

Broads Authority

20 September 2024

Agenda item number 12

Safety on the Broads – Safety update

Report by Chief Executive, Director of Operations and Head of Communications

Purpose

A key aspect of the Port Marine Safety Code is to review and audit risk assessments within the Safety Management System. This review is being implemented due to various water and boating incidents during August, some of which have been fatalities.

Broads Plan context

Theme C4 - Maintain and improve safety and security standards and user behaviour on the waterways.

Recommended decision

Members updated on the safety incidents in August 2024.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Thousands of visitors enjoy a boating holiday on the Broads without incident each year, and for the vast majority, a Broads holiday remains an idyllic and memorable occasion. But very occasionally, there are tragic accidents. Appendix 1 contains a list of the incidents experienced in August 2024. The Rangers work closely with the emergency services, and the appendix shows the degree of involvement in each incident. Under the Authority's PMSC, each incident is investigated, and consideration is given to the lessons to be learned.
- 1.2. The Broads Authority's safety messaging has consistently focussed on three main elements:
 - Wear a life jacket or buoyancy aid when moving around the outside of a boat, particularly when getting on and off.
 - Be aware of the effects that alcohol has on your abilities.
 - Due to unseen underwater hazards, cold water temperatures, and high numbers of craft, the Broads Authority advises against swimming unless it is part of an organised activity.
- 1.3. These safety mantras are repeated every year at the beginning of the summer season, with articles placed on social media, senior officers conducting television and radio

interviews, and targeting critical locations on the waterways at planned safety events. We also have a series of free-to-view videos to reinforce this safety messaging.

- 1.4. We also use events like the Royal Norfolk Show to promote our safety messages and link up with other blue light services and Drowning Prevention Forums to communicate our simple safety messages.

2. Fatalities

- 2.1. Of the 13 specific incidents that occurred in August 2024, three resulted in the loss of life, and our thoughts and condolences go to the families who lost loved ones.
- 2.2. A review of the 13 incidents shows five resulted in persons in the water. One, we understand, was a conscious choice to enter the water to swim, which resulted in a drowning; the other 4 were accidental water entries.
- 2.3. The recovery of persons in the water following the vessel capsizing (River Bure) was greatly assisted and expedient as the occupants wore lifejackets. The wearing of a lifejacket meant persons were quickly spotted in the water, and due to the inflation of the lifejacket, they were presented with their heads above the water; lifejacket fittings allowed a good firm grab handle to assist rescuers to haul persons back onto vessels to aid their removal from the river.
- 2.4. The unintentional entering of water on the Lower Bure at Great Yarmouth Yacht Station on 22 August was not observed by the Yacht Station staff. Other family members assisted the person back on board. The duty manager logged the incident and recorded that no life jacket was being worn.
- 2.5. The second unintentional entry into the Lower Bure at Great Yarmouth Yacht Station on 23 August was assisted by duty staff, who were able to help them to a safety ladder; again, no lifejacket was being worn.

3. Review

- 3.1 These incidents highlight how quickly a highly enjoyable and pleasant waterways experience can change and lead to tragedy, either through freak weather events, momentary lack of judgement or medical episode. The PMSC and the accompanying Safety Management System have been reviewed following these events and we have concluded that existing mitigation measures are adequate.
- 3.2 The incidents underline the importance of promoting the wearing of personal floatation devices (lifejackets or buoyancy aids, depending upon the chosen activity).

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[Broads Plan](#) strategic objectives: C4

Appendix 1 – Incidents in the Broads in August 2024

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List of Accidents in the Broads for August 2024

With all these incidents Broads Control staff assisted with investigations and report writing which involved considerable time.

Date	Nature of the Accident/Incident	Broads Authority Assistance
5 August	Boat fire Loddon -	3 Rangers, 1 vehicle, 1 launch. Deployed pollution control booms and equipment and marked and lit vessels that has sunk. Finished around 10pm. Repeated visits by Ranger over coming days to adjust pollution booms. Liaison with insurance company, MAIB report and notices issued.
11 August	Langley Hire Cruiser sinking -	Rangers attended. Marked and lit vessel. Investigated area next day to check for any possible hazards. The 3rd party method statements for raising and use of divers assessed.
17 th August	Pollution incident – Ranger responded to report of multiple diesel spills on river Yare.	Ranger on launch traced vessel which was under way and spoke to owner who identified problem and rectified it.
16 August	Wroxham Broad fatality – private vessel with 2 on board. 1 person entered water just before midnight and did not surface.	Ranger on launch assisted police with closure of the Broad and local knowledge to assist with identity of persons.
18 th August	St Olave’s Bridge Strike – Richardsons vessel got stuck under the bridge,	Rangers on launch liaised with fire and rescue service and boatyard, assisted removing the boat from under bridge as the tide dropped.

20 August	Wroxham Bridge – A Richardson’s vessel got stuck under the bridge. Norfolk Broads Direct tug assisted in pushing it out, and no injuries have been reported.	Ranger investigated incident. Spoke to Norfolk Broads Direct and Richardsons, requesting details for reporting purposes.
20 August	Capsize on River Bure —Martham Boat, a sailing hire, capsized after getting hit by a strong gust yesterday afternoon.	The nearest Ranger recovered adults on board, 2 nd Ranger launch arrived to assist with lights and markers if necessary. Boatyard recovered vessel while 1 launch stayed on scene to manage waters until safe.
20 August	Fatality – An 89-year-old female moored at Ranworth Staithe suffered a cardiac arrest; emergency services attended but were unable to resuscitate.	No Ranger activity at scene but information collated and reported.
20 August	Fatality – A male in his mid to late fifties was recovered from the lower Bure, it appears he fell off his Barnes Brinkcraft hire vessel whilst moored at GYYS last night. The body was recovered from the river but attempts to resuscitate failed.	Senior Ranger attended to assist Yacht Station Staff with casualty’s family members and coordinate collection of vessel with Barnes Brinkcraft staff. MAIB report completed and filed. Accident report completed. BA volunteer helped family recover car from Barnes Brinkcraft in Wroxham.
22 August	Fell into water – GYYS, person fell in between vessel, assisted out by friends and family	Yacht Station staff completed staff accident report
23 August	Fell into water – GYYS person fell while leaving mooring	Assisted to safety ladder by Yacht Station Staff
25 August	Vessel aground – Vessel went aground on Haddiscoe cut after being blown by a strong gust of wind.	Ranger attended, recovered people off vessel and liaised with boatyard.
29 August	Stranded Vessel Breydon – vessel lost power while crossing Breydon	Standby duty Ranger liaised with coastguard