

Broads Local Access Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 31 August 2022

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Present

Keith Bacon – in the Chair, Richard Atkins, Linda Aspland, Christine Cane, Tony Gibbons, Tim Harris, Steve Read, Michael Scott, Chris Yardley.

In attendance

Emily Chittenden – Generation Green Project Officer, Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Andrew Walters – Waterways and Recreation Officer, Russell Wilson – Norfolk County Council.

1. Appointment of Chair

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

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

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

3. Apologies for absence and welcome

The Chair welcomed one new member to the Forum; Alison Holden Standley.

The Broads Authority appointees were confirmed as Harry Blathwayt and Michael Scott. The Chair welcomed both members to the meeting.

Apologies received from Louis Baugh, Katie Baxter, Peter Dixon, Peter Mason, John Murray.

4. Declarations of interest

None declared.

5. Minutes of the Broads Local Access Forum meeting held on 9 March 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. Summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings

Open water swimming

The Authority website has been updated with its position on open water swimming and safety in navigable areas. It recommends that the best way to swim in navigable areas within the Broads is through organised events only.

There has been an increase in media coverage on water quality and untreated sewage into the sea and rivers which is risk for open water swimmers. The Rivers Trust have produced a

map which shows where the sewage network discharges treated sewage and overflows of untreated sewage and storm water into rivers in England and Wales in 2021. [Sewage Map | The Rivers Trust](#). Forum members suggested adding a link to the map on the Authority's open water swimming guidance webpage.

The Angling Trust are working on a programme that looks at sewage outfall into the rivers as the water quality affects the health of the fish and nearby ecosystems.

Several Forum members noted the difficulty in obtaining water quality data for the Broads and would like to see the Authority focus on monitoring. Dan Hoare responded, water quality is monitored by the Environment Agency, not the Broads Authority.

A member suggested publishing the risks of open water swimming and visibility when in the water in parish magazines and websites.

The Authority is working with partners on a potential project for designated inland bathing areas in the Upper Waveney and will report back at a future meeting.

Lost Paths in the Broads

The Chair has written to Norfolk County Council and Suffolk Council and requested a list of all of the paths that have been lost to the river. If the response indicates that there are several foot paths effected, a member suggested contacting other National Park Authorities to see if they have come across the same issue.

There has been progress on the Surlingham and Bramerton footpaths and they are both now included in the Wherryman's Way improvement plan.

7. Wherryman's Way

Russell Wilson from the Trails team at Norfolk County Council presented phase 1 of the Wherryman's Way access improvements to the Forum. Norfolk Country Council and the Broads Authority are working together for key strategic improvements on the Wherryman's Way. Works to date and ongoing works include

- Signage throughout the route- Norwich to Great Yarmouth
- Access improvements at Heckingham
- Planned works at Rockland 'Access for All' path complete
- Associated cycle route signage delivered by Norse

Phase 1 of the improvements include

- Dredging of the River Chet
- Riverbank Stabilisation
- Restoration of Footpaths, rebuilding of bridges and bird hide repairs
- Improvements at Rockland Staithe

Comments and answers to questions

The improvements have been made possible due to the joint working of the Broads Authority restoring the riverbanks, and Norfolk County Council restoring the footpaths on top of the riverbank. The Chair thanked the both for their work.

Feedback from feasibility studies for the Surlingham and Bramerton paths will be reported back to parish groups by early 2023.

Forum members will be taken on a site visit to Rockland Staithe to view the improvements after today's meeting.

8. Norfolk Walking and Cycling Strategy

Norfolk County Council are working in partnership with local authorities to create a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Norfolk. The purpose of the plan is to create a proposed cycling and walking network across the county, and to identify and prioritise improvement schemes which can be delivered over the short, medium and long term.

Russell Wilson presented the LCWIP for Norwich and Great Yarmouth which can be viewed at the following link: [Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans - Norfolk County Council](#).

9. Three Rivers Way

The first section of the Three Rivers Way from Hoveton to Horning was funded by a grant from the government to improve access in National Parks. Since the funding stopped there has not been any progress on the route. The ambition for the route is to continue to Ludham and on to Potter Heigham as and when funding becomes available.

10. Generation Green

Emily Chittenden, presented Generation Green to the Forum. The project had a national target of connecting 100,000 young people with nature and Protected Landscapes and ended in May 2022. Generation Green was a 16-month project aimed at:

- Improving diversity of access to nature and the natural world, for young people now and in the future
- Testing approaches to ensure more young people have opportunities to connect and care for nature
- Delivering activities that inspire the youth and give clear career pathways into the environment and outdoor sector

The project targets young people between 8- 26 years who are less likely to participate in outdoor or nature-based activities and are from under-privileged urban or coastal communities or under-represented in the visitor profile of the area.

Working with New Routes Integration and the EMPOWHER programme, young women have been taken to Whitlingham, Wheatfen and How Hill to understand the Broads and learn new outdoor skills.

An apprentice at the Authority has been appointed as a youth ambassador for the Broads.

Comments and answers to questions

There are no Youth Hostels within the Broads boundary, the closest is at Sheringham. Residential stays at How Hill were not possible as they were not included in the Access Unlimited Coalition.

A member noted the difficulty in keeping young people engaged and returning once the activity has taken place and the support is no longer there. Emily responded, if the bid for Generation Green Part 2 was successful, the project would go back to the original groups and work on building their confidence so that they may access the Broads by themselves. The current Broads Youth rangers are also a young voice which will offer practical support.

The funding for the project was from the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund in response to Covid-19. The project was also an opportunity to include some of the recommendations from the Landscape Review by Julian Glover, for example a night under the stars in a protected landscape for children.

11. Integrated Access Strategy: Update

Andrew Walters introduced the report which gives an update on some of the strategic priorities identified in the Integrated Access Strategy. The Integrated Access Strategy is due to be refreshed and will be reviewed in the coming months. The following additional updates were provided at the meeting.

- Hoveton Riverside Park enhancement works are delayed due to the rising costs of materials, but there is now money in place to complete some of the re-piling.
- The River Wensum Delivery Plan can be viewed on the Norwich City Council website: [River Wensum Strategy | Norwich City Council](#).
- Norwich and District Angler's Association have an agreement in place with a landowner for access on the first parcel of land between Coldharbour and Womack Water. Access is for angling purposes only, but the Association would like the Authority to continue work on a permissive path so that there is access for all.
- The bridges on the permissive path between Horsey Windpump and the Nelsons Head were installed by the Authority but they are not a Broads Authority asset, nor are they responsible for the maintenance and repairs. Andrew Walters has been discussing the bridges on the permissive path with the Horsey Estate and the National Trust to seek funding for the ongoing maintenance and repairs.
- An initial review of the Integrated Access Strategy highlights the need for more projects that are aimed at young people.

12. Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2021/2022

The report was noted.

13. Any other business

None.

14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Broads Local Access Forum would be held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 30 November at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 11.30am.

Signed by

Chairman

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Broads Local Access Forum, 31 August 2022

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest