

Broads Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2009

Present

Mr Jonathan Bowman (Chairman)

Mr Andrew Alston	Mr Mike Evans	Mr Bryan Read
Dr Keith Bacon	Mr Terry Fleet	Mr Richard Starling
Mr Julian Barnwell	Mr Barry Green	Mr Matthew Thwaites
Mr Mark Casto	Mr Michael Knights	Mr Hugh Tusting
Mr Nicholas Deane	Mr Peter Medhurst	Mr Anthony Wright

In Attendance

Mr S Birtles – Head of Waterways Strategy and Safety
Ms M Conti – Broads Strategy Officer
Mr R G Holman – Director of Corporate Services
Mr S Hooton – Director of Conservation and Countryside Management
Mrs A Long – Director of Planning and Strategy
Mr J Organ – Head of Administration and Executive Assistant
Dr J Packman – Chief Executive
Mrs L Shute – Administrative Officer
Ms C Weller – Communications Manager

1/1 Apologies and Welcome

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Henry Cator, Mr Martyn Davey, Mr Steve Duckett, Dr Martin George, Mr John Hiskett, Ms Pamela Masters, Mr Philip Pearson, Mr Jeff Toser and Mr Kenneth Turner.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Mark Casto, who was attending as a temporary replacement for David Batten under Fishing/Angling Interest Groups.

1/2 Chairman's Announcements

(1) Report back from Broads Authority Meetings: 14 August and 18 September 2009

Dr Bacon reported back on the discussions at the Authority meeting on 18 September 2009 where he had stressed the need for consideration of the issues relating to the flood risk issues for the Broads and the option of a tidal barrier and for this to be formally discussed by the Authority.

There had also been an Authority meeting on 14 August when one item was considered which was to fix the Appointed Days following receipt of Royal Assent to the Broads Authority Act 2009.

(2) **Membership Issues**

Members noted that David Batten (member for Fishing/Angling Interest Groups) had resigned. Mr Casto was a temporary replacement member. The Broads Angling Strategy Group would be formally considering Broads Forum membership in December.

1/3 Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2009 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

(1) **Minute 4/2 (2): Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 April**

The last sentence of paragraph 2 be amended to read: “ The original list of moorings that had been identified as being problem sites has not been extended”.

(2) **Minute 4/7 (4): Aquatic Plant Monitoring**

In reply to a member’s question regarding the growth of plants in Rollesby Broad which was causing problems to sailing, it was noted that there had been discussions with the Trinity Broads Steering Group to look at the possibility of a managed cutting scheme for next year.

The minutes, as amended, were signed by the Chairman.

1/4 Summary of Progress/Actions/Response Taken following Discussions at Previous Meetings

A report summarising the progress of current issues was received.

(1) **Climate Change**

A member commented that greater attention and priority should be placed on climate change.

1/5 Membership of the Broads Forum

During the passage of the Broads Authority Bill through the House of Lords, suggestions had been made concerning the composition of the Broads Forum. A report describing the debate on the issue of direct elections to national park authorities and the Broads Authority and the suggestions for the composition of the Broads Forum was received.

Following consideration of the remarks by the House of Lords, the Authority had decided that the Forum should be asked for its comments on the proposals for increased parish council representation on the Forum, how this should be carried out and the proposal that the Chair of the Forum should be a parish councillor.

In reply to a member's comment that there should be parish councillors on the Authority, it was noted that the Minister was not in favour of adding parish council members to the Broads Authority at this time. Members of the Authority were not selected by the Authority and there was no bar to anyone applying as a Secretary of State member.

There was some support for an increase of two parish council members to the Forum. However, members pointed out that increasing the parish council representation would increase the Forum to too large a size. This would not necessarily increase the range of views. It was important that the Forum should remain a non political body and the main priority should be to ensure that as many interests as possible were represented.

Members commented that it would not be within their remit to decide how additional parish council members should be appointed from the 93 parish councils in the executive area. However, comments were made that the Norfolk Association of Local Councils was not the appropriate body to decide on membership and that the parish representation in the Broadland area should be involved.

Members considered the additional suggestion made in the House of Lords that the Chair of the Forum be a parish councillor. The key criteria in the appointment of the Chairman of the Broads Forum had been that he/she was independent, and seen to be so, and not aligned to any other interest groups in the Forum. This principle would be undermined if the person were a parish councillor. It was agreed that the original process should be retained for selecting an independent chairman.

1/6 Broads Authority Act 2009: Development of New Arrangements for Waterskiing and Wakeboarding

A report setting out proposals for the development of new arrangements for the management of waterskiing and wakeboarding on the Broads, which had been discussed and agreed by the Waterski Review Panel, was received.

Members discussed and supported the transitional powers and the proposals as set out in paragraphs 2.3, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9 and 3.10 of the report. This was subject to the number of permits as set out in paragraph 3.9 of the report being discussed and agreed with the local skiing clubs.

Members noted that there would be a further review taking place from April 2010 to early 2011 when the recommendations of the water-ski review which took place in 2007 would be developed and formalised and the review of wakeboarding would be completed.

1/7 Chief Executive's Report

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

(1) **Consultation on Proposed Minor Amendments to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994**

The Chief Executive reported that the Authority had been informed that the amendments as originally drafted would be implemented.

The amendments to the legislation had been the addition of water to the regulations and both the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association and the Authority had expressed their concern that the amendment to the legislation had introduced the ability to undermine the public right of navigation and should only be used as a last resort.

In reply to a member's comment that this was a way of introducing the Sandford Principle to the Broads, the history of the national parks' legislation, including how the report by Lord Sandford had been incorporated into national parks legislation, was noted. The legislation recognised that the natural resources of national park areas needed to be protected. In addition, for the Broads area there was a whole series of legislative powers to protect the navigation.

(2) **Merchant Shipping – Public Consultation on the Merchant Shipping Watercraft) Order 200X**

In reply to a member's comment, it was noted that details of this would be reported at the next Navigation Committee meeting.

1/8 Broads Plan Review: Workshop Session

The Director of Planning and Strategy introduced a workshop session to enable members to provide their views and ideas on key issues facing the Broads and their input to objectives to be addressed during the lifetime of the next Broads Plan.

The Chief Executive gave a presentation on sea level rise and climate change scenarios and examples of likely impacts and remedial actions which could be taken in the Broads. A framework which might be useful when assessing the impacts to the Broads, preparing for the future and addressing this in the Broads Plan was suggested, based on the special qualities of the Broads identified during the last Broads Plan Review and set out in the current 20-year vision.

Members discussed draft key issues and objectives for the next Broads Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report which were grouped under the Authority's statutory purposes and key themes similar to those in the current Broads Plan as follows:

- Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Broads (Living Landscapes; Water, Habitats & Wildlife).

- Promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public (Tourism and Recreation; Understanding the Broads).
- Protecting, improving and developing the navigation.

Members noted that feedback from the workshop would be circulated with the draft minutes. Broads Plan review progress updates would be reported to future meetings. There would be further opportunities for members to get involved in the Broads Plan consultation process, including the public consultation period scheduled to take place in early 2010.

1/9 Current Issues

(1) Habitats Directives

A member requested a presentation on the various Habitats Directive regulations and their effect on the management of the Broads. This would be brought to a future meeting.

(2) Fen Site Visit

A member referred to the recent site visit and asked if information gathered as part of the Fen Audit would be publicly available. In reply it was noted that as the information gathered would consist of a vast number of documents at this stage, it was not possible to say how the information would be provided.

(3) Whitlingham Links

A member requested that the Forum be kept aware of the progression of plans for links between Norwich and Whitlingham Country Park.

1/10 Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

1/11 Matters for Chairman to raise at next Broads Authority meeting

The Chairman asked that members get in contact if there were any items they wished him to take to the Authority when he made his usual report to the next meeting.

It was noted that the Environment Agency was progressing proposals for a third river crossing at Great Yarmouth so work, which might include a barrier, was ongoing.

1/12 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 11 February 2010 at 2.00pm at Dragonfly House, 2 Gilders Way, Norwich.

1/13 Matters to be discussed at the next meeting

The Chairman expressed his wish that members provide topics for agenda items and presentations. He requested that members inform him of their views and wishes for the content of the agenda in plenty of time. This would be helpful for the planning of future agendas.

The meeting concluded at 4.30pm.

Chairman