

# THE BROADS SOCIETY

## Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 November 2016 at How Hill, Ludham

Before the meeting, the President asked those present to observe a period of silence in memory of seven significant members of the Society who had died during the year: Peter Boardman, Standley Bushell, David Capp, Martin George, Keith McDougall Patricia Mockridge and David Trower.

### 1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from: Paul & Sheila Ashford, David & Jennie Burlinson Anthony Coe, Diana Cornell, Frank Dobson, Anne & Ken Grapes, Gillian Jeckells, Keith Lindsay, Ian & Penney Northover Smith, Audrey Shaw, Geoffrey Shaw, Roger & Sarah Tomkins and Vic & Wanda Standley.

### 2 Minutes of the Meeting of 21 November 2015

The Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting, having previously been published in "Harsner", were taken as read. Their acceptance was unanimously agreed and the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

### 3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

### 4 To receive and adopt the Accounts and Trustees' Report for the period 1 April 2015 - 31 March 2016.

#### 4.1 Presentation of Accounts

The Treasurer, Richard Reid, presented the accounts. He also provided a brief oral report.

Although the Society was still losing money on a year to year basis, the rate of loss had slowed to a more manageable level. The Society was grateful for a number of donations and legacies which had mitigated the financial situation. Membership continued to decline. Income was derived from subscriptions and donations and the Editor was to be commended on increasing income from advertising in Harnser. The main items of expenditure were the cost of Harnser and the Administrator's fee. Although the Society had reserves of approximately £25k, a financial forecast, based on the "worst case" scenario, showed that this could be halved within 5 years. The Committee would need to engage in a debate about Society's financial future.

#### 4.2 National Parks Conference Finance

Although the Conference had been great success, the organising committee had been disappointed by the numbers attending. An original financial projection of break-even had turned into an actual loss of £1400. However, this was within the limit previously agreed by the Committee.

#### 4.3 Position of Treasurer

The Treasurer concluded his report by announcing that, although he was standing for election this year, he did not intend to seek re-election for 2017-18.

#### 4.3 Adoption of the Accounts

There were no questions and the Treasurer **proposed** therefore proposed adoption of the account. This was seconded by Warren King and unanimously agreed.

### 5 **To receive and adopt the following annual reports**

#### .1 Northern Rivers Sub-Committee (NRS-C) Report

#### .2 Southern Rivers Sub-Committee (SRS-C) Report

The reports had been circulated. Their acceptance was proposed by David Edleston, seconded by Lesley Bonshor and unanimously agreed.

#### .3 Membership Report

The annual report had been published in "Harnser".  
The Administrator had nothing to add.

### 6 **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman reported yet another busy year with more uncertainties arising than had been anticipated.

The Government's announcement that the National Parks grant was to be protected in real terms until 2018/19 was good news. However, following the results of the referendum, and the implications for EU funding, there was no guarantee that the commitment on funding was still valid.

The Society had submitted a response to the first draft of the Broads Plan 2017. The proposals raised no concerns but the Society had suggested two subjects which it believed should be included: promotion of the Southern Broads (including better riverside access into Norwich) and water quality, particularly in relation to discharge of 'black water' into the Broads.

The Chairman had accepted an invitation to accompany the Northern Rivers Sub-Committee on their annual tour of inspection along a section of the Broads network. The chosen route along the River Thurne above Potter Heigham had proved most interesting although the inappropriate development at Martham Ferry was a cause for concern.

During the year the Society had been particularly concerned about the closure of Wherryman's Way along the Hardley Flood section of the River Chet. The opening of this footpath, had been a major achievement and a popular attraction for visitors and local people. Closure, due to collapse of the river bank, has had a significant impact on the villages of Loddon and Chedgrave. After many meetings with statutory bodies and local organisations some progress was being made and Norfolk County Council had agreed to convene a meeting of all interested parties later in the month. It is hoped

that a rebuilt easy access path from Pits Lane in Chedgrave to Chedgrave Common will be open before Christmas.

The Society together with the Broads Authority and the Kinder family (owners of the the riverside bungalow in Candle Dyke known as “The Holt”) are joint Trustees responsible for preserving the last remaining Eel Sett in the Broads. The Broads Authority has considering withdrawing from its responsibilities. This is a cause for concern. The Society would like to see the Eel Set properly maintained and possibly opened for demonstrations. Investigations about the legal aspects of ownership are under way.

The Society had mounted a stand in the new Broads Village section of the Royal Norfolk Show based around the lake in the Countryside Area. Many other Broads related organisations had exhibited and expressed themselves pleased with this opportunity to showcase their activities. Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall had visited the Society’s stand.

The problem of refuse disposal continued although some significant progress had been made thanks to the effort of Paul Rice (Committee member and member of the Broads Authority) in persuading North Norfolk District Council to maintain refuse collection at Horning and Ludham Bridge. Further meetings are to be held in 2017. The Chairman believed that if local authorities really wished to welcome visitors to the Broads, then they should think carefully about withdrawing this service.

The National Parks Societies Annual Conference hosted by the Society in October had proved a great success and feedback from delegates had shown how much they enjoyed it. Despite the Society’s efforts, attendance had been low and the event attracted only 47 participants. Thanks were due to the Conference organising committee for the enormous amount of work they had done to ensure the event went smoothly.

Reflecting on his period in office, the Chairman said that there had been a number of occasions when he had been advised that the Society should not get involved in contentious issues. Generally, this advice had been wise and had prevented the Society’s involvement in which turned out to be personal disputes. However, when there are major issues of principle involved which affect the future of the Broads, the Society must get involved if it is to perform the role for which it was founded.

The Chairman went on to thank the many people who had worked untiringly for the Society during his time in office. He singled out for special thanks Jill Wickens for producing Harnser and for her efforts in publicity and recruitment, Nick Balls for his work behind the scenes managing the website, Richard Reid, the Treasurer for managing the Society’s finances so effectively and Carol Palfrey, the Administrator for work beyond the call of duty. In stepping down he wished to give his final tribute and public thank you to his wife, Genevieve, for all her support over the past four years.

Looking to the future the Chairman felt that the Society was now at a turning point. At the beginning of the meeting, we acknowledged the death of seven influential members who had responded to issues affecting the Broads at their particular times. With ever changing times organisations such as ours need to ensure that we are ready to respond to ever increasing challenges, particularly with the uncertainty following the referendum. With no clear idea of where funding will be coming from, the Society needs to be equipped to deal with the challenges with whatever threats the Broads may be faced. In handing over the reins he felt confident that his successor was well

equipped to deal with the challenges ahead and asked the membership to give him their full support.

The President took the Chair for the following items:

**7 Election or Re-Election of Officers and Committee**

Chairman: Paul Rice - proposed by Jill Wickens, seconded by Anne Filgate

Vice-Chairman : Keith Bacon – proposed by Jill Wickens, seconded by Paul Rice

Hon Treasurer : Richard Reid - proposed by Jill Wickens, seconded by Jill Paul Rice

Committee Members

Anne Filgate – proposed by Jill Wickens, seconded by Paul Rice

Pat Simpson – proposed by Colin Dye, seconded by Anne Filgate

Colin Dye - proposed by Keith Bacon, seconded by Jill Wickens

Mike Filgate – proposed by Jill Wickens, seconded by Richard Reid

Robin Godber (immediate Past Chairman) and Jill Wickens (Editor of “Harnser”) would remain on the Committee as ex officio members.

Appointments to the two remaining vacancies could be made by the Main Committee during the coming year.

It was proposed by the President and seconded by Peter Horsefield that all the above candidates be elected or re-election.

The Chairs of the Northern and Southern Rivers Sub Committees would be appointed as ex officio members by the Main Committee in January.

*[Elected and ex officio members of the Committee are Trustees of the Broads Society].*

**8 Appointment of Hon Solicitor**

The re-appointment of Malcolm Savory was proposed by Bill Maxted, seconded by Keith Bacon and unanimously agreed.

**9 Appointment of Independent Examiner**

The re-appointment of Debit & Credit Accountancy was proposed by Richard Reid, seconded by Bill Maxted and unanimously agreed.

This concluded the formal business

## INFORMAL MEETING

### 1 Address by new Chairman

Paul Rice, gave an account of his own experience and many interests related to the Broads and talked about his vision for the future of the Society.

Bearing in mind the age profile of current members and the reported decline in membership number, one of his main initiatives through which he hoped to revitalise the Society was by taking advantage of modern methods of communication, including social media, which would be more attractive and relevant to younger people.

### 2 Comments and questions from the floor

#### 2.1 Awards

Bill Maxted noted the absence of Awards this year. The Administrator pointed out that eligibility for the Lady Mayhews Trophy was restricted to individuals or groups which had made significant achievements in encouraging the interest of young people in the Broads. She also explained that the Broads Society Trophy had been introduced to award the contribution of a particular individual and was not intended to be an annual award.

#### 2.2 Young People

Alex Howe believed the Society should do more to interest in the Broads.

#### 2.3 Hickling Broad

Warren King enquired whether the proposed purchase by Norfolk Wildlife Trust would have any impact on sailing on Hickling Broad. Keith Bacon assured him the accepted right of navigation, dating from 1898, was unlikely to be affected.

#### 2.4 Climate Change

Paul Rice believed that all organisations with an interest in the Broads should work together in support of the Broads Authority Climate Change Partnership.

#### 2.3 Footpath maintenance

Bill Maxted said that the collapse of the footpath on the River Chet was not the only example of deterioration and suggested that this demonstrated a lack of vision for the future. Peter Horsefield added that Society should urge the relevant authorities to plan in advance in anticipation that all the work carried out by BESL would be in need of repair at the same time. Keith Bacon informed members that some progress was being made on co-ordinated action.

#### 2.4 National Parks Conference

Peter Horsefield expressed disappointment that, apart from those directly involved in organising the Conference, only four Society members had attended.

#### 2.5 Impact of Brexit on current funding

Keith Bacon informed members that funding approved before the final date when the UK left the EU would be unaffected.

**3 Auction**

A book on Broads history had been donated to the Society by Peter Horsefield to raise funds. The book was therefore put up for auction, the winning bid coming from Colin Dye.

**4 500 Club**

The Draw for the 500 Club was won by Nick Barne.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.45 pm.

Signed .....

Date .....

Chairman