

# The Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report 2018-19

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# 1. Broads Local Access forum

## 1.1 Statutory purposes

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 four public meetings to agree its advice to the Broads Authority and other organisations.
- ii The forum provided representation at the Broads Engage workshop, the Norfolk Local Access Forum, the Joint LAF meeting (Broads and Norfolk) and at Regional LAF meetings.
- iii Forum members provided advice by individual correspondence on consultation documents including the Broads Integrated Access Strategy Review and the Norfolk Access Improvement plan.
- iv 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 main challenge faced by the Forum has again been the continuing pressure on public funding for countryside access across all local authorities which has meant some paths have received little maintenance. Additionally as Agri-Environment Access payments to landowners have come to an end some permissive paths have closed resulting in a more fragmented access network.

## 2.3 Advising the Broads Authority

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

- Norfolk County Council, on the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan Consultation
- Defra, on the implementation of the cut-off date for recording public rights of way based on historic evidence
- Defra consultation response - Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment
- River Wensum Strategy Partnership on the River Wensum Strategy and Action Plan

The forum has also given further advice to the Broads Authority on:

- The Review of the Broads Integrated Access Strategy

## 2.3 Responding to consultations

The forum has responded to the following consultations:

- Norfolk Wildlife Trust consultation on Hickling Broad project

## 2.4 Access reports and presentations

- Broads Integrated Access Strategy Review
- Broads Engage Workshop – priorities for working with Norfolk County Council on access development through the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan
- Review of Broads Local Access Forum membership
- Broads Engage Workshop
- Defra consultation - Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment
- Aston Rowant National Land Access Centre
- Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment – The National Survey on People and the Natural Environment
- Membership review
- Regional LAF meeting update
- County Council prioritisation of Rights of Way claims under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Broads Integrated Access Strategy update on draft changes
- Norfolk Wildlife Trust consultation on Hickling Broad
- Norfolk County Council updates

## 2.5 Partnership working

The forum has worked with the following organisations:

- Norfolk County Council
- Suffolk County Council
- Norwich City Council
- Natural England
- River Wensum Strategy Group
- Broads Climate Change Partnership
- Broads Engage
- Norfolk LAF
- Suffolk LAF
- Environment Agency
- Broads Angling Services Group

## 2.6 Observers and advisors to the forum

- Andrew Hutcheson, Norfolk County Council
- Martin Caplin, Norfolk County Council
- Ken Hawkins, Norfolk Local Access Forum
- Ian Leatherbarrow, Norfolk Wildlife Trust
- Marie-Pierre Tighe, Broads Authority
- Adrian Clarke, Broads Authority
- Mark King, Broads Authority
- Simon Hooton, Broads Authority

## 3 Who makes up the forum?

### 3.1 Chair and Vice-Chair

In December 2018 Keith Bacon was re-appointed as Chair and Alec Hartley was re-appointed as Vice-Chair of the Broads Local Access Forum.

### 3.2 Members and representation

**Chairman: Keith Bacon** – Catfield

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Representing: Archaeology and landscape heritage

**Vice-Chairman: Alec Hartley** - Norwich

Tel: 01603 452884

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Representing: Wensum River Parkway Partnership

**Kelvin Allen** – Downham Market

Tel: 01366 384458

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Representing: Broads Authority

**Louis Baugh** – Neatishead

Tel: 07785 224589

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Representing: Landowners and managers

**Liz Brooks** – Ludham

Tel: 01692 678674

ejb553@gmail.com

Representing: Equestrian riding and driving

**Robin Buxton** - Lingwood

Tel: 01493 750102

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Representing: Landowners and managers / Tourism and local business

**Mike Flett** – Ludham

Tel: 01692 678560

mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com

Representing: Local Authority (Parish Councils)

**Tony Gibbons** – Norwich

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Representing: Angling

**Dawn Hatton** – Norwich  
Tel: 01603 433174  
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Representing: Walking / People with disabilities and access for all

**Peter Mason** – Catfield  
Tel: 01692 583152  
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Representing: Walking / Tourism and local business

**Stephen Read** – Oulton Broad  
Tel: 07720 808715  
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Representing: Walking / Waterborne recreational users

**Richard Webb** – Norwich  
Tel: 01603 505362  
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Representing: Walking / Sailing

**Christopher Yardley** – Burnham Thorpe  
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Representing: Waterborne recreational users / Nature conservation

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