

Broads Authority

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2026

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Present

Harry Blathwayt – in the Chair from item 3, Gary Champion, Tom Daly, Alan Goodchild, Tony Grayling, Gail Harris, James Harvey, Tristram Hilborn, Heather Hilburn, Martyn Hooton, Tim Jickells, Leslie Mogford, Tim Munday, Matthew Shardlow.

In attendance

Emma Krelle – Chief Executive/Director of Resources, Izabela Foley – Senior Accountant, Rob Leigh – Head of Communications (item 32), Andrea Long – Broads Plan Coordinator, Rob Rogers – Director of Delivery, Joseph Balaam – Governance Officer, Lorraine Taylor – Head of Governance/Monitoring Officer.

1. Welcome and apologies

The Chief Executive welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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 record of the meeting. She 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.

Apologies were received from Stephen Bolt, Peter Dixon and Siân Limpenny

Morgan Brobyn and Curig Johnston were absent.

2. Appointment of Chair

Harry Blathwayt was proposed by Tim Jickells and seconded by Tony Grayling

There being no other nominations Harry Blathwayt was appointed Chair of the Authority for the forthcoming year 2026/27.

Harry Blathwayt took the Chair.

3. Appointment of Vice-Chair to the Broads Authority

Tristram Hilborn was proposed by Tony Grayling and seconded by Harry Blathwayt

There being no other nominations Tristram Hilborn was appointed Vice-Chair of the Authority for the forthcoming year 2026/27.

4. Chairman's announcements

The Chair welcomed Gary Champion and Tom Daly to the Authority. The Chair asked members to ensure their emergency contact details were recorded on MyView. The Head of

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Governance said they would be able to add the details of any members who did not have access to MyView and requested members send updated contacts for inclusion by email.

5. Introduction of members and declarations of interest

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered.

6. Items of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

7. Public question time

No public questions had been received.

8. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

9. Summary of actions and outstanding issues

Members received the latest summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings. The Chief Executive (CE) said two of the items on the report were completed. The Broads Peat project had come to an end, and the new Monitoring Officer had been appointed.

The report was noted.

10. Strategic priorities – Update July 2026

Members received the report of the Head of Governance (HoG). The HoG said a number of strategic priorities were set each year, influenced by the Broads Plan, with regular reports providing updates on these. There were no further updates to the report.

The report was noted.

11. Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and Code of Corporate Governance 2026

Members received the report of the Head of Governance (HoG). The HoG said the Authority were required to publish the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and Code of Corporate Governance 2026 in line with Section 15 of The Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The HoG said the report was present to the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee on 21 July 2026, who recommended the document be approved. The HoG acknowledged that the Authority could improve on stakeholder engagement (appendix 1) which would be examined following the arrival of the new Chief Executive.

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A Member asked if the audit opinion of “reasonable” was considered a good classification. The HoG said this classification was good and added that a “substantial” classification was awarded to Tolls. The Director of Resources (DoR) added the result was positive.

A Member asked if the Authority would consider swimmers to be stakeholders. The HoG said they would be considered as stakeholders. The Director of Delivery (DoD) said the Authority did not recommend swimming in the Broads but was aware that it did happen, information on swimming in the Broads was available on the Authority’s website.

Martyn Hooton proposed, seconded by Matthew Shardlow.

It was resolved unanimously to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26 and to note, subject to the implementation of improvements identified in the action plan, that the Authority’s systems of governance and internal control are considered to be adequate and effective.

12. Draft Statement of Accounts 2025/26

Members received the report of the Senior Accountant (SA). The SA said the report provided an update on the Broads Authority’s Statement of Accounts (SoA) for the year ending 31 March 2026. There were two major changes to the format of the report compared to previous years. The first of these changes was due to organisational restructuring and the removal of one of the directorates. The second concerned the indexation of non-investment assets. The SA explained this was due to changes to the CIPFA Code of Practice in 2025/26.

Since the surplus was reported at the Broads Authority meeting on 15 May 2026, the SA confirmed that it had increased by £3,148 and stood at £232,715. A summary of income and expenditure was available in table 1, the summary of adjustments in table 2 and detailed adjustments in table 3 of the report.

The SA said there was an error worth noting on page 88 of the combined papers which would be adjusted before producing the final statement. The document stated that the Authority received a National Park Grant of £4,423, however, the actual figure was £4,423,000.

The external auditor had advised the Authority that the audit opinion would likely be qualified except for. It was unlikely that the Authority would receive a clean unqualified opinion until 2027/28. The Director of Resources (DoR) explained this was due to an issue in local government audits which meant the Authority’s 2022/23 accounts were not audited. As a result, the opening balances of the 2023/24 accounts had not been verified. To rebuild assurance, the prior accounts from 2022/23 would need to be examined.

A Member commented that the audit opinion was frustrating as the Authority was proud of the accounts and hoped the Authority would be able to obtain a clean unqualified audit opinion in the future. The Member commented that the audit opinion was not a reflection on the good work of the finance team.

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A Member asked if the audit opinion would have any impact on the Authority. The DoR said borrowing had potential to be impacted but added the issue was sector wide and did not anticipate any issues to arise from this.

A Member commented that the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee had thoroughly reviewed the Authority's accounts, with both internal and external auditors, and said it was unfortunate that the Authority could not achieve an unqualified opinion as the matter was beyond the Authority's control.

The DoR said the draft accounts were being audited and subject to change. The current intention was to sign off the accounts at the Broads Authority meeting in November.

A Member thanked the Senior Accountant and the finance team for the recent training they had arranged.

The report was noted.

13. Financial Performance and Direction

Members received the report of the Director of Resources (DoR). The DoR said the report consisted of two main parts that required members decision. The first of these was expenditure from the earmarked reserves to purchase a concrete pump screener in order to aid the dredging programme. Second, a waiver of standing orders relating to contracts for a navigation safety assessment to be carried out by ABPmer. The DoR said this had been brought to members as the Authority had previously used the services of ABPmer during the past year and as such the proposed work could have been considered a continuation of an existing contract.

A Member asked what the purpose of the screener was. The Director of Delivery (DoD) said the screener filtered oversized debris.

A Member asked for clarification on whether the works carried out by ABPmer were at an end or if future expenses would be anticipated. The DoD said the proposed contract was the start of a new phases in carrying out the required formal safety assessment in which the navigation risks to the Authority would be examined.

A Member asked if there were any other companies capable of completing the required work and queried whether a tender process would be appropriate. The DoD said there were no alternative providers.

Leslie Mogford proposed, seconded by Tim Munday.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- i. Approve the expenditure from the earmarked reserve.**
- ii. Approve the waiver of standing orders relating to contracts.**

14. National Park Funding Update

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (CE). The CE said the report provided members the first update on spending the allocated National Park funds provided by DEFRA. The CE said recruitment to additional posts had been progressing well and hoped a new Capital Projects Manager would be appointed soon.

The CE said a contract had been signed last week concerning the consultants for the SharePoint data management project, which had been funded by revenue funds from DEFRA. The CE highlighted the appendix on page 175 of the papers, which provided a full update

A Member asked if the Authority would be able to spend the funds allocated prior to the deadline. The CE said the Authority was currently on track and would review the position in September.

A Member asked for an update on the progress of the Haddiscoe depot. The Director of Delivery said the Authority was in discussions with the Environment Agency regarding this.

A Member was pleased to see planned expenditure in relation to renewable energy which included electric cycle hire and the installation of solar panels.

A Member asked if a land acquisition strategy would be developed. The CE said this was already covered in an existing Asset Management strategy.

The report was noted.

15. Broads Plan 2028 – Update

Members received the report of the Broads Plan Coordinator (BPC). The BPC informed Members there was a mistake in appendix 1, in which a comment had been presented twice. This version of the report was removed from the website and combined papers and replaced with an updated version on Friday 17 July 2026.

The BPC said the Authority was working towards a timetable to adopt the new Broads Plan at the November 2027 meeting. Section 2 of the report set out the DEFRA guidance on the production of management plans. There were ten steps in total, two of which had already been achieved.

The BPC highlighted the Broads Plan as being a plan for the Broads as a location rather than a plan for the Authority. The engagement of partner organisations and stakeholders would be essential to the success of the new plan. The comments from these organisations, in relation to the current Broads Plan, were detailed in appendix 1. Meetings with stakeholders were still ongoing, with previous meetings listed in section 2.5 of the report; appendix 2 and 3 represented comments received from these meetings. The BPC informed members additional meetings had been scheduled with partners who had not yet contributed. The BPC aimed to produce a document using qualitative analysis of commonly discussed themes. The BPC believed the themes of resilience and recovery would be a common theme and highlighted nature recovery, landscape recovery and climate change amongst key discussions.

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The BPC commented that partnering organisations had shown a greater interest in collaborating with the Broads Authority, compared with previous versions of the Broads Plan. Partners had shown a will for the Broads Plan to succeed, and the BPC was confident the Authority was in a good position to produce an effective Broads Plan within the outlined timetable.

A Member commented they enjoyed reading the report and attending the Broads Plan workshop. The Member asked for clarification on the relationship the Authority had with Anglian Water and the Strategic Pipeline Alliance (SPA). The BPC said Anglian Water was a separate partner organisation which had shown a willingness to contribute towards the Broads Plan. Anglian Water had recently discussed the issues of land management and water supply, abstraction and quality with the BPC; further cooperation with regard to the Broads Plan was expected in the future. The BPC added the SPA infrastructure project would help with the current drinking water issues.

A Member thanked the BPC for running the recent workshops and asked how the process would manage tensions between the aims of the Authority and various partners. The BPC said such tensions between organisations priorities were not uncommon when building the Broads Plan. The BPC hoped to discuss this with the new Chief Executive to establish the best structure to identify issues and work towards cooperative solutions. The BPC emphasised the complexity of such tensions and commented there would be no easy remedy.

A Member acknowledged the complexity of the task and hoped the various organisations would collaborate to achieve a common goal.

A Member was happy to see the inclusion of climate change analysis but was concerned aims such as rewilding, restoration and maintaining the Broads were not a long-term possibility. The Member asked whether consideration had been given to habitat change due to factors such as increased salinity. The BPC said the Broads Plan would need to address this issue. A Member added the Broadland Futures Initiative were examining various environmental models. The Member expected salinity to be a central theme in future models.

A Member thanked the BPC for running the Broads Plan workshops and believed the new Broads Plan should be built with consideration beyond the five-year period of the plan. A Member commented the vision of the plan should be an oil painting rather than a blueprint.

The Head of Governance asked members if they were content with receiving updates on the Broads Plan via the Summary of Progress report in circumstances when a full committee report was not necessary. The members indicated they were happy with this.

The report was noted.

16. Local Plan for the Broads

Members received the report of the Planning Policy Officer. The Head of Governance (HoG) said the Local Plan was submitted in February 2026 by the Head of Planning as a delegated decision. Since this time, a judicial review had commenced elsewhere in the country that

concerned the process in relating to submitting local plans. It had been common practice for local authorities to seek delegation to submit local plans following Regulation 19 consultations, however, the legal challenge accused this process of contradicting Environment Assessment Regulations. The report asked Members to endorse the Local Plan for the Broads in the event that the review concluded the process was contrary to Environment Assessment Regulations.

A Member asked if the legal review would impact the inspectors review carried out in September. The HoG said the inspectors review should not be impacted and the only implication would be that the Authority could be accused of failure to follow due process in the delegation decision. It was for this reason Members were asked to approve the Local Plan for the Broads.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by Tony Grayling.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- i. **Note the update; and**
- ii. **Confirm the decision to submit the Local Plan to the planning inspectorate.**

17. The making of Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan

Members received the report of the Planning Policy Officer. The Head of Governance (HoG) said the report on the adoption and making of the Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan had been presented to the Planning Committee on 7 July 2026. The plan had successfully completed its referendum and was ready to be made. The report requested members to approve the making of the Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan.

Martyn Hooton proposed, seconded by Matthew Shardlow.

It was resolved unanimously that the Authority would make/adopt the Strumpshaw Neighbourhood Plan.

18. Endorsing the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document

Members received the report of the Planning Policy Officer. The Head of Governance (HoG) said the report detailed the Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) produced by the Greater Norwich authorities of Broadland District Council, Norwich City Council and South Norfolk District Council. The Planning Committee recommended that the Authority endorse the SPD at their meeting on 7 July 2026.

A Member added that endorsing the SPD was important as the Broads Authority could not discharge its housing responsibilities without the help of neighbouring councils.

Gary Champion proposed, seconded by Tim Jickells.

It was resolved unanimously to endorse the Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document.

19. Endorsing the Norwich City Council Affordable Housing SPD

Members received the report of the Planning Policy Officer. The Head of Governance (HoG) said Norwich City Council had adopted the SPD on 30 June 2026. The Planning Committee discussed the SPD at their meeting on 7 July 2026 and recommended the document for endorsement as the Local Plan for the Broads had regard to and deferred to affordable housing policies for its districts.

Gary Champion proposed, seconded by Tony Grayling.

It was resolved unanimously to endorse The Norwich City Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

20. Scheme of powers delegated to Chief Executive and other authorised officers – update to section 2(e) Planning and heritage

Members received the report of the Head of Governance (HoG). The HoG said an update to the scheme of delegation was required in order to provide clarification in planning decisions. The first of these changes related to planning applications submitted by or on behalf of the Authority which had previously been brought to the Planning Committee at the discretion of the Director of Delivery (DoD). A new clause 37(x) was proposed to capture the scenario and ensure applications made by or on behalf of the Authority be brought to the Planning Committee for approval.

A second change was proposed in relation to the delegation of response to consultation on planning matters. Clause 67 had been proposed in response to suggestion from the Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee and would introduce criteria to clarify when consultation response on both general planning matters and neighbourhood plans could be delegated. A further amendment to clause 66 was also recommended, stating consultations should be delegated to officers and be brought to the Planning Committee only when there would be a significant impact on the Broads.

The final proposed change was to clause 47. This clarified when matters of enforcement should be brought before the Planning Committee.

The HoG asked members to further approve amendments to Section 2 f, g and h of the document. The HoG said updates to officer titles would be needed as the title Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology had been changed to the Head of Operations; similarly, the role of Ecology and Design Supervisor had been renamed Ecology and Design Manager. The HoG further requested Members approve an amendment to Section 2(f) clause 73 and 77 to add the Head of Operations to the authorised officers.

A Member said applications from the Authority had always been brought to the Planning Committee for approval. The Member said the amendments proposed would not reduce the oversight of the committee but would streamline the process and reduce the time taken for officers to produce Planning Committee reports. The Member asked if it was possible to include the phrase or equivalent in brackets, following officers titles, to remove the need of approval for future amendments of this nature. The HoG said a clause could be included to address this, as job titles could change periodically.

A Member asked if there was a definition of “serious implications” for clause 66 and 67. The HoG said serious implications would include matters that would have an impact on or contradict the Authorities Local Plan.

Alan Goodchild proposed, seconded by Gail Harris

It was resolved unanimously to:

- i. Approve the revised Scheme of powers delegated to the Chief Executive and other authorised officers in relation to the Planning Committee as set out in paragraphs 2.3, 3.2, 3.5 and 4.2 of the report.**
- ii. Update 4.1 of the Code of Practice for members of the Planning Committee and officers to reflect the proposed change in clause 37 of the Scheme of powers delegated to the Chief Executive and other authorised officers.**
- iii. Approve amendments to officer job titles in section 2 f, g and h.**
- iv. Approve the addition of the Head of Operations to authorised officers under section 2(f) 73 and 77.**

21. Committee membership and member appointment 2026/27

Members received the report of the Head of Governance (HoG). The HoG said members were emailed prior to the meeting to assess their willingness to remain on the committees and outside bodies they had been appointed to. A number of vacancies had become available following the change in local authority members and these needed to be filled. The HoG specifically sought a volunteer to join the Standards Committee and said the Authority were still waiting for Norfolk County Council (NCC) to appoint their two representatives to the Authority. Tom Daly volunteered to join the Standards Committee.

A Member commented that the delay from NCC in appointing to outside bodies had been placing pressure on members to ensure committees remained quorate. The HoG confirmed correspondence had taken place with the Head of Democratic Services and it was hoped that they would appoint two members to the Authority shortly. However, she would contact the Norfolk County Council Monitoring Officer directly if appointments were not forthcoming.

A Member said that NCC had previously announced appointment to outside bodies would not be made for a period of six months following their election.

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A Member asked how much officer time had been used while chasing NCC to fulfil their statutory responsibilities. The HoG said the biggest impact was on officer time. It has meant that some tasks were now having to be duplicated, such as induction sessions for all new members. This would normally be carried out as a group induction, but the delay meant that individual sessions would need to be held.

Martyn Hooton proposed, seconded by Gail Harris.

It was resolved unanimously that appointments to the Navigation Committee; Planning Committee; Risk, Audit & Governance Committee; Standards Committee; and the Broads Local Access Forum be made in accordance with Table 1, with the addition of the appointment of Tom Daly to the Standards Committee, and appointments to outside bodies as set out in Table 2.

22. Whitlingham Charitable Trust – appointment of Trustee

Members received the report of the Head of Governance (HoG). The HoG said the Authority were able to appoint four members as trustees to the Whitlingham Charitable Trust (WCT) for a period of three years, with the Authority currently having three trustees appointed. The HoG said the Authority and the Chair of WCT were happy for these trustees to remain in their roles for a further three years and the Broads Authority engaged in a recruitment process to appoint one further trustee.

The process sought to recruit a candidate with a marketing background and Nicola Blake emerged as the preferred candidate following candidate interviews. The Chair commented that all candidates were impressive and thanked them all for applying.

Harry Blathwayt proposed, seconded by Alan Goodchild.

It was resolved unanimously to agree to the appointment of Nicola Blake as Trustee to the Whitlingham Charitable Trust on behalf of the Authority, for a period of three years.

23. Items of business raised by the Designated Person in respect of the Port Marine Safety Code

There were no matters to report under this item.

24. Broads Local Access Forum annual report 2025/26

Members received the report of the Waterways and Recreation Officer. The Director of Delivery (DoD) said there were no further updates and the report showed that the Broads Local Access Forum had remained busy and active throughout the year.

A Member asked why there were eight vacancies on the forum. The Head of Governance said the report was written before the recruitment process had begun and all eight vacancies were now filled.

The report was noted.

25. Report on outside bodies – Whitlingham Charitable Trust 2025/26

Members received the report of Matthew Bradbury, Trustee of the Whitlingham Charitable Trust. The Head of Governance (HoG) said the report set out activities of the Trust throughout the year.

A Member commented that independent representatives were appointed by the Authority due to the potential and frequent crossover of aims between the Authority and Whitlingham Charitable Trust.

The report was noted.

26. Minutes to be received

Members received the minutes of the following meetings:

Broads Local Access Forum – 19 November 2025

Risk, Audit and Governance Committee – 24 February 2026

Planning Committee – 8 May 2026

27. Other items of business

The Chair said an item of business had been brought to their attention which required consideration as a matter of urgency. The Chair said the item involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended. The Chair sought members approval to discuss this matter as an exempt item for inclusion as item 32 on the agenda. The members unanimously agreed to allow the addition of this item.

28. Formal questions

There were no formal questions of which notice had been given.

29. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Friday 25 September 2026 at 10.00am at the King's Centre, 63-75 King Street, Norwich, NR1 1PH.

30. Exclusion of the public

The Authority **resolved** to exclude the public from the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 for the consideration of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraph 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act as amended, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public benefit in disclosing the information.

The public left the meeting and the recording was suspended.

Please note these are draft minutes and will not be confirmed until the next meeting.

31. Exempt minutes of last meeting

The exempt minutes of the last meeting held on 15 May 2026 were confirmed and would be signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting. A summary of the discussion was contained in the exempt minutes.

32. Item of urgent business

A summary of the discussion was contained in the exempt minutes.

The meeting ended at 12:00pm

Signed by

Chairman