

# BROAD SHEET



## A different landscape in 2023

Welcome to the latest edition of Broad Sheet, our annual Broads Authority newsletter which goes out to all toll payers on the Broads. I hope you find it interesting and informative.

As you will be aware, rapid inflation is having a massive impact on the cost of living for individuals, and like many public bodies, the Authority is facing an extremely challenging financial situation.

The price of raw materials needed to maintain the waterways and landscape: steel, wood, aggregate and diesel have risen steeply, and perhaps more importantly the value of the ongoing flat cash National Park Grant settlement has been considerably reduced. For the last five years it has remained at £3.4 million; roughly half the value of the grant received in 2009/10.

Amongst other cost saving operational measures, we are reducing our main office space by around half to save approximately £132,000 this year.

During the last 10 years we have improved our services for boaters and will continue to deliver improvements in the following areas:

- We manage 801m more mooring frontage compared to 10 years ago, and 413m more than five years ago. This has increased despite pressures from landowners as well as rising material and equipment costs.
- Broads Authority Rangers spent

1,713 days patrolling the waterways during the last season, an increase compared to the 1,241 days spent patrolling 10 years ago, and 1,413 days spent five years ago.

- Our Operations Team spent 272 days cutting water-plants across the Broads system (the highest total since we began recording). This is a significant increase compared to the 72 days spent 10 years ago, and the 184 days spent five years ago.

**John Packman**  
Chief Executive - Broads Authority

# Navigation charges for 2023/24

**Following consultation with the Navigation Committee, we have made the difficult decision to increase Broads' tolls by 13% this year, to ensure we can continue to deliver our statutory purposes and responsibilities.**

As a result of high inflation, compounded by reduced funding in real terms, we are still budgeting for a deficit of £18,222 this coming financial year.

In order to maintain our current levels of navigation services, and retain increased safety patrolling by seasonal Rangers, an increase in toll charges of 13% has proved to be necessary.

The Navigation Committee was consulted on the proposal in January and supported it. Later in January, the Broads Authority Committee approved the budget for the forthcoming year and the increased charges.

Alongside this, new and increased mooring charges are being introduced. The projected income from these

prevents the need for a further 3% increase on tolls charges.

The increase in tolls will impact boaters in different ways depending on the size of their boats, with just under one third of all private boat owners paying less than an extra £10 per year.

A typical unpowered dinghy will pay an extra £4.91 and a 5m<sup>2</sup> motorboat will pay £9.80 more. An 11m<sup>2</sup> sailing boat will pay an additional £13.20 and a popular-sized private motorboat of 38m<sup>2</sup> an extra £74.48.

For smaller private motorboats, those less than 7m<sup>2</sup>, the charges for 2023/24 will still be less than in 2016/17.

As a result of making the tolls system fairer, in 2016/17 a 5m<sup>2</sup> motorboat paid

£99.32 and will pay £85.10 in tolls this year.

Annual toll renewals can be paid by post, by telephone: 01603 756080, in our office at Yare House, or you can register for our online payment system Tolls Online. We are mindful of the impact this increase will have on boat owners and so if you are struggling to pay your toll, please contact our tolls office.

Mooring charges at Great Yarmouth and Norwich Yacht Stations will increase by £2 per day and £3 overnight. Charges to use Mutford Lock will increase by £2 per day and the Authority is proposing to charge for moorings at Reedham and Ranworth.



## Swing bridge renovations

**In October 2022, Network Rail began the long-awaited renovations of the electrical and mechanical systems at two swing bridges at Reedham and Somerleyton.**

These iconic bridges were designed to carry rail traffic over the River Yare at Reedham and the River Waveney at Somerleyton, swinging open to let boats pass through. At over 100 years-old, their internal parts had become unreliable and required frequent and costly maintenance.

On each bridge, engineers are replacing the winch systems, hydraulic jacks and pipework, lighting and installing new power systems. Once works are completed at the end of May 2023 the bridges will operate more reliably.

For swing bridge updates, follow Network Rail Anglia region @NetworkRailAng using the hashtag #AngliaSwingBridges .

See 'Notices to Mariners' on our website for further information and closure dates.





## Progress on invasive species

Tackling invasive species of plants and organisms entering the Broads is an ongoing issue for the Authority. During the last two years we have seen some excellent results from initiatives to improve biosecurity. This is thanks to the tireless efforts of our staff, Volunteers, and working in partnership with the Norfolk Non-Native Species Initiative and the Rivers Trust.

Biosecurity involves preventing the spread of invasive species and organisms which are harmful to nature. In the Broads, most prevalent are the Australian swamp stonecrop plant and the floating pennywort plant, found in the River Ant.

We are asking all Broads' users, and especially paddlers to help us improve biosecurity. When out and about, please ensure you:

**CHECK** your equipment and clothing carefully for any live organisms – particularly in areas that are hard to inspect.

**CLEAN** and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where

you found them.

**DRY** all equipment and clothing – some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Always ensure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

At How Hill, a 'biosecurity station' with boot scrapers and brushes to clean your shoes, will be installed in spring. We are encouraging all visitors to use it - see our information boards on site.

Last September, the Maintenance Team, Ecologists and Volunteers successfully eradicated a persistent case of the invasive plant Australian swamp stonecrop (*Crassula helmsii*) at a dyke near Snipe Marsh, which had for several years evaded attempts to remove it.

Before the dyke could be filled in to safely bury the material, the water needed to be pumped out and filtered in order to stop spreading crassula further. A water-pump system was set up by Volunteers and required constant monitoring whilst in operation.

Another partnership project to remove invasive floating pennywort on the Ant has been so successful that it has been nearly completely eradicated. Thanks to our Operations Technicians and Rangers who have been out in all weathers pulling it out of the river.

If you think you've spotted an invasive species, please email [broads.control@broads-authority.gov.uk](mailto:broads.control@broads-authority.gov.uk) with an exact location and (if possible) some photos.

### A new tolls system

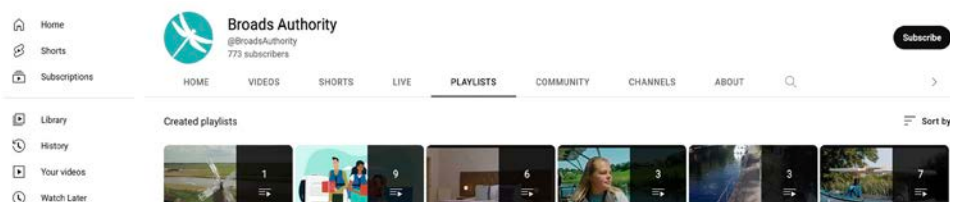
Over the next few years, we are upgrading the IT computer software for toll payments. We would like to provide toll payers with the option to submit applications for new craft and to buy short-visit tolls online. We are seeking changes to make it simple to renew an annual toll without the need to create an online account, and we will explore options for making payments. If you would like to have a say, please email us on [tolls@broads-authority.gov.uk](mailto:tolls@broads-authority.gov.uk)

### Videos on YouTube

Our YouTube channel has a wealth of videos for seasoned and new boaters / paddlers. Our series of Broads' boating safety videos have been viewed thousands of times and include how to moor up at Great Yarmouth Yacht Station and how to cross Breydon

Water. We recently produced new videos on accessible days out, the Electric Eel boat trip at How Hill and the Ra Solar boat experience with Ruby Bishop, GB wheelchair tennis player.

See more on our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/@BroadsAuthority](https://youtube.com/@BroadsAuthority)





## Recognising the hard work of Broads Volunteers

**The Authority is grateful to all its Volunteers. Their hard work helps us to ensure that the Broads remains a special place for everyone to enjoy.**

Volunteers take part in most areas of our work programme, including assisting visitors at Information Centres and Yacht Stations, helping Rangers out on patrol and giving advice to the public. They carry out practical conservation work with the Maintenance Team; survey wildlife populations with the Ecology and Design Team, assist our Fitter Team repairing boats and machinery and help enthuse young people through a range of outdoor activities with the Education Team. Some volunteers work at specific sites (such as How Hill, Potter Heigham and Barton Boardwalk) and others volunteer all over the Broads.

There are currently around 110 Broads volunteers, who typically get involved because they love the opportunity to be in the great outdoors, learn new skills, make long-lasting friendships and enjoy the feeling of giving something back.

Some volunteers have kindly given up

their time over many years, such as well-established volunteer groups the Beavers and Broadsword, the latter of which has been going for 31 years!

Last year, Volunteers helped manage the waterways by assisting Rangers with patrolling and condition checks, maintaining moorings, mowing, installing new signage, installing safety ladders and monitoring the Oulton Broad powerboat racing.

Volunteers also helped with the water-plant cutting programme, enabling staff to complete extra cuts around the Broads. They helped at Great Yarmouth Yacht Station, and at Ranworth, assisting visitors to moor up, giving safety information and helping with piling checks, which feed into the next 10-year navigation workplan.

Volunteers are always supervised, appropriately trained and will never replace members of staff. They allow the Authority to deliver additional benefits above and beyond the core functions of our statutory role.

If you'd like to learn more about volunteering visit: [broads-authority.gov.uk/volunteering](https://broads-authority.gov.uk/volunteering)

### Future farming and nature restoration

**With the increasing pressures of climate change and biodiversity loss, how we manage, and future-proof Broads' ecosystems is of utmost importance.**

Two projects, the Broads Peat Partnership and Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) are working across the Broads catchment area with partners, farmers and land managers to improve farming and conservation.

Both projects aim to create landscapes that restore nature, provide carbon storage, clean air and water, offer flooding protection and improve biodiversity.

While the Broads stores vast amounts of carbon in its wet fens and reedbeds, nearly a quarter of its deep peat soils are drained for agriculture, which releases greenhouse gases. Around one million tonnes of carbon have been lost from the Broads in the past 40 years.

Since December 2021, partners have been working with farmers and land managers to overcome barriers to peatland restoration, including investigating private funding.

Now in its second year, FiPL has delivered habitat improvement projects for biodiversity and water quality. For example, 1,600m of foot drains for breeding waders, funding for training young reed and sedge cutters, and a new rainwater reservoir in Tunstead.

Other projects, such as educational visits to farms have improved public engagement with land management.





# Broads' biodiversity investment from Defra

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has provided the Authority with a capital grant of £1.115 million (2022/23) for maintaining biodiversity and habitat restoration. Capital funding can be used to buy buildings, land or equipment but cannot be used for ongoing revenue costs.

We will use it to buy specialist equipment to help manage the fens and waterways for both biodiversity and navigation.

The grant will also allow the Water Mills and Marshes: Broads Landscape Partnership to promote the special qualities of the Broads, attract more people who don't usually visit and pay for new 'Changing Places' accessible toilets at Whitlingham Broad and Lowestoft Station.

Equipment being purchased includes:

**A Truxor T50 amphibious machine:** like an aquatic tractor with water-plant cutting attachments, used to maintain ditches and dykes.

**A small, motorised workboat:** used to support projects on land and water, providing mobile staff-welfare facilities, fuel storage, transporting materials and dredged sediment.

**Three Whaly workboats:** robust small workboats that enable staff to reach and work in remote locations.

**A 360 Excavator:** a long-reach excavator that will enable sediment/fen management and assist with dredging and habitat creation.

**An extra water-plant harvester:** an additional vessel which will improve the efficiency of our water-plant management.

**A reciprocating mower, chainsaws and brushcutters:** used for vegetation management, including riverside and moorings maintenance.

For further details of the funding see the Broads Authority Committee paper on our website: [20 January, full Broads Authority meeting, 'Capital funding progress report'](#).



## New five-year plan for the Broads

In November 2022, we launched the latest Broads Plan, which sets out our ambitions for the future of the Broads and actions to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of this special area.

The Broads Plan (2022 to 2027) is the key management plan, developed through consultation with partners, stakeholders from the boating industry, other local authorities and members of the public.

The long-term vision for the Broads is set out under six themes.

For further details see the: ['Broads Plan 2022-2027'](#) on our website.







# Mooring upgrades

## River Ant

The final stage of a major three-part refurbishment at **How Hill** is now complete. New timber quay-heading was recently installed in the downstream third of the mooring. The entire quay-heading (just under 300m) at this busy site has now been upgraded during the last three years. Six mooring posts have been replaced at **Horning Marshes** and similar repair work is planned for **Gay Staithe** in early 2023.

Major piling projects will take place at **Neatishead** and **Horning Marshes** between January and July. It will involve significant upgrades, with new piling, timber and paths.

## River Bure

Extensive quay-heading work repairs took place at **Boundary Farm**, where much of the timber, capping and waling was replaced and new mooring posts installed.

11 new mooring posts have been installed on the Dinghy Dyke at **Ranworth**.

## River Thurne

Capping and waling repairs also took place at the mooring basins at **Potter Heigham Staithe**. Further capping and mooring post replacement work is currently being carried out working around the high water-levels at **Womack Island, Deep Dyke** and **Deep Go Dyke** moorings.

## River Yare

Major piling was carried out at **Commissioners Cut** on a 50m section of piling that was failing. The mooring opened again last summer.

At **Cantley**, 50m of capping and four mooring posts were replaced.

Mooring posts and capping repairs were carried out on the following moorings: **Langley, Polkey's Mill, Rockland Short Dyke, Postwick Wharf and Brundall Church Fen**.

## River Waveney

**Burgh Castle** 24-hour moorings reopened after major piling work took place as part of flood alleviation works. New signage and three electric charging points were also installed, along with new steps and barriers.

To improve safety, bridge-height gauge boards and new signage were installed at **St. Olaves**, in multiple new locations, including on the bridge itself.

During February and March, the Maintenance team will be topping up and maintaining paths at moorings around the river system using the workboat Shoveler, with its on-board crane.

## Future works in 2023

### Yare

Commissioners Cut (summer). Work on 30m of timber quay-heading to continue the work carried out last year.

Capping, waling, mooring posts and path works to maintain the serviceability of the moorings at:

### Bure

- Castle Staithe (summer)
- Ranworth (autumn/winter)
- Womack Dyke (autumn/winter)

### Ant

- Dilham Staithe (winter)

### Yare

- Cantley (autumn/winter)

## A busy year for our dredging team

Last season 10,000m<sup>3</sup> of sediment was removed from Oulton Broad and used to create new habitat at Peto's Marsh, owned by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, with an additional 10,000m<sup>3</sup> of dredged sediment to be placed by end of August 2023.

The new habitat at Peto's Marsh will include a mosaic of reedbed, water pools and channels. This major engineering project will create the ideal nesting and feeding habitat for species such as bittern and water vole.

Last April, 6,000m<sup>3</sup> of sediment was dredged from Sutton Broad, with the material used for riverbank improvements in conjunction with a landowner and the Internal Drainage Board.

Our dredging team also dredged Malthouse Broad, where in excess of 6,500m<sup>3</sup> of sediment was removed. This sediment will be used to strengthen flood defences along the River Bure near Horning.

## Cleaning up the Broads

**As with other National Parks and green spaces across the country, the Broads experiences incidents of individuals dumping waste into the rivers and along the riverbanks.**

Most fly-tipping incidents are dealt with by local councils; however our Rangers organise several litter picks each year and we also support groups who wish to organise their own events. Our focus is on areas that experience regular build-ups of litter such as Cary's Meadow and Breydon Water, where we undertake annual litter picks at the start and end of each season.

Last season, our Breydon Rangers and staff from Great Yarmouth Yacht Station teamed up with the Sea Life Centre staff to clean up the shores of Breydon Water. They collected



### 2023/24 Future dredging projects

#### River Ant

Mid-February will see the dredging team return to Sutton Staithe and moorings and also dredge areas on the River Ant between Wayford Bridge and Barton Broad. This phase will remove 15,000m<sup>3</sup> of sediment that will be used at Hunsett Mill.

Later this year, the team will begin dredging Stalham Dyke.

#### Upper Bure

Plans are in development for dredging between Coltishall Common and Hoveton Viaduct (to start around November 2023) aiming to move approx. 20,000m<sup>3</sup>

of sediment over a two-year period. The material will be used on arable land adjacent to the river. Dredged sediment contains high levels of organic matter which improves soil structure and adds some nutrients for future crops.

#### Lower Bure

In January 2023 the Authority will be plough-dredging from Marina Quays to the confluence of the River Yare, in Great Yarmouth. This special type of dredger scrapes material from the riverbed using a blade and moves it a sufficient distance away, where it can then disperse on the ebb tide.

shopping trolleys, signs, old fencing, ropes and numerous bags of general waste that washed up on the high tides. All items were then taken away and recycled or disposed of properly.

Our Yare Rangers collected a whole host of waste at the Cary's Meadow litter pick including bags of fly-tipped green waste, an office chair, a microwave, wheels and general litter.

Emma Sturman, founder of Norfolk Beach Cleans does a fantastic job organising paddleboard litter-picks on the Wensum in Norwich (join future events via the 'NorfolkBeachCleans' Facebook page).

We would like to thank everyone who took part in or organised litter picks last year.

There is also an increasing problem

of waste from magnet fishing being dumped at moorings. Magnet fishing involves dragging powerful magnets through the water to retrieve items from the riverbed. Unfortunately, once more valuable items are removed, large pieces of waste metal are being discarded on 24-hour moorings, posing both a safety and environmental hazard.

We ask 'magnet fishers' to dispose of the waste at their local recycling centre. While it seems harmless, small pieces of sharp metal are a danger to wildlife, dogs and people. Magnet fishing is permitted from our moorings if individuals give way to other river users, are safe and do not litter.

If you witness fly-tipping, please remember to report it to the local council with any details or contact Crimestoppers: [www.gov.uk/report-flytipping](http://www.gov.uk/report-flytipping)





### **Broad Sheet needs you!**

It's been a while since Broad Sheet had a makeover. We want to improve the design, layout and the topics we cover but need your help and feedback to make it happen.

Please get in touch and tell us what you like about Broad Sheet, what needs improving and any topics you would like to see us cover. Would you prefer to receive a copy of Broad Sheet in the post, or by email? Please get in touch by email: [broads@broads-authority.gov.uk](mailto:broads@broads-authority.gov.uk)

## **Increasing access to the waterways**

### **Improving opportunities for recreation and access to the Broads' waterways involves working with local communities and partners.**

Our Waterways and Recreation Officer (WRO) supports the planning and development of all recreational improvements on both land and water in the Broads. They lead on the development of the business case for major projects such as paddle craft access, developing cycling infrastructure, footpath improvements, promoting sustainable boating, and improving access to the Broads for all.

A large part of the role also involves building private and public partnerships to bid for funding to bring new projects to the Broads. Several long-term partnership projects are now complete, thanks to the efforts of the WRO.

Recent projects include the installation of a new pontoon for paddle craft and boats at Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT)'s Carlton Marshes Reserve. The project

took over two years to complete and required a water vole survey, a planning consultation, managing various stakeholders and permits to work in a Site of Special Scientific Interest. SWT has also installed a new, and now very popular bird hide.

Supported by the WRO, the Broads Local Access Forum works to improve public access to land within the Broads executive area. A long-closed permissive path in Reedham has re-opened after improvements and agreements coordinated by the WRO. Funded by Norfolk County Council, a section of the Wherryman's Way footpath at Hardley Flood is being restored using dredged material.

The work includes footpaths around Surlingham and Bramerton, installing footbridges and stabilising riverbanks, so that paths can be accessed all year-round.

A canoe pontoon at Geldeston Locks has also been installed in partnership with the Canoe Foundation, Love the Broads and the River Waveney Trust. This is a busy site, and the pontoon is already well-used by canoeists and paddleboarders. Although there are many slipways and launching points from which you can get your craft onto the water, many people do not know how to find them. An interactive map for slipways and launching points is now available on our website (see below).

The WRO has helped to deliver the Waterways Management Strategy, which has streamlined the process of waterways management, such as tree management, ecological work and the dredging programme.

Find Broads' slipways and launching points on our website: [www.broads-authority.gov.uk/boating/facilities/slipways-and-launching-points](http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/boating/facilities/slipways-and-launching-points)

### **Updated mooring charges**

As of the start of the new season (1 April) mooring charges at Great Yarmouth and Norwich Yacht Stations will increase by £2 per day (from £6 to £8), and will go up from £13 to £16 for an overnight stay. This is the first increase in yacht station charges since 2017. The charge for using Mutford Lock will increase from £15 to £17. The Authority is proposing to charge for moorings at Reedham and Ranworth.



**BROAD SHEET is available in large print or as audio • 01603 610734**