

Broads Authority

Minutes of the meeting held on 29 July 2022

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Present

Harry Blathwayt, Matthew Bradbury, Nigel Brennan, Bill Dickson, Andrée Gee, Tony Grayling, Gail Harris, Tim Jickells, James Knight, Leslie Mogford, Greg Munford, Michael Scott, Simon Sparrow, Vic Thomson, Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro, Fran Whymark

In attendance

Natalie Beal - Planning Policy Officer (items 15-16), Chris Bing - Monitoring Officer, Michelle Glover - Governance Officer, Kate Knights - Historic Environment Manager (item 14), Emma Krelle - Director of Finance, John Packman - Chief Executive, Ellie Richards - Senior Accountant, Rob Rogers - Director of Operations, Marie-Pierre Tighe - Director of Strategic Services and Sara Utting - Senior Governance Officer

The Chief Executive (CE) welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The CE explained that the meeting was being audio-recorded. All recordings remained the copyright of the Broads Authority and anyone wishing to receive a copy should contact the Governance Team. The minutes remained the record of the meeting. He added that the law permitted any person to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of public meetings of the Authority. This did not extend to live verbal commentary. The Chair needed to be informed if anyone intended to photograph, record or film so that any person under the age of 18 or members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed could be accommodated.

1. Appointment of Chair

Bill Dickson was proposed by Gail Harris and seconded by Harry Blathwayt.

Bill Dickson was appointed Chair

Bill Dickson took the Chair.

2. Appointment of Vice Chair

Matthew Bradbury was proposed by Gail Harris and seconded by Bill Dickson.

Matthew Bradbury was appointed Vice Chair

3. Chairman's announcements

The Chair thanked everyone for both re-elections, and added it was a privilege to be Chair of the Board and to work with such a dedicated CE and officer team, and assured everyone that he and the Vice Chair would do their utmost to justify the members' continuing confidence.

The Chair said that feedback had shown that the system of confining Board agendas largely to decision making business, and having separate workshops for more in depth discussions, had been shown to work well and to be popular. The Small World Consulting (SMC) workshop was a recent example of this, and this session prompted good discussion. The question which

arose from this workshop asked what the Authority, as a small organisation with an equally small budget, was able to do to have the biggest impact. The Chair suggested the following:

- consider where there may be scope to expand the existing in-house carbon-reduction programme
- demonstrate leadership to industry and others wherever possible in promoting carbon and greenhouse gas reduction projects, for instance: electrification of the Broads
- take this forward in partnership with others, write to leaders and Chief Executives of local authorities with a brief summary of the main points from the SWC report

Further reports on this subject would be brought to the Board in the autumn.

The Chair continued and said that one of the highlights of the year, the member annual site visit, gave an opportunity to physically see those things which were discussed in meetings, as well as the opportunity to talk to members and officers informally. The visit this year reinforced the paramount importance of partnership working, both with other organisations and between the Board and Executive, to achieve much more than the sum of its parts. The ability and willingness to work cooperatively would determine how the Authority would approach the unprecedented pressures that lie ahead. Challenging issues, such as supply chain problems, soaring prices, shrinking grants and unrealistic expectations from central government would be discussed in the workshop on tolls and the budget for 2023/24 on 5 October. The Chair summarised that the coming year could bring the necessity to make some difficult choices but there would be opportunities too.

The Chair welcomed Tony Grayling to the Board and invited him to provide a brief synopsis of his background for the benefit of other members.

The Chair confirmed that, in line with the email notification sent out to members this week, that item 13: 'Issues and Options' would not be taken at this meeting, as this item was deferred from the Planning Committee. It would therefore be included in the agenda for the Broads Authority meeting in September.

Finally, the Chair advised that whilst the item 'Items of business raised by the Designated Person in respect of the Port Marine Safety Code' was not included on agenda, he was pleased to report that the Director of Operations had confirmed that there were no issues to report.

4. Apologies

Apologies were received from Stephen Bolt, Paul Hayden, Tristram Hilborn, Matthew Shardlow and Nicky Talbot.

5. Introduction of members and declarations of interest

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered, and as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

6. Items of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

7. Public question time

No public questions had been received.

8. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

9. Summary of actions and outstanding issues

Members received the latest summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings.

The CE highlighted the following key points:

1. As the report showed, there had been substantial progress with the Wherryman's Way footpath on the river Chet. The CE commented on what an important development this was and thanked Vic Thomson in particular for his support and work with the officers of the Authority. Vic Thomson commented that residents and parish councils were happy with the work, and the funding for this was an initial amount of money.
2. In regards to the presentation on the greenhouse gas emissions on the Broads, the presentation by the scientists from Small World Consulting had been videoed and circulated to all members, volunteers and staff. This was a significant piece of work which drew attention to the scale of change needed, and as the Authority was a small organisation, the only way to make any real impact was to work with its partners, in particular the local authorities. The CE said that he would write to the Leaders and CEs of all the local authorities in Norfolk and Suffolk, and recommended local authority appointed members to also raise with their own authority. Working with the local authorities would be the only way in which a significant impact on the amount of carbon released in this area could be made.
3. An additional item about safety on the Broads had been added, to keep members informed about what had been done since significant decisions were made in relation to safety.

The CE agreed to copy in relevant members on emails that he would be sending to the Leaders of the local authorities, and confirmed that the video of the presentation could be shared by members.

A member commented that the addressing of climate change was now a statutory legal responsibility of all authorities - it being official government policy to reach zero carbon by 2050. It was not just an aspiration, but effectively law.

The report was noted.

10. Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 and Code of Corporate Governance 2022

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer on the Annual Governance Statement for 2021/22 and the Code of Corporate Governance for 2022 which demonstrated how the Authority was complying with the principles of good governance, including internal control systems and risk management. It was noted that, at its meeting on 26 July 2022, the Audit and Risk Committee had recommended these documents for approval by the Authority.

Michael Scott proposed, seconded by Andree Gee, and

It was resolved unanimously to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 and to note, subject to the implementation of improvements identified in the action plan, that the Authority's systems of governance and internal control were considered to be adequate and effective.

11. Draft statement of accounts 2021/22

Members received the report of the Director of Finance, which provided an update on the Broads Authority's Statement of Accounts and its audit for the year ending 31 March 2021.

These had also been presented to the Audit and Risk Committee at its meeting on 26 July 2022 where external Audit were in attendance, and no significant issues were raised.

The report was noted.

12. Strategic priorities - update

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer, on the latest progress in implementing the Authority's annual strategic priorities for 2022/23 and the draft strategic priorities for 2023/24.

The Chair commented that decreasing resources combined with the fact that several of our Strategic Priorities (SPs) were multi-year programmes meant that there was little scope for new SPs.

The CE commented that in the current year there were eight SPs. Although this appeared to be a challenging number to achieve, it was a tribute to the staff that they were broadly on track or completed. SPs were large significant issues of a strategic nature, involving potentially significant amounts of money. They were brought to the Board at every meeting so that members could keep track of those significant matters.

The management team had considered and made suggestions as to what the SPs should be for 2023/24, acknowledging the current pressures of inflation and political uncertainties.

The CE explained why four SPs from the current year were not being recommended for 2023/24:

- The Landscape Review: a large piece of work by the government, seems to have been put to one side or postponed, and so it would be difficult to have this as an SP which needs specific timelines, dates and actions.
- The Broads Plan: the Authority has made good progress producing a new Broads Plan and this will be complete before 2023/24.
- Safety: safety was always an issue, but in terms of SPs there were no new significant steps or actions to take.
- Nature for Climate Peatland grant: this would have been completed by March 2023. Until any kind of continuation scheme was adopted, actions and timelines could not be applied and so therefore it has been suggested that this should be removed from the list.

The CE outlined the following draft suggestions for SPs:

1. Water, Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Scheme: to remain for another year. The CE explained that as the scheme involved a significant amount of money and a large number of partners with a lead agency in delivering it, and due to its relationship with the Heritage Lottery Fund, it was important from a reputational perspective.
2. Responding to climate change: a multi-faceted, long term issue and highly important to the work of the Authority.
3. The Local Plan for the Broads: a significant document for the Broads Authority.
4. Farming in Protected Landscapes: the grant scheme to facilitate farmers and landowners to change their practices in order to have a sustainable future. This has been very successful and the CE emphasised the importance of continuing to monitor this scheme.
5. Replacement toll system: this would be a large project for the Authority. The current online system needed replacing and this would take several years.
6. Budget pressures: the Authority would need to consider how to respond to budgetary pressures. Although this could be considered as daily business, the pressures this year were regarded as more urgent. The briefing on 5 October will be used to discuss budget pressures, as well as tolls, with members in more detail.

Members were invited for views and comments or for any other suggestions for SPs. Discussions would feedback into forthcoming management meetings and into the meeting on 5 October, and a draft budget would then be presented to members later in the year.

A member commended the CE for the SP suggestions. Although Nutrient Neutrality was covered in several of the suggested points, he felt it would be useful to have the impact of that issue highlighted more. Other points to include could be the imminent introduction of sustainable farming initiatives, the larger environmental management schemes and land management programming. Budgetary pressures were covered from an Authority

perspective, but it would be useful to also bear in mind that everybody was being impacted by the cost of living crisis. Also, the change in the political situation was something that the Authority may need to respond to.

Another member commended the SP suggestions and asked whether there was sufficient focus on nature recovery and biodiversity.

A member commented that it would be useful to have budgetary pressures as an SP to include in the quarterly reports to Defra. The CE added that the regular SP reports that were presented to members could also be used for Defra. This would not only be efficient but would also add a level of consistency.

A member gave support for focussing on a smaller number of SPs, and support for budgetary pressures included as an SP.

In terms of Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI) a member commented that it was unclear what the Authority's position was regarding this initiative and what the initiative itself was proposing.

The CE responded that in terms of BFI it was too early to give a view, as work was very much in the research phase. Later on, there would be a point where choices and decisions would need to be made, and where members' views will be sought.

A member commented that it would nevertheless be good to have more visibility of those choices. The Director of Strategic Services commented whilst the Authority is still collecting evidence it would be premature to ask for members' views at this moment in time. At a recent Elective Members Forum, there was discussion on the methodology to use to progress to the point where a decision can be made. The process is long and this can be frustrating but due to its complexity it could not be rushed.

A member added that the process was slow due to the fact that there were a lot of organisations and policies involved. The member also gave assurance that it was not at stage where members need to take a particular view, and that it would be better to receive all the necessary information and recommendations first so that an informed view could be taken at the right point in time.

A member commented on the necessity to hone in on preserving and increasing biodiversity which is one of the primary things that the Authority has the relevant expertise for. The Authority would need to work with the contributions of other local authorities and businesses in the Broads area, farmers need to be involved in discussions about Nutrient Neutrality, and individuals encouraged to preserve biodiversity in their own gardens. The CE added that the Broads Authority owned very little land itself, so the way it influenced the recovery of biodiversity was by working with its partners, and this would be considered in regards to how it would be incorporated with the SPs.

A member commented that it seemed that responding to climate change and Broadland Futures Initiative were effectively one item, and suggested that a line be drawn between the

two to show that they were linked but not the same thing. The CE confirmed that this would be taken into consideration and would come back with some suggestions.

As regards biodiversity a member suggested that it should be made mandatory to have to apply for planning permission to install plastic grass due to the serious environmental impacts the substance had with run off and microplastics. The CE added that in a similar vein, takeaway BBQs were a serious fire and safety risk, and these issues may seem small but should be addressed.

A member commented that whilst considerable time was spent on climate change and carbon reduction, and even if 2050 targets were reached, sea level rises were still going to be an issue. There should be more discussion on adaptation, such as floating accommodation, and a workshop opportunity to discuss adaptation to future changes - alongside the carbon reduction problem. The CE agreed that adaptation was indeed very important, and fitted under the heading of BFI.

In conclusion, the CE thanked the members for their comments which would all be taken on board by the management team, and an updated draft set of SPs would be presented at a future meeting, together with actions and timelines to work by.

The report was noted.

13. Issues and Options

This item was deferred, as explained by the Chair during his announcements.

14. Consultation on the design guide

The Historic Environment Manager (HEM) introduced the report, seeking approval for the commencement of the consultation of the draft version of the Design Guide. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2021) required all local planning authorities to prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide (2021) and National Model Design Code (2021).

At its meeting on 24 June the Planning Committee resolved unanimously to approve consultation on the Draft Design Guide.

Consultation was originally planned for August, but due to the consultation on the Local Plan being deferred this would take place in October as they were being run concurrently.

The HEM confirmed that dates and times of the drop-in sessions would be shared with members.

The HEM confirmed that the design guide would include the information that all new developments and alterations to existing buildings should be as sustainable as possible, and should help to enhance biodiversity. The inclusion of sustainability standards such as energy efficiency and carbon footprint would be a key part of the document.

Matthew Bradbury proposed, seconded by Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro, and

It was resolved unanimously to approve public consultation for the draft Broads Authority Design Guide.

15. Lound area Neighbourhood Plan adoption and Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plan adoption

The Planning Policy Officer introduced the report which proposed the adoption of the Lound area Neighbourhood Plan and Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plan.

Leslie Mogford proposed, seconded by Tim Jickells, and

It was resolved unanimously to adopt the Lound with Ashby, Herringfleet and Somerleyton, and the Fleggburgh Neighbourhood Plans.

16. East Suffolk Council Affordable Housing SPD - endorsement

The Planning Policy Officer introduced the report on the endorsement of the East Suffolk Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

Harry Blathwayt proposed, seconded by Gail Harris, and

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the East Suffolk Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

17. Appointment of members to committees and other bodies

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer on the proposals for member appointments to committees and other bodies for the year 2022/23, following expressions of interest by members and a review by the Chairs' Group.

A member asked about the possibility of having at least one member of the Authority as a member of Whitlingham Charitable Trust (WCT). The Vice Chair (VC) advised that the Charity Commission dictated that a trustee of WCT, or of any other charity, must act in the best interests of that charity at that meeting, and that they were not allowed to represent the views of another organisation. The VC and CE would be meeting with the new Chair of WCT next week. A member asked if it would be useful to have that conversation first before making agreements about the appointments. The VC commented that there was flexibility in the proposed arrangement to satisfy the governance elements of WCT, and of the Authority's own governance.

As the Authority was no longer operationally connected with WCT, a member asked why the Authority still wanted to be involved. The CE commented that the park was an important public facility on the edge of Norwich within part of the Authority's executive boundary, and currently the only trustees were appointed entirely by the Colman family. As a public body the Authority needed to ensure that users, and all those with an interest in the park, also had representation as trustees. Therefore, it was being suggested that the Authority adopt the same process as for the Broads Local Access Forum and the Navigation Committee: to have an open process and select people interested in the management and governance of the Trust in

the best interests of the public. The CE confirmed that having listened to the debate, this was very much a starting position for the Authority to discuss with the new WCT Chair, and to then discuss with Authority members how it should be taken forward.

The Chair suggested that Members approve the recommendations but that there may be modifications to make after the meeting between VC and WCT Chair had taken place. A member asked if it was necessary first to make a slight amendment to table 2, to recognise that there was some flexibility needed. In response, the VC suggested that the phrase “to be confirmed” is added to the WCT section in table 2.

There was further discussion on the involvement with South Norfolk Council, and the suggestion that this would be mentioned in the discussions with the WCT Chair.

In terms of the recommendation for appointments to the WCT, members were in support of the suggestion that the CE and VC discuss alternative proposals with the new WCT Chair and report to a future meeting of the Authority.

Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro proposed, seconded by Andrée Gee, and

It was resolved unanimously to confirm the Broads Authority member appointments for the 2022/23 year (until the Annual Meeting on 28 July 2023) as set out in Appendix 2 to these Minutes to:

- i) the Audit and Risk Committee; Navigation Committee, Planning Committee; Hearings Committee and Broads Local Access Forum (table 1) and outside bodies (table 2) and**
- ii) receive a report at a future meeting on the proposed arrangements for appointing Trustees to the Whitlingham Charitable Trust.**

18. Amendment to Scheme of Delegation to include enforcement matters

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer (SGO) on a proposed amendment to the Scheme of Powers delegated to the Chief Executive and other authorised officers to clarify the position regarding the handling of planning enforcement matters which had previously been reported at the 13 May meeting. The SGO drew members’ attention to paragraph 3.9, which stated that the Planning Committee of 24 June unanimously supported the proposals subject to the insertion of the word “material” so that the wording would read “.... is involved in a material breach of planning control”.

Fran Whymark proposed, seconded by Leslie Mogford and

It was resolved by 15 votes for (one member having left the room during this item) to adopt the proposed changes to the planning section of the “Scheme of powers delegated to the Chief Executive and other authorised officers”.

19. Whistleblowing Policy

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer (SGO) on the proposed adoption of a Whistleblowing Policy for Members. The SGO advised that, at its meeting on 26 July, the Audit and Risk Committee meeting had recommended the policy for adoption with one small amendment: section 9 - external contacts - a reference should be made to “suspected breaches of the law” and that the contact details for Norfolk Constabulary should be added. Members supported this inclusion.

Matthew Bradbury proposed, seconded by Tim Jickells, and

It was resolved unanimously to adopt the Whistleblowing Policy for Members.

20. Broads Local Access Forum annual report 2021/22

Members received the report of the Waterways and Recreation Officer on the Broads Local Access Forum Annual Report for 2021/22.

A member noted that his name was missing from the list of representatives on the Forum and the CE confirmed that this would be corrected.

The report was noted.

21. Minutes to be received

Members received the minutes of the following meetings:

Audit and Risk Committee - 8 February 2022

Navigation Committee - 14 April 2022

Planning Committee - 29 April 2022

Planning Committee - 27 May 2022

Planning Committee - 24 June 2022

A member referred to the Heritage Asset Review Group (HARG) visit to the Museum of the Broads in Stalham on 9 September which was open to all members, and encouraged them to attend.

22. Other items of business

There were no other items of business.

23. Formal questions

There were no formal questions of which notice had been given.

24. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Friday 23 September 2022 at 10.00am, venue to be confirmed.

The meeting ended at 11:37

Signed by

Chairman

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests: Broads Authority, 29 July 2022

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest
Fran Whymark	12	A member of Broadland Futures Initiative – other registerable interest
Andree Gee	15 and 16	East Suffolk Council – other registerable interest

Appendix 2 – Appointments to Committees and other bodies

Table 1: Committee appointments

Committee	Members
<p>Audit and Risk Committee At least 6 BA members, to include Chairs of BA and Navigation Committee</p>	<p>Chair of Broads Authority (Bill Dickson) Chair of Navigation Committee (Nicky Talbot) Matthew Bradbury Gail Harris Paul Hayden Tristram Hilborn Michael Scott Matthew Shardlow Fran Whymark</p>
<p>Navigation Committee 5 BA members and 8 co-opted members</p>	<p>BA members Harry Blathwayt Stephen Bolt Leslie Mogford Greg Munford Michael Scott</p> <p>Co-opted members Vacancy Linda Aspland Mike Barnes Andy Hamilton Simon Sparrow Nicky Talbot Paul Thomas Alan Thomson</p>

Committee	Members
Planning Committee At least 11 BA members	Harry Blathwayt Stephen Bolt Nigel Brennan Bill Dickson Andrée Gee Tony Grayling Gail Harris Tim Jickells James Knight Leslie Mogford Vic Thomson Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro Fran Whymark
Broads Local Access Forum 2 BA members	Harry Blathwayt Michael Scott
Hearings Committee (Chair of Audit and Risk Committee plus pool of 6 BA members)	Chair of Audit & Risk Committee Nigel Brennan Bill Dickson Gail Harris Matthew Shardlow Nicky Talbot Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro

Working groups

All Broads Authority members are invited to join the **Heritage Asset Review Group**

Table 2: Outside bodies

Outside body	Appointments
Broadland Futures Initiative Elected Members Forum	Matthew Bradbury Matthew Shardlow (reserve)
How Hill Trust	Tim Jickells
Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust	Nigel Brennan Paul Hayden
Whitlingham Charitable Trust	To be confirmed
Broads Tourism	Paul Hayden
Upper Thurne Working Group	Harry Blathwayt Stephen Bolt (reserve)

Other appointments

Other appointments	Appointments
Lead member for safety	Chair of Navigation Committee (Nicky Talbot)
Greater Norwich Development Partnership	Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee
Norfolk Duty to Cooperate Member Forum	Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee
Norfolk Strategic Framework	Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee