

The Broads Society

Minutes of the Northern Rivers Sub-Committee Meeting held on 8 August 2011 at 7.30 pm at the Hotel Wroxham

Present: Lesley Bonshor (Vice-Chairman) - in the Chair
Keith Bacon, Michael Brandon-Jones, David Edleston,
Robert Paul, John Pitchers, David Skinner, John Wheeley and Peter
Horsefield.

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator/Committee Secretary)

1 **Apologies** - John Scott

2 **Matters arising from the meeting of 11 April (approved 27 June)**
There were none

3 **Minutes of the Joint Meeting with the Southern Rivers Sub-Committee**

The minutes of the meeting of 27 June had been circulated and were agreed and signed as a true record.

4 **Matters Arising**

It was agreed that the Vice-Chairman of NRS-C should write formally to the Main Committee confirming their support for the decision to shelve the proposal to appoint a Liaison Officer for the foreseeable future.

5 **Matters Arising from the Main Committee held on 26 July**

The following issues were highlighted:

5.1 Review of financial position

Despite the deceptively health looking financial situation, the Chairman believed that the Society should compile a 5 year financial projection by the Finance Committee.

5.2 New Treasurer

Keith Bacon reported that, since the Main Committee meeting, a likely candidate had been identified.

5.3 500 Club

The Club had donated £1,250 to Society funds. David Capp and Colin Dye had been appointed as Trustees.

5.4 AGM 2012

A nominations sub-Committee had been established to work on succession planning.

5.5 Publicity & Promotion

Nick Balls and Jill Wickens had mounted a stand at all recent Broads-related events. They urgently required volunteers to assist.

- 5.6 Harnser
Jill Wickens proposed to introduce major changes to “Harnser” in January 2012 to make it more attractive to younger people, without in any way “dumbing down” the publication.
- 5.7 Society Name
Members attending the AGM would be invited to air their views on a possible change of name to “Friends of the Broads”.
- 5.8 Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust
The Trust had launched its website.

6 **Issues Relating to the Society’s Mission**

Responding to David Skinner’s query, Peter Horsefield explained that the four elements listed routinely in the NRS-C agenda - Leisure, Tourism, Local Economy and the Natural Environment - had been listed in the order they appeared in the Mission Statement, and were not in any order of priority. David suggested that the Society should identify what it was that people wanted the Society to do for them.

Peter Horsefield explained that that he had introduced this agenda item to focus the Committee’s attention on the Society’s purpose. By trawling copies of all committee minutes he had discovered that members seemed to spend most their time discussing the Society’s internal business rather than what it was trying to achieve. There had been continuous arguments about the Broads Authority and a reluctance to address contentious issues.

John Pitchers believed that the Society did not make enough of the fact that it was a consultee on all planning applications . No other non-statutory body had this privilege. In this respect the Society’s role, mainly through the Planning Sub-Committees, was to protect the Broads from unwanted development. Peter Horsefield said that he had written about this on the Forum some time ago. He undertook to find the item and publish it in “Harnser” as well as posting it on the website where it could be seen by wider audience.

Members made suggestions as to issues which the Society might tackle. David Skinner drew attention to ongoing correspondence in the Eastern Daily Press about the closure of footpaths. David Edleston reminded members that the Society had been raised the issue of pub closures with the Broads Authority. The BA had now amended the regulations on business rates and several pubs had re-opened.

Lesley Bonshor referred to the Society’s project to identify areas of dereliction. This had resulted in the BA carrying out remedial action in a number of areas and suggested that the list drawn up at that time be revisited. The Administrator undertook to circulate the list.

John Wheeley reported that a change in the way subsidies were paid would give rise to problems for farmers on the marshes. The NFU were campaigning on the farmers’ behalf but had not sought the Society’s support. However, he believed the Society should have a point of view. Keith Bacon suggested

inviting a representative to a meeting and asking whether there was any way in which the Society might help.

Robert Paul reminded members of the Society's involvement in the Yare Barrier proposals

7. **Planning - General**

Peter Horsefield alerted members to two important consultations.

a) The Localism Bill

The aim of the legislation was to put more power in to the hands of local communities and to bypass the normal planning process if the majority of the community were in favour a development. Keith Bacon explained that it was not clear whether "community" included people who worked in an area; if so, this could skew the results of any local referendum in favour of commercial development, overriding the wishes of residents. Developers would be able to offer incentives, such as new local facilities, in return for a vote in favour of development. It was also not clear how the boundary of the "electorate" was to be established. There was a clear need for clarification.

b) National Planning Policy Framework

David Edleston explained that the new framework proposed to condense existing Planning Policy Statements into one shorter document. There would be a presumption in favour of development which could generate a conflict with the Localism Bill. The deadline for responses to the consultation was some time in October.

It was agreed that the Sub-Committee should set up a working group to consider a response to both consultations. David Edleston offered to be a member in an advisory capacity. The other members would be: David Skinner, Keith Bacon, John Pitchers and Lesley Bonshor. The Administrator was asked to arrange a date for a meeting during the first week of September at the Hotel Wroxham. She was also asked to invite representatives from the Southern Rivers Sub-Committee to attend.

8 **Planning**

8.1 A list of planning applications considered since the last meeting had been circulated.

8.2 Responses to three major/contentious planning applications were noted:

3210 - Deal Ground, Norwich
3172 - Cox's Boatyard, Barton Turf
3363 - 12 Top Road, Belaugh

8.3 New Applications to consider
A number of applications were considered and responses agreed.

8.4 Planning Procedures

Reassignment of some areas was agreed. The Administrator would circulate a revised list.

It was agreed to remove the top section of the Planning Pro Forma and to discontinue the use of "No comment" as a response.

David Edleston pointed out that, on numerous occasions the Society had expressed concern about the size and scale of developments in relation to the local context. However, it was not apparent that the Broads Authority Planning Officers and Planning Committee took account of such concerns. He therefore suggested that a representative from the BA Planning team should be invited to a meeting to explain their policies. The Administrator undertook to ask Cally Smith if she would be willing to attend a meeting.

9. Any Other Business

9.1 Thurne Staithe

John Wheeley reported that there was a fibreglass yacht, (No. 9214 - "No Worries") untaxed and covered in mildew, moored in front of Thurne Mill. The Administrator would contact Trudi Wakelin at the Broads Authority.

9.2 Disposal of Planning Documentation

Planning documentation was now available on the BA website. The Administrator maintained electronic records of all Society responses. It was therefore agreed that it was no longer necessary for the Society to retain paper records and members need not therefore return documents. They could keep them for personal reference or put them out for recycling as they wished.

10 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 10 October 2011

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Signed
Chairman

Date