

# Navigation Committee

## Agenda 06 November 2025

10.00am

King's Centre, 63-75 King Street, Norwich, NR1 1PH

John Packman, Chief Executive – Thursday, 30 October 2025

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations (2014), filming, photographing and making an audio recording of public meetings is permitted. These activities however, must not disrupt the meeting. Further details can be found on the [Filming, photography and recording of public meetings](#) page.

### Introduction

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. To receive declarations of interest (see [Appendix 1](#) to the Agenda for guidance on your participation having declared an interest in the relevant agenda item)
3. To note whether any items have been proposed as matters of urgent business
4. **To receive and confirm the minutes of the Navigation Committee meeting held on 4 September 2025** (Pages 4 - 15)
5. **Summary of actions and outstanding issues following discussion at previous meetings** (Pages 16 - 19)

### Reports for information

6. **Chief Executive's report and current issues** (Pages 20 - 28)  
Report by Chief Executive
7. **Proposed navigation charges for 2026/27 in the navigation area and adjacent waters** (Pages 29 - 41)  
Report by Chief Executive, Director of Resources and Head of IT and Collector of Tolls
8. **Construction, Maintenance, and Ecology work programme – progress update** (Pages 42 - 50)  
Report by Head of Construction, Maintenance, and Ecology and Ecology & Design Manager
9. **Hire Boat Code – Personal Flotation Devices** (Pages 51 - 54)  
Report by Head of Safety Management

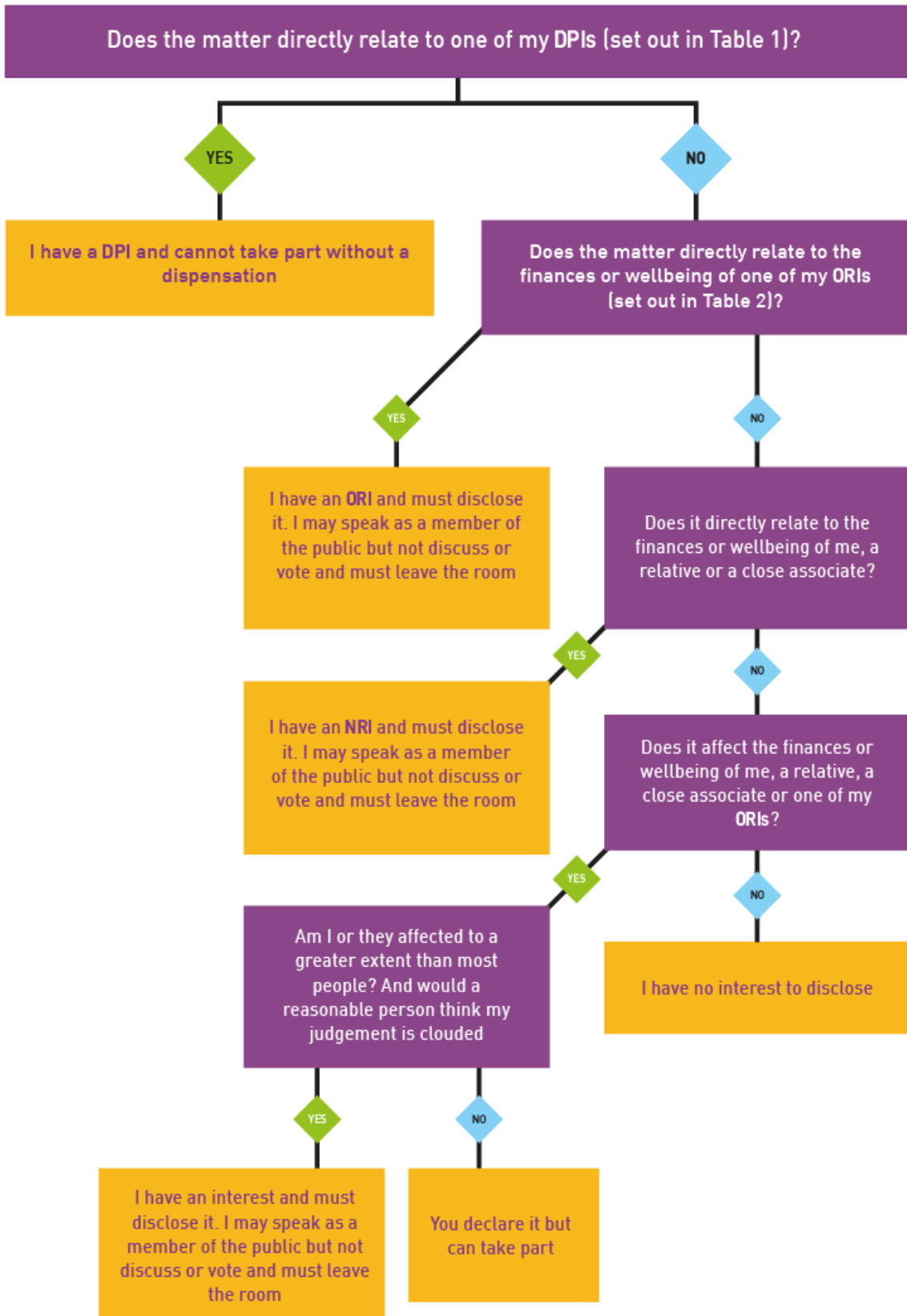
10. **Planning application with implications for navigation – BA/2025/0289/FUL, Heigham Sound, Hickling, Norfolk** (Pages 55 - 59)  
Report by Assistant Planning Officer

## Other matters

11. Other items of business  
Items of business which the chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to section 100B (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972
12. **To note the date of the next meeting – Thursday 22 January 2026 at 10.00am at Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich NR1 1RY**
13. Exclusion of the public  
The Authority is asked to consider exclusion of the public from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the consideration of the item below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public benefit in disclosing the information.
14. **To receive the Exempt Minutes from the meeting held on 4 September 2025** (Pages 60 - 63)

For further information about this meeting please contact the [Governance team](#)

# Appendix 1 – Extract from the Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct



# Navigation Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 04 September 2025

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Please note these are draft minutes and will not be confirmed until the next meeting.

## **Present**

Alan Goodchild – in the Chair, Harry Blathwayt, Stephen Bolt, Sue Cadamy, Mark Collins, Peter Dixon, Tony Grayling, Leslie Mogford, Bob Neate, Remus Sawyerr, Paul Thomas, and Daniel Thwaites.

## **In attendance**

Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Emma Krelle – Director of Resources, John Packman - Chief Executive, Lorraine Taylor – Governance Officer, Daniel Wilken – Asset Officer.

## **1. Apologies and welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no apologies.

### **Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

The Chair explained that the meeting was being audio-recorded. All recordings remained the copyright of the Broads Authority and anyone wishing to receive a copy should contact the Governance Team. The minutes remained the formal record of the meeting. He added that the law permitted any person to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of public meetings of the Authority. This did not extend to live verbal commentary. The Chair needed to be informed if anyone intended to photograph, record or film so that any person under the age of 18 or members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed could be accommodated.

## **2. Declarations of interest**

Members expressed their declarations of interest as set out in Appendix 1 of these minutes.

## **3. Matters of urgent business**

No items were proposed as a matter of urgent business.

## **4. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2025 were signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

## **5. Summary of actions and outstanding issues following discussions at previous meetings**

Members received a report summarising the progress of issues that had recently been presented to the Committee. The Chief Executive (CE) said that there were no further updates to the report. A Member asked whether there had been a direct response from Defra in relation to the letter sent regarding the funding the waterways. The CE said that there had

been no formal reply from the Minister, however, the process whereby Defra allocated funds had only just started.

## **6. Chief Executive's report and current issues**

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (CE). The CE said that following the tragic accident at Oulton Broad, East Suffolk Council were taking the lead in the investigation and the Broads Authority and the club were working with them. The CE envisaged that once the investigation was complete, a report on lessons to be learned from the incident would be brought to the Navigation Committee.

The CE said that he thought the Authority had considerable success in persuading Defra that, in terms of the National Park grant, the Authority could use the grant on items that would traditionally have been seen as navigation items on the basis that access to and from the water was consistent with the second purpose of promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public.

The CE said that he saw this as a big step forward. Table 1 of the report sets out the Capital Programme as agreed by the Board at its meeting on 25 July 2025. A further report would be tabled at the next Broads Authority meeting on 19 September which would seek some amendments to the agreed Capital Programme on which the Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology (HCME) could provide more information. The HCME referred to the 22-tonne long reach excavator listed in table 1 of the report and said that after looking at the Authority's current stock of those machines and the work lined up for the next two years, it was decided that it would not be necessary at this time to purchase another excavator and would, instead, look to purchase a new tug to enable the Authority to help with work such as movement of pontoons, removal of wrecks, marker post installation and other activities. On review it became clear that by swapping out the 22-tonne excavator for a new tug would be more beneficial.

## **7. Annual Income and Expenditure 2024/25**

Members received the report of the Director of Resources (DR). The DR reported that the audit was still ongoing and there had been, to date, no significant changes to the report in front of Members had been found that would cause any amendments. However, as the audit was still ongoing, there could be some items that would need to be adjusted. The report would come back to the Broads Authority in November with the final amended Statement of Accounts.

The DR said that the pension figures would change in the final Statement of Accounts because the Authority had to apply the Pension Asset Ceiling which came into effect in 2023/24. This meant that all assets in the pension fund could not be fully recognised because they would need to be available to pay people's future pensions and that would reduce the assets that were in the balance sheet. The DR said that the balance sheet would reduce by £10m, however, that was an adjustment to the pension reserves and not to the figures in the report.

## 8. Navigation income and expenditure 1 April 2025 to 31 July 2025 and 2025/26 forecast outturn

Members received the report of the Director of Resources (DR). The DR said that the report in front of Members went up to 31 July 2025 but was able to provide a verbal update on income figures up to 31 August 2025. There had been some positive movement on toll income – private tolls had increased by £22,782 and hire craft tolls had increased by £1,968, this therefore meant that the deficit in the report had reduced to £39,533.

The DR said that one of the variances in the report was in relation to the delay in works at Mutford Lock, however, following the repairs to the gates that money was no longer needed and had been moved back to the earmarked reserves.

A Member asked about the transfer of interest to the reserves meant a 9.9% reserve balance which was slightly under the required 10%. The DR said that because the income position had improved, the forecast position was now 10.4%. The reason why it had dipped to 9.9% was because of the cost of removing the sunken vessel in April.

A Member asked what proportion of income was coming from toll payers. The DR said that the proportion of the income was 50/50, however, this year the income from Defra included the capital grant. The Member asked what the trajectory was in relation to the income required from tolls. The DR said that budgets for 2026/27 were still being worked on in preparation for the tolls meeting in October, however, until the Authority received notification from Defra it was difficult to forecast. The Member asked whether the Navigation Committee could consider any reforms that could be made to make sure there was no increase in tolls. The DR said that the Authority was currently going through a restructuring process which was approved by the Broads Authority earlier in the year. Phase one had already been completed which had seen the directorates going from three to two, and phase two would be looking at other areas to reduce costs.

## 9. Construction, Maintenance and Ecology work programme – progress update

Members received the report of the Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology (HCME). The HCME said that the report provided the year-end figures for 2024/25 and showed the total amount of time allocated and split between Navigation and National Park functions.

The HCME provided an update on the capital grant and the installation of pontoons on the Upper Thurne in between Heigham Sound and Hickling Broad where the existing vertical steel piling was failing. Pontoons would offer long-term security of moorings in this year and would be an easier structure to maintain, as well as being a cheaper per-metre cost to install. The HCME said that following the tender and procurement process, the Authority would be submitting a planning application in due course.

A Member asked whether the Authority had consulted with those who used the existing moorings as he was aware that there had been some discussion about the suitability of

pontoons in that area, the potential of narrowing the channel which could have an impact on the Three Rivers Race. The HCME said that those thoughts had been taken into consideration, however, consultation with various parties had been planned as part of the process, and added that at the planning application stage the public would have a chance to comment on the proposals.

A Member commented that the cost of plant cutting had grown exponentially in the last few years and asked whether the HCME had found that this trend had continued this year. The HCME said that plant growth had plateaued in the last three years, however, what was being seen was that the water plants were migrating further downstream as the water quality improved. This had resulted in additional cutting along the linear length of rivers. The Member asked whether this would be continued enhanced cost for the Authority. The HCME confirmed that this would be the case.

A Member commented that the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) had reported that Floating Pennywort had been seen further down on the River Ant and asked whether this was true, was the Broads Authority facing that threat, and was that threat growing. The HCME said that Floating Pennywort was on the River Ant. It had started at Honing Lock outside of the navigation area on the canal section, however, the Pennywort had self-spread and had now been found in Barton Broad. There was an ongoing effort with the Broads Authority, Environment Agency and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust to manage each patch of growth as it was identified. The HCME said that there was constant monitoring of the situation by the Authority's Rangers, operations technicians and the ecologists.

A Member welcomed the work carried out on the Yare, and commented that Bargate Broad was becoming a problem for cruisers to moor. The Member asked whether the Authority could do anything about the water lily growth. The HCME said that he was familiar with the issues at Bargate Broad and had carried out surveys so understood the water depth issues, however, although the Broad wasn't the top priority, it was high on the list and the Authority was currently looking at the next five-year dredging programme. The Member asked whether it was possible to get the weed cutter into Bargate Broad. The HCME said that the water plant harvester did go through the two approach dykes and through the marked area, however, Broad was a SSSI site and the Authority only had consent from Natural England (NE) to manage the approach dykes and the marked area. The Authority had never sought permission from NE to manage the water plants within the Broad itself and that would need to be considered. The Member asked whether the Authority could look at the situation and seek permission as he was very concerned about the future for boats around the Brundall area and thought that the Authority should have a responsibility to ensure the navigation was actually a place where boaters can navigate on. The HCME said that he would look into cutting on Bargate Broad, however, there would be issues around staff time, where the cut material could be offloaded, and budget.

## 10. Water depth specifications

Members received the report of the Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology (HCME). The HCME said that the report in front of Members was to propose a transparent process of a review of the waterways specifications, i.e. the dredge depths. The process outlined in the report was transparent and inclusive. The timeline for the process of the review would tie in with the next round of resetting of the objectives for the Waterways Management Strategy action plan.

A Member said that he welcomed the approach and suggested that one of the consultees in this process should be the local river cruiser class. The HCME noted this.

## 11. Management of Hickling Broad

Members received the report of the Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology (HCME). The Chair said that there could be a lot of participation on this agenda item and so that everyone had a chance to speak, reminded Members to keep comments brief.

The HCME said that the report in front of Members set out where the Authority was in terms of investment that the Authority had put into Hickling Broad. The report provided an overview of the Authority's activities at Hickling Broad over the last ten years including dredging, habitat restoration, and water plant cutting. The report also included the ecological information available to date which supports any future management decisions the Authority might take.

The HCME said that the Authority had listened to stakeholders and users of the Broad and understood that sailing in Hickling Broad was highly valued. The Authority's role was to take all the information and comments on board, and with the input from the Navigation Committee, and come to a management conclusion. The ecological information was needed in this situation as it was the major legal requirement in terms of having evidence to move forward with any management decision. The original aims of the Hickling Broad Enhancement Project were to protect the water depth in the marked channel, increasing the water clarity, stabilising water plant growth, and increasing the habitat around the end of the Broad for the wildlife and the HCME said that the Authority had achieved those aims.

In terms of the water quality, the HCME said that the latest environmental and ecological data had been provided in the report and this showed that the Broad's water quality and plant growth had gone up and down and the situation was not particularly stable and any actions taken in Hickling Broad could have a detrimental effect on what was a delicately balanced system. The report sets out what the Authority does in Hickling Broad which included the management of the marked channel, water plant cutting in the marked channel three or four times per season, monitoring the water plant growth through hydroacoustic surveys to map the underwater extent and height of the water plants. The Rangers regularly patrol the areas to ensure that the channel was kept clear so that users are able to access the channel right up to the village moorings.

The HCME said that the requests for increased water plant cutting in Hickling Broad had been listened to and confirmed that the committee's comments were welcome.

A Member thanked the HCME for the excellent report and the amount of work that had been put into it. The Member commented that he had recently checked on riparian responsibilities on landowners at Hickling and a resident thanked him for the excellent work that the Broads Authority was doing in respect of weed cutting on the north-west of the Broad.

A Member thanked the HCME for the report and commented that it was a complicated issue and it was a legitimate aspiration to want to be able to sail on the Broad, however, he had concerns about how the extent of additional cutting might not be compatible with the conservation objectives of the highly protected site which was something of a success story in terms of clarity of water and ecology and in particular the rare Stonewort unique to the Broads. The Member said that the evidence did suggest that some limited and localised cutting could be looked at, but there was a need to look at how that additional cutting would impact the balance of the plant life. In addition, there was a concern about the potential cost of additional plant cutting where money was tight and there were pressures on other parts of the Broads, and added that further work would need to be done before considering any extra cutting.

A Member thanked the HCME for the comprehensive paper which focused on the ecology of the Broad and said that it was clear that a lot of effort had been made in this area, however, the improvements had come at the expense of the local community which was not mentioned in the report. The Member referenced a recent report on boating on the Upper Thurne and Hickling Broad produced by the NSBA and the Broads Society, which had been circulated to all members of the Committee. The Member commented that the Authority must be careful not to exclude people from Hickling Broad unnecessarily, in particular for sailing and other water-related activities which was beneficial for well-being and the wellness of nature – if you cannot access the Broad properly, you cannot enjoy nature. It was time to encourage more sailing vessels to Hickling Broad and to find ways to do that and for many years sailors had complained about the state of the channel. The top priority should be to ensure the maintenance of the existing channel on Hickling Broad, however, the design of the channel was such that traditional triangular racing courses could no longer be set. The Member said that he believed that facilitating racing by cutting water plants over a larger area should be the second priority for the committee to recommend. The Member suggested that a way forward would be to make sure the existing channel was maintained effectively and that there were adequate resources to prevent excessive plant growth and a larger area of the Broad to the north-west be managed in order to allow safer access for sailing and racing.

A Member commented that in 1997 the Potter Heigham pilot took 13,000 boats through the bridge, however, in 2003 the pilot took three and in 2004 there were none taken through. This year, none have been taken through to date. The Member said that the only craft going through Potter Heigham bridge were day boats and sailing yachts, therefore, in relation to navigation tolls, 90% of boats were not going through Potter Heigham up to Hickling Broad.

A Member said that at the moment, water levels were approximately 6” higher than normal which had an impact both on boats getting through the bridge and on boats getting in trouble with water plants as there was much more water on the system. This year, the Member noted that the water was very cloudy and yet there was prolific plant growth, therefore he did not think that the idea that clear water was required for good plant growth was correct. The Member commented that there was an historic right of navigation over the entire Broad and the channel was an artificial construct which was defined as the navigation. The evidence showed that this issue was both complicated and cyclical. With regard to the 2017-2019 trial, this showed that after three years there was no effect on the Stonewort and that conclusion, coupled with the suggestion from the Hickling Broad Lake Review – 1980-2024 that more could be done, was something that should be taken forward. Hickling Broad was the largest of the Broads with a history of boating and was part of the heritage of the landscape and was important to preserve.

A Member commented that if the Authority was going to look at extra cutting, there would need to be a sound business case for it if the majority of boats were unable to get under Potter Heigham bridge, this would need to be justified to the toll payers.

A Member commented that he did not recognise that 90% of boats could not get to Hickling Broad and was not sure where this figure came from, and added that he did not understand what this had to do with the enhancement of sailing regattas – many boats would get to Hickling on trailers.

A Member said that in an ideal world every part of the Broads would be free for everyone to use, however, in reality there were cost restraints and if there were a choice between dredging the rivers Bure or Yare where the majority of the boats could access, or Hickling where the majority of the boats could not access, the Authority had to bear in mind that a high percentage of those that pay toll fees could not access Hickling Broad.

The HCME said that table 3 of the report provided a breakdown of what it would take to deliver an expanded cutting programme at Hickling and the overall risk associated with it. It would be possible to work out the total cost of undertaking an expanded cutting programme but it would then come back to the resource reality within the Authority, i.e. the relative work in Hickling versus any other work carried out across the navigable system within the Broads. The HCME said that the operations team was currently working with reduced resources with two less operation technicians so any move to increase work in Hickling would mean that reciprocal work would not get done somewhere else on the system.

The Chief Executive (CE) thanked the HCME for an excellent report. He also thanked the Member who highlighted that this issue was a business case as this was, in part, about cost versus benefit. The CE said that officers had a useful meeting during the week with the NSBA and one of the things that came out of that meeting was that the number of people who would benefit from the proposal to widen the channel at Hickling Broad was relatively small. Therefore, what the Authority needed to look at was what was the benefit for that relatively small number of people against the significant costs, including the large preparatory costs of engaging with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Natural England. The CE said that the Authority

had fewer staff than previously and would have to make some difficult choices, particularly bearing in mind the pressures on the hire boat industry, and officers would be talking to Members about where the balance laid.

A Member said that the committee had a duty over the navigation, and in particular the maintenance of that navigation. Hickling Broad was a very beautiful and important area and the only way that people could see Hickling would be from the water. The Member said what was important was being able to enable the Whispering Reeds boat yard to function. If people were not able to take day boats from Hickling, which they cannot do at present due to the weeds and it became uneconomic to run them, that was a problem. That was not about running regattas or races, it was purely about navigation in the channel. Therefore, the priority should be making sure that channel was clear enough so that small businesses could run and enable people to get out and see Hickling Broad.

A Member commented that a lot of this was down to finance and who pays and asked when the business case was put together would it be possible to look at third party funding or some form of external funding which would bolster those that benefited.

In response to a question on where the Authority went from here, the HCME said that fundamentally this would require a release of resources that the HCME did not currently have. It would therefore need a decision from the Broads Authority to change the work priorities and find money that was currently not in the budget. The question was where that money would come from – that was the type of choice that the Authority had. If the money was not available, then the Authority would have to stop doing work elsewhere to focus on Hickling.

A Member said that the risk analysis referred to in the report was very partial and quite narrow. What was needed was a risk analysis that took into account ensuring public access and ensuring local communities thrive. There had been a lot of discussion around business cases, but this was not mentioned in the report and the Member would welcome seeing a business case which did much more than simply look for a new budget within the Authority.

The Chair welcomed the thought of looking at outside funding opportunities and said that hopefully the HCME had enough to move forward on this issue.

A Member commented that a meeting about Hickling was held with Natural England in February 2025, to which Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Broads Authority did not attend. The Member found the meeting very positive.

## **12. Boat Safety Scheme – compliance**

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (CE). The CE apologised for a rather complicated paper, however, the Broads Authority had its own Act of Parliament which was amended by the 2009 Act. One of the important things that provided was a focus on safety of users of the Broads and adopted the Boat Safety Scheme (BSS) in line with the national scheme. Much of that had worked really well, but one of the things that had come to the Authority's attention was that if someone knowingly did not have a Boat Safety Certificate (BSC) required for their boat, the process for dealing with that was rather difficult, lengthy

and costly. Prior to the Act, the Authority had some Byelaws which were a stop-gap and were not related to the national scheme but they set out a requirement for people to have compliance with the national scheme. The CE said what he wished to consult on was whether the Committee thought it would be a sensible and wise thing to seek a change to our Registration Byelaws, such that it became an offence if someone was required to have a BSC but did not have one.

The CE said that this was an initial report to get the Committee's views and would need to do some more work with the Solicitor to detail it because, as suggested in the report, it would be done under the 2009 Act.

A Member asked what happened with boats that are moored but are clearly not compliant. The CE said that the Rangers have an app on their phone which shows whether a toll had or had not been paid and whether a BSC was up to date and in place, and would then be drawn to the attention of the boat owner. Most boat owners would then comply, however, there were an increasing number of people deliberately not complying and the process set out in the 2009 Act was long, difficult and complicated. We, therefore, want a more straightforward process.

A Member commented that reputable companies had to comply with the BSS, however, he was aware of lots of liveaboards that do not comply. It was frustrating that boats that did comply with the BSS were at risk from those who did not, and added that nothing was done about them, therefore, anything fully supported anything that could make it easier to ensure people complied with the BSS. The CE said that the Authority did take action on this issue, but it took a lot of time and cost under the present circumstances. The Authority saw sunken boats on a more regular basis and came at a cost of both time and money to the Authority. What the CE would like to do was to try and address an improvement in the process.

A Member said that there were large holes in the BSS in that hull and deck conditions, stability, through-hull fittings, general mechanical condition, life buoys, and automatic fire extinguishers in engine bays were all not checked on private boats. There were huge differences in the BSS between private boats and hire boats. The CE said that he thought that it would be expected that hire boats would have higher level of certification.

A Member commented that the BSS had its faults but it was better than nothing and a hire boat had to comply with a far greater requirement and asked what the Authority would do where there was a boat which did not have a BSC, was not in good condition, and the owner did not have the funds to comply. The CE said that this was not an easy area of operation for the Authority, and it was getting more difficult. However, the Rangers did a fantastic job in dealing with individuals who were not easy to deal with, but ultimately the Authority would take these people to court and this was what the report was about. If a person was required to have a BSC and refused to do so, then the Authority could more quickly act and take people to court.

A member commented that this was about safety and fully supported anything that the Authority could do to make the process quicker and easier to ensure compliance.

A Member asked if a boat owner did not have a BSC could they still get insured. A Member replied that it was possible to get insured without a BSC but it would not be possible to get tolled.

A Member asked whether the Harbour Authority element provided any additional support on this issue. The CE said that this was the Broads Authority's Act of Parliament and an amendment to the Byelaw would need to be made to make it faster to deal with these issues.

The Chair said that there was not a requirement for a vote on this, however, asked Members for a show of hands for those in favour of the approach set out by the CE. The Members unanimously supported this approach.

### 13. Other items of business

There were no other items of business.

### 14. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Navigation Committee would be held on 6 November 2025 at the King's Centre, 63-75 King Street, Norwich, NR1 1PH commencing at 10am.

### 15. Exclusion of the public

Tony Grayling proposed, and Stephen Bolt seconded.

**It was resolved unanimously that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for consideration of the item below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraph 1, 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public benefit in disclosing the information.**

The public left the meeting and the recording was suspended.

### 16. Insurance requirements

Members received the exempt report from the Chief Executive. A summary of the discussion was contained in the exempt minutes.

### 17. Mooring negotiations - update

Members received the report from the Chief Executive and Asset Officer. A summary of the discussion was contained in the exempt minutes.

The meeting ended at 11:44am

Signed

Chairman

Please note these are draft minutes and will not be confirmed until the next meeting.

## Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests: Navigation Committee, 04 September 2025

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest
Mark Collins and Peter Dixon	11	Membership of Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association and the Broads Society. Other Registerable Interest. Granted a dispensation by MO to participate and vote.

# Navigation Committee

06 November 2025

Agenda item number 5

## Summary of actions and outstanding issues following discussions at previous meetings

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Target date
Network Rail Swing Bridge £10 million refurbishment programme	19/10/2017	John Packman	Network Rail Whole Life Strategy planning for swing bridges.	<p>Historical updates (date range October 2019 to April 2024) have been removed. All historical updates can be found in previous versions of the Summary of Actions and Outstanding Issues available via the committee papers on the <a href="#">Broads Authority website</a>.</p> <p><b>April 2024:</b> Network Rail confirmed that the work to the Somerleyton and Reedham swing bridges was complete. Work included extensive brickwork repairs to reinforce the control boxes, a full upgrade to the electrical system, a full upgrade and replacement of the manual winch system to enable the bridge to be swung open manually by the bridge operator if there was a problem with the machinery, and replacement of the navigation lights. What was not clear was whether, as part of the scheme, the lifting equipment and jacks within the control box had been completed and the Authority was waiting to receive confirmation from Network Rail.</p> <p>Network Rail had been unable to go ahead with the Oulton swing bridge repairs as they were more substantial than first thought.</p> <p><b>May 2024:</b> Network Rail have confirmed that they are continuing to look at ways in which, in the long term, they might be able to address the issue of the two Swing Bridge thermally expanding and not being operable in very hot weather. However, these are likely to entail structural works and will require additional funding, so they do not currently have a timeline for this.</p> <p>For the time being, they have instead undertaken a smaller, though still significant, set of works. Together with a consistent maintenance regime, these will prevent the bridges from deteriorating and make failures less likely.</p> <p><b>June 2024:</b> As agreed in Navigation Committee meeting on 06/06/2024, historic updates have been removed up until April 2024 updates.</p> <p><b>October 2025:</b> No updates to report.</p>	

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Target date
Carrow Road Bridge Repairs	15/04/2021	John Packman	Briefing provided at Navigation Committee meeting in April 2021, outlining Norfolk County Council's proposals for the repair of Carrow Road bridge. Further information is awaited from the County Council.	<p>Historical updates (date range October 2019 to April 2024) have been removed. All historical updates can be found in previous versions of the Summary of Actions and Outstanding Issues available via the committee papers on the <a href="#">Broads Authority website</a>.</p> <p><b>April 2024:</b> It is understood that some repairs have been carried out and the bridge was fit for purpose at present.</p> <p>June 2024: No further update. As agreed in Navigation Committee meeting on 06/06/2024, historic updates have been removed up until April 2024 updates.</p> <p><b>August 2024:</b> Norfolk County Council reported that repairs were due to take place to the Bridge on 22 August 2024.</p> <p><b>September 2024:</b> The council carried out urgent repairs to the surface of the road.</p> <p><b>August 2025:</b> Repairs were undertaken to the timber decking following an inspection which identified some defects in the bridge's timber.</p> <p><b>October 2025:</b> No updates to report.</p>	10/06/2021
Funding the waterways of the Broads National Park	11/01/2024	John Packman	To track the progress on making the case for central Government funding to support the maintenance of the Broads waterways.	<p><b>January 2024:</b> The paper was presented to the committee on 11 Jan. 2024 and received unanimous support to endorse the paper for adoption by the Broads Authority. On 26 Jan. 2024, the Broads Authority unanimously endorsed the paper and supported the Chair in writing to the Secretary of State for the Environment.</p> <p><b>March 2024:</b> Funding paper sent to the Minister and a response received on 18 March.</p> <p><b>April 2024:</b> As reported at the Navigation Committee on 11 April, the Minister confirmed that the Government remained committed to supporting the vital role Protected Landscapes play in protecting our precious wildlife, and the importance they have for tourism, the regional economy, and public access. The Minister was optimistic that a more sustainable funding model for our Protected Landscapes could be developed.</p> <p><b>June 2024:</b> As discussed at the Navigation Committee meeting held on 6 June 2024, the Chair would write to the Minister again following the General Election.</p> <p><b>August 2024:</b> Broads Authority Chair has written to the new Minister.</p> <p>November 2024: No reply received from the Minister, however, the Chair and Chief Executive are trying to set up a meeting with the Minister in the near future to discuss the issue face-to-face.</p> <p><b>March 2025:</b> No response to date. Officers raised the matter on 13 January as part of the Defra Annual Review.</p>	

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Target date
				<p><b>August 2025:</b> Defra has provided the Authority with flexibility in the use of National Park capital funding. The Change Control Notice stated the following:  “The capital grant and any income derived from the expenditure is to be treated as National Park income and must be used in furtherance of section 2(1)(a) and (b) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. Any such income may be applied to an expenditure that incidentally supports Section 2(1)(c) provided the primary aim of the expenditure remains the pursuit of Section 2(1)(a) and (b)’’.  Section 2(1) (b) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act states:  <i>It shall be the general duty of the Authority to manage the Broads for the purposes of: (b) promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public</i>  The argument accepted by Defra is that improving access to and from the water is one of the main ways the public enjoy the special qualities of the Broads.  <b>October 2025:</b> No updates to report.</p>	
Haven Bridge	06/06/2024	John Packman	The Great Yarmouth Ports Leisure Users meeting on 2 April had a long discussion regarding the problems with the Haven Bridge. There is a dispute between Peel Ports and Norfolk County Council regarding opening the bridge which is having an adverse impact on commercial and private boat owners based in the Broads.	<p><b>June 2024:</b> The Chief Executive has been in touch with the CEO at Norfolk County Council to help facilitate a way forward between the two parties - Norfolk County Council and Peel Ports.  <b>July 2024:</b> Temporary arrangements agreed by Peel Ports and Norfolk County Council have allowed the bridge to open. The Monitoring Officer has written to the Great Yarmouth Port Authority reminding it of its statutory duties.  <b>August 2024:</b> Response received from Great Yarmouth Port Authority and meeting to be arranged to discuss Haven Bridge.  September 2024: Great Yarmouth Port Authority wrote to the Chief Executive to defer the meeting until they have had their AGM on 18 September.  <b>14 November 2024:</b> Meeting with users on lifting arrangements. Peel Ports proposed that charges be introduced for lifting the bridge and the Port Users Group would formulate a response to that proposal.  <b>January 2025:</b> A letter, dated 19 December 2024, had been sent to the Port Users Group from Great Yarmouth Port Authority which indicated that the proposed lift charge would not be applied for 2025. The wider issue of the operation of the bridge and its lifting remained outstanding.  <b>March 2025:</b> The Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer met with Peel Ports on 19 February and covered a range of issues.  <b>October 2025:</b> No updates to report.</p>	

Title	Meeting date	Lead officer	Summary of actions	Progress so far	Target date
Boat Safety Scheme Compliance	04/09/2025	Bill Housden	Amend the Authority's Byelaws, to require a current Boat Safety Certificate to be held in respect of vessels, other than seagoing freight vessels, as a condition of using the navigation area and adjacent waters for the purposes of safety.	<b>October 2025:</b> Solicitors instructed to proceed with drafting byelaw.	tbc
Insurance Requirements	04/09/2025	Bill Housden	Seek a legal opinion as to whether Paragraph 1 of Schedule 3 of the 2009 Broads Authority Act includes wreck removal insurance.	<b>October 2025:</b> Solicitors instructed to seek legal opinion.	tbc

Date of report: 23 October 2025

# Navigation Committee

06 November 2025

Agenda item number 6

## Chief Executive's report and current issues

Report by Chief Executive

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### Purpose

To provide a briefing on significant matters relating to the maintenance and management of the waterways.

### Broads Plan context

All strategic actions under Theme C: Maintaining and enhancing the navigation.

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## 1. Oulton Broad Accident

- 1.1. Following on from the report at the last meeting of the Committee we understand that East Suffolk Council is nearing completion of its investigation into the fatal power boat accident on Oulton Broad.

## 2. Floating pennywort

- 2.1. Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) is a non-native invasive plant which can smother ponds, dykes and rivers, severely damaging aquatic ecosystems and hindering navigation. It can grow from even the smallest fragments. Staff and volunteers have been vigilant in locating and removing it.
- 2.2. It was introduced to the UK in the 1980s as an ornamental plant for garden ponds but grows into large floating mats of dense foliage and smothers waterways. It is so damaging to native flora and fauna that it is listed under [Schedule 9 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#), meaning that while it is not illegal to grow it, it is an offence to cause it to spread. Since 2014, it has also been banned from sale in the UK.
- 2.3. Floating pennywort can float on the water surface and root in bank edges, including through cracks in quay heading. It can rapidly reproduce from seeds or small fragments of plant that are disturbed through construction works or transported by boats. The species has recently been identified in Limekiln Dyke, the northern section of Barton Broad and many of the channels upstream of the Broad along the River Ant.
- 2.4. Norfolk County Council have coordinated the effort on non-native species focusing on sites outside the navigation while the Authority's staff and volunteers check and remove anything in the navigation area.
- 2.5. A meeting of the Floating Pennywort Steering Group will be held on 11 November to discuss a coordinated approach. That group includes the Environment Agency, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the Internal Drainage Board, Norfolk County Council, the RSPB as well as the Broads Authority. We will update the Committee on progress.
- 2.6. Further information about the species can be found here:

[How to stop invasive non-native plants from spreading - GOV.UK](#)

[Nonnativespecies.org/Floating Pennywort](https://nonnativespecies.org/Floating-Pennywort)

## 3. Ludham Bridge moorings

- 3.1. We are making good progress on the potential transfer of the ownership of the Ludham Bridge mooring from the Environment Agency to the Authority. This has long been an ambition with the Authority's commitment to bringing this site up to our 24-hour mooring standard, once transferred. We will update the Committee on the latest position at the meeting.

## 4. Navigation patrolling and performance targets

- 4.1. The report of the significant use of powers by the rangers is displayed in Appendix 1 and reflects the busy period. The average navigation/countryside splits since April (Appendix 2) are higher on the navigation side as would be expected during the summer when patrolling is a priority.

## 5. Sunken and abandoned vessel update

- 5.1. The sunken, abandoned and unserviceable vessels update is included in Appendix 3. A number of vessels have been recovered and removed from the water over this period.

## 6. Planning enforcement update

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

Author: John Packman

Date of report: 24 October 2025

[Broads Plan](#) strategic actions: Theme C

Appendix 1 – Rangers exercise of powers analysis

Appendix 2 – Ranger duties total time allocated and actual days

Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 14 October 2025  
14/10/2025

Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 04/09/2025

## Appendix 1 – Rangers exercise of powers analysis

**Table 1**

<b>Verbal warnings</b>	<b>Wroxham launch</b> Wroxham and upper Bure	<b>Irstead launch</b> Ant	<b>Ludham launch</b> Hickling, Potter Heigham, upper Thurne	<b>Ludham launch 2</b> lower Thurne and lower Bure	<b>Norwich launch</b> Norwich and upper Yare	<b>Hardley Launch</b> Reedham, Chet and middle Yare	<b>Burgh St Peter launch</b> Oulton Broad and upper/middle Waveney	<b>Breydon launch</b> Breydon water, lower Waveney and Yare
Care and caution	117	13	52	40	16	14	11	6
Speed	2101	683	123	440	108	67	55	41
Other	154	71	16	9	157	21	17	126

**Table 2**

<b>Written warnings</b>	<b>Wroxham launch</b>	<b>Irstead launch</b>	<b>Ludham launch</b>	<b>Ludham launch 2</b>	<b>Norwich launch</b>	<b>Hardley Launch</b>	<b>Burgh St Peter launch</b>	<b>Breydon launch</b>
Care and caution		1		1				
Speed	15	6			2		2	2
Other	2	15	12	9	3	10	5	4
Special directions	119	44		46	20	47	191	59

**Table 3**

Launch patrols	Wroxham launch	Irstead launch	Ludham launch	Ludham launch 2	Norwich launch	Hardley Launch	Burgh St Peter launch	Breydon launch
Launch staffed by ranger	182	130	126	144	146	111	126	183
Volunteer patrols		6					2	
IRIS reports	3	5		8	7	2	8	2

**Table 4**

Broads Control total calls

Contact method	Number of calls
Telephone	13,152
VHF	1,496
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,559</b>

## Appendix 2 – Ranger duties: total time allocated and actual days

**Table 1**

Broads Authority corporate duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Training	112	56.82
Broads Control	401	212.23
Team meetings, work planning	243	136.82
Partnership working	61	8.04
Assisting other sections	74	17.16
Billets and boatsheds	35	12.16
Launch – general		12.03
Trailers - general		0.00
Vehicle maintenance		4.32
Other equipment repair		4.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>926</b>	<b>463.65</b>

**Table 2**

Navigation duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Patrolling	1660	1210.78
Escorts	37	17.84
Prosecution files	0	17.77
Bankside tree management	80	20.34
Obstruction removal	42	20.17
Channel markers and buoys	25	10.47
Signs and boards maintenance	43	28.24
Adjacent waters	86	70.68
Reactive mooring maintenance	100	25.74
<b>Total</b>	<b>2073</b>	<b>1435.99</b>

**Table 3**

Conservation, recreation, countryside maintenance

<b>Work area</b>	<b>Annual allocation (days)</b>	<b>Actual days to date</b>
Fen management	168	16.55
Lake, riverbank restoration	99	0.00
Invasive species control	42	3.78
Other conservation work	168	33.24
Pollution response		0.81
Visitor site maintenance	188	128.98
Public Engagement	110	45.61
Public footpath work	69	20.74
Education work	38	15.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>265.26</b>

**Team total up to 08 October 2025**

Percentage Navigation: 84%

Percentage National Park: 16%

## Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 14 October 2025

Description	Location found	Action	Notice affixed	Result
Motor Cruiser	Old River Yare, Thorpe	Vessel sunk at owners moorings	No	Not affecting the navigation
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Trowse	Vessel sunk behind bridge fenders	Yes	Not affecting the navigation
Auxiliary Yacht	Barton Turf	Vessel sunk at wild moorings	Yes	Vessel removed
Speedboat	Hoveton	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel removed
Auxiliary Yacht	Ludham Staithe	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel removed
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Whitlingham	Owner unknown	Yes	Found drifting, vessel recovered to Dockyard
Motor Cruiser	Sutton Broad	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel removed
Auxiliary Yacht	Lower Bure, Yarmouth	Vessel sunk	Yes	Vessel recovered

### Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 04 September 2025

Type of vessel	Fined	Costs awarded	Victim surcharge	Compensation
Aux Yacht x 2		£260.00	£160.00	£136.96
Unregistered vessel x 1	£100.00			
Unpaid Toll x 1	£120.00			
No Insurance	£180.00			

# Navigation Committee

06 November 2025

Agenda item number 7

## Proposed navigation charges for 2026/27 in the navigation area and adjacent waters

Report by Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Head of IT and Collector of Tolls

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### Purpose

This report is the formal consultation with the Committee on the level of charges for 2026/27 as required by S13 (3) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. The views of the Committee are requested. The Broads Authority will make the decision on the navigation charges for 2026/27 at its meeting on 28 November 2025.

### Broads Plan context

All strategic actions under Theme C: Maintaining and enhancing the navigation.

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. Last year there was a range of factors for members to consider, including the impact of inflation, the increase in the Employer’s National Insurance Contribution, the annual pay increase and a reduction in the number of smaller boats. After much deliberation, the Navigation Committee recommended a 5.9% increase in charges along with a reduction in navigation expenditure through a cutback on patrolling and practical work. This was accepted by the Broads Authority. This year the main issue is the on-going reduction in the number boats, both private and commercial, even though less than last year it is still significant.

## 2. Boat numbers

2.1. Table 1 shows the registered boat numbers for 30 September for 2023 to 2025.

**Table 1**

Private craft numbers 2023–25 as at 30 September 2025

Private craft	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	Change 23-24	Change 24-25
Motor cruisers	4,993	4,893	4,819	-100	-74
Aux. yachts	960	892	883	-68	-9
Day launches	582	533	539	-49	+6
O/B dinghies	1014	919	894	-95	-25
Workboats	155	162	139	+7	-23
Sailing	809	740	721	-69	-19
Rowing / Paddling	1,870	1,613	1,484	-257	-129
Houseboats	71	71	65	0	-6
Passenger – SPB	22	21	21	-1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,476</b>	<b>9,844</b>	<b>9,565</b>	<b>-632</b>	<b>-279</b>

2.2. In 2024 the total number of private boats using the Broads fell by 632 (–6.0%) as of the end of September. The largest reductions last year were in small boats e.g. rowing 257 (–13.7%), with smaller percentage falls in all the other categories apart from workboats and houseboats. This year the fall has been less than last year, at 279 (–2.8%). The fall in rowing craft is still the largest but half that in the previous year. Private motor cruisers fell by 100 (-2%) last year and by 74 (-1.5%) this year.

2.3. Appendix 1 gives a longer term context showing the number of boats since 2014. This shows a reduction in private craft over the ten years of -853 (-7.9%). The number of private motor cruisers grew in 2021 and 2022 and the overall reduction is -107 (-2.1%). There is a long term trend in the decline in the number of sailing boats, both sailing craft and auxiliary yachts.

- 2.4. Table 2 shows the number of commercial craft across the three years. Last year the number of commercial craft using the Broads fell by 46, (–2.9%), the major change being in rowing craft (a decrease of 29). This year the loss of commercial craft has increased to 85 (–5.4%), with the biggest reduction in day launches and rowing craft.
- 2.5. Appendix 1 shows the long term predicted decline in the number of hired motor cruisers. Research more than ten years ago suggested that the number would fall to around 500. The number of day launches has increased, over the ten years.

**Table 2**

Commercial craft numbers 2023–25 as at 30 September 2025

Hire craft	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	Change 23-24	Change 24-25
Motor cruisers	647	641	630	–6	–11
Aux. yachts	45	43	43	–2	0
Day launches	358	344	310	–14	–34
O/B dinghies	4	1	1	–3	0
Sailing	71	71	71	0	0
Rowing / Paddling	442	413	377	–29	–36
Houseboats	26	32	29	+6	–3
Passenger – MCA	6	6	6	0	0
Passenger – SPB	7	9	8	+2	–1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,606</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>1475</b>	<b>–46</b>	<b>–85</b>

### 3. Lapsed Boat Ownership Research

- 3.1. The decline in the number of private boats appears to be part of wider changes in society with similar falls in boat numbers on other inland waterways and a decline in boat building. We have speculated with members on the causes: the state of the economy, the costs of owning and maintaining a boat and the demography of boat ownership.
- 3.2. It would be helpful for the Authority if we had some better knowledge of the reasons behind the fall in boat ownership. We had hoped that the Tolls Team would have time during the summer months to telephone former Broads boat owners to try and understand the reasons for not renewing their boat toll. But, because of the large backlog in late payers, see below for more information, this has not proved to be possible and there would be advantages in using an independent contractor for such work. The costs would be in the order of £4,000 to £8,000 depending on the sample size. The views of the committee on whether we should commission this work are sought.

## 4. Navigation Income

- 4.1. On 1 October 2024, the impact of the large reduction in boat numbers was a predicted deficit of -£130,591. At the end of the year the gap between the budgeted income and actual income was -£128,298.
- 4.2. This year the current deficit is -£74,204. This is an improvement, but still a deficit we need to consider and respond to. Table 3 below shows the toll income against the budgeted figures.

**Table 3**

Toll income as at 1 October 2025

	Private Boats	Hire Boats
Budgeted Income 2025/26	£3,057,000	£1,489,000
Income received 1 April to 30 September 2025	£2,904,280	£1,442,560
Predicted income 2025/26	£3,024,236	£1,447,560
Predicted deficit	<b>- £32,764</b>	<b>- £41,440</b>

## 5. Late Payment

- 5.1. One of the issues the Authority has addressed this year is late payment of tolls and the additional administrative costs involved. All toll payers are sent notification of their charge for the new year in February/March. The majority pay before 1 April or soon after. The Rangers check if boats have been tolled and if required, issue a Notice of Contravention which is affixed to the vessel, with a duplicate sent to the Tolls Team. The Tolls Team write to the owner reminding them that payment is overdue, and that a £25 administrative charge will be added if they fail to pay by a certain date.
- 5.2. To date we have received over £3,000 in £25 late payment charges which makes a small contribution to our administrative costs. Importantly the prospect of an additional charge encourages prompt payment.
- 5.3. As previously discussed with, and supported by, the Navigation Committee we intend to make a further change to this process next year. The notification of charges, our website and other information will include a warning that if Rangers issue a Notice of Contravention for late payment, tolls payable after that date are subject to a £25 administrative charge. This has the potential to save the Tolls Team a lot of work.

## 6. Navigation Expenditure

- 6.1. During the year, the Authority has made savings in expenditure on navigation to align it closer with navigation income. For example, we reduced patrolling and practical work and cut our overheads and management costs. The net impact of these changes has been a reduction in expenditure of £65,000. In addition, the pay increase for staff was less than the Authority had budgeted for. The table below provides details of the forecast adjustments since the report to the committee in September.

**Table 4**

Forecast adjustments

Item	Amount £
Forecast outturn deficit as per LAB	67,606
Adjustments reported 04/09/2025	(3,324)
Decrease to Hire Craft income	6,998
Increase to Private Craft income	(35,278)
Increase to investment income	(16,500)
Increase to staff costs for redundancy	7,558
<b>Forecast outturn deficit as at 30 September 2025</b>	<b>27,060</b>

6.2. The forecast outturn for 2025/26 is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

Navigation forecast compared to the latest available budget for 2025/26.

Navigation outturn 2025/26 vs budget	Budget £	Outturn £	Difference £
Income	(4,726,300)	(4,668,596)	- 57,704
Expenditure	4,793,906	4,695,656	+ 98,250
<b>(Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>67,606</b>	<b>27,060</b>	<b>+ 40,546</b>
Transfer of interest to earmarked reserves	50,100	60,000	+ 10,100
Opening reserve	(627,403)	(627,403)	0
Repayment of National Park loan	50,000	50,000	0
Closing reserve	(459,697)	(490,343)	+ 30,646
Reserves as a % of expenditure	9.6%	10.4%	+ 0.8%

## 7. Capital funding

7.1. It is important to state the additional National Park capital funding is welcomed but it does not relieve the pressures caused by the decline of National Park revenue funding. However, Defra has recently given the Authority more flexibility in the use of National Park capital funding. The department has accepted the argument that improving access to and from the water is one of the main ways the public enjoy the special qualities of the Broads. This means that navigation will benefit from National Park Capital funding.

7.2. Defra's Change Control Notice for this year states:

*The capital grant and any income derived from the expenditure is to be treated as National Park income and must be used in furtherance of section 2(1)(a) and (b) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988.*

*Any such income may be applied to an expenditure that incidentally supports Section 2(1)(c) provided the primary aim of the expenditure remains the pursuit of Section 2(1)(a) and (b).*

*Section 2(1) (b) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act states:*

*It shall be the general duty of the Authority to manage the Broads for the purposes of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public;*

- 7.3. Appendix 2 is a copy of the current version of the capital programme. This includes new pontoons and enhanced moorings which have long been on the Navigation Committee’s wish list. Upgrading the charging pillars, and more NATO pontoons for floating our excavators are all helpful investments.

## 8. Factors to consider when setting the tolls for 2026/27

### 8.1. Level of inflation

The current levels of inflation in September 2025 (announced 22 October) are:

CPI	=	3.8%
CPI H	=	4.1%
RPI	=	4.5%

The costs of owning and maintaining a boat, including mooring fees, repairs, fuel, insurance, and tolls, are continuing to rise and there is little doubt that this is contributing to the decline of private boats and placing strain on the hire boat industry.

### 8.2. Estimate of boat numbers

It is impossible to give an accurate estimate of boat numbers for next year, but the following assumptions can be made.

1. Given the difficult outlook for the economy and personal finances, it is probable that we will see a further reduction in the number of private craft. It is likely to be similar to this year’s – a loss of a further 300 boats, including a fall in the number of motor cruisers of about 95.
2. Based on our information from the industry we are predicting a further loss of 30 motor cruisers in 2026 as companies continue to take older vessels out of their fleets. We can also anticipate a further reduction in day launches and rowing craft. We are using the following numbers in our calculations:

Hired motor cruisers	600	–30
Day launches	300	–17

### 8.3. Salary increase

Based on current information we are applying a 3% increase in our 2026/27 budget for a salary increase. The Authority is obliged to apply nationally agreed increases by the National Joint Council.

## 9. Options for 2026/27

- 9.1. Based on the above, a 2.5% increase would be required to maintain the current level of maintenance. A figure lower than 2.5% would require further cuts in services and is not recommended. At the Tolls Briefing on 7 October some members asked officers to explore the option of increasing practical work by raising tolls by 3.5%. This has been done.
- 9.2. The number of Senior Operations Technicians and Operations Technicians has been reduced from 22 to 20 and the proportion of their time given to navigation reduced from 70% to 60% in 2025/26. A 3.5% increase in tolls would produce an estimated additional income of £44,000. With this it would be possible to employ one new Operations Technician and increase the overall proportion of time given to navigation to 62% in 2026/27. These two changes would increase the number of days given to the practical maintenance of the navigation by the Operation Technicians from 2,190 to 2,399. This could expand the programmed work which is allocated to the following tasks: dredging (44%), maintenance of moorings (33%), water plant cutting (11%), riverside trees (2%) (Note: excludes work by Rangers) and other (channel markers, gauge boards, raising wrecks and obstructions etc.) (9%).

**Table 6**

Cost per m<sup>2</sup> by category of vessel for the two options

No.	Category – cost per m <sup>2</sup> except rowing, canoes etc	Current	+2.5%	+3.5%
1.	Weekly hired motor craft	£44.05	£45.15	£45.59
2.	Weekly hired motor craft – electric and hybrid	£30.32	£31.08	£31.38
3.	Day hired – petrol/diesel	£70.00	£71.75	£72.45
4.	Day hired electric	£43.58	£44.67	£45.11
5.	MCA passenger boats and small passenger boats	£57.97	£59.42	£60.00
6.	Hired motorised sailing craft – diesel	£33.77	£34.61	£34.95
7.	Hired sailing boats & hired motorised sailing - electric	£24.69	£25.31	£25.55
8.	Hired houseboats	£22.33	£22.89	£23.11
9.	Hired rowing – fixed amount	£98.12	£100.57	£101.55

No.	Category – cost per m <sup>2</sup> except rowing, canoes etc	Current	+2.5%	+3.5%
	Hired paddle craft – fixed amount	£49.05	£50.28	£50.77
10.	Private motorboats - petrol & diesel	£19.56	£20.05	£20.24
11.	Private motorboats electric	£14.95	£15.32	£15.47
12.	Private motorised sailing craft - petrol & diesel	£14.47	£14.83	£14.98
13.	Private sailing boats & private motorised sailing craft - electric	£11.95	£12.25	£12.37
14.	Private houseboats	£7.70	£7.89	£7.97
15.	Private rowing, canoes etc. – fixed amount	£49.05	£50.28	£50.77

9.3. The implications of a 2.5% and 3.5% increase on the charges for some of the most common types of vessels are shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7**

Proposed increase in navigation charges by common types & sizes of vessel

Type of Vessel	Sep No.	Current	+2.5%	+3.5%
5 m <sup>2</sup> Private sailing craft	301	£59.75	£61.25	£61.85
11 m <sup>2</sup> Private sailing craft	123	£131.45	£134.75	£136.07
5 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	524	£97.80	£100.25	101.20
15 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	231	£293.40	£300.75	£303.60
22 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	305	£430.32	£441.10	£445.28
38 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	106	£743.28	£761.90	£769.12
11 m <sup>2</sup> Day hired boats – petrol/ diesel	43	£770.00	£789.25	£796.95
11 m <sup>2</sup> Day hired boats - electric	18	£479.38	£491.37	£496.21
38 m <sup>2</sup> Weekly hired motor craft	50	£1,673.90	£1,715.70	£1,732.42
48 m <sup>2</sup> Weekly hired motor craft	53	£2,114.40	£2,167.20	£2,188.32

## 10. Financial implications

10.1. The steps made to reduce costs during 2025/26 means a 2.5% or 3.5% increase will provide a reserve balance of 11.5%, above the recommended minimum of 10%. This will help provide a cushion if boat numbers reduce further than expected. The medium-term financial plan currently indicates similar increases over the two following years to keep pace with forecast salary inflation and potential further losses of boats in 2027/28 and 2028/29.

## 11. Social, economic, and environmental implications

11.1. Toll payer surveys have shown that the Authority's tolls account for less than 10% of the typical costs of owning a boat. While boat ownership may be seen by some as a luxury, we know that this is not always the case. The cost-of-living crisis is having an

impact on society and its impact on the boating community using the Broads and those visiting on holiday is difficult to predict. Our community of private boat owners is diverse, and some may face difficult decisions regarding their continuing boat ownership.

- 11.2. The Broads Society and Inland Waterways Association conducted research into the level of navigation charges across different waterways. The research concluded that: 'Looking beyond the headline percentage increases of the past two years, however, the cash cost to most private boat owners today remains modest, giving good value when compared with other navigations.' (Broads Society 2024).

## 12. Risk implications

- 12.1. As with last year the main area of uncertainty involved in determining charges for next year is the number of boats using the Broads. Estimates have been made using information from the hire boat companies and for the private boats it has been assumed that

## 13. Conclusion

- 13.1. Last year's switch in the apportionment of operational costs from Navigation to National Park and the lower-than-expected pay rise has more than offset the reduced income from the reduction in the number of boats.
- 13.2. This has put the navigation budget in a healthier position, and an increase in tolls of 2.5% or 3.5%, below the current level of inflation (3.8% to 4.5%), would leave the Authority in a stronger position for this year and the following two, even with our anticipated reduction in boat numbers. The use of National Park capital funding is providing for investment in a range of improvements this year, which our toll payers will notice, and I am sure appreciate. The higher rate of increase would allow for the replacement of an Operations Technician and a nearly 10% increase in the time of the Technicians spent on maintenance of the navigation.

Author: John Packman, Emma Krelle, Bill Housden

Date of report: 15 October 2025

Background papers: Navigation charges 2026/27 – Briefing Note.

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C1, C2, C3, C4.

Appendix 1 – Annual Boat Numbers as at 1 November from 2014-2024

Appendix 2 – National Park Capital Programme 2025/26

## Appendix 1 - Annual Boat Numbers as at 1 November 2014-2024

Annual Boat Numbers as at 1st November													
PRIVATE BOATS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change	% Change
Motor Cruisers	5059	5091	5086	5110	5079	5083	5004	5237	5142	5049	4952	-107	-2.12%
Auxiliary Yachts	1168	1152	1127	1132	1093	1107	965	1048	1024	966	904	-264	-22.60%
Day Launches	514	504	495	556	574	558	562	582	600	592	546	32	6.23%
Outboard Dinghies	1062	1016	962	1064	1060	1058	1051	1140	1185	1039	940	-122	-11.49%
Workboats	180	172	156	158	156	153	144	142	166	159	164	-16	-8.89%
Passenger Vessels SPB				22	21	23	13	19	20	22	21	21	
<b>TOTAL MOTORBOATS:</b>	<b>7983</b>	<b>7935</b>	<b>7826</b>	<b>8042</b>	<b>7983</b>	<b>7982</b>	<b>7739</b>	<b>8168</b>	<b>8137</b>	<b>7827</b>	<b>7527</b>	<b>-456</b>	<b>-5.71%</b>
Sailing Craft	1230	1191	1107	1076	1081	1023	844	920	861	820	747	-483	-39.27%
Rowing Craft	1578	1532	1513	1483	1513	1545	1800	2039	2054	1874	1618	40	2.53%
Houseboats	27	33	45	45	49	52	49	52	67	77	73	46	170.37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10818</b>	<b>10691</b>	<b>10491</b>	<b>10646</b>	<b>10626</b>	<b>10602</b>	<b>10432</b>	<b>11179</b>	<b>11119</b>	<b>10598</b>	<b>9965</b>	<b>-853</b>	<b>-7.89%</b>
<b>HIRE BOATS</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>		
Motor Cruisers	842	821	789	802	806	801	734	729	673	647	641	-201	-23.87%
Auxiliary Yachts	47	43	44	45	46	44	39	45	45	45	43	-4	-8.51%
<b>ALL CABIN HIRE BOATS:</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>-205</b>	<b>-23.06%</b>
Day Launches	299	290	295	290	301	297	261	326	363	359	344	45	15.05%
Outboard Dinghies	8	10	11	9	9	8	4	4	4	4	1	-7	-87.50%

Annual Boat Numbers as at 1st November													
Passenger Vessels MCA	10	10	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	-4	-40.00%
Passenger Vessels SPB				6	7	7	4	8	8	7	9	9	
<b>TOTAL MOTORBOATS:</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>1174</b>	<b>1145</b>	<b>1158</b>	<b>1175</b>	<b>1163</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>1118</b>	<b>1099</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>-162</b>	<b>-13.43%</b>
Sailing Craft	110	108	102	101	95	87	74	88	73	71	71	-39	-35.45%
Rowing Craft	175	184	192	191	194	193	182	227	230	442	413	238	136.00%
Houseboats	16	16	16	28	26	26	27	27	28	27	32	16	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1507</b>	<b>1482</b>	<b>1455</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>1490</b>	<b>1469</b>	<b>1330</b>	<b>1460</b>	<b>1430</b>	<b>1608</b>	<b>1560</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3.52%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12325</b>	<b>12173</b>	<b>11946</b>	<b>12124</b>	<b>12116</b>	<b>12071</b>	<b>11762</b>	<b>12639</b>	<b>12549</b>	<b>12206</b>	<b>11525</b>	<b>-800</b>	<b>-6.49%</b>

## Appendix 2 – National Park Capital Programme 2025/26

Defra has awarded the Authority £1,385,058 for capital spend. The Authority has adopted a longer list to ensure it can deliver the whole spend by 31 March 2026.

Project	Priority	Indicative cost £	Progress
Purchase of land at Barton Fen	1	472,250	Sale completed September 2025.
Acle Bridge enhancement	2	95,000	
Improvements to Great Yarmouth Yacht Station - showers etc.	2	50,000	Waiting for a new lease to be signed. Investigating options for improvements. These are likely to require over £50k.
Pontoons to improve access to the water	2	175,000	Continuing to consult with local stakeholders before submitting the planning applications for the Upper Thurne and Worlingham mooring sites by the end of September. Tender required for pontoon procurement.
Upgrade 40 electric charging pillars	2	60,000	Options appraisal for meter and pillar systems completed. Demonstrations from the top two suppliers by mid-September. Costs likely to be greater than £30,000 (TBC)
Dockyard solar	2	80,000	Tenders for scheme received and evaluated. Works to start soon.
Truxor attachments	3	12,620	On order.
Fen Harvester with double chop head	3	205,030	On order.
Nato floats (x4)	4	40,000	
Mowing equipment to manage conservation and visitor sites	4	95,000	Remote-controlled mower prioritised instead of electric telehandler.
Ride on Mower	4	14,100	On order.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Indicative cost £</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>RESERVE LIST</b>			
Water quality monitoring equipment	4	30,000	Outside current budget. Quotes received as a guide.
Dockyard enhancement	5	200,000	Outside current budget.
Review and upgrade EV chargers	5	25,000	Outside current budget. Quotes for these works have already been received.
New electric pool vehicles x 2	5	60,000	Outside current budget.

# Navigation Committee

06 November 2025

Agenda item number 8

## Construction, Maintenance and Ecology work programme - progress update

Report by Head of Construction, Maintenance & Ecology, and Ecology & Design Manager

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### Purpose

To provide the Committee with an update on the Authority's management activities to maintain public navigation, develop mooring facilities for public use and demonstrate the effective use of available resources in managing the Broads waterways.

### Broads Plan context

C1: Maintain navigation water depths to defined specifications, reduce sediment input, and dispose of dredged material in sustainable and beneficial ways.

C2: Maintain existing navigation water space and develop appropriate opportunities to extend access for various types of craft.

C3: Manage water plants, riverside trees and scrub, and seek resources to increase operational targets.

C4: Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

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# 1. Introduction

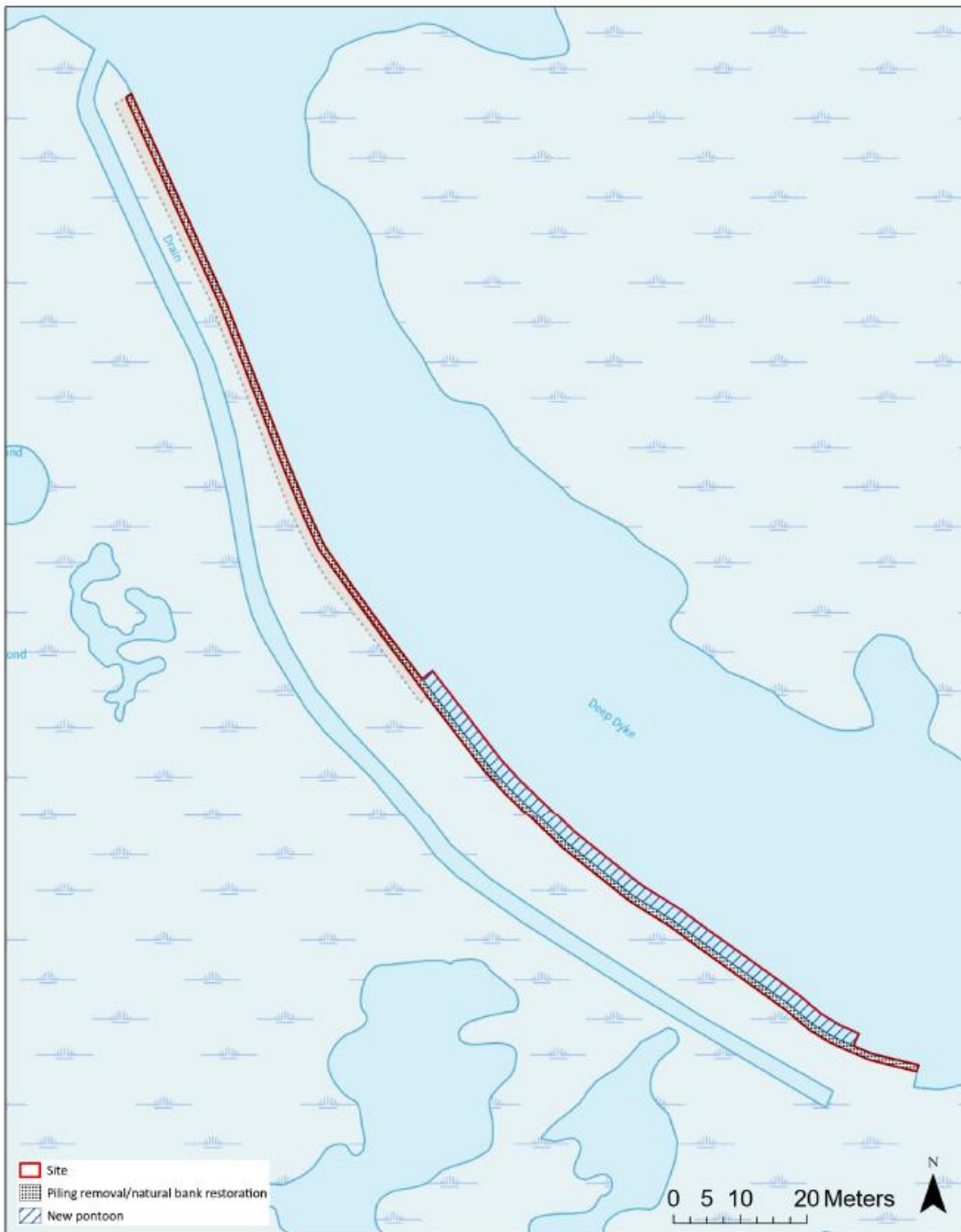
- 1.1. The detailed breakdown in Appendix 1 gives the figures and volumes for the current dredging programme for 2025/26 (April 2025 to end September 2025). A total of 6,600 m<sup>3</sup> of dredged sediment has been removed from the prioritised sites. This figure represents 24% of the programmed target of 27,380 m<sup>3</sup> for the year.
- 1.2. Dredging work is due to start in the Upper Thurne before the end of October. Dredging locations include the marked channel of Hickling Broad from the approach to Catfield Dyke heading towards Hickling village; River Thurne between Martham Ferry and Somerton Dyke; Martham Dyke; and shoals near the Candle Dyke/River Thurne junction. An operational pause is currently in place to protect fish from multiple stresses, following the salt surges that penetrated up the Broadland rivers in the first week of October following Storm Amy.
- 1.3. The Environment Agency (EA) Fisheries Team have been completing fish rescues and responding to reports of fish mortalities in the Rivers Bure, Thurne and Ant since 5<sup>th</sup> October because of this saline incursion. The EA have rescued approximately 77,000 fish, which have been relocated to Hickling Broad, where salinity levels were significantly lower than the rescue site at Womack Staithe.
- 1.4. Hickling has always been a suitable relocation site for the EA to release fish, but high salinity levels are still being recorded at Hickling. Before the surge in early October, salinity levels (measured as electrical conductivity) were around 7,000 µS/cm on Hickling Broad (a typical value for this brackish-water site). During the surge, conductivity peaked at 16,617 µS/cm, and by 21<sup>st</sup> October, levels were still at 12,300 µS/cm. For comparison, seawater has a conductivity of around 53,000 µS/cm. Furthermore, salinity levels remain generally high and unchanged at other sites, such as Martham Ferry. On 12<sup>th</sup> October, levels were around 12,500 µS/cm, but were still recorded at 11,000 µS/cm on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
- 1.5. As per the Broads Authority's environmental safeguarding plan for the Upper Thurne dredging, an upper salinity threshold of 8,400 µS/cm is in place. Broads Authority staff continue to monitor this situation closely, so that dredging can start once the salinity declines below this threshold and conditions are more favourable for fish.

# 2. Maintaining safe public mooring facilities

- 2.1. The three 24-hour moorings between Heigham Sound and Hickling Broad (Whiteslea, Deep Dyke, and Deep Go Dyke) are under review. The steel piling at these sites is very close to where it no longer meets safety and structural standards for public 24-hour moorings. The piling at Deep Dyke is the worst performing of all the Authority's 24-hour moorings. The three moorings are owned by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and are leased to the Broads Authority for public use, with the Authority responsible for the steel sheet piling and quay heading. Figure 1 shows that the planned location of pontoons at the Deep Dyke moorings is focused on the channel's widest parts at the southern end.

2.2. Figure 1 – Proposed location for pontoon moorings (blue hatching) at Deep Dyke.

Site plan A  
Scale: 1:500

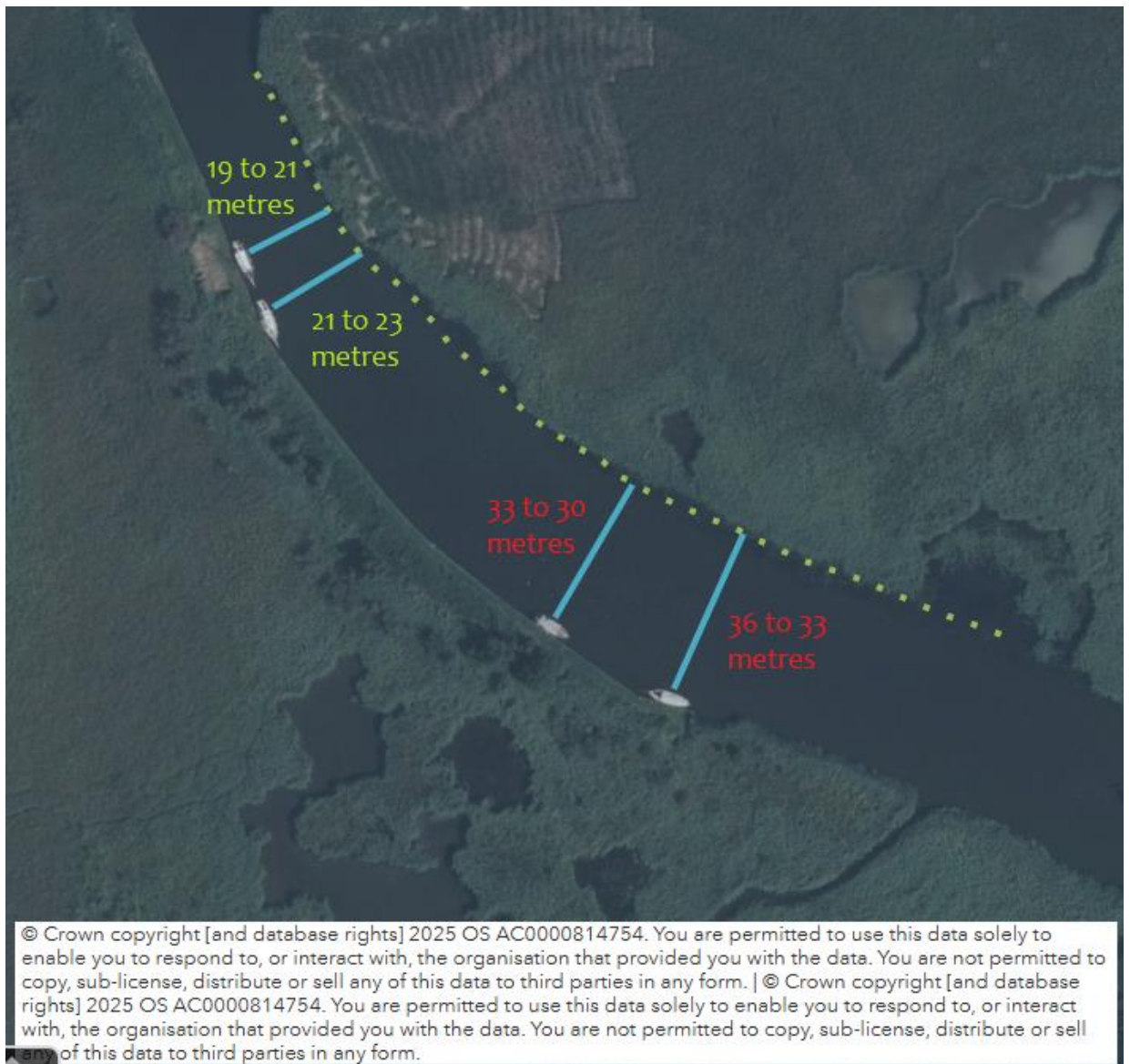


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2.3. Replacing the vertical piling like-for-like is very expensive. Adapting mooring designs to be resilient to climate change and rising water levels was reported to the Navigation Committee on 5 September 2024 [Future proofing Broads Authority public moorings](#). Adaptations such as higher capping levels and longer piles driven into the soft peat soils adds more cost and complexity. A more cost-effective alternative is to install floating

pontoons, which are cheaper per linear metre to install, need less maintenance, and stay at a constant height to the water (freeboard), making them safer for users in all conditions. The subsequent minutes of the 5 September 2024 meeting, [Minutes of the Navigation Committee held on 5 September 2025](#), summarised that “A discussion was had on mooring design options and the common agreement was support for pontoon moorings, where the width of the river allowed.”

- 2.4. Looking across the suite of Broads Authority 24-hour moorings, maintaining the structural condition at over 60 locations requires continuous maintenance and improvement. Section 8.3 of the Authority’s [Safety Management System](#) sets out the safety requirements and risk management approach of the provision of public moorings, as per the Port Marine & Facilities Safety Code. Regular structural inspections are conducted to evaluate the overall condition of the vertical piling at each mooring. Those with failing elements which cannot reasonably be maintained are prioritised for review of the mooring need and how best the Authority can continue providing mooring facilities. At the top of this review list (as previously reported at the 5 September 2024 meeting), locations where alternative mooring designs, such as pontoons, would not be possible are primarily those with very narrow channels (less than 18 metres).
- 2.5. To support long-term planning and ensure toll income is spent efficiently, it's essential to maintain existing infrastructure to a high standard, phase replacements strategically, and choose mooring designs that offer a balance between cost, service quality, and resilience to rising water levels. In this context, options like pontoons are becoming increasingly viable. The Authority cannot afford to replace all existing steel piled moorings on a like-for-like basis without severely impacting other waterways management responsibilities.
- 2.6. Figure 2 shows that the current effective channel width with vessels moored at Deep Dyke is between 19 and 36 m. In the section proposed for the addition of pontoons, this would result in a narrowing of roughly 3 metres (red values). In the narrowest parts of the channel, with no planned pontoons and removal of the steel piling, sailing vessels will have up to two metres additional space in which to manoeuvre (green values).
- 2.7. At Deep Go Dyke, the exact measurements are 26-27 metres, currently changing to 23-24 metres effective channel width with pontoons in place. At the smallest of the three moorings, Whiteslea, the effective channel width would change from 23 metres currently to 20 metres with a pontoon.
- 2.8. Figure 2. Diagram of example channel widths (pre and post pontoon installation) with vessels moored at Deep Dyke.



- 2.9. When considering replacement moorings at these three sites in the Upper Thurne, the decision involves balancing three key factors: overall affordability across the Authority’s wider mooring commitments; ensuring the new provision meets current demand in the area; and mitigating the minor navigational impacts of pontoons by widening the usable channel in nearby narrower sections.

### 3. Channel markers

- 3.1. Removal of the defunct and failing timber structure at the end of Turntide Jetty is planned by the end of March 2026. Once the timbers are removed, including the orange posts that currently mark the hazard, temporary channel marker buoys will be installed. This will maintain the visual run of marks either side of the yellow post at the junction of the rivers Yare and Waveney.

Author: Dan Hoare & Sue Stephenson

Date of report: 21 October 2025

Background papers: [Future proofing Broads Authority public moorings](#); [Minutes of the Navigation Committee held on 5 September 2025](#); [Safety Management System](#)

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C1, C2, C3, C4

Appendix 1 – Annual dredging progress 2025/26 (to end September 2025)

Appendix 2 - Operational staff time spent on all work types 2025/26 (to end September 2025)

## Appendix 1 – Annual dredging progress 2025/26 (to end September 2025)

<b>Project title Dredge site and sediment re-use location</b>	<b>Active Broads Authority dredging weeks completed/ planned</b>	<b>Planned volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Actual volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Planned annual project cost<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Actual project cost</b>
<b>River Yare</b> Bargate Broad	8/8	2,400	1,800	£56,260	£54,730
<i>Postwick Marshes re-use site – started in 2024/25, completed in 2025/26</i>					
<b>River Yare</b> Postwick Viaduct to Trowse Swing Bridge	10/9	6,480	4,630	£74,880	£57,110
<i>Postwick Marshes re-use site - complete</i>					
<b>River Yare</b> Hardley Dyke	-	-	170	-	-
<b>River Thurne</b>					
Hickling channel	0/8	6,000	0	£175,420	£2,500
Martham & Somerton Boat Dykes	0/4	1,300	0		
Somerton to Candle Dyke	0/10	6,200	0		
<i>Hickling channel (Chara Bay re-use site) – October to November Martham &amp; Somerton Boat Dykes (sidecast) – November Somerton to Candle Dyke (Chara Bay re-use site) – December to February</i>					
<b>River Bure</b> Wroxham Broad	0/5	3,000	0	£33,940	£2,580
<i>Wroxham Island – February to March</i>					
<b>River Bure</b> Lower reaches	0/4	5,000	0	£35,270	£820
<i>Cutter suction head dredging on ebb tide – January to February</i>					
<b>River Bure</b> Mid-Bure	-	-	-	£3,000	0
<i>Lagoon preparation costs</i>					
<b>Site restoration</b>	-	-	-	-	£12,420

<b>Project title Dredge site and sediment re-use location</b>	<b>Active Broads Authority dredging weeks completed/ planned</b>	<b>Planned volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Actual volume removed m<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Planned annual project cost<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Actual project cost</b>
<b>Future site preparation Survey, mitigation &amp; set- up</b>	-	-	-	-	£1,980
<b>Dredging support activities</b>	-	-	-	-	£17,670
<b>Total</b>	<b>21/45</b>	<b>27,380</b>	<b>6,600</b>	<b>£378,770</b>	<b>£149,810</b>

## Appendix 2 – Operational staff time spent on all work types 2025/26 (update to end September 2025)

<b>Work type</b>	<b>Planned - Days</b>	<b>Planned - % of annual total days</b>	<b>Actual - Days</b>	<b>Actual - % completed</b>
<b>Navigation (60%)</b>	<b>2,664</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,059</b>	<b>24</b>
Italics are proportion within Navigation				
Dredging	1068	40	491	18
Mooring maintenance & repairs	687	26	268	10
Riverside tree management	50	2	7	-
Water plant cutting	225	8	198	7
Other navigation works <sup>1</sup>	184	7	119	5
Corporate allocation <sup>2</sup>	450	17	281	11
<b>Recreation (10%)<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>444</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Conservation (30%)<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>1,332</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,440</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>2,131</b>	<b>48</b>

1 – includes raising & disposal of wrecks, channel markers & buoys, gaugeboards & signage

2 – includes premises & equipment maintenance, training, sickness & gaps in recruitment.

3 - National Park funded work to facilitate public access and visitor services.

4 – National Park funded work to carry out priority fen management and other biodiversity restoration projects

# Navigation Committee

06 November 2025

Agenda item number 9

## Hire Boat Code- Personal Flotation Devices

Report by Head of Safety Management

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### Purpose

To consult the Navigation Committee on the requirements for personal flotation devices as documented in the Hire Boat Code. The report highlights safety information on the manual/automatic self-inflating types, how they vary and from a 2025 survey where manual types are issued to hirers of Broads hire craft.

### Broads Plan context

Broads Plan objective C4 includes an action - Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways. Key action: Incorporate Hire Boat Code through local licence conditions.

---

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Hire Boat Code is a Code of Practice for the operation of hire vessels on inland waterways. It is co-owned by the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) and British Marine, and supported by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA).
- 1.2. The Code outlines the basic principles for safe operation of all types of craft hired to members of the public and clarifies the responsibilities of each of the parties involved. The focus is on ensuring that the operator has a suitable safety management system in place to ensure the continued safe operation of vessels under their responsibility.
- 1.3. Along with all other inland navigation authorities who are members of AINA, the Broads Authority incorporates the code into its Business Licencing Terms and Conditions.
- 1.4. Broads hire fleet operators already abide by the Hire Boat Code and are familiar with its contents and the requirements that are placed upon operators, users and navigation authorities.
- 1.5. Relevant to this report, the Code documents guidelines and requirements for boatyards in risk assessing and the issuing of personal flotation devices (PFDs).

## 2. The Hire Boat Code and Personal Floatation Devices

- 2.1. The British Marine / AINA (Association of Inland Navigation Authorities) Code for the Design, Construction and Operation of Hire Boats states the following about risk assessing Lifejackets, PFDs for Hire Boat Activity in Appendix II:

Man overboard	Hirers, Boatyard Staff. Drowning	Grab rails present on appropriate areas, Staff wear personal flotation devices (PFD) when on boats and during show out. Hirers issued with PFD for the period of hire and hirers are briefed on how to correctly wear and fit a PFD. Hirers instructed on how to recover person from the water. All boats with large freeboard supplied with a means to assist recovery of a person from the water.
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- 2.2. The Code then states the following on the application of standards for PFDs:

Risk control measure	Application
Personal flotation devices	Issued to each child, non-swimmer and passengers of reduced ability, and 'offered' to all others for Cat A and B waters; and issued and put on board for all on Cat C and D waters.  Personal flotation devices must have minimum buoyancy of 100N on Cat A and B waters and a minimum of 150N on Cat C and D waters.

- 2.3. Sections (b) and (d) of 3.3.3 of the Code also cover the following areas of handover to hirers:
- b) Using the boat – Moving around and getting on and off the boat. **Use of lifejackets**
  - d) Briefing material: The handover should be supported by briefing material which may include information on: – Personal safety – moving around and getting on and off the boat; **and the use of lifejackets.**
- 2.4. The Broads Authority Hire Boat Licensing Officer conducted a survey of all Broads hire operators during the main season of 2025 and in relation to compliance with the Code. Information was sought to establish what types of PFDs were being issued to and used by hirers.
- 2.5. The vast majority of hire operators confirmed using either the automatic or foam type PFDs. Three yards were found to be using manual PFDs. One of these was a small operator with only two dayboats accompanying holiday rental properties, the other two were larger hire yards with a full range of hire boats, including cruisers.
- 2.6. The manual inflating PFDs require the user to pull a toggle to inflate the lifejacket. If they are struggling to do this or unconscious, then the lifejacket will not inflate, and this could be when it is most needed. The only other option available on these types of PFDs is they can be manually inflated by blowing into them.
- 2.7. Automatic PFDs inflate instantly on contact with the water. They also incorporate manual pull toggles and manual inflation capability as per 2.6 as a last resort and as an override. These are widely recognised as being particularly suitable for use by

inexperienced boaters, where cold water shock is a risk and where falling in could be accompanied by other factors including being personally injured during a fall.

- 2.8. The above information highlighting the shortcomings of the manual inflation type was presented to the Broads Boat Safety Management Group at its meeting on Monday 13 October 2025. They fully supported that recommendations should be in place for the Authority to encourage hire operators to only issue and use automatically inflating PFDs/ Lifejackets to hirers. The BSMG supported the report detailed here and that its findings should be taken to the Navigation Committee for its view.

### 3. Financial implications

- 3.1. The following table shows the differences in costs for some of the most common manual and automatic PFDs. Note that there are a significant number of types available including many different internal parts and mechanisms. Therefore, this information is to provide a guide only.

<b>Table A</b>	<b>Manual</b>	<b>Automatic</b>	<b>Examples of original purchase price difference</b>
<b>Crewsaver Crewfit 150N Lifejacket</b>	£66.66 Ex VAT	£70.79 Ex VAT	£4.13 Ex VAT
<b>Seago Seaguard 165N Life Jacket</b>	£45.79 Ex VAT	£53.99 Ex VAT	£8.20 Ex VAT
<b>Bluewave 150N Lifejacket</b>	£65.99 Ex VAT	£74.99 Ex VAT	£9.00 Ex VAT

- 3.2. Both manual and automatic PFDs require regular checking and annual servicing. If they have been fired, then they need to be serviced before further use. This can be done in house if there are suitable trained personnel or by using a recommended service agent. The costs are normally around £10 to £15 per PFD for the service itself depending on the numbers being checked in one batch.
- 3.3. The main difference between the two types (manual and automatic) for servicing and parts is the automatic part of the system, everything else is the same. The automatic element comprises of an operating head of which there are numerous types and these retail from between £10 around £30. Operating heads are sometimes in one unit or include a head and a separate firing mechanism. These items are supplied as dated and last for approximately 5 years from purchase date with a use by date. From there they have to be replaced.
- 3.4. Additional average costs for the automatic type original purchase over and above the equivalent manual models is shown in table A in section 3.1. A cost of £10 Ex Vat

average difference covers for a number of the popular models. The expectation is that these types of PFDs should give at least 5 years' service with the regular use that is expected for hire boats.

- 3.5. The servicing parts difference cost for the automatic type is on average between £20 and £30 over this 5 year period.
- 3.6. It is therefore estimated that an additional £30-40 is required for purchase and use of the automatic inflating PFD as opposed to the manual type over the 5 year period.

## 4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The self-inflating automatic types of PFDs add a layer of safety for anyone on board a vessel, experienced or not. They activate immediately: automatically inflates upon contact with water and providing instant buoyancy. They are hands-free: ideal for situations where you might be unable to pull the cord, such as if you're injured or unconscious. There is peace of mind knowing the lifejacket will activate without any action needed.
- 4.2. It is proposed to ensure that all hire boat operators are communicated with and fully appraised of the main differences between the two types of PFD. It is suggested that they should be encouraged to check their PFD equipment alongside their risk assessments, to update them as necessary and provide the appropriate equipment to hirers.

Author: Matt Dane

Date of report: 20 October 2025

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C4

Appendix 1 – [The Hire Boat Code](#)

# Navigation Committee

06 November 2025

Agenda item number 10

## Planning application with implications for navigation - BA/2025/0289/FUL, Heigham Sound, Hickling, Norfolk

Report by Assistant Planning Officer

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### Purpose

To inform members of a planning application submitted by the Broads Authority for the installation of floating pontoons at three existing 24-hour mooring locations between Heigham Sound and Hickling Broad. The views of the Navigation Committee are sought on any matters relevant to navigation.

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 Broads Authority manages three 24-hour moorings on the Upper Thurne system between Heigham Sound and Hickling Broad — Whiteslea, Deep Dyke, and Deep Go Dyke. These sites are owned by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and leased to the Broads Authority for public use.
- 1.2 The existing steel piling at these moorings has reached the end of its structural life and no longer meets current safety standards. Replacing the piling on a like-for-like basis would be prohibitively expensive, particularly given the need for higher capping levels and longer piles to address climate change impacts and rising water levels in the Broads.
- 1.3 A more cost-effective, resilient alternative has therefore been developed in the form of floating pontoons, which are cheaper per metre, require less maintenance, and maintain a consistent freeboard height with changing water levels — improving safety and accessibility for boaters.

## 2. The Planning Application

- 2.1 The application proposes the replacement of the existing piled edge and the installation of new floating pontoons at the three 24-hour mooring sites.

- 2.2 The proposed pontoons will provide approximately 85 metres of mooring at Deep Dyke, 20 metres at Whiteslea, and 40 metres at Deep Go Dyke. The pontoons will be installed parallel to the original mooring line, ensuring that the navigation channel is not significantly reduced.
- 2.3 The pontoon will be approximately 2 metres wide and connected to a tubular pile via a sliding bracket, allowing it to rise and fall with the tide. Safety ladders, navigation hazard lights, and mooring cleats will be installed along the pontoons, with a handrail provided at the landward edge for visitor safety.
- 2.4 Prior to installation, the existing piled edge will be removed and the bank reprofiled to encourage natural restoration of the river margin habitat.
- 2.1. The comments of the Navigation Committee on the planning application would be welcomed.

### **3. Stakeholder engagement**

- 3.1 The Broads Authority has undertaken early engagement with local stakeholders, including sailing clubs and nearby boatyards. Emails and indicative drawings were circulated, and an in-person event was held in Hickling to discuss the proposal and gather initial feedback.
- 3.2 No formal consultation responses have been received at the time of writing this report.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1. The proposed replacement of existing piling with floating pontoons represents a proactive and sustainable approach to maintaining public moorings within the Upper Thurne area. The design ensures that navigational width is preserved while improving safety, accessibility, and climate change resilience.
- 4.2. Members' views on any matters of relevance to navigation are sought and will be considered as part of the planning process.

Author: Callum Sculfor

Date of report: 21 October 2025

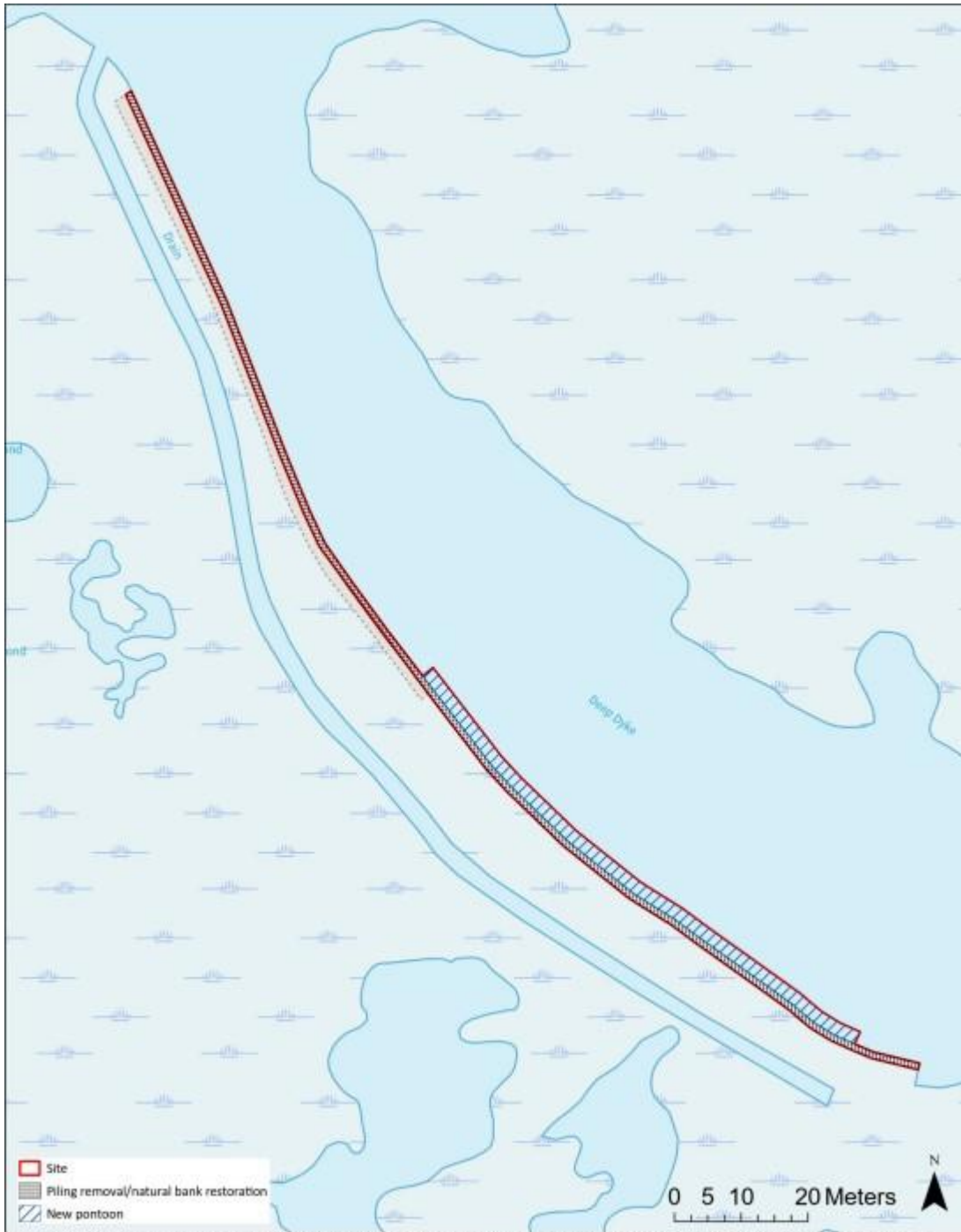
Appendix 1 – Location map

# Appendix 1 – Location map

Location Plan  
Scale: 1:2,500



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