing authority to:

- (a) publish the annual report, and
- (b) send a copy to the Natural England within 21 days of publication. (This information will be used to assist Natural England in delivering its own functions, and in supporting forums (e.g. through training)).

2 Draft Annual Report

- 2.1 The draft annual report is attached to this covering report as Appendix 1. Members are asked to consider both the report and whether they wish to make any additions/amendments prior to its consideration by the Broads Authority on 12 July 2013.

Background papers: Minutes of the Local Access Forum

Author: Adrian Clarke
Date of report: 29 May 2013

Broads Plan Objectives: None

Appendices: APPENDIX 1 – Draft Annual Report of the Local Access Forum to the Broads Authority

The Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report – 2013

1. Broads Local Access Forum

1.1 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.

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 three public meetings to agree its advice to the Broads Authority and other organisations.
- ii. The forum provides representation on the Broads Forum and the Norfolk Local Access Forum.
- iii. Forum members provide advice by individual correspondence on consultation documents.
- iv. The Chair and Vice Chair attended the East of England Local Access Forum Chairs and Vice Chairs' meeting to consider and better understand areas of common concern and ways of partnership working in the eastern region.

- v. 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 reduction of funding for maintenance of rights of way by local authorities generally.
- The withdrawal of funding for access agreements in agri-environment schemes.
- The reduction in support from Natural England.

2.3 Advising the Broads Authority

The forum has given advice on the following issues:

- Finalising the content of the Broads Integrated Access Strategy.
- Paths for Communities.
- Broads Outdoors Festival.

2.4 Responding to consultations

The forum has responded to the following consultations:

- Planning application at Deal Ground, Trowse for a bridge over the River Yare.

2.5 Access reports

The forum has received the following access reports:

- Oulton Broad Free Quay.
- Breydon Water Mobility Access Path.
- Punting on the River Wensum.
- Whitlingham Ferry Proposal.
- River Waveney Ferry Burgh St Peter.
- Three Rivers Way.
- National Trails and Rights of Way Update – Norfolk County Council.
- Department for Transport Funding for Cycling in National Parks.
- Canoe Trails in the Broads.
- Paths for Communities – Natural England.
- Footpath Link from Ludham Bridge to St Benet's Abbey.

2.6 Partnership working

The forum has worked with the following partner organisations:

- Norfolk County Council.
- Three Rivers Way Association.
- East of England Local Access Forum Chairs and Vice Chairs Meeting.

2.7 Observers and advisors to the forum

The forum has received reports and advice from:

- Fiona Taylor, Natural England.
- Peter Howe, Three Rivers Way.
- Louisa Lloyd, Norfolk County Council.
- Matt Worden, Norfolk County Council.
- Sarah Abercrombie, Norfolk County Council.
- Andrea Long, Broads Authority.
- Simon Hooton, Broads Authority.
- Adrian Clarke, Broads Authority.
- Russell Wilson, Broads Authority.

3. Who makes up the forum?

3.1 Chair and vice-chair

In December 2012 Keith Bacon was re-appointed as Chair and Peter Medhurst was re-appointed as Vice-Chair.

3.2 Members and representation

David Broad – Horning

Tel: 016092 63127

davidbroad@btinternet.com

Representing the Broads Authority

First visiting Horsey, Wroxham and Brundall in the Norfolk Broads as a boy for fishing holidays, David has more recently been associated with boating as past Director of the Cruising Association and founding chairman of the Broom Owners Club. Retired early as company Chairman and Chief Executive, David has been a toll payer and resident in a thatched riverside house in Horning since 1989 and been a member of the Broads Authority and Navigation Committee since 2008 as the Broads Authority's lead member on Sustainable Tourism. Keen on cycling, walking and dog training he has taken up the role of the Authority's representative on the Local Access Forum.

Charles Swan – Oulton

Tel: 01502 588915

Representing Parish Councils

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 Poors Trustee for Oulton Marshes, a keen angler and walker and also boat owner. As a supporter of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, he works with primary school nature projects in the parish.

Peter Medhurst – Norwich

Tel: 01603 259723

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Representing educational establishments

Peter, although born in Kent, spent most of his childhood in East Anglia. In 1978 he returned to East Anglia from the north of England. Having spent most of his life in the countryside, and as walking is his passion, access to rural areas is vitally important to him. He has, over many years, represented the trade union on committees dealing with rural issues both nationally and regionally. Now retired, he is currently chair of Norfolk Rural Community Council.

Robin Buxton – Lingwood

Tel: 01493 750102

robin.buxton@ukgateway.net

Representing landowners and managers

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

Keith Bacon – Catfield

Tel: 01692 581314

keithbacon@keme.co.uk

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 Chairman of the North Norfolk group of the Campaign to Protect Rural England. He has been Chairman of Catfield Parish Council for nearly 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.

Christopher Yardley – Burnham Thorpe

Tel: 01328 738705

chris.yardley@cjyardley.co.uk

Representing nature conservation and cycling

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.

Stephen Read – Oulton Broad

Tel: 07720 808715

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Representing tourism and local business, and water-borne recreational issues

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.

Ray Walpole – Norwich

Tel: 01603 300221

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Representing walking

Ray has spent most of his life in east Norfolk and now lives in the Norwich fringe. He is a member of Norfolk Ramblers, Norwich Cycling and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. He campaigns for the Sustrans1 cycle network to be linked directly to Whitlingham Country Park and for new trails in the Yare valley.

Hattie Llewelyn-Davies – Tring

Tel: 07710

hattie.llewelyn-davies@virgin.net

Representing walking

Hattie has been coming to the Broads all her life. She has a keen interest in walking, wildlife, the environment and sailing. All of these interests are shared by her family. She knows the Broads very well and is very committed to ensuring the area is accessible for future generations. Hattie's background is in housing and health and she knows how important access to our countryside is to provide quality of life for people.

Tony Howes – Horsham St Faith

Tel: 01603 897326

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Representing water-borne recreational users

Tony has lived and worked in the Broads area all his life. He retired in 2002 after 30 years with Blakes Holidays, latterly as Boating Operations Director, and is now Secretary of the Broads Hire Boat Federation. He is member of the Executive Committee of Broads Tourism and sits on the Broads Authority Boat Safety Management Group. Outside boating his interests include cycling, walking, bird-watching and the natural world.

Gary Simons – Cantley

Tel: 01493 701983

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Representing people with disabilities and access for all

Gary has canoed or sailed all the accessible navigable Broads waterways. He has a particular interest in the preservation of staithe and helped secure the registration of Cantley Parish Staithe as a village green. He now serves on the staithe management committee and sees this development as a good example of local initiative with Broads Authority support. The quality of the Broads landscape and access to it, especially for young people, are his priorities.

George Saunders – Norwich

Tel: 01603 413485

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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 the Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People. 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.

Jo Lester – Reedham

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Representing nature conservation

Jo is a consultant ecologist and works for The Landscape Partnership, a firm of landscape architects and environmental planners, in Norwich. She has a particular interest in the creation, development and management of landscapes and ecosystems and combines her interest in natural history with a love of walking. Jo has lived and worked in the Broads area for over 40 years. She is a member of Reedham Parish Council and Norfolk Geodiversity Partnership, and also serves on the Norfolk Biodiversity Wetland Topic Troup.

Mike Flett – Ludham

Tel: 01692 678560

mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com

Representing landowners and managers

Mike, although born in Surrey, has been a resident in Norfolk for over 35 years, mostly in Ludham. He has been a Parish Councillor for the last 13 years and a

Governor of Ludham First School for over 10 years. He is a founder Trustee of a registered local charity, Womack Charitable Trust, set up in 2001, whose main purpose is to administer and maintain a substantial mooring facility in the village of Ludham. His recreation activities include sailing, walking and membership of the Friends of How Hill Trust.

Patrick Hacon – Caister-on-Sea

Tel: 01493 720917

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Representing walking

Patrick joined the Forum after 24 years as a Norfolk County Councillor. In 2006-7 he was Chairman of Norfolk County Council. Most of his working life was spent in Norwich Union. He also spent many happy years as a Parish Councillor and some time as a Great Yarmouth Borough Councillor. He walks very frequently with his wife and pet Beagle and can do up to 3 hours every day, so visiting new walks in the Broads is a particular delight.

Louis Baugh – Neatishead

Tel: 07785 224589

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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 Neatishead Parish Council Chairman, 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

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Representing equestrian riding

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.

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