

## Navigation Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2018

### Present:

Mrs Nicky Talbot – Chairperson

Mr K Allen

Mr M Bradbury

Mr S Sparrow

Mr J Ash

Mr B Dickson

Mr M Whitaker

Ms L Aspland

Mr M Heron

Mr B Wilkins

### In Attendance:

Mr S Birtles – Head of Safety Management (item 9-10)

Mr A Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer (item 11)

Mr D Harris – Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Mr B Housden – Head of IT and Collector of Tolls (item 8)

Ms E Krelle – Chief Financial Officer (item 8)

Miss S Mullarney – Administrative Officer

Dr J Packman – Chief Executive

Mr R Rogers – Director of Operations

### 4/1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence received from Alan Goodchild and Greg Munford.

#### Tree Shears Demo

The Chair formally thanked the Chief Executive and Director of Operations for arranging the demonstration of the tree shears. She said it was a very useful exercise for members which showcased the fast and efficient equipment.

#### Recordings

The Chair announced that the meeting would be recorded and that the copyright remains with the Authority; however a copy of the recording could be requested.

### 4/2 To note whether any items have been proposed as matters of urgent business

No items were proposed as a matter of urgent business.

### 4/3 To receive Declarations of Interest

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

### 4/4 Public Question Time

No public questions were raised.

**4/5 To receive and confirm the minutes of the Navigation Committee meeting held on 6 September 2018**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 September were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the meeting.

**4/6 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.

**Staithe Report**

The Chief Executive updated members that the outstanding issues regarding the Staithe report had been resolved and it was hoped it would be published in the near future.

**Network Rail**

It was commented by the Chief Executive that Network Rail had shown that they will respond quickly to issues. Following the Swing Bridges workshop on 1 August 2018 it had since been confirmed that a separate business case had been commissioned for the refurbishment and maintenance of the bridges. This is due to be reported before 31 March 2019.

One member said that the Broads Authority's reporting on Facebook on the working status of the bridges was excellent.

**Barnes Brinkcraft**

Following a member question on the contents of the management plan for Barnes Brinkcraft, the Director of Operations said that a configuration of boats that could be stern on moored on the frontage of Barnes Brinkcraft had been agreed with Planners. He added that there were strict guidelines in place to prohibit narrowing of the navigation, a condition placed by the Authority's Planning Department. However, the Ranger team would be able to intervene, using existing byelaws, if it wasn't adhered to. The member asked that a review of the situation be provided to members next year.

Members noted the report.

**4/7 Chief Executive's Report and Current Issues**

**Acle Bridge**

The Chief Executive explained that the Broads Authority had considered the costings and business case for the Acle Bridge Visitor and Education Centre and that officers were asked to explore the potential options for a wider tourism project. This was being discussed with potential funders.

**National Parks Review**

The discussion points from the Broads Authority meeting were outlined in the report. The Chief Executive stressed the significance of the review and stated that it

was an opportunity to explore how to put the National Parks in a better position. He said it was important to make the review team aware of the special qualities of the Broads as well as the challenges including climate change and sea level rises. He explained that Defra had announced a call for evidence for the review. The Chief Executive suggested the NSBA, BHBF, angling groups, the Wherry Yacht Charter and others may want to be involved and said officers were available to discuss the information received regarding this; the closing date for evidence was 18 December.

One member commented on the once in a lifetime opportunity to contribute to the discussion. He mentioned the Broads Authority's discussion on the legislation for the future for the Authority to deliver the vision for the Broads, and in terms of the management of the riverbanks the member suggested shifting the balance onto the landowner.

Another member stated that typically net benefactors and asset holders were landowners, he referred to the presentation by Professor Kerry Turner on Natural Capital Accounting to the full Authority on 26 January 2018, and suggested utilising this to get investment back into National Parks.

### **Speeding**

One member asked if the electronic speed signs were having an impact; the Director of Operations explained that they were still collecting data. He said there were five signs on rotation around different hot spots and added that there was a positive response from Ranger observations.

The Chief Executive thanked the Navigation Committee for supporting officers in the excellent investment in the electric speeding signs.

Members noted the report.

## **4/8 Proposed Navigation Charges for 2019/20 in the Navigation Area and Adjacent Waters**

Members received a report on the proposed navigation charges for 2019/20. In order to maintain the existing level of service and invest in electric charging points at Acle Bridge, it was proposed that tolls be raised by 2.6%. This increase was below the August Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 2.7%

Members of the Tolls Working Group met prior to the Navigation Committee to explore the options for additional expenditure presented in the report. They were of the view that the installation of electric charging points would be worthwhile and provide a valuable service. Members were asked to discuss the proposal.

The Chief Executive thanked the members of the Tolls Working Group, and stated that the opportunity to explore options with the group was very useful. He commented on the need to refresh the group whilst retaining the experience.

The Chief Executive reiterated the uncertainty surrounding Brexit and the impact this would have in the future. He advised that the Authority needed to be cautious in terms of charging and the Broads Authority costs.

One member questioned why the report was based on the August CPI, noting that the September CPI was 2.4%. He commented that other public sectors used the September CPI and suggested that this new figure be taken into account when setting the tolls in the future. Another member suggested the process be investigated for possible adoption next year in order to align with local government reviews that take place in September.

The Chief Financial Officer explained that the September CPI was not available when the report for Navigation Committee was prepared. She added that the August CPI had been used consistently because the Navigation Committee needed to receive the report in October before the Broads Authority's decision in November. She stated that other local authorities had different timescales and made financial decisions later on in the year. The Chief Executive confirmed that reference to the September CPI would be included in the report presented to the Broads Authority.

Members discussed the charge increases of other organisations, which exceeded the rate of inflation. One member said it was important that the value for money provided by the Broads Authority was highlighted to the public.

One member commented that private boat interests would like to see toilet facilities, showers and a shop (supplying essentials like bread and milk) reinstated at Acle Bridge. It was added that the electric charging points were an essential part of developing the Acle Bridge site. In general members were in agreement that the tolls proposal provided the right balance and would send the right message in terms of targets and accountable activities for moneys put aside.

The Chair concluded that the August CPI would continue to be used as per previous processes but that the September CPI should be reported at next year's meeting in October when the tolls are reviewed.

It was proposed by Matthew Bradbury, seconded by Brian Wilkins, and

Unanimously RECOMMENDED

That charges be raised as an across the board percentage on last year's rates of 2.6% to include the provision of installing electric charging points at Acle Bridge.

The report also included the draft income and expenditure for 2019/20. Members were informed that for the current year income from private boats was as expected with an increase for hire boats.

#### **4/9 Water Ski Permit – amendment to conditions**

The Head of Safety Management explained that it was proposed to remove the requirement for a mandatory wash and noise test. He informed members that no

water ski boat had ever failed the test and added that the Authority still have the right to carry the test out.

One member stated that he had noticed a significant issue with noise in the fens this year with water ski boats using inboard diesel engines. The Head of Safety Management responded that these boats hadn't triggered any particular issues and weren't close to the noise trigger level. The Chair advised that the Boat Safety Management Group had been consulted on the amendment to the conditions, and reiterated that if there was a new boat the Broads Authority could implement the test.

A member suggested amending the conditions to state that the Broads Authority reserves the right to carry out a wash test when it sees fit, specifically when a new class of boat is introduced. Members were in agreement that the conditions be amended.

#### **4/10 PMSC Aids to Navigation – Trinity House**

The Head of Safety Management explained that the Trinity House annual report had highlighted the Broads Authority as a poor performer in managing the Aids to Navigation (AtoN). Members were made aware that the Broads Authority has a responsibility for the AtoN once they were installed but has no power over maintaining the third party AtoN. The Head of Safety Management explained that there had been some significant success recently in engaging with these third party companies.

The Head of Safety Management discussed the AtoN in Norwich and said it was being pursued with Trinity House to rationalise these, as a notice at the start of the restrictions would suffice for the whole of Norwich.

The report would be presented to the Broads Authority as part of the process of notifying the duty holders. Members noted the report.

#### **4/11 Sediment Management Strategy Compliance**

The Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer introduced a report on the analysis of the hydrographic survey data. He said that the survey was able to produce high quality data that would enable officers to more accurately target sediment that is economically removable from the riverbed. He explained that of the 1.2 million cubic metres of accumulated sediment above the specification depths described in the report a lot was outside of the marked channels and in extreme margins of the rivers. Going forward, officers are able to target dredging operations from the high quality maps the data produced. These maps would be available to members in a future report.

One member commented that there was little difference in the figures between the two years outlined in the report table, which he said didn't reflect how much economically dredgable material had been removed.

The Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer responded that the quantity had increased because the quality of the survey gave a more accurate impression of what is at the edge of the navigable area. He said some of this sediment was difficult to remove but it was still part of the management and included in the table quantity. He added that they were more accurately able to map the areas that needed attention, which would be used for the operations schedule.

The Director of Operations explained that success could be gauged by other ways, for example the reduction in complaints about shallow areas, as they were now able to target these spots. He further explained that it was taking longer to remove the sediment as they were having to use set back areas that were further away from the dredging sites. He said other methods for removing this was being explored.

In response to a member question, the Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer explained that the entire river system was surveyed at the same level of detail every five years. He added that they also identified areas that needed to be dredged and completed pre and post dredging surveys to determine if targets had been met; he said the before and after survey maps would provide better information for the Navigation Committee to see.

The Chair applauded the data capture technique which she said enabled the Broads Authority to make better decisions. She said the Navigation Committee needed to work with officers to highlight problem areas. Another member agreed that the maps would make members better informed to comment on the work; he further suggested Oulton Broad for prioritisation.

The Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer concluded that the Sediment Management Strategy would be reviewed in 2019/20, which would review the wider waterways management.

#### **4/12 Construction, Maintenance and Environment Work Programme Progress Update**

Members were provided with a report which outlined progress of the work programme for 2018/19. The Director of Operations explained that less time was spent this year on cutting the aquatic plants as they hadn't flourished as well as in other years. He referred to the trial plots at Hickling and said that there was evidence that the Chara did start to grow but it wasn't as good as expected. He further explained that Ranger observations directed where the weed cutters needed to go, which helped in keeping on top of the key areas scheduled for weed cutting.

One member informed the committee that the Pymnesium working group would be meeting in November.

Another member asked for an update on determining the route of the problem with silt run offs and negotiations with landowners. The Director of Operations explained that a lot of work had been done with farmers as part of the catchment partnership, and that sediment input from farm fields was less. He added that there was more run off produced from the edge of the roads rather than the fields and that the

Broads Authority needed to engage with Norfolk County Council to deal with this problem.

Members noted the report.

**4/13 To note the date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Navigation Committee would be held on Thursday 17 January 2019 at Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich commencing at 2pm.

The meeting concluded at 3.30pm

Chairman

## Code of Conduct for Members

**Declaration of Interests**

Committee: Navigation Committee

Date of Meeting: 25 October 2018

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
Linda Aspland	8	None relating to agenda	
Max Heron	6-12	No new declarations	
John Ash	8	As previously noted	
Kelvin Allen	8	As previously noted	
Simon Sparrow	6-12	As previously disclosed	
Mathew Bradbury	8	Member of British Canoeing	
Brian Wilkins	8	All as previously advised	
Nicky Talbot	8	None relating to the agenda except item 8. Toll payer.	
Michael Whitaker	6-12	As previous	
Bill Dickson	8		