

Broads Authority

Navigation Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2012

Present:

Mr D A Broad (Chairman)

Mr L Betts	Mr P Frost	Mr J Knight
Mrs S Blane	Mr A Goodchild	Mr A S Mallett
Sir Peter Dixon	Mr P Greasley	Mr P E Ollier
Mr P Durrant	Mr M Heron	Mr M Whitaker

In Attendance:

Mr S Birtles – Head of Safety Management
Mr A Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer
Ms R Evitt – Administrative Officer
Mr R G Holman – Director of Change Management and Resources
Mr J Organ – Head of Governance and Executive Assistant
Mr J Packman – Chief Executive
Mr R Rogers – Head of Construction and Maintenance
Mr A Vernon – Head of Ranger Services
Mrs T Wakelin – Director of Operations

3/1 To receive apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

3/2 To note whether any items have been proposed as matters of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

3/3 To receive Declarations of Interest

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

3/4 Public Question Time

No questions had been received.

3/5 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A member queried a report which had been requested at the previous meeting regarding the high water levels throughout December and January. Mr Kevin Marsh, BESL, advised that according to the Environment Agency's criteria the incident had not technically been a flood. The overtopping on the Chet and on the River Yare at Reedham was a result of the scheme's design to allow overtopping into controlled areas where there were pump stations or drainage channels nearby. The results of the over topping had conformed to the modeling results.

Members commented that they would still like to receive a more detailed report on this incident at a future meeting.

3/6 Summary of Progress/Actions/Response Taken Following Discussions at Previous Meetings

Members noted that there had been no further changes to the Swing Bridges update.

In respect of the replacement launches, a member asked for details of the proposed design and noted that the craft were a key public face of the Authority. Members were advised that the replacement launches would be very similar in design to the Charles Collier launch, though the launches would have less varnished wood to reduce maintenance costs.

3/7 Water Ski Zone Variation Consultation

Members received a report which set out the proposal to extend the trial of recreational wakeboarding including 'getting air' in zones on the River Yare and to include one zone on the River Waveney. It also proposed the variation of times for River Yare water ski Zone 1. Members' views were sought on the variations set out in Appendix 1.

Members also received a presentation and a summary of the issues raised during the recent consultation regarding the Water Ski Zone Yare 1. Proposed trial area maps were set out and the dates and times for waterskiing to take place were explained.

Members were content with the proposal to re run the trial of wakeboarding and the extension of the trial to the River Waveney for the forthcoming toll year.

Members noted the issues raised for the River Yare water ski zone 1 that as well as compatibility issues between water space users there were issues regarding fair distribution of time on the water space. Safety was also an issue

when rowing and waterskiing activities overlapped. Members also noted the clear mandate from the Government to grow and support these sports and rowing and canoeing groups had seen a recent increase in membership following significant investment. Members reviewed the options available including the proposed date and time combinations.

A member reported that a group of stakeholders had met in December and tried to find a suitable compromise for all. Three areas had been specifically designated for rowing on the Broads and ten had been designated for water skiing. It would be very difficult to match the aspirations of all stakeholders. However the meeting had been positive and had initiated an improved dialogue between the groups.

Certain dates and times were favoured by different groups and members queried whether a compromise was possible. A member commented that there was a possible option for extending the days on the Waveney, leaving the arrangement on the Yare unchanged. The Committee agreed to recommend that the status quo on the River Yare 1 zone be maintained and that dialogue should continue with all the stakeholders.

A member suggested that the Waterski Review Panel should include a representative of local rowers.

Members noted that a paper would be taken to the Authority on 16 March 2012.

3/8 Adjacent Waters

Members received a report which summarised the current position in respect of the Adjacent Waters Survey. Work was still progressing on the inputting of data and resulting enforcement action. Members were updated on the latest survey figures along with latest income projections.

Members noted that the survey exercise had been completed but enforcement was ongoing and the key issue to all concerned was safety.

3/9 Planning Application with Navigational Implications: Construction of a Walkway over the River Wensum Linking St George's Street to Duke Street

Members received details of a planning application which had been submitted in respect of the installation of a new walkway which would be partly sited in the River Wensum on a series of raised piles connected to a floating pontoon walkway. The piled sections of the walkway would be located up and downstream of Duke Street Bridge with the floating walkway running under the bridge, connecting the two piled sections. Anticipated navigation issues had been set out in Section 4 of the report and members views were sought on the issues and the conclusions as set out in Section 5.

Members noted that the width of the river at the narrowest point was 20 metres and that the proposed walkway would reduce this minimum river width to approximately 17.7 metres. The total length of the proposed walkway was around 140m, breaking down into two separate stretches over the river which were 2.3m wide and a centre section on the land. The walkway would reflect the design features of Peter's Bridge giving waterside features a consistent approach.

Members queried the surface material of the walkway with regard to safety and were reassured that this was in hand. Members also queried the access via a 'lockable' gate. It was noted that in order for Planning Officers to be satisfied that the development was safe, a lockable gate was required so that in the event of flooding managed access only would be available. It was also stated that the intention was to lock the gates each night.

Concerns were mentioned in the report regarding restriction on the width under Dukes Palace Bridge and restriction on turning space. Members were reassured that this was being taken into consideration, and consultation had been undertaken with the River Bus operators.

Members queried whether this might be a good opportunity to include additional moorings in the development. It was noted that this area had not been identified in the Mooring Strategy as a potential site due to poor access. It was recognised that further mooring opportunities were being sought in this length of river and this development would be taken into account when assessing proposals for neighbouring sites.

It was also queried whether any of the area's local history would be lost because of the development. It was noted that a viewing platform was to be erected with the potential to hold some form of interpretation board informing users of the area's historical context.

3/10 Draft Strategic Priorities 2012/13

Member's received a paper which set out the Draft Strategic Priorities for 2012/13. The Navigation Committee's views were sought on these priorities.

A member commented that there appeared to be activities identified in the schedule which might be carried out by bodies other than the Broads Authority. The member felt that in times of economic stringency the Authority should be seeking to restrict itself to core activities. It was noted, however, that the example provided, concerning the landscape study, was part of the Authority's remit as a Planning Authority.

A member commented that there was an ongoing issue with an excess of trees lining river banks and asked that the wording of priority 2(c)2 be more explicit in terms of the specification. It was noted that many such areas were on private land and it was not always possible to persuade landowners to clear trees back. A way forward was through compromise, education and negotiation.

A member questioned whether the Head of Communications was the appropriate officer to develop the yacht stations and visitor centres and suggested that the Authority needed a designated officer to deal specifically with tourism.

It was noted that the Authority did currently have an officer responsible for tourism, funded by the STEP Project. The Authority was committed to carry on with the high level of support to local tourism until the STEP project finished, whereupon alternative arrangements would need to be considered. The Chairman, also being the Lead Member for Tourism, acknowledged that this was an issue which was not being ignored.

The Chief Executive confirmed that the Head of Communications managed the yacht stations and visitor centres and in his opinion was best placed to take forward these tasks.

A member noted the linkage between item 4.6 "Continue to roll out the Document Management System across the whole Authority" and the later item in the report on the Safety Management System Audit Action Plan, item 7 "Set the Safety Management System as high priority for rollout of Authority wide DMS". The Chief Executive agreed that this linkage would be recognised.

The Committee supported the Draft Strategic Priorities as set out in the report, on the basis that the comments on priorities 2(c)2 and 4.6 were taken into account.

3/11 Broadland Flood Alleviation Project

(1) General Update

Members received a report which provided an update on the Broadland Flood Alleviation Project including the works scheduled and works at the design, pre-application stage and construction phase.

(2) Planning Application for Compartment 20 (Langley Marshes)

Members received a report which provided them with a summary of BESL's planning application proposals for Compartment 20 (Langley Marshes) on the true right bank of the River Yare. The report also outlined officers' comments on the planning application upon which members comments were welcomed.

A member commented that this was a very good example of how working together on projects provided benefits to all parties. BESL was proposing to initiate some flood defence works in this area and alongside this install a slipway. The Authority was very supportive of this as long as all the planning conditions were met.

(3) Planning Application for Compartment 9 Phase 2 (Acle Bridge to Bridge Farm)

Members received a summary of BESL's planning application for Phase 2 of the flood defence works in Compartment 9 between Acle Bridge and Bridge Farm on the true left bank of the River Bure. The report outlined officers' views on the planning application upon which members' comments were sought.

Members were concerned that another potential mooring space was to be lost and contended that the Authority appeared to have missed an opportunity to deliver against strategic objective NA5.2 of the Broads Plan by securing demasting moorings on this quadrant of Acle Bridge. BESL had offered to repair the pilings with the caveat that the landowner would then take on the responsibility for their ongoing maintenance. It was noted that the land owner, after discussion with BESL, had decided not to take on responsibility for the pilings and so they would be removed as they were in a state of serious disrepair.

Members were advised that it was not in the Authority's remit to take on responsibility for structures in this condition.

Agreement had been made with the landowner for the construction of a timber clad wall creating a flood defence with a conservation area/dyke developed within the excavated areas.

Members were advised that this work would not preclude the Authority from providing a de-masting point at this location at a later stage as pontoons could work well at this location.

Members questioned whether it was possible to add a caveat to the planning application requiring a de-masting point at this location. They were advised that this was not possible in this instance.

(4) Erosion Monitoring at Piling Removal Sites

Members received a summary of the erosion monitoring data that BESL had provided for the piling removal sites in the project area. Members were advised that officers were content with the consultation so far.

Members queried the issue of cliff erosion of the river banks following piling removal and reprofiling and what kind of intervention might be needed in the future. They were advised that BESL was providing the Authority with ongoing reports and nothing dramatic had been noted at this stage. Members were asked to note that the design promoted vegetation and reed re-growth that, in itself, dissipated the wave energy and helped prevent further erosion with less intervention. Adequate reed growth had been observed on the upper reaches of the rivers. Lower reaches with faster flows were more problematic.

3/12 Boating Safety Management Group

The Committee received the minutes of the Boating Safety Management Group meeting held on 2 February. One issue had been the current problem with water quality at water points. It had been agreed at the meeting that the terminology used on the water points should be '*Be sure - boil before drinking*'.

Suggestions were also made that more electric power points should be made available on the system, potentially with higher charges being applied.

Members noted the verdict of 'accidental drowning' from the Coroner's Report on the drowning at the Great Yarmouth Yacht Station in April 2011. The HSE had carried out a full investigation following the incident. However, as a result of this, 10 external lockers would be purchased. These external lockers would be available for anyone mooring at the Yacht Station. A lifejacket could be safely stored within the locker and then used to board the vessel, retrieving the other lifejackets to ensure safe boarding for other passengers.

Members received a report which set out findings from the recent external audit of the Authority's Safety Management System. Members were content with the findings.

3/13 Construction and Maintenance Work Programme: Progress Report 2011/12 and Draft Programme 2012/13

Members received a report which set out progress made in the delivery of the 2011/12 Construction and Maintenance Work Programme to date. The report updated members on changes to the programme and also set out the proposed programme for the forthcoming financial year.

Members noted that good progress had been made and work was going very well. The team had now caught up with the dredging programme timetable.

3/14 Navigation Income and Expenditure: 1 April 2011 to 31 December 2011

Members received a report which summarised the actual navigation income and expenditure for the nine month period to 31 December 2011, compared to the revised budget. The report provided a list of major variances and reasons for these variances. Members noted the amendments to the paper as tabled during the meeting.

Members noted that, following a meeting with the new Treasurer and Financial Adviser, it had been agreed to dispense with providing revised budgets in future. Instead, members would be provided with the original budget, actual expenditure and forecast outturn figures.

Members received an update on the new on-line tolls payment system. The system was working well and at the date of the meeting 14% of total payments had been made on-line.

Members queried the financial profiling of the budgets. Members were advised that profiling had been difficult this year with new budget holders and that training would be provided to make sure that the profiles for 2012/13 were more realistic.

A member queried the PRISMA expenditure and income. Members were advised that a more detailed report on PRISMA expenditure would be provided at a future meeting.

3/15 Chief Executive's Report

Members received a report which 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 noted the Broads Authority's resolution concerning the transfer of Breydon Water.

The matter of Vauxhall Bridge had been under discussion with Norfolk County Council for some time. The Council wanted to close the bridge during April and May to enable work to go ahead. The Authority was not in a position to prohibit or grant this approval as it was not the navigation authority for the area. However, the Authority had concerns about this as did other stakeholders.

Members noted that a meeting was taking place in March to finalise the dates to carry out the work after the risk assessments had been agreed. There was no intention to restrict air draft or space under the bridge. All affected users would be made aware of what is going on via a Notice to Mariners with the closure being made for about five days during October/November 2012.

A Structural Engineer would be instructed to report on the bridge and a full independent assessment was to be carried out on the feasibility of raising the bridge. Members noted that a budget of around £200,000 has been estimated for the lifting of the bridge and that Strategic Objective NA 5.3 of the Broads Plan committed the Authority to promoting the replacement of low bridges with opening / raised alternatives where opportunities exist in capital works projects. Conservation Officers from the Authority and Great Yarmouth Borough Council had also been involved as the bridge was an important Grade 2 Listed structure.

3/16 Current Issues

Members noted that the Authority's Planning Policy Officer had been consulted on proposals for a new footbridge in the Lake Lothing area as part of the Lowestoft Development Plan. Members were requested to provide a response independently or through their respective organisations. Members were advised that they would be provided with a copy of the Authority's response to the consultation.

3/17 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday 19 April 2012 at Dragonfly House, Norwich, commencing at 2.00pm.

3/18 Exclusion of the Public

The Committee agreed to exclude the public from the meeting under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972.

3/19 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011

The exempt minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Members also received an update on Breydon Water and unanimously agreed to support the transfer of Breydon Water to the Authority under the terms proposed.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 16.50

Code of Conduct for Members

Declaration of Interests

Committee: Navigation Committee

Date: 23 February 2012

Name Please Print	Agenda/ Mins No(s)	Nature of Interest (Please describe the nature of the interest)	Please tick here if the interest is a Prejudicial interest ✓
A S Mallett	All items	Toll payer, Appointed Broadland District Council Member BA Planning Committee, Vice Commodore Norwich Frostbite Sailing Club, NSBA	✓
A Goodchild	8 – 21	Toll payer, ABA, ME Chairman, BMF Committee Dredge Contractor	
M Whitaker	8/12 – 14/17, 21	Toll payer, NHBF Committee, Hire Boat Operator	
D A Broad	8, 10/11 – 15/16	Toll payer, Great Yarmouth Port Consultative Committee, Chairman of Ropes Hill Dyke Residents Association	
L Betts	8 – 21	Toll payer and Landowner	
P E Ollier	8/12 – 14/17, 21	NSBA committee member, toll payer, member of BA Planning Committee, member of Broads sailing clubs	
P Greasley	8 – 21	Toll payer, Boat Hirer and Operator, BHBF Chairman	
P Dixon	8 – 17	Toll Payer, Sailing Club, RYA, SEV	
M Heron	8 – 19	Toll Payer, Chair Whitlingham Boathouses, Member Norwich RC, British Rowing, NSBA, NBYC, RCC, Landowner	
J Knight	8 – 21	Toll payer, Boat Hirer and Operator	