

Navigation Committee

22 January 2026

Agenda item number 6

Chief Executive's report and current issues

Report by Chief Executive

Purpose

To provide a briefing on significant matters relating to the maintenance and management of the waterways.

Broads Plan context

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

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Washroom Improvements	2
3.	Underwater Drone	2
4.	Navigation patrolling and performance targets	3
5.	Sunken, abandoned and unserviceable vessels	3
6.	Planning enforcement update	5
	Appendix 1 – Rangers exercise of powers analysis	6
	Appendix 2 – Ranger duties: total time allocated and actual days	8
	Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 18 December 2025	10
	Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 24 October 2025	12
	Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for navigation offences since 24 October 2025	13
	Appendix 6 – December 2025 Mutford Lock ROV Trial Survey	14

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The winter is a period when the Broads' waterways are quiet, and, unseen by most boat owners, the Authority is busy with its maintenance. The extreme weather has made things difficult, and we have had to stop the dredging of the river Thurne and disposal at Chara Bay in Hickling because of the saline incursion and more recently when the Broad and the disposal pipe froze.
- 1.2. We have been particularly busy with the removal of sunken, abandoned and unserviceable vessels and a longer brief on this is below.
- 1.3. The Tolls Team has had some success at recovering payments from owners who are late in paying and in December the income of just over £10,000 was above the profile of £7,300.
- 1.4. Officers have previously suggested a survey of former boat owners to identify the reason for them giving up their boats. Given the long-term stability in boat numbers, staff sickness and the pressure on the staff who would be involved it is proposed to follow this up later in 2026 when the pattern for the coming year's boat registrations is clear.

2. Washroom Improvements

- 2.1. Successful tenders have been accepted for the upgrade of the toilet and washroom facilities at Acle and the Great Yarmouth Yacht Station, funded from the National Park Capital Programme. The work is programme for completion before Easter and the end of the financial year.

3. Underwater Drone

- 3.1. In October 2025, we received a capital grant from National Parks England of £10,881 for the Broads ROV Test & Trial Project. The purpose of this project is to investigate the use of an underwater ROV to improve the management of the Broads, specifically looking at how we monitor and survey underwater environments, creating a best practice for the use of this technology that can be shared with other protected landscapes.
- 3.2. We purchased a Chasing M2 ProMax remotely operated submarine, which arrived at the end of November.
- 3.3. In December we took it on a first trial at Mutford Lock to investigate the potential of using the ROV to survey the lock gates. We found that even in low visibility conditions we were able to survey the eastern most set of gates, both inside and outside of the lock. This gave us a filmed view of the gates' overall condition including the penstocks, bolts, shoes and other mechanisms. For images, see Appendix 6.

- 3.4. This type of routine survey would normally require a team of divers with their associated costs. Through this initial trial, the ROV shows a savings in both time and cost for this type of survey activity, as well as a lower risk for officers and/or contractors working near to or in the water.

4. Navigation patrolling and performance targets

- 4.1. The average navigation/countryside splits for the last period are set out in Appendix 2. With the winter countryside work now underway the variance in favour of navigation is being corrected. The Ranger’s exercise of powers and patrolling duties for the last period is set out in Appendix 1. There has been one successful navigation prosecution over this period, see Appendix 5.

5. Sunken, abandoned and unserviceable vessels

- 5.1. Members will be well aware that the number of sunken, abandoned and unserviceable vessels has been increasing, on the Broads and other inland waterways, and that the Authority is being proactive in dealing with them. 5 or 6 years ago, we would have only been dealing with 3-4 vessels a year. In 2023 the figure was 19 and in 2024 28 vessels. The information for this year is as follows:

Number	Category	Notes
20	Abandoned	5 of these registered following the Notice being issued, others removed from waterways by BA
10	Sunken	2 of these raised by the owners, others issued Notice and recovered and removed by BA
10	Unserviceable	2 of these repaired by owners following issue of a Notice, others removed from waterway by BA
40	TOTAL	

- 5.2. Appendix 3 lists recent sunken, abandoned and unserviceable vessels. Most have already been recovered but a few are still being processed. Two further vessels have been left on land owned or managed by the Authority and letters requesting the vessels removal have been issued to the owners. One vessel has since been removed and the second we are awaiting the expiry date given before we remove the vessel.

5.3. The process for abandoned vessels

Step 1

Rangers identify a vessel on the system they believe may be abandoned. Work with Tolls team to find history, and recent contact, past owners, etc and to try and make contact.

Step 2

For new vessels, issue a registration letter, giving the owner 28 days to register the vessel and then monitor vessel during this time. Rangers issue Notice of Contravention (e.g. no reg marks, no BSS) and Memorandum of Navigation Warnings (e.g. overstaying) as appropriate

Step 3

Rangers ask round to see if anyone locally knows anything about the vessel or has a contact for the owner. This will be over a fortnightly period or more if we have evidence the vessel is being moved. The Authority has to prove it has exhausted this process before we can issue a Notice. Rangers note vessel movement, if any, over this time.

If contact is established with the owner, the Rangers work with Tolls Team to try and get the vessel registered.

Step 4

If the Authority is not able to find a contact, a Notice is placed on the vessel, normally giving 28 days for someone to come forward or the vessel will then become the property of the Authority. Once the Notice runs out, Rangers can remove the vessel to the Dockyard for sale or normally disposal.

Step 5

The Maintenance Team lift out at the Dockyard and break-up the vessel.

5.4. Process for sunken vessels

Step 1

Rangers work with owner to raise vessel in the first instance, about half (of the ones we are involved with) are raised and no Notice is issued. Ranger will deploy the oil spill boom if deemed necessary.

Step 2

A period of time is given for the vessel to be raised, based on the risk the vessel poses to navigation (undertaken by the Ranger and Senior Rangers). A Notice will be placed on the vessel giving 7-28 days to have this raised. 7 days would only be used where the vessel posed a risk to navigation, normally in the more tidal locations, such as Reedham or the Great Yarmouth Yacht Station. Rangers secure and mark and monitor the vessels. A Boating News may be put out, again depending on the location of the sunken vessel.

Step 3

Once the Notice has run out, the Authority will look to remove the vessel. For around half of the vessels, this is done by the Ranger Team, for vessels the Rangers are unable to raise or require larger equipment the CME team will raise these when next in the area (Rangers will mark and monitor the vessel in the meantime). For more urgent cases or for vessels which require specialist equipment or divers to attend the Authority will engage a contractor.

5.5. **Process for unseaworthy vessels**

The process for unseaworthy vessels is the same for sunken vessels. Rangers will work with the owner to try and rectify the issues with the vessel and where this is not possible will issue a Notice. If the issues with the vessel have not been rectified by the end of the Notice period, the vessel will be removed from the water.

6. **Planning enforcement update**

6.1. There are no further enforcement matters with navigation implications to report.

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Date of report: 07 January 2026

[Broads Plan](#) strategic actions: Theme C

Appendix 1 – Rangers exercise of powers analysis

Appendix 2 – Ranger duties total time allocated and actual days

Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 18 December 2025/12/2025

Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 24/10/2025

Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for navigation offences since 24/10/2025

Appendix 6 – December 2025 Mutford Lock ROV Trial Survey

24 October 2025

Appendix 1 – Rangers exercise of powers analysis

Table 1

Verbal warnings	Wroxham launch Wroxham and upper Bure	Irstead launch Ant	Ludham launch Hickling, Potter Heigham, upper Thurne	Ludham launch 2 lower Thurne and lower Bure	Norwich launch Norwich and upper Yare	Hardley Launch Reedham, Chet and middle Yare	Burgh St Peter launch Oulton Broad and upper/middle Waveney	Breydon launch Breydon water, lower Waveney and Yare
Care and caution	135	15	54	70	16	14	15	6
Speed	2196	707	141	470	108	67	61	46
Other	186	71	18	9	157	21	20	148

Table 2

Written warnings	Wroxham launch	Irstead launch	Ludham launch	Ludham launch 2	Norwich launch	Hardley Launch	Burgh St Peter launch	Breydon launch
Care and caution	1	1		1				
Speed	16	6			2		3	2
Other	3	22	19	11	3	10	18	5
Special directions	119	44		69	20	47	192	71

Table 3

Launch patrols	Wroxham launch	Irstead launch	Ludham launch	Ludham launch 2	Norwich launch	Hardley Launch	Burgh St Peter launch	Breydon launch
Launch staffed by ranger	213	147	146	167	169	124	142	214
Volunteer patrols		7					3	
IRIS reports	16	7	1	10	8	4	8	14

Table 4

Broads Control total calls

Contact method	Number of calls
Telephone	16,297
VHF	1835
Total	18,043

Appendix 2 – Ranger duties: total time allocated and actual days

Table 1

Broads Authority corporate duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Training	112	104.46
Broads Control	401	279.32
Team meetings, work planning	243	227
Partnership working	61	24.53
Assisting other sections	74	21.89
Billets and boatsheds	35	17.57
Launch – general		13.24
Trailers - general		1.01
Vehicle maintenance		4.86
Other equipment repair		5.20
Total	926	699.10

Table 2

Navigation duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Patrolling	1660	1429.36
Escorts	37	28.45
Prosecution files	0	19.26
Bankside tree management	80	27.91
Obstruction removal	42	22.53
Raising & removal of wrecks	0	15.17
Channel markers and buoys	25	12.03
Signs and boards maintenance	43	31.62
Adjacent waters	86	70.68
Reactive mooring maintenance	100	26.49
Total	2073	1683.48

Table 3

Conservation, recreation, countryside maintenance

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Fen management	168	72.36
Lake, riverbank restoration	99	0.00
Invasive species control	42	4.59
Other conservation work	168	35.61
Pollution response		1.89
Visitor site maintenance	188	161.07
Public Engagement	110	48.18
Public footpath work	69	20.74
Education work	38	16.08
Total		

Team total up to 09 December 2025

Percentage Navigation: 82%

Percentage National Park: 18%

Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 18 December 2025

Description	Location found	Action	Notice affixed	Result
Motor Cruiser	Old River Yare, Thorpe	Vessel sunk at owners moorings	No	Not affecting the navigation
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Trowse	Vessel sunk behind bridge fenders	Yes	Not affecting the navigation
Yacht	St Olaves	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel recovered
Motor Cruiser	Oulton Broad	Vessel sunk at moorings	Yes	Oil spill kit deployed. Vessel recovered
Yacht	Ludham Bridge	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel recovered
2x Motor Cruisers and 1 Dinghy	River Yare, Burney	Unserviceable vessels	Yes	Vessels recovered
Auxiliary Yacht	River Yare, Burney	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel recovered
Yacht	River Wensum, Norwich	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel recovered
Yacht	River Wensum, Norwich	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel recovered
Yacht	River Yare, Trowse	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel recovered
Yacht	River Wensum, Norwich	Owner unknown	Yes	Owner has now registered
Motor cruiser	River Yare, Reedham	Sunken vessel	Yes	Owner was unable to raise. Divers have secured vessel to bank until it can be raised.
Sailing boat	Oulton Broad	Owner unknown	Yes	Vessel was removed by unknown person
Auxiliary Yacht	River Thurne, Potter Heigham	Owner unknown	Yes	Awaiting notice expiry

Description	Location found	Action	Notice affixed	Result
Auxiliary Yacht	River Thurne, Potter Heigham	Owner unknown	Yes	Awaiting notice expiry
Motor cruiser	Langley Dyke	Vessel sunk at mooring	No	Pollution boom deployed as precaution. Vessel raised by owner

Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 24 October 2025

Type of vessel	Fined	Costs awarded	Victim surcharge	Compensation
Motorboat	£220.00	£238.00	£88.00	£535.63

Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for navigation offences since 24 October 2025

Type of vessel	Offence	Fined	Costs awarded	Victim surcharge	Compensation
Motor Vessel	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Care and Caution 2. Incapable of taking proper control due to drink or drugs 	£660	£510	£264	n/a

Appendix 6 – December 2025 Mutford Lock ROV Trial Survey



M2ProMax ROV in its case



Trialling the new controller setup



ROV preparing to descend along the lock gate



Marine growth on external lock gate penstock.



Inspection of bolts on internal gate



Overview of penstock on left hand external gate



View of shoes on bottom of internal lock gates