

Broads Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2005

Present

Mr Tony Stapleton (in the Chair)

Mr Andrew Alston	Mr Barry Green	Mr John Sharpe
Dr Keith Bacon	Mr Ian Hart	Mr Michael Sparkes
Mr Julian Barnwell	Mr Peter Howe	Mr Matthew Thwaites
Mr Standley Bushell	Mrs Val Khamabatta	Mr Chris Turnbull
Mr Henry Cator	Mr Mike Mansfield	Mr Hugh Tusting
Mr Keith Clarke	Mr Mike O'Brien	Mr Roy Warren
Mr Mike Evans	Mr Barry Odell	Mr Anthony Wright
Dr Martin George		

In Attendance

Mr B Hanson – Head of Recreation and Tourism Development
Mr R G Holman – Director of Corporate Services
Ms A Kelly – Conservation Officer (Waterways Strategy)
Mrs L Shute – Administrative Officer
Ms C Smith – Head of Development and Regeneration
Mrs T Wakelin – Waterways Manager

Also Present

Mr M C Broom – Navigation Committee
Mr D Hoare – UCL
Mr G Kelly – Chief Executive British Water Ski Federation
Ms J Johnson – Environment Agency
Mr S Lambert – UEA

12 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr D Batten, Mrs U Brewer, Mr T Carter, Mr J Hiskett and Mr M Knights.

13 Chairman's Update

(1) The South Downs National Park

The Chairman reported on his involvement with the South Downs National Park's adoption of an arrangement similar to that of the Broads Forum. They had 20 to 25 representatives for 150 interested parties on their Forum and would be holding an annual meeting to

which all the parties represented were invited. This was something members could think about for the future.

(2) **Corporate Assessment**

The Chairman reported that he had been involved in discussions with the Review Team during the Corporate Assessment process which he had found rigorous. Members noted the points initially identified for improvement and that the Team had been complimentary about the Forum. Their full report would be issued shortly.

(3) **BRAP Seminar**

The Chairman reported on the BRAP seminar entitled 'Broadland in 2050', which had recently taken place. He was pleased to note that 10 Broads Forum members had attended the seminar.

14 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the substitution of 'water sports' for 'sailing' in the last line of minute 8.

15 Points of Information Arising from the Minutes

(1) **Minute 3 (1): Long Fishing Poles**

It was noted that there was nothing further to report.

(2) **Minute 3 (3): Ludham Bridge**

A member expressed concern that as the landowner was charging a fee for mooring, they may also make a charge for the use of the area for demasting, and suggested that the situation should be kept under review.

(3) **Minute 3 (4): Norwich Yacht Station**

A member commented that it was pleasing to see that the yacht station had been widely used during the season despite various comments about lack of security. The Waterways Manager reported that Norwich City Council had allocated £160,000 to provide improvements to security at the yacht station.

(4) **Minute 3 (5): Quay Heading at How Hill**

Members noted that it was hoped that BESL would undertake the works to carry out the safety measures at How Hill during

January/February 2006 so that the site could be opened at Easter 2006.

In reply to a member's question as whether the works had made the channel narrower, it was noted that this was minimal but with greater visual effect due to the increased height. A suggestion was made that the channel could be widened using Authority land on other side of the staithe. It was noted that, apart from the costs, there would be other factors to be taken into account including the loss of habitat.

(5) Minute 5 (1): Management of the Fens

In reply to a member's question it was noted that 'vegetation' referred to tree and scrub.

16 Chief Executive's Report

The Director of Corporate Services presented the Chief Executive's report, which summarised the issues considered by the Broads Authority and the decisions taken during the most recent cycle of meetings.

(1) Navigation Toll 2006/07: The Priorities for Additional Expenditure and Strategy for the next 5 years

The Director of Corporate Services reported the decision of the Authority on 25 November 2005 on the agreed level of the toll increase, which was 9.2% for hire craft and 13% for private craft. This would bring in an additional £97,500 which would be ring fenced for specific items.

Members noted the details of the Navigation Account Expenditure as shown on a slide. This information would be amended to make the information clearer (a copy of which is attached to the minutes), and included within the next version of the Broad Sheet.

In reply to a member's question requesting concessions for clubs using small craft and dinghies, it was noted that it might be possible for organised clubs to qualify for a scheme similar to the paddling scheme. Details were being drafted.

In reply to a question as to whether the scheme could be extended to keel boats, which were used to teach people to sail, it was agreed that this would be investigated.

17 Local Development Framework: Core Strategy: Preferred Options

The Head of Development and Regeneration introduced a report on the next stage of the Local Development Framework process and described the

process. Members noted that the Authority was preparing a Core Strategy Development Plan Document, which would set the strategic direction for the spatial and planning policies and which will replace the Broads Local Plan. Comments received would be taken into account when preparing the Preferred Options Report, which would be published for further consultation in December 2005.

The Chairman stressed that this was a very important stage in the process as the report would be a crucial document for achieving the objectives of the Authority.

The Head of Development and Regeneration would be pleased to receive any comments.

18 A Mooring Strategy for the Broads

The Waterways Manager introduced a report summarising the progress made to date on the development of a Mooring Strategy for the Broads. Members noted that the report focussed particularly on the scope of the strategy, guiding principles and draft criteria, on which members comments were invited.

The strategy would be considered by the full Authority at its meeting on 27 January 2006, for comments, and come back to the Forum in March 2006 with the draft Action Plan.

Members were invited to ask questions and make comments on the proposed strategy. (Bullet points are members' comments/questions):

- Concern was expressed that there appears to be a shift in the responsibility for the provision of moorings from private to the Authority.
- The Authority should be seen as one of the contributors rather than the sole provider.
- The principles of provision in both wilderness and honey pot areas needed to be established so that a balance was achieved. A decision was needed as to whether charging was appropriate.
- There was a possibility of working in partnership with parish councils to enable public staithes to be brought up to a recognised standard.

It was noted that parish councils had been contacted as part of the collection and collating of information from the many sources used for the strategy.

- It is a waste of money to provide moorings in the less popular areas where they will not be used.

The setting of a balance of moorings in popular and less popular areas of the Broads was an element of the strategy that needed clarification. Should there be a concentration of moorings in the popular areas or could more use be made of them by introducing short stay or dinghy moorings and using a

tender? In urban areas there was likely to be a number of mooring providers whereas in rural areas there was not the same profit incentive for businesses. The Authority could be seen as competition for private providers. Where mooring opportunities arose full advantage should be taken of them. Different people wanted different experiences on the Broads so feedback was needed to respond to their needs. Where there was over intensity the strategy could be used to encourage boaters to other areas. The survey work carried out at the boat show had shown that people wanted greater access to pubs, shops etc whereas the responses to the questionnaire had shown a requirement for more moorings in remote areas.

- The longer people were moored up the less wear and tear on the system.
- There was not enough wilderness. The presence of people could degrade it.

The Flood Alleviation Project (FAP) was providing the opportunities for providing new habitats and washlands which people could approach and view without disturbing the wildlife. An example of this was at the River Chet. New sites must avoid environmentally sensitive areas and would need careful design to ensure minimal conservation intrusion.

This was a dilemma for all national parks.

- Quiet areas were needed for fishing. A lot of hire boats were there for the fishing.
- The strategy should be linked to the slipways strategy.
- The strategy was a positive way forward and signage and mapping were critical.
- A proportion of the work of the FAP would handicap some informal moorings. It was important to look at the proposals when the Authority looks at BESL's proposals.
- Some landowners were cashing in on charging for moorings. A minimum standard should be set for private moorings.
- The Strategy should be linked into the Local Development Framework.
- Leader + funding may be available.
- Is there an existing policy for short-term mooring?

Potter Heigham was a unique situation. Where appropriate a similar approach could be used.

- Would a charge be made?

Charges may be made but not before comments were received on any proposals.

19 Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and Recreation in the Broads

The Head of Recreation and Tourism presented a report introducing the first draft of the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and Recreation in the Broads, which had been sent to all Forum members. Members noted the way the strategy had been developed, the key issues that have come out of the process and the strategic objectives. Members were invited to express their views on the draft Strategy and Action Plan. (Bullet points are members' comments/questions):

- A boost to the tourist industry would be to increase the length of the season. The member quoted the example of seasonal lettings and their popularity during the fishing season but not during the close season.
- This was an excellent report and a key factor was the level of interest that could be developed by improvements to interpretation and information. Examples of where this had been successfully provided were quoted but interpretation needed to be linked to encourage visitors to move onto other places. There needed to be an interpretative strategy for all and this deserved a high priority.
- The uniqueness of the Broads when seeing it by boat should be emphasised.
- The report was welcome and it is a relief to know that boating was central to the strategy. The key was in the action plan and how the resources necessary would be found.
- It was heartening to see recognition of the special environment and conservation but it should go further as there was room for the improvement and enhancement of habitats.
- A good report, especially as it covers the Broads as a whole and not just the Broads Executive Area, but how will it be implemented?

In reply, the Head of Recreation and Tourism agreed that there was at this stage no firm allocation of resources but there had been a high level of interest and the implementation of the strategy would depend on partnership working.

- There were a lot of actions that had been given a high priority so there needed to be a focus on delivery with priority given to what it was possible to achieve.
- This need to focus on delivery had been picked up in the Corporate Assessment especially the need for identification of what was achievable as compared with aspirations.

The Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and Recreation in the Broads would be considered by the Navigation Committee, Local Access Forum, Planning Committee and Tourism Forum for their comments before going to the Authority meeting. The final draft would take account of comments received.

20 **Sediment Management Strategy: Desk Based Study of the Sediment Inputs to the Broads Catchment**

The Conservation Officer (Waterways Strategy) explained the framework and process involved in the desk based study carried out as part of the Sediment Management Strategy. Members noted a summary of the results, which included the sources and losses of sediment in the system and discussed the results, conclusions and recommendations, which showed that sediment from headwaters and bank erosion were thought to be the main inputs. The report included recommendations to quantify algal and plant inputs, tidal inputs/outputs, as well as budget recording.

Members were invited to ask questions and make comments on the Study so far. (Bullet points are members' comments/questions):

- Did the results include sediment from urban areas?

There was no data as yet but this could be looked at.

- What effect will the appointment of the new Catchment Officers have on the work?

It is good news for the Authority who will have a role in catchment sensitive farming. It should enable land managers to reduce sediment delivery to the watercourses in the Broads catchment.

- The inputs from roads, verges and drains into rivers and broads need quantification.
- There is no data on algae. This is needed. Also the effect of wave action on banks during storms.
- Is there still a role for the Water Quality Partnership?

Further research was required and can be built into this semi-quantitative study. The Partnership's role may change as new initiatives develop.

- A member was uneasy that there was no quantification or measure of the dead and dying algae, particularly at Hickling, and leaf fall. What were the reasons why it was not included? The sedimentation rate increased by 20 fold since nutrient enrichment.

Algal input is certainly important for broads. UCL have collated all data on sedimentation rates to broads and produced a report to the Authority. This would be forwarded to the member.

This study was just one of the pieces of work for the Sediment Management Strategy. It would help in deriving an understanding of the sediment inputs, assessing the need for dredging, especially the need to address the historic backlog. In the future the Authority should be able to manage the system from an understanding of the sources of the inputs and by effective dredging and using alternative techniques. Given the impact of emerging legislation

where dredgings were included with other waste materials, it was hoped to provide a sound base to take forward the protection of the disposability of dredged material and its possible reuse.

It was hoped to complete the desk based study work in March 2006 ready to move on to the next stage.

21 The Bure Loop: A Potential Living Landmarks Project: Update

A report updating members on the progress of the Bure Loop project and the process necessary for developing a funding bid for the Living Landmarks project was received. A number of exciting projects had been proposed which would link up with the bid which would be submitted before the deadline on 6 January 2006.

22 Current Issues

Given the time and that there were still two major agenda items to consider, it was decided to cancel this item.

23 Date of Next Meetings

It was noted that the next meeting would be held at County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich at 2.00pm on 2 March 2006.

The rest of the Broads Forum meetings for 2006 had been scheduled as follows:

8 June 2006
21 September 2006
7 December 2006.

Part B Presentations

24 Ecological Change in Freshwaters following Persistent Antifouling Biocide Contamination

Dan Hoare (UCL) gave a presentation on the key conclusions of a PhD study on the history of biocides and the problems associated with antifoulant biocide usage. Although TBT had been an effective antifoulant, its use had been stopped because of the widespread ecological damage it caused in marine and freshwater environments. The subsequent effects on Broads wildlife and plants were noted with a loss of submerged aquatic plants. The areas where the study had been carried out, where TBT remained and was not degrading in Broads' sediment, were noted. TBT was present in toxic concentrations in highly boated areas. However the interaction with the sediment pore water

required further study. The Authority needs to incorporate these results into the Sediment Management Strategy.

Members were invited to ask questions. (Bullet points are members' comments/questions):

- Had any experiments been carried out to show whether dredging released TBT into the system?

It can go from sediment into solution with subsequent effects.

Mr Lambert (UEA) pointed out that TBT had been replaced with copper which was a heavy metal and was equally toxic.

- Are TBTs carcinogenic?

The short answer was that they could affect the endocrine system.

- Is this why there has been an increase in pike with tumours?

This would require investigation.

- Members questioned whether the use of any biocides on the bottom of boats was necessary and whether it would be possible to ban their use in the Broads.

It was noted that the Authority acted in an advisory role.

- A member pointed out that the use of a pressure washer to clean the bottom of boats was an effective and non toxic method.
- It was noted that there were also biocides in paints which killed plants.
- The importance of where and how to find clear information on antifouling products was stressed by a member.

25 Wakeboarding

Julian Barnwell, representative of the Eastern Rivers Ski Club, explained how the Club worked with the Authority for the management of waterskiing and the differences between wakeboarding and waterskiing. Barry Odell, representative of the British Water Ski Federation, gave a brief explanation as to how the byelaws that control water skiing affected wakeboarding. These included the requirement that wakeboarders should not leave the surface of the water. He also mentioned the problems of access to the ski zones.

Members received a presentation on wakeboarding in the Broads and noted the water ski clubs' willingness to work with the Authority. A report setting out the background to wakeboarding on the Broads was noted.

Members made the following comments. (Bullet points are members' comments/questions):

- Sport England supports wakeboarding. It is a sport that is attractive to young people. The Broads area was a major resource for the sport.
- The NSBA supports waterskiing providing it is properly managed.
- The wake causes a problem by damaging banks and disturbing wildlife, especially if the boat is ballasted to create increased wake.
- At the RSPB reserve at Strumpshaw larger more powerful boats have been seen and that large waves have been generated as a result. The landowner has to bear the cost of damage to river banks.

There followed a full discussion on the sport and its appropriateness in the Broads, including safety aspects, damage to banks and the reasons for the recent complaints relating to wakeboarding. It was acknowledged that ski clubs had made a big effort to ensure that the sport was well organised and regulated. It was agreed that more could be done, including the provision of clear signage to inform boaters when they were entering a water skiing zone.

The Chairman confirmed that he would report the discussions to the Authority.

He thanked Julian Barnwell for the presentation and wished Barry Odell a happy retirement.

The meeting concluded at 5.48pm.

CHAIRMAN

■ 2005/06 Revised Budget
 ■ 2005/07 Budget
 ■ Funded by National Park Grant
 ■ Additional Toll Income

