

Navigation Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2013

Present:

Mr D A Broad (Chairman)

Mr K Allen	Mr A Goodchild	Mr J Knight
Mr L Betts	Mr P Greasley	Mr P Ollier
Ms S Blane	Ms L Hemsall	Mr M Whitaker
Mr P Durrant	Mr M Heron	

Also present: Dr S Johnson and Prof J A Burgess

In Attendance:

Mr T Adam – Head of Finance
Ms H Ayers – Administrative Officer (Governance)
Mr S Birtles – Head of Safety Management
Mr A Clarke – Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer
Mr B Housden – Head of IT and Collector of Tolls
Ms A Leeper – Asset Officer
Mr S Linford – IT Project Officer
Ms A Long – Director of Planning and Resources
Ms L Marsh – Head of Communications
Mr J Organ – Head of Governance and Executive Assistant
Mr R Rogers – Head of Construction and Maintenance
Mr A Vernon – Head of Ranger Services
Ms T Wakelin – Director of Operations
Mr R Wilson – Waterways and Recreation Officer
Ms K Wood – Planning Officer

1/1 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Sir P Dixon. Dr J Packman also provided apologies for not being able to attend.

1/2 Appointment of Chairman

The Head of Governance and Executive Assistant invited nominations for the position of Chairman for the forthcoming year.

It was proposed and duly seconded that Mr Broad be nominated.

There being no other nominations it was

RESOLVED

that Mr Broad be appointed as Chairman of the Navigation Committee for the forthcoming year.

Mr D Broad (in the Chair)

The Chairman welcomed Richard Card and David Talbot to the meeting and advised members that they would be assisting in the presentation of Item 12. The Chairman also welcomed Prof Jacquie Burgess and advised members that she would be assisting in the presentation of Item 14.

1/3 Appointment of Vice-Chairman

The Chairman invited nominations for the appointment of Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year. It was proposed and duly seconded that Mr Ollier be appointed as Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year.

There being no other nominations it was

RESOLVED

that Mr Ollier be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Navigation Committee for the forthcoming year.

1/4 To note whether any items have been proposed as matters of urgent business

There were no items of urgent business.

1/5 To receive Declarations of Interest

Members expressed their declarations of interest as set out in Appendix 1 of these minutes.

1/6 Public Question Time

No public questions had been received.

1/7 To receive and confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to noting that Mr Paul Greasley was in fact absent from the meeting which had been unclear from the minutes.

1/8 Summary of Progress/Actions Taken Following Decisions of Previous Meetings

The Committee received and noted a schedule of progress/actions taken following decisions of previous meetings. Members requested that the Broads Angling Strategy Consultation item could be removed as it had been fully progressed.

1/9 Canoe Trails Report

Members received a report setting out the Authority's progress on canoe trail development. The Chairman added that member, Mr Max Heron, would provide an update regarding rowing towards the end of this item. The Authority's Integrated Access Strategy (IAS) identified an action to improve the information available to the public on canoe access in the navigation area as a result of an increased demand for canoe access to the Broads. Since the adoption of the IAS, officers had worked to develop trails in partnership with the canoe hire network.

The Waterways and Recreation Officer advised members that as a result of external funding from the Sustainable Tourism in Estuarine Parks (STEP), he had worked with a local graphic designer (following a tender process) to create four trails which incorporated cultural, historical and environmental information. The trails were based from canoe hire centres following an extensive consultation process and input from those centres. Members were also advised that the trails were only available in PDF format (via the www.enjoythebroad.com website) and hence when printed all pages of the document would print which included safety advice. These trails covered the Barton Broad area on the River Ant, the Salhouse area on the River Bure, the Geldeston to Beccles river reach and the Bungay loop on the River Waveney. The Authority reported that it was considering publishing the trails in a Norfolk canoeing book which was currently being drafted; this was subject to the book being aligned to the Authority's principles, vision and priorities.

The project was delivered prior to the closing date of the STEP funding process on 1 June on time, within budget and to specification.

A member enquired whether the Authority was planning to chart additional trails to which the presenting officer confirmed plans were in place for this. The same member asked why there were no trails in the upper catchment to which members were advised this was due to a lack of receptivity from canoe hire centres in the upper reaches. The officer was able to advise that the Authority was looking to chart a trail from Potter Heigham to connect with the upper Thurne. General discussions on this topic took place around creating trails that do not affect wildlife and designating trails away from 'honeypot' (high waterways traffic volume) areas. Another member requested that making colour versions of documents (such as the canoe trails) in the pre-reading for committee meetings would be valuable.

By invitation of the Chairman, on the similar and related topic of rowing, a member advised of a new offering from Whitlingham Boathouses for recreational rowers. He informed those present that the organisation had a total of 8 hire boats that were of a wider than standard hull design to appeal to less experienced users which could be hired by any club in any region of the UK. In addition, the organisation was beginning to map routes for hirers to follow. Members were encouraged to learn that a group from Leicester had already hired and taken out some of the boats. Some discussion between the presenting member and the Waterways and Recreation Officer took place to the effect that this would be an excellent opportunity to link-up with the Authority's work around canoe trails. This was welcomed by those present in view of the obvious synergies and agreement was reached for partnership working which would be in adherence with the Authority's IAS. Further, the Authority could offer Whitlingham Boathouses access to tools such as GIS and assistance with the interpretation and analysis of such data.

A member also represented that a meeting had been held to discuss charges for rowing craft, where it was considered that a parallel arrangement to that in place for sailing and canoeing could be used to reduce the navigation charges for rowing craft used by young people. Upon further discussion it was proposed and agreed that the committee would add their support for this rowing initiative in addition to any further recommendation concerning the structure of tolls agreed later on Item 12.

1/10 Demasting and 24hr Moorings

Members were presented with a report which provided an update on the current position regarding the development of new 24-hour moorings and demasting moorings in the navigation area. The Broads Authority currently provided 66 24-hour moorings and a number of demasting moorings; the majority being developed on flood defence piling. In some cases the BA owned the land and thus had responsibility for piling maintenance. Since 2006 the provision of the Authority's moorings had been guided by the Mooring Strategy which included a commitment on the part of the Authority to the continued provision of 24-hour moorings in the Broads, but also recognised that it would not be the sole provider of moorings in the navigation area. Following the 2009 review of the strategy, it was subsumed into the Integrated Access Strategy (IAS), which also applied a number of other factors to the prioritisation of mooring sites and carried forward the Authority's aim of providing demasting moorings at all four quadrants of bridges spanning the navigation.

The Authority had identified potential 24-hour mooring and demasting mooring projects and presented these to members and advised that a total budget of £100,000 existed for the current financial year; £15,000 of which had been identified for demasting moorings at either St. Olaves or Acle Bridge. Given the budget conditions, it was not feasible to deliver all identified projects. Therefore, prioritisation was required.

As part of the Asset Management Strategy, the Authority has identified that it needed to allocate approximately £108,000 per annum (assuming external contractors are used) for the next 60 years to cover the costs of re-piling the existing structures as they reached the end of their useful lives. The Authority did not have responsibility for the future maintenance of a number of their 24-hour mooring structures and the EA indicated that some were no longer required for flood defence and would be removed unless landowners or lessees (e.g. BA) took on liability for the piled edges. EA would pass the Authority information regarding the affected sites following outcomes of conversations with relevant landowners which will enable officers to have a full understanding of the financial implications of EA's proposals and develop a strategic response.

Officers, the NSBA, BHBF and the Broads Society agreed that the lower Bure area was a high priority area and required new moorings. Officers had identified two potential sites in that area, and recommended the site near Dove House Farm which was identified as a high priority location due to its hard piled edge and did not require dredging to be made suitable for mooring. Hardley Cross on the River Yare was also seen as high priority as it scored highly against the IAC assessment criteria and provided access to the Wherryman's Way long distance path. In terms of demasting, officers (together with the Broads Society and NSBA) recommended St. Olaves over Acle for safety reasons. Further, the preferred solution would be to install two pontoons together, rather than one, for increased stability.

For clarity, officers recommended potential mooring sites at Dove House Farm (£25,000), Hardly Cross (£37,000) and St. Olaves (£15,000), leaving approximately £24,000 for other projects to benefit the navigation or maintenance of existing moorings once full information from BESL (EA's contractor) was available regarding the future of moorings that are no longer required for flood risk purposes.

One member queried whether one of the potential project's (at Rockland) reported distance of mooring at 4750 metres was correct. The Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer confirmed that it was indeed correct but that only 150m of this was the assumption arrived at for the estimate of £37,500. Another member enquired as to the lifespan of a piling structure to which he was advised that it varied from 30 to 50 years. Another member queried what the cost per metre of mooring included, but was assured by officers that the cost estimated was based on the current market rate following the recent tender exercises. The same member felt it was important for the Authority to continue to offer free 24-hour moorings in the face of rising tolls. The Chairman, representing Peter Dixon in his absence, proposed that robust conversations with the EA were required. Members expressed that the full picture and clear approach was required before decisions could be made regarding accepting liability for piling and that similarly landowners' could be predicted to take a cautious stance due to liability and potential costs. A member recommended the Authority needed to be 'in the background' to offer advice, guidance and solutions for those landowners intending to take-on liability. In terms of demasting, a member noted there appeared to be only

plans for demasting between the mouth of the River Bure and Breydon Bridge (where the new pontoon is to be welcomed) and no plans for demasting upstream of Breydon Bridge. In response, the Director of Operations advised that the Authority was in the final stages of replacing 4 Dolphin mooring structures in that area of the catchment, however the implementation of which had been slightly delayed whilst dealing with concerns raised by NWT and NE.

The Committee expressed support for the proposals within the report and agreed with the priorities for the current year's spending of approx. £100K.

The Chairman expressed the view that there was going to be an increasing demand upon the Authority's 24 hour moorings and that, both the future maintenance of these, and the wish to either adopt or add to those being discontinued by the EA would bring great challenges to the task of financing them. The matter of possibly charging for those where finance would otherwise be unavailable and charges would be feasible for collection was a key and controversial issue too.

Another member urged that thought be given to this sooner rather than later and supported the idea of a Member/Officer working group to start work urgently in reviewing and quantifying the options for moorings policy.

It was resolved unanimously that this committee recommends the setting up of such a group and the Chairman agreed to pursue this and at least two members were identified who would be willing to serve.

1/11 Appointments to the Navigation Committee

Members received a report providing proposals for the future appointments to the Navigation Committee and the timing of these to provide more consistency with other appointments to the Authority.

Members noted a proposal to migrate the co-opted member appointments towards a four year appointment term, as allowed by the Act, together with a proposal to extend the current three year of appointment by one year. It was noted that this would provide savings on the cost and resource requirements associated with the appointment process and allow members a longer period within a term in which to assimilate information and contribute. Members also noted that this would bring the terms of appointment in line with those for Secretary of State appointed members, including the maximum overall term of eight years which could currently be served by Secretary of State members.

Members also noted a proposal to revise the appointment timetable to allow the subsequent appointment of two co-opted members to the Authority at a similar time to secretary of state appointments to allow the two co-opted members to be considered for the appointments which are made during the Annual meeting of the Authority.

Members also received proposals to overcome the potential of having a period between appointment terms when there were no co-opted members appointed to the Authority. This would involve the temporary appointments to the Authority if required to ensure continued representation on the full Authority. These proposals also included a mechanism to maintain an interim Chairman of the Navigation Committee should this be necessary.

Members were also advised that it was intended to invite John Edmunds to chair the next Appointments Selection Panel again, but that if he was unavailable that the Chairman of the Authority and Chief Executive appoint an alternative Independent Chairman for the Selection Panel from waterways organisations independent of the Broads. There was general support towards this approach; though one member identified that there might be merit in appointing a new Independent Chairman for the next Selection Panel to ensure impartiality was maintained.

The Committee expressed support for the proposals within the report.

1/12 Navigation Charges: Proposals by the NSBA and the BHBF

The Director of Planning and Resources summarised a report which members had received. The report advised members that in January of this year, the Authority's Chairman invited the NSBA and BHBF to a meeting to look at tolls and their impact on the different fleets. The report set out the methodology being proposed by the NSBA and BHBF for the structure of the tolls' system in advance of the October meeting when the committee would be formally consulted on the level of charges for 2014/15.

Last year's decisions on charges followed the deliberations of a Tolls Working Group which proposed a reduction for smaller craft, endorsed by the Navigation Committee and adopted by the Broads Authority. The result of this was that over half of the boats on the Broads had a reduction or no increase in their tolls. Due to the existing relationship between small and larger craft, the change in relative charges resulted in the larger weekly hire and larger private craft paying higher tolls. In response to this, at the January meeting, the NSBA/BHBF raised their concerns about the impact these rises would have on the hire boat companies and private owners of larger craft. The organisations were invited to look at the impact of the Authority's proposals on different fleets and make suggestions about the tolls' structure.

The two organisations proposed an alternative charging structure based on the 2013/14 position. The lower charges for smaller 5-6m² boats would be retained but the main difference being that the NSBA/BHBF proposals resulted in some medium-sized boats seeing a higher toll increase; whilst for larger boats the previous increase would be reduced.

Richard Card (Chairman of the NSBA) and David Talbot (Vice-Chairman of the NSBA) were invited to present the NSBA/BHBF proposed structure. Richard Card advised the Committee that he and Paul Greasley had been asked to comment on the report, but had had insufficient time to comment on

the covering report due to time and only checked the content of the appendix. He went on to question paragraph 1.1 of the report, proposing that the stated proportion of over half of craft seeing a reduction in tolls was inaccurate in the view of the presenting organisations. Further, he advised these were an alternative for the current year and did not make recommendations for the next year's tolls' increase. They were about a new structure that was not about all types of craft but only encompassed motor and sailing of 6sq metres and above. Boats smaller than 6sq metres were subject to a fixed flat rate and hence were not being addressed by the new proposal.

In terms of the existing tolls' structure, the Chairman of the NSBA advised those present that the hire boat industry was particularly badly hit by the tolls-increase in respect of hire motor cruisers. He also advised that larger craft faced substantial increases, whereas smaller craft received a reduced toll. The NSBA Chairman stated that in January of 2012 the Authority agreed the principles and criteria for tolls and that the NSBA/BHBF's proposals were completely compliant with these and would generate the same predicted income; albeit with a redistribution of tolls that gave a much flatter line when presented graphically. He stated that the BHBF had gained support on their proposals from the member yards and notified those present that hire boats were in the minority in terms of number. Further, he informed that he had taken the alternative proposals to the Commodores of the NSBA's affiliated clubs to which he had received unanimous backing.

Richard Card continued that small craft used moorings and small sailing vessels draw more water than large cruisers and stated that these craft were the ones that had a greater requirement for dredging. He went on to explain that small sailing boats used Breydon Water and the Survey of Hire Boat Users showed that only 1/3 of hire boats crossed the same stretch. Richard Card concluded that a 1% increase for small craft would be relatively insignificant when compared to a 1% increase for larger boats. The NSBA Chairman requested those present to give serious thought to the proposals. David Talbot proceeded to present graphs to demonstrate the alternative proposal, following which the Chairman asked for any questions to be raised.

In response to some earlier points, The Head of IT and Collector of Tolls advised that he did not presently have all of the figures in front of him regarding paragraph 1.1 of the Authority's report, but advised that he would look into this. The officer also noted that Private Day Boats were not apparent in the alternative proposal, to which Richard Card advised had been included and subsumed within the total for Total Private Motor Boats.

A member urged those present to consider the UK tolls' market and from his own investigations advised that private boat tolls on the Broads were approximately 46% below the UK market rate which meant that a private boat toll on the Broads would stand at c£321 compared to if used on waterways near Ely at c£417. Conversely, he identified that hire boat tolls were approximately 11% above the UK tolls market. Another member proposed that the Broads' tolls could be cheaper as there were no hard structures or locks to maintain and could think of numerous large cheap boats on the

Broads. Another member encouraged those present to consider that the Broads was competing with other locations both in the UK and on the continent and could think of one or two boats, larger ones especially, that could go elsewhere if their tolls were raised which would result in lost revenue. One member thanked both organisations for the work done to-date and viewed the new proposal as being a sensible approach and warned that our position was one of neutrality and needed to be mindful of feedback from stakeholders. Two other members, in a similar vein, stated that this was a detailed and well-constructed / thought-out proposal.

Another member requested some clarity at a high-level of the difference between the two toll structures and queried whether the new structure was proportionate for boats in the middle of the spectrum. David Talbot confirmed that boats in the middle would have a larger percentage increase whereas larger vessels would have a decrease. The Chairman of the NSBA added that the steeper steps were brought in to mitigate the effects of the reduced toll for entry level boats. The same member enquired further, asking whether users' perception was that this was proportionate to which the NSBA Chairman advised he could not answer on behalf of the general public but had shown it to his member clubs so that they were aware. The Vice-Chairman stated that the amount of money involved was not high. The NSBA Chairman commented that it depended on whether one 'buys' the idea of proportionality.

The Head of IT and Collector of Tolls gave some background as to when previous changes were introduced for smaller craft. These decisions to alter the charges for rowing and sailing craft had resulted in stabilising and increasing fleet sizes. He advised that since 2004 private motor vessels of 5sq metres and under had seen a reduction in number of approximately 500.

In conclusion, the Committee expressed their thanks to the NSBA speakers and their BHBF colleagues for their time invested in formulating their proposals and presenting them. The committee resolved that they would take the proposal fully into account when considering the tolls question and formulating recommendations at the next meeting for the 2013 Toll setting process.

The Committee also resolved to incorporate the proposals for a Broads Rowing Scheme for younger rowers into their recommendations as discussed during Item 9.

1/13 Boat Waste Update 2013

Members received a report from the Asset Officer which provided an update regarding boat waste further to the report presented to the Navigation Committee in September of 2012.

New Controlled Waste Regulations introduced on the 1 April 2012 affected the way that local authorities treat waste from boats. Local authorities were looking for the "polluter" to pay for the collection and disposal of boat waste. Members were advised that despite several meetings and an exchange of

correspondence the Authority had still not been supplied with detailed costs by local authorities and therefore the potential cost to the Authority was still not known. However, no waste facilities had been removed by local authorities as previously feared, except in 1 instance at the request of the landowner.

The Asset Officer reminded those present that as a result of the new above Regulation, boat waste had been reclassified from household to commercial waste.

Members continued to support the views expressed in the September 2012 report that it would be unreasonable for these charges to fall entirely upon navigation expenditure. It was concluded that the committee wanted an update at a future meeting once detailed cost data had been provided by respective councils and that the Broads Authority did not need to push for this as members felt this would be passed to officers once available.

1/14 Boat Owners Survey

The Authority Vice-Chair and Senior Waterways and Recreation Officer presented members with the Authority's proposed approach to a survey of boat owners; which was deemed to have a broader scope and more in-depth analysis than that of previous surveys.

Following a suggestion from a member, it was agreed (in principle) at the July 2013 Authority meeting to conduct a statistically representative sample survey of private boat owners who kept vessels on the Broads.

Prior to the analysis and reporting stage, the aim was for the Authority to consult with representative bodies, committee members, and the project's Working Group and other possible outside groups or individuals in order to identify the broad topics and issues of relevance. The ultimate intention was to produce a set of reliable and valid findings using appropriate scientific methodology and statistical analysis for both the qualitative (verbatim) and quantitative data gathered on owners' opinions, attitudes and behaviours. This approach was favoured over approaches based on anecdotal data as it was deemed to give greater confidence in findings due to increased objectivity, inclusivity and rigour. Members were informed that the final results of such work would improve the quality of our decision-making.

The Vice-Chair stated that it was critical that the maximum response rate (of around 50-60%) was achieved as the higher the response rate, the greater likelihood of a statistically reliable set of results. Members' attention was brought to paragraph 2.3 which listed the current topics for inclusion in the survey. The project (if approved) was proposed to run in two phases, the first being to conduct the survey for private boat owners between January and March 2014 (with results presented in April). This would be funded from navigation expenditure. The second phase would be to conduct a second survey of residents within the Broads and its adjacent areas funded by National Park Grant. As with previous surveys, the Authority would look to

minimise costs by using in-house expertise and resources where possible. If sufficient funding was available a follow-up study could be conducted with a small number of respondents.

Members views were sought on the approach presented.

The Chairman agreed that from his experience, evidence-based approaches gave rise to greater objectivity. It was envisaged the overall cost of this project would run into the thousands rather than tens of thousands of pounds. Furthermore, the issues of what questions would be asked and with what wording would thus be fairly and adequately agreed and then by using an independent body to analyse the results and present its conclusions, this could be seen as an impartial and objective study. The Senior Waterways & Recreation Officer advised that where possible project work would be conducted internally or via Phd / UEA students to save cost and the Vice Chair was also offering her own professional help for the same reason.

Another member welcomed the proposal, however, believed that cost would be a factor, but was willing to see what could be achieved. The same member queried owners' willingness to contribute to such a survey.

In conclusion, members welcomed the project and the proposed approach presented and resolved to support the proposal subject to the further detailed methodology and costs being presented.

1/15 Subscriber Text Service

Following a member request for the Authority to consider the development of a subscriber text service to assist boaters crossing Breydon Water, the Director of Operations presented members with a report setting out the current methods by which the Broads Authority disseminates information to the public and identified options for further developments. Current methods ranged from hardcopy publications such as Tide Tables, Notice to Mariners (published in the EDP), to the Broadcaster and Broadsheet newspaper/letter type channels. The Authority also provided online services which include hydrographic charts and navigation notes to assist with passage planning. Additional support was also given via other mechanisms such as Ranger, yacht station and Broads Control employees. In addition, other support existed such as bridge gauge boards and layby / demasting moorings.

It was reported that whilst members were supportive of providing as much assistance as possible to boaters, in consideration of the existing sources of communication available, it was agreed that anything implemented to address Breydon Water should be at minimal cost and simple to use. The advantages and disadvantages of a Subscriber Text Service alongside those of other potential alternative IT solutions were outlined to members. The main limitations of the text service were the content of the message (i.e. limited to 160 characters and associated concerns over liability), officer time and resources, and cost to both the user and the Authority. In view of the various pros and cons, it was the officers' view that the solution rested in a

combination of methods, ranging from the existing website, Twitter or RSS feed.

One member stated he was impressed with the amount of investigation that has been done around this matter, however, wanted to re-focus those present on the original request: to investigate the implementation of a text service to communicate the time it was safe to navigate through Great Yarmouth and Breydon Water. He advised that all other crucial information that a boater required was available from other sources. Another member concurred that focus on the original matter was required, however stated that the work presented was of value and should be retained.

The Chairman asked how a text service would be produced to which the Director of Operations advised it would be via a database. The challenge being that resource time would be eaten into to make changes to message content. The Chairman stated that the initial offering could be predicted times and hence no requirement to amend the data file, to which the Head of Communications expressed some caution as she was aware that users of these types of services typically expect real-time updates should information become out-of-date. Another member said that unless the information offered was real-time, he could see little benefit in going ahead with this.

The Head of Ranger Services highlighted that Great Yarmouth Yacht Station already provided the information that members were asking to be conveyed by text to subscribers. However, the Yacht Station also provided weather condition data. Further, he warned that to provide the time for crossing / slack water in isolation could present a risk as boaters could assume that it was safe to cross Breydon Water at the time stated in the SMS message. Other members expressed some unease over providing the times in isolation. The Chairman interjected that there had been quite a body of users requesting this information and therefore proposed a trial text service over, for example, a bank holiday. The IT Project Officer advised that the service was bought in, so when it could be used would depend on the chosen provider.

In conclusion, the Chairman asked for the IT Project Officer to see if a trial could be performed using predicted low water times (slack water being an hour later) such that no further information was initially considered for publication to avoid the perceived legal and operational difficulties and this was agreed by the committee as a recommendation.

1/15a Planning Applications with Navigation Implications

Members received a report concerning two planning applications that had been submitted in respect of the excavation of a basin to use as a material source and the use of a basin to provide seven private moorings and two visitor moorings at Pyes Mill Farm on the River Chet in Loddon.

Members noted that the proposed site was situated on a bend in the River Chet on a fairly narrow point in the navigation, with the river being

approximately 15m in width at this location. The intended BESL flood bank construction might also limit visibility between the basin and the channel.

Members noted that the landowner would be responsible for the maintenance and dredging of the basin.

The potential for further moorings in the system was welcomed, though there was concern over the length of boats that should be permitted to moor at this location given the width of the river and potential visibility issues. The Committee therefore supported the application on the condition that a restriction was placed on the length of boats permitted to use the moorings; limiting this to a maximum of 10m.

1/16 Construction and Maintenance Work Programme

Members received a report which set out the progress made in the delivery of the 2013/14 Construction and Maintenance Section work programme to date.

The report also proposed an amendment to the 2013/14 dredging programme to allow the use of PRISMA money to fund a trial of a new dewatering technique. One of the locations for the trial would be on the River Chet and this trial was proposed to be fast tracked in order to respond to the concerns raised regarding water depths in the upper Chet. This would mean, however, that the planned works on the River Ant would need to be postponed to 2014/15.

Members noted the report and agreed the proposed amendment to the 2013/14 dredging programme.

1/17 Navigation Income and Expenditure: 2012/13 Actual Outturn 1 April to 30 June 2013 Actual and 2013/14 Forecast Outturn

Members received a report detailing the actual outturn navigation income and expenditure figures for 2012/13. The report also summarised the actual navigation income and expenditure for the three month period to 30 June 2013 and provided a forecast of the projected expenditure at the end of the financial year. The financial monitoring report was presented in a new format, as proposed to the Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee at its meeting on 9 July 2013, and the main differences in the format were highlighted to members.

It was noted that the actual income and expenditure would be reported at summary/directorate level, providing members with an overview of the Authority's position. Core navigation income was slightly above the profiled budget at the end of June 2013, with a favourable variance of £27,363 from the latest available budget (LAB). The report also included graphical charts to provide a visual overview of actual income and expenditure compared with both the original budget and the LAB.

Members noted that the LAB format would ensure that the budget accurately reflected the resources available in the financial year, that there was a full and effective implementation of the virement process, that there was better visibility of budgets providing clearer information about approved changes, and that allowed members to distinguish between planned budget changes and unplanned outturn variances.

Members attention was drawn to the reasons that the LAB differed from the original budget, and specifically the carry forward of £162,576 from 2012/13 budgets. Taking account of all budget adjustments, the LAB currently provided for a navigation deficit of £135,439 in 2013/14.

Members noted that as at the end of June, the forecast outturn indicated that income was expected to be broadly in line with the original budget and that total expenditure was forecast to be £3,063,111. The resulting deficit for the year was therefore forecast to be £159,626.

Members also noted that the current navigation earmarked reserve balance was £618,264.

The actual outturn for 2012/13 was a deficit of £545,743 compared with a budgeted deficit for the year of £197,886. Members noted that the variance mainly arose as a result of additional expenditure approved by the Authority during the year; and in particular the expenditure related to the construction of the new Dockyard Workshop and the costs associated with the transfer of responsibility for Breydon Water. Members were advised that these figures were subject to on-going audit work and that an adjustment on the National Park figures was anticipated. This had no impact on the Navigation figures reported.

Members noted the proposed timetable for financial engagement with the Committee and that the navigation budget for 2014/15 and the financial strategy to 2016/17 would be brought to the Committee at its meeting in December 2013.

Following a question from one member, it was explained that the reports to the Navigation Committee would always include the original budget, budget adjustments, the latest available budget, the forecast outturn and the forecast outturn variance.

Members noted the report.

1/18 Chief Executive's Report

Members received a report which summarised the current position in respect of a number of important projects and events, including decisions taken during the recent cycle of committee meetings.

Members noted the outline proposals for the payment of Tolls by the hire boat fleet, which had emanated from a meeting between the Authority's officers and representatives of the Broads Hire Boat Federation.

Members also noted that the Harbour Revision Order (HRO) for Mutford Lock had not yet been formally submitted. The Chairman also advised members that the HRO for Great Yarmouth had not been agreed and that the Authority would retain its current responsibilities.

The report was noted.

1/19 Current Issues

A member briefed the Committee on a meeting which had been held in London with five local MPs following representations to MPs from some toll payers and some members of the Navigation Committee. The meeting was chaired by Norman Lamb MP, who had invited the Chief Executive, the Chairman of the Authority, the Chairman of the Financial Scrutiny and Audit Committee, the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Navigation Committee and the members of the Navigation Committee who had raised the initial concerns.

Norman Lamb MP gave an overview of the concerns which had been raised to him. An opportunity was given to members of the Navigation Committee to explain those concerns in more detail, for the Chief Executive and members of the Broads Authority to respond to those concerns, and for the MPs to ask questions and seek clarity on the different issues.

The member advised that the primary issues raised and discussed were:

- (a) Concerns over the lack of representation for navigational interests on the full Authority, in relation to the Authority's three equal areas of responsibility and the proportion of overall BA income contributed by tolls;
- (b) Concerns over the process of consultation with the navigation committee on navigational issues, especially those where the navigation account was expected to make substantial financial contributions (the new dockyard development was raised as a particular concern in this respect); and
- (c) Concerns over the Broads Authority's consideration of the advice of the Navigation Committee in setting toll levels, focused particularly on the process which resulted in a 3% increase for the current year.

Norman Lamb MP had proposed that the Authority should appoint one of its Directors to engage with an emissary representative from the navigation committee, to discuss consider and agree potential changes to internal protocols and processes, with the goal of improving relationships and understanding between the Navigation Committee and the Executive. He further proposed that progress would be reported back to the MPs at a similar meeting in six to nine months.

The Chairman advised that the notes of the meeting were still to be agreed and that these would then be forwarded to members for information. Following the agreement of the notes and actions to be taken, the Navigation Committee agreed that the Chairman could nominate a member, who would take forward the issues raised, all of which would be in full consultation with other members of the Committee.

1/20 Items for future discussion

None

1/21 To note the date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee would therefore be held on Thursday 24 October at Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich commencing at 2.00pm.

The meeting concluded 5:40pm

Chairman

APPENDIX 1

Code of Conduct for Members

Declaration of Interests

Committee: Navigation Committee

Date of Meeting: 5 September 2013

Name <i>Please Print</i>	Agenda/ Minute No(s)	Nature of Interest (Please describe the nature of the interest)
Mr K Allen	General	Angling Trust, BASG Member
Mr D A Broad	9 - 18	Toll Payer and member of Great Yarmouth Port Consultative Committee
Mr L Betts	9 - 18	Toll Payer and Land Owner
Ms S Blane	-	(No relevant interests)
Mr A Goodchild	9 - 18	Toll Payer, Land Owner, Member of ABA, Chairman of BMF Commercial Marine
Mr P Greasley	9 - 18	Toll Payer, Chair of BHBF, Boat Operator and Passenger Boat Operator
Ms L Hemsall	-	(No relevant interests)
Mr M Heron	9 - 18	Toll Payer, Land Owner, Member of British Rowing, NRC, NSBA, NBYC, RCC and Chair of Whitlingham Boathouses
Mr J Knight	9 - 18	Toll Payer, Hire Boat Operator
Mr P Ollier	General	Toll Payer, Broads Authority Planning Committee, NSBA Committee member, RYA and various sailing clubs
Mr M Whitaker	9 - 18	Toll Payer, Hire Boat Operator, BHBH Executive Committee Member