

The Broads Society

Minutes of the Northern Rivers Sub-Committee Meeting held on 5 December 2011 at 7.30 pm at the Hotel Wroxham

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

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator/Committee Secretary)

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Peter Cobb and Paul Savage who had expressed interest in becoming members of the Sub-Committee and invited them to say a few words about their backgrounds and interests.

1 **Apologies** - David Edleston

2 **Minutes of the meeting of 10 October**

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

3 **Matters Arising**

3.1 Mooring of Unused Vessels – Boat moored at Thurne (Minute 3.2)

At the previous meeting, there had been general agreement that the response from Adrian Vernon was somewhat confusing and it had been suggested that it would be useful to invite him to come to a meeting to explain the rules governing the mooring of unused vessels. On the advice of the Vice-Chairman, the Administrator had put the invitation “on hold”. Members therefore reconsidered the response from Adrian Vernon which stated that the BA Tolls Section had written to the owner requiring payment by 16 September, after which proceedings would commence. Adrian had also confirmed that the boat was moored in a “cut in” from the navigation, a location classed as “adjacent waters”, circumstances under which enforcement action had not previously been taken.

The fact that the BA had taken enforcement action implied that the Broads Authority was operating under enabling legislation provided by the new Broads Act. However, according to Paul Savage, there was no evidence on the BA website that the Authority had created Bye Law necessary for enforcement to proceed. The Administrator was asked to seek clarification.

John Pitchers reported that he had seen BA Rangers inspecting the licences of boats at Anchor Moorings, Coltishall.

3.2 Future of Southern Rivers Sub-Committee SRS-C (Minute 4.7)

The possibility of merging the Northern and Southern Rivers Sub-Committee had been mooted at a meeting of the Main Committee. However, David Capp had volunteered to lead a small working group with the aim of reviving the SRS-C. The working group would comprise those members of the Main Committee who were also members of the SRS-C (David Capp, Colin Dye and Mark Wells) plus

Robin Godber (current vice-chairman of SRS-C) and Peter Waller (retiring SRSC-chairman) if he wished to be involved.

Lesley Bonshor suggested that the recommendations should include setting up an annual joint meeting of both Sub-Committees and Keith Bacon asked the working group to establish the boundaries to be covered by each Sub-Committee. The Administrator would convey these suggestions to the working group.

3.2 Thurne Staithe – Safety Issues (Minute 8.2)

At the previous meeting John Wheeley had suggested that the BA be asked whether ladders could be installed at both ends of Thurne Dyke to assist rescue operations. The Administrator contacted Steve Birtles (BA Head of Safety Management) who had replied that the Authority only fits ladders to moorings for which it had direct responsibility; both sides of Thurne Dyke were privately owned and the duty of care therefore rested with those landowners who were taking payment for mooring. The Authority was now issuing planning guidance on the construction of moorings, which included provision of chains and ladders, but this applied only to new moorings.

Keith Bacon pointed out that the Broads Authority had installed ladders in Catfield Dyke even though they did not own the moorings. There was general agreement that the Broads Authority had a responsibility to remind owners of their duty of care and their legal obligations when hiring out moorings to the public. The Administrator was asked to convey members' views to Steve Birtles.

3.3 Irstead Slipway (Minute 8.3)

Michael Brandon-Jones had, as agreed, spoken to the Chairman of Irstead Parish Council who had informed him that there was no slipway to be re-opened, describing the access points previously used as “inlets for run off” rather than proper slipways.

Members discussed the more general problem of access to the Broads which was a disincentive to visitors wishing to launch boats. It was, however, recognised that parking of trailers would create problems if launching took place at sites without adequate facilities. Keith Bacon informed the meeting that the BA had a Slipway Strategy which was to be incorporated into the new Mooring and Access Strategy (see Minute 7.3).

4 **Matters Arising from the Main Committee held on 8 November 2011**

Peter Horsefield reported briefly on the general business and at greater length on the issue of water quality.

Peter had attended the recent National Parks Societies Annual Conference and had been inspired by a presentation from South West Water about the management of water quality in the Exmoor Rivers. Management of water quality in the Broads was far more complicated, involving seven organisations working under the title of the Broads Water Quality Partnership. Peter believed that the water quality control process needed radical overhaul and he and the Trustees had decided to make lobbying

for this a priority for the year ahead. Water quality was an issue which concerned all National Parks and he proposed to raise this at the forthcoming CNP Chairs and Chief Executives Meeting with a view to making this a national campaign.

In addition, the Society would continue to make clear its strong support for a Yare Barrier, which it had been advocating for many years.

David Skinner pointed out that, if anything was to be achieved, it was essential to lobby Members of Parliament.

6 Matters Arising from the AGM

Peter Horsefield reported on the Main issues:

6.1 Election of Officer and Main Committee

The Chairman (Peter Horsefield) and Vice-Chairman (Keith Bacon) had been re-elected. Paul Weeks had been elected as Treasurer to succeed Chris Pulley who had decided to step down.

Six Committee members had been re-elected, leaving two vacancies arising from resignations.

6.2 Subscription Increases

The announcement about the forthcoming increase in subscription rates had met with no opposition. One member had queried the level of increase but appeared satisfied when it was explained that the last increase had been in 1998 and more frequent increases would be costly to administer. The Administrator would be writing individually to all members asking them to amend standing orders or to pay the new rate by cheque and had requested everyone to defer action until her letter and instructions arrived.

6.3 Proposal to Change the Society's Name

A lively discussion had taken place on whether the time had come for the Society to change its name to "Friends of the Broads". Those present had suggested that the wider membership should be canvassed for their views before the proposal was discussed further. The Administrator had therefore volunteered to send out a questionnaire to all members when writing to them about the change in subscription rates.

6.4 Broads Authority Climate Adaptation Plan

Peter had included in his Chairman's Report reference to The Broads Authority' draft Climate Change Adaptation Panel which had caused some alarm. The Society had written to the Broads Authority seeking assurance of their determination to fight for the conservation of our unique environment.

7 Issues Relating to the Society's Mission

7.1 Abandoned vessels

At the October meeting members had already identified the boat moored at Thurne (see minute 3.1). and others at Lime Kiln Dyke, and the Barton Turf Adventure Centre. It was agreed that members should continue their monitoring during the 2012 sailing season.

7.2 Areas of dereliction.

The Administrator had circulated the lists compiled previously. For the benefit of Peter Cobb and Paul Savage, it was explained that the Society's efforts had already met with some success. A photographic presentation had been made to Broads Society Officers, resulting in improvements, or promise of improvement, at some of the sites identified. Trudi Wakelin, Director of Operations at the Broads Authority, regularly attended meetings of the Main Committee to provide an update on Broads Authority's activities and was always happy to investigate and address the Society's concerns.

It was agreed that members should start compiling new lists of areas of dereliction in the Spring.

7.3 Moorings

The Administrator had forwarded to the Vice-Chairman the draft Broads Mooring and Access Strategy. Lesley apologised that she had not yet had an opportunity to study the document and it was therefore agreed that the Administrator should email a copy to all Sub-Committee members (hard copy to John Wheeley).

David Skinner enquired about the Society's views on the increasing number of residential moorings, pointing out that the Broads Authority's attitude now appeared to be more supportive in certain conditions. Peter Horsefield said that the main Society's concern about live aboard boats was their visual or other impact on the Broads. Speaking personally, he had no problem with the principle of people living on boats provided they were subject to the same social responsibilities as everyone else. Keith Bacon said that there was a concern if live aboard craft occupied public moorings.

8 **Planning**

8.1 General

There were no general planning issues

8.2 Planning Applications and decisions since 1 October

A list had been circulated which included the following applications:

Ref 3441 - Phased erection of 7.5m wind pump - Hickling Nature Reserve

It was agreed to respond with "no objection" to this particular application, while reserving the right not to regard this decision as setting a precedent when considering future applications for wind pumps.

Ref 3434 - Installation of a 50 m wind turbine at Upton Poultry Farm

This application, though outside the Broads Executive Area, would have a visual impact on the Broads. A letter of objection had been sent to Broadland District Council in accordance with Society policy

9. **A.O.B**

Peter Cobb and Paul Savage confirmed that they would be willing to join the Sub-Committee. The Administrator undertook to check the rules on appointment of sub-committee members with a view to the two new members formally becoming members of at the next meeting.

The relevant paragraph of the rules is quoted below:

The Chairman of sub-committees and up to six members of such sub-committees shall be appointed by the Main Committee at any time. Sub-Committees shall have power to:

a appoint their own Vice-Chairman

b co-opt members of the Society for a period expiring at the next AGM. Such co-option can be renewed at the first meeting after the AGM. The number of co-opted members shall not constitute a majority on the Sub-Committee.]

10 **Dates of Meetings 2012**

Members confirmed that Monday was a convenient day to meet excluding the first Monday in the month.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 10.00 pm

Signed Vice-Chairman Date.....