

# Navigation Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020

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## **Present**

Nicky Talbot – in the Chair, Kelvin Allen, John Ash, Linda Aspland, Mike Barnes, Harry Blathwayt, Matthew Bradbury, Andrew Hamilton (to item 9), Leslie Mogford, Greg Munford, Simon Sparrow, Alan Thomson.

## **In attendance**

Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Environment (CME), Bill Housden – Head of IT and Collector of Tolls, Emma Krelle - Chief Financial Officer, John Packman - Chief Executive, Cheryl Peel – Senior Planning Officer, Rob Rogers - Director of Operations, Cally Smith – Head of Planning, Marie-Pierre Tighe – Director of Strategic Services, Sarah Mullarney (meeting moderator), Essie Guds (meeting moderator), Maria Conti (minute taker).

## **1. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Paul Thomas.

## **Remote meeting standing orders and recording**

The Chairman announced that the meeting was being held remotely under the Standing Orders for remote meetings adopted by the Broads Authority on 22 May 2020. The Standing Orders are made under the provisions of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and The Local Authorities Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings England and Wales) Regulations no. 392.

The meeting was being live streamed and recorded, with the live stream accessible from a link on the Authority's website. The Broads Authority retained the copyright of the recording and the minutes remained the formal record of the meeting.

## **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first remote meeting of the Navigation Committee, including those members of the public viewing the meeting via live streaming and Authority members joining the meeting as observers.

## **2. To receive declarations of interest**

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

## **3. To note whether and items have been proposed as matters of urgent business**

No items were proposed as a matter of urgent business.

## **4. Public question time**

No public questions were raised.

## **5. Minutes of Navigation Committee meeting held on 16 January 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2020 were approved as a correct record of the meeting. The minutes would be signed electronically subsequent to the meeting.

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

Members received a summary of progress on issues recently presented to the Committee. There were no questions arising from the report.

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

The Chief Executive introduced his report. He thanked the Authority's staff for adapting quickly to working under the Government's COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. The continuation of construction and maintenance work throughout the lockdown meant that people could use the waterways again as soon as the restrictions were eased.

The Government had now released guidance on allowing day boat hire, and it was anticipated that guidance on allowing overnight stays on boats and weekly boat hire would be in place by 4 July. The Chief Executive had asked Rebecca Pow MP, Defra Minister for Inland Waterways, to approve a start date of 3 July to support hire boat operators (HBOs). He had also asked for £3.6m to support HBOs through this winter, and was working with the Broads Hire Boat Federation on how hire yard and ancillary operations staff could be supported. The Authority was also in regular liaison with other navigation authorities and national park authorities to support cases for funding both nationally and locally. HBOs were producing safe distancing guidance for their staff and customers. The Authority's communications team was also issuing regular advice on social media and had recently produced COVID-19 safety posters and leaflets for hire boat users.

The Chief Executive thanked officers, members and others for their input to the substantial information needed to support a strong case to Defra. In response to a member's question about the Government's lockdown ruling on overnight stays, he acknowledged the frustrations and conflict of interests this was causing businesses, residents and visitors.

## **8. Construction, maintenance and environment work programme progress update**

The Head of CME introduced his report. Operations work had continued at full capacity throughout the lockdown, although it had been necessary to redeploy some resources, seek new ways of working, and defer some planned work to next year. In response to a question about the results of last year's water survey at Hickling Broad, the Head of CME said the Authority was plotting Environment Agency collection point data into GIS. This would be used to model scenarios as part of the emerging water management strategy, which would be brought to the Committee for consultation.

## **9. Planning application with navigation implications: BA/2020/045/COND Piling left bank of Haddiscoe Cut, North of Haddiscoe Dam (A143), Northern River Edge, NR31 9HX**

The Senior Planning Officer gave a presentation on the navigation implications of the above planning application, including photographs of the site showing the piling before and after refurbishment. There was no record of planning permissions for moorings at this site, although historically there had been some mooring here. Members were shown aerial photos taken between 2010 and 2014 showing boats moored on site, and a photo from 2018 when the piling had deteriorated and no boats were moored.

Planning permission had been granted to the Environment Agency for the piling works only, with a condition to clarify that this did not convey permission for moorings. The landowner (who is the current applicant) had asked for this condition to be removed, but had not submitted a proposal for mooring use.

Members were asked whether moorings at this site would impact on safe navigation.

A member thought permanently moored boats could cause some obstruction to navigation at the bridge, but would support 24-hour moorings. It was suggested this could be a condition of any application for moorings at this site. Another member said that moorings there would not be a hindrance to navigation. Other members agreed that 24-hour moorings would be acceptable, and would help meet the need for more short stay moorings as identified in the Authority's moorings strategy.

Another member considered that moorings would not impact on safe sailing. He suggested any permission for moorings could include 24 hour and residential mooring. It was noted that width restrictions were already covered by byelaws.

In conclusion, members agreed unanimously that moorings at this site would have no detrimental impact on the safe navigation of vessels. In a separate vote they agreed that they would support the use of the site for 24-hour moorings.

## **10. Trowse Rail Bridge**

The Director of Operations updated members on progress by the Trowse Rail Working Group, whose membership included the Broads Authority, on potential solutions for Trowse Rail Bridge and the content of a Position Statement.

The Director of Operations said each sector within the Working Group had a clear idea of what it wanted, but as part of an overall vision for the area within the River Wensum Strategy. Dealing with the rail bridge was key to moving things forward, and progress was in its early stages. A member felt future development should embrace the river more, possibly to include a marina, and a bridge with better air draft would enable more boats to get into Norwich.

While the Authority was aware that Network Rail was in breach of legislation in terms of bridge opening for navigation on request, the Director of Operations emphasised that the

company had been working constructively with the Authority to find pragmatic solutions, and it was important to continue this collaborative approach. He also reported that Network Rail was looking at option appraisals for the swing bridges at Oulton Broad, Somerleyton and Reedham.

## 11. Annual income and expenditure 2019/2020

Members noted the summary report of the Authority's income and expenditure for the 2019/20 financial year. The Chief Financial Officer advised that the audit had started a week later than expected.

## 12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Navigation Committee would be held on **Thursday 3 September 2020** at 2pm.

## 13. Exclusion of the public

It was resolved that the 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, 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 live stream recording was suspended.

## 14. Exempt minutes of Navigation Committee meeting held on 16 January 2020

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2020 were approved as a correct record of the meeting. The minutes would be signed electronically subsequent to the meeting.

## 15. Hire boat industry – financial position

Members received the exempt report. A more detailed report would be brought to the Committee at its next meeting, when more evidence was available.

The meeting ended at 4.24pm

Signed

Chairman

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests Navigation Committee, 11 June 2020

<b>Member</b>	<b>Agenda/minute</b>	<b>Nature of interest</b>
Andy Hamilton	15	Hire Boat Operator
Greg Munford	15	Hire Boat Operator
Simon Sparrow	15	Hire Boat Operator