

Broads Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2013

Present:

Prof Richard Card (Chairman)

Mr Andrew Alston	Mr Mike Flett	Dr Philip Pearson
Dr Keith Bacon	Dr Martin George	Mr Simon Partridge
Mr Ashley Cato	Mr Brian Holt	Mr Bryan Read
Mr Martyn Davey	Mr Mike Hoyland	Mr Richard Starling
Mr Colin Dye	Mr Peter Jermy	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Mike Evans	Mr John Lurkins	

In Attendance:

Ms H Ayers - Administrative Officer
Ms N Beal - Planning Policy Officer
Mr S Hooton - Head of Strategy and Projects
Ms A Kelly – Senior Ecologist
Ms A Long - Director of Planning and Resources
Mr J Organ - Head of Governance and Executive Assistant
Mr N Sanderson – Education Officer
Mr R Wilson - Waterways and Recreation Officer

1/1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Henry Cator, Dr John Packman, Mr John Hiskett, Mr Peter Medhurst, Mr Brian Barker, Mr Anthony Wright and Mr Tony Gibbons.

1/2 Chairman's Announcements:

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced newly appointed members: namely Ashley Cato (Representing Canoeing and Rowing within the Boating/Water Based Recreational Interest Group) who replaced Mike Mansfield and Jeff Toser, and Pete Waters (Representing the Commercial Interest Group) who replaced Michael Barnes. In addition, the Chairman advised that a number of new substitutes had been identified within the Broads Forum Review of Membership as detailed in Item No 6 and welcomed Mike Hoyland to his first meeting as the substitute for Tony Gibbons (member of the Broads Angling Strategy Group).

The Chairman advised members that since the last Forum, two Broads Authority meetings had taken place. The Chairman reported that at the meeting on the 10 May new Secretary of State members, Peter Warner and Kelvin Allen, were welcomed. In addition, following local elections, some individuals ceased to be members and all had since been replaced. Members

were also asked to note the significant contribution that Broadland District Council appointed former member, Alan Mallett, had made to the Authority during his 13 years' service. Other matters covered by this meeting were the future strategy for dredging where the Authority approved for the continuation of the current target output of 50,000 m³ per annum. In terms of swing bridges, the Authority agreed that Reedham should not be fixed but Somerleyton could be providing its height over the new cut matched Reedham's.

The 12 July meeting covered a wide range of issues, including: the continuation of Stephen Johnson's appointment as Chairman and the new appointment of Jacquie Burgess as Vice-Chair. Another item was the proposed future developments at How Hill and Whitlingham visitor centres whereupon the Authority agreed to use reserves to fund up to feasibility stage. The Whitlingham proposal was favoured over How Hill, which was put on-hold largely due to the location of the proposed development. A decision was taken for the promotion and marketing post (established in July 2012) to be fully funded by National Park grant for the coming year rather than part funded from navigation expenditure. The annual report of the Broads Local Access Forum report was also received.

Forum members were asked to note that as part of Item 13, Martin George would be raising his concerns over the conversion of grass marsh to arable land and its effects on the ecology and landscape as a result of the cessation of ESA Schemes.

1/3 Public Question Time

No questions had been received by the public.

1/4 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25 April 2013 (herewith)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following changes:

- **Page 1:** The minutes had recorded that the Director of Planning and Resources attended the last meeting when she had not.
- **Page 5: Paragraph 4, last sentence.** *“PP reminded members that the EU Water Framework Directive had set targets to improve water quality which PP and Simon Hooton were consulting with Anglian Water on to explore opportunities on how they could allocate a greater proportion of their budget to conservation matters.”*

Should read;

“PP reminded members that the EU Water Framework Directive had set targets to improve water quality which PP and Simon Hooton were consulting with Anglian Water on to explore opportunities on how they

could allocate a greater proportion of their **resources** to conservation matters.”

- **Page 8: Paragraph 3, first sentence.** “*Richard Starling (RS) commented that pike stocks had seen a decline in the Upper Thurne over the last 5 years and that licence purchases were down 25%2*

Should read;

“Richard Starling (RS) commented that pike stocks had seen a decline in the Upper Thurne over the last 5 years and that **permit** purchases were down 25%.”

- **Page 9:** The minutes depicted the Chief Executive’s Report as the final bullet point with the Broads Angling Strategy Consultation (Item No. 10), when in fact it was an Item (No. 11) in its own right.
- **Page 10: Last but one bullet point.** “EA/NE Presentation on Water Quality on Barton Broad”.

Should read;

“EA/NE Presentation on Water Quality on Barton Broad and Connecting Dykes.”

1/5 Summary of Progress/Actions/Response Taken following Discussions at Previous Meetings

A report was received that provided members with a summary of progress on matters previously discussed by the Forum.

The Forum was asked to note that the matter concerning high speed boat trials outside Strumpshaw Fen (initially discussed by the Forum in February) was represented to the Authority through a petition on 12 July. The Authority had drawn-up a plan for how this would be addressed and was likely to come back to the Forum for consideration in May 2014. Philip Pearson (PP) advised that he had made attempts to arrange a meeting with the Brundall yards which had proven difficult to arrange as key invitees were not available at the same time.

John Organ (JWO), Head of Governance and Executive Assistant, advised that the Broads Climate Change Adaption Panel engagement project’s first electronic newsletter would be circulated to members in the near future.

On the matter of Grant Aid for Anti-Fouling Paints, Martin George (MG) welcomed research on sediments, however advised that when he originally raised this matter, he was referring to a need to gain a better understanding of the paint available for purchase today. MG’s view was that putting this paint on boats remains unnecessary and requested the Authority presents a paper

on this at a future Forum with an update on what the Authority has done to reduce / eliminate the use of anti-fouling paint on all craft in view of the sensitivity of the Broads' environment. MG stressed that alternative solutions existed to address fouling. Further, MG propounded that if the Authority can agree with the relevant boating interests groups (stated as predominantly private boat owners) that something else can be used, then progress will have been made. Andrew Alston (AA) requested that some guidelines on usage of this paint are needed.

Simon Hooton (SH) confirmed that research is necessary to better understand this matter which, over recent years, had not been subject to a great deal of enquiry.

The Chairman requested the discussion resumed following receipt of a report in due course.

1/6 Broads Forum Review of Membership

Members received a report which summarised the current position regarding the review of the Broads Forum membership. JWO advised that the Forum now had 24 appointed members. Since the writing of the report additional members had been re-appointed to their previous Interest Groups, including Brian Holt, Peter Medhurst, Keith Bacon and Anthony Wright. Ashley Cato was newly appointed to the Boating/Water Based Recreational Interest Group which also had a new substitute of Paul Gurbutt. The Commercial Interest Group had also appointed a new member, Pete Waters.

Members noted that there were still some Interest Groups which needed to confirm their member representatives. The Chairman encouraged these Interest Groups to complete this tasking as soon as possible to avoid this matter having to be determined by the Chairman in conjunction with the Chief Executive and Chairman of the Authority

Mike Hoyland (MH) of the Broads Angling Strategy Group advised that his organisation was likely to be the sole organisation for this Interest Group and therefore only one member was likely to be appointed.

Some of the members' responses were unclear as to whether they endorsed the use of their contact details to be published on the Authority's website. Members would therefore be asked to complete a consent form for the Authority to use members' contact details. Members were advised that they could opt out so that the website could advise users that such members could be contacted on a 'care of the Authority' basis.

The review of membership also identified that members would occasionally like substitutes to attend Forums when the primary member was also present. The views of those present on this matter were sought.

Martin George (MG) put in a plea that those present do not become too doctrinaire when a substitute attends with the main member. MG stated that if

a substitute was prepared to attend and does, then it would be beneficial for the Chairman to allow that substitute to speak given that such members can be very knowledgeable in their field. For example, MG explained that the Forum substitute for the Broads Society is also the Chairman of the Society and is a hire boat industry expert. Keith Bacon (KB) added that it would be valuable for substitutes to attend with the primary member to observe once or twice could be a valuable learning experience in readiness for taking the primary role if / when called upon.

Andrew Alston (AA) questioned whether the British Association for Shooting and Conservation should be included in the Wildlife and Conservation Interest Group or the Fishing/Angling Interest Group, rather than the Farming/Landowning and Drainage Interest Group.

KB also represented that each National Park Authority had a Society associated with it and the Broads Society was the relevant body for the Broads Authority and that it would be more appropriate to have this included under a more applicable title.

The Chairman reminded members that the Broads Forum Terms of Reference would be reviewed in 9 months when it would be best to incorporate such changes.

In summary members agreed with the report that substitutes could attend Forums with the main member to gain experience of how the Forum meeting was conducted, provide expert/specialist viewpoints with the permission of the Chairman, and could be seated at the table subject to space.

1/7 Update on Electric Boating

Members were provided with a report giving an overview of electric boating in the Broads. It especially considered how it relates to the Broads Plan and how the Authority encourages the use of electric boating through its toll structure and the provision of facilities.

Russell Wilson (RW), Waterways and Recreation Officer, explained to members that the Broads Plan sets out three key priorities for the Authority and its partners including the encouragement of the sustainable use and enjoyment of the Broads. The Plan also recognised the need for low carbon initiatives to be promoted in the Broads which the Authority delivered through its Integrated Access and Broads Sustainable Tourism Strategies. Businesses were encouraged to improve their environmental performance through entry to schemes such as the Green Tourism Business Scheme and the Green Boat Mark Scheme.

The Authority considered encouraging and supporting electric boating in the Broads as important as such boats produced less pollution, were quiet, and had finer hulls (which lessens wash and hence reduces bank erosion and habitat damage). This was supported by the Authority which offered 30% discounts on the annual toll for electric craft. The tolls system was also

structured to encourage small craft to use the Broads river system. Members were told of the progress of the Green Boat and Tourism Show and the new Green Boat Mark Scheme which encouraged greener boating.

In order for electric boaters to use and enjoy the Broads the Authority developed a ten year strategy in 2006 on the provision of charging points at BA moorings. It was reported that there were currently 28 charging units and some of the most recently installed were funded through the EU Interreg STEP Project. The Authority would continue to identify sites for new provision determined by surveys and customer feedback. A number of private units were also located throughout the system.

The cost per installation ranges from approximately £3,000 to £10,000 and all units allow for 16 amp and 24 amp charging which meant they can be used for domestic power by hire craft and for battery charging by electric powered boats. It was hoped that further advances in battery technology would provide hirers with the same level of freedom they currently enjoyed with diesel craft. Colin Dye (CD) expressed the view that once more commercial vehicles were electrically powered, then such technologies could be adapted for boating - which is small-scale in comparison.

AA stated that the Swiss appear to have made more technological advances than the UK in terms of electric boating and enquired why these technologies weren't being applied here. RW advised that battery life is fairly finite and variables (such as tidal flows) that apply on the Broads (compared to enclosed Swiss lakes) can impact on manoeuvrability and safety. AA asked whether the Authority could set targets to which RW explained that we can have ambitions but targets have not been set: there first needs to be an appetite for this between the Authority and hire boat industry. Mike Evans (ME) stated that he was yet to see any scientific evidence that electric boating leads to lower carbon emissions. Simon Hooton (SH), Head of Strategy and Projects, advised that the move to electric boating was in preparation for the future renewable means of power generation. Currently electricity is largely sourced from nuclear or fossil sources. SH went on to expand that part of the benefits are around the 'pleasantness' of these quieter craft and part of the goal is to stop that engine from running. ME accepted that these boats were more pleasant with lower washes but raised a concern that approximately 3% of the Broads fleet have a battery as their main propulsion source at a cost £20k per unit. The implication was that the cost could be a factor in the low percentage of uptake. ME also advised those present of an incident in a French marina where a boat exploded due to a build-up of hydrogen from the battery compartment – clearly safety was a factor for consideration. ME enquired where funding for the power points would be sourced outside of the STEP allocation and this would need to be looked into.

Michael Flett (MF) suggested if the Authority is considering putting money into charging points that a paper is presented to the Forum on battery-life. Another member stated that they had not seen anyone using the points for battery charging, instead just for auxiliary charging. Barbara Greasley (BG) advised that hirers of their electric craft come back to their yard to charge as are very

often unable to get on a public point. Succinctly, Peter Jermy (PJ) advised that points are being used for 'e-hook-up' rather than e-boating.

In summary the Chairman acknowledged that this was an interesting topic and what was required was an improvement in technology in terms of the power of electric motors and the interval between the need for battery charging, both particularly important in terms of Broads tidal areas if this type of boating was to take-off. The Chairman noted the concerns raised over safety and that there was some consensus amongst members that the provision of additional charging points was not a priority at present for electric boating but was in terms of hook-up facilities. KB stated that he was looking forward to another report with details around these points.

1/8 Update on:

- 1. Broads Sites Specifics Policies Development Plan Document**
- 2. The Greater Norwich Development Partnership Joint Core Strategy**

The Forum was presented with a report to update members on the Broads sites Specifics Policies Development Plan Document. This document is a formal part of the Authority's Planning Policy Framework and will be used to inform and guide the preparation of applications and form the basis of decisions by the Broads Authority. Such sites are allocated in different areas of the Broads and for different uses.

The Forum was advised that the DPD had already completed several stages of public consultation and the next stage being to submit it to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination if the Local Planning Authority (LPA) considered it to be sound. It was originally intended to be submitted in February 2013 but was delayed due to ongoing enforcement issues with Thorpe Island where the Inspector's appeal decision (issued in June 2012) had the effect of varying the enforcement notice to grant planning permission to allow for the mooring of 12 boats. This was challenged by the appellant and a High Court hearing date in June of 2013 was set. The outcome of which being that the Secretary of State conceded the Inspector's appeal decision was flawed and should not stand and was thus quashed. This process would take some weeks, after which the Planning Inspectorate could reconsider and a fresh decision made, which would probably be towards the end of 2013. Consequently the decision has been made (by Planning Committee and Full Authority) to remove the policy referring to Thorpe Island (TSA2) from the Sites Specifics DPD and save the 1997 Local Plan version. As such, this change is a 'main modification' and the DPD is currently open for consultation (due to end 13 September 2013).

Richard Starling (RS), declaring an interest as a member of Somerton Parish Council, raised a concern that a freeze had been put on plans submitted for a residential development at West Somerton, which had caused the landowner enormous problems.

RC summarised that there was some concern amongst members over the time being taken to finalise the DPD and encouraged dialogue between all interested parties to keep this progressing. AL advised that whilst the current

situation was not ideal that there was very little alternative given the regulatory nature of the plan making system.

As part of this agenda item, the members also received an update on the Joint Core Strategy (JCS). This JCS had been prepared by the three councils of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, working together with Norfolk County Council as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP).

The JCS sets out the long-term vision and objectives for the area which includes strategic policies for steering and shaping development. It also identifies outline locations for housing, employment growth, changes to transport infrastructure and supporting community facilities. It also defines areas where development should be limited.

A legal challenge to the adoption of the JCS was received from Stephen Heard, Chairman of the Stop Norwich Urbanisation. Mr Justice Ouseley issued the final order following his ruling in the High Court on February 24, 2012. He found that the elements of the Strategy concerning the North East Growth Triangle (NEGT) should be remitted, thus requiring a review of some text of the JCS as well as a review of the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal. The recent public hearings, held on 21 and 22 May, resulted in the Inspector accepting the Councils' request for an adjournment to be reconvened on 24 July 2013.

Natalie Beal (NB), Planning Officer, attended most of the July hearing days following the adjournment of the May hearings. The main issues discussed were as follows:

Carbon emissions – the Green Party argued that the GNDP should have undertaken more robust carbon footprint modelling to ascertain the carbon footprint of vehicles associated with the proposals. In addition, a landowner in Wymondham argued that more dwellings should be allocated in Wymondham, rather than all 10,000 allocated in the north east Growth Triangle. The methodology and results of the 5 year land supply statement produced by the GNDP was discussed at length; the main issues were what area the statement should cover.

Andrea Long (AL) advised members that she would provide an update at the next Broads Authority meeting on 20 September.

1/9 Water Quality Across the Broads and Habitats Regulations Assessment

As requested by the Forum, the Environment Agency's Ian Pearson (Environment Planning Specialist (RSA)) and Rory Sanderson (Catchment Delivery Manager – Norfolk), supported by Chris Bielby (SSSI Lead Adviser) of Natural England provided presentations regarding Water Quality Across the Broads and the Habitats Regulations Assessment.

Andrea Kelly (AK) advised that this agenda item was being presented as a result of members' concerns around Catfield Fen, specifically the need for the

correct water level and flush and flow of water to keep it healthy. AK informed members that this issue was complex and a fuller understanding of the bigger overarching issues was important.

IP presented a series of slides that related to the Habitats Regulations and “Appropriate Assessment”. RSA (Restoring Sustainable Abstraction) forms part of the assessment and was a programme (which embraced a number of separate projects) of work to investigate the impacts of abstraction on the local environments triggered by the needs of the European Habitats Directive. If, after exploring a range of factors during the review process, it cannot be shown that there would be ‘no adverse effect’ : 1) changes must be made to permission(s) to ensure compliance with the environmental objectives; 2) those changes must be fair and reasonable; and 3) the changes must be the *least* onerous (or cause least harm) to those affected. Each licence assessed had to be either; 1. affirmed; 2. modified; or 3. revoked. IP was able to advise that the public water supply makes up the vast amount of abstraction in the Broads area.

MG, enquired what would be considered as ‘over-riding public interest’ as he was anxious about the housing shortage and government plans to build approx. 40 thousand more properties in the catchment area. IP confirmed that decisions on matters such as these were not for the EA and would be passed to the Secretary of State for the Environment.

RS (EA) went on to describe his role to implement water quality on the Broads to meet Water Framework Directive stipulations. RS provided members with an overview of what the EA monitored and included ecological, morphological, hydrological and water chemistry. Some challenges, not covered by WFD directly, were of local interest and needed particular solutions e.g. salinity & ochre, sedimentation, prymnesium, and septic tank treatment. RS advised that a key approach to making improvements in this area was the catchment approach.

He stated that ecology was the best indicator of overall health status. The analysis is primarily around nutrient composition and levels and explained that Phosphorus (which had seen a significant drop as an effect of working with water companies) was one of the main reasons for failures across the country, together with ammonia and dissolved oxygen. He advised that the reasons for failure: (biggest to smallest) were:

1. Physical mods;
2. Pollution from rural areas;
3. Pollution from waste water;
4. Pollution from towns, cities and transport;
5. Changes to the natural flow and levels of water;
6. The effects of non-native species.

RS explained that two members of the BRSCA had suffered a 50% loss in yield on Catfield Fen since the issues developed and another has already taken work further afield in Cambridge as a result. He asked whether the

sedge cutters should give up on this area. He suggested the cause was water entering the Fen was unable to freely drain out, which resulted in stagnation. RS pressed for the dykes to be cleaned out and for the area to function as a flood plain, where water freely moves on and off. RS (EA) advised that, generally, trying to connect to the flood plain was correct. He added that he could not comment on the specific area. He went on to summarise that this example showed that there were a number of interested parties with different interests, some being statutory, others personal – which were difficult to balance but did require more focus and site-based discussion.

RS stated that he was confident the dykes would be cleared in the autumn. However, he added, he was worried at the time it was taking to gain certainty; if this matter persisted for another 2-3 years, certain areas would die. KB declared an interest as Chairman of the Trustees of Catfield United Charities which owned the site of the drain. He stated that the Trustees supported the clearance of the dyke. RS was keen for a decision or progress at the current meeting but the Chairman advised that it was not the Forum's function to make decisions on such matters. It was recognised that the consenting for management lay with Natural England and CB agreed to work further on the matter outside of the meeting. RS added that the matter was not confined to Catfield Fen and hoped similar issues could be mapped so progress could be made elsewhere as well.

AK, supported by several members, expressed the view that this matter needed the site managers to discuss and understand this very detailed and complex matter on a site specific basis.

The Chairman summarised the outcome by stating that there were concerns raised amongst those present as to the time taken to reach a conclusion under the assessment process and therefore the Forum encouraged the Authority, relevant organisations and interested parties to discuss how to improve the situation.

1/10 Educational Strategy 2012-2016 Progress Report

Members were provided with an update on the progress of the Education Strategy for 2012-2016. Nick Sanderson (NS), Education Officer, gave an outline of the five year strategy which provides a framework and action plan for cross-cutting educational activity related to all three purposes of the Broads Authority and to deliver the Broads Plan, in particular objective PE3 to “enable a wider range of people, particularly those from hard to reach groups, to understand experience and actively benefit from the resource of the Broads”.

NS advised that this post was relatively new and enabled cohesion and prioritisation in the delivery of the strategy; vital given the scale of demand against limited funding. NS explained that the focus was on promoting the best use of resources, creating approaches and activities that build on the uniqueness and special qualities of the Broads. Further, the strategy aimed to

provide quality measurable outcomes whilst raising the profile of the Broads as a national treasure and promote inclusivity and sustainability.

The Education Officer outlined the 5 key objectives of the strategy and provided members with an Action Plan which detailed progress to June 2013 on each measure.

The Chairman commented that the focus seemed to be on working with Norfolk schools and institutions above those in Suffolk. NS replied that his partnerships were inclusive of Norfolk and Suffolk as long as each institution was within 5km of the Broads. Another member advised that 90% of children at the deprived St. John's RA VC Infant School had not been out on the water of the Broads and requested that the delivery of the strategy was more inclusive. RC stressed how vital it was to educate Broads' villagers. BR commended NS on doing a tremendous job, but stated there seemed no mention in the report of getting children on the water, sailing etc. NS assured those present that all of the Broads discovery days included some form of boat trip and was reflected in the curriculum which included the attainment of RYA qualifications.

Members and the Education Officer agreed that lack of money (especially in terms of transportation rather than admission charges) appeared to prevent many families and school parties from making the most of the Broads and NS advised that the Authority was looking into this matter and was able to report that the County Trust can potentially provide some funding for such groups.

BG stated that she was grateful for the education material that the Authority has provided to her business and that she offered heavily subsidised services to get children out on the Broads.

1/11 Chief Executive's Report

Members received a report which detailed the recent activities of the Broads Authority and included an update on dredging, swing bridges, Breydon water ski zone designation, progress on placemaking ideas, valuing England's National Parks, and the Love Your Nation Parks' campaign.

JWO brought members' attention to the swing bridges which despite the recent hot weather conditions, had operated effectively.

1/12 Parish Issues

Local community members were requested to report any relevant parish issues for this standing item.

John Lurkins (JL) reported that residents' concerns had not been taken into account by BESL in respect of the proposed route that BESL heavy vehicles would take to complete bank strengthening engineering works in the Loddon and Chedgrave area. Residents were pressing for a circular route to be taken instead which would allow for passing places to be incorporated that would

leave a legacy to benefit road users once the works were completed. The Director of Planning & Resources was aware of this matter as Authority member Colin Gould (CG) had recently brought this to her attention.

MF advised members that the permissive path at St. Benet's remained to be determined which had been outstanding for a number of years. MF also raised a second point that had been shared at the Local Access Forum, where a number of parish paths had not been cleared of undergrowth by Norfolk County Council. He acknowledged that the Authority had been extremely helpful where they could and now requested whether the Authority could press for the County Council to maintain these paths as parishioners as yet had not received a response. MF hoped that the May elections would make them re-evaluate their priorities. KB added that as Chairman of the Local Access Forum, he was severely critical (as were several members of the Broads Forum) of Norfolk County Council for seemingly neglecting their statutory obligations. He explained that they made the upkeep of designated trails a higher priority and had neglected the needs of ordinary people and dog walkers. AA advised that if the path crossed a field, then it was the landowner's responsibility to maintain it, not the council's.

Charles Swan (CS) asked those present if they knew why the Burgh St. Peter (at Waveney River Centre) ferry was out of the water. No-one present appeared to know the reason for the vessel being seemingly out of operation but AL advised she would follow-up on this.

1/13 To note whether any items have been proposed as items of urgent business

In response to an email that MG had received on the 24 July from the Authority's Landscape Officer, Lesley Marsden (LM), MG raised a matter of urgent business. LM had advised MG that the owners of two blocks of grass marsh, one near Horsey and the other at Damgate (near Acle), had been minded to put their holdings under the plough, and asked MG's advice on what effects this would have on their ecological interest. MG also asked the Authority to be aware of the potential for peat close to the Acle site to oxidise. MG advised those present that this was a result of subsidies for grass marsh owners under the ESA scheme coming to an end. MG raised his concerns that if other landowners follow suit, the long-term consequences for the well-being of the Broads would be very serious, given that the conversion of grass marsh to arable had been shown to have a disastrous effect on some of the richest aquatic plant and animal communities found in the region, namely those found in grazing marsh dykes. MG enquired what measures the Authority employees were taking on this matter.

The Chairman advised that he would take the matter raised by MG to the full Broads Authority meeting.

The Authority's Senior Ecologist, AK, provided some further context to the matter by advising that over the last two years c.7-800 ESA schemes expired, covering 1,000km² in Norfolk. The total spend on these was in the region of

£42 million. Over this time many larger holdings have moved into HLS schemes, whilst smaller holdings were referred to ELS. Although uptake of ELS was relatively high, the actual area of land under conservation management options had reduced significantly (by 70-80%). This left land vulnerable to agricultural improvements. There is a further threat during the transitional period between the current and next RDPE funding. Added to this is the threat that the new CAP greening measures will include an obligation for farmers to maintain all permanent pasture at the 2014 level.

AK also advised that NE had received 4 EIA screening requests and the Authority had provided responses to 3. AK asked members to be aware that any change to the Water Level Management Plans implemented by the Internal Drainage Boards would be subject to Habitat Risk Assessments and so any significant drainage changes would be assessed where it was likely to have an effect on designated sites.

RS added that it was an option for Somerton PC to take the matter to the international body responsible for Ramsar as the Council considered that the changes afoot would damage an important wetland.

MG raised another matter than it would be beneficial to have a member gathering once a year. RB suggested something similar to the BA members' annual site visit.

1/14 Matters for Chairman to raise at next Broads Authority meeting

The Chairman confirmed he would raise the following items to the next Broads Authority meeting:

- Grass marsh threatened by end of the ESA Scheme
- Proposed introduction of Broads Forum member annual site visit

1/15 To note the date of the next meeting –Thursday 7 November, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich commencing at 2.00pm

1/16 Matters to be discussed at the next meeting

- BA canoe trails and intended consumers
- Progress Update on canoe launch platform downstream of Ellingham Lock (River Waveney)
- Fen Harvester Effectiveness