

**Review of Broads Local Access Forum membership**  
Report by Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer

**Summary:** This report considers the current membership of the Broads Local Access Forum (BLAF) and proposes a list of the interest groups that should be prioritised for future recruitment to membership of the Forum.

**Recommendation:** That members support the conclusions to this report.

## **1 Background**

- 1.1 The BLAF is a statutorily prescribed body under Sections 94 and 95 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 1990 (CROW). The main function of local access forums is to advise their appointing authority, i.e. either a local highway authority (LHA) or a national park authority (NPA) for their area, as to the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.
- 1.2 The regulations governing the composition of local access forums state:
- “forums should have at least 10 and a maximum of 22 members, and that these should be people who appear to be representative of:
- (a) Users of local rights of way or open access land (e.g. walkers, horse riders, cyclists and carriage drivers);
  - (b) Owners and occupiers of access land or land over which local rights of way subsist; or
  - (c) Any other interests especially relevant to the appointing authority’s area.”
- 1.3 Currently the BLAF has 18 members representing a range of interest groups so there is scope for increasing the membership. At the last meeting of the BLAF it was agreed that a report reviewing the membership should be brought to the Forum’s September meeting.

## **2 Review of the BLAF’s membership**

- 2.1 As indicated at paragraph 1.3 there are currently 18 members of the BLAF. Appendix 1 sets out the membership of the BLAF and lists the interest groups that each forum member represents.
- 2.2 As can be seen from the membership list of the BLAF there is a reasonable balance of representation from recreational interest groups including walking, cycling, horse riding, waterborne recreational users and people with

disabilities. Other interest groups represented include: parish councils, educational establishments, tourism and local businesses, landowners and managers, archaeology and landscape heritage, nature conservation, the Wensum River Parkway Partnership and the Broads Authority itself.

- 2.3 Clearly the major land and recreational interest groups, as described in the regulations covering appointments to local access forums and set out in subsection (a) and (b) of paragraph 1.2 of this report, are well represented on the BLAF. However, it is under the third category of membership described in the regulations which covers “any other interests especially relevant to the appointing authority’s area” where there is scope for improving representation on the Forum.
- 2.4 In the case of the Broads there are other important types of recreational users and organisations whose advice on recreational access in the Broads would be welcomed by the Authority. In particular canoeing and angling are major recreational activities in the Broads that are not currently represented on the BLAF. The Authority’s Integrated Access Strategy has identified a number of potential projects to improve access for canoeists and anglers and the ongoing development of angling and canoeing projects would benefit from advice from the BLAF. Additionally representation from interest groups covering specific geographic areas such as river trusts would be of value.

### **3 Appointment of New Members**

- 3.1 The appointment of new members to the BLAF is covered under the scheme of powers delegated to officers. Paragraph 182 delegates the appointment or re-appointment of BLAF members to the Chief Executive of the Broads Authority in consultation with the Chairman of the BLAF. This is further delegated to the Head of Governance in consultation with the Head of Strategy and Projects. New members can therefore be appointed to the BLAF provided that the Chairman, Head of Governance and Head of Strategy and Projects agree that a prospective member fits in one of the categories set out in the regulations covering representation on local access forums.
- 3.2 Members will recall that at the last meeting of the BLAF a representative of the River Waveney Trust (RWT) attended as an observer and a member suggested that representation from the RWT would be a welcome addition to the BLAF’s membership. Since then consultation has been undertaken with the Chairman, Head of Governance, and Head of Strategy and Projects and the prospective member from the RWT and members will wish to note that it has been agreed to appoint the representative from the RWT as a member effective from the September meeting of the BLAF.

### **4 Conclusions**

- 4.1 The BLAF provides valuable advice to the Broads Authority on access related issues and contributes greatly to the delivery of the Authority’s Integrated Access Strategy. Given the very special nature of the Broads, it is important that all major access interest groups relevant to the area are represented on

the BLAF. Currently the BLAF has no representation from canoeists or anglers and if new members are to be appointed to the BLAF it is recommended that priority should first be given to people who represent these groups. In addition, it is recommended that priority should be given to river trusts or access groups representing specific geographic areas who become established in the Broads.

Background papers:	Nil
Author:	Adrian Clarke
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Broads Plan Objectives:	TR1, TR2
Appendices:	Appendix 1 List of current BLAF members



## Broads Authority

### Broads Local Access Forum Members

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Peter Medhurst	3 Upton Close Norwich Norfolk NR4 7PD	01603 259723	<a href="mailto:petermedhurst@virginmedia.com">petermedhurst@virginmedia.com</a>	Educational establishments/ Walking
Stephen Read	The Anchorage Broadview Road Oulton Broad Lowestoft Suffolk NR32 3PL	07720 808715	<a href="mailto:stevereadcon@btinternet.com">stevereadcon@btinternet.com</a>	Tourism and local business/ Water borne recreational users
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Mike Flett	Broadmead Turf Fen Lane Ludham Great Yarmouth Norfolk NR29 5PH	01692 678560	<a href="mailto:mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com">mikeandjeanne@btinternet.com</a>	Landowners and managers
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