

BROADS SOCIETY

Minutes of the Main Committee held on Tuesday 13 May 2014 at the Hotel Wroxham, Wroxham

Present: Robin Godber (Chairman); Keith Bacon (Vice-Chairman),
Nick Balls, Colin Dye, Peter Horsefield, Ian Masters,
Richard Reid, Paul Savage, Pat Simpson and Jill Wickens

By invitation for part of the meeting: Henry Cator

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

The Chairman introduced Henry Cator and welcomed him to the meeting. Henry has lived in Norfolk all his life and has a farm at Salhouse. He is Chairman of the Royal Agricultural Society of England, Chairman of the Association of Drainage Authorities and the Broads Internal Drainage Board and a past Chairman of the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association. He is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and was awarded an OBE in 2008.

Mr Cator had been invited to the meeting to describe his vision for new farming practices and water management to deal with the impact of climate change.

Mr Cator began by describing the challenges posed by the changing pattern of weather due to climate change: increased frequency of storms, milder wetter winters and hotter drier summers. These changes, combined with the increase in world population (more people are alive today than have ever died), made food security the world's greatest problem. The pressure on the food supply was exacerbated by a growing demand for meat as populations became more affluent.

Development of new techniques in farming had made little progress over the past 25 years. There was, however, potential for major developments in technology. It must be borne in mind that the landscape is not natural but man made. For centuries land management has focussed on the evacuation of water rather than storage. In England this dated back to land drainage schemes of the 17th century carried out by the Dutch engineer, Cornelius Vermuyden. However, in the 21st century a change in attitude to water was required. It was a precious and declining resource and needed to be conserved and used responsibly. Farmers and engineers needed to use the power of water – for energy and transport.

He understood the fear that people, especially in Norfolk, had about rising water levels but pointed out that the control of water was the answer to this problem and this could be provided by a barrier at Gt Yarmouth.

Members drew attention to the problems of water quality, the decline in wildlife due to the use of chemicals and the loss of the grazing marshes.

In conclusion Mr Cator stressed the importance of deciding how to use the land to produce the food required. In his view, the UK could not afford to

continue its opposition to the use of GM modification. He was now involved in the setting up of "Innovation for Agriculture", a new charity which aimed to reconnect the farming industry with technology.

The Chairman thanked Mr Cator for his thought provoking remarks and hoped that the Society could play a role in addressing the challenges ahead. Mr Cator left the meeting.

1 Apologies and Welcome

David Capp, Colin Dye, Mark Wells and Peter Howe

The Chairman welcomed Pat Simpson to his first meeting.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 18 March 2014

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

4 Matters Arising

4.1 Upper Thurne Working Group (Minute 4.5)

The Chairman had written to John Packman making the case for retention of the Upper Thurne Working Group but had not received a satisfactory reply. He had also raised the matter with Jackie Burgess, Vice-Chair of the Broads Authority, as promised at the last committee meeting. Martin George intended to raise the matter with Tim O'Riordan (UEA).

4.2 Arthur Ransome Society (Minute 9)

Richard Reid confirmed that, working with the Chairman and other volunteers, he would take responsibility for the arrangements and would report to the Committee as necessary. The matter could be removed from the agenda until there was something to report.

5 Finance

The Finance report had not been circulated but the Treasurer gave a brief update. The anticipated deficit for the year was £2,000 subject to formal examination. The financial situation was not critical but if this downward trend continued the Society would gradually use up its reserves. The main source of income was from Membership subscriptions and numbers had declined from 1253 in 2011 to 911 at 31 March 2014.

The Treasurer would send the financial report to the Administrator for circulation to members after the meeting. He would provide the budget for 2014/15 at the July meeting.

6 CNP

Peter Howe had sent his apologies as he had nothing significant to report and did not wish to take up the Committee's time.

For the benefit of Pat Simpson, Robin Godber referred to the previous meeting's discussion on the A47 and explained the Society's current stance.

The 2015 CNP Conference would be hosted by the Yorkshire Dales Society (venue to be decided) 8 – 10 October.

7 Broads Charitable Trust

There was nothing to report.

8 Broads Forum

The Chairman, Richard Card, has resigned after one year in office and a replacement was being sought. Keith Bacon had been invited to chair the last meeting.

8.1 Broads Society Representation

Robin Godber had made the case for the Society to have two representatives because its area of interest was too wide to be which covered by one category of representation. The Forum had agreed to this proposal and to the creation of a new membership category solely for the Broads Society. A recommendation would be considered by the Broads Authority at its meeting on Friday 16 May.

8.2 Hoveton Great Broad

Natural England had agreed to allocate funds for improvements to Hoveton Great Broad. These would include mud pumping, removal of vegetation and creation of a nature trail. The decision had the support of the Broads Authority. This was a disappointment for the Society as it had been thought that interventions by Martin George in support of work to improve water quality in Hickling Broad would be successful. The Society believed that improvement to the water quality in Hickling Broad would have more benefit in terms of regenerating native species.

8.3 Climate Change

Public events organised by the Broads Authority had not been well attended. The Broads Authority was in the process of producing the first draft of the report required by DEFRA. Simon Hooton the BA Officer responsible for the report had invited the Broads Society to help with preparing the consultation document and representatives would be meeting him in the near future.

9 Harnser

No one had yet expressed interest in taking over the role of Editor. Ian Masters had been making enquiries and had identified a potential candidate who might be willing to volunteer once he retired.

10 Lake BESS Website

The Society had received information about a blog and website on biodiversity and ecosystems in the Broads set up as part of a research project at University College, London. Nick Balls had placed a link on the Broads Society website as requested in an email from the lead researcher.

11 Anglia Afloat

Richard Reid the Society's columnist, had met the early deadline for submission of his article for the June issue but was still seeking a topic for July. The subject for August would be a report on the Society's display at the Norfolk Show.

It was noted that "Anglia Afloat" publishes ten issues every year.

12 Website

Nick Ball reported that the Broads Authority had recently made changes to their website and he had therefore had to amend all the links on the Society's site. The Administrator had reported a fault with the film project videos but the problem was now resolved.

13 Issues of Concern

13.1 Pylons - Lowestoft to Norwich

It was noted that that National Grid was planning a new sub-station at Bacton linked with a sub-station on the east side of Norwich. The likely implementation date was 2020.

13.2 Solar Farm Development

The Society was maintaining a watching brief. The next major proposal was likely to be on the site of the RAF station at Coltishall

13.3 Water - Ski-ing and management issues

There had been little ski-ing on Breydon and bird numbers were increasing,

13.4 River Chet

Following work at Loddon basin the situation was greatly improved. Dredging of the main channel would take place during the winter.

13.5 Water Quality and Climate Change Adaptation

This had been discussed during Mr Cator's talk.

13.6 Norfolk Hub

Consultation on the proposals for the Northern Distributor Road was once more under way. The Broads Society had registered its interest. There would be a preliminary meeting on 2 June. The Society was keeping a watching brief on the Norfolk Hub

developments via David Hastings and the Chairman suggested that it would be appropriate to ask him to be the Society's representative for the NDR project. This was agreed.

13.7 Acle Straight

The Chairman had written to the Department of Transport and the Highways Agency. The DoT had provided a helpful response and Robin would be attending a meeting in the near future and would ensure that the Society was fully involved in consultations on the feasibility study. The Highways Agency had not responded.

13.8 Pegasus Boatyard

Nothing to report.

14 **Publicity and Promotion**

The Society's stand at the Horning Boat Show had attracted interest from the public and a number of "Harnsers" and application forms had been handed out. Forms had had been marked to identify new members who had been recruited at this event.

The next events would be Fair on the Yare (8 June) and The Green Festival (22 June). Final details about the Norfolk Show stand were awaited.

There was concern that there were, as yet, no entries for the Photographic Competition. The Publicity Group was using public events to promote it.

15 **Rivers Sub-Committees**

15.1 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee (NRS-C)

The minutes of the meeting of 31 March 2014 had been circulated.

Paul Savage (Chairman) drew attention to the following items:

Norwich Riverside Walk led by Bryan Read (Minute 3.2)

Members of the Committee and partners would be welcome and were asked to contact the Administrator if they wished to take part. Wednesday 9 July starting at 6.00 pm. Meeting point to be confirmed. Jill Wickens asked for photographs to be taken during the walk.

Sutton Staithe Boatyard (Minute 7.1)

The Sub-Committee had spent some time preparing a response to the application for a new mooring basin and associated work, full details of which are included in the NRSC minutes.

Informal Moorings

The Sub-Committee would continue to lobby for retention of informal moorings. There was a rumour that an informal mooring at West Somerton had been lost. No further details

had been received about the Broads Authority Workshop announced by Trudi Wakelin at a previous Main Committee meeting.

Hoveton – Cottage opposite site of former Broads Hotel

At the Horning Boat Show, one of the visitors to the Society stand had asked whether this cottage was likely to be demolished. Paul Savage offered to make enquiries and report back to Jill Wickens.

15.2 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee (SRS-C)

No meeting had been held since 5 March.

Robin Godber drew attention to the following issues of concern in the Southern Rivers:

Slutton's Dyke

This had been a cause of controversy in recent years because of the lack of dredging which made navigation virtually impossible. The Dyke had now been dredged.

Swing Bridges

In recent years, problems with the bridges had occurred with increasing frequency. Robin had attended a meeting at the Broads Authority at which Mott McDonald consultants had the results of the feasibility study carried out for Network Rail. Five options had been described, ranging from ongoing repair to complete replacements. Network Rail recognised their statutory responsibility to open the swing bridges to allow the passage of boats at any time.

16 **A.O.B**

17.1 Follow up to talk by Henry Cator

It was agreed that the Society should direct its efforts towards the Gt Yarmouth Barrier, the future of the grazing marshes and water quality in Hickling Broad and the Upper Thurne. The Society could derive great benefit from Mr Cator's influence and should work alongside him in lobbying the Broads Authority and other relevant official bodies.

With regard to water quality, Peter Horsefield pointed out that the standard required within National Parks was no greater than that required of other water courses in the UK, such as the Thames and major rivers. He strongly believed that a higher standard should be introduced for National Parks and the Broads. The other major problem was the number of different authorities involved in managing water with no one body having overall control and responsibility.

Nick Ball offered to include information on the website.

The Chairman undertook to write to Mr Cator summarising the Committee's views on the way forward and seeking his response.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 15 July 2014

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.08 pm

Signed
Chairman

Date