

Broads Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2014

Present:

Mr Andrew Alston	Mrs Barbara Greasley	Mr Peter Medhurst
Dr Keith Bacon	Mr John Hiskett	Dr Philip Pearson
Mr Ashley Cato	Mr Mike Hoyland	Mr Richard Starling
Ms Janet Gilmour	Mr John Lurkins	Mr Charles Swan
Mr Tony Gibbons		

In Attendance:

Mrs Sandra Beckett – Administrative Officer
Mr S Birtles – Head of Safety Management
Mr S Hooton – Head of Strategy and Projects
Dr D Hoare – Environment and Design Supervisor
Ms A Long – Director of Planning and Resources
Mr J Organ – Head of Governance and Executive Assistant
Dr J Packman – Chief Executive
Mr A Vernon – Head of Ranger Services
Ms T Wakelin – Director of Operations

Also in attendance:

Mr Chris Bielby – Broads Water Framework Directive Specialist, Land Management Team, Natural England

Also Present

Mr Hugh Taylor – SALC
Mr Paul Gurbutt
Mr David Broad – Chairman of Navigation Committee
Prof Jacque Burgess – Vice-Chair, Broads Authority
Ms Mollie Howes

4/1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Brian Barker, Mr Julian Barnwell, Mr Henry Cator, Mr Martin Davy, Mr Mike Evans, Dr Martin George, Mr Brian Holt, Mr Peter Jermy, Mr Simon Partridge, Mr Bryan Read and Mr Anthony Wright.

The Chief Executive welcomed everyone to the meeting including Ms Janet Gilmour who was attending in place of Mr Mike Evans and Mr Robin Godber attending in place of Dr Martin George. Those present introduced themselves.

4/2 Appointment of Chairman

The Chief Executive invited nominations for the appointment of the Chairman to the Committee.

Tony Gibbons (TG) nominated Keith Bacon (KB). KB commented that he would be happy to chair the Committee for this meeting but would not wish to take this up for the long term. No other nominations were forthcoming.

Charles Swan (CS) proposed, seconded by Richard Starling (RS) that Keith Bacon be appointed as Temporary Chairman for this meeting, until the next meeting when it was anticipated that another candidate able to command the respect and support of the Forum Members and nominating groups was willing to stand.

RESOLVED

that Dr Keith Bacon be appointed as Chairman of the Broads Forum for this meeting.

Dr Keith Bacon in the Chair

4/3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chairman to the Committee.

No nominations were forthcoming.

RESOLVED

that the position of Vice-Chairman remain open until such time as it was considered appropriate.

4/4 Chairman's announcements

Retiring Chairman – Richard Card

The Chairman on behalf of everyone thanked and paid tribute to Richard Card for the way in which he had chaired the Broads Forum meetings and his valuable contribution in liaising with the Authority, commenting that it was regrettable that it had only been for one year.

- (1) The Chairman advised that a written report of the Broads Authority meeting of 21 March 2014 from Richard Card had been circulated in advance.

4/5 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendments:

- *Minute 3/6 Reflection on the December tidal surge.* Para 4: delete “on the A143”. Para 5: replace “after” with “before”.
- *Minute 3/14 Chief Executive’s Report re lack of monitoring of the waterskiing on Breydon Water* Para 2: delete “what he perceived as”.

In reply to a query from Mike Hoyland (MH) that the issue of Tidal Surges and Flooding was to be included as a standard item on the agenda. The Head of Governance and Executive Assistant commented that it was understood that the matter would be raised as and when relevant and appropriate. He assured members that the comments from the Forum on the subject from the last meeting had been reported to the Authority as requested.

4/6 Public question time

No questions had been raised by members of the public.

4/7 Summary of progress/actions/response taken following discussions at previous meetings

A report summarising the progress of current issues was received.

4/8 Broads Forum Arrangements: Review of Terms of Reference and Membership of the Forum

Members received a report from the Head of Governance and Executive Assistant that provided details of the Broads Forum’s Terms of Reference and current membership. Members’ comments on the Terms of Reference and the current organisations within the interest groups and levels of membership were requested since the current arrangements had now been in place for a year and were to be reviewed in line with the Forum’s decision in April 2013. Members noted that any changes to the terms of reference and/or membership of the Forum (other than that of replacement or named substitutes or individual groups) would require the agreement of the Broads Authority.

Representations were received from the Broads Society, the Suffolk Association of Local Councils and the Farming/Landowning and Drainage Interest Group. Robin Godber (RG) commented that following discussions and an approach by a member of the Forum, the Broads Society felt that two members would be more appropriate than one, given the wide variety of interests within the Society and the need for knowledge and expertise on both navigation and conservation/ecological issues to be represented.

Charles Swan (CS) commented that similarly the Suffolk Association of Local Councils covered a broad church and two members would provide a greater depth of community engagement for Suffolk with the Authority. Andrew Alston (AA) spoke on behalf of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) who had expressed the view that they wished to have a representative and that their organisation would fit better within an Angling and Shooting category. Members agreed that this would require two members to be appointed within that group. Given that the Broads Angling Strategy Group was now the only angling organisation, this was considered appropriate.

Members considered that all these proposals would be acceptable as it would be useful and helpful in providing a broader breadth and understanding of some of the more specific interests associated with the Broads to the Forum and the Authority. Members agreed with Barbara Greasley (BG)'s suggestion that the group under which the Broads Society appeared "Local Charities Interest Group" was a misnomer, as a number of other organisations had charitable status. They agreed that this should be renamed the Broads Society Interest Group and include two members to be appointed from the Broads Society. It was suggested that in future this category might include a representative from the Broads Trust. However, a number of members on the Forum and the Authority were currently Trustees of the Broads Trust and therefore it was considered inappropriate at this stage. Likewise the members appointed within the Local Communities Interest Group were appointed respectively by the Norfolk Association of Town Councils and Suffolk Association of Local Councils and the terms Northern and Southern Broads should be amended accordingly.

With regard to the Terms of Reference, and in association with the discussion above, the Chairman suggested that under para 2.10 concerning the deletion and/or addition of nominating groups, the words "cease to exist" be deleted and replaced with "cease to be appropriate" since a group may continue to exist, but for example, move from the area, and therefore no longer be relevant to the Broads. Members considered that this would be acceptable.

RS raised concerns re para 3.5 Members of the Public attending Forum meetings and being able to pose a question or make a statement and considered that anyone should be able to attend and ask questions without giving due notice. It was explained that the Forum would be responsible for answering a question or responding to a statement and there were other mechanisms for members of the public to ask similar questions of the Authority. There was merit for the Forum to receive questions and statements in advance of the meeting, to allow members of the Forum to consult their organisations. However, the Forum did not wish to restrict public engagement and considered that, although the current five day notice period would be ideal, this should not exclude members of the public asking questions or making statements without notice at the meeting.

The Chairman proposed that "ideally" be inserted at para 3.5 to take account of the concern. This was accepted.

Members agreed that it was important for members of the public to be made aware that they were welcome to attend Forum meetings and have their views represented, either directly or via the representatives on the Forum and that this was the stepping stone to the Authority. It would be appropriate to clarify this within the terms of reference and also to publicise the avenues available. Tony Gibbons (TG) suggested that having been present at a recent very successful and well attended Broads Parish Forum in Reedham, such an event would be a valuable means of publicising the existence of the Broads Forum in the future.

With regard to 3.3 RS raised concerns about members being able to raise items for inclusion on the agenda as it appeared to him that on a couple of occasions this had been denied. The Chairman explained that there was the opportunity to raise items for inclusion at a future meeting both within the meetings as well as outside. The Chief Executive confirmed that the agenda was always constructed in consultation with the Chairman of the Forum. If officers were required to produce a report, this would need to fit in with the work programme of the Authority. Members of the Forum were also encouraged to provide reports to the meetings.

Dr Pearson commented and supported by others considered that the system had been working well over the last year.

In summing up the discussions the Chairman stated that the Committee wished to recommend the following to the Authority:

- (i) that the Terms of Reference of the Broads Forum be adopted subject to the following amendments:
 - a) to paragraph 2.10 to delete “cease to exist” and replace with “cease to be appropriate”;
 - b) to paragraph 3.5 insert “ideally” so as to read: “Such questions or statements should ideally be submitted to the Chairman at least five working days before the meeting”

- (ii) that amendments be made to the Broads Forum Membership as follows:
 - a) The Fishing/Angling Interest Group be renamed the Fishing/Angling and Shooting Group to include two members to be appointed by the Broads Angling Strategy Group and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation(BASC). (This involved the deletion of the Norwich and District Anglers Association and Norfolk Anglers Conservation Association and deletion of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation from the Farming/Landowning and Drainage Interest Group.)

- b) The Local Charities Interest Group be renamed the Broads Society Interest Group increasing the number to be appointed from one to two members.
- c) The Local Communities Interest Groups appointing bodies being amended to the correct titles of Norfolk Association of Town/Local Councils (NATLC) and Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) and that the number of members to be appointed be increased from four to five, with three members being appointed by NALC and two members from SALC.

4/9 Broads Authority Boat Test Area Review

The Forum received a report from the Head of Safety management, Steven Birtles which set out the background to the introduction of the Boat Test Areas and the findings and proposals from the recent review for future management.

Members noted the designated areas and times for the exemption to the Broads Authority's Speed Limit Byelaws 1992 which enabled boatyard vessels to use certain areas at certain times for the purposes of trial, demonstration or testing after repair, the number and times when use had exceeded the speed limit during the activity between April 2013 and January 2014 and the usage of high speed boat activity in the context of the overall boat movements in the relevant areas. They noted that no complaints had been registered with Broads Control, the safety aspects required and the future management proposals. The Head of Safety Management reported that both the Boat Safety Management Group and the Navigation Committee had welcomed the report and supported the management proposals to promote best practice especially through a voluntary Code of Practice. The Navigation Committee had also requested a section on environmental impact and this would be included within the report to the Authority.

In response to a question the Head of Safety Management commented that there was no definition in the byelaws which provided a differentiation between a trial or demonstration for sales purposes and therefore it could be open to interpretation. However, the benefits of doing so might be marginal.

Members welcomed the report and the work that had been carried out recognising that the boating industry, part of which included the requirement for speed trials, was a vital element to the economy of the area. Members were particularly supportive of the proposal for a Code of Practice and that this involved liaison with the boatyards. It was also suggested that the RSPB be involved in the discussions given the areas involved. There was particular support for the low speed run through prior to speed trials.

The Head of Safety Management commented that the boatyards welcomed being required to inform Broads Control when they were due to carry out speed trials as, if/when complaints were received, it would be possible to identify whether it was the boatyard or a rogue boat that was responsible. RG commented that as a regular sailor in the Strumpshaw area he recognised the

problems of monitoring and the difficulties encountered by the Authority's rangers. It was also up to river users and members of the public to assist by reporting any incidents. The use of trade plates was considered particularly valuable.

In response to the issue of possible riverbank erosion raised by RS, the Design and Environment Supervisor reported that the impact of the use of the river for speed trials on the river banks was being examined and mitigation measures being discussed with the boatyards and landowners.

The Chairman offered the Forum's congratulations on the report and members endorsed the future management proposals and the views of both the Boat Safety Management Group and Navigation Committee. They welcomed the proposal for discussions on a Code of Practice with the industry and landowners and further consultation with the Broads Forum.

4/10 Lake Review Project

Members received a progress report from the Senior Ecologist introduced by the Head of Strategy and Projects on the work that the Authority in association with Natural England had commissioned to undertake a comprehensive 40 years review of lake ecological data in order to provide strong scientific evidence which would help the Authority in its decision making. The Lake Review Project was aimed at highlighting the relative benefits of different types of scenarios of management, and would help to identify sites where particular types of management were likely to prove most effective. A full report would be provided in the Summer.

The Committee noted and welcomed the report and considered that it would be helpful in providing a baseline of information for the Authority.

4/11 Future Management of Hoveton Great Broad

Members received a presentation from Chris Bielby, Natural England on the Hoveton Wetlands Restoration Project explaining the site context, the project partnership, support and aims, the reasons for restoring wetlands to provide direct ecological improvement, improved visitor experience and the wider ecological benefits. He provided an outline of the methods of restoration, similar to those used at Salhouse and informed the Forum of the progress so far and the next steps which included applying for external funding from the HLF and Life project (European funding for Conservation) as well as planning permission.

A member queried the reasons for choosing Hoveton Great Broad, a private broad instead of Hickling, which was considered to be of higher priority. Chris Bielby explained that there were six lakes within the Broads which were all considered to be of high priority for restoration, including Hickling and Horsey Mere, both of which had the same international designations. However, despite all the studies, there were difficulties in establishing what the requirements should be and the actual methods that would be required for

restoration in this area. These elements were much clearer for Hoveton Great Broad especially where the river water quality was better due to phosphate stripping and biomanipulation plans were more thorough.

In answer to a query by Ashley Cato concerning canoe access to the area, CB explained that this was an important element of the project to gain external funding. However, it would be limited via a gated access and in association with guides and arrangement with the nature reserve staff using their canoes. Access via canoe would not be a commercial venture.

TG explained that Broads anglers had some concerns that the area would be restricted over the next three to six years, although there was recognition that there would be long term benefits.

The Chairman thanked CB for his interesting presentation and members anticipated that the project would enable wider benefits to be provided for the long term.

4/12 Adapting to a Changing Climate in the Broads Authority

Members received a report from the Head of Strategy and Projects which provided an update on the ideas for a revised Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Broads to include more detail on the key issues and potential adaptation options before it was published for a period for public consultation. Members noted that the aim was to produce the revised draft plan for consultation in the Autumn which would help to formulate the revised plan by the end of 2014 for submission to Defra to help inform the National Adaptation Programme. Members were encouraged to contact the Head of Strategy and Projects if they wished to be involved through the Broads Community group and would wish to suggest other contacts who might become involved. The Head of Strategy and Projects reported that the Adaptation Panel on 10 April had agreed the draft methodology for the revised Adaptation Plan.

Mike Hoyland indicated that he felt that the Broads Angling Strategy Group would like to be involved in the climate change adaptation consultation.

With reference to the Authority's agreement at its previous meeting on the need to explore with other agencies options for future water management including flooding, and in response to a member's question, the Head of Strategy and Projects commented that there had not been any direct contact with Great Yarmouth Borough on this as yet, although there was a member appointed by Great Yarmouth on the Authority. In addition he assured members that the viability of various options would be considered with other bodies as part of the whole process.

PP welcomed the commonality with the RSPB approach through its Futurescape in which climate change was a key component. He expressed a note of caution in relation to flooding, (point 11 in the Draft Methodology) recognising that although it was an important issue it should not be

oversimplified in relation to climate change. Water quality and its availability were also important issues and to be considered in the round.

Mike Hoyland (BASG) commented that following the tidal incursion and recent flooding events, he was of the view that the MPs had done nothing but confuse matters and the public was still under the impression that “the Government will sort it out”. He considered that someone had the responsibility to inform people that there were certain areas where it would not be suitable to live in the future. Other members agreed that policies needed to be explored.

Members welcomed the report and noted the progress being made.

4/13 Public Access to Oulton Broad: Mutford Lock/Free Quay

Members received a report prepared on behalf of Mr Charles Swan and a presentation from him on the history and background of Oulton Broad, Mutford Lock and the free quay facilities and the proposed work to provide public access to these areas. He explained that the history had been long and complicated and paid tribute to the work of the Authority in association with Mutford Lock. He made a plea for the Authority to examine ways of restoring the jetty in order to provide navigation, tourism and heritage benefits.

The Director of Operations provided members with an update on the status of Mutford Lock. Although the Authority had managed the Lock for a number of years, it was still in negotiations with Suffolk County Council and the Association of British Port Authorities (ABP) over the complete transfer to the Authority under the Harbour Revision Order. Once officially and finally transferred the Authority’s primary concern was that of Mutford Lock and access to the sea. The Authority had been and was still in discussions with Waveney District Council over future facilities such as a slipway and a free quay, which the Authority was willing to support, but could not provide funds for at this juncture.

Members expressed support for the improvement of facilities at Oulton Broad which it was felt would provide considerable benefits to the regeneration of the southern rivers.

4/14 Chief Executive’s Report

The Chief Executive presented his report, which summarised the current position of important projects and events, including any decisions taken during the recent cycle of committee meetings.

With reference to reduction in National Park Grant the Chief Executive provided clarification on the proposals for the changes in apportionment for Operations work between National Park Grant and Navigation given the need to make savings but also the need to balance the Authority’s three main purposes. Following Defra’s insistence that navigation income be used for navigation purposes within the Broads Act 2009, the Authority was not able to

use the increased income from navigation income and therefore would be attempting to fund fen restoration and other conservation matters through other sources of funding so as not to curtail that vital work.

Members commented that navigation benefited from landscape and conservation projects paid for from NPG and that conservation projects could also benefit from navigation projects. However, it was noted that the extra funds from National Park Grant could be used for navigation purposes but that it was not possible to use navigation income for national park grant purposes, although the two were mutually beneficial.

With reference to the Impact of Otters on the Broads Ecosystem, members discussed the potential need for controls in the future of other species, such as red deer, cormorants and birds of prey, the link with the management of habitats and the need to balance species populations. It was a useful reminder that although some species, such as the water vole and marsh harrier were now more common within the Broads, they were still seen as an endangered species. This therefore emphasised the national importance of the Broads landscape and habitats for biodiversity.

Members noted the report.

4/15 Parish Issues

Neighbourhood Plans

CS (SALC) reported that Oulton Parish had set up a Steering Group to embark on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan. Hugh Taylor (SALC) commented that Beccles was also initiating a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Director of Planning and Resources assured members that Neighbourhood Plans were subject to Habitat Regulations and in dealing with Neighbourhood Plans, the Authority was ensuring that environmental considerations were taken into account.

Charges at Reedham Quay

In response to a members' question, the Director of Operations confirmed that Broadland District Council had agreed not to introduce charges at Reedham Quay. This was a matter which would be considered as part of a future strategy.

4/16 To note whether any items have been proposed as items of urgent business

Broads Outdoors Festival

Barbara Greasley reported that the Fourth Outdoors Festival would be commencing from Saturday 3 May until Sunday 18 May 2014 with a wide variety of activities being included, the aim being to encourage the

involvement of local people in the facilities available on their doorstep, prior to the main holiday season.

Copies of the brochure were available.

4/17 Matters for Chairman to raise at next Broads Authority meeting

The Chairman confirmed he would raise the following items to the next Broads Authority meeting:

- Members' comments on the Review of Terms of Reference and Membership of the Broads Forum
- Members' comments on the Broads Boat Test Area Review
- Members' comments on the Lake Review Project and Wetlands Restoration expressing the view that Hickling Broad requires a high priority.
- Members' support for the Public Access to Oulton Broad, Mutford Lock/Free quay.

4/18 Matters to be discussed at the next meeting

Tony Hoyland commented that the issue of tidal incursion and flooding should be kept under review.

Members also considered that it would be helpful if a representative from Defra (Natural England and Rural Payments Agency) could provide a report on the changes to Agri-Environment payments and the implications for the Broads.

RS raised concerns that there appeared to be a number of rowing boats which were using outboard motors but not paying a full toll and queried whether there was any means of identifying this.

In view of concerns raised during the meeting, Peter Medhurst supported by others suggested that it would be very helpful and beneficial if Richard Starling could provide the Forum with a report giving an overview of the work undertaken by the Reed and Sedge Cutters, the difficulties and challenges they faced and possible ways in which matters could be improved in order to provide members with a greater understanding of the changes which had taken place and the issues involved.

4/19 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 31 July 2014 at Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich commencing at 2pm.

The meeting concluded at 5.00pm.

Chairman