

Broads Authority

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2010

Present

Dr J S Johnson – in the Chair

Mrs S Blane	Mr S Dorrington	Mr A S Mallett
Mrs J Brociek-Coulton	Mr P Durrant	Mr G McGregor
Mr M C Broom	Dr J M Gray	Ms R Varma
Mr N Dixon	Mr G W Jermamy	Mr P Woodcock

In Attendance

Mrs A Abery – Head of Finance
Dr J Packman – Chief Executive
Mrs S A Beckett – Administrative Officer
Mr C Brown – for the Solicitor
Ms H Franzen – Press Officer
Mr R G Holman – Director of Corporate Services
Mr S Hooton – Director of Conservation and Countryside Management
Mr J W Organ – Head of Administration and Executive Assistant
Mrs L Shute – Administrative Officer
Ms T Wakelin – Director of Waterways
Ms C Weller – Communications Manager

Also Present

Mr M Cook – Chairman, Standards Committee

6/1 Apologies and Welcome

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D A Broad, Sir Peter Dixon, Mr A Duce, Mr P Frost, Mr C Gould, Mrs A Haswell, Mr J Sharpe, Mrs C Sheridan and Mr J Bowman (Chairman, Broads Forum).

The Chairman welcomed Mr A Presslee, Planning Policy Officer who had joined the Authority for a year to work on the Local Development Framework Policy documents, who was observing the meeting.

6/2 Chairman's Announcements

(1) Maurice Cook: Chairman of Standards Committee

The Chairman announced that this would be Mr Cook's last Broads Authority meeting. He had been on the Standards Committee for more than eight years, seven and a half of which had been as Chairman. On behalf of the Authority, supported by the Vice-Chairman, he thanked Mr

Cook for his integrity, guidance, common sense and excellent contribution to the work of the Authority.

(2) **Broads Forum Chairman**

Following consultation between the Chairman, Chief Executive and the Chairman of the Broads Forum, members noted that it had been decided to reappoint Mr Jonathon Bowman as Chairman of the Broads Forum for a further three year term until 31 March 2013.

(3) **Future Dates**

Members noted the following dates:

- Annual Site Visit: This would take place on 21 July 2010 and based around How Hill looking at the valley management approach, wetland management, the effects of disturbance versus access and the proposed Landscape Partnership Bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Open Day: At Dragonfly House **11 September 2010** (11.00am to 4.00pm) as part of the Norfolk Open Weekend from 9 - 12 September 2010.
- ANPA Annual Conference: This would take place from 20 to 23 September 2010 in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs.
- Port Marine Safety Code Familiarisation: This would take place following the Authority meeting.

(4) **Rearrangement of Agenda Items**

The Chairman advised that he proposed to take items 14 and 15, Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts, after agenda item 9 since the Chairman of the Finance Scrutiny and Audit Committee (FSAC), which had considered these matters at its meeting on 17 June, had to leave early.

6/3 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6/4 Introduction of Members and Declarations of Interest

Members introduced themselves and expressed declarations of interest as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

6/5 Public Question Time

A formal question had been received from Mr Chris Moffatt. The question, together with the Authority's response, was dealt with in accordance with the Authority's procedures and is set out in Appendix 2 of these minutes.

Mr Moffatt was given an opportunity to respond.

RESOLVED

to note the questions and the response from the Authority.

6/6 Minutes of the Broads Authority Meeting held on 14 May 2010

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6/7 Summary of Progress/Actions Taken Following Decisions of Previous Meetings

The Authority considered and noted a schedule of the progress/actions taken following decisions of previous meetings.

(1) Great Yarmouth Harbour Revision Order

It was noted that following receipt of a draft legal agreement from the Great Yarmouth Port Authority, discussions would be held with the Royal Yachting Association within the next week and a response made to the Port Authority.

(2) World Heritage Status

The Authority had received acknowledgement that its bid had been received by the Department of Cultural Heritage. The application was required to be validated and the Authority would be duly informed and asked to clarify any matters if necessary.

It was noted that the Authority was likely to be informed as to whether it had been successful in being included on the tentative list in November.

6/8 Minutes Received

(1) Planning Committee: 21 May 2010

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 21 May 2010 be received.

(2) Navigation Committee: 3 June 2010

The Chairman introduced the Navigation Committee minutes and reaffirmed his concern that Somerleyton Swing Bridge was still out of action. He pointed out that this had serious economic implications on the overall recreation and navigation of the area.

Members noted that, following concerns expressed by the Authority and Navigation Committee at previous meetings, officers were in negotiation with Network Rail and progress was being made in drawing up a legal service agreement and undertaking concerning the swing bridges, particularly Somerleyton. Every effort was being made to ensure that users were being kept informed of the situation.

It was considered and recognised that Network Rail was a strategic partner in the economic well being of the Broads and therefore it was important to further improve liaison. Members discussed the likely remedies open to the Authority and users should the situation continue. Subject to the result of scheduled repairs on Somerleyton Bridge due to take place on 4/5 July 2010, it was agreed to consider the convening of a small group of members to consider future operational options and actions.

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Navigation Committee meeting held on 3 June 2010 be received.

(3) **Standards Committee: 9 June 2010**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 9 June 2010 be received with an amendment to the recommendations at Minute 3/6(iv), taken at minute 6/17.

6/9 Reduction in National Park Grant

The Authority received a report and presentation giving details of the 5% reduction in the Authority's National Park Grant for the current financial year which represented a cut of around £212,000. Members noted proposals for how this could be accommodated and what actions would need to be taken in anticipation of further cuts following the Spending Review (SR) due to take place in the autumn. It had been reported that following the Review, some government departmental budgets including that of Defra would be reduced by 25% over the next three/four years which was likely to have a significant effect on national park authorities' funding levels. It was noted that the Authority's comprehensive service level reviews outlined in the report had already commenced and would be completed in time for the Resource Allocation Working Group's report to the Authority in November. Members endorsed the principles on which the options to meet the savings target were made. They were also mindful that the impacts on services needed to be taken into account when carrying out the in-house reviews and the Authority's ability to deliver its objectives in line with the Authority's State of Park Report.

Members noted the considerable efforts being made to address the reduction in funding and commended the course of action and approach proposed.

RESOLVED

- (i) that, in response to the 5% cut in this year's National Park Grant the following immediate savings in this year's budget be approved:
- Reduce expenditure on the implementation of the Lake Restoration Strategy - £30,000
 - Further savings on staff costs by not filling vacant post - £20,000
 - Reduce expenditure on publications and photography - £10,000
 - Delay the implementation of practical projects - £30,000
 - Reduce expenditure on the management of fens and grazing marshes - £10,000
 - Delay maintenance of trip boats - £10,000
 - Reduce expenditure on wetland connectivity - £12,000
 - Delay refurbishment of two visitor centres - £15,000
 - Delay expenditure on Landscape Partnership Bid to next year - £15,000
 - Reduce this year's National Park Grant contribution of £200,000 to navigation dredging by 5% (£10,000)
 - Reduce General Reserves by £50,000;
- (ii) that the progress being made by the Resource Allocation Working Group, supported by officers, in examining all possible avenues for increasing income, and reducing expenditure through different ways of delivering projects and services be noted; and
- (iii) that the report be noted, including the comments by Defra officials on the likelihood of further cuts in funding in 2011/12.

Minutes 6/14 and 6/15 were considered after Minute 6/9

6/10 Sustainable Tourism in Estuary Parks (STEP)

The Authority received a report on the STEP project which would bring together the Biesbosch National Park in the Netherlands, a flood relief project beside the River Schelde near Antwerp and the Broads Authority in an Interreg funded scheme to support sustainable tourism. A grant of €500,000 would support expenditure of €1,150,500 in projects including re-application for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, branding and web site work, new interpretation and visitor facilities and support to minimise the adverse environmental impacts of tourism businesses.

Some aspects of spending which went back to 2008 had been incorporated into the bid with most project work taking place from now to the end of the scheme in early 2013. There was likely to be scope to revise the budget following discussion with partners and the central secretariat which would enable the Project to provide vital investment and support for tourism in what would be a period of transition due to public spending changes.

As part of the activities outlined in Appendix 2 to the report, the Authority received a presentation on the new tourism website and Branding project noting that the launch of the latter would take place in 'The Curve' at the Forum, Norwich on 1 July 2010. It was noted that there had been an encouraging response to the Broads Explorer newsletter.

Members welcomed the progress being made and in particular the development of the tourism website.

The Chairman thanked all members of staff involved in the STEP project for their efforts and for the work in getting the tourism website up and running.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the budgets for the STEP project be approved; and
- (ii) that the approach to seek maximum grant aid where possible, accepting that this had to remain flexible depending on the financial climate and the success of the Authority in refining budgets with the partners, be supported.

6/11 PRISMA Project Bid: Promoting Integrated Sediment Management

The Authority received a report setting out details of the development of a sediment management project bid for Interreg European funding. The project followed on from the successful development of an earlier European partnership for the STEP project and sought to provide match funding for a series of activities for the development of sustainable dredging techniques, treatment and disposal with a series of European partners. It had the potential to provide considerable support to the work of the Authority including the ability to participate in an expert exchange programme including that of specialised information with the partners.

Members noted that, if successful, the work would improve the Authority's capacity to support future dredging programmes. However there were match funding requirements for the programme of 50% of the costs which could be a combination of cash and staff time. Members noted the project outputs and outcomes and that this would commit the Authority to four years of work and budget requirement based on navigation expenditure.

The Steering Committee decision was expected during November 2010 when the project would be started if successful. It was hoped that the outcome could be reported to the Navigation Committee in December.

Members welcomed and supported the Authority's engagement in the partnership project.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the development and objectives of the project be supported; and
- (ii) that the submission of the funding application be authorised.

6/12 Proposal for the Transfer of Postwick Tip

The Authority received a report setting out the background to the Authority's involvement with Postwick Tip, and outlining the proposal for the transfer of Postwick Tip from May Gurney which would enable dredging operations on the River Yare to continue into the future.

RESOLVED

that the transfer of the freehold of Postwick Tip to the Authority on the terms set out in paragraphs 2.2, (relating to liability for contamination issues), 2.4 (rights of access and contributions to the road's maintenance) and 2.5 (re-fencing of the boundary) of the report be authorised.

6/13 Designation of Local Nature Reserve of Whitlingham Country Park

Having declared an interest, Mr Mallett took no part in the discussion.

The Authority received a report setting out proposals for the designation of Whitlingham Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which would result in the multiple benefits of community engagement in the International Year of Biodiversity, provide a useful planning tool and achieve shared goals of the provision of accessible green space for local residents. It was noted that the designation of the LNR at Whitlingham fitted into the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Policy 10 and supported the existing and on going management and commitment of the Authority, the Whitlingham Charitable Trust and landowners as well as maintaining this natural resource.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the designation of Local Nature Reserve for Whitlingham Country Park be approved; and
- (ii) that powers be delegated to the Chief Executive to seal the declaration.

6/14 Annual Governance Statement 2009/10

The Authority received a report explaining the purpose of the Annual Governance Statement, and the requirement to carry out an annual review of the Authority's systems of internal control and governance arrangements. It was noted that the Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee had considered a separate report on the Annual Governance Statement and concluded that proper arrangements had been put in place and that the internal control systems and governance arrangements were satisfactory subject to improvements as identified in the Action Plan.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Annual Governance Statement for 2009/10 be approved with an amendment to paragraph 4.7 to reflect the conclusions of the Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee; and
- (ii) that the Action Plan for 2010/11 be endorsed and implemented.

6/15 Statement of Accounts 2009/10

The Authority received a report summarising the Authority's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010. Details of amendments to the Statement of Accounts (Pages 35, 46, 47, 51, 60 and 65) were tabled and the Director of Corporate Services explained the figures including the reasons for the increase in pension liability.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Statement of Accounts for 2009/10 be approved in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003;
- (ii) that the slippage variances for the General Fund as set out in Appendix 5, totalling £96,399, be approved and carried forward to the 2010/11 approved budgets;
- (iii) that £200,000 be transferred from the General Fund Reserves to set up a reserve account from which future match funding for the STEP project can be drawn;
- (iv) that £60,000 be transferred from the Navigation Fund Reserves into the following reserve accounts:
 - £20,000 to the Dockyard Vessels and Equipment Reserve; and
 - £40,000 to the Dredging Disposal Sites Reserve; and.
- (v) that the Authority's gratitude be expressed to Norfolk County Council for its support in allowing one of their accountants to assist the Head of Finance with the preparation of the Statement of Accounts, and that thanks also be expressed to the officer for her diligence.

6/16 Appointment to the Navigation Committee

The Authority received a report outlining a proposal for filling a vacant position on the Navigation Committee

RESOLVED

that the one vacant position on the Navigation Committee be maintained until September 2011.

6/17 Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee

The Authority received a report confirming the process for the appointment of independent members to the Standards Committee, a matter for which the agreement of the full Authority was required.

It was noted that the Government had announced that the Standards Board for England was to be abolished and, in light of this, it was suggested that the current independent members remain in place for a year until the future intentions relating to standards was clearer. It was noted that the general consensus for the Standards of England was that a member's term should be no longer than two terms as otherwise they could become too involved in their own Authority and cease to be independent. In addition, as one other member had resigned, adverts had already been placed in order to gauge response.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the terms of appointment for independent members be in accordance with paragraph 3.1 of the report namely:
 - (a) that the term for all future independent member appointments should be for four years; and
 - (b) that all independent members should serve for a maximum of two terms to ensure that independence was not lost; and
- (ii) that a panel consisting of the Chairman of the Authority, Chairman of the Standards Committee and Mr Gould, advised by a representative from the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer, be convened on 29 July 2010 to interview and select applicants for the appointment of members to the Standards Committee.

6/18 Any Other Items of Business

There were no further items of business which the Chairman decided should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) (b) of the Local Government Act.

6/19 Formal Questions

There were no formal questions of which due notice had been given.

6/20 To consider any items of business raised by the Designated Person in respect of the Port Marine Safety Code

The Chairman reported that the Head of Navigation Strategy and Safety had confirmed that there were no items which needed to be raised under this item.

6/21 Strategic Priorities for 2010/11

The Authority considered a report by the Chief Executive which set out the projects and actions which would be used to deliver the strategic priorities adopted for the coming year 2010/11. Members noted that all projects were on target except for the Survey of Adjacent Waters which was due to staff sickness.

Members received copies of the newly published Volunteer Handbook.

RESOLVED

that the performance of the different projects in the schedule accompanying the report be noted.

6/22 Feedback from Lead Members and those appointed to represent the Authority

Lead members provided feedback on the meetings they had recently attended on behalf of the Authority.

(1) Broads Flood Alleviation Project

Mr Durrant gave an update on various projects currently being carried out which included works that were nearly completed on the River Ant, the undergrounding of electricity lines by EDF at Potter Heigham, works at Thurne Dyke and BESL works at Cantley Staithe. Neolithic and bronze age remains had been found in the Bure Loop area and Geldeston.

(2) Equalities

Ms Varma reported that she had met with the Head of Human Resources and that a report on equalities would be submitted to the Authority in the Autumn.

6/23 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Friday 17 September 2010 at Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich, commencing at 10.00am.

The meeting concluded at 12.48 pm

CHAIRMAN

Code of Conduct for Members

Declaration of Interests

Committee: Broads Authority

Date of Meeting: 25 June 2010

Name Please Print	Agenda/ Minute No(s)	Nature of Interest (Please describe the nature of the interest)	Please tick here if the interest is a Prejudicial Interest ✓
A S Mallett	6/6, 6/8, 6/13	Toll payer, Sailing Club member Appointed by Broadland District Council, Minutes BA - Navigation and Planning Committees Vice-Commodore/Flag Officer for Norwich Frostbite Sailing Club, will withdraw if matter discussed.	✓
S Dorrington		Toll payer, Norfolk County Council	
G McGregor		Member of Suffolk County Council Chair of Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee	
S Blane	6/13	Trustee on Whitlingham Charitable Trust	
G W Jermany		Great Yarmouth Borough Council Toll Payer	
M C Broom	6/9, 6/11, 6/13 and 6/16	Toll payer, Member Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association, Broads Hire Boat Federation, Great Yarmouth Port Authority, member of Navigation Committee; and Trustee Norwich Frostbite Sailing Club	
N Dixon	General	As they affect Norfolk County Council	

APPENDIX 2

Broads Authority

25 June 2010

Agenda Item No 5

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR CHRIS MOFFATT

What are the Broads Authority's views on houseboats as cultural heritage, especially at a time when the Authority is bidding for World Heritage status?

Broads Authority Response to the Question Submitted

The suggestion that the Broads should be put forward for World Heritage Status will mean that many aspects of the landscape and the way it is used will be evaluated, and its significance assessed. A number of different craft are traditionally associated with the Broads, whether these were originally commercial vessels and wherries, workboats and ferries, boats used in the tourist trade, or recreational sailing craft. Despite the fact that these are movable, and therefore cannot be guaranteed to stay within the Broads, they add character to the place. Indeed, the encouragement to preserve and recognise traditional vessels formed part of one of the first Broads Plans.

In terms of cultural heritage therefore we would view any vessel that has heritage value either in terms of the heritage of the Broads or in terms of an individual vessel having some kind of historical association as potentially being a heritage asset to the area. Houseboats, provided that they are moored in an appropriate location, are no exception.