

## **BROADS SOCIETY**

### **Minutes of the Main Committee held on Thursday 20 May 2010 at Broad House Hotel, Wroxham**

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

**In attendance:** Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

#### **1 Apologies for absence**

Lesley Bonshor, Patrick Larnar, Ian Masters  
Peter Waller was absent

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

#### **3 Minutes of the Meeting of 18 March 2010**

The minutes, having been circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record subject to the following amendments:

Minutes 5.3 and 9: Amend "Butterfly Conservancy" to "Butterfly Conservation"

#### **4 Matters Arising**

##### 4.1 Venue for AGM 2010 (Minute 17.2)

The Administrator confirmed that the AGM would be held at in the Barn at Broad House Hotel on Saturday 13 November

##### 4.2 Site visit to St Benet's Abbey (Minute 17.3)

Those members who had attended the special visit organised for the Society confirmed that it had been an interesting and useful exercise. The Society had been asked for its comments on the project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which included repairs to brick and stone work, installation of interpretation boards, a new car park and boardwalk for the disabled and re-routing of visitors through the site. Members had supported the proposals to conserve the site and improve the visitor experience but had expressed opposition to creating an access route via the former dock area. Their biggest concern was the provision of car parking as it seemed unrealistic to expect that it would be possible to restrict this to use by disabled visitors and it would encourage increased traffic to the site. Comments by Martin George on this issue had been forwarded to the Project Manager.

Society members had been asked to help with on-site visitor surveys and the Administrator had sent details to all Committee and Sub-Committee members asking them to let her know if they could take part.

The Chairman suggested that the St Benet's project team might consider an interactive tour using iPhone technology (see Minute 8).

Liz Goodyear suggested that the Society might consider assisting the project financially by sponsoring an information board.

#### **5 Finance**

##### **5.1 Receipts & Payments Account to 31 March 2010**

This had been circulated. Total payments exceeded receipts by £5,668 compared with an excess of receipts over payments of £1,669 in the previous year. It was pointed out that a large legacy in 2008-09 had contributed to income.

#### 5.2 Draft Accounts for the year to 31 March 2010

The Treasurer did not anticipate any significant changes to the draft he had circulated. The accounts showed a net deficit for the year of £4,892 compared with a net surplus in 2008/09 of £2,024. However, in view of the overall reserves and the current financial climate, he did not recommend any increase in subscriptions. Members supported this recommendation taking the view that the better option would be to increase membership.

The Treasurer hoped to have the final accounts for signature ready for the July meeting.

#### 5.3 Receipts and Payments Account to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010

This had been circulated for information.

#### 5.4 Independent Examiner

The Treasurer had received a letter from Chris Dicker informing him of his retirement in September and expressing the hope that the Society would continue to use Lovewell Blake as its independent examiner.

#### 5.5 "Charity Matters"

Copies of this publication by Lovewell Blake had been received by the Treasurer for distribution to committee members.

#### 5.6 Reserves

Members were asked to make suggestions for using reserves. The Chairman confirmed that the Finance Committee was still in existence but its role was to advise on the management of money, not to make policy decisions about how it should be spent.

## 6 **Publicity & Promotion**

#### 6.1 Event at Hoveton Riverside Park

Ian Masters had been unable to accommodate the display boards and no work had therefore been done to update them. Jill Wickens and David Capp volunteered to take on this responsibility in consultation with Ian. The Administrator undertook to take the boards to Jill. She would also send a copy of the current text panels to Liz Goodyear for comment.

#### 6.2 Discussion with Ian Masters

The Chairman had, as agreed, had a discussion with Ian Masters to convey the Committee's views expressed at the last meeting. Unfortunately, Ian's commitment on a Thursday evening was unbreakable and was likely to continue for the foreseeable future. He was, however, still committed to making a contribution to publicity and promotion matters.

It was proposed, and agreed, that Ian should be asked to draft a "Publicity, Promotion and Recruitment Strategy" which could be discussed at a special meeting arranged on a date when he was able to attend.

#### 6.3 Role of the Broads Society

Copies of the letters published in Harnser had been circulated. Nick Barne suggested that these letters, and another to be published in the July issue, were symptomatic of a general unease among the membership.

However, the letters published had expressed contradictory opinions. This was typical of the membership which encompassed a wide range of individual views, often diametrically opposed, on many issues.

There was general agreement that the Society's strength lay in its ability to take a broad and balanced view based on the wealth of experience and knowledge of its members. However, this

strength might also be seen by some as a potential weakness as it made it difficult to define the Society's role for the general public and potential members.

After some discussion about changing the mission statement, there was general consensus that no action was necessary because it was premature to diagnose a major problem on the basis of two or three letters. However, the letters were a welcome and thoughtful input from members who had the Society's interests at heart and their publication in Harnser had been of great benefit. One lesson to be learned was that the Society needed to be more vocal, expressing its views in public when it was appropriate to do so. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman suggested that the underlying problem was the Society's inability to get its message across. This was a role for Ian Masters, which it was hoped he would address in the Publicity Strategy document which he would be asked to prepare (Minute 6.2).

## **7 Planning**

### **7.1 General**

- a) The informal meeting with Planning Sub-Committees arranged for 1 May had been cancelled as the date had proved inconvenient. Richard Baguley pointed out that major changes in planning were in the pipeline and suggested that the best course of action would be to arrange a formal meeting to discuss the implications for the Society once details were known. This was agreed.
- b) Keith Bacon reported that he had asked whether the Society might be allocated spare places on the bus and boat tour organized each year by the Broads Authority for Parish Councils to view examples of successful and less successful planning decisions.
- c) It was noted that the BA boundary could be changed but no details were available. Paul Howes pointed out that three National Parks were proposing extension of their boundaries.

### **7.2 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of 19 April had been circulated. The Chairman was wryly pleased to note the report that Hunsett Mill had been nominated for an RIBA Design Award.

#### **Upper Thurne Working Group (UTWG)**

Keith Bacon reported on Compartment 6 (Potter Heigham) of the Flood Defence Scheme. Water would be allowed to permeate the marshes owned by the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and a new flood defence line created. This would require changes to the route of the Weavers Way footpath which would be the responsibility of Norfolk County Council and the Broads Authority. Keith had expressed to the UTWG his concern that the embankment, also owned by the Wildlife Trust and forming an important part of the footpath, would be abandoned and become unusable within 30 years. He would use every opportunity to put pressure on those responsible to secure the integrity of the bank and the preservation of this part of Weavers Way.

It was agreed that the Society should become involved in this issue by writing to Norfolk County Council, The Broads Authority, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, BESL and the Environment Agency. Keith undertook to draft a letter for comment via the Forum and signature by the Chairman.

### **7.3 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of 22 April had been circulated.

The recommendation that the Society should adopt a more robust approach in preventing the use of sea toilets in the Broads was agreed, provided that it was restricted to static craft. David Capp undertook, in consultation with Colin Dye, to draft a letter for comment via the Forum. The letter, once signed by the Chairman, would be sent to the Environment Agency, which was responsible for water quality, with a copy to the Broads Authority.

See also minute 15.3.

## **8 Broads Authority**

### 8.1 Landscape Project

Peter Horsefield reported on a workshop which he had attended. Keith Bacon and Bryan Read had also been in attendance, representing the Local Access Forum and the Windmills Trust respectively.

The Broads Authority was proposing to submit an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant to support landscape heritage. £750K was available. The criteria for applications included the involvement of the local community and preservation of unique and distinctive features.

The Authority was proposing a first stage application for funding to carry out a scoping study to define a project. A steering committee would be set up to put the application together and the Authority were seeking help from relevant organizations. Peter Horsefield had already volunteered to be a member.

The initial idea was to illustrate the changes to the Broads landscape over the past 2,000 years, including through an interactive website. Those attending the workshop had said that it would be impractical to cover such a large area and suggested that smaller sections, such as the Ant Valley, should be the initial focus with the rest to follow. The project might last five years.

Committee members suggested other topics which might be considered, and which would have a practical application, for example the history and restoration of staithe which were a unique feature of the Broads.

It was agreed to arrange a special meeting, preferably on a Monday so that Ian Masters and Paul Howes could attend, to which Lesley Marsden, BA Landscape Architect, could be invited to talk about the Heritage Lottery Landscape Heritage Fund and the way forward for the Broads.

### 8.2 Trudi Wakelin, Director of Waterways

The Chairman had issued an open invitation to Trudi Wakelin to attend Committee meetings whenever there was item on the agenda where her input would be relevant. The Administrator had already sent her the list of meeting dates and would routinely send her copies of the agenda and the web version of the minutes.

There was unanimous agreement that Trudi be invited to the next meeting.

### 8.3 Meeting with BA Chairman and Chief Executive

Richard Baguley proposed that it was time for another meeting. This was agreed and the Chairman undertook to invite the BA representatives to meet the Committee, preferably in September, at either Dragonfly House or the Broad House Hotel, depending on the wishes of the BA.

## **9 Harnser**

Nothing to report

## **10 Social Events**

Jill Wickens reported that the Annual Service had been an outstanding success. The "Waveney Stardust" had proved an excellent means of transport and the Rector and PCC of Belaugh Church had provided first class hospitality. Jill had made a donation of £20 to the Church and £10 to "Waveney Stardust" on the Society's behalf. It was proposed by David Capp, seconded by Richard Starling, and unanimously agreed, that Jill be reimbursed.

Jill was planning another walk, possibly at Catfield Fen. Members suggested that a walk at Potter Heigham including the threatened embankment (Minute 7.2) would be timely.

## **11 Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust (NSBCT)**

Nick Barne reported on the successful event held at the Museum of the Broads on 7<sup>th</sup> April to celebrate the inauguration of the new audio guide funded by the Trust. The Trustees were already

working on the next project which is to fund an interpretation scheme at Geldeston Lock so as provide historical information for both visitors and school study visits.

## **12 Broads Forum**

Richard Starling reported on the meeting held on 8 April. Attendance by representatives had been poor. Of the 11 present, three were Society members.

The agenda had included the following items:

- Parish Council representation – no progress
- A Workshop on planning focusing on the Broads Plan Review due to go out to consultation in June
- Implementation of “Removal of Vegetation” legislation
- Natural England – the condition of SSSIs and habitat restoration
- Notification that the Broads Authority was submitting a bid to designate the Broads a World Heritage Site.
- Chief Executive’s Report
- Exemption from the requirement for insurance for visiting boats under 4 metres in length. No such exemption for local craft.

## **13 CNP**

There had been no meeting since the BS Committee had last met in March. There had, however, been a flow of information following the General Election.

The National Parks Societies Conference would take place from 3-5 September. Paul Howes and Peter Horsefield would be representing the Society.

## **14 Website**

Richard Baguley hoped that the site would be transferred to the new host during the week after the Spring Bank Holiday.

## **15 A.O.B.**

### **15.1 Application Form and Information Leaflet**

Richard Starling handed to Jill Wickens copies of membership forms and information leaflets used by the Dartmoor Preservation Society and the Friends of the Peak District and suggested that the Broads Society should produce something similar. The Administrator was asked to send a copy of the current Broads Society Information Leaflet and Membership Application Form to Jill for updating in consultation with Ian Masters as part of the “Display Board Project”.

*[Subsequent problems and prior engagements have delayed this until July.]*

### **15.2 Navigation Events**

Paul Howes reminded members of the following major events:

22/23 May – Acle Regatta

29/30 May – Thurne Mouth Open Regatta

6/7 June 50<sup>th</sup> Three Rivers Race which had attracted a record entry

### **15.3 Meeting with the President**

Peter Horsefield reported that he and the Vice-Chairman had, as agreed, met with the President and had had a useful and amicable discussion on the points raised during the discussion at the January meeting on his comments at the AGM.

## **16 Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 15 July 2010 at Broad House Hotel, Wroxham