

BROADS SOCIETY

Minutes of the Main Committee held on Tuesday 10 September 2013 at the Hotel Wroxham, Wroxham

Present: Robin Godber (Chairman); Keith Bacon (Vice-Chairman),
Nick Balls, Colin Dye, Peter Horsefield, Richard Reid, Mark Wells
and
Jill Wickens

By invitation for part of the meeting: Trudi Wakelin (BA) and Peter Howe
In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

Trudi Wakelin had been invited to provide her regular update from the Broads Authority and this part of the business is recorded in a separate note.

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from David Capp, Ian Masters, Paul Savage and Mark Wells

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 9 July

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

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Broads Authority and Toll Income (Minute 5)

Members were pleased that the Broads Authority had abandoned its proposal to use toll income to pay the salary of a Tourism Officer. The Chairman drew attention to a press release concerning a meeting between local MPs and the Broads Authority to address concerns that navigation interests were not being properly represented. It was anticipated that there would be a report in the Eastern Daily Press.

Colin Dye pointed out that the Broads Authority was only one of the three official organisations responsible for conservation in the Broads, the others being the Environment Agency and Natural England. The Broads Authority was the only organisation responsible for navigation. This created an imbalance in the weight of influence accorded to conservation compared with navigation and he felt that navigation interests were not fairly represented. Peter Horsefield endorsed this view, expressing the view that the structure of the Broads Authority was wrong.

4.2 Sotshole Broad (Minute 11.9)

The Northern Rivers Sub-Committee had received a retrospective planning application. In their response they had referred to the applicant's failure to submit a planning application prior to carrying out the work. Had he done so, the Society would have had the opportunity to query the excessive width of the boardwalk and to suggested modifications to the scheme. However, the Society's main focus was the impact of development on the Broads and rivers system. Sotshole Broad, being secluded and private, had no such impact and the NRS-C had decided that it would be inappropriate to comment now that the work had been done. Members had taken into account the helpful comment from Martin George that the stark appearance would soon be "softened" by the growth of plants.

4.3 Recruitment Drive (Minute 6.2)

The Chairman asked members to identify people whom they believed might become members if invited to do so via a personal letter. It was agreed that a list of names should be sent to the Administrator who would check that these individuals were not already members before passing the lists to the Chairman

5 Finance

5.1 Presentation of the Report and Accounts for 2012-2013

The draft final accounts prepared by Lovewell Blake were circulated. The Treasurer explained that, because of the accounting procedures used by Lovewell Blake, it was difficult to reconcile the figures in the documents with the financial information provided by the Society. However, he had full confidence in the information presented and proposed acceptance of the accounts for ratification at the AGM. This was seconded by Jill Wickens and unanimously agreed.

5.2 Financial Statement for the period to 31 August

This had been circulated. The financial position was as expected and there was nothing additional to report.

5.3 Other Financial Issues

The Treasurer drew attention to the possible implications for Charities of the proposals in the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning & Trade Union Administration Bill currently before Parliament. Major charities had already expressed their concerns. The Society might wish to keep the issue in view and, if necessary, seek advice at the appropriate time.

6 CNP

6.1 Information from CNP

Peter Howe had continued to circulate communications from CNP. Of the issues being addressed by CNP the following might have some relevance to the Broads Society:
Increased funding for placing power lines underground by the National Grid

Proposal to develop a motor sport park on the edge of the Brecon Beacons (cf the Broadland Hub proposal)
The Government's road building programme (cf dualling of the Acle Straight)

6.2 Transport in National Parks

Norfolk County Council had submitted a bid under the scheme for funding for alternative transport initiatives in National Parks. This was for a cycle route along the Three Rivers Way. The bid, for £1m, had been unsuccessful because it had been prepared in a very short time and the sum requested not sufficiently large.

6.3 CNP Annual Conference

Peter and Robin Godber would be representing the Society at the annual CNP Conference in Tenby. It was assumed the Bryan Read would be attending in his role as Council member.

6.4 CNP Finances

Peter confirmed that, as far as he was aware, CNP finances were now on an even keel and the organisation had settled down after its reorganisation. The forthcoming conference would demonstrate whether this was the case. Kate Ashbrooke had been appointed as the officer responsible for the link with the Society. She had said that she would be willing to visit if there were special meeting or event.

7 **National Park Status**

The Chairman had included this item because the proposal for the Broads to be designated as a National Park continued to be on the Broads Authority's agenda. Robin would be discussing this at his meeting with John Packman the following day and he wished to make his position clear. He believed that within the Broads equal status needed to be given to both navigation and conservation and would be totally opposed to any change which failed to meet this criterion. Robin also proposed to share this opinion with members at the AGM and request feedback.

Referring to the Sanford Principle, which was always cited as the reason why the Broads should not become a National Park, Keith Bacon said that this was a red herring. In reality, the Habitats Directive had superseded the Sanford Principle. However, the Principle was an intrinsic part of the Broads Act and could not be abandoned without amendment to the Act.

Peter Horsefield pointed out that, because the Broads were governed under a different Act of Parliament from the other National Parks, it would be very complicated to achieve a change of legal status.

8 **Broads Charitable Trust**

8.1 Love the Broads Scheme

The Love the Broads Scheme was progressing well following the appointment of the new Development Officer, Lynn Finnigan. Forty businesses were now participating in various ways, e.g placing stickers on hire boats, promoting text giving, selling

merchandise and setting up badge boxes. A few were also inviting donations via the Visitor Tax Scheme. All participants were enthusiastic and Hoseason's would be including an advertisement in their 2014 brochure.

Keith Bacon expressed disappointment that so few of the businesses had opted into the Visitor Tax Scheme which had been intended as the major vehicle for producing income.

8.2 Projects

Three new projects had been agreed:

Installation of Barn Owl Boxes in conjunction with the Hawk and Owl Trust. (Ian Masters had agreed to make a short film).

Peter Horsefield pointed out that the main risk for Barn Owls was now lack of food rather than lack of nesting places.

Footpath across Carlton Marshes with sponsorship from the Waveney River Centre

Erection of cycle route signs round the Broads.

8.3 Finance

The major financial concern was the payment of the Development Officer as STEP funding would come to an end in September. No other source of funding had yet been identified.

8.4 Governance

Peter Horsefield once again enquired about governance and how the Trust could check that all income received by participating businesses was handed over. It was pointed out this would be impossible and that all charities receiving voluntary income had to accept a certain level of trust.

9 **Lady Mayhew Trophy**

It was agreed to make an award this year. The Administrator was asked to notify the successful nominee and invite two representatives to attend the AGM to receive the trophy.

10 **AGM**

10.1 Photographic Competition

Nigel Hughes, who had organised the photographic competition, had asked if he might set up a display at How Hill and arrange for judging during the break after lunch. This was agreed provided that Nigel was not expecting the judges to be given complimentary lunches. Jill would contact How Hill to ask if they could provide display boards. It was further agreed that the presentation of the prize should be made prior to the 500 Club Draw. Jill undertook to add this to the agenda.

10.2 Nominations for Election

The Administrator would email nomination forms for completion and return. She would also check on eligibility as she believed that Keith Bacon had completed his 6 year term.

11 **Harnser**

The Harnser and AGM booklet would be circulated in accordance with the usual timetable. The Administrator pointed out that there would be no further reduction in postage costs even if circulation declined because there was a minimum charge.

Peter Horsefield offered to write an article for the January issue on the Eric Edwards Memorial Room at How Hill.

12 Anglia Afloat

Richard Reid had provided an article for every issue since taking on this responsibility. He requested other ideas for inclusion in the Society's column.

The following were suggested:

Lady Mayhew Trophy

Broadsword

New mooring and the influence of the Society in getting these installed

Robin Godber undertook to raise the issue of access to nature reserves with John Packman and Keith would take it up at the Local Access Forum

Action had already been taken on Hickling Broad, thanks to intervention by Martin George who had persuaded the Broads Authority to divert funding from Hoveton Great Broad to Hickling. The Chairman had written about this in his letter for the October Harnser.

13 Website

Nick Balls intended to refresh the front page to include the latest news. The Landscape survey would run until the end of the year.

He confirmed that he uploaded communications from CNP after filtering those which had no relevance for the Broads.

The suggestion to remove the Forum was discussed but it was agreed to take no action at the present time but to revisit the matter at a later date.

14 Issues of Concern

It was agreed that the list of items previously identified would be retained on the agenda and updates provided at each meeting as appropriate. Issues would be added or deleted as necessary.

14.1 Pylons – Lowestoft to Norwich – await developments

14.2 Solar Farm Development – maintain watching brief

14.3 Breydon Water – Ski-ing and management issues

The Broads Authority was developing a Breydon Water management plan. Martin George and Robin Godber had met Broads Authority Officers. A small amount of dredging might be required but there appeared to be nothing to give rise to concern at the present time.

14.4 River Chet

Water levels in Loddon Basin had improved since the repair of Hardley Weir and the news of the interim dredging was welcomed. The Loddon pressure group had seen the logic of withdrawing from active campaigning.

14.5 Water Quality

Only one meeting had taken place but the decision to divert funding to Hickling (see Minute 12) was welcome progress.

14.6 Climate Change Adaptation

Keith Bacon reported that Simon Hooton, the BA Officer responsible for preparing the Authority's Climate Change Adaptation Plan, seemed to be making some progress. He would welcome the Society's help. Once the Plan was ready for consultation, the Society's Climate Change Group would need to meet to check inaccuracies. More information was required. Peter Horsefield pointed out that available data showed that nothing had happened which had not happened in before; he believed that the only reason the BA were taking this initiative was because of requirements imposed by DEFRA. He suggested that the Society should write to local MPs questioning DEFRA policy.

14.7 Norfolk Hub

The Chairman proposed that the best course of action was to rely on David Hastings to provide information on developments so that, if appropriate the Society could take action in due course. This was agreed.

14.8 Government's Road Building Proposal - Acle Straight

Colin Dye asked whether the Society had policy about dualling the Acle Straight. Members were aware that Martin George was opposed on environmental grounds. Keith Bacon also drew attention to features of important archaeological interest. The Society would discuss the issue if and when it arose.

15 Publicity and Promotion

During 2013, the Publicity Team had attended more local events than ever before and felt that their efforts were producing results in terms of recruitment and raising the Society's profile. The team were planning to attend one more event this year at Salhouse. In planning for next year's activities, the team had decided to change their focus and to put effort into leaving leaflets in local shops, cafes, hotels and other tourist outlets. The Administrator suggested that the team should leave literature at all the businesses signed up to "Love the Broads"

16 Rivers Sub-Committees

16.1 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee (NRS-C)

The minutes of the meeting of 12 August had been circulated.
Sotshole Broad (reported in minute 4.2)
Cess Staithe - nothing to report on outcome of court hearing.

14.2 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee (SRS-C)

The Sub-Committee does not normally meet in August. Work continues on regenerating the Southern Broads. The next meeting is on 9 October.

17 A.O.B

Tour for Group of Farmers visiting the Broads on 2 October. The Group had asked to meet Keith in Neatishead. It was agreed that Keith should telephone them for more details about their requirements and offer a visit to How Hill if this was of interest.

The chairman advised that the President, Major Nicholas Barne, expressed his wish to attend the November meeting of the committee prior to the AGM. Members agreed that this was a good idea. Nick Barne had also suggested that Lynn Finnigan, Development Office with the Broads Charitable Trust should be asked to address the meeting. Whilst it was agreed that this was a good idea it was felt that there would be too much business to discuss before the AGM that this invitation should be deferred until a later date.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 12 November 2013

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.50 pm

Signed
Chairman

Date