

Navigation Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2026

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Present

Alan Goodchild – in the Chair (from item 2), Harry Blathwayt, Sue Cadamy, Mark Collins, Peter Dixon, Tony Grayling, Heather Hilburn, Leslie Mogford, Bob Neate, Remus Sawyerr, Paul Thomas, and Daniel Thwaites.

In attendance

Lucy Burchnall - Head of Ranger Services, Matt Dane – Head of Safety Management (items 12 and 13), Dan Hoare – Head of Operations, Emma Krelle – Director of Resources, Emily Leonard – Waterways Project Officer (item 15), John Packman - Chief Executive, Rob Rogers - Director of Delivery, Joseph Balaam – Governance Officer, Lorraine Taylor – Head of Governance.

1. Apologies and welcome

The Chief Executive welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Stephen Bolt.

Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

The Chief Executive explained that the meeting was being audio-recorded. All recordings remained the copyright of the Broads Authority and anyone wishing to receive a copy should contact the Governance Team. The minutes remained the formal record of the meeting. He added that the law permitted any person to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of public meetings of the Authority. This did not extend to live verbal commentary. The Chair needed to be informed if anyone intended to photograph, record or film so that any person under the age of 18 or members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed could be accommodated.

Chair's announcements

The Chief Executive reminded Members that they were in the pre-election period of heightened sensitivity and Members should refrain from speaking in a way which sought to influence voters.

2. Appointment of Chair

Alan Goodchild was proposed by Sue Cadamy and seconded by Mark Collins.

There being no other nominations Alan Goodchild was appointed Chair of the Navigation Committee for the forthcoming year.

Alan Goodchild took the Chair.

The Chair thanked the committee for having confidence in him to continue as Chair.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Peter Dixon was proposed by Sue Cadamy and seconded by Mark Collins.

There being no other nominations Peter Dixon was appointed Vice-Chair of the Navigation Committee for the forthcoming year.

4. Declarations of interest

Members expressed their declarations of interest as set out in Appendix 1 of these minutes. Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered.

The following Members confirmed that they had been lobbied in relation to agenda item number 15: Bob Neate, Mark Collins, Harry Blathwayt, Peter Dixon and Alan Goodchild.

5. Matters of urgent business

No items were proposed as a matter of urgent business.

6. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2026 were signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting.

7. 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. The Chief Executive said there were no further updates, and no questions were presented by the Members.

The report was noted.

8. Appointment of two co-opted members to the Broads Authority

Members were asked to recommend the appointment of two co-opted Members to the Broads Authority until 14 May 2027 as set out in Section 1(2)(c) of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988 as amended. The Head of Governance explained that given that Alan Goodchild had been appointed Chair of the Navigation Committee, he would automatically take up one of those appointments. This, therefore, left one vacancy that needed to be filled.

Tony Grayling proposed and Sue Cadamy seconded that Peter Dixon be appointed as a member of the Broads Authority until 14 May 2027. No other nominations were received.

It was resolved that Alan Goodchild and Peter Dixon be recommended to the Broads Authority for appointment as the co-opted Members to the Broads Authority until 14 May 2027.

9. Chief Executive's report and current issues

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (CE). The CE said there were a number of issues from the last Broads Authority meeting that would be of interest to the committee. First, the CE said the Authority had adopted a series of strategic priorities, one of which

related to navigation. This comprised three parts; review of Breydon and lower tidal rivers management plan, the development of a Joint Maintenance Dredge Protocol with Peel Ports and a Riverside Tree Management Plan, which was due for review.

Second, The CE said the financial strategy had been adopted by the Authority. At the time of writing the Authority had received 46% of the budgeted tolls income, this figure was now 75% and continued to be monitored weekly. A climate action plan had also been adopted.

The CE drew Members attention to the timetable for the development of the Broads Plan, which had also been adopted at the last meeting of the Authority. The CE acknowledged the important role of the Navigation Committee during this process and emphasised the need of the Committee's involvement. The process would start this week as the Authority would be informing Natural England of the commencement of the review. The CE recommended that Members of the Navigation Committee attend a future workshop to consider both the effectiveness of the existing plan and what Members thought the priorities should be for the next five years.

In relation to capital expenditure for 2025/26, the CE said that as before, confirmation from DEFRA had been received quite late, and commended the staff on the brilliance of being able to develop the projects, get the consents and deliver projects. One of these projects was the toilet improvements at Yarmouth Yacht Station, which the CE was very pleased with. The CE advised the Authority had spent most of the funds allocated and had returned a comparatively small sum of £44,000 to DEFRA which was unable to be spent prior to the deadline.

The CE provided an update on one project, the River Waveney pontoons at Castle Marsh, and was pleased to say the project had been granted planning consent by the Authority at the Planning Committee meeting held on Friday 10 May 2026.

Finally, the CE said the EDP had posted an article on the late payment of tolls. The CE remarked it had been an exceptional year in relation to toll collection, court proceedings had been issued to over one hundred people, of which fifty settled out of court and the others had been prosecuted. The CE said some people who had not paid tolls had limited resources, which the Authority had taken into account, but those that could afford to were wasting the Authorities time, energy and resources. The CE hoped that the attention brought by the article, in combination with new administrative charges, would reduce the occurrence of toll non-payment in the future.

A Member asked how the Authority would present the award of costs in the accounts. The Director of Resources said they would be included on the income line of the legal budget. The Member asked how cautions were issued for speeding at night as Rangers would not be on patrol. The Head of Ranger Services said the Authority investigated a number of witness statements received in relation to this vessel. In total, the Authority received over one hundred witness reports every year, all of which were investigated.

The Head of Governance said a poll would be sent to Members which would assess their availability for a workshop to discuss the Broads Plan. Members indicated they would be happy to attend.

The report was noted.

10. Income and expenditure

Members received the report of the Director of Resources. The Director of Resources said there were no further updates to the report, and no questions were presented by Members.

The report was noted.

11. Operations work programme – progress update

The Members received the report of the Head of Operations (HO). The HO said the Authority had not reached river sediment management targets set out at the beginning of the year and the report provided explanation for this. The HO highlighted high salinity amongst the causes that impacted the programme of works for longer than expected. The Authority had completed the Riverside Tree Management programme over the winter with one small area on the River Waveney being deferred to the next year. The HO said the piling installation project at Acle Bridge had stalled as contractors discovered the ground in the area was softer than predicted and asbestos sheets had been discovered. Consequently, the initial design was unfeasible, and a new design would be required to address these challenges. Finally, the redundant timber structure at Turntide Jetty had been removed and the movement of marker posts would take place when obstructive sediment could be cleared.

A Member expressed concern that the interruptions caused by salinity may become a regular occurrence and asked if any thought had been given to redesigning the dredging programme. The HO said the salinity issues at Hickling were unpredictable and not faced by the Authority before at this level. The persistence of salt through the winter created issues as activities were paused whilst conditions remained stressful for fish in the area. The HO said the Authority would need to examine the operations schedule if this was to become a continuous feature. The Authority carried out works at Hickling in the winter months to avoid disturbing *Prymnesium* algae in the summer months. The HO acknowledged the challenge of a shrinking working window should salinity issues persist in future.

A Member asked if monitoring of salinity on the Broads was sufficient. The HO replied that monitoring at Hickling had taken place before, during and after works. This had guided conversation with the Environment Agency (EA) regarding thresholds for fish safety. The HO stated the Thurne was moderately covered in terms of monitoring salinity with there being a monitoring point at Repps. The Member asked if the remainder of the Broads was sufficiently covered. The HO said the EA had a small network of salinity monitors that tracked live data but acknowledged the Broads did not have a wider network covering all the Broads as other organisations monitored salinity independently. The HO said water companies carried out monitoring in some areas and as such there was no large-scale live monitoring system that

covered the whole network. The Chief Executive (CE) believed that in terms of the Authority's dredge programme, the information provided by the EA combined with the Authority's own measurements was more than sufficient. The CE said it may be possible to have a further discussion with the EA about the trigger points and at what point could the Authority dredge, or not. There had been a suggestion that the Authority took a cautious approach to its dredging activities and the impact of dredging on fish.

The Member queried whether capital funds could still be used following delay to works at Acle Bridge. The HO said the piling had been purchased and project funding, which included the 24-hour mooring section, was split 50/50 with the navigation budget.

A Member sought clarification on the evidence that guided current salinity thresholds and questioned the impact that dredging would have on these levels. The HO said the Authority were in discussion with EA regarding the appropriate thresholds and said disturbance at sensitive times was another issue in relation to this. Dredging could force fish into areas of high salinity or trap them in areas with high aggregation that could impact oxygen levels, both of which could be detrimental to the health of fish on the Broads. The Member acknowledged that the Authority needed to conduct operations responsibly but would prefer the Authority to focus on activities that could take place and limit the expense on idle equipment. A number of Members agreed the current salinity limits may be too sensitive.

The report was noted.

12. 2025/26 Health and Safety Review and internal audit recommendations

The Members received the report of the Head of Safety Management (HSM). The HSM said the purpose of the report was to present the annual review of marine incidents in 2025/26 and the recommended audit programme for 2026/27.

Data from the report showed accidents remained relatively rare, with there being one fatality and seven individuals requiring hospitalisation, in connection with boating activities. The HSM remarked this was the lowest number in two decades. Incidence of vessel fires and explosion also remained minimal.

The HSM added there were seven fatalities not connected to boating activity. These figures included incidents where individuals entered the water either accidentally or intentionally, with some of these related to swimming. The Authority continued to emphasise the dangers of swimming in the Broads.

The Authority continued to monitor reports of slips, trips and falls as these were regularly featured on incident reports. Fortunately, in the incidents of accidental entry into the water, life jackets were in use which allowed those involved to exit the water and make a full recovery. The HSM concluded that the Broads waterways continue to provide a safe environment for families and visitors.

A Member applauded the Rangers and Dockyard for their continued emphasis on safety and the wearing of life jackets, however, the Member raised concern regarding an incident they had witnessed the previous week. The Member said they witnessed unsafe behaviour at Potter Heigham in which children were attempting to rock a rowboat. The children were standing in the boat whilst tilting the vessels in a manner that could have capsized the craft. Neither child was wearing a life jacket, whilst the father was watching from their hire boat. The Member said it was essential for the Authority to continue to emphasise the dangers of such incidents to ensure the public were well informed.

A Member sought clarification on the conditions of reporting incidents. The Member commented they were part of a large group that utilised the water for paddling activities and asked if each incident of entry to the water would need to be reported. The Member stated that not all entries in relation to the group's activities would be intentional and the group would not normally report this to the Authority but would record internally. Due to this, the Member believed occurrence of entries would be far higher than reported. The HSM acknowledged that not all incidences would have been reported and advised reporting was useful to the Authority as it enabled the study of trends. The Member sought advice on how to spread this message to similar groups that utilised the Broads. A Member suggested that there may be an issue on clarity between reporting in relation to controlled incidence of entry into the water and said not all entry in relation to water sports may be necessary.

A Member queried whether the Oulton Broad power boat racing had been cancelled for the remainder of the year. The Head of Safety Management said there was an ongoing investigation and East Suffolk Council (ESC) had been corresponding with the organisers. ESC still needed some questions to be answered further to be fully satisfied and then the potential of the activity resuming could be established. The Member believed the Committee needed to be cautious of navigation restrictions and commented they would like to see the Broads opened for this sport as soon as possible and sought the opinion of the Committee. The Chief Executive (CE) believed it was not appropriate for the Committee to form an opinion on this before all the facts were known. The CE stated the Authority should trust the judgement of ESC as the investigating Authority and emphasised the tragic loss of life of which was currently under investigation. The CE said the area of the Broads was open to navigation and restriction was only in place for a specific activity.

A Member asked if there were any engagement opportunities where safety awareness could be raised. A Member said hire businesses provided extensive safety inductions to their hirers which included safety videos and demonstrations. The Director of Delivery said the Authority engaged with the public each year at the Norfolk Show and further Ranger super safety days, in which blue light services were invited to attend.

A Member commented page 136 of the combined papers provided a useful guide as to whether an incident should be reported.

The report was noted.

13. Safety Management System review

The Members received the report of the Head of Safety Management (HSM). The HSM said the report introduced the revised version 10 of the Broads Authority Safety Management System (SMS). The HSM added the Maritime and Coast Guard Agency (MCA) Port Marine Safety Code, a nationally agreed standard for UK ports, harbours and marinas, was updated in 2025 to the Port Marine Facilities Safety Code (PMFSC). This change extended compliance to third party marinas and facilities in competent harbour authority areas which resulted in the Authority undertaking the large task of informing third party marinas, within the Broads, that they would need to develop their own code. The HSM said the Broads Authority had registered their SMS and safety code as compliant with the MCA. The window for this closed in March 2026 and would not open again until 2028.

A Member commented that references to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) were incorrectly termed Special Site of Scientific Interest in a number of places. The Member also sought clarification on the image presented on page 15 of the SMS (page 83 of the combined papers). The Member believed the label 'navigable river/channels' shown on the map of the Broads Authority Executive and Navigation Areas (figure 1) was not clear. The Member also noted the section which stated hire boats could not proceed through Mutford Lock and queried what would happen if a hire boat company was content for a hirer to pass the lock on one of their vessels.

A Member commented that they did not see any issue with the labelling of navigable river/channels on the stated image.

A Member said it would not be possible for hire boats to pass Mutford Lock as vessel insurance would end at Mutford Lock. As a result, no company would provide consent for one of their vessels to pass. A Member added that any vessel would likely need to be ABP (Associated British Ports) registered to pass through the harbour. It was also stated that hire boats did not meet the required category to pass Mutford Lock.

A Member asked if any briefings would need to take place regarding changes to the new SMS. The HSM said the report highlighted a number of key recommendations and training to duty holders would take place as per the recommendations.

The report was noted.

14. Lower tidal rivers channel management – marker post specifications

The Members received the report of the Head of Operations (HO). The HO said the report was brought to the Committee to seek opinion on a subset of marker posts which were not in an ideal position or colour in terms of channel marking safe navigation. The HO provided a presentation which displayed images of the marker post locations and highlighted those on the Lower Bure, for which comments were sought. The HO said this work would be a continuation of the successful work completed at Breydon and review would take place on a

post-by-post basis. The HO requested feedback on signage, marker posts and dredging in relation to navigation safety.

A Member recalled an incidence of a hire boat which had moored in an unsafe location that lacked signage. The vessel moored at what was an appealing mooring location at high water, however, the vessel listed entirely to one side when water levels changed. This incident required the inhabitants of the vessel to be airlifted from the craft. Fortunately, there were no injuries, and the only cost was financial. The Member believed that marker buoys were essential for safe navigation and asked that no markers be removed. The Member praised the work carried out by the Authority at Breydon and encouraged the Authority to continue to apply the principles and method used.

The HO sought further clarification as to whether the Member would prefer the two Environment Agency (EA) marker posts, to which specific attention had been drawn in the presentation, to remain in place. The Member said any marker that marked a hazard should remain and be clearly distinguishable.

A Member believed consistency was one of the most important factors in the review. The Member praised the work carried out at Breydon and said the principles used at the site should be utilised further in both directions of the navigation. The Member acknowledged the importance of clearly marking the navigable channel and added consistent dredging may be necessary in troublesome areas. The Member stated that navigation markers should not be the same colour as hazard markers and any hazards should be clearly marked.

A Member agreed with these comments and said that any marker posts that were incorrectly positioned would need to be moved as they could be misleading and create a hazard. The Member did not agree with the removal of marker posts and said navigation must be clearly marked.

A Member agreed with all the points raised but requested that international colour schemes be used if any repainting were to take place. The Head of Ranger Services said the Authority was able to define differences from international standards in the Safety Management System document. The Broads followed a traditional marking method that had been used for many years. Should the Authority change this and adopt international standards it would require the painting of all marker posts and adaptation of the Safety Management System document.

A Member added that some posts created confusion as certain green and red navigation markers were in areas which were clearly not navigable. The Member suggested these be painted yellow to identify the markers as a hazard. The Member suggested that there may be an insufficient number of posts on the Lower Bure but acknowledged there was warning signage in some areas that highlighted hazards to address this. The Member proposed this signage be extended if more posts were not added. The Member praised the work carried out at Breydon and hoped for a similar result with this review.

A Member suggested the IALA system be adopted as this was known to navigators, and stated tradition was an insufficient justification for preserving the current system. Regardless of

which system was used, a Member requested that the posts be consistent and easy for boaters to understand and follow.

The Chief Executive (CE) said it would have a detrimental impact to the landscape if the Lower Bure were to be filled with posts and a balance would need to be struck so that posts were placed in areas with the most need. The CE suggested the removal of any post that were poorly positioned and did not mark a navigable channel, including the old EA posts, and add posts in areas to mark hazards. A Member agreed with this and said justification would be needed for all posts. The Member favoured the current red and green colour scheme used for navigation posts and suggested remarking the whole system to IALA standards would be difficult and an unnecessary expense.

The Committee resolved to recommend the removal of unnecessary channel markers that served no purpose and created additional hazards, the addition of channel markers in strategic points which were underrepresented, to retain the existing colour scheme and to dredge where necessary to reinforce the navigable channel.

15. Potter Heigham Staithe re-piling and mooring space – options for the two existing small mooring cuts

The Members received the report of the Waterways Project Officer (WPO). The WPO said the report had been brought to the Navigation Committee to obtain feedback from the Members on the proposed options regarding implications on navigation.

A Member sought to provide useful context to the situation and said the dyke had been used for over 200 years and there were three in total. The left cut was used by day boats and the right was for short term loading only but was frequently blocked by contractor barges. The Member said there was a path linking the dykes with 200 nearby properties which was frequently impassable due to flooding. The Member emphasised the importance of the dykes as this frequently presented the only method for local users to load their vessels from nearby parked cars. Consequently, the Member was not in favour of removing the dykes and believed to do so would have a detrimental impact on luggage loading.

The Member shared a desire for a like for like replacement and expressed concern regarding eddies from larger vessels passing through the bridge. The Member thought this may present an issue if a pontoon were to be installed as limited protection from eddies would be provided and the structure could be unstable as a result. The Member believed further investigation would be required on the impact of this should the Authority seek to install a pontoon. The Member said it would be difficult for the community to lose access to a valuable resource should it be closed for an extended period whilst works take place. The Member hoped it may be possible to carry out a like for like replacement on one dyke at a time so that the other may remain open to the public.

A Member agreed with these sentiments and expressed that local opinion dictate that the dykes remained. The Member was not in favour of filling them in and preferred a like for like replacement. The Member did acknowledge that the installation of a pontoon would be

preferable to removal and advised the Parish Council would be discussing the matter at their next meeting. The Member expressed concern regarding the use of the dykes as a permanent mooring. The Head of Ranger Services said enforcement action in the area had been taken in the past.

A Member emphasised the historical significance of the Staithe as one of the few remaining on the system and commented that it regularly saw great use. The Member expressed a preference for the installation of a pontoon as this would be more accessible for wheelchair users.

A Member emphasised previous concerns that a pontoon may not be ideal due to eddies and further stated that the less attractive option to overstaying commercial users be considered in the decision-making process. A Member believed there may be no cost-effective modelling to investigate the impact of eddies.

The Head of Operations thanked the Members for their feedback and asked if Members would be happy for the project to be funded entirely from the navigation budget or seek other sources of funding.

A Member commented funding for the project should be primarily sourced from the navigation budget but said they would be in favour of supplementing this if a source of funds could be found.

A Member asked if the steel pilings had been costed. The WPO said the sheets for like for like piling (option 5) had been costed at £180,000 whereas piling sheets for replacing the central peninsula with a pontoon (option 1) would cost £116,000. A Member believed maintenance on the pontoon would raise the projected cost over time, whereas like for like piling would last for 30 years and would not raise concern in relation to the impact of eddies.

A Member advised pontoon maintenance was not expensive and if installed correctly there would be no stability issues resulting from eddies.

The Chief Executive said the navigation budget was in the best place it had been for years due to the expense of national park capital funds on equipment that would have otherwise been taken from the navigation budget. As a result, the navigation budget had sufficient funds should it need to finance the project.

It was agreed by the Members that like for like piling (option 5) or the replacement of the central peninsula with a pontoon (option 1) were the only options acceptable. The Members unanimously rejected the options to fill in the dykes as this would be a great loss to the community.

16. Committee timetable of meetings 2026/27

Members received the report of the Head of Governance (HoG). The HoG asked Members to note the dates of meetings and highlighted the tolls briefing, which would be on 7 October 2026 and the annual site visit on 12 August 2026.

The HoG encouraged Members to attend any briefings and workshops they were invited to. The invite indicated that the session would be of benefit to them and would not otherwise be sent.

17. Other items of business

The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for his service to the Authority and congratulated him on what would be his last Navigation Committee meeting before retirement. This sentiment was echoed by the applause of the Officers and Members in attendance.

18. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Navigation Committee would be held on Thursday 3 September 2026 at Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich, NR1 1RY commencing at 10am.

The meeting ended at 11:45am

Signed

Chairman

Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests: Navigation Committee, 16 April 2026

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest
Mark Collins	13	Communication with NSBA regarding Safety Management Systems.
Bob Neate	15	Owner of property in Potter Heigham.
Harry Blathwayt	15	Ward member for Potter Heigham.
Leslie Mogford	15	Member for Repps with Bastwick. Located on the opposite side of the river to Potter Heigham.