

The Broads Society

*Minutes of the Northern Rivers Sub-Committee Meeting
held on 15 October 2012 at 7.30 pm at the Hotel Wroxham*

Present: Paul Savage (in the Chair), Lesley Bonshor, Michael Brandon-Jones, Peter Cobb, David Edleston, Robert Paul, John Scott, David Skinner and John Wheeley

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator/Committee Secretary)

Steve Birtles, Head of Safety Management at the Broads Authority, had been invited to talk about the Authority's role with regard to safety on the Broads and to discuss issues raised by members.

John Wheeley, who had first raised concerns about safety, introduced the discussion. He said that the Society was impressed by the standard of the Authority's moorings but members of the North Rivers Committee were concerned about the lack of safety provision at private moorings; he cited Thurne Dyke as an example. This led him to enquire whether there was a minimum safety standard to which owners of private moorings were required to comply.

Steve confirmed that he would like to see higher safety standards throughout the Broads but, as there was no legislative framework, enforcement was not possible.

The only pieces of legislation relating to safety of moorings were the Docks Act, which covered berths in docks, and the Yacht Harbour Association Code of Practice which governed safety standards in marinas. Neither of these was directly applicable to the Broads.

When the Health & Safety Executive had investigated an incident of drowning at Gt Yarmouth Yacht Station they had used the Docks Act as the standard, although the Broads Authority had pointed out that its provisions were not strictly relevant to the Broads.

The Broads Authority has set standards for the safety of its own moorings but, without a legal framework, it has no enforcement powers for private moorings other than to call in the HSE in the event of an accident. Nonetheless, the Authority does make efforts to educate land owners about their responsibilities whenever possible. Creation of new moorings requires planning permission and adequate safety provision could be required as a condition of consent. Any areas re-piled by BESL which could be used for new moorings could be similarly covered and in such instances safety ladders and chains had been installed. However, there was little that could be done about existing moorings, not least because there was no definitive list of private moorings and owners. On the other hand, if the Authority found that a private mooring was dangerous, or had an impact on navigation, enforcement powers could be used.

Responding to the Committee's opinion that the Broads Authority had a role in providing advice to land owners, Steve said that advice could be given if required based on the framework of ROSPA safety guidance and risk assessment.

Members suggested that the Authority should include a specific section on Safety on its website which could, among other things, give advice to owners of private moorings. More detailed guidance could be accessed by including links to other relevant **websites**. Steve believed this could be a useful way forward and offered to follow up the suggestion.

Peter Cobb expressed concern that placing undue emphasis on owners' liabilities and insurance requirements could lead to closure of private moorings. Steve offered to look at past issues of the Court Circular published by the Association of Insurers which gave details of payments arising from insurance claims.

There was general agreement that the basic requirement for anyone providing a facility for public use was to be able to demonstrate reasonable care for safety.

Robert Paul described a situation where the Environment Agency required the re-siting of a charging point closer to the river so that the wire did not cause a tripping hazard on the footpath. Steve confirmed that the Broads Authority would make a similar recommendation but would not suggest that the charging point be sited at the water's edge.

The Chairman thanked Steve for a useful discussion and he left the meeting.

It was agreed to write to Steve Birtles to thank him and to confirm the points raised in the discussion. Paul Savage would prepare a draft for the Administrator to send.

1 Apologies for absence

Keith Bacon and John Pitchers

3 Minutes of the meeting of 13 August 2012

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

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Planning Application 3474 - Utopia and Arcady, Stalham (Minute 4.1)
Still pending consideration.

4.2 Young People's Film Project (Minute 5.7)
Speaking on behalf of John Pitchers, Peter Cobb offered his congratulations on the Film Project and asked whether the films were to be made available on DVD. It was confirmed that the films would be

available on the website in due course. The Administrator said that production of a DVD was under consideration.

4.3 Pub Closures Minute 6.2)

David Skinner reported that Neatishead Parish Council had made enquiries about rumours that the White Horse was at risk of closing but no further information was forthcoming.

5 Matters Arising from the Main Committee held on 18 September 2012

.1 Society Chairman

Robin Godber had been formally nominated for election as Chairman.

5.2 Lady Mayhew Trophy

No valid nominations had been received by the closing date and no award would be made this year.

5.3 BA Water Ski-ing Panel

Colin Dye had represented the Society. Water ski-ing will be permitted on a designated section of Breydon Water on condition that all participants must be members of the Eastern Rivers Ski Cub

5.5 Society Treasurer

A candidate has been nominated for election at the AGM.

5.6 CNP

Peter Howe the Society's CNP representative, gave a report on the National Conference.

5.7 Society Website

The new website has been launched and members are encouraged to visit it.

5.8 Report by Trudi Wakelin

A full copy of the notes on the report is had been posted on the website. The Administrator offered to circulate a copy with the minutes.

6 Issues Relating to the Society's Mission

6.1 Areas of dereliction (including abandoned vessels)

Broads Hotel, Hoveton. David Edleston drew attention to the condition of the Broads Hotel. The Administrator had previously made enquiries to North Norfolk District Council (the planning authority) and had been informed that an Enforcement Notice had been issued. She would ask NNDC for a progress report.

Fishing Platforms. Platforms along the boardwalk between Horning Ferry and Cockshoot Dyke are in a dangerous condition. Fishing platforms at Fleet Dyke and Potter Heigham are overgrown and almost unusable. It was agreed to include reference to fishing platforms in the letter to Steve Birtles.

6.2 Tourism

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Waste Disposal. This is an ongoing problem in the Broads which is of great concern to visitors. There seems to be an impasse between the District Councils, the Broads Authority and the Boat Hire companies. Members believed that there could be an opportunity for the Society to act as “honest broker” by convening a meeting of all the relevant parties with the overall aim of reaching a solution which would improve the visitor experience. It was agreed to refer this suggestion to the Main Committee.

6.3 Navigation

David Skinner drew attention to weed growth in Barton Broad. The present cutting regime, limited to the area inside the marker posts, was inadequate. Peter Cobb added that the depth of cut was also inadequate.

Trudi Wakelin had reported on weed cutting in one of her reports to the Main Committee. The Administrator would seek an update.

6.4 Moorings

It was agreed to invite Adrian Clarke (BA) to the next meeting to talk about the BA Integrated Access Strategy.

6.5 General Issues

There were no other issues.

7 **Planning**

7.1 Planning Applications and decisions since 2 May 2012

A list had been circulated.

7.2 Refusals

The Administrator had, as requested, brought copies of refusal notices to the meeting. These were:

Ref 3516 – Waverley Cottage, Neatishead. Erection of conservatory.
Grounds for refusal – design and materials inappropriate in a conservation area. The Society had not lodged an objection.

Ref 3528 – Broadmead, Ferry View Estate, Horning. Replacement dwelling, now boathouse, lagoon, quay heading and boardwalk.
Grounds for refusal – overdevelopment
The Society had lodged an objection on the same grounds.

Ref 3535 – Land adjacent to Bridge Inn, Old Road, Acle – Camp site with log cabin/site office.
Grounds for refusal – development would erode character of local area.
High flood risk
The Society had not lodged an objection.

Ref 3562 – 1 Broad Road, Fleggburgh. Replacement conservatory
Grounds for refusal – Use of PVC inappropriate
The Society had not lodged an objection

.3 New applications to consider

Three new applications received in the last week were considered.

.4 Any other planning issues

The agent for the owners of Bewilderwood Adventure Park had provided pre-application information about potential developments at the adventure park. This was noted but no concerns about the proposals were expressed. The development would be considered in detail on receipt of the full planning application.

7.5 Statement by Eric Pickles – Minister for Communities and Local Government

A statement on planning policy had been circulated for information. It was agreed that there was little of relevance to the Society.

8 **A.O.B**

8.1 Broads Authority – Office move

John Pitchers had sent a note enquiring about the Broads Authority move to new premises. Trudi Wakelin had explained the rationale in her report to the Main Committee.

[For convenience a copy of the relevant note is included here.

“The Authority had issued a press release about the relocation of its head office to Yare House, Yarmouth Road. It was hoped that the move would be complete by 26th November. The new premises would be more convenient for access and parking as well as being more cost effective.”]

8.2 Promoting the Society

John Wheeley had received with his copy of the EDP, a leaflet about the Norwich Society which had encouraged him to become a member. He suggested that the Society should explore similar opportunities for promotion. The Administrator informed members that a membership leaflet had been sent out with the Green Book some years ago resulting in several new members. She would pass on John’s suggestion to the Publicity Team for consideration. John undertook to send the Norwich Society leaflet to the Administrator.

9. **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 10 December 2012

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Signed

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