

# Broads Authority

28 November 2025

Agenda item number 11

## Proposed navigation charges for 2026/27 in the navigation area and adjacent waters

Report by Chief Executive

---

### Purpose

Following the formal consultation with the Navigation Committee this report provides and update and outlines proposed charges for 2026/27 for consideration by the Authority.

### Broads Plan context

All strategic actions under Theme C: Maintaining and enhancing the navigation

### Recommended decisions

- i. Notes the report to the Navigation Committee (Appendix 1) and the feedback from the members of the Committee in the extract from the draft minutes for the meeting (Appendix 4).
  - ii. Approves an increase of 3.5% in navigation charges for 2026/27 in the navigation area and adjacent waters in line with the majority view of the Navigation Committee.
  - iii. Approves the introduction of a £25 administrative charge being applied at the Notice of Contravention stage to cover the additional costs of late payment (Section 5 of the Navigation Committee report).
- 

## Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Navigation Income	2
3. Inflation levels	2
4. Navigation Committee: Formal Consultation	3
5. Conclusion	3
Appendix 1 – Report to the Navigation Committee, 6 November 2025	5
Appendix 2 - Annual Boat Numbers as at 1 November 2014-2024	14
Appendix 3 – National Park Capital Programme 2025/26	16

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. A Briefing Paper on the navigation budget was circulated to all Members and interested parties in September. This was followed by a briefing meeting for members on 7 October. The formal consultation with the Navigation Committee on next year’s charges was held on 6 November. A copy of the report considered by the Committee is in Appendix 1 and the relevant section of the draft minutes for the meeting is in Appendix 4. This report provides members with updates to the information in the Navigation Committee paper.
- 1.2. The Canals and Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency, the other two large inland navigation authorities in England and Wales, have recently announced their charges for next year, an increase of +4.85% and +3.8% respectively.

## 2. Navigation Income

- 2.1. Table 3 in the Navigation Committee report showed toll income against the budgeted figures, as at 1 October, a deficit is -£74,204. The figures as of 1 November are shown in the following table with a reduced deficit of -£58,083. This shows that October outperformed last year for income and can be attributed to the hard work of the Tolls Team following up on Notices of Contravention.

**Table 1**

Toll income as at 1 November 2025

	Private Boats	Hire Boats
Budgeted Income 2025/26	£3,057,000	£1,489,000
Income received 1 April to 30 September 2025	£2,952,088	£1,449,308
Predicted income 2025/26	£3,038,609	£1,449,308
Predicted deficit	- <b>£18,391</b>	- <b>£39,692</b>

- 2.2. This improved position has been offset by the recent news that the membership of Paddle UK is down by 16% which means that our income will be reduced by £8,000.

## 3. Inflation levels

### 3.1. Level of inflation

The Navigation Committee report included the September figures for inflation. The figures for October published on 19 November are set out in the Table below.

**Table 2**

Levels of inflation

Index	September 2025	October 2025
CPI	3.8%	3.6%
CPI H	4.1%	3.8%
RPI	4.5%	4.3%

## 4. Navigation Committee: Formal Consultation

- 4.1. Section 13(3) requires the Authority to “consult the Navigation Committee before determining the level of any tolls or other charges to be imposed in respect of the navigation area or adjacent waters”. This took place on 6 November and the draft minutes of the meeting are in Appendix 4 to give Members a good understanding of the range of views and the Committee’s recommendation.
- 4.2. At the meeting the two options were considered with eight members of the Committee in favour of 3.5% and four in favour of 2.5%. Members were also in support of a survey being further investigated.

## 5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The changes made in the last year have put the navigation budget in a healthier position though it has been at the cost of reducing our capacity for waterways maintenance. The Navigation Committee discussed the merits of a 2.5% and a 3.5% increase. The arguments for the higher increase included the risks associated with:
  - (i) the growth in the number of abandoned and sunken boats;
  - (ii) the increase in no-compliance and the costs of recovering tolls owed;
  - (iii) threats from invasive species such as Floating Pennywort; and
  - (iv) increased plant growth.
- 5.2. We are also operating in a difficult economic environment. Nationally boating as a recreational activity appears to be in decline. This report has taken a prudent in estimating the number of boats using the Broads for next year but even so a further reduction in boat numbers is a significant risk.
- 5.3. Given the level of risk on both income and expenditure a 3.5% increase in navigation charges if recommended in line with the majority views of members of the Navigation Committee.
- 5.4. The Navigation Committee supported the proposal for a boat owners’ and ex-boat owners’ survey. This needs further thought and consideration by officers.

Author: John Packman

Date of report: 19 November 2025

Background papers: Briefing Paper circulated in September 2025

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: Theme C: Maintaining and enhancing the navigation

Appendix 1 – Report to the Navigation Committee, 6 November 2025

Appendix 2 – Annual Boat Numbers as at 1 November from 2014-2024

Appendix 3 – National Park Capital Programme 2025/26

Appendix 4 - Extract from Draft Minutes of the Navigation Committee held on 6 November 2025

# Appendix 1 – Report to the Navigation Committee, 6 November 2025

## Navigation Committee

6 November 2025

Agenda item number 7

### Proposed navigation charges for 2026/27 in the navigation area and adjacent waters

Report by Chief Executive, Director of Resources, Head of IT and Collector of Tolls

---

#### Purpose

This report is the formal consultation with the Committee on the level of charges for 2026/27 as required by S13 (3) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988. The views of the Committee are requested. The Broads Authority will make the decision on the navigation charges for 2026/27 at its meeting on 28 November 2025.

#### Broads Plan context

All strategic actions under Theme C: Maintaining and enhancing the navigation.

---

### Contents

1.	Introduction	6
2.	Boat numbers	2
3.	Lapsed Boat Ownership Research	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
4.	Navigation Income	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
5.	Late Payment	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
6.	Navigation Expenditure	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
7.	Capital funding	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
8.	Factors to consider when setting the tolls for 2026/27	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
9.	Options for 2026/27	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
10.	Financial implications	12
11.	Social, economic, and environmental implications	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
12.	Risk implications	13
13.	Conclusion	13

# 1. Introduction

1.1. Last year there was a range of factors for members to consider, including the impact of inflation, the increase in the Employer’s National Insurance Contribution, the annual pay increase and a reduction in the number of smaller boats. After much deliberation, the Navigation Committee recommended a 5.9% increase in charges along with a reduction in navigation expenditure through a cutback on patrolling and practical work. This was accepted by the Broads Authority. This year the main issue is the on-going reduction in the number boats, both private and commercial, even though less than last year it is still significant.

# 2. Boat numbers

2.1. Table 1 shows the registered boat numbers for 30 September for 2023 to 2025.

**Table 1**

Private craft numbers 2023–25 as at 30 September 2025

Private craft	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	Change 23-24	Change 24-25
Motor cruisers	4,993	4,893	4,819	-100	-74
Aux. yachts	960	892	883	-68	-9
Day launches	582	533	539	-49	+6
O/B dinghies	1014	919	894	-95	-25
Workboats	155	162	139	+7	-23
Sailing	809	740	721	-69	-19
Rowing / Paddling	1,870	1,613	1,484	-257	-129
Houseboats	71	71	65	0	-6
Passenger – SPB	22	21	21	-1	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,476</b>	<b>9,844</b>	<b>9,565</b>	<b>-632</b>	<b>-279</b>

2.2. In 2024 the total number of private boats using the Broads fell by 632 (-6.0%) as of the end of September. The largest reductions last year were in small boats e.g. rowing 257 (-13.7%), with smaller percentage falls in all the other categories apart from workboats and houseboats. This year the fall has been less than last year, at 279 (-2.8%). The fall in rowing craft is still the largest but half that in the previous year. Private motor cruisers fell by 100 (-2%) last year and by 74 (-1.5%) this year.

2.3. Appendix 1 gives a longer term context showing the number of boats since 2014. This shows a reduction in private craft over the ten years of -853 (-7.9%). The number of private motor cruisers grew in 2021 and 2022 and the overall reduction is -107 (-2.1%). There is a long term trend in the decline in the number of sailing boats, both sailing craft and auxiliary yachts.

- 2.4. Table 2 shows the number of commercial craft across the three years. Last year the number of commercial craft using the Broads fell by 46, (–2.9%), the major change being in rowing craft (a decrease of 29). This year the loss of commercial craft has increased to 85 (–5.4%), with the biggest reduction in day launches and rowing craft.
- 2.5. Appendix 1 shows the long term predicted decline in the number of hired motor cruisers. Research more than ten years ago suggested that the number would fall to around 500. The number of day launches has increased, over the ten years.

**Table 2**

Commercial craft numbers 2023–25 as at 30 September 2025

Hire craft	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025	Change 23-24	Change 24-25
Motor cruisers	647	641	630	–6	–11
Aux. yachts	45	43	43	–2	0
Day launches	358	344	310	–14	–34
O/B dinghies	4	1	1	–3	0
Sailing	71	71	71	0	0
Rowing / Paddling	442	413	377	–29	–36
Houseboats	26	32	29	+6	–3
Passenger – MCA	6	6	6	0	0
Passenger – SPB	7	9	8	+2	–1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,606</b>	<b>1,560</b>	<b>1475</b>	<b>–46</b>	<b>–85</b>

### 3. Lapsed Boat Ownership Research

- 3.1. The decline in the number of private boats appears to be part of wider changes in society with similar falls in boat numbers on other inland waterways and a decline in boat building. We have speculated with members on the causes: the state of the economy, the costs of owning and maintaining a boat and the demography of boat ownership.
- 3.2. It would be helpful for the Authority if we had some better knowledge of the reasons behind the fall in boat ownership. We had hoped that the Tolls Team would have time during the summer months to telephone former Broads boat owners to try and understand the reasons for not renewing their boat toll. But, because of the large backlog in late payers, see below for more information, this has not proved to be possible and there would be advantages in using an independent contractor for such work. The costs would be in the order of £4,000 to £8,000 depending on the sample size. The views of the committee on whether we should commission this work are sought.

## 4. Navigation Income

- 4.1. On 1 October 2024, the impact of the large reduction in boat numbers was a predicted deficit of -£130,591. At the end of the year the gap between the budgeted income and actual income was -£128,298.
- 4.2. This year the current deficit is -£74,204. This is an improvement, but still a deficit we need to consider and respond to. Table 3 below shows the toll income against the budgeted figures.

**Table 3**

Toll income as at 1 October 2025

	Private Boats	Hire Boats
Budgeted Income 2025/26	£3,057,000	£1,489,000
Income received 1 April to 30 September 2025	£2,904,280	£1,442,560
Predicted income 2025/26	£3,024,236	£1,447,560
Predicted deficit	<b>- £32,764</b>	<b>- £41,440</b>

## 5. Late Payment

- 5.1. One of the issues the Authority has addressed this year is late payment of tolls and the additional administrative costs involved. All toll payers are sent notification of their charge for the new year in February/March. The majority pay before 1 April or soon after. The Rangers check if boats have been tolled and if required, issue a Notice of Contravention which is affixed to the vessel, with a duplicate sent to the Tolls Team. The Tolls Team write to the owner reminding them that payment is overdue, and that a £25 administrative charge will be added if they fail to pay by a certain date.
- 5.2. To date we have received over £3,000 in £25 late payment charges which makes a small contribution to our administrative costs. Importantly the prospect of an additional charge encourages prompt payment.
- 5.3. As previously discussed with, and supported by, the Navigation Committee we intend to make a further change to this process next year. The notification of charges, our website and other information will include a warning that if Rangers issue a Notice of Contravention for late payment, tolls payable after that date are subject to a £25 administrative charge. This has the potential to save the Tolls Team a lot of work.

## 6. Navigation Expenditure

- 6.1. During the year, the Authority has made savings in expenditure on navigation to align it closer with navigation income. For example, we reduced patrolling and practical work and cut our overheads and management costs. The net impact of these changes has been a reduction in expenditure of £65,000. In addition, the pay increase for staff was less than the Authority had budgeted for. The table below provides details of the forecast adjustments since the report to the committee in September.

**Table 4**

Forecast adjustments

Item	Amount £
Forecast outturn deficit as per LAB	67,606
Adjustments reported 04/09/2025	(3,324)
Decrease to Hire Craft income	6,998
Increase to Private Craft income	(35,278)
Increase to investment income	(16,500)
Increase to staff costs for redundancy	7,558
<b>Forecast outturn deficit as at 30 September 2025</b>	<b>27,060</b>

6.2. The forecast outturn for 2025/26 is shown in Table 5.

**Table 5**

Navigation forecast compared to the latest available budget for 2025/26.

Navigation outturn 2025/26 vs budget	Budget £	Outturn £	Difference £
Income	(4,726,300)	(4,668,596)	- 57,704
Expenditure	4,793,906	4,695,656	+ 98,250
<b>(Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>67,606</b>	<b>27,060</b>	<b>+ 40,546</b>
Transfer of interest to earmarked reserves	50,100	60,000	+ 10,100
Opening reserve	(627,403)	(627,403)	0
Repayment of National Park loan	50,000	50,000	0
Closing reserve	(459,697)	(490,343)	+ 30,646
Reserves as a % of expenditure	9.6%	10.4%	+ 0.8%

## 7. Capital funding

7.1. It is important to state the additional National Park capital funding is welcomed but it does not relieve the pressures caused by the decline of National Park revenue funding. However, Defra has recently given the Authority more flexibility in the use of National Park capital funding. The department has accepted the argument that improving access to and from the water is one of the main ways the public enjoy the special qualities of the Broads. This means that navigation will benefit from National Park Capital funding.

7.2. Defra's Change Control Notice for this year states:

*The capital grant and any income derived from the expenditure is to be treated as National Park income and must be used in furtherance of section 2(1)(a) and (b) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988.*

*Any such income may be applied to an expenditure that incidentally supports Section 2(1)(c) provided the primary aim of the expenditure remains the pursuit of Section 2(1)(a) and (b).*

*Section 2(1) (b) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act states:*

*It shall be the general duty of the Authority to manage the Broads for the purposes of promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Broads by the public;*

- 7.3. Appendix 2 is a copy of the current version of the capital programme. This includes new pontoons and enhanced moorings which have long been on the Navigation Committee's wish list. Upgrading the charging pillars, and more NATO pontoons for floating our excavators are all helpful investments.

## 8. Factors to consider when setting the tolls for 2026/27

### 8.1. Level of inflation

The current levels of inflation in September 2025 (announced 22 October) are:

CPI	=	3.8%
CPI H	=	4.1%
RPI	=	4.5%

The costs of owning and maintaining a boat, including mooring fees, repairs, fuel, insurance, and tolls, are continuing to rise and there is little doubt that this is contributing to the decline of private boats and placing strain on the hire boat industry.

### 8.2. Estimate of boat numbers

It is impossible to give an accurate estimate of boat numbers for next year, but the following assumptions can be made.

1. Given the difficult outlook for the economy and personal finances, it is probable that we will see a further reduction in the number of private craft. It is likely to be similar to this year's – a loss of a further 300 boats, including a fall in the number of motor cruisers of about 95.
2. Based on our information from the industry we are predicting a further loss of 30 motor cruisers in 2026 as companies continue to take older vessels out of their fleets. We can also anticipate a further reduction in day launches and rowing craft. We are using the following numbers in our calculations:

Hired motor cruisers	600	–30
Day launches	300	–17

### 8.3. Salary increase

Based on current information we are applying a 3% increase in our 2026/27 budget for a salary increase. The Authority is obliged to apply nationally agreed increases by the National Joint Council.

## 9. Options for 2026/27

- 9.1. Based on the above, a 2.5% increase would be required to maintain the current level of maintenance. A figure lower than 2.5% would require further cuts in services and is not recommended. At the Tolls Briefing on 7 October some members asked officers to explore the option of increasing practical work by raising tolls by 3.5%. This has been done.
- 9.2. The number of Senior Operations Technicians and Operations Technicians has been reduced from 22 to 20 and the proportion of their time given to navigation reduced from 70% to 60% in 2025/26. A 3.5% increase in tolls would produce an estimated additional income of £44,000. With this it would be possible to employ one new Operations Technician and increase the overall proportion of time given to navigation to 62% in 2026/27. These two changes would increase the number of days given to the practical maintenance of the navigation by the Operation Technicians from 2,190 to 2,399. This could expand the programmed work which is allocated to the following tasks: dredging (44%), maintenance of moorings (33%), water plant cutting (11%), riverside trees (2%) (Note: excludes work by Rangers) and other (channel markers, gauge boards, raising wrecks and obstructions etc.) (9%).

**Table 6**

Cost per m<sup>2</sup> by category of vessel for the two options

No.	Category – cost per m <sup>2</sup> except rowing, canoes etc	Current	+2.5%	+3.5%
1.	Weekly hired motor craft	£44.05	£45.15	£45.59
2.	Weekly hired motor craft – electric and hybrid	£30.32	£31.08	£31.38
3.	Day hired – petrol/diesel	£70.00	£71.75	£72.45
4.	Day hired electric	£43.58	£44.67	£45.11
5.	MCA passenger boats and small passenger boats	£57.97	£59.42	£60.00
6.	Hired motorised sailing craft – diesel	£33.77	£34.61	£34.95
7.	Hired sailing boats & hired motorised sailing - electric	£24.69	£25.31	£25.55
8.	Hired houseboats	£22.33	£22.89	£23.11
9.	Hired rowing – fixed amount	£98.12	£100.57	£101.55

No.	Category – cost per m <sup>2</sup> except rowing, canoes etc	Current	+2.5%	+3.5%
	Hired paddle craft – fixed amount	£49.05	£50.28	£50.77
10.	Private motorboats - petrol & diesel	£19.56	£20.05	£20.24
11.	Private motorboats electric	£14.95	£15.32	£15.47
12.	Private motorised sailing craft - petrol & diesel	£14.47	£14.83	£14.98
13.	Private sailing boats & private motorised sailing craft - electric	£11.95	£12.25	£12.37
14.	Private houseboats	£7.70	£7.89	£7.97
15.	Private rowing, canoes etc. – fixed amount	£49.05	£50.28	£50.77

9.3. The implications of a 2.5% and 3.5% increase on the charges for some of the most common types of vessels are shown in Table 7 below.

**Table 7**

Proposed increase in navigation charges by common types & sizes of vessel

Type of Vessel	Sep No.	Current	+2.5%	+3.5%
5 m <sup>2</sup> Private sailing craft	301	£59.75	£61.25	£61,85
11 m <sup>2</sup> Private sailing craft	123	£131.45	£134.75	£136.07
5 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	524	£97.80	£100.25	101.20
15 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	231	£293.40	£300.75	£303.60
22 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	305	£430.32	£441.10	£445.28
38 m <sup>2</sup> Private motorboats	106	£743.28	£761.90	£769.12
11 m <sup>2</sup> Day hired boats – petrol/ diesel	43	£770.00	£789.25	£796.95
11 m <sup>2</sup> Day hired boats - electric	18	£479.38	£491.37	£496.21
38 m <sup>2</sup> Weekly hired motor craft	50	£1,673.90	£1,715.70	£1,732.42
48 m <sup>2</sup> Weekly hired motor craft	53	£2,114.40	£2,167.20	£2,188.32

## 10. Financial implications

10.1. The steps made to reduce costs during 2025/26 means a 2.5% or 3.5% increase will provide a reserve balance of 11.5%, above the recommended minimum of 10%. This will help provide a cushion if boat numbers reduce further than expected. The medium-term financial plan currently indicates similar increases over the two following years to keep pace with forecast salary inflation and potential further losses of boats in 2027/28 and 2028/29.

## 11. Social, economic, and environmental implications

11.1. Toll payer surveys have shown that the Authority's tolls account for less than 10% of the typical costs of owning a boat. While boat ownership may be seen by some as a luxury, we know that this is not always the case. The cost-of-living crisis is having an

impact on society and its impact on the boating community using the Broads and those visiting on holiday is difficult to predict. Our community of private boat owners is diverse, and some may face difficult decisions regarding their continuing boat ownership.

- 11.2. The Broads Society and Inland Waterways Association conducted research into the level of navigation charges across different waterways. The research concluded that: 'Looking beyond the headline percentage increases of the past two years, however, the cash cost to most private boat owners today remains modest, giving good value when compared with other navigations.' (Broads Society 2024).

## 12. Risk implications

- 12.1. As with last year the main area of uncertainty involved in determining charges for next year is the number of boats using the Broads. Estimates have been made using information from the hire boat companies and for the private boats it has been assumed that

## 13. Conclusion

- 13.1. Last year's switch in the apportionment of operational costs from Navigation to National Park and the lower-than-expected pay rise has more than offset the reduced income from the reduction in the number of boats.
- 13.2. This has put the navigation budget in a healthier position, and an increase in tolls of 2.5% or 3.5%, below the current level of inflation (3.8% to 4.5%), would leave the Authority in a stronger position for this year and the following two, even with our anticipated reduction in boat numbers. The use of National Park capital funding is providing for investment in a range of improvements this year, which our toll payers will notice, and I am sure appreciate. The higher rate of increase would allow for the replacement of an Operations Technician and a nearly 10% increase in the time of the Technicians spent on maintenance of the navigation.

Author: John Packman, Emma Krelle, Bill Housden

Date of report: 15 October 2025

Background papers: Navigation charges 2026/27 – Briefing Note.

[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C1, C2, C3, C4.

## Appendix 2 - Annual Boat Numbers as at 1 November 2014-2024

Annual Boat Numbers as at 1st November													
PRIVATE BOATS	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change	% Change
Motor Cruisers	5059	5091	5086	5110	5079	5083	5004	5237	5142	5049	4952	-107	-2.12%
Auxiliary Yachts	1168	1152	1127	1132	1093	1107	965	1048	1024	966	904	-264	-22.60%
Day Launches	514	504	495	556	574	558	562	582	600	592	546	32	6.23%
Outboard Dinghies	1062	1016	962	1064	1060	1058	1051	1140	1185	1039	940	-122	-11.49%
Workboats	180	172	156	158	156	153	144	142	166	159	164	-16	-8.89%
Passenger Vessels SPB				22	21	23	13	19	20	22	21	21	
<b>TOTAL MOTORBOATS:</b>	<b>7983</b>	<b>7935</b>	<b>7826</b>	<b>8042</b>	<b>7983</b>	<b>7982</b>	<b>7739</b>	<b>8168</b>	<b>8137</b>	<b>7827</b>	<b>7527</b>	<b>-456</b>	<b>-5.71%</b>
Sailing Craft	1230	1191	1107	1076	1081	1023	844	920	861	820	747	-483	-39.27%
Rowing Craft	1578	1532	1513	1483	1513	1545	1800	2039	2054	1874	1618	40	2.53%
Houseboats	27	33	45	45	49	52	49	52	67	77	73	46	170.37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10818</b>	<b>10691</b>	<b>10491</b>	<b>10646</b>	<b>10626</b>	<b>10602</b>	<b>10432</b>	<b>11179</b>	<b>11119</b>	<b>10598</b>	<b>9965</b>	<b>-853</b>	<b>-7.89%</b>
<b>HIRE BOATS</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>		
Motor Cruisers	842	821	789	802	806	801	734	729	673	647	641	-201	-23.87%
Auxiliary Yachts	47	43	44	45	46	44	39	45	45	45	43	-4	-8.51%
<b>ALL CABIN HIRE BOATS:</b>	<b>889</b>	<b>864</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>845</b>	<b>773</b>	<b>774</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>692</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>-205</b>	<b>-23.06%</b>

Annual Boat Numbers as at 1st November													
Day Launches	299	290	295	290	301	297	261	326	363	359	344	45	15.05%
Outboard Dinghies	8	10	11	9	9	8	4	4	4	4	1	-7	-87.50%
Passenger Vessels MCA	10	10	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	-4	-40.00%
Passenger Vessels SPB				6	7	7	4	8	8	7	9	9	
<b>TOTAL MOTORBOATS:</b>	<b>1206</b>	<b>1174</b>	<b>1145</b>	<b>1158</b>	<b>1175</b>	<b>1163</b>	<b>1047</b>	<b>1118</b>	<b>1099</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>1044</b>	<b>-162</b>	<b>-13.43%</b>
Sailing Craft	110	108	102	101	95	87	74	88	73	71	71	-39	-35.45%
Rowing Craft	175	184	192	191	194	193	182	227	230	442	413	238	136.00%
Houseboats	16	16	16	28	26	26	27	27	28	27	32	16	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1507</b>	<b>1482</b>	<b>1455</b>	<b>1478</b>	<b>1490</b>	<b>1469</b>	<b>1330</b>	<b>1460</b>	<b>1430</b>	<b>1608</b>	<b>1560</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3.52%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>12325</b>	<b>12173</b>	<b>11946</b>	<b>12124</b>	<b>12116</b>	<b>12071</b>	<b>11762</b>	<b>12639</b>	<b>12549</b>	<b>12206</b>	<b>11525</b>	<b>-800</b>	<b>-6.49%</b>

## Appendix 3 – National Park Capital Programme 2025/26

Defra has awarded the Authority £1,385,058 for capital spend. The Authority has adopted a longer list to ensure it can deliver the whole spend by 31 March 2026.

Project	Priority	Indicative cost £	Progress
Purchase of land at Barton Fen	1	472,250	Sale completed September 2025.
Acle Bridge enhancement	2	95,000	
Improvements to Great Yarmouth Yacht Station - showers etc.	2	60,000	Waiting for a new lease to be signed. Investigating options for improvements. These are likely to require over £50k.
Pontoons to improve access to the water	2	45,000	Continuing to consult with local stakeholders before submitting the planning applications for Worlingham mooring sites in December. Tender required for pontoon procurement.
Upgrade 40 electric charging pillars	2	60,000	Options appraisal for meter and pillar systems completed. Demonstrations from the top two suppliers by mid-September. Costs likely to be greater than £30,000 (TBC).
Dockyard solar	2	72,550	Tenders for scheme received and evaluated. Works to start in January 2026.
Truxor attachments	3	12,620	On order.
Fen Harvester with double chop head	3	205,030	On order.
Nato floats (x10)	4	90,000	Waiver to be submitted.
Mowing equipment to manage conservation and visitor sites	4	67,410	Remote-controlled mower prioritised instead of electric telehandler.
Ride on Mower	4	14,100	On order.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Indicative cost £</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Reciprocating mower	4	9,000	Quotes being sought.
Water quality monitoring equipment	4	25,000	Quotes being sought
New electric pool vehicles x 2	5	70,000	Quotes being sought
<b>RESERVE LIST</b>			
Dockyard enhancement	5	200,000	Outside current budget.
Review and upgrade EV chargers	5	25,000	Outside current budget. Quotes for these works have already been received.

## Appendix 4 - Extract from Draft Minutes of the Navigation Committee held on 6 November 2025

### Agenda item 7: Proposed navigation charges for 2026/27 in the navigation area and adjacent waters

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (CE), Director of Resources (DR), Head of IT and Collector of Tolls (HITCT). The CE said that he wanted to thank the DR and the HITCT in particular for their help on what was a major piece of work. Thank you also to the Members who attended the briefing meeting in October which was a really helpful event.

The CE said that he wanted to give the Members some updated figures. Table 3 showed the toll income for the year as at 1 October 2025 together with the budgeted income and the predicted income by the end of the year. For private boats, the predicted deficit was £32,764 and for hire boats, the predicted deficit was £41,440. The CE said that he was pleased to say, because of the hard work the tolls team did on chasing late payers they have had some success. The CE added that in 2025 there had been more late payers than previously which had given the team a huge task. The figures for October 2025 were better than predicted and as of 1 November 2025, the predicted deficit for private boats had reduced to ~£18,000, and for hire boats the predicted deficit had reduced to just under £40,000, therefore the total theoretical deficit had fallen from ~£74,000 to ~£58,000.

Each year, the Broads Authority received a significant sum, in the region of £40,000, from Paddle UK. Their membership, however, had fallen by 16% which meant that the Authority's income from Paddle UK had reduced by £8,000.

The CE said that there had been a briefing with all Members on 7 October where the financial issues for the navigation were looked at. This was the formal consultation with the Navigation Committee, and then the Broads Authority would make a decision on tolls for next year on 28 November 2025.

The CE referenced the decline in boat numbers which were set out in tables 1 and 2. The decline had been quite significant and that had an impact on income. The CE referred Members to appendix 1 of the report and said that this provided annual boat numbers over the last ten years. Members would see that the change was not so great, for example although private motor cruiser numbers had dipped down in the last couple of years, over the last ten years, the numbers were much more stable.

One of the difficulties in setting the tolls was the prediction of how many boats would be on the water next year. Therefore what had been done in the paper was take a fairly prudent approach which assumed that the reduction in private boat numbers seen in 2025 would be matched next year. The CE said that from feedback from those that run the Environment Agency's (EA) waters, the Canals and Rivers Trust (CRT) and British Marine, all show that boating was on the decline. However, the factors behind the decline were not known but

thought that in part was economic factors, but there was probably a demographic factor in that there were not so many younger people taking up boating and older people were leaving. The Authority was therefore looking at doing some research to find out what the drivers were behind people who have had boats on the Broads no longer do. The costs for this exercise would be between £4,000 and £8,000 depending on the sample size, and the CE asked Members for their views.

The CE referred Members to section 5 of the report and late payment and said that the introduction of a £25 administrative charge for those that had failed to respond to the Authority writing a letter following the issuing of a notice of contravention. The CE proposed that the £25 charge be brought forward one step and the charge be added to the cost of tolls following the notice of contravention being issued.

The CE explained that the Authority had made significant changes to the organisation and had cut out quite a lot of costs. The downside to this was that the Authority would be doing less in 2026 with less staff and, therefore, the Authority would have to do less practical work. The combination of the reduction in the National Park grant and the reduction in the Navigation income had meant that the Authority had had to take some serious action in terms of the reduction of the scale of what the Authority could do. The plus side of that was that both the Navigation income and expenditure and the National Park income and expenditure had been broadly brought into balance, and this was the reason why, despite the reduction in the number of boats, a 2.5% increase in tolls would provide the Authority with a stable position going forward in terms of Navigation. Members would recall, however, when the Member briefing was held, several Members questioned whether a slightly higher increase of 3.5% to put back some of the reduced output.

The Chair said that he would open the floor to questions and for any clarification on points. After questions, he would go round the room and ask all Members individually on whether they supported the survey and to give their preference on the percentage toll increase of 2.5% or 3.5%. This would enable a balanced view of what the Navigation Committee's preferences were to be presented to the Broads Authority at the end of the month.

#### **Comments and questions on tolls:**

A Member asked whether £25 late payment charge was exclusively on private boat owners, or did it include hire boats. The HITCT said that it was predominantly on private boats.

A Member commented that the problem of boats that have sunk and then have to be lifted was clearly a significant financial problem and asked whether that problem was going to be resolved by the costs being passed to insurance companies or would it remain an issue for the Authority. The CE said that he recently met with a colleague who was responsible for the Thames and they had hundreds of sunken, abandoned or unserviceable boats and it was a big problem for the agency. The CE went to the Rangers' end of season meeting earlier in the week and all had highlighted the amount of time they spent on sunken, dangerous or unserviceable boats. The features that the Authority was finding was the same in other waters and therefore did not think it was going to get any better and thought there would be costs

associated with this issue. The Authority was doing its best to deal with this issue but it would be wrong to assume that the work the Authority was doing in terms of insurance would sort the issue, but what it might do would be to mitigate it. The Director of Delivery (DD) said that Members would remember that a paper regarding the improved Unserviceable Vessels policy had been brought to the committee which was the bridge between boat safety and unsafe vessels. That was bearing fruit and the Authority was working with various owners of vessels that should not be on the water. The DD was working with the EA to find solutions to deal with this growing issue. It was not cheap disposing of a vessel and where possible, the Authority would put the costs back to the owner.

A Member commented that there was a difference between the toll for a private motorised electric sailing craft and private motorised petrol/diesel sailing craft and asked what the justification was for that. The CE said that some of this was historical, and it had been a few years since a review of categories had been carried out. The HITCT said that there was an electric boat discount and an electric sailing boat would pay the same as a non-powered sailing boat. There was a similar reduction for electric motorboats. The Member said that the toll for an electric sailing boat was still lower than that for an electric cruiser. The HITCT said that sailing boats had always been charged less than motorboats, for the fact that most of them did not have a motor and those that did, only used the motor occasionally.

A Member commented that the differences in the tolls was to support sustainability on the Broads and there was a modest reward for those who recognised that. A Member commented that it was a positive decision that was made in 2024.

A Member commented that if the toll rise of 3.5% was agreed, that would raise an extra £44,000 and thought that the Authority should look into the feasibility of extra cutting at places like Hickling.

A Member commented that he believed that during the tolls meeting in 2024 a few types of businesses were identified that did not have the toll increase applied, however, noted that the same had not been done this year and said that he had not seen any economic changes for those businesses and whilst it was a relatively small amount for them, asked whether the Authority should be doing that again. The CE said that whatever decision the Broads Authority took about tolls, it had almost no impact in terms of the decisions made either by individuals or by businesses. The evidence showed that it was a relatively small part of the total costs of running a boat. The CE said that what was happening with the economy and the alternative holiday offers, such as cheap foreign holidays, far outweigh what the Authority did with the tolls. That did not mean that the change that the Authority did last year was not important, because it signalled that the Broads Authority was caring about those particular companies and their future.

A Member commented that the hire boat industry was 10% down this year, although there was roughly the same amount of boats let, they have had to apply discounts which, on top of National Insurance costs, rise in insurance costs, and the rise in minimum wage, had seen a fall in income. The Member believed that hire boat companies may, in future, not toll all boats in future and therefore run a smaller fleet.

A Member commented that they were concerned that the communications budget had been cut, amongst other things. The Member commented that it seemed that there were perpetual non-payers and asked the HITCT what the trends were for more non-payers and, from a communications perspective, were toll payers told at the outset what repercussions there would be if they did not pay their tolls, or did that get triggered when they actually did not pay their toll. The HITCT said that the Authority was looking to communicate in the Broadsheet which would be sent in 2026 about how non-payment of tolls was dealt with. Although the Authority found that there were certain people who were non-compliant most years, regrettably non-compliance had been driven by people who could no longer afford to continue boating. There was, however, an element where non-compliance had been encouraged and it was creating a huge amount of work. Since 1 April 2025, there had been 1,835 notices of contravention issued and 1,566 of those did relate to non-payment. So far, this year, the Authority had submitted 70 cases to court and there were ~15 cases waiting. The HITCT said that the Authority may not have communicated well enough about what would happen in relation to non-payment in the past, but it was set out in the schedule of tolls which was sent toll payers at the start of each year.

A Member asked whether a 2.5% toll rise would achieve a status quo in terms of what had been achieved over the last twelve months in terms of resources. The CE said a 2.5% rise would provide a status quo to what the Authority had at present, which had included the reduction of two operations technicians who did the practical work out on the ground and it would, therefore, be the staffing as it was currently. The Member asked whether a 3.5% toll rise would redress some of that reduction. The CE confirmed that this was correct.

A Member asked if the Authority had any awareness as to what fellow navigation authorities were proposing. The CE said that the CRT had introduced increased above inflation over five years, and he believed that the EA were increasing their tolls in line with inflation. All inland navigation authorities were facing the same pressures on costs as the Authority were, such as the cost-of-living crisis, National Insurance increase and cost of materials.

#### **Comments and questions on the proposed survey:**

A Member asked how the survey would work and was it to understand whether there were any common factors which could then be addressed by the Broads Authority and try to attract people back to the Broads as well as what the likely boating numbers would be. The CE said that in terms of predicting the numbers of hire boats, the Authority worked closely with the Hire Boat industry and received figures from them and therefore were reasonably confident about knowing what would happen in that sector. What the Authority did not know was what the ~9,000 private boat owners would do, all of whom were making individual decisions. The survey might show some common factors that affect the Broads.

A Member commented that, in terms of the survey, although generally in favour, the Authority should try to get a handle on whether people would start boating in the future. The CE said that it was very difficult to anticipate what people's future decisions would be about owning a boat. One of the things that the CE thought would be useful to look at through the survey was the extent to which people had given up boats because of the demographics, such

as age, and the extent to which it was driven by economic factors. The CE thought that the amount of young people buying boats, rather than paddleboards and canoes, was relatively small.

A Member asked whether the proposed survey could include a cross-section of current boat owners to ask what might make them leave boating, opposed to just restricting it to those that had given up.

A Member commented that a survey could be an asset to the Boat Builders Federation and asked if they would be interested in helping with costs. The Member believed that the demographic was definitely dropping off and older people were leaving boating.

A Member said that they were greatly in favour of a survey and thought that the Authority could learn a lot from it. The Member noted the change in demographics and that older people had left boating, however, would like to point out that the Authority had lost out on getting young people out on the water since having stopped boats having unpowered tenders as part of its registration and believed that the Authority should once again allow unpowered tenders to be included as part of the cost of a motor cruiser's registration.

A Member said that a survey would be very valuable, but the key thing would be to point it in the direction of the encouragement of building of boating on the Broads. The Member commented that asking why people had left boating was a waste of money, and would probably see lots of negative responses. The focus should be on current boaters and ask them about what they would like to see, why they enjoyed boating on the Broads, and how their experience could be improved. Boating on the Broads was not only about budget, but it was also about health and wellbeing, it was about keeping the navigation open, and more effort needed to be put into encouraging boating on the Broads which should be done through the existing boating community.

A Member agreed that the survey should be more focused to those that were current owners of boats, in addition to those that have left, and asked what did the future look like and how the Authority could support the boating community.

The Chair asked each Member in turn what their preferred option of increase would be and whether the Member supported the proposal of conducting a survey. The Chair reminded Members that last year, when the Navigation Committee recommended the increase on tolls to the Broads Authority for approval, which was on the grounds that it was thought this year's increase would be a below inflation figure because of the increases over the last three years. The comments and suggested increase were:

- Supported the higher figure of 3.5% for two reasons. First the extent to which the Authority had got to deal with abandoned boats and no-compliance which would be expensive. Second, other factors that need to be considered such as Floating Pennywort, weed growth and maintaining the navigation. Agreed to the survey, but should be focused on those who still used boats.

- Supported a 3.5% increase on tolls. Agreed to survey with the remit of the inclusion of those that still used boats.
- Supported the survey and looked forward to seeing what the terms of reference would be. In favour of a 2.5% rise.
- In favour of a 2.5% increase. Was not sure on the survey but thought that the Authority should look forward and not back.
- In support of a survey, however, thought that this should come from the National Park budget rather than the Navigation budget. The Authority had gone through a lot of pain to rebase the tolls and would be surprised if the Authority went notably below inflation and therefore would choose a 3.5% increase because there were cost risks ahead. Would request that the Authority considered whether there were any sectors as last year that should be ring-fenced.
- For all the reasons that the Member mentioned above, would support a 3.5% increase and would also support the suggestion of untethered craft included within a boat's toll. Would agree with doing a survey but would like to see it entirely owned by the Navigation Committee and solely focused on people who were currently boating on the Broads.
- Agreed with the survey, thought there was mileage to be gained with those who had given up ownership, but did agree that the current boat ownership should be the priority. Supported a 3.5% increase for all of the reasons that have already been said.
- A positive yes on the survey and thought that it should be left to the Executive to decide how this went forward. Supported the 3.5% increase, however, felt that there was some forecasting that was missing and looked forward to a discussion about what future proofing of the Broads Authority would help with making decisions going forward, which the survey would help with.
- The survey should cover both reasons why people have left boating as well as current toll payers. The Authority had been through a lot of pain over the last year to keep costs down and was in favour of a 2.5% rise.
- Agreed with the survey across both current boat owners and those who had left and asked if it was possible to include various organisations and clubs and for them to chip in to get the widest possible engagement. Could see an argument for both 2.5% and 3.5% and would prefer a 3% rise, but if pushed would go for 3.5%.
- In favour of the survey. Supported the 3.5% rise so that it gave the latitude to make good investment decisions.
- In favour of a survey and thought it should include boat clubs. Supported the 2.5% increase.

The Chair confirmed that there were eight Members in favour of the 3.5% increase, and four Members in favour of the 2.5% increase for recommendation to the Broads Authority. In

relation to the survey, it was unanimous recommendation for a survey, but the detail of that survey needed to be looked at before any commitment to spending.