

Public Question Time

Statement submitted by Mr Graham Trimmer

I am a toll payer and a committee member and past Skipper of The East Anglian Cruising Club as well as being a member of the Yare Valley Sailing Club and a personal member of the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association (NSBA). I sail an auxiliary Broads river cruiser with a block area of 21 sq. metres.

I wish to object to the proposals regarding the Tolls round for 2014-15 as presented by the BA Navigation Committee.

The effect of the proposal is to penalise small motorboats of an average size of 15ft long, which could increase their rate of decline on the Broads. These are low budget boats, which can enable families and beginners to boating to access the Broads, and many have not been launched during the difficult economic situation. The proposal will undo the work the Broads Authority has put in since 2008 to try to reduce the percentage these boats pay for tolls and thereby increase the numbers enjoying this activity – particularly the young.

Under the proposal 10 sq m boat will have a 10% hike in charges of £13.50 but a huge 44 sq. m boat will pay 18p more and even larger boats of 86 sq m will pay up to £14 less. This will put an 8% rise on an entry level boat such as a Wayfarer.

I am alarmed that the Authority may be under the impression that the NBSA has consulted with its membership. That is not the case as far as the two clubs with which I am associated neither am I aware has there been any such consultation with personal members, not all of whom will be members of affiliated clubs.

The claim of 'consultation' may refer to an informal presentation (in as much that the topic of 'tolls' was not announced as being on the agenda) at the annual Flag Officers 'get together' held at the Royal Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Club in March of this year. I understand that flag officers of just twenty member clubs of the fifty one which are actually affiliates attended!

I call upon the Broads authority to reject the proposals of its Navigation Committee on this occasion – instead applying an 'across the board' increase of no more than the RPI.