

# Planning Committee

06 March 2020

Agenda item number 8

## **BA/2020/0013/FUL Gays Staithe, Irstead Road, Neatishead – Use of land for mooring of BA passenger boat**

Report by Planning Officer

---

### **Proposal**

Use of land for mooring of Broads Authority passenger boat

### **Applicant**

Broads Authority

### **Recommendation**

Approve subject to conditions

### **Reason for referral to committee**

Broads Authority Planning Application

### **Application target date**

27 March 2020

---

## **Contents**

1.	Description of site and proposals	2
2.	Site history	2
3.	Consultations received	3
4.	Representations	3
5.	Policies	3
6.	Assessment	4
7.	Conclusion	6
8.	Recommendation	6
9.	Reason for recommendation	6
	Appendix 1 – Location map	8
	Planning Committee, 06 March 2020, agenda item number 8	1

# 1. Description of site and proposals

- 1.1. Gays Staithe is an existing Broads Authority operated 24hr mooring located to the east of the settlement of Neatishead with access to Barton Broad and the Broads network by boat and Neatishead via Lime Kiln Dyke. The site is an area of grassed quayheading with pedestrian access along a gravel track leading to Irstead Road to the south. The site is in close proximity to the Broads Authority operated Barton Broad car park with a part surfaced part grass footpath to link the car park via Long Road and Irstead Road with the access track to Gays Staithe.
- 1.2. Planning permission is sought for the re-instatement of the previous use of the land as a mooring and embarkation/disembarkation point for a passenger trip boat run by the Broads Authority. The application sets out that the mooring would be required for use in conjunction with the passenger boat trips between the hours of 10am and 5pm during the month of April through to and including October. Outside of these hours during the months of April through to October the boat would be kept at Cox's Boat Yard. The mooring would revert to public mooring outside of the operational hours.
- 1.3. In the five off season months of November through to-March (inclusive) the mooring will be open for the general public to moor.
- 1.4. The boat proposed for the use, The Ra, is a solar electric powered boat with a capacity of 12 including one crew member. The applicant has set out that the Ra is 31' (9.45m) in length and therefore only takes up one space which would only be enough space for a small cruiser. Trips are organised on the basis of pre-booking passengers who will be given information regarding the timings of the trip, car parking and walking route to the staithe from the existing car park. Car parking would be at the existing car park to the south of the site which functions as a car park for the existing boardwalk route to Barton Broad.
- 1.5. Included in the application are details of the ramp which is used to access the boat when the moorings are in use. This will be removed outside of the operating season. Additionally, the applicant has submitted details of a flood response plan, and also noted the existing safety by the water features at the site which will be retained for the proposed use as well as the existing 24-hour public moorings.

# 2. Site history

- 2.1. The most relevant planning history is the previous planning approval effectively the same use, ref. BA/2002/1670/HISTAP. This allowed the Use of land for seasonal mooring of solar powered boat at Gays Staithe, permitted on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2002. The use continued from Gays Staithe until 2011, where the Ra was transferred to Whitlingham where the boat was used for boat trips until last year.
- 2.2. Previously permission has been approved for effectively the same use. However, due to the prolonged period where the use has not continued and the intention of the Broads Authority at the time of the cessation (i.e to move from Gays Staithe on a permanent

basis), it is considered that the use had been abandoned. This means that planning permission is required to re-instate this use.

### 3. Consultations received

#### Parish Council

- 3.1. To be reported orally.

#### Environment Agency

- 3.2. No Objection (works may be subject to EA Permitting).

#### Norfolk County Council (NCC) Highways

- 3.3. Not received at the time of writing.

### 4. Representations

- 4.1. Broads Hire Boat Federation - Objects on the grounds that the proposed location for daytime operation of the passenger boat Ra would appear to make at least two alongside moorings not available to hire or private cabin boats at this popular spot. Short stop moorings are in short supply in this area anyway and the loss of any number, however small, should be avoided. Additionally, access for many, particularly the disabled, would appear to be quite difficult at this location and an alternative at a commercial site that is not available for short stop visitor mooring should be sought.

### 5. Policies

- 5.1. The adopted development plan policies for the area are set out in the [Local Plan for the Broads](#) (adopted 2019).
- 5.2. The following policies were used in the determination of the application:
- DM5 Development and Flood Risk
  - DM21 Amenity
  - SP9 Recreational Access around the Broads
  - DM23 Transport, Highway and Access
  - DM24 Recreation Facilities Parking Areas
  - SP12 Sustainable Tourism
  - DM29 Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Development
  - DM46 Safety by the water
  - SSSTAITHES Staithes

## 6. Assessment

- 6.1. The key issues relating to this development are the principle of development, access and highway safety, and impact upon existing public moorings. Other issues to consider are amenity of neighbouring properties and water safety. The development would not have an adverse impact upon the landscape or visual amenity as this relates to a seasonal use of an existing mooring area, and there is no significant construction involved in this scheme.

### Principle of development

- 6.2. The proposed change of use would effectively re-instate a Broads Authority run visitor attraction in close proximity to existing visitor facilities, namely the Barton Broad carpark and boardwalk, as well as the existing public 24 hour moorings and open space. Policy DM29 seeks to site new tourism and recreation development in close association with existing visitor attractions or tourism sites. As such in this instance, the use of existing facilities is considered to comply with Policy DM29. The scale of the proposal being limited (capacity of 12, limited hours of operation, and timing during the year) also weighs in favour of compliance with both Policy DM29, and also the more general principles of sustainable tourism as set out in Policy SP12 of the Local Plan for the Broads.
- 6.3. The change of use has previously occurred in this location and took place for a number of years until 2011. The boat trips from Gays Staithe allow for the general public including those less mobile, to access the Broads on the water. This is in accordance with Policy SSSTAITHES as it would allow the continued access for the public, and would not obstruct the remaining areas of the staithe for mooring in line with the 24 hour mooring use.
- 6.4. In terms of the intensity of use, this is relatively low key from the data taken from the previous operation at the site (due to the capacity of the boat being 11 passengers plus skipper and the times of operation). The busiest year (2010) during the previous operation by the BA of a passenger boat at Gays Staithe had a total of 2,264 passengers with the busiest month being July with 575 passengers. This is an average of 19 passengers per day for July. The quietest months were May (99 passengers) and October (74 passengers), however during these months the boat only operated during school/bank holidays and weekends.
- 6.5. No data is available on the composition of groups/individuals or how they got to the site, however there would have been groups travelling together as well as individuals travelling to the site. As such the development is considered to be of a scale and intensity which is compatible with the location and setting which is accordance with Policy DM29 (part b xi) of the Local Plan for the Broads.

### Access and Impact upon Highways

- 6.6. The proposed development would not significantly increase the number of visitors to the area due to the capacity of the boat being limited, the number of trips run from the

site also limited and the fact that Barton Broad car park and boardwalk already attracts visitor by car for walks and access to the Staithe.

- 6.7. Long Road and Irstead Road do not have lighting and do not have separated and surfaced footways. However, the boat trips will only operate in daylight hours so the lack of street lighting is not an issue. The verge is reasonably level on both of these roads and there is a footpath from the car park part way down Long Road in the direction of Irstead Road. However, anyone travelling to the boat trip by car would need to walk in part along Long Road and the section of Irstead Road.
- 6.8. On balance, this is not unacceptable as the roads are quiet country lanes with some provision of refuge in the place of the grass verge. Long Lane has a footpath separated from the road for part of the length of this route and because the section on the road is on a junction, the speed is limited. There is also an area of grass verge which acts as a footpath. Irstead Road also has in part a grass verge which acts as a footway and refuge if required.
- 6.9. The existing car park at Barton Broad is well laid out with a safe access. On balance, due to the small scale of the proposed boat the car parking facilities are considered to be acceptable for this proposed use. The scheme is therefore considered to accord with policies DM23 (Transport, Highway and Access), and DM24 (Recreation Facilities Parking Areas) of the Local Plan for the Broads.

#### **Amenity of residential properties**

- 6.10. The change of use would bring some new visitors to the site by foot from the Barton Broad carpark alongside residential properties which front onto Long Road and Irstead Road, as well as the residential property directly to the south of the application site adjacent to Gays Staithe. However, the intensity of use will be limited to maximum numbers of 12 people per trip, and only during the hours of 10:00 until 17:00 between April and October (inclusive).
- 6.11. As such, the scheme is not considered to have an adverse impact upon the amenity of any other residents or neighbours. The scheme is therefore considered to accord with Policy DM21 of the Local Plan for the Broads.

#### **Other issues**

- 6.12. Access for other boaters and visitors to the staithe is also a consideration. The mooring will continue to operate as it does currently as a 24-hour public mooring in the months of November, through to March (inclusive). Public mooring would also be possible outside of the hours of operation during the operational period as the passenger boat is to be stored at Cox's boatyard. This would allow for overnight mooring of visitors. It is also important to note that whilst the operational period has been specified April through to October (inclusive), in reality in the earlier months (April and May), and the later months (September and October) the boat trips only operate at weekends and through the week during the school holidays. As such this reduces any infringement on the 24-hour mooring. Whilst the boat is out on trips, there is no restriction for people

to use the section of the staithe for loading and unloading. The objection of the Broads Hire Boat Federation is noted, however, on balance the proposal would not restrict overnight mooring at any point in the year, and will only affect short stay mooring on a short section of the staithe during the months of April through to October (inclusive). The Ra at 31' (9.45m) is an average boat length and therefore would take up approximately 1 mooring spot for a smaller hire cruiser.

- 6.13. The applicant has considered alternative sites such as commercial boat yards. However, due to the additional costs associated with the use of a commercial boat yard, the limited options to accommodate car parking and also access for members of the public this has not been taken forward as it would make the trips unviable, or at sites where trips are already provided. On balance, therefore, the impact on short stay mooring is noted but is considered insufficient to warrant the refusal of the application.
- 6.14. The proposal would not have any adverse impact upon the landscape as the proposal (apart from the temporary positioning of an access ramp) does not include any significant physical development and relates predominantly to a change of use. The change of use would be in character and appearance very similar to the existing use and therefore there are no concerns regarding the impact upon the landscape.
- 6.15. The proposal would bring visitors in close proximity to the water. The scheme is considered to be acceptable in regards to Policy DM46 (Safety by the water) as the development would be located on an existing BA managed mooring where safety features are provided and maintained. In addition, the boat trip is manned and those using the boat are assisted by the BA trained skipper.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1. The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the principle of sustainable tourism, and due to its limited scale would not have an adverse impact upon highway safety or access. The use of the mooring for a (solar powered) boat trip would encourage the public to experience and see a larger area of the Broads, in a low carbon emission form of craft. The proposal is considered to meet the relevant criteria of the Local Plan for the Broads.

## **8. Recommendation**

- 8.1. Approve subject to conditions

## **9. Reason for recommendation**

- 9.1. The proposed development accords with the Local Plan for the Broads (2019), in particular Policies DM29, DM23, DM24, SSSTAITH and SP9.

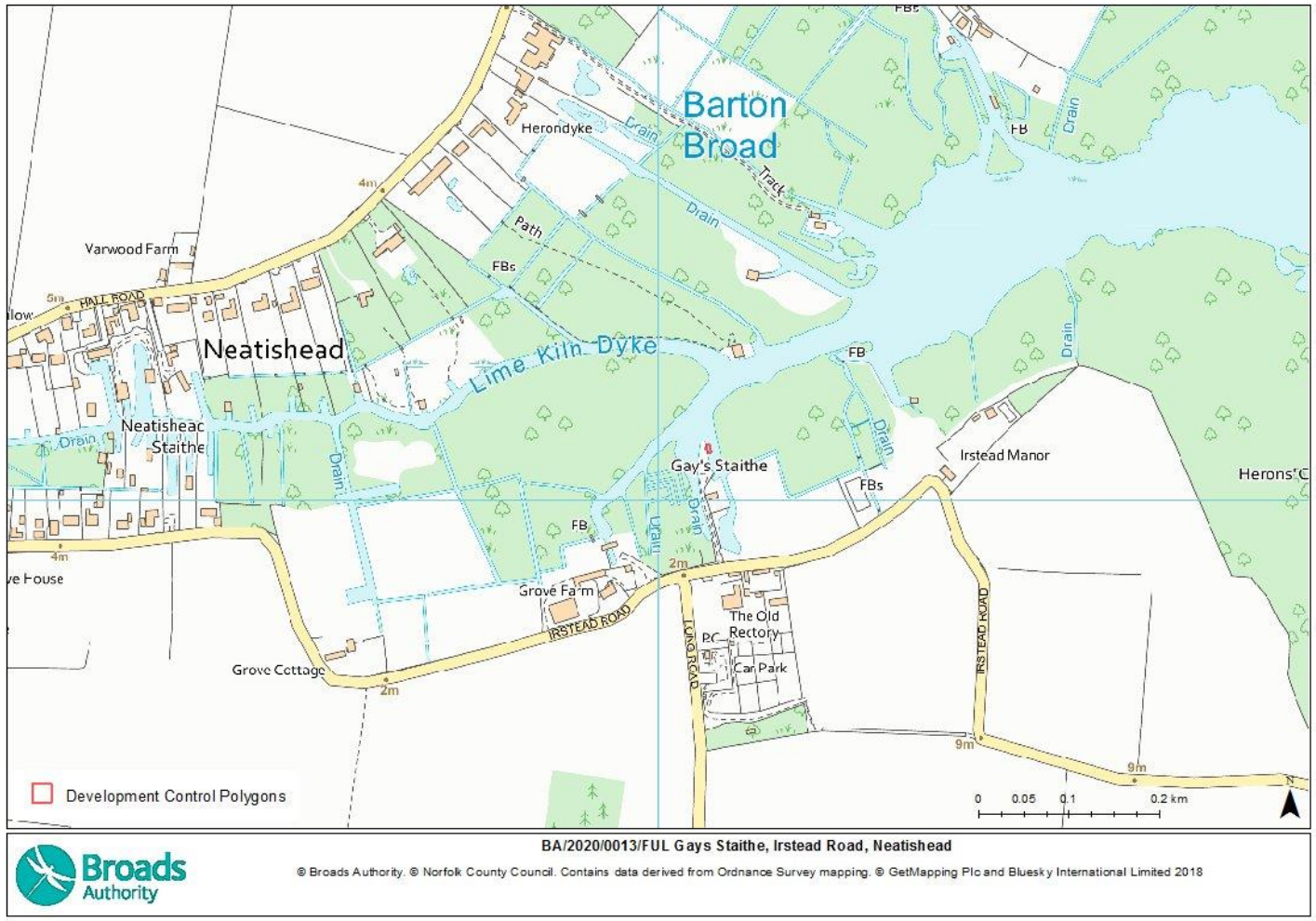
Author: Jack Ibbotson

Date of report: 24 February 2020

Background papers: Application File BA/2019/0013/FUL

Appendix 1 – Location map

# Appendix 1 – Location map



© Crown copyright and database rights 2019 Ordnance Survey 100021573. You are permitted to use this data solely to enable you to respond to, or interact with, the organisation that provided you with the data. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.