

Navigation Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017

Present:

Mrs N Talbot (Chairman)

Mr K Allen	Mr M Heron	Mr S Sparrow
Ms L Aspland	Mr J Knight	Mr M Whitaker
Sir Peter Dixon	Mr G Munford (1/1-1/10)	Mr B Wilkins

In Attendance:

Ms N Beal – Planning Policy Officer
Mr S Birtles – Head of Safety Management
Mrs L Burchnall – Head of Ranger Services
Mr A Clarke – Senior Waterways & Recreation Officer
Ms A Cornish – Planning Officer
Ms E Guds – Administrative Officer (Governance)
Mr D Harris – Solicitor & Monitoring Officer
Dr D Hoare – Head of Construction, Maintenance and Environment
Mr T Hunter – River Engineer
Ms E Krelle – Chief Financial Officer
Dr J Packman – Chief Executive
Ms S Stephenson – Environment & Design Supervisor

Also Present:

Prof J A Burgess - Chairman of the Authority
Lana Hemsall - Broads Authority Member

1/1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Matthew Bradbury and John Ash. The Chair said that comments received from John Ash would be fed into the discussions.

1/2 To note whether any items have been proposed as matters of urgent business/ Variation in order of items on the agenda

No items had been proposed as matters of urgent business.

1/3 To receive Declarations of Interest

Members expressed their declarations of interest as set out in Appendix 1 of these minutes.

The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised that those Members who had declared a personal interest in the item on the policy on residential moorings in the draft Local Plan should leave the room before a discussion on this item took place.

One Member expressed his wish to make a general comment on residential moorings before this item was considered by the Committee. The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer suggested a brief adjournment before Agenda Item 1/11, Broads Local Plan, allowing him to consult with the Member about the nature of his request.

1/4 Public Question Time

No public questions were raised.

1/5 To receive and confirm the minutes of the Navigation Committee meeting held on 20 April 2017

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

1/6 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.

One Member commented that the signs at the Irstead Shoals must be competent as he had not received any negative comments.

When asked whether the Committee would receive an update on the Staithes Report it was explained that once the feedback on the draft report had been received along with the maps, it would be published on the Authority's website. Professor Williamson had only been commissioned to give two presentations, one at the Broads Forum meeting in July 2016 and a second at the Broads Authority meeting in July 2017, to which Navigation Committee Members had been invited.

Members noted the report.

1/7 Progress in Implementing the Sediment Management Strategy

Members received a report and presentation on an analysis of recent hydrographic survey data and the draft dredging programme for 2018/19.

Comparisons with previous reports on estimated sediment volumes showed some significant differences, in particularly for the rivers Yare and Waveney. Officers had investigated this and reported that the increase was largely due to improvements made to survey method, and therefore data accuracy since 2011, rather than physical changes in the waterways. Where repeated surveys had been taken since 2011, for example the River Bure, changes in sediment volume was better understood with clear reductions where dredging had been undertaken.

The Committee applauded the work which had been achieved and recognised that the approach to sediment management was much improved. The Chair highlighted how the development of more accurate recording had improved the decision making process on which areas to target.

A Member commented he would like to see landowners take more responsibility for the run off of sediment from their fields into the waterways.

A concern was raised that based on the recent evidence the average volume of 25,000 cubic metres of sediment removed from the River Bure each year, half of the programmed target for the Broads as a whole, only just about maintained the status quo. Members also remarked that there was no dredging in the River Thurne or Yare this year and it was questioned whether Waxham Cut was a sensible priority for the proposed dredging programme 2018/19, as it was so little used.

There was a further concern that unless the target for sediment removal were increased or even doubled, the specifications might never be met. It was commented that the Authority had a duty to maintain the waterways, whatever funds required, even if this meant having to increase toll charges.

The Rivers Engineer stated that dredging in the Rivers Yare and Thurne were in the five year plan and, especially with CANAPE coming up, would be addressed in the coming years. It was further explained that Waxham Cut, was getting very shallow and needed to be dealt with urgently. He clarified that the River Bure would always be on the priority list because the compliance was low and the rate of siltation very high.

It was confirmed that, especially with CANAPE on the horizon, Hickling would be scheduled for dredging next year. It was also confirmed that the estimated sediment volumes were based on surveys of the navigation areas only and therefore Martham Broad and Duck Broad were not included in the figures.

The Head of CM&E commented as regards to the use of Waxham Cut, that from comments made and contact with Broads Control there was a demand for Waxham Cut to be dredged.

Members welcomed the report.

1/8 Construction, Maintenance and Environment Work Programme Progress Update

Members received a report which set out the progress made in the delivery of the 2017/18 Construction, Maintenance and Environment Section work programme from April 2017 to end July 2017. A summary of the year-end figures for dredging work during the 2016/17 year was also provided.

A presentation outlined the plans for Hickling Broad for the next 3-4 years. It was highlighted that waterplant management in Hickling was an ongoing process and plants were growing taller and spreading towards the marked navigation channels.

The Chair acknowledged that good progress had been made on the overall programme for 2016/17.

It was confirmed that work on the River Chet was still going ahead as planned and that tree work would be carried out ahead of the dredging.

A Member commented that the sailing conditions this year on Hickling Broad had been very difficult. He said that despite all the great work carried out by the Authority and Natural England, cut weed seemed to be drifting into the central area. Hirers were suffering as well and there were a number of instances when hired boats needed to be rescued.

The Head of Contructions, Maintenance and Environment confirmed that the cutting of the plants in the marked channels, including the approach to Catfield Dyke, had been carried out twice this year, once early August and once at the beginning of September.

It was enquired how it could be known whether Stoneworts either had survived the cuts or not. It was explained that ongoing monitoring would be undertaken over the course of next year in the areas that had been cut and untouched control areas. This monitoring aimed to provide the type and quality of evidence for evaluation supporting the Authority and Natural England to make an informed decision on the potential for any future larger scale management of Stoneworts on Hickling Broad.

Members noted the report.

1/9 Riverside Tree and Scrub Management

The Committee received a report and presentation outlining how management of riverside trees and scrub was required to maintain navigation safety and wind availability whilst retaining environmental features and interests. A five year plan, prioritising the location of riverside management had been produced, incorporating the permissions required, consultation and agreed methodology.

A Member queried why the navigation bodies had not been consulted on tree management. He believed that sailing conditions even after tree management remained dreadful and in many areas didn't reinstate the bygone landscape of open valleys with rivers on which all craft including trading wherries were propelled by sail. He further commented that there should be no tree growth on flood banks.

Members were informed that some habitats had not received management for some time. It was explained that the Authority had to work within its resources and therefore had to prioritise and go through a consultation process. The Senior Waterways and Recreation officer commented that the Norfolk Suffolk Boating Association and the British Hire Boat Federation had been consulted in the past on the annual tree clearance programme and that further details could be provided if necessary. It was also clarified that during flood defence works trees were cleared from the floodbank work corridor but not between the front face of the floodbank

and the river's edge where there was a wide road. Additionally specimen trees that are close to the floodbank are retained where appropriate.

Another Member commented that due to lack of tree management the River Ant would soon be impassable and it was impossible for wherries to sail certain parts of the River Bure. He believed that as a Navigation Committee they had a duty to maintain and enhance navigation.

Other Members expressed views which recognised the challenges of both meeting the needs of conservation and at the same time the needs of navigation. It was suggested that, as tree management was the landowners' responsibility, the Authority should put more pressure on Natural England, which owned a significant amount of the adjacent land, to manage encroachment on the navigation area that they are responsible for.

The Head of Construction, Maintenance and Environment explained that the strategy adopted dealt with safety issues and that the sustainable use of fen areas created tree corridors. Therefore it wasn't just a navigation issue but a wider cultural aspect of the use of the broads which created these conditions.

A Member said it would be useful to have the entire tree management plan including what was happening on the Yare and suggested that maybe wider priorities would need to be put forward to the Committee so Members could express their priorities. He further agreed to putting more pressure on landowners for acting on their responsibilities.

The Environment and Design Supervisor explained that the prioritisation process included a matrix scoring system making it as objective as possible to help with the programme of works.

It was agreed to include Scrub and Tree Management in the CM&E update report every six months.

Members noted the report.

1/10 River Wensum Strategy Consultation

Members were provided with a report and presentation detailing the draft River Wensum Strategy that was currently being consulted on and highlighted the main aspects of the strategy that relate to navigation and access to the River Wensum.

The Strategy was very well received and supported by the Members. Some comments were made however that the strategy lacked mention of the issues around Trowse Swing Bridge and believed this should be incorporated in the strategy. In particular, the strategy presented an opportunity of addressing the consequences of Network Rail's ambition of reducing journey times to London and the long-term possibility of the port of Norwich being unavailable to larger vessels.

A Member mentioned he supported the strategy's focus for organised angling competitions to take place after October. This would work well with the idea of having an Anglers Festival in the city during the winter months.

The Committee supported the proposals in the report, and stated a preference for filling the missing link on the riverside walk between Blackfriars' Bridge and Dukes Palace Bridge with a section of path on the north (true left) bank of the river as this would remove any need to encroach on river width at Blackfriars' Bridge.

The Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer confirmed he would feedback the comments of the Committee and their general support for the strategy and informed Members that they could also submit their individual comments directly to the consultation if they wished to do so.

Greg Munford left the meeting at 4 pm.

1/11 Broads Local Plan – Publication Version

Members received a report which introduced the Broads Local Plan Publication Version. This was the third consultation stage of the Local Plan production and included final policies for the stakeholders and public to consider. It was intended that the consultation would run from 4 October to 15 November 2017, covering six weeks.

Following a brief adjournment for the purpose of clarifying the situation about declaration of interest, the Solicitor and Monitoring Officer advised that those Members declaring interests in their business and residential moorings would be entitled to remain and participate providing their contribution was limited to discussion of general policy. The Solicitor and Monitoring Officer clarified that one of those Members would be entitled to put a question relating to what they considered to be an error on page 59 of the Residential Moorings Topic paper relating to policy DP25.

A member suggested that there was an error on page 59 in relation to Policy DP25 and specifically mentioned that none of the sites to be allocated were within or adjacent to a development boundary. The table should then go on to talk about the services and facilities that the sites have access to.

The Planning Policy Officer took on his comments and said she would make the amendment.

The Policy Planning Officer then addressed the Broads Local Plan itself. Although applauding the Local Plan, one Member commented he was disappointed about the lack of navigation mentioned within the objectives of the Local Plan and recommended there should be a specific criteria relating to navigation. The Policy Planning Officer indicated that she would pass on these comments to the Planning Committee.

Members noted the report.

1/12 Planning Application with Navigation Implications: Redevelopment of the existing Wayford Marina

The Committee had been made aware of a planning application which had been submitted in respect of the redevelopment of the Wayford Marina on the River Ant at Wayford Bridge. The scheme sought to improve the services and facilities provided at the marina, rationalise and improve the mooring opportunities and provide holiday accommodation at the southeastern end of the site.

When it was suggested that the site should have free visiting moorings for public use, the Planning Officer confirmed that the proposals provided three free moorings. The policy stated that a minimum of 10 percent free moorings was required, which meant there might be room to negotiate for more free moorings.

One Member suggested demasting moorings for public use, although it was queried by another Member whether this was necessary on this stretch of the river.

The Planning Officer said it was hard to confirm how many additional moorings would be provided as currently there were many triple and illegal moorings.

Members in general agreed with the planning permission but suggested to push for more moorings.

Members noted the report.

1/13 Annual Income and Expenditure: 2016/2017

Members received a report which set out a summary of the Authority's income and expenditure for the 2016/17 financial year, analysed between national park and navigation funds. Original and Latest Available Budget information was provided for comparison.

The Chief Financial Officer informed Members that the accounts had been audited and were approved by the Full Authority on the 28th of July. Members were reminded that the accounts had a faster close this year as a trial for next year, because next year they would need to be signed by the 31st of July. Members were reminded that it was very important to accurately complete their related party declarations which should tie back to their original declaration. It was stressed that next year the auditors would review this area in more detail.

Members noted the report.

1/14 Navigation Income and Expenditure: 1 April to 30 June 2017 Actual and 2017/18 Forecast Outturn

Members received a report which provided them with details of the actual navigation income and expenditure for the three month period to 30 June 2017, and gave them a forecast of the projected expenditure at the end of the financial year (31 March 2018)

A verbal update was provided on the income and expenditure up until the end of July. Hire and Private Craft Income continued to remain ahead of profile which had resulted in the forecast outturn increasing. However at this stage it did not include the purchase of Acle Bridge moorings.

Members noted the report.

1/15 Chief Executive's Report

This report summarised the current position in respect of a number of important projects and events, including decisions taken during the recent cycle of committee meetings.

Members received an update on the item Anti-Social Behaviour and were informed that the working group had arranged a meeting on the 4th October with the NSBA, the Hire Boat Federation, Broads Society and the Constabulary. Also the Chief Executive and the Head of Ranger Services had a productive meeting earlier that morning on the topic with the Inspector responsible for Broads Beat.

A Member mentioned that the Angling Trust had offered assistance to the Environment Agency following reports of anti-social behaviour at the angling platforms at Postwick. The Environment Agency had however declined the offer which the Member felt was disappointing. The Head of Ranger Services responded that Broads Beat had been supporting the Environment Agency with this issue. The Environment Agency planned to clear the sites at Postwick by cutting back vegetation making it more open.

Another Member mentioned that she had been approached because the sound of shots fired had been heard on the River Waveney next to the moorings. It was assumed was that this was in relation to shooting game or potshots. The Head of Ranger Services said she was unaware of this incident and would follow this up with Broads Beat.

A Member updated the Committee that the Broads Hire Boat Federation had now developed a Code of Practice which was signed by all Federation Members.

Members noted the report.

1/16 Current Issues

A Member informed the Committee of an incident on Hardley Dyke caused by unravelling matting and wanted it noted that this was a pressing issue, particularly in this location. The Chair said she would mention this at the next Boat Safety meeting.

Officers were thanked for their efforts in the successful purchase of the moorings at Acle Bridge. Members were informed that safety issues would be addressed first, i.e filling up of the pot holes. This would be followed by a survey of the main building.

1/17 Items for future discussion

The Chair informed the Members that the agenda for the next Committee meeting would include the consultation on tolls for 2018/19 and the transfer of Mutford Lock.

In regards to an incident of a toddler falling into the river Bure at the Great Yarmouth Yacht station, one Member suggested that a discussion was needed about of the Authority using its powers and making wearing a life jacket compulsory. The Chair responded that there would be an opportunity for this to be discussed at the Boat Safety Meeting.

1/18 To note the date of the next meeting

The Chair highlighted that the next meeting of the Committee had been brought forward one week and would be held on Thursday 19 October 2017 at Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich commencing at 2pm.

1/19 Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED

The Committee is asked to consider excluding the public 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 Paragraphs 1 and 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

Members of the Public left the meeting

Summary of Exempt Minutes

1/20 To receive and confirm the exempt minutes of the Navigation Committee meeting held on 20 April 2017 (herewith)

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting concluded at 4.51 pm.

Chair

Code of Conduct for Members

Declaration of Interests

Committee: Navigation Committee

Date of Meeting: 7 September 2017

Name Please Print	Agenda/ Minute No(s)	Nature of Interest (Please describe the nature of the interest)	Please tick here if the interest is a Prejudicial interest
Max Heron	6 - 11	Toll payer, landowner, Member British RC, NRC, Chair Whitlingham Boathouses	
Simon Sparrow	11	Toll Payer, hire boat operator, resident	
Michael Whitaker	11	Toll payer, Hire Boat Operator, Chair BHBF, resident	
Peter Dixon	9	Trees versus Sailing	
Kelvin Allen		Chair of BASG	
Greg Munford		Toll payer, non British Marine, Resident, Broads Tourism Director	
James Knight	11 in particular	Hire Boat Operator, Yacht Club Member, and Toll payer. Director of Waveney River Centre which was included in the assessment and evaluation of residential moorings for the Broads Local Plan.	
Brian Wilkins	9	Chair NSBA, all issues	
Nicky Talbot	12	Toll Payer, Member of NSBA and NBYC	
Linda Aspland		Hunter fleet, Toll payer, NBYC Committee, local resident	