



# Broads Local Access Forum

## Annual Report 2022/23

May 2023

Broads Authority  
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## 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 2022 and March 2023:

- (i) Three public meetings held to agree its advice to the Broads Authority and other organisations. Two meetings were held online and one in-person which included a site visit to a new all-access footpath at Rockland Staithe.
- (ii) The Forum discussed the lack of reference to public access in DEFRA's Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and wrote to the Secretary of State for the Environment highlighting their concerns.
- (iii) The Forum contacted Anglian Water and the Environment Agency and had reports and presentations from both on the issue of water quality and its potential impact on the health of water users (in particular for paddlesports). The Forum subsequently advised the Broads Authority on the issue.
- (iv) The Forum provided representation and guidance to the Norfolk Local Access Forum.

- (v) The Forum gave suggestions and advice on a number of projects being delivered by the Broads Authority.

#### Challenges faced by the Forum

As previously reported, 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:

- Water quality and its potential impact on human health.

#### Access reports and presentations

The Forum received the following access reports and presentations:

- 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.
- Russell Wilson from the Trails team at Norfolk County Council presented the 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.
- Emily Chittenden, Broads Authority Project Officer "Rails, Sails & Trails", presented Generation Green to the Forum. The project had a national target of connecting 100,000 young people with nature and Protected Landscapes.
- 'Safety of splash sports in the Broads: Anglian Water's responsibilities, challenges and future plans for water quality improvement'. Grant Tuff, Natasha Kenny, Tom Balfour and Emily Linsdell from Anglian Water presented Get River Positive, an initiative to improve river health and river quality.
- Jason Beck from the Policy department at East Suffolk Council presented the East Suffolk Cycling and Walking Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to create safe, coherent, direct, comfortable, and attractive cycling, walking and wheeling environments that lead to improvements in health and wellbeing, facilitate greater social interaction and play, encourage more environmentally sustainable lifestyles, reduce road congestion, and support economic growth.

- ‘Environment Agency response to bacterial water quality monitoring in the Broads’ - this report was provided to the Forum following a request to the Environment Agency.
- Andrew Walters, Waterways and Recreation Officer, Broads Authority, provided an update to the Forum on some of the access projects that the Broads Authority have been working on over the previous few months. The improvements have been made possible by the Removing Barriers fund, a £79,000 uplift to the National Park grant from Defra which needed to be spent on capital items by the end of the financial year.

### 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

- Russell Wilson, Norfolk County Council
- Emily Chittenden, Broads Authority Project Officer “Rails, Sails & Trails”
- Jason Beck, Policy department at East Suffolk Council
- Grant Tuff, Natasha Kenny, Tom Balfour and Emily Linsdell from Anglian Water

### Who makes up the Broads Local Access Forum?

#### Chair and Vice Chair

In August 2022, the Forum re-appointed Keith Bacon as Chair. The Forum agreed that the appointment of Vice Chair was not required at this time. If the Chair is unable to attend a future meeting than an interim Vice Chair will be appointed for the duration of the meeting.

#### 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

**Richard Atkins** - Surlingham

Representing paddle sports and walking

**Louis Baugh** – Neatishead

Representing landowners and managers

**Katie Baxter** - Wroxham

Representing paddle sports, tourism and local business

**Harry Blathwayt** – Ludham

Broads Authority member

**Christine Cane** - Wymondham

Representing equestrian riding and driving

**Tony Gibbons** – Norwich

Representing angling

**Tim Harris** – Catfield

Representing nature conservation, archaeology and landscape heritage

**Alison Holden-Standley**

People with Disabilities/Access for all

**Peter Mason** - Catfield

Representing walking, tourism and local business

**Stephen Read** – Oulton Broad

Representing walking and waterborne recreational users

**Martin Rendle** – Norwich

Representing paddle sports, tourism and local business

**Michael Scott**

Broads Authority member

**Richard Webb** – Norwich

Representing walking and sailing

**Christopher Yardley** – Burnham Thorpe

Representing waterborne recreational users and nature conservation