

Public Question Time

Question submitted by Mr Peter Riches

There is evidence of significant change in the vegetation of some Broadland Fens and in particular some increase in acidity and possible drying out.

Has the Broads Authority commissioned or done any detailed research into the relationship between change in the Broadland fens and the abstraction of water for agriculture and for the public water supply? In addition has any research been undertaken into the relationship between reduced summer river flows in the Broads basin and abstraction for agriculture and the public water supply in the middle and upper reaches of the rivers which flow into the Broads?

Statement submitted by Mr Bryan Read Chairman of the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust

The Trust was not consulted about the proposal for tolls for 2014 put forward by NSBA and BHBF but we have since had the opportunity to study them. The effect of adopting Option 1 in the papers for the Navigation Committee would mean a significant increase above the 2.8% overall for most of our fleet. While we accept that there may be a case for adjustments which will mean some are losers, We regard it as dangerous to depart from a flat rate straight line increase by introducing as steep increase for a selected size of craft, instead of a straight line increase and we do not consider that a case has been made to adopt this strategy.

We understand that the object of the proposal was to reduce the tolls for larger vessels at the expense of the smaller craft. However, we think that the level of tolls for the larger vessels is justified by the increased wear and tear they cause on the infrastructure and in particular for hire boats, the additional space that they take up at moorings.

In addition we feel that the Authority should not discourage smaller craft by imposing an exceptional increase for one group of craft based on an arbitrary size category.

Having studied the other options, we would support Option 3 which retains the straight line relationship but does give some relief for the larger hire craft.