

NSBA Survey Results
Report by the Chief Executive

Summary: Appendix 1 summarises the results from the survey carried out by the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association (NSBA) which deliberately paralleled the Authority's own boat owners' survey asking a different but related set of questions. This report looks at the output from the NSBA Survey, compares the findings with the Authority's own survey and draws out any key issues.

1 Respondents

- 1.1 247 members of the Association responded who, between them, owned 421 boats (for reference this compares to 609 owners of 803 boats in the Authority's survey). The number of responses to both questionnaires is relatively low compared to the 12,500 plaques that have been issued to date this year. The response rate of 23% for NSBA can be regarded as satisfactory, at least. It compares favourably with the response rate to the BA survey.

2 Types of Boat Owned and Usage

- 2.1 Approximately half the boats owned were powered (75% in the BA survey) and the average figure for usage just 26 days in the last year (69% and less than 30 days in the BA survey).

3 Moorings

- 3.1 Moorings are emerging as a greater issue for our users. Only the Ant and 'tributaries' were rated as satisfactory in the NSBA survey, otherwise mooring-availability was rated as poor. 15 respondents to the NSBA survey specifically expressed regrets about the loss/lack of informal moorings. No doubt that lack/loss contributed to the low ratings. 50% of the respondents to the BA survey thought free 24 hour moorings were a high priority for future expenditure and activity. The NSBA survey identified the Lower Bure and Yare as areas of deficiency which matches the Authority's analysis in the emerging Integrated Access Strategy which will be presented at a future meeting. The challenge is identifying suitable sites where the landowner is willing to make a mooring available.

4 Yacht Stations

- 4.1 The majority of the respondents to the BA survey were satisfied with the service provided by the BA provided facilities at Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Reedham (less than 5% thought they received a poor service). The NSBA

survey looks at four different aspects – availability, facilities, security and value for money. Security at both the Norwich and Great Yarmouth Yacht Stations was rated as poor, and so were the facilities at GYYS. Eight of the respondents had some specific comments on the security at Norwich and the conditions at Great Yarmouth. Up until the end of June the takings at Norwich were well up on last year and the installation of CCTV cameras has helped with the security. The Broads Authority took over the running of the Great Yarmouth Yacht Station in 2002 when the previous tenant decided not to renew the lease. Prior to then the Authority had received frequent complaints regarding the charges and services provided. There have been many improvements since 2002, funded jointly by the Borough Council and the Authority, and in 2011/12 the net cost to the Authority of operating the facility was around £25,000. Plans are in development for the upgrading the building to make better provision for the public and staff. The Authority does not lease the building in the winter and the Boat Owners Survey showed little support for a year round operation.

5 Facilities

- 5.1 With two specific exceptions, facilities were rated as poor. 26 respondents made additional comments about the lack of facilities. The closure of boatyards is a significant factor in the reduction in the infrastructure available on the Broads and this trend has been in spite of planning policies which seek to retain boatyards. There is some indication that not all hirers are being told that there are reciprocal arrangements for using other boatyard moorings and facilities and this is a topic worth taking up with the Broads Hire Boat Federation.

6 Electricity Charging Points

- 6.1 The Authority has installed a network of charging points with some external funding support. The original ambition was to encourage boats using electric propulsion. However, in recent years hirers have found them useful to maintain batteries and run all the electrical equipment on a modern hire boat. The Authority's budget line for this expenditure has been increased this year to provide a new location and increase the points at some of the existing locations. Taking a new electrical supply to some of the Authority's 24 hour moorings can be extremely expensive but it is an area where future investment will continue to be required.

7 Public Toilets

- 7.1 The provision of public toilets has been one of those services, largely provided by the district councils, which have been under threat because of the financial pressures on local government. The toilets at Potter Heigham do need updating and North Norfolk District Council have been in discussion with a private landowner about building new toilets for visitors to the village for many years.

8 Refuse Disposal

- 8.1 The issues around refuse disposal are similar to those regarding public toilets – with district councils trying to find alternative income streams or reducing the level of service provided. An earlier item on the agenda provides more information.

9 Dredging

- 9.1 The small number of respondents identifying inadequate water depth is perhaps a tribute to the huge efforts the Authority has put in recent years and the additional National Park Grant that has been invested in dredging the navigation area. A further £800,000 of PRISMA funding is continuing this enhanced level of activity. An update of the Authority's Sediment Management Strategy will be presented at a forthcoming meeting identifying those areas which do not meet the Waterways Specification. Looking at the individual rivers:

Ant – Barton Broad was subject to a huge project ten years ago to increase water depth and it meets the Waterways Specification.

Bure – many of the areas identified has been recently dredged and the Authority is currently on site in the Lower Bure. South Oby Dyke is private water where the Authority is not responsible for its maintenance.

Thurne – the Committee will be very familiar with the on-going works in the Hickling area to recreate the spit of land at Duck Broad and also place dredged material on land to the west of Candle Dyke.

Waveney – The Authority dredges the entrance to Oulton Broad every three years because of the high level of sedimentation. It has recently also been able to remove material from the North Bay.

Yare – the Authority has dredged the channels across Rockland Broad and the dykes but it is extremely expensive because all the contaminated material has to be transported to Authority's licensed site at Postwick.

10 Other Issues

- 10.1 Since the passing of the 2009 Broads Authority Act where vegetation is a potential hazard to users of the navigation the Authority contacts the landowner and asks it to be dealt with. In most cases this is meeting with a positive response and as a last resort the Authority will deal with it. The Authority continues to work in partnership with Broadsword removing vegetation on the river banks. In terms of the River Chet, the central part of the channel will be dredged this winter.
- 10.2 The Authority has committed to putting in demasting moorings either side of Breydon Bridge and is working with Network Rail to improve the reliability of the swing bridges across the navigation. New gauge boards in metric and

imperial measurements have been installed at Great Yarmouth to help with negotiating the two low bridges.

- 10.3 The excessive running of engines to charge boat batteries can be a problem particularly now that hire boats have so much electrical equipment on them. Members of staff working on the river in Norwich report less litter in the river and put it down to increased activity by the City Council.
- 10.4 Complaints by hirers of the behaviour by private boats and vice versa is a perennial activity on the Broads. The Authority has worked closely with the Broads Hire Boat Federation on codifying the handover procedures and this should help improve the boat handling skills of the novice hirer.
- 10.5 Managing the issues around 'itinerant live-aboards' can be challenging. They are not 'above the rules' and the Authority takes action where it is appropriate to do so. As in previous surveys there are some who feel that the Rangers are 'over-zealous' and some who would like them to take more action. This underlines the difficult lines they have to walk and from my observation they are doing an excellent job. The recent Super Safety Days have shown an increasing level of compliance. The charges levied by the Authority continue to represent good value for money and are rising more slowly than on some other inland waterways. The current review is specifically looking at the Hire Boat Multiplier and the relative costs for different sized boats.

11 Further Surveys

- 11.1 Working with the Broads Hire Boat Federation a simple questionnaire has recently been distributed to hirers asking a range of questions. The findings from this survey will be reported to the Committee in due course.

Background Papers:	Broads Boat Owners Questionnaire 2012 – analysis of results
Author:	John Packman
Date of report:	24 August 2012
Broads Plan objectives:	TR2
Appendices:	APPENDIX 1 - NSBA Survey Results

NSBA Broads Survey: Analysis

Number and type the craft for which respondents are Broads Authority tollpayers:

Sail, with cabin75 Sail, no cabin but keel ...27 Sailing dinghy ...55
 Powered, with cabin .157 Powered, no cabin44 Other63

Total number of craft....421 Number of respondents 247 (of whom all but 10 are tollpayers)

Days in the last year for which craft made a journey exceeding 100 metres on the Broads navigation (average):

Sail, with cabin32 Sail, no cabin but keel ...20 Sailing dinghy ...11
 Powered, with cabin ...36 Powered, no cabin27 Other11
 Average days for all types of craft26

Average rating for the availability of free moorings (score 4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2=satisfactory, 1 = poor, 0 = don't know (not included in scoring)) on:

Average scores:

the Ant and 'tributaries'2.01
 the Bure (and 'tributaries' ex Ant) above Thurne Mouth1.81
 the Bure below Thurne Mouth1.69
 the Thurne and 'tributaries'1.82
 the Waveney and 'tributaries'1.92
 the Yare and 'tributaries' (inc Wensum) above Cantley factory1.83
 the Yare and 'tributaries' (inc New Cut) below Cantley1.60

Average rating for yacht stations in terms of the availability of moorings, facilities (including condition of them), security and value for money (score 4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2=satisfactory, 1 = poor, 0 = don't know)

Average scores (not including 0s):

Yacht station	Availability	Facilities	Security	Value for money
Beccles	2.55	2.30	1.98	2.02
Great Yarmouth	2.01	1.69	1.55	1.47
Norwich	2.49	2.40	1.58	1.89
Oulton Broad	2.38	2.48	2.39	2.30

Average rating for availability of diesel (D), petrol (P), water (W), pump out (PO), chemical toilet disposal (TD) (scoring as above) on:

Average scores (not including 0s):

River	D	P	W	PO	TD
Ant and 'tributaries'	1.91	1.07	1.96	1.84	1.23
Bure (and 'tributaries' ex Ant) above Thurne M	2.30	1.12	1.91	2.03	1.28
Bure below Thurne Mouth	1.42	1.06	1.46	1.43	1.13
Thurne and 'tributaries'	1.79	1.12	1.79	1.76	1.27
Waveney and 'tributaries'	1.80	1.18	1.90	1.76	1.39
Yare and 'tributaries' (inc Wensum) above Cantley	1.84	1.32	1.76	1.76	1.28
Yare and 'tributaries' (inc New Cut) below Cantley	1.41	1.10	1.63	1.34	1.21

Appendix A: Comments about facilities

Issues raised by more than a few respondents are summarised below. All comments received have been logged and will inform the NSBA in acting for its members.

Riverside facilities in general

26 respondents referred to lack of facilities either generally or more commonly of a specific type. 6 respondents commented on the paucity of outlets selling petrol. 6 respondents commented on the lack of chemical toilet disposal facilities. 5 respondents commented on the reduced availability of yards to provide services, either because of the reduction in the number of yards or because the move to short breaks meant that yard staff were busy with hire boats for more of the week.

Electricity charging points

20 respondents commented on the need for an expansion of electric charging points around the Broads system, particularly at 24-hour moorings. They pointed out that, even where there was such a facility, the number of points was inadequate.

Public toilets

16 respondents complained about the unavailability of public toilets near public moorings. The facilities at Gaye's Staithe, Hickling, Ranworth, Horning, Ludham Bridge and Womack were noted and held up as good examples, unlike those at Potter Heigham. 6 of the above respondents pleaded for the provision of showers.

Refuse disposal

14 respondents commented on the lack of refuse disposal facilities for boaters, three advocating the provision of re-cycling facilities and one asking for the provision for disposal of dog excrement. The following is worthy of particular note in terms of possibly inadvertent effect:

'Waste disposal is a real problem in many places, especially where you don't use the public moorings, eg in Horning, but you moor nearby and have to dispose of domestic-type waste. The notices in the public bins limit use to those using the public staithe only. What am I supposed to do? Bring my rubbish back home with me or, like everyone else, ignore the notices and threats of prosecution?'

The following comment is also worthy of note in terms of a consequence of the lack of refuse disposal facilities:

'Boats often tie up bags of rubbish then leave them on the back of the boat over night to get knocked/blown in or pulled in by mooring lines. I'd love to see more education on it.'

Free moorings

15 respondents regretted the loss/lack of informal moorings.

6 respondents complained unfavourably on BA 24-hour moorings, citing the inappropriate surface material on refurbished moorings, obstructive ladders, and the fact that stern-on moorings are not practicable for craft which cannot directly moor stern to quay heading (eg long transom-hung rudder).

Yacht stations

8 respondents commented specifically on these.

'One noisy night at Norwich Yacht Station has put me off visiting again. Norwich and Gt Yarmouth are best left to hire craft.'

‘Free short time moorings in, for example Beccles and Oulton Broad, so that one could go shopping.’

‘The staff are terrific at Gt Yarmouth Yacht Station, but the season is short and the "closure" arrangements in winter are awful, and a discredit to Borough Council / BA together. Its very scruffy with one of two men's showers out of order for a lot of last season, albeit the staff efficiency goes a long way to compensate.’

‘Overnight mooring fees have made it very expensive to stay for more than one night.’

‘I’d like the facility to be available to me in Norwich. I can’t get to it due to the bridge.’

‘Significant lack of security at Norwich Yacht Station, so much so that we won’t moor there overnight any more after being cast adrift in the middle of the night several times in recent years.’

‘Real issues of security at Norwich since waterside development – the “half” price is a joke. Won’t stay overnight any more and therefore don’t visit nearly as often (& love Norwich so sad state of affairs)!’

‘Sad yacht stations, eg Great Yarmouth.’

Appendix B: Problems with inadequate dredging

Respondents identified areas where they had experienced inadequate depth of water. *The most commonly referred to areas were parts of the following areas: (* = all states of tide), ** = low tide, ***= no state of tide recorded, ****= half tide or less, ***** = most states of tide). All areas reported by respondents have been logged and will inform the NSBA in acting for its members.*

Ant:

Barton Turf to Irstead Shoals inc Barton Broad and Port Hand Channel as far as Neatishead 6 reports: with drafts of 1.25m*** (4 reports), 1.12m***, 0.76m***

Dilham to Paddy’s Lane, Barton Turf 5 reports: with drafts of 1.2m** (3 reports), 0.9m***, 0.79m***

Bure:

Horning Racing Reach to Thurne Mouth 9 reports: with drafts of 1.5m* (2 reports), 1.25m**, 1.1m* (2 reports), 1m***, 0.9m* (2 reports) & ***

Thurne Mouth to Upton Dyke, including South Oby Dyke 5 reports: with drafts of 1.1m*** (2 reports), 1m*** (2 reports), 0.9m**

Lower Bure 5 reports: with drafts of 1.3m*, 1.25m*, 1.2m*, 1m***, 0.76m***

Thurne:

Above Potter Heigham Old Bridge 8 reports: with drafts of 1.5m***, 1.2m** (2 reports), 1.1m***, 1m***, 0.9m*, 0.85m**, 0.75m***

Heigham Sound/Meadow Dyke/Horse Mere 33 reports: with drafts of 1.3m*, 1.25m***, 1.2m* & *** (2 reports), 1.1m* (2) & *** (2), 1m*(4) & ** (3) & ***(12), 0.9m* & ***(3), 0.8m*** (all in Heigham Sound except 2 x 1m***)

Hickling Broad/White Slea/Catfield Dyke 14 reports: with drafts of 1.25m***, 1.12m***, 1m* & ***(5) &*****, 0.9m* & ***(3), 0.85m*** (all but 1m* (Catfield Dyke) and 0.85m*** (White Slea) in Hickling Broad)

Waveney:

Oulton Broad and Dyke 8 reports – all but 1 re Broad: with drafts of 1.5m**, 1.3m****, 1.2m** & ****, 1.1m**** (Dyke), 1m** (2), 0.75m**

Yare:

Rockland Broad and Dykes 6 reports: with drafts of 1.5m***, 1.2m**, 1.0m*** (2), 0.9m**, 0.75m****

Appendix C: Other issues drawn to the NSBA Committee's attention

Issues raised by more than a few respondents are summarised below. All comments received have been logged and will inform the NSBA in acting for its members.

Tree/weed clearance

19 respondents commented on the need for tree (and other bank growth) or weed clearance or both. Specific comments were made in respect of the upstream section of the Yare past Bramerton Common, Rockland Dyke, Ant Mouth to Wroxham, Dydler's Mill to Coltishall Common, the Ant above How Hill including the approach to Neatishead, and the Waveney above Beccles (trees), and Hickling Broad, Heigham Sound, Martham Broad to West Somerton, the 'Neatishead Cut', the Upper Ant and the Chet (weed).

De-masting

12 respondents commented on the need for de-masting provision at bridges. Associated with this, one respondent, a dinghy sailor, pleaded for provision to be made at the yellow dolphin at the Breydon/Bure junction of something to enable craft without power to get hold of something – eg vertical ropes – while waiting for the tide to turn.

Bridges

7 respondents emphasised the problems with low bridges, including swing bridges which do not open, especially at Somerleyton, and the low bridges at Great Yarmouth.

The environment

7 respondents referred to the impairment of the idyllic, peaceful charm of the Broads, This included: boaters running engines early and late (4 reports), river into Norwich a mess and unwelcoming, too many ugly signs for boaters. Other complaints have been logged under the 'Broads Authority' heading.

Hireboat helms' handling skills etc

5 respondents expressed concern about what appeared to be inadequate training by hire yards on boat handling/behaviour/'rules of the road'.

Broads Authority

18 respondents were concerned about the lack of policing by rangers re drunkenness, speeding, itinerant live-aboards 'who seem to be above the rules'. One respondent complained about over-zealous rangers.

8 respondents criticised the continuing rise in tolls not matched by improvements or by maintenance of waterway – neither value for money nor fair.