

## **Chief Executive's Report and Current Issues**

<p><b>Purpose:</b> The purpose of this report is to brief the Committee on significant matters relating to the maintenance and management of the waterways and to provide an opportunity for members of the Committee to raise any such issues.</p>
---

### **1. Swing Bridges Workshop**

A workshop involving Broads Authority, members and officers, Network Rail engineers, boat owners and businesses was held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018 to examine the problems associated with the Reedham and Somerleyton swing bridges. The aim was to:

- (i) Build a better common understanding of the impact of the failure of the bridges to open reliably and the reasons behind it;
- (ii) Identify what measures can be taken to improve the reliability of the present structures and response to hot conditions and mitigate any problems;
- (iii) Examine the options for refurbishment or replacement and identify what needs to be done to pursue them.

28 people attended the workshop including four members of this Committee. Notes of the workshop have been circulated to all members and those who attended. An Action Plan has been agreed with Network Rail and this is replicated in Appendix 1. Probably the most significant development was the announcement that Network Rail is commissioning the preparation of asset management plans for the two bridges to make the case for separate funding and these are expected to be completed by March 2019. This is in the context of a total 5 year maintenance budget of £160 million for the 6,000 structures across the region and a replacement cost for the two bridges of £80 million.

Officers will follow up with the engineers from Network Rail on the implementation of the agreed Action Plan.

### **2. Incident on the River Chet**

On 24 July 2018 a hire boat owned struck failed flood defence piling on the true left bank of the lower section of the River Chet. This holed the vessel at the stern and it sank. This is an extremely unusual incident but does raise serious concerns about the poor state of some of the old flood defences around the Broads.

There are a significant number of hazards in and around the navigable system and the rangers are very alive to their presence and assiduous in either taking immediate action or marking them so that all boat owners and hirers can avoid them. All hazards are not just marked on the ground but also mapped.

Old flood defence piling is a particular concern for us and we have mapped and marked all those areas which we believe to be a hazard. The ownership and responsibility for flood defence piling usually rests with the Environment Agency and we have alerted the Agency's staff to our concerns on a regular basis.

In the case of the incident on the River Chet we have established that the hazardous piling on one of the lower bends of the river was clearly marked and the yellow posts warning boats to keep clear have been reinstated.

Given our concerns about the hazards posed by this piling and concerns that the Head of Ranger Services has about the condition of the bank owned and maintained by the Environment Agency at another location the Chief Executive emailed the senior engineer responsible on Monday morning (6<sup>th</sup> August). He received a response on Monday afternoon that he would "ask BESL to attend to the issue as a matter of urgency." Officers also took the opportunity to raise our concerns about this specific issue with the Regional Director of the Environment Agency when they were with him on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August.

As you will all know the Broads Authority, its members and officers, take all matters concerned with the safety of the public extremely seriously and have therefore responded very quickly to this matter in drawing the Environment Agency's attention to this hazard posed by this section of old piling.

An update from the Environment Agency on how it is proposing to deal with the two hazards I will provide at the meeting

### **3. Trespass mooring at Catfield Dyke**

The Broads Authority and the Catfield Pools Trust are supporting the Norfolk Wildlife Trust in its legal action to apply for an injunction to remove a group of illegally moored boats along with paraphernalia and a considerable encampment on the bank from the NWT land and prevent it from moving on to adjacent land owned by the Pools Trust and the Broads Authority. The trespasser has previously trespassed on the Authority land in the area and the Ranger team considered there to be a probability that removal from one parcel of land would result in him moving onto the Authority's. The trespasser is claiming a disability defence.

A date of 10th and 11th December 2018 has been set for the hearing.

The Authority has also issued all the relevant paperwork for non-payment of tolls and failure to have Boat Safety Scheme certification and these matters are being pursued separately by the Broads Authority.



**4. Mutford Lock: Transfer**  
Contact Officer: David Harris

The two Harbour Revision Orders for the transfer of ownership of Mutford Lock to the Broads Authority have now been lodged for a 42 day public consultation from 3 August 2018.

**5. Waveney Swimming Event**  
Contact Officer: Adrian Clarke/Mark King

Sunday 1 July saw the first ever organised open water swim event to take place in the rivers of the Broads National Park. The Waveney River Swim proved to be a success and saw over 100 competitors enter the water at the Waveney River Centre.

The event was devised and organised by the world record holding open water swimmer, Mel Holland, who has worked closely with the Broads Authority for the last 10 months to ensure all of the planning, route selection and safety issues were checked, double checked and agreed with Broads Authority Officers.

The swim began at the Waveney River Centre where participants made their way (either in relays or as a single swim) towards Beccles Quay where family and friends awaited their triumphant arrival. All of the competitors completed the course successfully before the organised 2pm cut off.

Prizes were awarded by the Mayor of Beccles, Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw, as well as Hugh Taylor of the River Waveney Trust and Broads Authority member, Bill Dickson.

It is hoped that the Waveney River Swim will become an annual fixture in the Broads calendar.

## **6. Reservation of Moorings**

The Authority has taken the difficult decision not to reserve space at public 24 hour moorings for specific craft because of an increase in the number of requests and complaints from others. We have to be fair to all users of our busy 24 hour moorings and yacht stations which is why we have stated that in order to accommodate everyone we are no longer able to reserve a specific spot for any particular boat.

This has resulted in correspondence with Wherry Yacht Charter in particular. The Authority has been and continues to be a great supporter of all the surviving wherries, both those owned by Wherry Yacht Charter, the Norfolk Wherry Trust and Wherry Maud Trust. They are an important part of the area's cultural heritage. The recent tolls review identified them as a special class of vessel to be treated favourably.

Broads Authority staff have made it clear that we will welcome the wherries at the yacht stations and will make sure we find appropriate mooring space. Both yacht stations have considerable lengths of mooring and there should be no problems in accommodating them. The position at Ranworth is very different, with a short length of mooring at the public staithe which is heavily used by visitors to the Broads. There are other options available.

We are arranging to meet the Trustees of the Wherry Yacht Charter in the autumn to discuss the issue.

## **7. Frequency of Ranger Patrols**

Contact Officer: Lucy Burchnall

At the last Committee a member asked about the level of patrolling by the Rangers. We have 8 vessels (excluding the RIB) which require 9 people to operate them (Breydon is double manned). The limiting factor is not boats but people. We have 12 full-time Rangers, 6 Summer Seasonal Rangers and 2 Winter Seasonal Rangers, plus around 50 volunteers. They are funded 60% from Navigation income and 40% from National Park Grant and the work allocated accordingly.

Appendix 3 shows the average navigation/countryside splits for three months are higher on the navigation side as would be expected during the summer when patrolling is a priority. You can see that of the 1764 days spent on navigation duties, the vast majority, 1356 (77%), are on patrolling.

The Head of Ranger Services has looked for comparisons from the past and found statistics for patrolling in the year 2000. Interestingly if we

compare the number of person days spent patrolling in the summer season only they are as follows:

2000 – 1356 person days (this includes lunch breaks, paperwork etc.)

2018 – 1356 person days (this excludes lunch breaks, paperwork etc.)

It is somewhat surprising that the figures are identical but there is a measurable increase in coverage because of what the figures include – which is pleasing.

## **8. Navigation Patrolling and Performance Targets**

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Lucy Burchnall/4.3

The report of the significant use of powers by the rangers is displayed in Appendix 2 and reflects the busy period. Appendix 3 shows the average navigation/countryside splits for three months are higher on the navigation side as would be expected during the summer when patrolling is a priority.

## **9. Sunken and Abandoned Vessel Update**

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Lucy Burchnall/4.3

The sunken and abandoned update is contained in Appendix 4. As with the last report we are continuing to deal with a number of vessels which have sunk on the River Waveney but progress has been made in each of these cases.

## **10. Planning Enforcement Update**

Contact Officer/Broads Plan Objective: Cally Smith/None

There are no further enforcement matters with navigation implications to report.

Background papers:	None	
Author:	Sandra Beckett/Sarah Mullarney	
Date of report:	August 2018	
Broads Plan Objectives:	Multiple	
Appendices:	APPENDIX 1 -	Swing Bridges Workshop Action Plan
	APPENDIX 2 -	Rangers Exercise of Powers Analysis
	APPENDIX 3 -	Ranger Duties
	APPENDIX 4 -	Sunken and Abandoned Vessels

**Swing Bridges Workshop  
1 August 2018**

Action	Responsible
1. Agree service level for the bridges and a metric that measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of failures and impact on boat users</li> <li>- Helps build the business case</li> </ul>	Network Rail/Broads Authority to draft and circulate
2. Agree a procedure for high impact days – so that Network Rail can adjust maintenance teams and deliver a better service.	Network Rail/Broads Authority  Liaison with Broom Owners Club/Yacht companies
3. Agree a better escalation system if boat owners have a problem – a person who understands the problem.	Network Rail to draft
4. Improved system to notify Broads Control about the status of bridges to improve the information put out to public.	Network Rail/Broads Authority
5. Network Rail Operations Team to review procedures for interacting with users of the Broads – production of a How to Guide – for example improving information displayed on the Electronic Boards.	Network Rail
6. Follow up information regarding Ofcom and radio channels.	Network Rail
7. List of incremental improvements made to date and scheduled for delivery	Network Rail
8. Network Rail to proceed with bespoke asset management plans for the two bridges to seek funding outside the normal process, keeping the Broads Authority briefed on progress with the aim of presenting the outcomes next year.	Network Rail
9. When we have the evidence and asset management plans raise the profile of the bridges and their importance to the local economy with all decision makers. (DfT, Network Rail, Norfolk County Council and Highways England.)	All

**APPENDIX 4****Sunken and Abandoned Vessels**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Location found</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Notice Affixed</b>	<b>Result</b>
Motor Cruiser	River Yare Old River Thorpe.	Vessel sunk at owners moorings	No	Not affecting the navigation owner will raise in due course
Motor Cruiser	Oulton Broad	Harbour Master liaising with owner	No	Not affecting the navigation Oulton Broad Harbour Master liaising with owner
Yacht	Geldeston	Liaising with owner	No	Authority liaising with owner
Yacht	Somerleyton	Abandoned Notice expired. Hazard marked	Yes	Will be raised by Authority
Motor Cruiser	Beccles	No owner found for vessel. Notice affixed deadline 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept 2018	Yes	Awaiting deadline for Notice