

BROADS SOCIETY

Minutes of the Main Committee held Tuesday 29 March 2011 at the Hotel Wroxham, Wroxham

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

By invitation: Bryan Read (President)
In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

1 **Apologies for absence** Chris Pulley (Treasurer), Lesley Bonshor and David Capp

2 **Declarations of Interest**
There were none.

3 **Minutes of the Meeting of 24 January 2011**
The minutes, having been circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4 **Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising

5 **Finance**

5.1 Receipts and Payments Account to 28 February 2011

The Treasurer had circulated a summary of receipts and payments together with a brief explanation of the figures. There was nothing to add to his accompanying report.

5.2 Accounts for the year to 31 March 2011

In his report the Treasurer had requested committee members to notify him of any expenses so that these could be included in the draft accounts which would be available at the next meeting.

5.3 CNP Subscriptions

The Chairman reported receipt of the annual request for subscriptions from CNP. The capitation fee per member for 2011/2012 would increase by 2% to £1.10. The Administrator informed members that she had done the calculations and notified CNP that the Broads Society contribution would be £1,362.90.

5.4 500 Club

The Administrator reported that membership of the 500 Club had dropped below 250, the threshold for awarding a maximum annual prize of £500. If membership numbers were not restored to 250 before the Annual General Meeting, the prize would be reduced to £250. The Administrator was asked to send an application form to any Committee members who had not joined the Club.

6 **Proposal to appoint a "Project Officer"**

The original idea had been put forward by Bryan Read and he had therefore been invited to the meeting to take part in the discussion.

A report by the sub-group set up to consider the proposal had been circulated, together with a copy of the briefing paper written by Bryan in 2008 setting out his thoughts about the Society's need for a "Project Officer".

Keith Bacon, a member of the sub-group, introduced this item by expressing his belief that the proposal had merit and was worth taking further. Ian Masters pointed out that, in order to make progress, the Society needed a clear definition of the nature of the role.

Bryan Read explained the background to his original proposal. Other National Park Societies used paid personnel to provide support for the voluntary officers and committee, thereby enabling them to

carry out their purposes more effectively. The Broads Society relied exclusively on volunteers and, bearing in mind the increasing range and complexity of issues in which the Society was involved, this arrangement could become untenable.

The report identified a number of areas to which the “Project Officer” might contribute and it agreed to consider each of these in turn.

a) Planning

The report proposed that the Officer’s role might include attendance at meetings of the BA Planning Committee, establishing good working relationships with BA Planning Officers, maintaining a watching brief on developments within the Broads and working with the North and South Rivers Sub-Committee.

Whilst accepting the potential value of such a post, the Chairman stressed the vital importance to harmony within the Society of involving planning sub-committees in discussions and obtaining their support for the proposals.

Keith Bacon pointed out that there were two distinct aspects to planning: ‘development control’ and ‘strategic planning’ (e.g. the Local Development Framework). A “Project Officer” would be of particular assistance in assisting the Society to deal with the latter.

b) Consultations

Members believed that this was an area where a “Project Officer” would be of particular value. At present, individual Committee members or sub-groups were tasked with preparing the Society’s response to a range of major consultations which involved a great deal of work. A Project Officer could carry out background research and, with advice and guidance on the Society’s overall stance, could be asked to prepare a draft response for the Committee’s comments. The appointee could also carry out any tasks requiring detailed analysis, for example going through the revised Broads Plan documents to assess the extent to which the Society’s comments had been taken into account.

c) Liaison

The sub-group’s report had listed a number of organisations with which the Project Office might establish links. There was, however, general agreement that this aspect of the potential role should not be given too much weight. However, there were two areas where the “Project Officer” could provide support: (a) developing a relationship with CPRE and (b) helping the Society to deal with the ever increasing amount of material emanating from CNP.

The Chairman pointed out that the Society had issued a standing invitation to Trudi Wakelin to attend committee meetings which strengthened its relationship with the Broads Authority.

d) Media Relations

Speaking from their professional experience, Ian Masters and Mark Wells counselled against using the “Project Officer” as the single point of contact for media enquiries. The appointee would not be qualified to act as spokesman, would not be available at all times and could only act as a re-routing agency, thereby introducing a new layer of bureaucracy. It was therefore agreed that this proposal should be dropped.

e) Publicity

It was agreed that the “Project Officer” could be useful.

f) Representation

Keith Bacon pointed out that the Society was entitled to send a representative and a substitute to meetings of the Broads Forum. At present, although two members of the Committee attended, they were officially representing other organisations. The “Project Officer” could be the designated substitute. Colin Dye, the current substitute member, volunteered to attend all meetings if the Society so wished. This was agreed.

g) Fund Raising

It was agreed that the “Project Officer” could be useful in identifying sources of funding.

h) General

It was agreed that the “Project Officer” would need to attend meetings of the Main Committee and possibly the Sub-Committee

Conclusion

There was a majority agreement that the Sub-Group should continue its work, taking account of the points raised in the discussion, and submit a detailed proposal taking into account the comments of the Committee for further consideration. It was also agreed that the Chairman should join the Sub-Group as well as any other Committee members interested in taking part in the discussion.

7 Corporate Membership

It was agreed that corporate membership should be limited to companies and organisations which could provide disinterested financial support to the Society.

It was agreed that development of a corporate membership scheme should be included on the agenda of the next meeting

8 Lady Mayhew Bequest

Richard Starling was concerned that the Charity Commission had not been notified of the transfer of the Lady Mayhew Bequest to the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust. He believed that the Society needed assurance that the transfer did not contravene Charity Commission rules. It was agreed that the Administrator should draft a letter explaining what had been done.

It was confirmed that the project at Geldeston Locks was a legitimate use of the Charitable Trust’s funds as it was not a statutory duty of the Broads Authority.

9 Publicity & Promotion

9.1 Film Project

An application to the Broads Authority’s Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) had been submitted and a decision was expected by 17 April. Referring to his previous suggestion about involving the Sainsbury Centre, Peter Horsefield advised that contact be deferred until the project was complete.

Ian Masters had prepared a press release and would consult with John Ash (SDF) about the best way to publicise the project. Peter Horsefield suggested a joint announcement with the Broads Authority

9.2 New leaflet

The leaflet was now ready for printing and Nick Balls proposed that the initial print run should be 500 copies at a cost of £75. Members thanked Nick for his work in producing the leaflet.

9.3 Society Banner

It was proposed by Colin Dye, seconded by Richard Starling, and unanimously agreed to commit a budget of up to £100 to commission a 12 foot banner for use at major events, such as the Three Rivers Race, as well as a supplementary banner with the words “Join Now” to be fixed to the bottom of the main banner in appropriate circumstances.

10 NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK BROADS CHARITABLE TRUST

Nick Barnes reported on a successful event at Geldeston Village Hall to publicise the project at Geldeston Locks. About 40 people had attended, including those directly involved with the Project and interested local residents. The official unveiling of the interpretation boards would take place during the Broads Authority’s “Festival of the Broads”. Members of the Committee would be very welcome to attend the ceremony to be held on Tuesday 10 May at 12.00 for 12.30. *[Since the meeting the date of the ceremony has been changed to Tuesday 24th May at 11.00. Committee members are still very welcome to attend.]*

11 CNP

Peter Horsefield reported on the meeting of Chairs and Chief Executives held on 2 March at which a paper summarising the response to government spending cuts by National Park Authorities had been discussed. The Northumberland Authority had indicated that the cuts were likely to make future operation unviable and were considering the possibility of taking the matter to judicial review. Overall, Authorities were managing the cuts by using accumulated reserves to offset the need for redundancy, achieving staff reductions through natural wastage and voluntary redundancy and extending the period over which the cuts would be implemented.

In most cases, National Park Societies were satisfied that there had been adequate consultation.

Peter pointed out that the section on the Broads was inaccurate and he would be submitting amendments.

12 Planning

12.1 North Rivers Sub-Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 28 February had been circulated. There were no matters arising. At its next meeting on 11 April, the North Rivers Committee would be considering a major application to develop the Deal Ground in Norwich. Bryan Read had been asked to assist, because of his knowledge of the site, and Cally Smith, Head of Planning at the Broads Authority, had offered to attend the meeting to explain those aspects of the project in which the Authority had an interest. Keith Bacon reported that Cally made a presentation on the proposals to the Local Access Forum at which it had been suggested that a footbridge across the Yare to Whitlingham should be incorporated into the plans.

12.2 South Rivers Sub-Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 24 February had been circulated

13 AGM 2011

Peter Horsefield explained that How Hill would not be available for the AGM. The Administrator reported that she had explored two possible venues but neither was ideal.

Ian Masters suggested that the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club would provide an ideal venue and offered to introduce the Administrator to the Manager so that she could make the necessary arrangements.

14 Website

Liz Goodyear was attempting to tidy up the site by amending key pages. However, there was a need to decide the purpose of the website. In Liz's view its main role should be to attract new members and promote the Society.

It was therefore proposed by Liz, seconded by Nick Balls, and agreed that the Publicity Group should review the purpose, format and content of the website and make a presentation to the July meeting. *[Nick Balls has since requested that the presentation be deferred to the September meeting].*

15 Harnser

15.1 Future of "Harnser"

Nick Barne expressed concern that the character of "Harnser" had changed over the past year. This was largely due to the tone and content of some of the letters published in recent issues. The Editor reported that similar concerns had been expressed by readers, four of whom had indicated that they would resign from the Society if the present policy continued. She also pointed out the space taken up by the Society's external correspondence had forced her to exclude some of the articles submitted.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Editorial Committee should have discretion to decide which letters should be published. It was further agreed not to publish the external correspondence in full. Instead, members would be kept informed by a reference to such correspondence in the new "Working On Your Behalf" section with copies available on the website and hard copy provided on request for members without internet access.

The Committee also agreed that, in future, the Chairman would circulate draft letters for comment by email rather than relying on the Committee Forum.

15.2 Book Review

Nick Balls offered to ask his wife if she would review “Norfolk Broads – 10 Leisure Walks (Book 1)” by Tony Rothe.

15.3 Pen Portrait

The Editor reminded Mark Wells that she was still awaiting a short biographical note for publication.

15.4 Christmas Harnser – Special Edition

The Editorial Committee was exploring the possibility of publishing a facsimile of the very first issue of “Harnser” for circulation to members.

The Administrator undertook to provide a copy.

16 Social Events

16.1 Ghost Walk in Norwich

Wednesday 20 April starting at 7.30 pm at the Adam and Eve. £5 per head for twenty people.

16.2 Annual Service

Sunday 8 May at the United Methodist Church, Beccles at 11.00

16.3 A Walk on the Wild Side

Saturday 11 June at 2.00 pm starting at Somerton Village Hall. One member had signed up for this event in response to publicity at the AGM

17 A.O.B.

Planning Enforcement

Colin Dye enquired whether planning permission had been granted for a mobile home situated half way down Thurne Dyke, about 100 yards from the Mill. The Administrator would refer this query to the BA Planning team.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 10 May 21011

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.15 pm

Signed
Chairman

Date