

## BROADS SOCIETY

### Minutes of the Main Committee held Tuesday 8 November 2011 at the Hotel Wroxham, Wroxham

**Present:** Peter Horsefield, Keith Bacon (Vice-Chairman)  
Chris Pulley (Treasurer), Nick Balls, Lesley Bonshor, David Capp,  
Ian Masters, Richard Starling, Mark Wells, Jill Wickens and  
Bryan Read (President)

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

#### 1 Apologies for absence

Nick Barne, Colin Dye, and Liz Goodyear

#### 2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

#### 3 Minutes of the Meeting of 27 September 2011

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

#### 4 Matters Arising

##### 4.1 Treasurer Designate (Minute 5.3)

The Administrator confirmed that Paul Weeks had become a member and would be attending the AGM, though not the lunch.

##### 4.2 Proposed Increase to Subscription Rates (Minute 5.4)

The Chairman confirmed that he would take account of the points raised when writing his regular letter for "Harnser" but pointed out that there would be no time for checking as suggested in the minutes.

##### 4.3 Job Description for Committee Members (Minute 6.1)

Peter Horsefield disagreed with the suggestion that it would be useful to have a job description for committee members, pointing out that, as Trustees, their role in achieving the Society's objectives was clearly set out in the Charity Commission document "The Essential Trustee". He then referred to the relevant paragraphs and requested that these be reproduced in full in the minutes.

"Trustees have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been set up.

Trustees must:

- ensure that the charity complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it

has achieved and annual returns and accounts as required by law;

- ensure that the charity does not breach any of the requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) which govern the activities of the charity;
- act with integrity, and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets;
- ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent;
- use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the charity's objects;
- avoid undertaking activities that might place the charity's endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk;
- take special care when investing funds of the charity or borrowing funds for the charity to use
- use reasonable care and skill in their work as Trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the charity is well-run and efficient;
- consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the charity, or where the Trustees may be in breach of their duties.”

Peter went on to point out that the Charity Commission guidance clearly stated that the Trustees have collective responsibility and all decisions concerning the charity must be taken by the Trustees acting together as a team.

This principle reflects directly into the role of the Chairman, which as is explained in the guidance booklet, is simply that of another Trustee, but with some additional duties, i.e.:-

- “The Chair, as well as helping to plan and chair Trustee meetings, may also be the link between the trustees and the employees and representing the charity at appropriate events. However, ***when it comes to making decisions about the charity, the trustees must take them together.***”

Peter explained that he interpreted this as confirmation that the role of the Chairman carries no executive powers, He advised that Trustees should be jealous of their authority and should guard it assiduously.

Keith Bacon was of the opinion that committee members had a dual role: as Trustees and as members of a Committee.

#### 4.4 CNP (Minute 10)

Peter confirmed his wish to continue as the Society's representative on CNP during his term of office as Chairman.

## 5 Finance

Chris Pulley apologised for delaying the publication of the AGM booklet and also for the printer's error in transposing page 15 and 16 in the bookle; he would explain this to members when presenting his report at the AGM.

5.1 Receipts and Payments Account to 31 October 2011

A summary of receipts and payments had been circulated. The Treasurer anticipated a significant reduction in income from subscriptions.

5.2 Subscription Payments by Direct Debit

The Treasurer had contacted the Society's Relationship Manager at Barclays who had advised him (a) that the Society did not have the right sort of account and (b) that the costs of moving to Direct Debit would be prohibitive. Mark Wells added that NSBA had been given similar advice about costs.

It was agreed that there was no time to pursue further investigations at the present time and to continue with standing order payments.

## 6 **Report by Nominations Committee**

The notes of a meeting of the Nominations Committee held on 20 October had been circulated. The main purpose had been to consider how to recruit to the Committee individuals who could, in time, take office in the Society. The Nominations Committee had set out a suggested a procedure for advertising and considering the responses received.

Peter Horsefield informed members that he would shortly be having a meeting with Steve Pullinger (EDP) to discuss an article about the Society.

It was agreed that Bryan Read should begin drafting an advertisement and putting together an application pack which would be considered by the Nominations Committee.

Committee members believed that a change of name to "Friends of the Broads" would aid recruitment. The possibility of changing the name would be announced at the AGM to assess the reaction of the general membership. If this proved favourable, the Society could consider the way forward. [Note: a survey has been started to obtain the views of the all members]. In anticipation of a name change it was agreed that Nick Balls and Liz Goodyear should take steps to acquire the web domain for "Friends of the Broads" in all its various permutation (.org, .com. etc).

The Chairman thanked the Nominations Committee for their work.

## 7 **AGM**

7.1 Attendance

The Administrator had received approximately 40 bookings for lunch.

7.2 Other Organisational Matters

Chris Durdin, whose book was to be reviewed in “Harnser”, would be selling copies) at the AGM; he would make a donation of £4 to the Society for every copy sold.

7.3 Retirement of Sir Timothy Colman

Sir Timothy had written asking the Society to allow him to retire as Patron. The Chairman would respond appropriately and include reference to Sir Timothy’s retirement in his letter in “Harnser”. It was agreed that no changes would be made to the first page of “Harnser” or to stationery until the date of the retirement had been confirmed.

## 8 **Planning**

8.1 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee

The minutes of the meeting of 10 October had been circulated. Keith Bacon drew attention to the Sub-Committee’s response to the consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework.

8.2 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee

The Southern Rivers Sub-Committee had not met since June.

8.3 Future of Sub-Committees

David Capp volunteered to carry out a review of the Southern Rivers Sub-Committee and report to the next meeting. He believed that, with appropriate changes, the Committee could be revived. This was agreed. It was further agreed that the sub-committee meeting scheduled for 15 December should be cancelled.

8.4 Deal Ground Site

Mark Wells enquired about the Society’s response to the application and whether the Southern Rivers Sub-Committee had been involved. He understood that organisations opposed to the proposals had formed a joint enterprise to lobby against the proposals. These organisations included the Norwich Society, the Yare Users Group and the River Heritage Group and Mark wondered whether it would be of benefit for the Society should join this body.

Keith Bacon was opposed to this suggestion and spoke strongly in favour of the Society retaining its independence, a view endorsed by the meeting. He explained that a response to the outline planning application had been submitted expressing concern at the height of the buildings along the riverside which represented an abrupt change of landscape character at this entry to Norwich. The Society had also suggested the provision of an additional bridge for pedestrian/cycle access to Whitlingham Park and the allocation of a proportion of the new moorings provided for public use.

It was noted that this was only an outline application and more detailed comments would be made on receipt of the full planning application which would be considered jointly by members of both Sub-Committees.

## 8.5 BA Draft Climate Adaptation Plan

Dr Martin George had been in correspondence with the Chairman in connection with the draft plan. His fear was that the draft Plan included options under which the Broads Authority might adopt a “laissez faire” approach to the protection of the Broads. He was keen to have the Society’s support for his views and conclusions and had prepared a draft document which had been circulated with the meeting papers for consultation.

At the recent meeting of the Broads Forum, Martin (the Society’s representative) had stated that it was imperative for the Broads Authority to make clear its position on Climate Adaptation. Forum members had agreed that the Broads Authority should be urged to make the following statement:

“The Authority will face numerous challenges attributable to Climate Change in the coming decades, and wishes to make it clear that it intends, in conjunction with the Environment Agency, Natural England, local authorities and other partners, to do its utmost to overcome the threats posed by this phenomenon, the Authority’s over-arching aim being to ensure that the region remains for the foreseeable future the best and largest example of a predominantly freshwater ecosystem in Lowland Britain.”

Peter Horsefield proposed that the Society should support Martin’s views.

Bryan Read disagreed with Martin’s analysis of the draft Climate Adaptation Plan and considered that his fears were ill-founded. He had sat in on a Broads Authority meeting and could not find any suggestion that it was likely to adopt a “laissez faire” approach. He pointed out that the Plan was at the consultation stage which would last until summer 2012. He believed that, when the options had been drawn up, there was an opportunity for the Society to convene a public meeting to debate the issues as it had done some years ago in relation to Hickling Broad.

Peter Horsefield expressed the view that the draft Plan should not have been published. It was designed to enable academic consideration of all options, including the worst case scenario. Release of the document into the public domain would cause unnecessary concern as had been the case following publication of the report on the Upper Thurne.

Richard Starling suggested that Martin and Simon Hooton (BA) be invited to place articles in “Harnser”. This was agreed.

It was agreed that the Chairman should draft a letter to the Broads Authority along the lines suggested in Martin’s paper and post it on the Forum for comment (copy by post to David Capp). Bryan Read asked if the Chairman could, for the information of Committee

members, include with the draft letter the long term aim on page 32 of the Broads Plan.

## **9 CNP**

Peter Horsefield reported on the annual meeting of National Parks Societies held at Exmoor. This had been excellent, particularly as he had been reminded once again that many of the problems affecting the Broads also concerned other National Parks despite their very different character; a major mutual problem was management of the water system and protection of the water quality. Led by South West Water, those responsible for Exmoor had been able to improve control by taking action right back as far as the watersheds, something which was not possible in the Broads since the sources of its rivers were outside the Broads Authority Executive. In addition, unlike the Broads, there were comparatively few landowners which made negotiations easier.

David Capp suggested that there could be an important role for the Society in spearheading a project to improve water quality by co-ordinating the activities of all relevant agencies and authorities so that the water supply could be effectively managed.

Peter Horsefield emphasised that there was little point in attacking the Broads Authority about water quality since unlike Exmoor the boundaries of their executive area are tightly drawn round the lower reaches of the rivers, whereas theirs contained several complete river valleys. The Broads Authority has no control over many factors influencing water quality. He agreed that the Society could have a role in provoking organisational change at Government level.

It was agreed that members should consider this proposal and come prepared with thoughts on a possible way forward for discussion at the next meeting.

## **10 Harnser**

The publication deadlines for the January issue were earlier than usual because of the Christmas holiday. Nonetheless, the editor was confident that it would be distributed on time.

## **11 Publicity and Promotion**

Ian Masters reported that work had started on the Film Project. Twelve students aged between 14 and 16 were currently involved. However, Ian had concerns that it might be difficult to retain their commitment and enthusiasm since, following a change of school policy, such activities now had to take place outside school hours. The group was currently meeting at 4.30 on Friday afternoons.

**12 Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust**

Bryan Read reported that the Trustees were considering a number of smaller projects.

**13 Website**

Nick Balls reported that the re-vamp was ongoing.

**14 A.O.B**

14.1 Alan King's Bibliography

The Administrator had been contacted by Alan King to remind the Society about the bibliography which he had been compiling for many years and hoped to publish it in due course. Committee members were favourably disposed to offering some financial support for this initiative but suggested that the best way to publish would be on the internet as an information resource. The Administrator was asked to obtain more details from Alan so that they could give the matter proper consideration.

**15 Date of Next Meeting**

To be agreed following the AGM on 26 November.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.10 pm

Signed .....  
Chairman

Date .....