

Navigation Committee

03 September 2020

Agenda item number 11

Construction, Maintenance and Environment work programme - progress update

Report by Head of Construction, Maintenance and Environment

Purpose

The report gives an update on the Broads Authority's management activities to maintain the public navigation, develop mooring facilities for public use, and demonstrate the effective use of available resources.

1. Maintaining water depths for navigation

- 1.1. The detailed breakdown in Appendix 1 gives the volumes for the annual dredging programme from the start of April to the end of July 2020. A total of 13,070 m³ of dredged sediment has been removed from the prioritised sites. This figure represents 32 % of the programmed target of 41,400 m³ for 2020/21.
- 1.2. Active dredging projects are at Oulton Broad and the River Yare near Brundall. At Oulton Broad, dredging is taking place along the centre of the broad working towards Mutford Lock. The sediment is being used to create the reedbed area at Peto's Marsh. On the River Yare, shoals on the main river between Brundall and Bramerton have been targeted. A bar at the upstream entrance to Bargate Broad was also removed. The crew will soon move to Trowse to remove shoals at Trowse Eye and other areas towards Trowse Rail Bridge.
- 1.3. Successful site restoration at Tyler's Cut has been carried out, with the dredged material levelled and reseeded with grass. The site is on track to be handed back as planned to the landowner early this autumn.
- 1.4. Preparation for this winter's dredging work (see Appendix 1) is progressing well. The relevant site permissions and permits are in all place.

2. Maintaining safe public mooring facilities

- 2.1. The re-piling and refurbishment of the Acle Bridge 24 hr mooring has now been completed, following a delay due to Covid-19 working restrictions. New timber capping, mooring path and mooring posts have finished off the site, which is now open for public

use. The electric pillars have been installed, with final connection by the electrical contractors due by early September.

- 2.2. The mooring at Castle Staithe, Wroxham is now also open for public use and is being managed by the Authority as a free 24 hr mooring.

3. Our resources

- 3.1. The ongoing replacement programme of plant and equipment has proceeded as near to normal during this financial year. A replacement telehandler for the Dockyard and a replacement mini-excavator for the Maintenance Team have been purchased and delivered. Both are essential items for our ongoing works programme. The 31-year-old Sanderson telehandler to be retired certainly earned its keep.
- 3.2. In September, this year's group of Practical Environmental and Countryside Apprentices will have reached the end of their formal apprenticeship with the Authority. Emily, Becky and Eloise have completed all their required training units and have all done very well so far in the assessed learning units. Despite the lockdown interrupting the normal pattern of work on site, all the staff who have worked alongside them have been very pleased with their attitude and ability to assist with a wide range of maintenance tasks across the Broads. Thank you to all three for their hard work and commitment.

4. Managing water plants

- 4.1. As in previous years with relatively low spring rainfall, low water levels and plenty of spring and early summer sunshine, water plant growth this season has been vigorous. The Authority's two weed harvesters have been working continuously on the system since the start of May in the northern rivers and since the first week of June in the southern rivers. Weekly working hours have also been extended for the vessel and operative in the northern rivers to ensure the interval between cuts at the various hotspots on the Thurne, Bure and Ant is reduced as far as possible.
- 4.2. The Authority is in discussions with the Environment Agency's Flood Risk and Asset Performance teams about the issue of cut water plants travelling downstream of Horstead Mill, from Agency activities upstream. The impacts of large volumes of floating plant debris in the Broads navigation area are obvious to Broads' users, so working with the Agency to manage and further mitigate such impacts are ongoing.

5. Other navigation works

- 5.1. The programmed maintenance of Mutford Lock chamber in August was completed. The work was both timely and highly necessary. Aside from the usual accumulation of sediment and mussel shells that will eventually impact on the ability of the gates to open, the contractors removed a car tyre and a large metal pole wedged between a gate and the lock wall. Thankfully these items were removed before they got stuck and prevented the gate from closing fully.

5.2. The Authority has been actively involved in redrafting the Environment Agency guidance on the rules for exemptions from Environmental Permitting when placing dredged sediment on river banks. Reconsideration of the rules regarding aspects of sediment storage, distance travelled to offload and the subsequent re-handling of deposited material are all critically important factors for the Authority's future work. The simpler and more accessible locations along the main rivers have largely been used, so having the legislative guidance more closely aligned with our requirements and practice is extremely helpful. The revised guidance will be published on the Environment Agency's website this autumn.

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[Broads Plan](#) objectives: 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 6.1

Appendix 1 – Dredging progress 2020-2021

Appendix 1 - Dredging progress 2020-2021 (April 2020 to end March 2021)

Note: 'Planned annual project cost' includes staff time for all elements (pre-works ecological mitigation, site set-up, active dredging and site restoration), BA plant and budgetary expenditure (equipment hire, survey costs, contractor costs, mitigation works, materials and consumables, etc) within the reporting period.

Project title	Active BA dredging weeks completed/ planned	Planned volume removed m ³	Actual volume removed m ³	Planned annual project cost	Actual project cost
River Bure - COMPLETED South Walsham & Acle to Oby (Apr-May)	6/8	2,000	4,600	40,703	36,630
River Waveney - ACTIVE Oulton Broad to Peto's Marsh (May-Sept)	11/20	8,500	5,510	110,104	69,140
River Yare - ACTIVE Prioritised shoals between Trowse & Cantley (Jun-Sept)	7/15	6,400	2,960	114,507	36,470
River Thurne River Thurne sites & Catfield Dyke to Chara Bay (Oct-Feb) Plus 4 weeks for planting geotextile bags	0/19	8,000	0	150,664	4,870
River Yare Haddiscoe Cut to Raveningham (Nov-Feb)	0/20	8,500	0	106,990	60
River Thurne – Waxham Cut Sidecast (Jan-Feb)	0/7	6,000	0	26,862	520

Project title	Active BA dredging weeks completed/ planned	Planned volume removed m³	Actual volume removed m³	Planned annual project cost	Actual project cost
Lower Bure Plough dredge (Mar)	Contractor	2,000	0	10,000	0
Site Restoration Waxham Cut (Phase 1), Tyler's Cut	-	-	-	12,000	6,150
Site Preparation Peto's Marsh, Carlton Marshes	-	-	-	16,000	6,820
Total	24/89	41,400	13,070	587,830	160,660