

The Broads Society

Minutes of the Northern Rivers Sub-Committee Meeting held on 12 August 2013 at 7.30 pm at the Hotel Wroxham

Present: Paul Savage (Chairman), Lesley Bonshor,
Michael Brandon-Jones, Peter Cobb, David Edleston, John
Pitchers,
John Scott, David Skinner, John Wheeley and Robin Godber
(Society Chairman)

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator/Committee Secretary)

The Chairman welcomed Robin Godber to the meeting.

1 **Apologies**

Robert Paul and Keith Bacon

2 **Minutes of the meeting of 10 June 2013**

The minutes had been circulated and were agreed and signed by the Chair of the meeting as a true record.

3 **Matters Arising**

3.1 Mooring and Access Strategy (Minute 3.1)

Paul Savage reminded members of the February meeting when Adrian Clarke (BA) had given members an update on the Mooring and Access Strategy. Despite frequent requests, the Society had not received the promised follow-up. Paul had therefore written to John Packman drawing his attention to the lack of provision for mooring on the lower Bure, pointing out that this was a safety issue. At the press launch of the opening of the Wherry Workshops Trudi Wakelin had taken the opportunity to talk with Paul and informed him that the Authority was currently negotiating the purchase of leases for land at Mautby Marsh Farm and Dove House Farm. Paul intended to meet Adrian Clarke and visit the sites. He welcomed the fact that the Authority had now recognised that provision of adequate mooring facilities in locations such as the lower Bure was a safety issue and suggested that the time was right to make suggestions for further mooring sites. Paul pointed out that removal of quay headings, which were an integral part of navigation facilities, was not a viable policy. In summary, he believed that good progress was being made on this important issue.

3.2 Allocation of Tolls Income (Minute 3.2)

Peter Cobb reported on this Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the BA enquiring how the money paid in tolls was allocated. This was a personal request from the perspective of a private boat owner. In response, Andrea Long (BA Director of Planning and Resources) had provided information on the sources of BA income including a

breakdown of toll income received from private and commercial boat owners. She was unable to provide detailed information of expenditure under the headings which Peter had specified in his letter. In her letter Andrea had explained that the Authority was currently reviewing its website with the aim of improving ease of use and the accuracy and accessibility of information. The new corporate website would go live in March 2014. Peter intended to send a follow up letter detailing the type of information which should be included and invited Sub-Committee members to email him with suggestions for further items.

Robin Godber reported that Richard Card, Chairman of NSBA, had attended the last meeting of the Main Committee to report on the Broads Authority's proposal to allocate income from tolls to pay 30% of the salary of a new Tourism Officer. Following representations from the NSBA, RYA, Broads Hire Boat Federation, the Authority had subsequently withdrawn the proposal.

3.3 Outcome of Court Hearing – Cess Staithe (Minute 3.3)

In the absence of Keith Bacon no further information was available.

3.4 Sotshole Broad (Minute 7.5)

The retrospective planning application for the new quay heading, decking and boardwalks at Sotshole Broad had been received. It was agreed that the response should refer to the applicant's failure to follow due process by submitting 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 suggest modifications to the scheme.

However, the Society's main focus was the impact of development on the main Broads and rivers system. Sotshole Broad, being secluded and private, had no such impact and it would therefore be inappropriate to comment now that the work had been done. The helpful observation by

Martin George that the stark appearance would soon be "softened" by the growth of plants was noted.

3.5 Renewable Energy (Minute 7.4)

David Edleston had circulated by email a link to the Government's guidance document 'Planning practice guidance for renewable and low carbon energy'. This included guidance on large scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms and wind turbines.

John Pitchers had prepared an item for the October issue of "Harnser" drawing together all the information about generation of renewable energy including the fact that new Government policy would enable communities to have a greater influence in decisions about development in their local areas.

3.6 “Harnser” (Minute 3.4)

It was agreed that the use of headings was a welcome improvement. Opinion was divided about article on Thorpe Island. Some members had found it of great interest, while others believed it to be too long. It was suggested that breaking up the text with more photographs would have been helpful.

Speaking from his experience at recent publicity events (particularly the Norfolk Show and the Broads Museum), Robin Godber said that there was an urgent need for the Society to provide an information brochure. Currently, visitors to the Society’s stand were given membership forms and a copy of “Harnser” but these were inadequate as tools for recruitment.

3.7 “Norfolk Hub” Development (Minute 3.4)

Following John Wheeley’s plea for the Society to take an active part in countering proposals for this development, Robin Godber had contacted David Hastings. As a result, it had been agreed that the Main Committee would follow a five point plan of action:

1. Include the “Norfolk Hub” Development as a standing agenda item
2. Appoint a Committee member to maintain a watching brief on developments
3. Involve other organisations with similar concerns (BA/CPRE etc)
4. Write to the Eastern Daily Press when the time was right
5. Include reference to the issue in “Harnser”

It was agreed that NRS-C should also include this as a standing agenda item.

4 **Matters Arising from the Main Committee**

The Administrator reported on the following items discussed:

4.1 Finance

The new arrangement for dealing with the Society’s financial affairs was working well. The Treasurer and the Administrator had prepared a budget for the year and would provide regular reports on income and expenditure.

4.2 Recruitment Drive

There will be a repeat of a recruitment exercise carried out some years ago. Committee members will be asked to provide the names of potential members to whom the Chairman could send a personal letter inviting them to join the Society.

4.3 Broads Charitable Trust

The Trust has produced a new leaflet entitled “Love the Broads” describing the scheme enabling participating businesses to

seek voluntary donations from clients. The money raised would be used to fund projects for the benefit of the Broads.

4.6 Publicity and Promotion

The Society's attendance at the Norfolk Show has provided a good opportunity to raise the Society's profile.

The display boards had been updated and the Society's publicity team continued to mount a stand at all the main Broads related events.

4.7 Issues of Concern

The Main Committee continues to maintain an interest in the following issues:

Pylons – Lowestoft to Norwich; Pegasus site development; Breydon Water; Water Quality; River Chet; Climate Change Adaptation; Norfolk Hub.

[Further details are available from the copy of the minutes posted on the website.]

5 **Issues Relating to the Society's Mission**

David Edleston reported that the boat trip had been very worthwhile. The trip had extended northwards as far as Horsford Lock and south through Wroxham Bridge to Salhouse. Those taking part had had the opportunity to view buildings which had been the subject of recent planning application and to note the comparative scale of developments and use of materials. His proposal that the Sub-Committee should include at least one boat trip in its annual programme was endorsed by members. David agreed to write a report for "Harnser".

Members expressed their thanks to Brian King for the use of his boat.

6 **Planning**

6.1 Planning Applications and decisions since 19 February 2013

A list had been circulated.

3675 – The Norfolk Mead Hotel, Coltishall

Erection of function room and service block

John Pitchers and Peter Cobb had dealt with this application.

Although there were no grounds for objection, they would have preferred the extension to match the style of the Grade II listed building rather than the modernist structure proposed. An alternative solution, which would also be more in keeping with the main house, might have included designing the main function room in the form of an orangery or conservatory. John expressed disappointment that planners seemed averse to using more traditional design when considering extensions to historic buildings.

3688 – Bureside Holiday Park Farm, Oby

New boat dyke etc.

John Wheeley, who had dealt with this application, expressed surprise that the Society had withdrawn its objections following receipt of information from the applicant and asked for an explanation.

The Administrator said that she had circulated the information by email to members of the Committee who had not been involved in compiling the initial response and they had unanimously agreed that it would be appropriate to withdraw the objection.

John expressed his strong opposition to this decision and voiced his objection to the fact that he had not been consulted by telephone.

6.2 Refusals

The following were noted:

3695 – Ferry Quay, Ferry Corner, Horning

Removal of planning conditions to allow ground floor workshops to be used as ancillary accommodation for accommodation above

The Society had raised no objection.

6.3 New applications to consider

3714 – Icehouse Dyke, The Shoal, Irstead

Erection of holiday dwelling within curtilage of Icehouse Dyke to enable refurbishment of main dwelling

The Society would normally be concerned about developments within the curtilage of existing properties since this could create a precedent for unwelcome over-development.

However, the proposal to refurbish the main house – a heritage asset – was to be welcomed. If the building of a holiday dwelling would provide funding to enable this, the Society would have no objection provided that permission was strictly conditional on a carefully worded agreement to ensure that income derived was used for the proposed restoration.

3719 – Sotshole Broad, South Walsham

Retrospective application for quay heading, boardwalks etc

See comments recorded under Minute 3.4

3720 – Bristercraft, The Rhond, Hoveton

Variation of planning condition to allow use of holiday accommodation throughout the year

No objection.

3721 – Horning Hall, Horning

Erection of new manege

Although there is no objection in principle to the erection of fencing to create a new manege the Committee considered that inappropriate in this location because of its close proximity to

of a historic building on which the development will have an adverse visual impact.

3722 – 70 Bishopgate, Norwich

Installation of woven willow panels within the River Wensum to give erosion protection to dwelling
No objection

8 A.O.B.

8.1 Eels

Lesley Bonshor reported that, in a number of areas, action was being taken to revive the eel population. She had heard of no similar initiative in the Broads and wondered whether the Broads Authority had a policy on this. The Administrator offered to enquire.

8.2 Lead Poisoning

Lesley Bonshor had seen a TV programme which claimed that water birds which needed grit were still suffering from lead poisoning. This reminded her of a local report of the death of a black swan apparently to lead poisoning. Members pointed out that, although lead shot had been banned on the Broads for some time, there was still a possibility that residues of shot from the past may still be present in the soil.

8.3 Road Building

Robin Godber drew attention to a recent communication from CNP alerting National Parks to the danger posed by the Government's new plan for extensive road building. The Society would need to maintain a watching brief on new proposals for dualling the A47.

9. Date of Next Meeting

14 October 2013

The meeting closed at 9.55 pm

Signed

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