

BROAD SHEET



Improving navigation, safety, and sustainability

The Authority continues to seek ingenious solutions to maintain the waterways efficiently.

Last year, one of our major projects was to install new steel posts to mark the channel across Breydon Water. Many of the old wooden marker posts needed replacing and we wanted to install additional posts to help people navigate this channel safely. Steel posts were used to reduce future maintenance. The steel tubes (*pictured*) are long and extremely heavy, so our Operations Team developed a technique to safely install them using a pile driver and a crane mounted on a floating platform.

We continued to work with the public, media and hire boat fleet to raise awareness of safety issues, as well as sharing information on our social media channels.

We ran four sold-out Demystifying Breydon Water boat trips which were appreciated by both new and

experienced boaters, who discussed safe routes, channel markers, emergency mooring points and potential hazards. The trip onboard the Spirit of Breydon patrol launch was led by Rangers, who also shared their passion for their role and the environment they patrol.

While our National Park grant has not increased for the past five years, last year we received an additional grant from DEFRA, for £500,000 split equally between capital and revenue, which was used to support our National Park and Navigation functions. We bought a new concrete pump for dredging, a steel welfare unit to support the dredging team and equipment for fen management. A new excavator attachment has been ordered to assist with decommissioning boats.

Another major project was to reduce our office space at Yare House to a third of its original size. The new downsized office has created savings of 38% or £88,636, each year on rent and utilities.

Last year, our three water plant harvesters spent 226 days continually working to remove plants from the navigation channels around the Broads, with some areas receiving third and fourth cuts by the end of the season in October. For example, the Upper Thurne received five cuts, and the Upper Ant and Upper Bure, three.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that after two successful lease negotiations, Aldeby Hall and Hardley Mill will open as 24-hour moorings in April.

Mutford Lock repairs

Due to repair works, Mutford Lock in Oulton Broad will be **closed to vessels until Friday 28 March 2025**.

One of the penstock sluices on the gate has failed and is in need of repair. To enable this, the first set of gates

on the freshwater side of the lock had to be lifted out entirely by a large crane, a difficult and time-consuming task given the size and weight of the structures. The gate will be repaired, alongside any additional maintenance required.

To minimise disruption, the closure is taking place at a time when there is very little boat traffic to and from the

North Sea and also avoids a period of road bridge maintenance (which will prevent the lifting of Haven Bridge at Great Yarmouth). The Lock is scheduled to open again before the Easter Holidays.

Please see the Notices to Mariners on our website for more information.

www.broads-authority.gov.uk/notices-to-mariners



In the Dockyard workshop

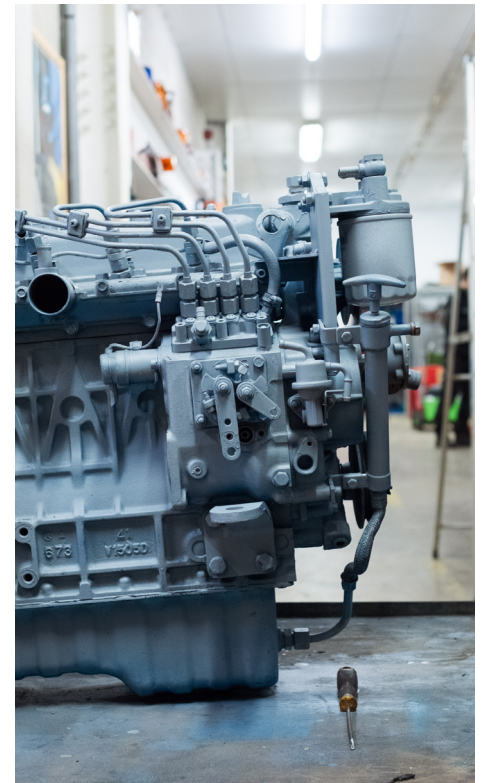
John Gowler is one of four Fitters in our Plant and Equipment Team. He is responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Authority's plant and equipment, including vessels and vehicles.

John was working on 'Megan' (the oldest of the Authority's three water-plant harvesters) which was in the workshop for a full refit. Although Megan will be in the Dockyard for around five weeks, the Fitter team will need to attend callouts that require them to down tools for any emergency repair out in the Broads during this time.

The Fitter role is highly skilled due to the variety and complexity of tasks required and the range of equipment used by staff during Broads' maintenance. Fitters assess, repair and sometimes fabricate parts for many types of equipment including excavators, vessels (and

their engines), vehicles and our Truxor amphibious machine.

Megan's refit involved an initial assessment by the vessel operator before the Fitter team could begin on the repairs and routine maintenance. Tasks included preventing engine corrosion, greasing the many bearings (replacing them where necessary), sharpening the cutting blades and completing function tests before it could be re-launched. There were weak spots in the deck which required reinforcing with new steel, which were welded in place. In the photo, John was applying the first coat of primer to Megan's hull.



Having worked with the Authority for over two years, John enjoys the variety of the role. His work on Megan involved mechanics, engineering, electrical work and welding. Although he receives a new list of jobs each week, he never knows what callouts he might get for emergency repairs. It could be a broken concrete pump, an oil leak, a mechanical fault on a launch or a broken-down vehicle.

Also in the workshop for a refit was the Waveney Ranger launch. Its engine (*pictured above*) was removed and painted to prevent water corrosion.

All three plant harvesters are refitted during winter and Megan will head back out on the water in April.



The challenges of planning in a National Park

Due to their rich biodiversity, important habitats and special cultural heritage, Planning in protected landscapes such as the Broads poses a unique set of challenges and opportunities.

Ever since National Parks were first set up in the 1940s, planning has been considered a key responsibility, ensuring that development in precious landscapes is appropriate. The Broads Authority has managed planning in the Broads since 1989 in recognition of the special qualities of the area and the need to assess the impacts that developments could have on our fragile wetland landscape.

The team deals with a wide variety of proposals, varying from minor extensions of existing buildings to the construction of modern houses, alterations to historically important listed structures, the creation of new moorings and even larger developments such as marinas.

In particular, the expertise of colleagues in the areas of biodiversity, local heritage and planning policy is invaluable when dealing with complex development proposals. Local

knowledge ensures that decisions can be made confidently and swiftly.

By law, development in the Broads must consider the delicate ecology and habitats found here. Specialist knowledge of the landscapes and sensitive wildlife species (such as water voles, bats and owls) helps to ensure responsible development.

Similarly, development must be sensitively designed so that it does not detract from nearby buildings or surrounding areas. Our Design and Heritage Planning Officers assess a development's wider impact on the landscape, ensuring the Broads retains its unique charm.

Other key responsibilities undertaken by the team include protecting ancient trees through preservation orders, giving advice to the owners of iconic listed buildings and preparing appraisals for conservation areas.

Walking improvements pick up the pace

Improvements to a key section of footpath between Acle Bridge pub and Acle Marina are due to be completed in April. The path is being resurfaced and old bridges replaced with culverts (large

tubes beneath the path) that allow water to flow through.

The path will be closed temporarily when it is being resurfaced, however the Weavers Way will still be open from the Marina to Acle Bridge.

The path forms part of a longer walk that you can find on AllTrails: www.alltrails.com/en-gb/parks/england/norfolk/the-broads-national-park

Five iconic Broads chalets listed by Historic England

The Planning team also supports the conservation of both the natural and built environment within the Broads, such as the five waterside chalets that were recently Grade II listed by Historic England. Each one tells its own unique story about bygone eras of the Broads.

The unique buildings include an old helter-skelter, structures produced by the company that created Scott's Antarctic expedition huts, and one of the only surviving examples of an eel sett in England.

Some of the information used to determine the listings included the research of Heritage Planning Officer Kayleigh Judson (pictured below), whose work has helped to conserve these well-loved chalets. Not much was known about the buildings until Kayleigh started to research them in 2014 and included them in her dissertation for her Masters in Conservation and the Historic Environment.

They meet the national criteria for listing due to their historic and architectural significance and the listings will preserve their special appearance by giving them the protection they deserve. Their unique characteristics can now be appreciated for generations to come.





Future funding of navigation maintenance

Broads Authority and the Navigation Committee Members were very conscious of the impact of cost-of-living pressures on users of the waterways when setting the navigation charges for 2025/26. A 5.9% increase was agreed on the basis that services would be slightly reduced this year.

The Authority's budget is under pressure due to rising costs of raw materials – wood, steel, and aggregates – which are outpacing inflation, worsened by added national insurance costs from the Government's November budget. The hire boat industry faces similar cost rises and continues to operate in an extremely competitive market which is also influenced by the weather. We saw a reduction in the number of small boats using the Broads, which also reduced the Authority's income.

To balance income and expenditure we have deferred repairs to moorings at Potter Heigham and Martham for a year, saving approx. £100,000,

although deferring this will have an impact on future years. The annual contributions to our reserves needed to be reinstated because they had been put on hold last financial year to help with subsidising toll income. Since dredging was brought in-house from May Gurney in 2007, we have made positive progress in catching up with the dredging backlog, meaning we believe we can reduce the time spent on this activity next year. Plant cutting and riverside tree maintenance will take a higher priority.

Following 2020, we increased the Ranger service and the level of patrolling. Given budgetary constraints we will be scaling patrolling back to a level which still

exceeds the pre-COVID standard.

We receive no public funding towards maintenance of the waterways and this must be paid from tolls income.

We believe the waterways are an important public amenity and have therefore requested Government funding to support this work.

This year's annual toll for a small (5m²) unpowered sailing dinghy will be an extra £3.35 and a small motorboat will pay £5.45 more. An 11m² sailing boat will pay an additional £7.37 and a popular-sized private motorboat of 38m² an extra £41.42.

The Authority asks anyone genuinely struggling to pay their tolls to contact our Tolls department by calling 01603 756080.

Would extra dredging in the River Bure resolve flooding?

Last year, a number of Broads' community groups questioned whether additional dredging in an area known as the 'Bure Loop' would help alleviate flooding experienced in the Broads.

Following a public meeting, the Environment Agency (EA) was commissioned to scientifically assess whether additional dredging in areas of the Lower River Bure would help. The £13,000 study was funded by a Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid.

The report used hydraulic computer modelling of different possible scenarios to determine the effect of additional dredging (beyond that undertaken by the Authority for the benefit of navigation) of the Bure Loop.

This modelling was based on dredging to depths of 2.5m and 3m, almost a metre below the current navigation waterways specification depth. A range of both heavy rainfall, storms and tidal events were explored through the model, as was data collected during Storm Babet. In addition to using the Authority's data, the assessment also included knowledge from local people who had highlighted 10 locations where sediment had accumulated in the river.

The assessment concluded that extra dredging in the River Bure would not reduce peak flood height and would result in only small reductions in river levels in the upper part of the catchment after many days following heavy rainfall or a storm. Similarly, if flooding did occur, there

would only be a small reduction in maximum flood depths on the affected land. Extra dredging would also further increase the risk of tidal flooding at the lower end of the river, between Great Yarmouth and Acle.

The cost of additional dredging would far exceed the current total annual EA maintenance budget for the entire Broads system. Furthermore, regular dredging would be needed to maintain the new depths. The additional dredging would also need considerable licensing and environmental considerations such as the disposal of large amounts of sediment that exceed those produced during our annual dredging programme for navigation.

The lack of benefits, risk of triggering flooding elsewhere and excessive costs mean that the work would be unlikely to be eligible for central government funding. Reallocating the EA's Broads maintenance funds would also significantly limit maintenance activities such as embankment repairs. Therefore, the report concluded that funding would be better targeted at other flood-risk interventions by the EA, such as maintaining the crest height of raised embankments. The Broads Authority will continue dredging on the Lower Bure to maintain navigational depths.

Read more: www.broads-authority.gov.uk/news/lower-bure



Dredging: a year in figures

These are the locations where dredging took place last year and our planned works for 2025, with further dredging locations to be confirmed throughout the year.

2024/25 completed works

Upper Bure – 12,810m³ sediment dredged by November.

Rockland and Bargate Broad – channels will be completed in March, with an expected total of 12,400m³ sediment dredged.

Stalham Dyke – 5,460m³ sediment dredged by December (phase two of last year's project).

Planned works for 2025/26

Dredging will take place in the Upper Yare, Upper Thurne, and Lower Bure, with specific locations and further projects to be confirmed throughout the year.

To find out how our dredging programme works, please see the video on YouTube by the Broadland Futures Initiative.



BFI Dredging Video
www.youtube.com/watch?v=mldiS-ACHvwandt=3s



Operations team at Belagh on the River Bure

Improvements and repairs to BA 24-hour moorings 24/25



Coltishall 24-hr mooring

River Ant

Mooring posts replaced: Neatishead, Sutton Staithe, Sutton Staithe Two, Horning Marshes, Dilham, How Hill and Wayford Bridge.

New capping installed (or repaired): Neatishead, Gay Staithe, Sutton Staithe Two, Dilham and Wayford Bridge.

Topped up or repaired paths: Neatishead, Gay Staithe and How Hill.

Waling and capping replaced: Sutton Staithe Two.

Safety ladder repaired: Horning Marshes.

Bridge-height gauge boards replaced: Ludham Bridge.

Safety barrier repaired: Wayford Bridge.

River Bure

Mooring posts replaced: Ranworth, Womack Dyke, St. Benet's Abbey, Cockshoot, Acle Bridge and Stokesby.

New capping and waling installed (or repaired): Ranworth, South Walsham

and Wroxham Island.

Piling repairs: Ranworth.

Topped up or repaired paths: St. Benet's Abbey and Wroxham Island.

Safety ladder repaired: Ranworth and St. Benet's Abbey.

Bridge-height gauge boards installed/replaced: Lower Bure/Yare Breydon Bridge, Great Yarmouth and Wroxham.

Capping, end barrier, posts and boardwalk repairs: Cockshoot Dyke.

River Thurne

Mooring posts replaced: Boundary Farm and Repps Bank.

New capping installed (or repaired): Martham Bank, Potter Heigham Dinghy Park and Potter Heigham Bridge Green.

Mooring refurbishment: Repps Bank (145m).

Staithe repairs: Potter Heigham Staithe.

Capping replaced and path surface topped up: West Somerton.

River Yare

Mooring posts replaced: Bramerton, Rockland Staithe.

Capping repairs: Rockland Short Dyke.

Mooring refurbishment: capping, waling and new path at Postwick Wharf.

Water points upgraded and repairs to safety ladders: Reedham Quay.

River Waveney

Mooring posts replaced: Beccles South Bank and Somerleyton.

Mooring refurbishment: Capping, waling and new path at North Cove.

Mooring timber repaired: St Olaves.

Gauge board replacement: Somerleyton Swing Bridge and Beccles New and Old Bridge.

Electric charging posts repaired: Reedham Quay, Ranworth Quay, Hoveton St. John, Bramerton, Rockland and Horning Staithe.

Monthly mooring mowing cuts took place at each mooring (approx. eight times).

In February and March our workboat 'Shoveller', with its on-board crane is visiting moorings around the Broads' system to top up and repair paths in time for Easter.

Planned mooring refurbishments for next year

Mooring refurbishment at Martham Bank (144m).

Re-piling/quay heading replacement at Potter Heigham demasting (37m).

Waling, capping and path replacement during winter at Cantley (60m).

Boat safety scheme warnings

Lithium-ion batteries

There have been a number of reported boat fires caused by charging lithium-ion batteries. The Boat Safety Scheme website has 30 top tips for using and charging

batteries relevant to boats.

Product recall: Morco's open-flued water heaters

Please be aware of a potential gas leak/fire risk on Morco's Primo 6 (MP6), Primo 11 (MP11), EUP6 and EUP11 LPG open-flued water heaters.

The affected appliances were

sold between 2018 and 2023. They should not be used with immediate effect, and the gas supply to such appliances isolated.

For current safety notices visit: www.boatsafetyScheme.org/stay-safe-advice/



When is prosecution necessary?

Boat users and owners risk prosecution if found to be breaking navigation byelaws or refusing to pay the appropriate toll for their vessel, although it is usually the last resort for the Authority, once other methods have failed.

Prosecutions are time-consuming, stressful for those being prosecuted and can lead to additional legal and victim surcharge costs. We rely on toll payments to fund the continued maintenance of the Broads including our 24-hour moorings, tree management and water plant cutting programmes.

Last year, one vessel owner was ordered to pay more than four times their original toll of £166.40 after a fine and a victim surcharge of £520 were added. Another owner almost doubled the cost of their original toll from £664 to £1,284 once the fine and victim surcharge were included.

The Authority asks anyone suffering genuine financial hardship to contact our Tolls Department by calling 01603 756080 - this enables a two-way dialogue which may help us to find a solution.

In 2024 over 60 cases of non-payment of tolls were submitted for prosecution. These will go to court later this year.

In addition to non-payment of tolls, the Authority is committed to addressing boating behaviour which could potentially harm the Broads

or put boaters' safety and others at risk. Speeding and dangerous boat handling causes damage to riverbanks and property, distress to other river users and injury/death to wildlife.

Last year, a vessel owner was prosecuted for letting go (untying) a boat at night at Great Yarmouth Yacht Station. Due to the serious distress caused to the passengers on board the vessel, the man prosecuted was ordered to pay a total of £2,974 (a fine of £660, victim support of £264, compensation of £1,200, and costs of £850).

Due in court this year are numerous prosecution cases from last season's navigation byelaw offences. The majority of these related to failing to navigate with care and caution, breaking the speed limit, and overstaying byelaw offences.

If you witness speeding or reckless behaviour, please contact Broads Control on 01603 756056 or email Broads.Control@broads-authority.gov.uk with the vessel name/registration number and photos if possible.



Welcoming our new Asset Officer

The Authority's Asset Officer role is diverse and challenging, involving the management of assets such as moorings, boathouses, staites and visitor centres. The role is further complicated by the fact that most of the assets we manage are not owned by the Authority, but by other organisations, landowners and stakeholders.

Daniel Wilken joined the Authority as Asset Officer last year and much of his role involves managing contracts for a portfolio of land, woodland and maritime assets. Daniel also negotiates with property consultants and landowners to secure new sites either through purchase or lease.

One of Daniels most recent achievements is the completion of negotiations for the new BA 24-hour moorings at Aldeby Hall and Hardley Mill which open this season

Another recent project completed by Daniel was to convert our electrical recording and metering across various sites to smart meters. These provide accurate readings to our utility suppliers, freeing Rangers from the task of taking manual readings, and saving money by producing accurate billing.

As part of our Asset Management Strategy (2024) the Authority is also evaluating whether it is feasible to purchase land for the deposition of dredged sediment. Locating and securing the sites required to store thousands of tonnes of sediment (until it is suitable for reuse) is one of our most significant annual challenges.

Read more: www.broads-authority.gov.uk/asset-management-strategy



The Ranger's Year

Last year, the Ranger Team:

- Spent 1,740 days patrolling the rivers.
- Completed 146 days of visitor site maintenance.
- Spent 72 days removing obstructions from the river, cleaning signs, and maintaining moorings.
- Gave advice (verbal warnings) 3,880 times for speed and safe navigation.
- Issued 233 written warnings.

Biodiversity emergency declared



The Broads has over a quarter of Britain's rarest wildlife species, but despite the efforts of the Authority and partners, it has been losing species at a rate of six per decade for half a century.

Last November, our Members unanimously agreed that urgent action is required to protect wildlife species from the impacts of climate change and environmental pollution.

The aims of declaring a Biodiversity Emergency are to foster stronger partnerships with local stakeholders, encourage collaboration on critical issues, to mobilise the community, increase volunteer engagement and raise public awareness.

The Broads Nature Recovery Strategy and its delivery plan will be key in delivering and monitoring change.

Iconic Broads species such as the Swallowtail butterfly (*Swallowtail caterpillar pictured above*) are at risk from warmer, wetter winters, and sea-level rise as a result of climate change. The greater frequency and intensity of storms will also increase the risk of sewage runoff in the Broads. These multiple stressors threaten the survival of some plants and animals.

Read more on our website:

www.broads-authority.gov.uk/news/broads-authority-declares-a-biodiversity-emergency

Recent awards

The achievements of our Education Officer Nick Sanderson and volunteer Kath Warner were recognised with two awards for their outstanding work for the Authority.

Volunteer Kath received the 'Saving Species' award at the Norfolk Community Biodiversity Awards (2024). The award, sponsored by the RSPB, recognises individual or group efforts to improve the situation for wildlife species. Kath started volunteering in 1994 with the species monitoring programme which has helped to shape our understanding of Broads' wildlife populations.

Our Education Officer, Nick, received

a national 'Campaign for National Parks Protector Award' last year for inspiring young people and leading community nature recovery at Barton Turf Adventure Centre.

Nick (*pictured right*) has worked tirelessly for the Authority for 21 years and created the Authority's Education Programme from scratch, which has inspired thousands of people to connect with the Broads. His dedication has fostered lasting connections with schools, community groups and charities, changing the lives of people from diverse backgrounds and young people who cannot usually access the Broads.

We would like to thank Kath and Nick for their hard work over the years.

