

BROADS SOCIETY

Minutes of the Main Committee held on Thursday 28 January 2010 at Broad House Hotel, Wroxham

Present: Peter Horsefield (Chairman), Keith Bacon,
Chris Pulley (Treasurer), Richard Baguley, Nick Balls,
David Capp, Colin Dye, Liz Goodyear, Paul Howes, Patrick Larnar, Richard Starling, Ian Masters,
Peter Waller and
Jill Wickens

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

The Chairman welcomed Liz Goodyear and Ian Masters who had agreed to be co-opted to membership of the Committee

1 Apologies for absence

Nick Barne, Lesley Bonshor

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Co-option of New Members

It was proposed by Peter Horsefield, seconded by Paul Howes, and unanimously agreed, that Liz Goodyear and Ian Masters should be co-opted to the Committee.

4 Minutes of the Meeting of 5 November

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

5 Matters Arising

5.1 New Signage (Minute 3.1)

The Chairman apologised that he had not been able to write to Stephen Johnson concerning the Authority's policy on advertising but would do so before the next meeting.

5.2 Mooring for mast lowering (Minute 5.2.2)

In response to the Society's letter, the Chairman had received an email from Trudy Wakelin confirming that the Broads Authority were aware the problem at Haddiscoe Bridge and were taking action via their Enforcement Officer. It was agreed to wait until the next meeting and ask for an update on progress if nothing had been done by then.

6 Finance

6.1 Treasurer's report

The report and receipts and payments account to 31 December 2009 had been circulated. These were self-explanatory and the Treasurer had no issues to which he wished to draw attention.

6.2 Mailing Costs for Harnser

The Administrator explained that the mailing company had found "Harnser" too thick to post at the lowest rate for items under 100gm. She had corroborated this information via a test at a local post office. It would therefore be necessary to increase the budget for postage for subsequent issues. Members agreed that the increased cost was a worthwhile expenditure in view of the time and effort saved. The next issue would be posted in C5 size envelopes.

7 DEFRA Consultation on National Parks and the Broads

Paul Howes and Richard Baguley had prepared the Society's response to the consultation. Helpful comments had been received from Nick Balls. Paul explained that the response comprised two parts: Part A – an overview on the situation of National Parks generally; Part B – a detailed commentary on the text.

It was pointed out that one of the draft responses was to the DEFRA proposal that National Parks should include climate change at the centre of their mission. The draft stated that the Society believes that this would be a diversion of focus and resources and should not be a short term priority. The Trustees fully concurred with this view, considering that climate change was a matter for national government.

Richard felt it important for members to be aware that John Packman had been consulted to ascertain whether the Society could assist by highlighting in its response any issues of concern to the Broads Authority and he was happy to report that this had been done.

Liz Goodyear enquired whether other organisations with an interest in the Broads had been consulted. Richard and Paul confirmed that no such consultations had taken place and there was general agreement that this was unnecessary.

Some modifications to the layout, insertion of page numbers and removal of duplications were agreed.

Subject to these minor changes, it was proposed by Pat Lerner, seconded by Jill Wickens, and unanimously agreed, that a final copy should be prepared, signed by the Chairman and sent to DEFRA.

The Chairman's thanks to the authors of the response was warmly endorsed by all present.

8 Norfolk Hub

Following the special meeting on 14 January, members were in agreement that it would be premature for the Society to take any action. In the unlikely event that the proposal to develop a Norfolk Hub became a realistic possibility, the Society would consider how to respond. Keith Bacon pointed out the Society needed to differentiate between the proposed Eco Town and the Norfolk Hub since only the latter came within the Society's area of concern.

It was agreed that it was not necessary for the Society to write formally to David Hastings as Pat Lerner had already spoken to him to convey the Trustees' belief that it would be inappropriate to pursue the matter at the present time.

9 Role of the Broads Society

Three documents had been circulated: The Chairman's letter in "Harnser" January 2010; a response from a member, Mrs Margaret Bird and the President's comments at the AGM in the form of an extract from the minutes.

The Chairman explained that he had written his letter in the latest "Harnser" to encourage debate among members about the Society's role and he had therefore been pleased to receive the thoughtful comments from Margaret Bird. His letter had centred on the need for the Society to focus on the aims laid down by its founders; the core aims had not changed and diversion from them would dilute the organisation's effectiveness. Similarly, he believed that the principal "wielders of power or influence" in relation to the Broads should adopt an equally focussed approach.

Paul Howes said that he had been impressed by the approach of the CEO of the Northumberland National Park Authority whose declared policy was to focus on the needs of "customers". As a consequence, he and Richard Baguley had arranged a meeting with their local MP, Norman Lamb, to talk about the matter in general.

Turning to the paper by Margaret Bird, members were fully in agreement with the sentiments expressed in her final paragraph, namely that the Society's strength was its diverse approach, representing all those with an interest in the Broads. This could produce conflicts between different interest groups. Committee members pointed out that this was one respect in which the Society could sympathise with the Broads Authority.

The Chairman then asked the Committee to consider the comments made by the President at the AGM. It was agreed that Peter and Keith Bacon (as Vice-Chairman) would arrange a meeting with the President to discuss the views of the Trustees on the issues he had raised.

10 Allocation of Responsibilities

It was proposed by Liz Goodyear, seconded by Richard Baguley, and unanimously agreed, that "Publicity and Promotion" should be combined with "Membership"

The following allocation of responsibilities was agreed (subject to the Chairman seeking agreement from Martin George that he would carry on his previous responsibilities):

- Navigation – Richard Baguley (supported by Patrick Larnar)
- Environment and Sustainability – Liz Goodyear (supported by Richard Starling & Keith Bacon)
- Publicity, Promotion and Membership – Ian Masters (in liaison with Liz Goodyear, Nick Balls, Richard Baguley, Paul Howes and Jill Wickens)
- Access – Keith Bacon
- Social Activities – Jill Wickens
- Broadsword – David Capp (supported by John Harden)
- Website – Richard Baguley
- "Harnser" – Jill Wickens
- Campaign for National Parks Representative – Paul Howes
- Broads Forum Representative – Martin George (substitute Colin Dye)
- Upper Thurne Working Group – Martin George
- Middle Thurne Working Group – Peter Horsefield
- Barton Broad Management Group – Peter Horsefield
- Whole Valley Group – Martin George (substitute Peter Horsefield)
- Individual Valley Groups – Peter Horsefield (for Ant Valley)
- Economy and Tourism – Colin Dye
- Strategic Planning – Patrick Larnar and Keith Bacon
- "Anglia Afloat" Contributor – Paul Howes for 1 year
- Habitat Restoration Project – Paul Howes
- Representative on How Hill Trust – Peter Horsefield
- Responses to BESL flood defence work – Chris Groves

11 Planning

11.1 General

Richard Baguley intended to convene the special informal meeting with members of the Planning Sub-Committees in the near future.

11.2 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2009 had been circulated. There were no issues to report other than comments by John Pitchers (minute 3.1) discussed above.

11.3 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2009 had been circulated. There were no issues to report.

12 "Harnser" and Social Programme

12.1 "Harnser"

In response to the Editor's request for articles, the following were proposed:
60th Anniversary opening of Blackhorse Broad (Herbert Woods)
50th Anniversary Three Rivers Race – Paul Howes to approach
Hugh Tusting
Obituary in memory of Anne Horsefield – Peter Horsefield.
Opinions from Margaret Bird and John Pitchers (see minute 9 above).

12.2 Social Programme

The Annual Service would take place at Belaugh Church on Sunday 9 May at 11.00 am. The "Waveney Stardust" had been booked to take up to 12 people from Wroxham. Moorings for private boats were available near the church.

13 Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust

Keith Bacon reported good progress on installing an audio guide at the Museum of the Broads and Trustees were seeking the next project. An Administrator had been appointed.

14 Broads Forum

No meetings had taken place since the last Committee meeting.

15 CNP

Paul Howes reported receipt of a large volume of information which he had posted on the website Forum. He was pleased to report that some members had contributed comments.

The CNP Mosaic Project had been included on the agenda of the November meeting of CNP; its aim was to encourage ethnic minorities to visit National Parks. Bryan Read had asked CNP to write to the Broads Society seeking their involvement.

Paul had discussed the possibilities with Richard Baguley. Neither of them felt it appropriate to set up any initiative based on ethnicity. However, they believed there was considerable potential for the Society to target communities suffering social deprivation and economic disadvantage.

It was agreed that the Society should set up a project and that Richard and the publicity and promotion group should take the lead. Paul undertook to approach the Broads Authority with a view to joint working. It was further agreed that Broads-related organizations already working with disadvantaged people (eg the Nancy Oldfield Trust, and Waveney Sailability) would be useful contacts to help identify areas for action.

16 Website

A request for a reciprocal website link had been received from Clive Edwards, a member who had commercial boating interests in France. Richard undertook to respond and to advise him to make contact with www.norfolkbroads.com which would be a more appropriate site with which to establish a link.

17 A.O.B

17.1 Invitation to Steve Hayman (Area Flood Protection Officer)

It was agreed to arrange a meeting (including members of the two planning sub-committees) in late February/early March at the Hotel Wroxham? The Administrator would arrange a date.

17.2 Venue for AGM 2010

It was not yet known whether the meeting could be hosted at How Hill in view of Sue Holmes's forthcoming retirement. The Chairman undertook to seek further information about future plans at the next meeting of the How Hill Trustees in February. In the meantime, the Administrator was asked to enquire about the seating capacity of the barn at the Broad House Hotel. Ian Masters suggested the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club as a possible alternative venue.

17.3 Invitation from St Benet's Abbey

The Society had been invited to participate in a site meeting at St Benet's Abbey to discuss proposed development work funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. All members, with the exception of the Chairman, Colin Dye, Peter Waller and Chris Pulley, expressed interest in attending if they were available. The Administrator would email members when a date for the visit had been confirmed.

17.4 Future Radio

Bryan Read had been invited to participate in an interview about the Society on Future Radio. He had discussed this with the Society Chairman who, in view of his personal circumstances at the time, agreed that Bryan should accept on the Society's behalf. The interview had gone well and the presenter had complimented the Society on its website.

17.5 Offshore Breakwater – Horsey Mere

Richard Baguley reported on an article by Mike Evans published in "Anglia Afloat" suggesting the construction of an offshore breakwater from Great Yarmouth to Happisburgh, creating a new freshwater lake. Martin George had prepared some notes expressing strong opposition.

17.6 "Waterways for Everyone" – DEFRA consultation

Richard Baguley reported on another DEFRA consultation and a government initiative to set up an Inland Waterways Conservancy Board to take over navigation responsibility for all inland waterways. If the Broads were classified as an inland waterway, this would have a major adverse impact. In his opinion the loss of responsibility for navigation by the Broads Authority would immediately remove the special status of the Broads and it would become a National Park in which the Sandford Principle would apply.

It was agreed that if there was any suggestion of the Broads being included in the proposals, the Society should fight it, in collaboration with the Broads Authority.

Richard undertook to provide the Chairman with the relevant website link so that the Society could consider how to respond to the consultation. *(A specific topic has since been set up on the Society's internet Forum.)*

18 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 18 March 2010

A date for the AGM would be set as soon as the situation regarding accommodation had been clarified.