Navigation Committee
19 April 2012
Agenda Item No 7

Policy in Respect of Charging at Moorings

Report by the Chief Executive

Summary: The Authority's established policy is to provide a network of free, well maintained 24 hour moorings for use across the navigation area. The exceptions in respect of charging are the two yacht stations at Norwich and Great Yarmouth where facilities such as showers and toilets are provided. The only other mooring where a member of staff is employed to help the public moor is the Quay at Reedham where for safety reasons a seasonal Quay Assistant is employed.

This report seeks the views of the Navigation Committee on the principle of charging boats to moor at the Broads Authority's 24 hour moorings in response to the request by Ranworth Parish Council that a charge be levied on visitors to the Ranworth Staithe as the means of funding the costs of a local warden to assist boats mooring, collecting rubbish and generally supervising the use of the staithe.

Members are also asked to consider the suggestion from Mr Cator that a feasibility study be undertaken "to determine the financial viability of the parish taking this on".

1 Background

1.1 The Broads Authority maintains a network of 63 free moorings across the area. These are well used by both private boats and visitors on hire boats. In addition the Authority operates two yacht stations at Great Yarmouth and Norwich with toilets and showers where a charge is made to mooring. At Reedham Quay where there is a strong tide and the complication of the railway bridge a seasonal member of staff helps the public moor their boats.

2 History of Ranworth Staithe and Information Centre

2.1 The staithe at Ranworth was originally owned by the Ranworth Estate and was gifted to the Trustees of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Yacht Owners Association (NSBYO) on 20 October 1950 by Lt. Col. Henry John Cator. In January 1984 Blakes Holidays Ltd. and the two NSBYO Trustees entered into an agreement with the Authority for the construction of the Information Centre. Blakes agreed to contribute £5,000 towards the costs of the building and share the running costs. The Authority agreed to reimburse the Company 50% of the costs of an employee who was responsible for the distribution and provision of information.

2.2 In July 1984 the NSBYO granted the Authority a lease of the staithe and information centre to the Authority for a term of 99 years at the annual rent of £1. In November 1984 the Authority and Blakes Holidays Ltd. agreed to share the management and expenses at Ranworth with the Authority undertaking:

- surfacing of the car park and installing bollards and signs;
- fencing, landscaping and planting of trees and shrubs;
- the installation of a surfaced children's play area;

and on completion of the works the Company would pay the Authority a contribution of £2,000.

The Company agreed to maintain the surface of the car park and keep it reasonably tidy and free from litter, insure the said play equipment and be responsible for the maintenance of the recreation area including the seeding and mowing of the grassed areas and keeping the area tidy and free from litter. The final account for the information centre and site works was around £55,000.

2.3 As part of a management agreement signed in 1984 the Authority agreed to reimburse Blakes 50% of the costs of a Ranworth Warden employed by the Company whose tasks in addition to providing information from the centre included assisting boats to moor at the staithe, mowing the grass and removing litter. It is interesting to note from the file that in 1991 the Authority wrote to Blakes expressing concern that these tasks were not being performed adequately.

2.4 In 1986 the Authority contributed £5,000 towards the construction of new public toilets at Ranworth.

2.5 In 1998 Blakes Holidays Ltd sold its boat agency business to the Holiday Cottages Group and following a review of its commitments terminated the two agreements with the Authority of January and November 1984 on 31 March 2000.

2.6 On November 19 2002 the ownership of the staithe and visitor centre were transferred to the Broads Authority. The correspondence makes reference to the Norfolk and Suffolk and Broads Yacht Owners Association "intending to pass the staithe area to the Broads Authority to ensure that it is maintained and managed for public use as it has been in the past." There has been a suggestion that the intention was that the staithe should remain a free mooring for visitors but no documentation can be found to substantiate that. However, there is a covenant in the transfer when the site was gifted to the Trustees of the Broads Yacht Owners Association (NSBYO) by Lt. Col. Henry John Cator to reserve the right to free mooring for parishioners.

2.7 Since 2002 the Authority has spent in the order of £95,000 improving the facilities at Ranworth including resurfacing, re-piling the frontage and dinghy dyke and installing electric charging points. Of this approximately £15,000 was funded from navigation expenditure and the remainder from National

Park Grant. When the Helen of Ranworth was operated from the site by the Authority the member of staff also assisted craft mooring when available.

2.8 Last year following the Government's decision to make a substantial cut in National Park Grant over the life of the Spending Review the Authority took the difficult decision to find alternative means of provision for three of its six visitor centres. In the case of Ranworth the decision was to lease the centre to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. The arrangements took longer to put in place than had been originally envisaged and it was not until late in the summer that the Trust was up and running on the site. The Authority agreed with the Trust a range of tasks and checks that its staff and volunteers would undertake and these are contained in a license. Below I have set out the relevant section for your information. In the Licence the Trust agrees to carry out the schedule of tasks and checks as staff presence on site and time allows and when the centre is operating. The daily check list includes:

Boat Moorings Check
Visual check whilst NWT personnel are on site to ensure moorings are operating in a safe and efficient manner e.g. If a boat is taking up too much space or moored in an inappropriate location the owners/hirers are assisted to move to a more appropriate location.

Check for Trip Hazards/Safety Issues
Check for loose or split capping, uneven surfacing, voids, general trip hazards, vegetation. Remove any immediate debris/litter/ hazards where possible. Report any outstanding issues direct to the Broads Authority immediately for rectification.

Check Life Saving Equipment
Check throw lines/life rings are in place and ready to be utilised if necessary. Report any missing or defective items immediately to the Broads Authority.

Operate Compactor/Clear litter
Operate the Broadland District rubbish compactor at least once daily ensuring the area is clear of general rubbish/litter.

Assist Persons in the Water
By utilising life saving equipment on site such as throw lines, life rings and/or calling for assistance.

Check Water Hoses
Check that hoses are in good condition and have no leaks. Recoil hoses on reels when necessary and ensure end of hoses are kept clear of the ground or river water. Report any defects to the Broads Authority for rectification.

General Visual Check
General observations on site for issues and defects, reporting any issues to Broads Authority direct for rectification.

2.9 While there were some problems early on in the season, once the Norfolk Wildlife Trust was on site the Authority's Rangers felt the new arrangements worked pretty well. In the latest e-mail from Mr Cator (29 March 2012) he states: *"The Parish has banded together to keep the Staithe and surrounding area tidy; gardening, hedge trimming, grass cutting, dyke slubbing, compacting rubbish etc. but the managing of visiting boats remains an issue".*

3 Local Residents' Views

3.1 Two letters are appended to this report. The first from Mr Charles Cator in April 2011 sets out the general background and makes the case for the introduction of mooring and car park fees. The second from Mrs James, the Clerk to the Parish Council, in July sets out more general concerns raised by Mrs Miller of the Granary Stores. Most of those issues were early in the season before the Wildlife Trust took occupation of the Visitor Centre and have been resolved. So, the Wildlife Trust has a key to the rubbish compactor and regularly operates it. Broads Authority Rangers regularly visit the site by land and water and monitor the length of stay of boats. When available the Norfolk Wildlife Trust staff and volunteers assist with mooring but in any event only at the yacht stations and Reedham is this facility available and on most occasions visitors and private boat owners sort themselves out and avoid leaving large gaps. Occasionally in the low season boats moor side on but it is not a big issue. Staff at the Information Centre operated by the Wildlife Trust can provide information to the public and the Authority is supporting in that.

3.2 A meeting was held at the end of October in the village shop involving Mr Cator, the shopkeeper, the publican and representatives of the Parish Council, the Church, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Authority. A wide range of issues were discussed with the residents wanting to see the employment of a local Warden and the Authority and Wildlife Trust taking the view that the new arrangements between them were sufficient.

3.3 One argument put forward by the residents is that in a world of reducing public expenditure it is becoming more accepted by the public that users of services should pay through charging and this is certainly true. A number of our national park colleagues have been introducing charging into their car parks for the first time. In the case of Ranworth the shop, pub and Parish Council are all unable to contribute financially to their proposed service and hence the suggestion that it should be funded by way of fees levied on car parking and mooring.

4 Broads Authority's Policy

4.1 Following extensive consultation the Authority adopted a Mooring Strategy for the Broads in 2006. This was updated in April 2009 and will undergo a further review later this year. The overarching objective for the Strategy is 'to maintain as a minimum the present number of moorings available for visitor use, as identified in the Moorings Audit. In seeking to achieve the above objective the Authority adopted a number of principles including: 'maintain free use of Broads Authority unmanned moorings'.

4.2 Should members consider that charges should be levied at 24hr moorings it would also be necessary to consider how the income generated should be spent. The proposal by Ranworth residents is that the income should fund a wardening presence, but alternative priorities might include increasing the number of mooring sites, provision of a greater level of facilities at sites or using the income to fund the necessary maintenance works

5 Conclusion

5.1 Looking back over the last thirty years several things are clear. Ranworth is a very popular site for visitors by water and by road. Very substantial sums of public money have been invested in the area by the Broads Authority and Broadland District Council, along with contributions from the private sector, Blakes and the Cator family, and the third sector, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Church.

5.2 The management of the staithe has, for historical reasons, benefited from a higher level of provision than comparable areas in the Broads and it is not therefore surprising that the Parish Council would like a Ranworth Warden to deal with the consequences of the visitor pressure. However, the Authority's staff and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust do not believe there are any significant problems and with a longer lead-in period to the coming season the Wildlife Trust are confident that the requirements of the license can be met.

5.3 It is the view of officers that in the changed economic climate it is not appropriate to fund a Ranworth Warden out of either National Park Grant or Navigation Income and there is no justification for overturning the Authority's policy of not charging for 24 hour moorings. The views of the principle of levying a charge and the experience of members from their visit to the site would be appreciated.

5.4 The letter from Mr Cator suggests a "feasibility study to determine the financial viability of the parish taking this on". Given the very substantial responsibilities and liabilities for the long term maintenance of the site this might be a non-starter. However, it would useful to have the Committee's view on this proposal.

Background papers:	Various leases and agreements concerning the staithe and surrounding area at Ranworth
Author:	John Packman
Date of report:	30 March 2012
Broads Plan Objectives:	None
Appendices:	APPENDIX 1 – Letter from Mr Charles Cator dated 5 April 2011 APPENDIX 2 – Letter from Mrs James, Clerk to Woodbastwick Parish Council 28 July 2011

APPENDIX 1

Trudi / Clare
- please have a read.
Thanks
26 APR 2011
26/4

RANWORTH ESTATE
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NR13 6HS
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John Packman Esq
The Broads Authority
Dragonfly House
2 Gilders Way
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NR3 1UB

Dear John

5th April 2011

The Staithe, Ranworth

Thank you very much for our constructive discussion on the future of Ranworth Staithe.
The Staithe is the centre of the village and most activities either focus on the Staithe or stem from the Staithe.
I am pleased that you have progressed plans for The Norfolk Wildlife Trust to occupy the old Information Centre on The Staithe. They adopt a sympathetic outlook to the area, are keen to increase visitor numbers both on the water and by land and I am sure the arrangement will benefit all the other attractions in the village.
The Ranworth Estate as a representative of the other businesses shares I believe a common objective, which stems from a desire to maintain and where possible to improve facilities for the visitor whilst striking a balance that sustains the goodwill and protects the residents of Ranworth.
There is a history of progress on this front, which has been achieved by a close partnership between the various interested parties; The Broads Authority, The Broadland District Council, The Norfolk Wildlife Trust, The Parish Council, The Granary Stores, The Maltsters Pub, The Church, Ranworth Estate and the representatives of users of the various amenities and attractions.
The local businesses have contributed towards the upkeep of the Staithe area both financially and in kind but the bulk of the funding to date has been from the Broads Authority, who are custodians of the Staithe.
For a long time there has been a "Harbour Master" at the Staithe, who has been a key person in maintaining equilibrium at the heart of the village, but this role is to be discontinued as part of the recent budget cuts necessitating a review of the management of whole of The Staithe area.
As an introduction I think it would be helpful to outline the issues we face and the challenges facing the village.

GENERAL POINTS

i) Visitor numbers to the village have been calculated to be in excess of 100,000 per annum by boat and by car. Although there are many attractions most visitors are drawn to the centre of the village, The Staithe.

ii) Visitors in this number have to be managed.

iii) Attractions include; Walking, Picnicking, the Church and Visitor Centre, the NWT Conservation Trail and Centre, Boat trips, the Shop and the Pub.

iv) Visitors fall into the passive category (source: EATB). The practicalities of this means they have low expectations and have a small budget.

v) Business Income per visitor is comparatively low but their impact is very high profile

vi) Business in the village is seasonal. All attractions close or partially close from November to April with the exception of the church.

vii) Traffic is a major issue and has to be managed: Coaches drop off visitors on the road outside The Granary Stores (GS) and are encouraged to park on the sugar beet pad 1 mile away on the Woodbastwick road so as not to cause congestion. Cars park wherever there is space, with the biggest car parks owned by The Maltsters PH and NWT. Additional car parking is on the Staithe and at the church but when these are all full, cars then park on the verges outside houses.

viii) The infrastructure belongs to, or is administered in part by The Broads Authority (BA), The Broadland District Council (BDC), Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT), Punch Taverns (PH), Parish Council (PC), NCC Highways (NCC) and Ranworth Estate (RE). There is no formal arrangement between these groups.

ix) Commercial operators such as Canoe Trail companies use the Staithe as a base causing congestion without making a financial contribution to the area.

x) The ownership of the Staithe carries with it unique responsibilities to manage the area, which can be assigned.

Below I have itemised the various services provided, associated costs and opportunities lost. Most of the costs are estimated but are probably very conservative.

AMORTISATION

A. Quay heading; Depreciation on 569ft run of steel quay heading and path- est £2,500-3,500 p.a.

B. Amenities; Depreciation on sitting areas for visitors- est £3,000 p.a.

ANNUAL COSTS

C. Repairs & Maintenance to the infrastructure; quay heading, paths, open areas, benches, tables, signposting, water pipes and stands, electricity posts, landscaping, tree surgery, car park surface and posts etc- est £6,000p.a

D. Insurance; Public Liability and Property – est £750 p.a

REGULAR COSTS

E. Services on the Staithe; Water rates, Electricity rates- est £450 each p.a

F. Litter disposal;

-Cost of compactor presently absorbed by BDC but a service recently under threat of removal. The cost is likely to be £60/empty, which being weekly comes to £3,120 p.a (as a direct comparison the much smaller commercial bins operated by The Maltsters and Ranworth Estate cost £30/empty).

-Daily monitoring of the compactor and tidying up surrounding area- £780 p.a

G. Grass cutting; cost currently absorbed by Granary Stores- £780 p.a
H. Landscape and Footpath maintenance; cost absorbed by BA est £500 p.a

DAILY COSTS

I. Harbour Master; a constant presence by a warden keeps disorder to a minimum whilst providing a valuable service to boat visitors. The Estate mans the Island 24hr moorings during the peak mooring hours over lunch and up to dusk. There is an important security element to this role. The feedback from visitors is extremely positive, who value the service we provide. The cost for a similar presence at the Staithe is likely to be a minimum of £7,500 p.a
J. Litter collection; daily in the centre of the village and weekly along the roads leading into the village to keep area tidy (it includes clearing up after dogs) - cost absorbed by Ranworth Estate and Granary Stores £2,900 p.a.
K. Toilet/shower facilities; cost currently absorbed by BDC but a service recently under threat of closure. The cost is likely to be £250/wk for a daily clean.
L. Mooring of Lady Helen/Dragonfly/BA vessel; cost currently absorbed by Granary Stores normally £500 p.a.
M. Storage of equipment at the Staithe; cost currently absorbed by the Granary Stores which on a commercial level would be £250 p.a

GOODWILL

N. Goodwill; a local presence is difficult to quantify but has a value
O. Liaison between operators; Pub/Stores/NWT/Coach drivers/other commercial operators such as canoe trails etc- again difficult to quantify but like goodwill has a value

OPPORTUNITY LOST

P. Car Parking; the cost of parking Cars and coaches is largely absorbed by the Pub and NWT and Ranworth Estate, - no fees are charged but there are costs incurred and opportunity lost
Q. Mooring; there is no charge made to visitors by boat

	BA	BDC	NWT	PH	GS	RE	TOTAL
A.Quay Heading	3,500						3,500
B.Amenities	3,000						3,000
C.Rep's/Main't'ce	6,000						6,000
D.Insurance	750						750
E.Services	900						900
F.Litter disposal		3,120			780		3,900
G.Grass cutting					780		780
H.Landscaping	500						500
I.Harbour Master	7,500						7,500

J.Litter Collection						2,900	2,900
K.Toilets		6,500					6,500
L.Mooring					500		500
M.Storage					250		250
							36,980

Future Service Provision:

The options open to us are:

1. To cut services; we are all agreed that a reduction in standards is not acceptable.
2. To maintain services; this should be the minimum target, which will incur estimated annual costs of £27,580. In addition to this there is the possibility that BDC will discontinue Litter collection and toilets with I suggest a minimum cost of £9,400 (minimum)
3. To increase services; this would benefit the visitor and boost income to the village through investment. The Cost of providing extra services will be over and above that itemised above. Projects that are currently in discussion are i) the merging of the car parks to gain more spaces and a better traffic flow ii) provision of showers for visitors.

Conclusion:

It is agreed that collectively we should continue to improve on the service to the visitor.

I have made a stab at the cost of manning a popular tourist location such as Ranworth, which is considerable at around £37k p.a and highlights the need for regular sources of income.

Income may be available as;

i) grants from central/ local government,
ii) contributions by local business
iii) visitor fees
iv) a combination of all the above

Budgetary cuts to the public purse will necessitate boosting funds from commercial sources of income.

The provision of services to the visitor is unsustainable without a steady income.

The obvious source of funds is mooring and car parking fees, which would transfer the cost of managing the Staithe from the taxpayer to the user.

A random survey at The Granary Stores indicates that visitors are happy to pay a fee in order to maintain services. Most regard Ranworth as the best stopover during their holiday.

We have experienced a high level of chaos in the early part of this season with the head ranger being called out on 13th April.

The Village needs a harbour master during the peak season. Reliance on local people to man the Staithe in busy periods is not practical or fair.

The businesses in the village are prepared to take on the responsibility of managing the Staithe area provided there is adequate funding.

I estimate the potential income from mooring and car park fees at anywhere between £25-50k p.a. depending on the level of fee and commitment.

To put this into context the voluntary contributions to the Church Box are £16-18k p.a

A more thorough feasibility study may need to be carried out to determine levels of responsibility and the financial viability of the parish taking this on but the concept of more commercial approach needs to be adopted first.
On the topic of Restrictive Covenants over the use of the Staithe, the original gift from my family states that no charges should be made to parishioners for the use of the Staithe additionally protecting Parishioner's rights to land produce. There are no restrictions on making a charge to visitors.

I very much welcome the chance to discuss the points raised in this letter at the earliest opportunity.

Yours ever

Charles Cator

Woodbastwick Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Mrs P James, Beech Farm, 15 Marsh Road, Upton NORWICH NR13 6BP
Telephone: 01493 - 751070 Fax No: 01493 - 750971

25 July 2011

John Packman
Broads Authority
Dragonfly House
2 Gilders Way
Norwich
NR3 1UB

Dear Mr Packman,

Ranworth Staithe

At the recent Parish Council meeting I was asked to convey the councillors' anxiety at the lack of management of the staithe in Ranworth; there are tales of boat users mooring badly, mooring for longer than the permitted 24 hours and issues with litter management. I enclose correspondence from the owners of The Granary Store at the staithe who have been keeping a log of issues and concerns.

I understand that the Norfolk Wildlife Trust has now taken over the information centre. The councillors would appreciate confirmation that the NWT will not only be running the centre but will also be managing the use of the staithe and the issues with the management of the litter.

As you know, the staithe is rightly very popular with visitors and residents, and an important part of the attraction of the area.

Yours sincerely

Pauline James

Pauline James
Clerk

Email: Paulinejames@aol.com

Problems on Ranworth Staithe since closure of Broads Authority Information Centre

Since the Broads Authority Information Centre has not re-opened this season, we are concerned with a growing number of issues that are affecting our Staithe. Some of them are:-

1. Rubbish overflowing from skip
   On three separate occasions, piles of rubbish have been left on the ground around the skip. This is due to it not being compacted, *not* that it's full. After many calls to the Broads Authority and Broadland Council, we (at the Granary) now temporarily have a key to the lock on the skip compacter which we are doing on a daily basis to prevent this happening again and causing the obvious environmental problems that would go with this.

June 2011

Skip overflowing

2. Boats overstaying 24 hours
   There are no Broads Authority staff here now to move boats on after 24 hours. We have a particular problem with some private boats who have actually told us that they're deliberately staying longer than 24 hours as there is no-one now to move them on! The shop and the pub *rely* on a whole new Staithe of boats every 24 hours for supplies, gifts, meals and drinks.

3. Lack of assistance mooring
Normally, the Rangers will help boaters moor up. It's even more of a problem at busy peak times or when the weather is very windy (making mooring tricky without help). We believed this became dangerous at Easter this year when two separate church groups of youngsters tried to moor dozens of yachts on an already full Staithe with no-one official to supervise and help.

Easter holidays 2011.
So many boats trying to moor, you could hardly see the water!

4. Wide gaps between moored boats
When the Rangers were here, they always made sure that the boats moored close together to ensure that the maximum number of boats possible were moored onto the Staithe. Now, with no-one to do this, boats are moored, often with large gaps inbetween. So with a full Staithe, we could still be 3-4 boats short of the maximum. When we have tried (politely) to move them up, we've been asked what authority we have and the Broads Authority *have* advised us that the boats are doing nothing illegal leaving gaps between them.

Wide gaps between boats.
April 2011.

5. Boats not mooring stern-on

There is also a problem with the boats that do not moor stern-on. Some of these even insist on mooring sideways, taking up several moorings at once. Others ignore signs and we have had the day boat dyke completely blocked in by cruisers so that day boats are unable to moor in the dyke.

Boats moored sideways...

April 2011

...and blocking the entrance to the day boat dyke!

April 2011.

6. Questions from the public

People are used to getting information at Ranworth Staithe so they now ask their questions at the Granary instead. Many questions are easy to answer but we're asked again and *again,* difficult when we're busy. A lot of questions we are unable to answer which leaves people disappointed.

These are just a **few** actual questions asked in the last few weeks:

- What are the times/prices of the ferry trip?
- Where do we get the Electric Eel from?
- What time does the tide go out?
- Where is the nearest chandlery?
- Where can we get a longer electricity lead?
- Where are the nearest baby changing facilities?
- Where on the Broads can we cycle off road?
- Where is the nearest campsite?
- Where is the nearest cash machine?
- Where is the nearest chemical toilet emptying point?

7. General untidiness of Staithe
   Besides the problems with the skip, there is a lot more general rubbish around. The Broads Authority litter bin on the patio has gone and so we have had to pick up a lot of rubbish ourselves including dog mess and bbq remains just to keep the area tidy. We also had to call in the Rangers to clear up two piles of horse droppings on the grass in front of the coffee shop eating area.
   Also, a lack of garden maintenance has been an issue with nettles and brambles not being cut back and incidents have been reported of children being stung/scratched on the boardwalks.

8. Assistance requested for help with electric meter
   We *do* now sell the cards for the electric meter (previously sold by the Information Centre but get many requests for advice/assistance in using them which we are unable to give.

9. Sale of launch licences
   We have had many requests to purchase a launch licence. These are only available from the Broads Authority but many people come to Ranworth thinking they can buy a licence here. They are then having to make the decision whether to not launch, or to launch illegally without a licence.

These are just a few of the issues that we've been dealing with since the closure of the Broads Authority Information Centre. It is now well into July and almost mid-season and still no sign of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust re-opening the Centre. The Granary made a bid in January to take over the Centre and all the running of the Staithe but this was given to the NWT. If we had been able to take this over, we would have had everything open in April at the beginning of the Season.

With the busiest part of the Summer Season almost here, we are very concerned that the above issues need addressing to ensure the smooth and safe running of our Staithe and to provide continued services and support to our many thousands of visitors.

Julie Miller
Granary Stores