

Navigation Committee

11 April 2024

Agenda item number 9

Chief Executive's report and current issues

Report by Chief Executive

Purpose

To provide a briefing on significant matters relating to the maintenance and management of the waterways.

Broads Plan context

All strategic actions under Theme C: Maintaining and enhancing the navigation.

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1. Funding the waterways of the Broads National Park

1.1. Following on from the support by this Committee for the paper on funding the waterways of the Broads National Park, it was considered and unanimously adopted by the Broads Authority Board at its January meeting. Subsequently, Bill Dickson wrote to the relevant Minister, Rebecca Pow MP, enclosing a copy of the paper. A response has been received and is included in Appendix 1.

2. Capital Programme

2.1. The other item to draw to the Committee’s attention is the report on Capital Funding considered at the March Broads Authority meeting. A copy of the report can be found using the following [link](#).

2.2. The Authority made the following decisions:

1. Following on from the Authority’s unanimous support for the ‘Funding the Waterways of the Broads National Park’ paper, recently submitted to the Minister, the Authority explicitly adopts the principle that National Park Grant, capital and revenue, can be used on items where there is a co-benefit for navigation as long as the funding is primarily used to deliver National Park purposes. This is on the basis that the current recreational use of the waterways is consistent with the Authority’s second National Park purpose of “promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public”.

2. Subject to Defra’s confirmation of a capital grant of £500,000 the Authority implements the capital expenditure set out in Table 1. The income and expenditure will be treated as National Park income and expenditure even though there is a co-benefit to the maintenance of the waterways.

3. Delegate authority to the Management Team to amend the list of items to ensure that the funding is spent before 31 March 2025.

2.3. The approved capital programme is as set out in the following table.

Table 1 - 2024/25 Capital Expenditure

Item	Cost £	Comment
1. Development and build a replacement Ranger launch	200,000	The Authority has 8 patrol launches, 3 of which need replacing because they are between 30 and 40 years old. We are looking into new engines that will reduce the carbon output. This funding would cover the research, development and purchase of the first new launch.

Item	Cost £	Comment
2. Concrete pump	173,000	A concrete pump is an integral part of the Authority's dredging operation and needs replacement. While there will be biodiversity and water quality benefits from the deployment of the concrete pump, there is a significant benefit in improved public access through the maintenance of the waterways.
3. Replacement of four Hilux (Rangers and CME)	120,000	Replace vehicles at end of life.
4. Dipper Arm Extension and Weed Bucket for Fen Excavator	16,000	These would facilitate on-going fen management on the Authority's own land and sites we manage for third parties.
5. Steel welfare unit	8,000	To replace a previous wooden welfare hut and upgrade facilities for staff welfare working in remote locations in the Broads.
	517,000	

2.4. Officers will brief the Committee on progress with the purchase of the relevant items.

3. Navigation patrolling and performance targets

3.1. The exercise of powers figures (Appendix 2) along with the number of calls taken by Broads Control staff reflect the quieter winter period. The Ranger duties are slightly higher than predicted on the Navigation side as a number of matters, including vessels overstaying on moorings and maintenance of moorings after the periods of flooding have required extra attention over this period.

4. Sunken and abandoned vessel update

4.1. The high-water levels and recent storms have resulted in a high number of vessels sinking. The Authority has needed to act quickly in a couple of cases, using our powers to remove vessels before they became a grater hazard to navigation. Costs have been sought from the owners in these cases. We have worked with the owners in other cases to ensure the vessels were raised quickly.

5. Planning enforcement update

5.1. There are no further enforcement matters with navigation implications to report.

Author: John Packman

Date of report: 20 March 2024

Appendix 1 – Response recieved from Defra Minister

Appendix 2 - Rangers exercise of powers analysis

Appendix 3 – Ranger duties total time allocated and actual days

Appendix 4 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 12/03/2024

Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 11/01/2024

Appendix 1 – Response received from Defra Minister



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Bill Dickson Chair
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Your ref: BD/EG
Our ref: PO2024/04263/MK

18 March 2024

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your letter of 20 February about public funding for the maintenance of the waterways of the Broads National Park.

Thank you for your paper on funding the waterways of the Broads. I understand that all Protected Landscapes organisations are currently facing challenging financial circumstances and we are committed to working with them to address these issues, for example through the additional £10 million announced in November last year, and by building capacity to attract green and private finance.

I read with interest the unique challenges faced by the Broads Authority. As you mention in your paper, we do recognise the need to re-examine the long-term funding model. We are actively considering how the grant funding model can be reformed and we will be working with Protected Landscapes organisations, including the Broads Authority, to progress this important work. Officials will consider your paper as part of their efforts to explore all opportunities to increase the scale and diversity of funding resources available to our Protected Landscapes.

Please be assured, the Government remains committed to supporting the vital role Protected Landscapes play in protecting our precious wildlife, and the importance they have for tourism, the regional economy, and public access. I am optimistic that we can develop a more sustainable funding model for our Protected Landscapes and this remains a priority for me.

Defra looks forward to continuing working with you to deliver on that goal.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.

REBECCA POW MP

11 January 2024

Appendix 2 – Rangers’ exercise of powers analysis 1st January 2024 – 5th March 2024

Table 1

Verbal warnings	Wroxham launch Wroxham and upper Bure	Irstead launch Ant	Ludham launch Hickling, Potter Heigham, upper Thurne	Ludham launch 2 lower Thurne and lower Bure	Norwich launch Norwich and upper Yare	Hardley Launch Reedham, Chet and middle Yare	Burgh St Peter launch Oulton Broad and upper/middle Waveney	Breydon launch Breydon water, lower Waveney and Yare
Care and caution								
Speed	3							
Other	1							

Table 2

Written warnings	Wroxham launch	Irstead launch	Ludham launch	Ludham launch 2	Norwich launch	Hardley Launch	Burgh St Peter launch	Breydon launch
Care and caution								
Speed								
Other	4	5	6			3	1	
Special directions								

Table 3

Launch patrols	Wroxham launch	Irstead launch	Ludham launch	Ludham launch 2	Norwich launch	Hardley Launch	Burgh St Peter launch	Breydon launch
Launch staffed by ranger	9	8	4	4	12	14	6	15
Volunteer patrols	2	5					1	
IRIS reports		5	4	1				1

Table 4

Broads Control total calls

Contact method	Number of calls
Telephone	2512
VHF	188
Total	2700

Appendix 3 – Ranger duties: total time allocated and actual days

Table 1

Broads Authority corporate duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Training	122	225.27
Broads Control	362	352.20
Team meetings, work planning	318	366.45
Partnership working	76	26.42
Assisting other sections	76	35.51
Billets and boatsheds	25	28.85
Launch – general		16.15
Trailers - general		2.50
Vehicle maintenance		7.43
Other equipment repair		15.95
Total	979	1076.73

Table 2

Navigation duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Patrolling	2136	1850.95
Escorts	44	37.30
Prosecution files		12.74
Bankside tree management	108	182.30
Obstruction removal	26	28.31
Channel markers and buoys	30	22.69
Signs and boards maintenance	34	42.57
Adjacent waters	96	70.27
Reactive mooring maintenance	100.5	26.42
Total	2574.5	2273.55

Table 3

Conservation, recreation, countryside maintenance

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Fen management	146	82.91
Lake, riverbank restoration	100	3.04
Invasive species control	32.5	2.97
Other conservation work	145	57.97
Pollution response		7.09
Visitor site maintenance	194	233.68
Public Engagement	97	38.92
Public footpath work	38	8.18
Education work	69	3.85
Total	821.5	438.61

Team total up to 05 March 2024

Percentage Navigation: 84%

Percentage National Park: 16%

Appendix 4 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 12 March 2024

Description	Location found	Action	Notice affixed	Result
Motor Cruiser	Old River Yare, Thorpe	Vessel sunk at owners moorings	No	Not affecting the navigation
Motor Cruiser	Sutton/Stalham cut	Hull only, marked with yellow posts	No	Not affecting the navigation
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Thorpe	Vessel Sunk at owners mooring	Yes	To be removed by Authority when a workboat is in the area
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Trowse	Vessel sunk behind rail bridge fenders	Yes	Will be raised at next spring low water
Motor Cruiser	River Wensum, Deal Ground	Vessel sunk	No	Working with owner to raise
Aux Yacht	River Wensum, Cow Tower	Vessel sunk	Yes	To be removed by Authority when a workboat is in the area
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Reedham	Vessel sunk at Reedham Quay	Yes	Raised by Authority
Motor Cruiser	Bure, GYYS	Vessel sunk at mooring	Yes	Raised by Authority, working to determine ownership
Motor Cruiser	Bure, Yarmouth	Vessel sunk at mooring	No	Raised by owner
Barge	River Yare, Berney	Vessel sunk at moorings	No	Raised by owner

Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 11 January 2024

Type of vessel	Fined	Costs awarded	Victim surcharge	Compensation
Motor	£300	£190	£120	£340.40
Motor	£200	£95	£80	£391.46
Motor	£200	£95	£80	£459.54
Motor	£293	£190	£117	£272.32
Sailing	£660	£190	£264	£340.40
Motor	£440	£210	£176	£238.28
Motor	£440	£190	£176	£476.56
Motor	£440	£190	£176	£102.12