

BROADS SOCIETY

Minutes of the Main Committee held on Tuesday 9 September 2014 at the Hotel Wroxham, Wroxham

Present: Robin Godber (Chairman); Keith Bacon (Vice-Chairman),
Colin Dye, Peter Horsefield, Richard Reid, Paul Savage, Jill Wickens

In attendance: Carol Palfrey (Administrator)

1 Apologies for Absence

Nick Balls, Ian Masters, Pat Simpson
Mark Wells was not present
Peter Howe (CNP representative) had also tendered his apologies

2 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3 Minutes of the Meeting of 15 July 2014

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

4 Matters Arising

- 4.1 Waste Collection Gt Yarmouth (Minute 9)
As reported by Keith Bacon to the North Rivers Sub-Committee, negotiations were in progress and it was hoped that a compromise could be reached.
- 4.2 Upper Thurne Working Group (UTWG) (Minute 4.2)
The Group was trying to identify a suitable Chair. Robin Godber believed that the best way to proceed was to defer convening a meeting until such time as an issue arose which required the group's attention. A decision on the way forward could then be decided.

5 Finance

- 5.1 Finance Report to 31 August
The Treasurer circulated a copy of the latest position. He drew attention to the following variances between the financial year 2013-14 and the budget for 2014-15:
- Gift Aid was still awaited.
 - A donation from the 500 Club related to the previous financial year.
 - The Administrator's payment for 2013-14 included a one off payment of £450.
 - The subscription to CNP had not yet been paid.

- The explanation for expenditure in 2013-14 relating to the Norfolk Show had already been provided and noted on the annual accounts.
- The financial year 2013-14 included the final payment to the Examiner for the previous year.

He confirmed that there were no financial problems other than an ongoing concern over the built-in deficit.

5.2 500 Club

The Treasurer explained that he had acted as Independent Examiner for 2012-13. However, since his appointment as Society Treasurer, he was no longer sufficiently independent to carry out this role. He therefore proposed to recommend to the Trustees of the 500 Club the appointment of Debit & Credit. Committee members expressed support for this course of action.

5.3 Lobbying Act

Clarification of the implication, if any, was awaited.

6 Annual General Meeting – 22 November 2014

6.1 Nominations for Election to the Committee

It was noted that Colin Dye had completed six years as an elected member. However, as Chair of the SRS-C, he would continue to serve on the committee in an ex officio capacity. Other ex officio members were: Peter Horsefield (Immediate Past Chairman), Paul Savage (Chair of NRS-C) and Jill Wickens (Editor).

Elected members eligible for re-election at the AGM:

Robin Godber – Chair; Richard Reid – Treasurer, Nick Balls, Ian Masters,
Pat Simpson and Mark Wells.

Co-opted members eligible for election at the AGM:

Keith Bacon and Pat Simpson

The Administrator would email all members eligible for election or re-re-election to check that they were willing to stand and ask them to name a proposer and seconder who would be asked to confirm by email. This would provide a written record in electronic form in accordance with the rules.

6.2 Invited Speaker

The Chairman was awaiting a response to his invitation. In the meantime, the agenda published in “Harnser” would state “To be announced”. Once a speaker had been identified this would be posted on the website.

6.3 Awards

The award of the Broads Society Trophy was agreed.

6.4 General Arrangements

It was noted that charges for room hire and lunches would be the same as last year. Members confirmed their previous decision not to hire a public address system.

- 7.1 CNP Manifesto
Copies were circulated. The Administrator would post copies to absentees and additional copies would be requested for the Chairman to circulate to other interested parties.
- 7.2 CNP Conference
The Chairman would be attending this year's conference in the Yorkshire Dales but Peter Howe had already explained that he was otherwise committed this year.
- 7.3 General
Peter Howe had forwarded all relevant information from CNP to committee members as it arrived and there was nothing new to report.

8 Broads Charitable Trust

The Trust had set a target income of £15,000 for the current year. Some new high profile businesses had recently joined the Trust's supporters and funding of £8k had been allocated to five new projects.

9 Hoveton Great Broad

The Chairman had written to Natural England at length setting out the Society's concerns about the proposals for Hoveton Great Broads; he would email a copy to committee members for information. NSBA and Hoveton Parish Councils had also submitted objections to the proposals.

Two site visits had been arranged: an official visit organised by the Broads Authority and an unofficial visit organised by protesters. Paul Savage had attended both visits on the Society's behalf and Pat Simpson had also been present.

Paul explained that the planning application in questions was a preliminary to enable Natural England to make a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for improvements to Hoveton Great Broad. He believed that the planning application would be passed since there could be no objection to the principle of dredging of a Broad. However, the measures proposed for excluding fish were over-engineered, scientifically questionable, would prevent the possibility of future public access and were unlikely to achieve the water quality targets desired.

If Natural England were to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (estimated at £4m), they would need to prove public benefit. Unless public access was included (and greater access than the limited access currently proposed) the application was likely to fail.

During the site visits, alternative options for excluding fish had been put forward by opponents, similar to those used at Barton Broad. However the consultant had said this would not work "because the water in the Broads was tidal". Picking up on this point, Colin Dye pointed out that if water was tidal it should be subject to navigation rights; he believed this should be followed up.

10 Broads Forum

The Forum had discussed Hoveton Great Broad and received an excellent presentation by Richard Starling on reed bed management and harvesting.

11 Publicity and Promotion

11.1 Norfolk Show

The member who had made donations to support the Society's attendance in 2013 and 2014 had indicated that a further donation would be forthcoming in 2015 provided that the approach was completely different. Bearing in mind that the Show was aimed at the farming community it was proposed to build the Society's stand around the theme of "Farming in the Broads".

11.2 Other Activities

The Society would continue to exhibit at the local events in 2015.

12 Harnser

Jill Wickens stated that she was willing to continue as Editor for the time being. However, she needed material and urged committee members to contribute voluntarily without having to be asked.

Peter Horsefield offered an article on water quality for the January issue.

13 Anglia Afloat

Richard Reid, the Society's correspondent, was drew attention to the fact that Anglia Afloat had allocated the Society a whole page. In his next article he proposed to cover the CNP Manifesto. It was agreed that it was either too late or premature to say anything about Hoveton Great Broad. Nonetheless Colin Dye believed that the opportunity to pick up the comment about tidal waters (see Minute 9) should not be lost. Members suggested that a brief history of navigation rights on tidal waters might be of interest.

14 Website

In the absence of Nick Balls there was nothing to report.

15 Issues of Concern

15.1 Pylons – Lowestoft to Norwich

Nothing to report.

15.2 Solar Farm Development

The Society continued to maintain a watching brief.

15.3 Water – Ski-ing and management issues

Nothing to report

15.4 River Chet

Nothing further to report.

15.5 Water Quality

Nothing to report.

- 15.6 Climate Change Adaptation
Nothing to report.

15.6 Acle Straight

Robin Godber had attended a meeting of stakeholders at which detailed analysis, section by section had been provided. The section of most concern to the Society was Acle to Breydon Bridge. The focus was currently in improving safety and no plans for dualling had been mentioned.

- 15.7 Norfolk Hub and the Norwich Northern Distributor Road
(NDR)
Nothing to report.

16 Rivers Sub-Committees

- 16.1 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee (NRS-C)

The minutes of the meeting of 11 August 2014 had been circulated.

Minute 6 – BA Mooring and Access Strategy

Paul Savage (Chairman) drew attention to his report of the Workshop on the BA Mooring and Access Strategy. The BA was considering reducing the number of its official 24 hour mooring on cost grounds, despite the provision of the Broads Act requiring the Authority to calculate toll income by reference to the need to spend money on navigation rather than the other way round. The Stakeholder meeting came about because Auditors said insufficient was being spent on fixed assets including moorings owned or leased by the BA. Current budget is for £140,000. Current expenditure expected at £196,000. The result of the meeting was an expenditure over £600,000 on fewer moorings. Paul had written to the Authority on this matter before the meeting, to set out the position that ring-fenced navigation income should always be sufficient to complete reasonable works.

The Workshop had not addressed the problem of the loss of informal moorings when piling was removed in the course of flood prevention works by the Environment Agency. The Broads Authority did not consider they had the power to impose planning conditions when the EA lodged an application for the removal of piling.

After the Workshop Paul had written to the Environment Agency explaining the issues in detail and had copied his letter to Brandon Lewis, MP, and Richard Card, Chair of the Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association.

Members of the Main Committee agreed that the loss of informal moorings was an issue of real concern to the Society and fully supported Paul's efforts to remedy the situation.

Minute 3.1 - Cess Staithe

A letter had been received from one of the lawyers at the Land Registry stating the Society had not provided grounds to support their objections.

16.2 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee (SRS-C)

The minutes of the meeting of 11 August had been circulated.

Minute 3.8 – encouraging visitors to Norwich by water.

Robin Godber had met with Caroline Jarrold, Chair of Visit Norwich. She believed that the existing mooring facilities in the city were being under-utilised. Discussions were under way with City Boats about enabling public access to their moorings.

Minute 8.2 – Strumpshaw Fen

David Capp had drafted a letter for the Society Chairman to sign suggesting the creation of moorings to enable visitors to enter the Nature Reserve from the water. The Senior Warden had responded that it was hoped to have a mooring in operation by 2016.

17 A.O.B

The President had expressed a wish to attend the next meeting and committee members were pleased to extend an invitation.

18 Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 11 November 2014
AGM Saturday 22 November 2014

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date