

Navigation Committee

10 June 2021

Agenda item number 10

South Walsham slipway access

Report by Director of Operations

Purpose

To seek the Committee's view on improving the access arrangements at South Walsham slipway.

Broads Plan context

Strategic objective 4.1 relates to opportunities to increase access.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In 1989, Edward and Marilyn Brewster gifted the South Walsham slipway to the Broads Authority. Prior to this gift, the Parish Council and the donor were in dispute as to the existence of any public right of way. It was argued that the access was by way of custom, not by way of deed.
- 1.2. The slipway is located in the Parish of South Walsham at the southern end of South Walsham Broad along Fleet Lane. The slipway is approximately 10m² and is of wooden construction surrounded by timber piling. Access to the slipway is governed by means of a metal barrier which is locked, with key holder access restricted to a set number of local parishioners. Immediately adjoining the slipway is a grassed area with wooden posts demarcating its extent. Land Registry title number NK421515 states that the Broads Authority is proprietor (see Appendix 1).
- 1.3. In November 1989, the Broads Authority entered into an agreement whereby the Parish Council would manage the slipway on behalf of the Authority. The agreement required the Parish Council to carry out basic maintenance at the site, but the Broads Authority liability for major works or repairs remained.
- 1.4. Under the agreement, the Parish Council is to ensure that the primary uses are to be for the temporary moorings of dinghies and tenders, the landing of such craft and the launching of such craft. The Parish Council will permit the slipway to be used for launching and landing of permitted craft, and will provide a 'lockable restriction bar' to prevent the use of the slipway "other than by persons permitted to use it under this clause".

- 1.5. South Walsham slipway is identified as 'priority location' in the Slipways Strategy, as an increase in smaller craft has seen a demand for suitable launching and recovery points within the Broads.

2. Challenges

- 2.1. The location of the slipway on Kingfisher Lane, South Walsham is accessed via small, narrow country lanes. Near the slip is a very small public space used to park vehicles, but this does not provide space for the associated equipment that slipping a small craft often entails.
- 2.2. The Parish Council has been concerned about the damage to verges caused by vehicles with trailers passing, and 'on verge' parking when the slipway is in high demand. Although not a frequent occurrence, it is a situation that has caused the Parish Council and the local community concern.
- 2.3. Under the Parish Council's management, access to the locked barrier is controlled by a 3-key application process: Parishioner keys (£25 per annum), Non-Parishioner keys (eight available via a ballot, £25 per annum), and Day key – publicly available, issued by the Parish Clerk (£5 per day).
- 2.4. In January 2011, a report to the Broads Authority gave details of considerations requested by the Navigation Committee (in December 2010) to allow improved access at South Walsham. Officers were asked to seek the views of the Parish Council on:
 - The replacement of the barrier with a lockable post – this would enable canoe and small boat use to occur (but with slightly easier access) but would still prevent use by larger boats and present access to the slipway by trailers.
 - For the Parish Council to be responsible for all day keys.
 - For the Broads Authority to give an appropriate number of keys to recognised angling clubs (numbers to be agreed).
 - For new signage advertising the slipway as suitable for canoe and small boat use to be erected by the Broads Authority.
 - For the slipway to be advertised in Broads Authority canoe (or similar) leaflets as being suitable for canoe or small boat use and for the details of how to access the day keys to be publicised.
- 2.5. Broads Authority members expressed sympathy with the Parish Council over the parking issues and encouraged a joint discussion to reach a workable arrangement to cover access and slipway management. To date, no changes to the management or arrangement at the slipway have been agreed.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1. The Integrated Access Strategy has ambitions to increase the availability of access points to smaller craft, a situation that has become even more pertinent following the increase in paddle sport craft during the various phases of Covid-19 national lockdown.
- 3.2. The lockable barrier is seen by officers as an unnecessary restriction to public access, and the '3-keys' system is complicated and non-inclusive. However, we understand the concerns of the Parish Council and appreciate the issues around parking.
- 3.3. Therefore, this committee's views are sought on a proposal to improve parking by creating some additional spaces near the slipway, which once completed would see a trial period of removing the locked barrier to allow open access. To address concerns about increased use and associated issues, the trial would be not be publicised by the Broads Authority.

4. Risk implications

- 4.1. In previous conversations, the Parish Council has been reluctant to make any changes to the access or management of the slipway. The Council was asked for its views in summer 2010 and held a public meeting on 17 August 2010, which was attended by Broads Authority officers. The Council's formal response following that meeting was to object strongly to the proposal for unrestricted usage.
- 4.2. The concerns expressed in 2010, and still raised today, relate to an increase in traffic, parking issues, noise, rubbish and the impact that increased visitor numbers would have on the wildlife.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Members' views are sought on a recommendation to approach South Walsham Parish Council about a short trial period to allow unbarred, keyless access to South Walsham Broad, with a small investment to create some additional parking on Broads Authority land near to the slipway, to help mitigate Parish Council concerns.

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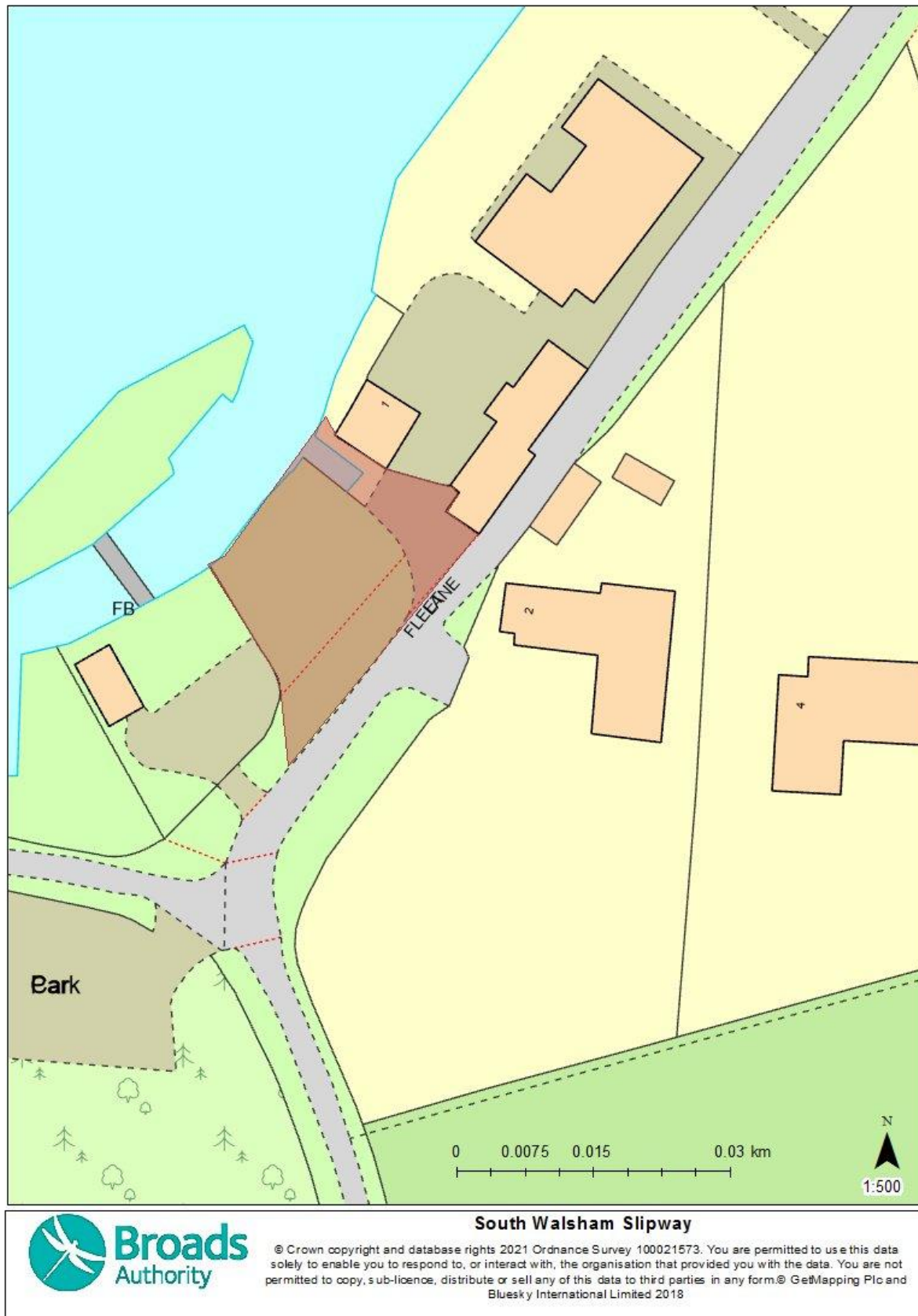
Date of report: 14 May 2021

Background papers: Broads Authority report 21 January 2011; Navigation Committee report 9 December 2009.

[Broads Plan](#) strategic actions: 4.1

Appendix 1 – Maps detailing Broads Authority landownership at South Walsham

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South Walsham Slipway
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