

Broads Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2015

Present:

Dr Keith Bacon in the Chair

Mr Andrew Alston	Mr Robin Godber	Mr Peter Medhurst
Mr Brian Barker	Ms Barbara Greasley	Mr Bryan Read
Mr Michael Flett	Mr John Hiskett	Mr Richard Starling
Dr Martin George	Mr Brian Holt	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Tony Gibbons	Mr John Lurkins	Mr John Tibbenham

In Attendance:

Ms Esmeralda Guds – Administrative Officer
Ms Andrea Kelly – Senior Ecologist
Ms Andrea Long – Director of Planning & Resources
Dr John Packman – Chief Executive
Mr Neil Punchard - Broadland Catchment Partnership Officer

Also in attendance:

PC Paul Bassham - Broads Beat Officer
Mr Giles Bloomfield - Farming/Landowning and Drainage Interest Group
Prof Jacquie Burgess – Chair, Broads Authority

4/1 Apologies & Welcome

Apologies for absence were received from Ashley Cato and his substitute Paul Gurbutt, Henry Cator, Philip Pearson, Simon Partridge and Hugh Taylor.

The Chair welcomed Jacquie Burgess and congratulated her on her new appointment as Chair of the Broads Authority and welcomed Giles Bloomfield to the meeting who was standing in for Henry Cator.

4/2 Appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

The Chief Executive invited nominations for the appointment of the Chairman to the Committee.

Peter Medhurst (PM) nominated, seconded Michael Flett (MF), that Keith Bacon be appointed as Chairman. No other nominations were forthcoming.

RESOLVED

that Dr Keith Bacon be appointed as Chairman of the Broads Forum.

Dr Keith Bacon in the Chair

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chairman to the Committee.

Peter Medhurst (PM) nominated, seconded Tony Gibbons (TG), that Michael Flett be appointed as Vice-Chairman. No other nominations were forthcoming.

RESOLVED

that Mr Michael Flett be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Broads Forum.

4/3 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman reported on the Broads Authority meetings of 20 March 2015 and the issues discussed including:

- (1) Stakeholders Survey Action Plan – series of workshops to be arranged
- (2) Strategic Direction and Priorities
- (3) External Funding Opportunities
- (4) Consultation on the River Basin Management Plan

4/4 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2015

After a minor change the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4/5 Public Question Time

No questions had been raised by members of the public.

4/6 Summary of Progress/Actions/Response taken following discussions at previous meetings

A report summarising the progress of current issues was received.

The Director of Planning and Resources updated members in relation to Ludham footpath to St Benet's that after all the agreements had been sent out to the landowners, one agreement had been received back and two more were still to be expected.

MF fed back on a meeting he attended in relation to Ludham Bridge and informed members that BESL had extended the lease for another year which

meant there would be no car park in the near future and the grounds might still be used as a compound by BESL for the next year.

Members noted the report.

4/7 Theft in the Broads and the Role of Broads Beat

Members were given a presentation by PC Paul Bassham (PB), who explained about his role as a Broads Beat officer and the service they provided. Members were informed that as the tourism industry grew, more police presence was required on the Broads and therefore Broads Beat was established about 20 years ago, now comprising 10 officers and two boats.

Officer PB explained that although they attend events and shows, their main role was fighting marine crime, which was rising, in particularly organised crime originating from East Europe.

Members were made aware of 'stolenboat.com', a useful website used by the police and insurance companies and free to all users.

It was further explained that as Broads Beat was only a small unit they sometimes doubled up with Broads Authority rangers.

Richard Starling (RS) enquired if Broads Beat had experienced any reductions in their budget, to which PC Bassham answered that Broads Beat was the longest running sponsorship in the UK and that everything but their wages was funded through sponsorship and therefore budget cuts had not affected them.

In response to a question from Charles Swan (CS) PC Bassham responded that intelligence was shared with Suffolk Police and that they had a close working relationship.

To a question of Brian Barker (BB) if there were any figures on crime success rates, PC Bassham answered that their team was generally on top of crimes committed locally but that they were struggling with organised crime originating from abroad as sharing intelligence with Interpol and police officials from other countries had been difficult.

Members welcomed the presentation.

4/8 The Broads Society: Broads Heritage Boats

Members received a discussion paper from the Broads Society proposing a reduced toll or toll exemption for classic and heritage broads built boats to support the owners of such vessels. The report suggested a second proposal to levy a surcharge on large twin-engined boats which allegedly cause damage to the river banks and habitats, as a way of filling the funding gap the first proposal would create.

Brian Holt (BH) said that the Canal and River Trust already offered discounted toll on heritage boats and believed that charging extra tolls on twin-engined boats would alienate them.

Peter Jeremy (PJ) believed as the toll was only a small percentage of the high cost of maintaining a heritage boat there would not be much benefit in reducing or exempting payment of the toll. He continued that offering free mooring during the winter months would be more effective and would understand if larger boats would be charged more as they take up more space.

Barbara Greasley (BG) agreed that toll was only a relatively small cost and acknowledged that wherries could be exempt but did not believe private owners of heritage boats should receive discounted tolls as they choose to own them.

MF believed that establishing who would and who would not be exempt from tolls would be challenging process and recognised that this would mean a complex system for the Broads Authority to manage.

John Tibbenham (JT) mentioned that the majority of heritage boats from before the war did not originate from the Broads and would like to know whether twin engines were really the issue.

Although Bryan Read (BR) agreed with Robin Godber (RG) and would like to support the heritage boats and see them survive. He did not believe discounted tolls would be the appropriate.

PM agreed and suggested that organising events and making the public aware of the heritage vessels and encourage industries to carry on making these boats might be a better way of addressing the issue.

Though members agreed they would like to see the existence of heritage boats and the needed skills continue, the Forum did not believe the suggested proposals were the right way forward and therefore decided not to support them.

RG explained his intention was to support a way for heritage boats to continue to exist but acknowledged the members comments and thanked them for their views.

4/9 A Review of Lake Restoration Practice and their Performance in the Broads National Park

Members received a report and a presentation outlining a review of Lake Restoration practice and their performance in the Broads Authority National Park from 1980 - 2013.

In response to Keith Bacon's (KB) question the Senior Ecologist responded that household sewage has the potential to cause a problem in some

waterbodies and that input from unsewered domestic properties have the potential to become a larger part of the problem as diffuse pollution is tackled from other sources .

Although Andrew Alston (AA) believed that septic tanks and not farming were causing the problem, the Senior Ecologist said that the input of unsewered domestic properties was still lower than that of farming and mains sewage. She further explained that further phosphate reduction was needed in the Rivers Ant and particularly the Bure to allow the water to be clear enough to promote the recovery of the healthy waterways.

RS mentioned that although he was impressed with the Lake Review Workshop he was disappointed they did not seem to have much knowledge of water movement. Senior Ecologist agreed that more survey and research understanding was required for water flows in certain lakes and that Norfolk Wildlife Trust had agreed to consider what more they could do to collect more data on the sites they own and manage.

MG believed it was very important not to lose sight in getting Hickling as the largest and richest broad clear again.

Giles Bloomfield (GB) stressed that landowners were looking for a solution and that a partnership meeting had been scheduled before August 2015. Also landowners were not looking to add anymore fertilizers than the crops require

MG mentioned that the poor water quality in Hickling Broad could be managed by pumping water out to sea and although this would be very costly the Senior Ecologist recognised that an engineering plan would most probably be part of the solution.

She further explained, in response to why in the case of some freshwater broads it would be useful to temporarily remove certain fish, a technique called biomanipulation was used as this created clear water.

Members welcomed and noted the report.

4/10 Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan Update

Members received a report summarising the progress of actions in the Broadland Rivers Catchment Plan and outlined the Catchment Partnership Action Fund 'Slow the Flow' project application for 2015/16.

The Catchment Officer informed members that the application to Defra had been successful and explained how Rural Sustainable Drainage System (RSuDS) could reduce water run-off from rural and urban areas into SSSIs, encouraged more infiltration into the ground and potentially reduced localised flooding.

AA enquired if the Broads Authority was insured and if farmers were safe to follow their advice to which GB responded that sediment traps did work and

could be cost effective but explained that although landowners were covered for the construction of the RSuD, which was relatively inexpensive, there were implications for maintenance costs, which could be higher than the installation costs. The Catchment Officer agreed that if landowners were prepared to cover the maintenance cost they could be offered up to 100% of the installation cost and there were potential opportunities to work with the Internal Drainage Boards.

Members supported the progress of the Broadland Catchment Partnership and the proposed project and recognised the on-going importance of seeking external funding to continue to progress the Broadland Catchment Based Approach beyond March 2016.

4/11 Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive presented his report, which summarised the current position of the Authority's strategic priorities.

The Chief Executive updated members that Michael Whitaker and James Knight had been appointed as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Navigation Committee and co-opted members to the Broads Authority.

The Chief Executive further updated members with progress being made on the Harbour Revision Order which is moving forward, although not very rapidly.

Members noted the report.

4/12 Parish Issues

BB raised the same concern as he had done in the previous meeting which was that professional signs were required at moorings in West Somerton advising visitors where the nearest available waste facilities were located. The Chief Executive undertook to look into the matter,

4/13 Current Issues

Members in general were concerned about the fish kill and the Prynnesium outbreak.

TG believed that although the fish stocks itself would recover, fish kill would in the meantime, apart from affecting the feeding habit of wildlife, also have a detrimental effect on the economy.

The Chief Executive responded that BA had recently been involved in a meeting with the Environment Agency and Natural England to review the situation and that a briefing note for members would be circulated soon. He informed members that EA and NE were fully aware of the issues and that the BA was supporting them in managing the situation. The Chief Executive reminded members that the fish kills occurred from time to time and that the

system generally resolved itself and that it was important to get the message out that the Broads was still open for business.

GB added that the Internal Drainage Board was also trying to help and resolve the issue by controlling the ground water.

4/14 To note whether any items have been proposed as items of urgent business

No items were proposed as items of urgent business.

4/15 Matters for Chairman to raise at next Broads Authority meeting

The Chairman would report to the Broads Authority meeting on the various issues discussed by the Forum.

4/16 Matters to be discussed at the next meeting

TG suggested to give a presentation on Angling on The Broads and to see where this was going in the future.

4/17 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the date of the next meeting will be Thursday 30 July 2015 at 2.00pm at Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich.

The meeting concluded at 5.10 pm

Chairman