

Guide for Local Authority appointees to the Broads Authority

Update: May 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. While the Broads Authority has some similarities to a local authority, it is non-political and therefore operates in a different way. Local Authority members are appointed not to represent a particular interest, area or authority but rather to participate in guiding the Authority in delivering its statutory purposes for the management of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. As such, a member's key role is to contribute knowledge, analysis and leadership in strategic decision making. Our local authority members are also an important communication link between the Authority and their own appointing authority.
- 1.2. This guidance explains the Authority's functions, governance structure, and our expectations of local authority appointees.

2. Our functions

- 2.1. The Broads Authority is a special statutory authority, set up under the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. The Broads Authority executive area has an equivalent status to that of a national park and the Authority has similar roles and responsibilities to that of a national park authority, with the added responsibility for navigation. You can read more about this at www.nationalparks.gov.uk and on the Authority's website at www.broads-authority.gov.uk, including our '[frequently asked questions](#)' page.
- 2.2. The 1988 Broads Act has been amended several times. Among the most significant changes are the realignment of its national park purposes with the national park authorities (Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006) and the Broads Authority Act 2009, whose primary purpose was to give the Authority greater powers to manage safety on the Broads.
- 2.3. Section 2 of the 1988 Act gives the Authority the general duty to manage the Broads for the purposes of:
 - a) conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads;
 - b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public; and
 - c) protecting the interests of navigation;

while having regard to:

- a) the national importance of the Broads as an area of natural beauty and one which affords opportunities for open-air recreation;
- b) the desirability of protecting the natural resources of the Broads from damage; and
- c) the needs of agriculture and forestry and the economic and social interests of those who live or work in the Broads.

Section 10 provides for more specific functions in relation to the navigation area namely that: (1) The Authority shall—

- (a) maintain the navigation area for the purposes of navigation to such standard as appears to it to be reasonably required; and
- (b) take such steps to improve and develop it as it thinks fit.

- 2.4. The Authority is also the statutory local planning authority for the Broads Authority executive area, and a competent harbour authority. It is a member of National Parks UK, the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA), and the worldwide Living Lakes network set up by the Global Nature Fund.

3. Committee structure and membership

- 3.1. Member appointments are to the board of the Broads Authority, which has 21 members. Nine members are appointed by the two county councils and six district councils whose boundaries fall within the Authority's executive area (Norfolk, Suffolk, Broadland, East Suffolk, Great Yarmouth, North Norfolk, Norwich City, South Norfolk). Ten members are appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), and two members by the Authority from the co-opted members of the Navigation Committee.
- 3.2. There are six meetings a year of the full Authority, two of which may be used for member workshops or site visits. The Planning Committee meets every four weeks; the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee three times a year and the Standards Committee has a minimum of one meeting per year. The Navigation Committee is a statutory consultative body on navigation issues and meets five times a year. The Broads Local Access Forum, which meets four times a year, is a statutory advisory body to provide guidance to relevant authorities on improving public access to the countryside in the Broads executive area.
- 3.3. A committee structure chart is at Appendix 1.

4. Appointments to outside bodies

- 4.1. The Authority is invited by various bodies to appoint a member to represent the Authority's interests on that body. Appointments to outside bodies are generally determined at the Broads Authority's annual meeting. For more information, see [Guidance for appointees to outside bodies \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk/guidance-for-appointees-to-outside-bodies).

5. Expectations of local authority appointees

5.1. The special qualities and commitments the Authority requires in local authority appointed members are:

- An enthusiastic willingness to develop an understanding of the unique and global importance of the Broads and the many factors needed to create and maintain a National Park.
- To be the conduit for the two-way flow of information, knowledge and understanding between districts, boroughs and parishes and the Authority.
- To be an ambassador, acting as the public face of the Authority in a professional, non-political manner.
- A willingness to participate in continuous development sessions, including mandatory training as appropriate (such as on development planning or the Port Marine Safety Code), and to take part in the members' annual review process.
- An analytical, creative approach to problem solving, and the ability to challenge in a constructive manner and be prepared to be challenged.
- To work and contribute as a team member, working towards common goals.
- To bring your own experiences and knowledge to the strategic development of the Broads.
- To adhere to the standards of conduct, accountability and openness of the Authority, and the protocol on member and officer relations.

5.2 In return, you will be an integral part of a team of members and officers caring for and developing this internationally important landscape for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.

5.3 Allowances and reasonable expenses are available to appointed members.

6. Contact for more information

Write to: Governance team, Broads Authority, Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1RY

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Appendix 1 - Broads Authority committee structure

