

# Navigation Committee

## Minutes of the meeting held on 09 June 2022

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## **Present**

Nicky Talbot – in the Chair, Linda Aspland, Mike Barnes, Harry Blathwayt, Stephen Bolt, Leslie Mogford, Paul Thomas and Alan Thomson

## **In attendance**

Natalie Beal – Planning Policy Officer, Michelle Glover - Governance Officer, Dan Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, Emma Krelle – Director of Finance, Emily Leonard – Project Support Officer, John Packman - Chief Executive, Rob Rogers - Director of Operations, Sara Utting – Senior Governance Officer

## **Also in attendance**

Bill Dickson

## **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Matthew Bradbury, Greg Munford and Simon Sparrow.

Andy Hamilton attempted to join the meeting but unfortunately was not able to connect due to IT issues.

## **Recordings**

The Chair announced that the meeting would be recorded and that the video recording would be available on the [Broads Authority's YouTube channel](#).

## **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

## **2. Declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **3. 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 last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022 were confirmed and would be signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

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

Members received a report summarising the progress of issues that had recently been presented to the Committee.

The Chair thanked everybody for the excellent work getting Burgh Castle ready in time for the season.

The Chief Executive (CE) confirmed that the information in the Summary of Progress was up to date. As regards Carrow Bridge, the Director of Operations (DoO) confirmed that Norfolk County Council was not going ahead with major resurfacing which would result in the bridge being sealed shut, but they did still need to do some repair work to the road surface, the full details of which were, as yet, unknown.

**The report was noted.**

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

The Chief Executive (CE) introduced the report and provided some updates as follows.

Since the agreement to recommend to the Authority that British Marine's Quality Accredited Boatyard scheme (QAB) be incorporated into the Authority's hirer boat licensing conditions, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) published its report into the Diamond Emblem 1 accident. The recommendations outlined on page 19 (of the Navigation Committee report) included one regarding British Marine's QAB which is very similar to that made by the Navigation Committee, and at the Broads Authority meeting on 13 May, that recommendation was adopted.

The Authority had since written to all hire boat yards alerting them to the requirement. There had also been discussion with British Marine who will provide support, training and advice to hire boat yard owners.

The requirement of the Broads Authority to reply to the recommendations from the MAIB within 30 days, was met.

There was a particular issue raised at the last Broad Authority meeting about the retention of RCD information, and this has been researched. The recommendation was that the Authority should retain a copy of the Declarations of Conformity and other associated information, demonstrating compliance with the requirements of the Recreational Craft Directive for all boats operating in their waters.

The response sent back to the MAIB read: "An RCD issued to a new fully constructed vessel is accepted as evidence that it complies with the construction equipment standards as per section 12 of the Broads Authority Act 2009. After four years the vessel has to be retested to ensure it is still compliant. The Broads Authority will retain the RCD certificates from the manufacturers for a period of seven years, as per the Broads Authority's data retention policy. Please note manufacturers are legally required to retain the RCDs for 10 years. After four years and in accordance with the Broads Authority Act 2009, any hire vessel operating on the Broads Authority's waterways will require a boat safety scheme (BSS) certificate."

The CE drew attention to Appendix 5 listing 13 prosecutions for navigation offences since 2 February 2021. It took some time for these figures to work through the system and for that reason this figure actually represented prosecutions over two years. The number of

prosecutions was therefore a very small number compared to the 12,000 (approximately) boats on the Broads. The CE added that these prosecutions were for serious offences where other craft were endangered. Similarly, with the tolls prosecutions, these were resolved as much as possible before having to go to court, and so the list was relatively short. The majority of people who used the waterways did so with a great deal of care, so although this list of prosecutions for other offences looked serious, there were a relatively small number of serious incidents on the Broads.

A member asked for clarification on when the compliance for the new requirement would be implemented from. The CE confirmed that it would be implemented from 1 April 2023, and added that British Marine were being very helpful in terms of offering support to all hire boat operators.

A member asked if the accredited boatyard scheme would apply to those yards offering sailing boats for hire, and also canoes and/or paddleboards. The DoO confirmed that the QAB was only for hire boat operators, so that did include sailing vessels under the new hire boat code, but it currently did not include the small independents operating stand-up paddle boards or canoes. This topic had however been discussed, and the aim would be to bring all types of craft into a licensing scheme.

**The report was noted.**

## **8. Construction, Maintenance and Ecology work programme – progress update**

The Head of Construction, Maintenance & Ecology (HCME) presented the report, supplemented by a presentation showing maps of Oulton Broad before and after dredging. This showed significant improvement in water depths in the most frequently used areas of Oulton Broad, although there was still work to do.

A member asked if hydrographic maps were available for other areas of the Broads. The HCME confirmed that all of the updated hydrographic maps were published annually on the Broads Authority's [Water Depths and navigation notes](#) web pages.

A member asked if there was any further update on the signage improvement on the approaches to St. Olave's road bridge. The HCME confirmed that rangers identified that review was needed in that area, particularly with advance warning for bridge heights and guidance through bridge structures in terms of where vessels should be positioned in the channel. There was a range of other new additional signage in progress, and work was planned to be completed by the end of July.

A member asked what proportion of time was spent at Oulton relative to other sites, and once the planned dredge campaigns were complete, whether any further work would be required. The HCME confirmed that the bulk of the identified sediment would be removed in Oulton by this project, as there was capacity available at Peto's Marsh. The program at Peto's to recreate the reed bed area would take at least another two years of dredging to complete.

The DoO commented that during 2021-22 teams were working under extremely difficult conditions maintaining staff through Covid, and through prioritisation the delivery on network was maintained. The DoO thanked the HCME and his team for maintaining that priority: it showed good Covid practice, isolating teams where necessary, working in bubbles and maintaining their work through the pandemic.

**The report was noted.**

## 9. Navigation annual income and expenditure 2021/22

The Director of Finance (DoF) introduced the report and added that there have been no further changes since the report was produced and this would be the basis for the draft Statement of Accounts.

Training has been scheduled for members on the statement of accounts for 20 July, and invites would be sent out shortly.

Income so far for 2022/23 at the end of May 2022 saw that private craft toll income was broadly on target. Hire craft tolls was currently showing a £17,666 deficit behind the annual budget. Comparisons to previous years were difficult due to the impact of Covid-19 but the forecast for the remainder of the year should become clearer in June.

Although no formal update on 2022/23 expenditure, the DoF reported that the unions had started negotiations with the National Joint Council (NJC) who agreed pay on behalf of employers for the 2022/23 pay settlement. The unions' opening proposal was either a minimum of £2,000 to each employee or Retail Price Index (RPI) increase, whichever was higher. RPI was currently at 11.1%. When the budget was set an allowance was made for 2%, and members may be concerned about the large difference between the two, but the unions' opening proposal for 2021/22 was 10% and staff eventually received 1.75% in March. The DoF would report back when there was further information.

**The report was noted.**

## 10. Draft Broads Plan – consultation

The CE introduced the report and provided clarification on the difference between this item and the following one, which related to the Local Plan.

He advised that the Broads Plan (item 10) was the management plan for the Broads that the Authority was required to review every five years. This was not a plan for the Broads Authority (BA) but a plan for the Broads. Partners of the Authority were also deliverers of the Broads Plan. The Local Plan (item 11) was specifically around the Authority's planning function and set the policies and guides development in the Broads.

Early drafts of the Broads Plan were introduced in two workshops (September 2021 and January 2022), and at the last Broads Authority meeting it was agreed that it was ready to go out for consultation. The CE confirmed that it was now out for public consultation and that

period would last until 15 July. The Navigation Committee's views were sought on the draft Broads Plan.

There was an opportunity for members, as individuals or organisations, to respond to the consultation up until 15 July, when all the received comments would be examined, and it could be considered as to whether any amendments needed to be made to the Draft Plan.

A member asked if some reference to the topic of rewilding, and the fact that it was not necessarily appropriate to the man-made Broads should be mentioned in the Plan. There was a great deal of discussion about rewilding in the press, specifically in relation to national parks, and it may be appropriate to make some reference to the subject. The CE responded that the Broads was very different from the other national parks which may be more suitable for rewilding. In terms of the Broads there were some sites that had been identified by land owners which may benefit from rewilding, but for most of the Broads it was a case of managing it to retain and enhance its existing biodiversity. The CE confirmed that he would see if a reference to rewilding could be included in the Plan. The difficulty with documents that covered a long time-span was keeping up with the latest views. The Authority had tried to keep the document at such a level so that it would last its life-span of five years but all comments would be taken on board.

A member asked about the sustainability of the Plan, especially in terms of affordability and access to resources, and asked if this could be a concern. The CE responded that the difficulty in any form of planning at the moment was the degree of uncertainty going forward was high and agreed that it was difficult to know what resources may be available. The National Park grant was likely to be fixed at a cash level for the next three years, so with inflation running close to 10 or 11%, that was a concern for the Authority. However, Defra may provide some additional funding for specific targeted areas of work. The Authority may be able to deliver some of the key priorities in the document because the document followed some of the national priorities of the government. The main income stream from toll payers seemed to be on track, as did the income from private boats. Inflation however was always a concern, and this was having an impact on navigation in terms of resources such as steel, wood, aggregate and fuel. The Plan tried to strike a balance between being ambitious about what could be achieved in five years and a level of realism about costs. The October meeting on the budget and tolls would be a crucial meeting for all to discuss what had happened to inflation by then, to the lines of income, and what it meant for the following financial year.

A member commented that there could be more information in the Plan as regards increased access for people with disability or mobility issues. The CE responded that that could certainly be looked at, and commented that organisations like Waveney Sailability did an excellent job in terms of people with disabilities and had specific provisions which allowed people to easily get on and off a boat, similarly with the Nancy Oldfield Trust. There may be a broader issue about the level of provision that the hire boat industry made for disabled people which was perhaps something that the CE and Chair can discuss with the Hire Boat Federation.

## 11. Issues and Options Local Plan – for consultation

The Planning Policy Officer (PPO) introduced the report and her role in producing the Local Plan. The Local Plan contained land allocations for certain development and policies that helped guide decisions on development proposals. These policies were used by development management officers when they considered planning applications. The Local Plan contained policies on such things as housing numbers, energy, water, climate change, affordable housing and open space.

The process for producing a Local Plan and its content was guided by national policy, national guidance and various Acts. It was regulated and there were certain steps which were necessary to do. The current Local Plan, which was adopted in 2019, was being reviewed because it needed updating.

The Issues and Options document was the first round of public consultation and engagement on producing a new Local Plan. It did not contain policies at the moment, but it raised some issues and topic areas. It talked about some potential options and asked a few questions. It also asked what people thought of the current policies. The Navigation Committee was invited to comment on the draft sections.

The Authority would be undertaking a call for sites for residential dwellings (Broads-wide), Gypsy and Traveller sites (Great Yarmouth Borough Council only), residential caravans (Great Yarmouth Borough Council only) and residential moorings (Broads-wide). The gaps in the plan in front of them were design, housing numbers (17 a year), Gypsy and Traveller need in GY (10 pitches) and residential caravans in GY (12). Information from research into this topic would be going to Planning Committee at the end of June. The residential mooring study was still awaited.

The Issues and Options document also dealt with the issue of placing new quay heading in front of old quay heading. Over time, by this action, the width of the waterway was gradually reduced. The section in the document asked what can be done about this.

The consultation on Issues and Options would most likely start at the end of July or early August, and would continue for approximately 10 weeks. The Authority aimed to hold some drop-in events in the north, centre and south of the Broads. The design guide and Local Plan would be topics for discussion at those events.

The Chair commented that the issue of quay heading in front of quay heading was an area for debate and supported seeking clarity on that issue by including it in the Issues and Options document.

A member commented that although reed and sedge cutting were mentioned further on in the Issues and Options document, it would be useful to have them in the economy section as well. The PPO made a note to add that information to the document.

The DoO commented that people pile in front of piling because it was expensive to remove piling and take out all the tie rods: it was easier to pile in front and then cut through and redo it again. It was a challenge to stop some of this development because some sections of piles

were very large. Some river sections could not withstand this kind of encroachment and a pinch point would be created. The Chair suggested that this topic could be added as a future agenda item in order to bring awareness of the pinch points and other issues that could occur through double piling. A member supported the Chair's suggestion and added that it would be useful to have actual examples of where this had occurred and the impact that it had had so that useful discussion could be had. A member made comment that by narrowing the river in this way, it may increase the risk of flooding. The PPO said that when the consultation ends and comments have been received, the PPO would present those comments at a future Navigation Committee meeting, including those on quay heading over quay heading, and see how members would like to proceed.

A member commented that in the report there was not much mention of solar panel energy in the Plan. The PPO responded that solar energy was tackled under the section that asked for comments on the Authority's existing policies, as there was a policy on renewable energy. The Issues and Options talked about wind energy specifically because there was a specific national direction on what to do with wind and the Issues and Options document discussed potential changes to the approach set out currently in the Local Plan.

## 12. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Navigation Committee was on 1 September 2022, commencing at 10am and would be held remotely.

## 13. Exclusion of the public

Proposed by Harry Blathwayt, and seconded by Mike Barnes.

**It was resolved by consensus 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 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 recording was suspended.

## 14. Exempt minutes of last meeting

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2022 were confirmed and would be signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

The meeting ended at 11:24

Signed

Chair