

# Broads Authority

## Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2024

### Contents

1.	Welcome and apologies	3
	Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014	3
	Apologies	3
2.	Chairman’s announcements	3
3.	Introduction of members and declarations of interest	3
4.	Items of urgent business	3
5.	Public question time	3
6.	Minutes of last meeting	4
7.	Summary of actions and outstanding issues	4
8.	Biodiversity emergency and Broads Nature Recovery Strategy	4
9.	Strategic priorities – update on 2024/25 and draft strategic priorities for 2025/26	6
10.	Proposed navigation charges for 2025/26 in the navigation area and adjacent water	7
11.	Financial performance and direction	10
12.	Statement of Accounts 2022/23	11
13.	Broads Authority Act 2009 provision – Removal of Wrecks	12
14.	Principle and Effectiveness of Body Worn Cameras	13
15.	Local Plan Publication Consultation	13
16.	Making Reedham Neighbourhood Plan	13
17.	Broads Authority Design Guide and Code	13
18.	Revised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	14
19.	General Direction	15
20.	Review of Standing Orders for the regulation of Authority proceedings	15
21.	Annual Partnership Register	16

22. Items of business raised by the Designated Person in respect of the Port Marine Safety Code 16	
23. Member report on outside bodies – Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust	16
24. Minutes to be received	16
25. Other items of business	17
26. Formal questions	17
27. Date of next meeting	17
Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests: Broads Authority, 29 November 2024	18

## **Present**

Harry Blathwayt – in the Chair, Stephen Bolt, Peter Dixon, Andrée Gee, Alan Goodchild, Tony Grayling, James Harvey, Paul Hayden, Tristram Hilborn, Martyn Hooton, Tim Jickells, Siân Limpenny, Leslie Mogford, Matthew Shardlow, Vic Thomson, Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro, Fran Whymark.

## **In attendance**

Natalie Beal – Planning Policy Officer (for items 15 - 16), John Packman – Chief Executive, Jonathan Goolden – Monitoring Officer, Andrea Kelly – Environment Policy Adviser (for item 8), Kate Knights – Historic Environment Manager (for item 17), Emma Krelle – Director of Finance, Rob Rogers – Director of Operations, Lorraine Taylor – Governance Officer, Marie-Pierre Tighe – Director of Strategic Services, and Sara Utting – Senior Governance Officer.

## **1. Welcome and apologies**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

The Chair explained that the meeting was being audio-recorded. All recordings remained the copyright of the Broads Authority and anyone wishing to receive a copy should contact the Governance Team. The minutes remained the record of the meeting. He added that the law permitted any person to film, record, photograph or use social media in order to report on the proceedings of public meetings of the Authority. This did not extend to live verbal commentary. The Chair needed to be informed if anyone intended to photograph, record or film so that any person under the age of 18 or members of the public not wishing to be filmed or photographed could be accommodated.

Apologies were received from Michael Scott.

## **2. Chairman’s announcements**

The Chair informed the meeting that item 15 on the agenda had been withdrawn, notification of which had been sent to Members on 22 November, and confirmed that the item would be brought back at the next meeting on 24 January 2025.

## **3. Introduction of members and declarations of interest**

Members indicated they had no further declarations of interest other than those already registered, and as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

## **4. Items of urgent business**

There were no items of urgent business.

## **5. Public question time**

No public questions had been received.

## 6. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## 7. Summary of actions and outstanding issues

Members received the latest summary of actions and outstanding issues following decisions at previous meetings. The Chief Executive (CE) reported an update on Haven Bridge, advising that at a meeting held on 14 November 2024, which the Broads Authority was not invited to attend, Peel Ports proposed that charges be introduced for lifting the bridge and the Port Users Group would formulate a response to that proposal. The CE said that he would be able to provide Members with a further update at the January meeting.

**The report was noted.**

## 8. Biodiversity emergency and Broads Nature Recovery Strategy

Members received the report of the Environment Policy Adviser (EPA). The EPA gave an overview of the report, advising that the Broads had approximately 17% of Britain's species and 26% of those had been declared as a conservation priority. She added that the Broads was one of the most important freshwater areas for those species and many were at risk from climate change. Several local authorities had already declared biodiversity emergencies and although the Broads Authority had declared a climate emergency in 2019, biodiversity was not included. By declaring a biodiversity emergency, it would raise public and political awareness, it would emphasise the emergency action for restoration of the Broads, and would create stronger partnerships and collaboration on the critical issues that the Authority faced. The EPA said that the Broads Nature Recovery Strategy (BNRS) would be a key mechanism to report and monitor change in the biodiversity emergency. The EPA added that the Broads Authority was a Supporting Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategies for Norfolk and Suffolk (LNRS), the report on which would be presented to the Broads Authority meeting on 24 January 2025, following a Members' briefing on 9 December 2024.

The EPA provided some context in regard to the BNRS and said that the framework for nature recovery was set through the 25-year Environment Plan 2018, the Environment Act 2021, and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023, along with the 30 by 30 target. The BNRS would replace the Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy and would be monitored by the Broads Biodiversity Partnership which had 29 organisations that reported into that partnership and who had supported the development of the BNRS.

The BNRS contained a vision, guiding principles, and details on available resources and mechanisms. It examined the state of the environment and set the Broads Authority's targets with seven protected landscape targets, and one target for species. The EPA added that the Authority was unable to meet the targets on its own and it was therefore about collaboration and partnerships, which is why the Authority worked with the partners within the Broads

Biodiversity Partnership. The EPA said that it was important to remember that the BRNS would act as the Biodiversity Duty Report which the Authority was required to produce under the Environment Act. The EPA referred Members to Appendix 1 of the report which detailed the Biodiversity Emergency and how risks were mitigated.

A Member commended the EPA on this work and said that they fully supported both the Biodiversity Emergency declaration and the BRNS and asked whether the first line of the Biodiversity Emergency Statement's opening line could be amended to include other pressures on biodiversity such as nutrient pollution, population growth and development, amongst others. The EPA confirmed that this could be added.

A Member commented that the Authority was hugely dependent on others to deliver the targets set in the BRNS and was worried that society was not putting enough resource into nature recovery.

A Member said that he thought it was right that the Authority did not set a particular tree target because of the nature of the Broads landscapes, however, would ask that a caveat was put on that target to include wet woodland which was a unique part of the Broads ecology. Other Members supported the comment on wet woodland, however, one commented that he was nervous about the inclusion as thought that any wet woodland would likely be damaging to boating and the historical landscape. A further Member commented that wet woodland was a threat to navigation. The Chair commented that there were lots of historic carr woodland within the Broads landscape. The EPA confirmed that wet woodland was very important to the Broads.

A Member asked what the planned communication around the declaration for Biodiversity Emergency was, adding that it was important that any communication was made the most of and it was not just a statement that sat passively on the website. The EPA said that the declaration would set the basis to move forward and confirmed that a press release had been prepared.

A Member asked whether an 'end of term' report had been prepared for the Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy. The EPA said that a workshop for Members was held in June 2023 at the Raveningham Estate where this was presented<sup>1</sup>.

A Member commented that the Biodiversity Partnership offered a way to achieve the aims of the BRNS and added that the Authority needed to be careful around the messaging as the process of addressing the whole climate issue would be a long process. The EPA replied that the targets, especially on habitat creation, were very ambitious, and that there was a lot to do in response to the challenges identified.

A Member commented that the Broads were susceptible to rising sea levels and salt water was likely to change the picture of the Broads and asked that, in terms of recovery, would that

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<sup>1</sup> Notes from the Members' workshop on the Broads Biodiversity and Water Strategy, held on 21 June 2023, together with the strategy document and presentation was sent to Members via email on 28 June 2023.

not include adaptation and a need to look at different sorts of species and habitats. The EPA replied that one of the mechanisms in the strategy was about adaptation.

A Member said that there was concern over the installation of sea defences in Lowestoft which would put pressure on high tides and water going towards the Broads and asked whether that scenario was considered. The Chair commented that the Government had indicated that they would be looking at other criteria when looking at funding for coastal defence, which would include biodiversity with a natural value.

A Member commented that one of the biggest things rising out of the Government's new targets was the 2,000 hectares of arable reversion which would be a large undertaking in the Broads area and would be dependent on a number of factors. The EPA said that officers were looking at how targets could be achieved in relation to agri-environment.

A Member commented on saline incursion in the Upper Bure and said that the saline was not getting away from the Bure and the tidal locking should be looked at in more detail.

Stephen Bolt proposed, seconded by Matthew Shardlow.

**It was resolved unanimously to:**

- i. To declare a Biodiversity Emergency, and to adopt the Statement in Appendix 1;**
- ii. To approve the Broads Nature Recovery Strategy (BNRS) and its delivery plan; and**
- iii. To note that the BNRS acts as the Broads Authority Biodiversity Duty Report.**

## **9. Strategic priorities – update on 2024/25 and draft strategic priorities for 2025/26**

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer. The Chief Executive (CE) said that the report was in two parts, with the first providing an update on the progress of the 2024/25 strategic priorities, which were all on track. The second part presented the strategic priorities for 2025/26 for adoption, together with milestones for measuring progress, following Members' input at the last Broads Authority meeting in September in response to the draft priorities.

A Member commented that it was good to see the priorities mapped against Defra priorities and wider Government missions, and the alignment highlighted the significant contribution that the Broads Authority could make to achieving the wider goals. However, the Member noted that there was not much included on the education role of the Authority played in inspiring behavioural change and asked whether this aspect could be strengthened, particularly in support of the Government's mission to break down barriers to opportunities. The CE said that one of the strategic priorities would be to bring significant external funding to deliver the Broads Plan objectives, and one of those was the lottery's new Landscape Connections programme which was potential a £10m programme of work with two years to develop it and eight years to deliver. A key component of that programme would be about education and engagement.

A Member asked whether, in relation to Defra's priorities, was there more the Authority could do to address and improve water quality in the Broads. The CE said that the Broads Authority's ability was quite limited on what it could do about water quality and it was mainly a function of the Environment Agency (EA), however, the Authority would work through the Catchment Partnership with the EA and other parties.

In regard to the priority of developing partnership arrangements for external funding bids, a Member commented that there was a strategic issue of sustainable funding for navigation in the long-term and solving that should be an ongoing priority. The CE agreed and referred Members to the document sent to Ministers by the Chair of the Authority that set out the case that the Authority believed that the management and maintenance of the waterways was a public benefit and therefore asked for a contribution from the public purse to help with that. The CE added that he and the Chair were looking to see whether they could have a meeting with the Minister about that issue. The CE said that one of the things that the Authority was uncertain about was what the future of boating in the Broads looked like. Although there had been a change in the composition of the type of boats in the last 20 years, overall, the 11,000-12,000 boats that regularly used the Broads had been relatively stable. Going forward, however, the CE said that it was unclear what the pattern would be. In part, the Authority would need to look carefully at what happens in the next year – this year there was a very poor summer and the cost of living crisis had had an impact, however, this was largely on the smaller boats. The Member asked whether the Authority could look at other sources of income. The CE replied that one of the difficulties was that it was not easy to get funding for statutory purposes, however, in the past several major projects had been made possible through European funding. The National Lottery would be another funding opportunity; this would be for engaging with people, which would be helpful in some areas, but not for work such as dredging and other essential maintenance work.

A Member commented that he welcomed the addition of Access for All to the 2025/26 priorities as this was an important issue.

Tim Jickells proposed, seconded by Siân Limpenny.

**It was resolved unanimously to:**

- i. To note the progress in implementing this year's strategic priorities; and**
- ii. To agree the strategic priorities for 2025/26 as set out in table 2 of the report.**

## **10. Proposed navigation charges for 2025/26 in the navigation area and adjacent water**

Members received the report of the Chief Executive (CE), Director of Finance, and Head of IT and Collector of Tolls. The CE provided an overview of the extensive process that the Authority had undertaken and reminded Members of the paper circulated to them in September setting out the financial challenges that the Authority faced, followed by a Member briefing on 8 October. At the briefing Members explored the different options and

were invited to indicate their preferences, as set out in the chart on page 7 of the report, which ranged from an increase of 0% to 10%. A formal consultation was held with the Navigation Committee on 7 November, and the draft minutes of that meeting were attached to the report as Appendix 1, detailing the debate and range of views which had narrowed between 5% and 7.5%. The Navigation Committee resolved by 9 votes to 1, with 2 abstentions, to recommend a 5.9% increase in tolls. The Committee was also supportive of freezing the tolls for hired sailing craft and increasing the differential between electric and diesel-powered day hire boats. The CE said that officers were recommending the adoption of Navigation Committee's recommendations, set out in section 6 of the report.

The CE provided an overview of the key issues affecting the Authority. The CE said that a decision in one year impacted on all the following years, for example the decision by the Board not to contribute to the earmarked reserves in 2024/25 equated to ~4% increase in tolls in 2025/26. Therefore, relatively small changes had a significant impact on the financial position. This year, there had been a reduction in boat numbers, especially in small boats, and it was not clear whether this was an adjustment post-Covid or part of a longer-term trend. The CE noted that other navigation authorities had seen a similar decline in boat numbers.

The CE said that there had been a number of changes since the Member briefing was held in October. The first was the Local Government Pay Award had been agreed lower than the figure that the Authority had budgeted for, which gave a positive impact for navigation of £126,000. The second was the increase in the Employer's NI contributions announced in the Budget which would give the Authority an additional cost of £69,000 for navigation. The third was the Countryside Stewardship scheme, which would help reduce the level of tolls increase required by ~£90,000. This sum had been transferred to National Park expenditure for Operations Technicians. The CE said that the Authority would envisage a 24% decrease in time spent dredging, however, over the past 10-15 years the Authority had made huge inroads into the dredging backlog which meant that it was possible to reduce the effort.

The CE said that these changes meant that there would no longer be a need for a 12% toll increase to deliver existing services. However, to keep services at the current level this would mean an increase of 7.3% which the CE thought was still too high and therefore recommended the 5.9% increase proposed by the Navigation Committee. In the case for the charges for mooring, following consultation with the relevant officers, the recommendation for charges was now £18 (rounded up from £17.50) for an overnight stay at the Great Yarmouth and Norwich Yacht Stations and £12 for Ranworth – and Reedham once charging could be implemented.

The CE said that Officers continued to look for savings and efficiencies and provided examples of some of the savings that had already been identified. The first was that the tolls software upgrade had been cheaper than budgeted. The budget was to spend £50,000 in 2024/25 and to date, the spend had been £15,450 with another ~£10,000 to come. Second, the finance system upgrade had similarly been delivered very cost effectively, having spent under £12,000 to upgrade the existing system rather than buying new. Third, the large job of the installation of channel markers in Breydon Water using in-house staff and resources to save money. The



CE added that the channel was better marked than it had ever been. Fourth, developed by the GIS Officer in-house, an App for Rangers which collected locations when verbal and Blue Book warnings, Notices of Contravention had been issued. This would also help track trends.

The CE said that the plans for 2025 included a review of the specifications for dredging by the Head of Construction, Maintenance and Ecology, and a trial of a cutter head on a JCB to fluidise the sediment on the Lower Bure when the tide was running out.

A Member commented that that the inclusion of Appendix 1 to the report was helpful and showed the level of debate that happened at the Navigation Committee.

A Member commented that he supported the lower tolls for electric day hire boats, however, in the longer term was concerned that if the Authority was successful in their aims of increasing the number of electric boats, they would lose money and asked whether the Authority could give owners a two-year holiday from paying tolls for them to justify conversion from diesel to electric. The CE replied that they had not thought about a holiday, however, although the recommendation was to increase the differential on day hire boats, there was not the expectation that this would immediately lead to a change in the number of electric day-hire boats. He added that the cost of a new electric day boat was significantly higher than the cost of a diesel one. A typical day boat was 11m<sup>2</sup> and, if the recommendations were adopted, it would mean the toll for a diesel boat would be £770 and therefore a toll holiday for a couple of years would not come close to the cost of investment in an electric day boat. The CE said that what was important was that the Broads Authority was signalling it would like the industry to move down the electrification route for two reasons: one in terms of climate change; and the other was the experience the public got from going out on an electric day boat.

A Member asked whether the CE could explain the difference between the toll increase per category as he thought there was some unevenness in the amounts. The CE said that the increase was 5.9% across the board, apart from the hired sailing boats and the electric day boats which were held at 0% rise, and a bigger increase in petrol and diesel-powered day hire boats, as recommended by the Navigation Committee.

A Member commented that there was a lot of discussion on safety at the Navigation Committee and said that when officers apportioned the savings in the budget, importance should be given to ensure that safety was not compromised.

A Member said that going forward, the Authority needed to look at the percentage on each category and what percentage gave the most amount of money to spend on navigation, and that the rising cost of tolls did not always provide more money in the long-term as more people might take their boats out of the water. He commented that the Authority had probably reached maximum toll level and asked the Authority to consider a zero-based approach in the following years. The CE said that the toll was a relatively small part of owning a boat and the pattern in the number of boats seen in the Broads was similar at other navigation authorities across the country and therefore did not think it was the Authority's charges that was having that impact. This year there was a need to balance the level of

charges that was reasonable to make against the desires and wishes of the boating community for improved services, which included more moorings, more plant cutting, more tree management, more dredging and more patrolling. The view Members needed to take was where the balance was. The CE added that to achieve the 5.9% increase there would be the need to take £170,000 of work out of the system.

Alan Goodchild proposed, seconded by Tim Jickells.

**It was resolved unanimously to approve the navigation and mooring charges for 2025/26 in the navigation area and adjacent waters as set out in section 6 of the report.**

The Committee adjourned at 11:12am and reconvened at 11:20am.

## 11. Financial performance and direction

Members received the report of the Director of Finance (DF). In presenting the report, the DF advised that the figures were up to the end of September and provided a verbal update on the accounts up to the end of October. The DF referred Members to table 1 in the report and said that the actual variance had moved to £782,010, a reduction in £81,712 compared to the September figures. £382,580 of this variance was related to salaries and this would be partially reduced in December when the pay award was implemented. The DF said that there was no further change to the forecast set out in table 3 of the report and the figure in table 4 of the report for the earmarked reserves had decreased to £3,157,775 mainly due to the additional vehicles delivered at the end of October.

The DF referred Members to table 5 of the report and noted the capital expenditure balance. This was due to IFRS16 and the need for leases to come onto the balance sheet in the financial year. This work had yet to be completed but accounted for a large portion of the capital expenditure.

The Chair of the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee (RAGC) said that there had been a good discussion on the level of reserves at the RAGC meeting on Wednesday 27 November and asked whether the DF could elaborate as it might be helpful for the Members present. The DF said that the earmarked reserves was where monies were put aside to fund capital purchases or maintenance of buildings etc. The earmarked reserves were separate from the National Park reserve, sometimes referred to as the general reserve, and the Navigation reserve. As a result of the forecast adjustments, i.e. the pay award being less than anticipated, the reserves were higher than originally budgeted, but this had been taken into account for budgeting for the toll increase for 2025/26 and added that being in a better position for 2024/25 helped keep the tolls increase down. To reassure Members, although the reserves looked high at present, future years would mean they would reduce. The Authority was required to keep them at a minimum level to mitigate for any unforeseen expenditure or loss of income in future years.

A Member commented that he had concern over the level of National Park reserves and said that the Authority should look at areas where there were underspends because if Government perceived that the Authority was spending less than its Defra allocation, they

might consider cutting funding and so the Authority should consider looking at spending some of that underspend this year. The DF said that the Authority was required to provide Defra with an annual return at the end of the financial year that gave them details of the balances of reserves held and reasons why they were held and added that the Authority had forecast a deficit in the next few years which would reduce the National Park reserve. The DF said that the Authority would know by 31 March 2025 what the Defra National Park grant would be and as a result of the one year spending review. During 2025/26 it would have future certainty over what the next three years after that might look like.

**Members noted:**

- i. the income and expenditure figures in paragraph 2 of the report;**
- ii. the latest on the pay agreement for 2024/25 in paragraph 4.2 of the report;  
and**
- iii. the prudential indicators in paragraph 6.1 of the report.**

## **12. Statement of Accounts 2022/23**

Members received the report of the Director of Finance (DF). The DF said that the Statement of Accounts 2022/23 was discussed at the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee (RAGC) meeting on Wednesday 27 November where the partner for EY was in attendance to present their audit completion report. The DF said that Members would notice from the report that EY looked to issue a disclaimed audit opinion which was part of the Government's proposal to tackle the audit backlog. The Broads Authority was in a fortunate position because there was only one year outstanding which was the 2022/23 accounts. The DF said that there was a piece of legislation, passed in September, which set out the first phase of the reset, which meant that all Statement of Accounts up until 2022/23 had to be signed off by 13 December 2024. Members would have received an email that explained the reasoning behind the disclaimed opinion and stated that this was not a reflection on finance departments of local authorities, but was because the external auditors had not got the resources to deliver the outstanding audits.

The DF said that she appreciated that it had been some while since the 2022/23 accounts had been before Members and confirmed that the deficit had increased (as set out in paragraph 2.1) and it was important to note that the deficit was funded by the National Park and Navigation reserves. The reason why the figures had changed from what was presented to Members in July, was because there was some additional adjustments made which were accruals. There also included a change to the pension valuation following the audit of the Norfolk Pension Fund which had taken place since the accounts had been drafted and resulted in the main adjustment.

A Member commented that this was discussed at length at the RAGC meeting with the auditor present, and they had looked at the implications in terms of what the disclaimed opinion might mean financially for the Authority. One in particular was Natural England's grant which asked for additional auditing on finances relating to that grant.

Melanie Vigo di Gallidoro proposed, seconded by Leslie Mogford.

**It was resolved unanimously to adopt the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23.**

### **13. Broads Authority Act 2009 provision – Removal of Wrecks**

Members received the report of the Director of Operations (DO). The DO thanked the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Navigation Committee and the Boat Safety Management Group (BSMG) for their input into the report. The DO said that the removal of wrecks was contained within the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1989 and so was not a new power. However, in the 2009 Act, there was a subtle change made and the wording “unserviceable” was added. The DO referred Members to section 1.3 of the report and said that this was not a case of the Broads Authority removing scruffy vessels from the Broads but was about unserviceable vessels and the definition of which was defined in section 5.4 of the report. The DO said that there was a rising problem: in 2020 there were 4 abandoned vessels in the Broads area, however, to date in 2024 the number was up to 38 and dealing with them was a very expensive process, especially in cases where the vessel had sunk.

The DO set out the process when dealing with an unserviceable vessel, once identified the owner would be notified and asked to get the vessel repaired either by taking the vessel out of the water or repairing in situ. The aim was to get to the vessel before it sunk.

The DO said that the BSMG originally helped with defining the criteria list in 2013, however, the Authority was looking to add additional criteria as detailed in section 5.4 of the report, which would make it easier to identify unserviceable vessels, especially around sailing vessels which was an area that needed to be clarified.

A Member asked whether the boats currently deemed unserviceable had been in situ longer than a year and had they been hidden away rather than abandoned. The DO clarified the terminology and explained that abandoned vessels meant that they had no registerable keeper, however, most of the vessels on the system had a registered keeper so the Authority would always try and work with the registered keeper. The DO said that it was also worth mentioning that for those who lived on-board unserviceable vessels, the Authority would not remove someone from their home and instead would work with a number of agencies, including the River Chaplaincy and housing associations to try and find alternative accommodation for them, and added that living on an unserviceable vessel with no heating, sewerage system or running water during the winter would not be pleasant for anyone. The DO said that there were often new vessels coming onto the system and the Authority tried to work with the registered keeper to get them up to a compliant standard.

A Member commented that unserviceable vessels were a significant and growing burden on the tolls budget. The DO replied that it was akin to the MOT for vehicles and this had achieved the removal of unsafe vehicles from the road, it is therefore hoped that once the Authority had removed all of the unserviceable vessels from the navigation, it would lead to a decline. He added that the Authority had recently had to build a special compound at the Dockyard to break these vessels up which came at a significant cost.

Alan Goodchild proposed, seconded by Andree Gee.

**It was resolved unanimously to adopt the revised criteria for unserviceable vessels as set out in paragraph 5.4 of the report.**

## 14. Principle and Effectiveness of Body Worn Cameras

Members received the report of the Director of Operations (DO). The DO said that through the Authority's Health and Safety Committee one of the trends that was spotted was an increase in abuse particularly to frontline staff and it was suggested that the Authority look at measures that could bring change. One solution was to look at Body Worn Cameras (BWC) as used by enforcement agencies across the country. A trial was conducted during the summer with BWC being worn by the Ranger Team and the TIC staff at Yacht Stations. From the feedback, however, rather than diffuse situations and calm them down, the BWC had a tendency to inflame them and the Rangers did not find them particularly useful. The recommendation was, therefore, not to continue with the trial. The DO added that this did not mean that the use of BWC would not be revisited again in the future.

A Member asked whether Rangers had the use of equipment such as a GoPro if they got into a difficult situation. The DO said that the staff were fully trained to handle difficult situations and they followed robust safety protocols and added that due to data protection restrictions, staff were unable to covertly record the public.

In response to a question on what would happen to the BWC that the Authority already had, the DO said that they were loaned free of charge to the Broads Authority for the duration of the trial and had since been returned to the company.

Stephen Bolt proposed, seconded by Alan Goodchild.

**It was resolved unanimously not to roll out body worn cameras to front-line staff carrying out byelaw enforcement.**

## 15. Local Plan Publication Consultation

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and would be reported on at the next meeting of the Broads Authority on 24 January 2025.

## 16. Making Reedham Neighbourhood Plan

Members received the report of the Planning Policy Officer (PPO). The PPO said that at the November Planning Committee it was recommended that the Broads Authority endorse the Reedham Neighbourhood Plan.

James Harvey proposed, seconded by Martyn Hooton.

**It was resolved unanimously that the Reedham Neighbourhood Plan be made/adopted.**

## 17. Broads Authority Design Guide and Code

Members received the report of the Historic Environment Manager (HEM). The HEM explained the background to the Design Guide and Code and said that at the November

Planning Committee it was recommended to the Broads Authority that the Design Guide and Code was endorsed for public consultation. The HEM said that since 2017 the Government had placed more emphasis on design within the planning process and in 2021 the Government published the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code, which were both useful documents that demonstrated the commitment to good design. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) stated that development which was not well designed should be refused and the HEM said that it was more noticeable that greater weight had been put on design in planning appeal decisions. The NPPF also required Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to produce Design Guides or Codes and this had been reiterated in the 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act which required LPAs to have a Design Guide and Code covering their whole area. The drafting of the Design Guide and Code was commenced in 2022. Prior to drafting, a survey was conducted with local communities, the results of which showed that there was great value that respondents placed on both the natural and built environment on the Broads. There was a strong preference for traditional design as well as an appreciation of Broads heritage. The first draft of the Design Guide and Code went out for consultation in the winter of 2022/23, the response to which informed the final draft which was attached to the report as Appendix 1 in the papers.

The HEM said that it was now hoped to adopt the Design Guide and Code as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and this required that there be an additional four-week period of consultation. The intention was to start the consultation early in December and would run for six weeks in order to compensate for the Christmas period. Following the consultation, any amendments would be made and a final copy would be brought back to the Planning Committee and Broads Authority for adoption.

Tony Grayling proposed, seconded by Tim Jickells.

**It was resolved unanimously to endorse the Broads Authority Design Guide and Code for consultation.**

## 18. Revised Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy

Members received the report of the Director of Operations (DO). The DO said that at the Broads Authority meeting on 20 September, Members asked for revised wording in paragraph 2.1.3 of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy to better explain the accountability rather than responsibility in respect of Health and Safety. Section 2.1 of the report set out the revised wording.

A Member commented that the word 'culture' should be included in the paragraph alongside processes and procedures. The DO agreed and it would be added to the policy as follows:

"Broads Authority Members play a crucial role in guiding the organisation to provide strong leadership and clear direction on health and safety issues, ensuring that processes, procedures and culture effectively manage safety risks and maintain their integrity."

Siân Limpenny proposed, seconded by Paul Hayden.

**It was resolved unanimously to endorse the revised wording in section 2.1.3 of the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Policy.**

## 19. General Direction

Members received the report of the Director of Operations (DO). The DO said that under the Port Marine Safety Code (PMSC) the Authority was required to provide pilotage for large commercial vessels that entered the Broads, however, to maintain a pilot was quite costly and the Authority had never had to use a pilot. Therefore, the General Direction needed to be amended to include the restriction of all vessels over 24 metres from entering the Broads. The DO thanked the Chair of the Navigation Committee who had helped with the definition of the length of vessels that the Authority would restrict. The DO clarified that it did not mean if a vessel was over 24 metres that it could not enter the Broads, but it would need to produce a risk assessment to show whether a pilot would be needed. The reason why this item was being presented to the Authority again was that, at the meeting in January, the Authority had initially agreed to restrict commercial vessels over 24 metres, however, it was the intention for the General Direction to include all vessels over 24 metres.

The Chair of the Navigation Committee said that he supported the rewording of the General Direction and said that the chance of a 24-metre vessel coming onto the Broads was slim, however, if this should occur, the crew would need to file a sufficient passage plan and risk assessment. He added that most captains and crew of vessels of that size would be more than adequate to navigate the waters.

Alan Goodchild proposed, seconded by Leslie Mogford.

**It was resolved unanimously to note the progress in resolving the outstanding issues concerning the General Direction and approve the inclusion of all vessels over 24 metres in length in its scope.**

James Harvey left the meeting.

## 20. Review of Standing Orders for the regulation of Authority proceedings

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer (SGO). The SGO reminded Members that, at the September Broads Authority meeting, a report had been presented advising of proposed changes to the Authority's Standing Orders and this was in effect to give notice in accordance with adopted procedure. Accordingly, discussion and adoption of the revised Standing Orders was adjourned to this meeting. Suggestions or comments on the proposed changes were invited but the SGO confirmed that none were received from Members. The Standing Orders were presented at the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee meeting on 27 November which recommended that the revised Standing Orders be adopted by the Authority. The proposed changes were to tidy up wording or for clarification, and the most significant change was the introduction of public speaking at Authority meetings. It was proposed that the new Standing Orders would come into effect from 1 January 2025.

Tony Grayling proposed, seconded by Stephen Bolt.

**It was resolved unanimously to adopt revised Standing orders for the regulation of Authority proceedings (as attached at appendix 2 to the report dated 20 September).**

## 21. Annual Partnership Register

Members received the report of the Senior Governance Officer (SGO) on the annual review of the Corporate Partnership Register. The SGO said that this was the usual report that came to Members every November and was presented to the Risk, Audit and Governance Committee on 27 November, but no comments were made.

**Members noted the updated Corporate Partnerships Register (Nov 2024).**

## 22. Items of business raised by the Designated Person in respect of the Port Marine Safety Code

There were no matters to report under this item.

## 23. Member report on outside bodies – Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust

Members received the report from Paul Hayden (PH), the Member appointed by the Broads Authority to the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Charitable Trust. PH said confirmed that since the report was written, the Memorandum of Understanding with the Broads Society had been signed. This would bring together the two larger charitable organisations in the Broads area, with the Trust being a vehicle to raise money and provide grants to deliver projects. PH added that the Trust had agreed to take a more strategic approach to raising funding. The report also asked Members to consider ways in which they might support the Trust in its ongoing development.

The Chair thanked PH for all his work on the Broads Charitable Trust.

A Member commented that under new planning requirements there was something called RAMS which might offer a route for funding of similar projects.

**The report was noted.**

## 24. Minutes to be received

Members received the minutes of the following meetings:

Risk, Audit and Governance Committee – 23 July 2024

Broads Local Access Forum - 4 September 2024

Navigation Committee - 5 September 2024

Planning Committee - 13 September 2024



## **25. Other items of business**

There were no other items of business.

## **26. Formal questions**

There were no formal questions of which notice had been given.

## **27. Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Authority would be held on Friday 24 January 2025 at 10.00am at the King's Centre, 63-75 King Street, Norwich, NR1 1PH.

The Chair reminded Members of the HARG meeting on 13 December 2024 which would be held online.

The meeting ended at 12:09pm.

Signed by

Chairman

## Appendix 1 – Declaration of interests: Broads Authority, 29 November 2024

Member	Agenda/minute	Nature of interest
Harry Blathwayt, Stephen Bolt, Peter Dixon, Alan Goodchild, Leslie Mogford	10	Private toll payer. The Member Code of Conduct allowed for these Members to participate and vote.