

BROADS SOCIETY

Minutes of the Main Committee held on Monday 24 January 2011 at the Hotel Wroxham, Wroxham

Present: Peter Horsefield (Chairman), Keith Bacon, Nick Barne, Chris Pulley (Treasurer), Nick Balls, David Capp, Colin Dye, Liz Goodyear, Ian Masters, Richard Starling, Peter Waller, Mark Wells and Jill Wickens

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

The meeting began with a presentation by Ian Masters on the proposed young people's film making project. Ian was assisted by Ashir Abbas, Head of Media Studies at Lynn Grove High School. In his presentation, Ian expanded on the paper which he had circulated in advance to Committee members. The paper explained the project brief and how it was to be carried out and described the planned public event at which the film would be shown.

Ian summarised the anticipated outcomes as follows:

- To bring film making experience to young people
- To expose young people to the beauty and amenity of the Broads
- To introduce the Broads Society and its opportunities of interest to young people
- To introduce young people to the skills of project financial responsibility
- To celebrate the Broads Society via premiere performance events at local cinemas, the internet and, possibly, through regional broadcasts.

In response to questions Ian explained that the students would be from Years 10 and 11 (14-16 year olds) but that the work was not intended to count towards GCSE qualifications as this would impose too much pressure. He confirmed that the project would cover all aspects of the Broads, although the content of the film would be selected by the young people themselves. With regard to the production of a commercial product, Ian pointed out the difficulties of copyright legislation. Staff from the schools involved would assist with transport etc and consideration would be given to enabling Society members to help where appropriate. The work would not be carried out during the school day.

Peter Horsefield offered to use his connections with the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts to enquire whether the film might be included in their display area and urged that How Hill be featured.

The cost would be in the region of £7-£10k. Ian had discussed the project with John Ash, who was responsible for the Broads Authority Sustainable Development Fund, and was optimistic about the success of an application for funds. Committee members were unanimously agreed that Ian should continue his discussions with John Ash and, if appropriate, prepare an application for funding. However, it was essential that the Society should make a financial contribution in order to retain overall control. The proportion of funds to be committed in the formal application would depend on the outcome of the ongoing discussions with the SDF.

The Chairman thanked Ian and Asher Abbas for their presentation and Mr Abbas left the meeting.

Before beginning the business on the agenda, the Chairman welcomed Mark Wells to his first meeting and asked members of the Committee to introduce themselves. He then invited Mark to say a few words about his background and interests. Jill Wickens asked Mark to provide a short pen portrait for inclusion in “Harnser” as was customary for all new committee members.

1 Apologies for absence

Lesley Bonshor

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 4 November 2010

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

4 Notes on the Meeting with representatives of Horning Parish Council

These had been circulated for information and were noted.

5 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

6 Finance

6.1 Receipts and Payments Account to 31 December 2010

The Treasurer had circulated a summary of receipts and payments together with a brief explanation of the figures. He had nothing further to add.

6.2 Other Financial Matters

Keith Bacon informed members that Voluntary Norfolk could offer independent examination of the accounts at a cost of £250 which was far less expensive than the current charge (£821.75) made by Lovewell Blake. It was agreed to consider this option at the next Annual General Meeting.

7 Proposal to appoint a “Project Officer”

A report by the “Project Officer” Sub-Group had been circulated. However, in view of the length of the agenda, the Chairman proposed that discussion on this item be deferred to the next meeting, or an ad hoc meeting convened for the purpose.

8 Publicity & Promotion including Fund Raising

8.1 Displays and Exhibitions

Nick Balls reported that he and Jill Wickens had attended the Parish Council “Pop In” at Ludham organised by the Broads Authority (BA). Other local organisation had mounted displays and there had been a

sizeable attendance. Andrea Long (BA) had, at Nick's suggestion, invited the Society to have a presence at future events of this type. Keith Bacon pointed out that Parish "Pop Ins" were intended primarily to give local people an opportunity to raise planning issues with BA officers; attendance was normally low. The Ludham event had been atypical since it related to more general issues affecting the Ant Valley which had generated interest and concern from people from outside the parish. Both Keith and Richard Starling cautioned against the Society having a presence at future meetings since members of the public normally attended only when there was concern about a contentious planning issue. On such occasions there was the risk that the Society might be seen as offering direct support to the Broads Authority. It was agreed that the matter required further investigation before the Society became involved.

Jill Wickens reported that the Society had been invited to mount a display at the Celebration Day being organised by the Museum of the Broads on Sunday 3 July. Volunteers were required.

8.2 Publicity Leaflet

The text of the leaflet had been agreed but the Chairman still had concerns that the strap line "Friends of the Broads" was not sufficiently prominent. The logo also needed some adjustment. Nick Balls undertook to amend the design of the front page to take account of these concerns.

8.3 Fund Raising

Following the open, but anonymous, letter in the January edition of "Harnser" urging members to follow the example of the author who had made a significant donation, a Life Member had made a donation and set up a standing order for future annual donations. He had also submitted a letter for publication (with a request that his name and address be withheld) urging other longstanding Life Members to consider following his example.

9

Flood Protection

A copy of an email from Chris Groves to the Chairman had been circulated. Chris had expressed his increasing concern that the spin-off benefits anticipated from the Flood Protection scheme were not being achieved. These were (a) creation of new footpaths/rights of way and (b) new 24 hour moorings. The Society had argued for the provision of these facilities at the preliminary consultation stage for each Compartment and had submitted objections to planning applications where such provision was lacking. However, these representations had failed to influence the outcome. Chris had offered to take this matter up with BESL and the Broads Authority if the Committee supported this suggestion.

It was agreed that more detailed information was required. Keith Bacon was therefore asked to discuss the matter with Chris and ask him for a detailed appraisal of the situation before the Society decided on an appropriate intervention.

A copy of the email from Chris had been sent to Trudi Wakelin who, in an email response, had agreed that the enhancements arising from the BESL work had been more limited than anticipated. However, she pointed out that the Memorandum of Understanding, to which Chris had referred, was aspirational rather than a legal document. She had suggested that, if the Society wished to send a letter, it should be addressed to Paul Woodcock (Environment Agency) and copied to John Packman.

The Administrator would circulate a copy of Trudi's email which also made reference to issues raised by the South Rivers Sub-Committee (see Minute 13.2).

10 Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust

A paper prepared by Nick Barne on behalf of the Trust had been circulated.

Nick explained the difficulties arising from the restriction on the use of the funds (i.e. the Lady Mayhew bequest) provided by the Broads Society. This specifically precluded the Trust from using the money for anything other than setting up and administration of the Charity. A condition of the grant for funding the project at Geldeston Lock had been that the Trust should provide an element of the cost in cash. There had been no time to identify an external source and it had been decided that the Trust should use its own resources, some of which had been provided by a generous donation. In the current economic climate it was evident that future grants would be dependent on additional funding from another source which, on some occasions, might have to be the Trust.

It was the view of the Trustees that, if the Trust was to work in the best interests of the Broads, it needed the flexibility to use its funds in the most effective way. They were therefore asking the Society to consider amending the terms of the resolution of June 2008 to read "that the money transferred to the Trust in June 2008 should be available for funding projects but will not be used to support any statutory duty of the Broads Authority."

Nick assured members that the Trust would have sufficient funds for administration even if some of the Lady Mayhew bequest were used to provide funding for projects.

The Chairman reminded members of the controversy arising from the proposal to transfer the Lady Mayhew bequest to the Charitable Trust and emphasised that the purpose of the restriction on the use of funds had been to ensure that there was no way the money could be diverted for use by the Broads Authority to support its statutory duties.

A lengthy discussion ensued, the main concern of members being to ensure that the funds donated by the Society were protected from use by the Broads Authority.

Bearing in mind that five of the Trustees were members of the Broads Society, two were independent and only two were representatives of the Broads Authority, it was agreed that this provided sufficient protection against the use of funds for inadmissible purposes. Several Committee members pointed out that the Trustees had been appointed to run the Trust in accordance with

Charity Commission requirements and the terms of their constitution and should be allowed the freedom to take responsibility for decisions without interference.

It was therefore unanimously agreed that the resolution of June 2008 should be amended using the following wording:

“... that the money transferred to the Trust in June 2008 should be available for funding of projects and shall not be used to support any statutory duty of the Broads Authority or any other public body”.

Nick thanked the Committee on behalf of his fellow Trustees.

11 Allocation of Responsibilities

A paper had been circulated showing the current allocation of responsibilities and highlighting vacancies. A revised list of allocations was agreed which forms and appendix to these minutes. Mark Wells undertook to contact Phil Ollier to ascertain whether the Habitat Restoration Project was still extant. It was noted that “Anglia Afloat” were seeking a new editor and the future of the magazine was uncertain.

12 CNP

Peter Horsefield had taken on temporary responsibility for liaison with CNP following the resignation of Paul Howes. He pointed out that his chosen method of providing information to the Committee was to post all communications from CNP on the Society Members’ Forum. He urged members to monitor this regularly.

It was noted that the annual National Park Societies Conference, hosted by the Exmoor Society, would take place from 4th to 6th November. Peter intended to go and this would need to be taken into consideration when deciding on the date of the AGM.

13 Planning

13.1 North Rivers Sub-Committee

The December meeting had been cancelled.

It was noted that a member had expressed interest in joining the Committee in response to the Chairman’s letter in “Harnser”

13.2 South Rivers Sub-Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 31 December 2010 had been circulated together with two communications from Peter Waller raising the following issues which required the attention of the Main Committee. The Administrator had sent copies of these latter items to Trudi Wakelin (BA) so that she could brief Peter Horsefield.

13.2.1 Breydon Water

The Sub-Committee was concerned at the number of boats going aground while crossing Breydon Water and the lack of adequate explanation about navigation marks.

In an email to Peter Horsefield Trudi Wakelin had confirmed that the Authority shared the concerns of the SRS-C had alerted the Port Company and Trinity House. A new consultative

forum had been established and was due to meet in early February when the BA would raise the issue again.

13.2.2 Broads Tourism Forum

The SRS-C had suggested that a meeting with Ian Russell would be useful. However, as Mr Russell was no longer Chair of the Tourism Forum, it was agreed that, if any invitation were to be issued, it would need to be to his successor.

13.2.3 Stakes near Oulton Broad Yacht Club

Peter Waller had raised this issue directly with the Broads Authority. Trudi Wakelin had informed him that the Authority would endeavour to remove the stakes whilst completing dredging works this winter.

13.2.4 Lack of mooring facilities for de-masting boats at St Olave's bridge and loss of moorings New Cut bridge

Trudi Wakelin had confirmed that the BA were aware of the situation at St Olaves but had said that this was not a high priority as there were other moorings in the vicinity. Peter Horsefield undertook to follow this up with Trudi.

14 AGM 2010 and 2011

There were no issues arising from the 2010 AGM. The Chairman felt it had been a good meeting, despite the service from the Hotel being far from satisfactory.

It was agreed in principle to hold the 2011 AGM at How Hill. Peter Horsefield would enquire about the possibility at the next meeting of How Hill Trustees.

15 Website

The transfer of webmaster responsibilities to Liz Goodyear was nearing completion. For the time being, items for posting should be sent to both Liz and Richard Baguley.

16 Harnser

The Administrator undertook to remind David Edleston about his promised article on the approach to planning applications adopted by the North Rivers Planning Sub-Committee.

The Editor was awaiting a report on CNP from Peter Horsefield.

It was agreed to accept for publication an article on the medieval foundation of the Broads.

17 Social Events

The walk on 11 June, led by Liz Goodyear, would be at Martham, with refreshments at Somerton Village Hall, from where the walk would start. This would replace the walk originally planned for the Weavers' Way from Potter Heigham Church to the eelset on Candle Dyke and back across the marsh.

18 A.O.B.

18.1 DEFRA Consultation on Governance of National Parks

Richard Starling enquired whether the Society intended to submit a response. Keith Bacon reported on a meeting at the Broads Authority at which it had been agreed that a response should be formulated via the Broads Forum.

CNP had discussed the matter at length and it was agreed to check on their response as well as the response from the Broads Authority. Mark Wells undertook to let the Chairman have a copy of the NSBA response.

It was noted that Paul Howes had suggested a revision of governance arrangements whereby Authority members would be Trustees.

In the absence of any other volunteers, the Chairman undertook to consider how best to address the consultation and take the necessary action.

18.2 Broadsword

David Capp drew attention to the achievement of Broadsword in clearing one bank from Catfield Dyke to Hickling Broad. The team had one more work session planned this season.

18.3 Corporate Membership

It was agreed to defer to the next meeting the application for corporate membership on behalf of 24 plot owners at Wayford Bridge.

18.4 Tolls

There was unanimous agreement that the strategy adopted by John Packman to reduce overall expenditure by 30% was unacceptable. This involved transfer of money from the Navigation Account to the General Account. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to John Packman deploring the increase in tolls resulting directly from this action

19 Meetings 2011

It was agreed that Tuesday would be the most suitable day for future meetings. The Administrator would circulate a list of dates.

Future meeting would be held at the Hotel Wroxham since nothing had been heard from the Broad House Hotel following the announcement that the company was going into administration.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.31 pm

Signed
Chairman

Date