

The Broads Society

Minutes of the Northern Rivers Sub-Committee Meeting held on 31 March 2014 at 7.30 pm at the Hotel Wroxham

Present: Paul Savage (Chairman), Keith Bacon, Lesley Bonshor,
Michael Brandon-Jones, Peter Cobb, David Edleston and David
Skinner

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator/Committee Secretary)

1 Apologies

Robert Paul, John Pitchers and John Scott

2 Minutes of the meeting of 10 February 2014

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 Cess Staithe (Minute 3.1)

Keith Bacon reported that the owners of Martham Boatyard, who had been granted “adverse possession” of the Staithe, had now applied to the Land Registry to extend their ownership to the access road. Keith had been in contact with Adrian Clarke, the BA officer responsible for the Authority’s Mooring and Access Strategy, for information on the status of this access road, i.e. public right of way or inclusion in the official list of street. If this application were successful it would affect access to the riverbank, a right which had been enjoyed by local residents and visitors for many years. The Thurne residents association were particularly concerned. It was agreed that the Administrator should write to the Land Registry on the Society’s behalf opposing this action by the Boatyard. Keith undertook to provide her with the reference number, the address of the Land Registry Office and details to be included in the letter.

3.2 Riverside Walk led by Bryan Read (Minute 6)

The Administrator had emailed Bryan to suggest a list of possible weekday dates during June and July but had not yet received a reply. She would follow this up. Referring to the proposal to organise another boat trip, recorded in the minutes of the December meeting, David Edleston offered to ask Colin Dye if he could provide a trip on the Southern Rivers; this could be a joint exercise with the Southern Rivers Sub-Committee.

3.3 Planning Application for installation of interpretation facilities at St Benet’s Abbey.

Keith Bacon cautioned against lodging objections to planning applications for comparatively “minor reasons”. Such action could be perceived as wasting Officers’ time and resources because any planning application to which there was an objection had to be referred the BA Planning Committee with all the associated documentation which this involved.

David Edleston believed that, in this instance, the Society's objection was entirely legitimate because of the need to protect the character of this unique site and said he would be concerned if the Society were to abandon its principles for reasons of expediency. Other members supported this view, and those who had taken part in the debate endorsed their reasons for lodging an objection.

It was noted that additional information might have alleviated these concerns. The application had now been approved and members would visit the site when the work had been carried out to assess the situation.

4 Matters Arising from the Main Committee

The Chairman and Administrator gave a brief resume of the matters discussed by the Main Committee at their meeting on 18 March including:

- The Society's current policy on the Acle Straight. CNP had indicated that they would support the Society's position as far as they could within the constraints of their national policy to oppose dual carriageways in National Parks.
- Dredging of the River Chet
- Mooring at Reedham – the proposal to introduce charging is unlikely to be introduced this year
- Upper Thurne Working Group – The Society has made strong representations for the retention of this valuable group.
- Pat Simpson, former boatyard owner and yachtsman, with a lifelong involvement with the Broads, has been co-opted to the Committee.
- CNP – New temporary Chief Executive Officer appointed
- The Broads Charitable Trust has appointed 12 "ambassadors" to look after businesses signed up to the "Love the Broads" Scheme. Funding to employ a Project Officer is still being sought. There appears to be a dearth of projects coming forward for funding.
- The financial position remains unchanged with a deficit anticipated at the end of the year. Cost saving measures are being explored.
- The Society has agreed to participate in the Arthur Ransome 2015 AGM to be held in Bungay. This will involve giving the opening address and mounting a display.
- Any decision about cost savings on "Harnser" have been deferred until a new Editor has been identified.
- The website has been updated and members are urged to visit it on a regular basis.
- Henry Cator has been invited to speak to the Committee at its next meeting about changing farming practices in response to climate change. The Society will be mounting a display at "Surf and Turf", an event organised by Mr Cator at his farm in September.
- The central attraction on the Society's stand at the Norfolk Show will be a pedal operated river craft manufactured and supplied by Colin Dye.
- The Southern Rivers Sub-Committee dealt with a planning application to erect a marquee at Ivy House Farm Hotel, Lowestoft to enable the hotel to host weddings and similar events. The planning application itself raised no problem. However, a separate application for a Public Entertainments Licence, submitted to the Licensing Authority, Waveney District Council, had raised serious concerns and the Society had supported local residents in submitting a strong objection.

[The application has been approved for three years with strict conditions on monitoring and controlling noise and lighting levels.]

- Paul Savage and David Capp offered to put their names forward for appointment to the BA Navigation Committee to increase the number of local members with direct experience of the Broads.
- Broadsword completed the equivalent of 90 man hours of work during the working season, concentrating on the Ranworth area.
- Martin George has offered to lead an evening walk at Strumpshaw Fen.
- No decision was reached on how the Society might handle the BA consultation on Site Specific Sites. Paul Savage believed this was too large and detailed a task for the Society to tackle .

[See minutes of the Main Committee meeting on the website for more details]

Trudi Wakelin had attended the first part of the meeting and provided an update on the following issues:

- Public exhibition at Whitlingham Information Centre to prompt ideas for developing the site.
- Water skiing will continue on Breydon under current management arrangements. It is likely that wake-boarding will be permitted following the recent trial
- The BA is discussing how to address reductions in the DEFRA grant over the next three years.
- Operational matters, including bridge and lock management and maintenance dredging of the River Chet and flood embankment trials using dredged material combined with cement.
- The Yare Parishes Forum will be held at Reedham along similar lines to the Ant & Bure Forum. A number of senior BA staff will be in attendance.

The promised Workshop on Moorings has been deferred pending communication between the Environment Agency and landowners. Members of NRS-C asked the Administrator to seek further clarification from Trudi Wakelin.

5 Norfolk Hub

This is a standing item which will be kept under review alongside the consultation on the Northern Distributor Route (NDR). CPRE has been involved in discussions about the principle of constructing the road rather than details of its route.

6 Issues relating to the Society's Mission

it was agreed to re-title this standing item "Current Issues" and to include the Norfolk Hub and DDR under this heading.

7 Planning

7.1 Planning Applications and decisions since the December meeting

A list had been circulated.

3812 - Sutton Staithe Boatyard, Sutton - Proposed new mooring basin and access dyke, staging and quay heading

It was agreed that the Society should lodge an objection. The following grounds were cited:

1. The proposed development will change the character of this rural staithe to that of a large commercial boatyard.
2. The site for the new mooring basin and associated access facilities is in close proximity to adjoining holiday units
3. Confusion as to the identity of the applicant or applicants makes the application misleading. The documentation states that the applicants are Mr Withers and Sutton Staithe Boatyard. The owner of the Staithe is not the Boatyard but Sutton Parish Council.
4. The exact location and ownership of the 20 existing car parking spaces is not clear from the paperwork or whether these places are part of the car park owned by the Parish Council. The proposal for 45 car parking spaces means a significant increase in the volume of traffic and there is no clear indication of where these additional facilities are to be located.
5. There is already congestion in the narrow stretch of water around the staithe and boats already find it difficult to manoeuvre around the area. Any increase in the number of vessels will exacerbate the problem and could lead to a complete impasse.
6. The new development will be clearly visible from the A149, rendering the landscape less rural. Approval should be conditional on the provision of adequate tree screening to reduce the visual impact.
7. Vessels using the mooring basin will be required to retain sewage in holding tanks and to dispose of it elsewhere. It was agreed to ask whether pump out facilities must be provided for new mooring developments.

The Administrator offered to draft a letter based on the points raised and circulate it to members for comment.

7.2 Refusals

3781 - BAM Nuttal Site, Old Road Acle – Use of site for offices and site compound with replacement of existing offices and with new energy efficient cabins

The Society had lodged no objection,

7.3 New applications to consider

Four new applications were considered, none of which gave rise to concern.

7.3 Other planning matters

There were none

8 A.O.B.

8.1 Boathouse between Wroxham and Coltishall

Peter Cobb had observed a large boathouse and wondered when planning permission had been given. However, he was unable to provide sufficient detail of the location for the application to be identified on the list of planning applications.

8.2 Royal Visit

Keith Bacon reported that HRH The Princess Royal would be visiting How Hill on 9 April.

9. Date of next Meeting

Monday: 9 June 2014

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

Signed

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