

## BROADS SOCIETY

### Minutes of the Main Committee held on 22 January 2008 at Broad House Hotel Wroxham

**Present:** Nick Barne (Chairman), Keith Bacon (Vice-Chairman), Derek Rae (Treasurer), Richard Baguley, Gordon Craig, Martin George, Anne Horsefield, Peter Horsefield, Peter Howe, Paul Howes, Patrick Larner and Jill Wickens  
Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

#### 1 **Apologies for absence** – All members were present

The Chairman welcomed Gordon Craig, Paul Howes and Patrick Larner to their first meeting and Peter Horsefield who had attended previously as a co-opted member but who was now an elected member.

#### 2 **Minutes of the Meeting of 30 October 2007**

The minutes, having been circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

#### 3 **Matters Arising**

##### 3.1 CNP Information (Minute 6)

Peter Howe would forward information from CNP to Committee members by email rather than posting on their forum as suggested at the last meeting.

##### 3.2 Carbon Audit for the Broads (Minute 13.2)

A copy of the Society's application, prepared by Peter Howe, had been circulated. Peter reported that this had not been successful but he was pleased to see that the Broads Authority had been selected as the organisation through which the project could be carried out and he understood that that they would operate in a similar way to that suggested in the Society's application.

##### 3.3 IWA (Minute 15)

The regular report by Chris Groves had only just been received and would be emailed to members after the meeting.

#### 4 **Finance**

##### 4.1 Current financial reports

The Treasurer circulated the following reports:

- Profit and Loss account showing Budget vs Actual expenditure for the period – April 2007 – 22 January 2008
- Balance sheet at 22 January 2008

##### 4.2 Although the accounts showed a deficit of £2,055.89 against budget, the Treasurer anticipated that the final accounts for the year would show a break-even position.

##### 4.3 Green Boat Show 2008

Peter Howe reported that this would take place on Sunday 21 September. It was unlikely that external grant funding would be available and, as the Society had already given its support in principle to organising the event, he requested a grant of £500 towards the cost. A grant had been made from the 500 Club in 2007 and it was therefore agreed that this would be an appropriate source of funding for 2008. Paul Howes expressed disappointment that the article in "Anglia Afloat" had not mentioned the Society's role in organising the 2007 event. *[This was subsequently found to be an incorrect assertion, as the article clearly credited the Society].*

## 5 Broads Charitable Trust

A paper by Peter Howe had been circulated which explained the background to the proposed Charitable Trust, provided a progress report and set out the aims and objectives. The Constitution had been finalised and sent to the Charity Commission and it was hoped that the Trust would be formally established by April 2008.

Peter reported on behalf of the sub-group that had been working to establish the Trust. He said that following approval by the Charity Commission, the next stages would be: recruitment and appointment of Trustees (up to 10); identification of a Patron; recruitment of an Administrator; establishment of administrative procedures; a short term fund-raising campaign to pay for the first few projects and, finally a publicity launch and invitations to applicants for funding. Approval by the Charity Commission was dependent on funds being available in the bank account set up for the Trust and it was therefore essential that transfer of the Lady Mayhew bequest, as previously agreed, was made as soon as possible.

Members acknowledged that Peter's paper and the article in "Harnser" by Bryan Read were both very helpful. However, although all members were in favour of establishing a Charitable Trust, some still had concerns about the procedures. These were discussed at length and included:

- Some members felt they had not been given sufficient detailed information about the Trust and were concerned about the proposals, particularly as a financial commitment was involved. The view of the members of the sub-group was that there had been discussion at many committee meetings over the last two years although full details of these discussions had not been recorded in the minutes.
- It was suggested that there was a danger of losing the support of the general membership, some of whom believed they should have been given the opportunity to consider the proposal and vote on the transfer of funds at an AGM or EGM. *[NB It has subsequently been pointed out that the transfer of the Lady Mayhew bequest to a designated fund to set up the Broads Charity was included in the accounts circulated to members and approved at the Annual General Meetings in 2005 and 2006 as well as 2006/07]*
- The decision to transfer the Lady Mayhew bequest to the Trust had been made by Committee by a majority of two and some members felt that this indicated insufficient support, bearing in mind the large financial commitment. The chairman's view was that a simple majority was all that was required on any matter taken to the vote.
- The Committee, at its meeting on 30 October, had voted on the transfer of money on the basis of draft documents of the Prospectus and Declaration of Trust plus a verbal assurance that there would be a condition in the final documentation that Public Bodies, including the Broads Authority, would only be eligible to apply for funding for "added value" projects and not to carry out their statutory duties. This assurance was a key factor in influencing the voting decision of some members. In the event, the condition had been included only in the Prospectus and not in the Constitution, the legally binding document submitted for approval by the Charity Commission. Peter Howe explained that the advice received by the sub-group had not suggested the inclusion of the condition.
- The Committee was again being asked to vote on the transfer of funds without having seen definitive documentation and there was a risk that the validity of the decision could be questioned at a later stage.
- Some members felt that evidence of the need to establish a Trust as a separate entity not been sufficiently clear. The chairman explained that the Society was constituted as a membership organisation while the objective of the Trust was to act as a channel for funding to other charities and organisations, a role that was not in the Society's remit.

- It was pointed out that the Society's Solicitor had not been involved in the discussions about the Trust but the sub-group believed that the advice they had received from the Guild was adequate and approval by the Charity Commission of the documents would confirm the legal requirements.
- One member was of the opinion that one of the most important aspects of such a Trust was the establishment of an appropriate management structure, not necessarily to give the Society overall control but to ensure the proper running of the Trust. He believed that the number of Trustees proposed was excessive. Members of the sub-group, however, expressed their belief that the Trust required up to 10 members to achieve a balance of skills and experience on the Board considering the amount of work anticipated. As the Trust would be an entirely independent body, the way in which it utilised any of the funds would be determined by its constitution and the Society would be able to exert influence through its representatives on the Board.

In view of these concerns it was proposed by Martin George that the Lady Mayhew bequest should be transferred to the Charity in the form of a loan. This would satisfy the Charity Commission's funding requirements and enable the Trust to be registered.

This proposal was seconded by Keith Bacon, put to the vote and agreed, 10 members voting in favour and two abstaining. The treasurer agreed to draft suitable terms of agreement for the loan. Members requested that the draft be made available to members well before the next meeting to enable careful scrutiny of the proposed terms and conditions.

It was agreed that a further discussion would take place once a response had been received from the Charity Commission.

## **6 RSPB Report on the future of the Broads**

A copy of a response from Richard Powell, Regional Director RSPB, had been circulated, together with a copy of the Society's original letter commenting on the report. It was agreed that no follow-up was required.

## **7 Royal Norfolk Show**

The Chairman requested the Committee's support for a Society Stand at the 2008 Show to be held on 25 and 26 June. The Society had been allocated a Stand free of charge at the 2007 event, but there would be a charge of £210 in 2008. It was agreed that the Society would benefit from having a Stand. It was therefore proposed by Jill Wickens and seconded by Gordon Craig, and unanimously agreed, that the Society should have a Stand and that 500 Club funds should be used to cover the charge and the cost of hiring the marquee.

## **8 Review and Reallocation of Committee and other Members' Special Responsibilities**

A list had been circulated showing the current allocation and vacancies which required filling. The following were agreed.

### **8.1 Committee Members, General Areas of Special Responsibilities**

Paul Howes, in his role as Secretary, accepted the Chairman's invitation to set up and lead a small working group to review the Rules and Constitution. Derek Rae and undertook to be members, and it was also agreed that Bryan Read should be involved, bearing in mind his key role in formulating the rules and preparing the application for Charitable Status. Peter Howe and Patrick Larner volunteered additional help if needed which was appreciated.

- Navigation – Richard Baguley (supported by Patrick Larner)

- Environment – Dr Martin George (supported by Keith Bacon)
- Publicity – to be identified (see below)
- Access – Dr Keith Bacon
- Sustainability – Mr Peter Howe
- Social Activities – Mrs Jill Wickens
- Volunteers – to be identified (see below)
- Website – Mr Richard Baguley
- Membership – Mr Richard Baguley
- “Harnser” – Mrs Jill Wickens
- Council for National Parks Representative – Peter Howe
- Broads Forum Representative – Martin George (supported by Keith Bacon)
- Upper Thurne Working Group – Martin George
- Middle Thurne Working Group – Anne Horsefield (supported by Peter Horsefield)
- Barton Broad Management Group – Martin George (supported by Keith Bacon who attended in another capacity)

It was agreed to seek ordinary members who might be willing to take on responsibility for volunteers and publicity. The Administrator was asked to review the returns to the membership questionnaire to identify possible candidates. It was agreed that it was essential that the person undertaking the role of Press Officer should be co-opted to the Main Committee.

#### 8.2 Other Members with Special Responsibilities

- “Anglia Afloat” column – John Pitchers
- Broadsword (North) – John Atkins

#### 8.3 Flood Alleviation Sub-Group

Martin George (co-ordinator Northern Rivers)

Keith Bacon  
Robert Paul  
Peter Horsefield  
Patrick Larnar

It was agreed that Chris Groves should be asked if he was willing to continue as co-ordinator of the Society’s responses to schemes in the Southern Rivers area. If not, then Robin Godber would be approached. It was noted that the majority of schemes still to be approved were in the Northern Rivers.

#### 8.4 Local Development Framework (LDF) Steering-Group

Keith Bacon  
Martin George  
Patrick Larnar  
Robin Godber

#### 8.4 Finance Sub-Committee

Nicholas Barne (Chairman)  
Keith Bacon (Vice-Chairman)  
Derek Rae (Treasurer)  
Bryan Read (President) – by invitation

#### 8.5 Editorial Sub-Committee

Jill Wickens (Editor of “Harnser”)  
Nicholas Barne  
Gill Jackson  
Trevor Warren

## **9 LDF – Flood Protection Scheme and PPS25**

Keith Bacon reported on progress. In August the Society's LDF Steering Group had submitted a response to the consultation on "Development Control and Flood Alleviation – Issues and Options". The Authority had subsequently released for consultation a "Preferred Options" document. The Society's Steering Group had met during the previous week and had arranged to meet with relevant BA officers in the coming week. A major issue for debate at that meeting would be the Broads Authority's attempts to ameliorate the adverse effects of PPS25 legislation on local property owners by creating special exemptions. One suggestion under consideration was their proposal to differentiate between "functional" and "non-functional" flood plains. The Steering Group would submit a response on the Society's behalf after this meeting.

The Society's response would include:

- suggesting improvement to the presentation of the maps
- drawing attention to the omission of public access land locations
- making the point that insufficient use had been made of the valuable information in the Authority's Landscape Character Assessment
- making the case for boats to be classified as adequate means of escape from waterside properties in the event of flooding bearing in mind that owners of such properties would normally have access to a boat.

The Broads Authority's Policies on live aboard craft and wind turbines were also included in the "Preferred Options" document – these two topics were discussed later in the meeting (see minute 10 and minute 13.3 below).

## **10 500 Club**

Because of the length of the agenda, it was agreed to defer discussion to the next meeting because of time constraints.

## **11 Society Policy on Live Aboard Craft**

This topic had been raised at the AGM and other ordinary members had subsequently expressed their concerns about the problems caused by live aboard craft. A paper had been circulated which detailed the concerns raised and set out current BA policy as described on their website.

Keith Bacon reported that the LDF "Preferred Options" document made it clear that the Authority proposed to take a hard line on any existing live aboard craft which contravened legislation. No new houseboats or residential would be permitted. It was agreed that the Society should support the Broads Authority and the Environment Agency in their efforts to remove all illegally moored live aboard craft.

## **12 Broads Forum – Report on Away Day Conference, Easton College**

It was agreed to defer discussion to the next meeting by which time a report on the meeting would be available.

## **13 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee**

13.1 The minutes of the meeting of 3 December had been circulated. .

### **13.2 Appointment of Members**

The Main Committee has responsibility for appointing the Chairman and six members. Other members (with full voting rights) could be co-opted by the Sub-Committee. As eight existing members were willing to stand for re-appointment, it was agreed to follow the practice of previous years by appointing the six members with the longest service.

The following re-appointments were therefore made:

Chairman – Peter Horsefield

Keith Bacon, Michael Brandon-Jones, David Edleston, John Pitchers, Robert Paul, John Scott

### 13.3 Working Group on Windfarms

The Working Group, led by Peter Horsefield, had met and prepared a draft letter to be sent to all District Councils in the region requesting the opportunity to comment on any applications for windfarms which would be visible from the BA Executive area. It was agreed that Peter should amend the draft and send it to the relevant Councils.

Referring to the “Preferred Options” consultation document (see minute 9 above), Keith Bacon reported that the Broads Authority intended to take a strong line on applications for windfarms and would give pre-eminence to landscape and wildlife considerations. This would apply not only to developments within the Executive Area but also on sites outside it if there was likely to be an adverse impact on the Broads.

### 13.4 Dereliction in the Northern Rivers areas of the Broads

There was nothing further to report.

## 14 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee

14.1 The minutes of the meeting of 12 December had been circulated.

### 14.2 Appointment of Members

Following the principle adopted for appointing the Northern Rivers Sub-Committee, the following re-appointments were approved:

Chairman – still to be identified

Thelma Gascoyne

David Trower

Berry Powell

John Heasman

Colin Dye

Peter Waller

### 14.3 Jensen’s Island (Minute 3.5)

It was confirmed that Standley Bushell, the Society Solicitor, had not been involved in the discussions with the Broads Authority. He was now unwell and it would therefore be inappropriate to seek his advice on the legal aspects of the Broads Authority’s proposals, as requested by the Southern Rivers Sub-Committee

## 15 Website

### 15.1 Review of items for transfer to the archive

There were no items to transfer

### 15.2 Website Forum

The Forum was working well. Richard Baguley urged Committee Members to make more use of their own Forum. It was agreed that there should be no change to current access to the Committee members’ forum.

## 16 “Harnser” and Social Events

Jill Wickens was seeking letters for publication in “Harnser”.

The Society Service would be Evensong at St Helen’s Church, Ranworth on Sunday 11 May.

**17 CNP**

Peter Howe had nothing to report since the AGM. The next meeting would be a get-together of National Park Society Chairmen and Representatives on 18 February. Any suggestions for topics should be sent to Peter.

**18 A.O.B.**

18.1 BA Consultation of Membership of the Navigation Committee  
Paul Howes requested that the Society's submission should be posted on the website.

18.2 Hickling Broad  
Martin George reported that the latest report by Jane Harris on Hickling Broad showed that the site was now derelict in terms of aquatic flora. Jane's contract had therefore been terminated.

18.3 Norfolk Wildlife Trust  
Peter Horsefield reported that both he and Anne were now members of the Broadland Section Committee.

**19 Chairman's Closing Remarks**

Nick Barne explained that, after careful consideration tinged with regret, he had decided to stand down as Chairman at the 2008 AGM after two years in office. The role of Chairman was an onerous duty and he felt that two years was an appropriate term for any incumbent. He hoped that, by giving a long period of notice, he had given the Society sufficient time to identify a successor.

Members expressed their regret at Nick's departure but understood the reasons for his decision and thanked him for informing them at this early stage.

**20 Date of Next and Future Meetings**

Tuesday 11 March 2008

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 22.00