

# Navigation Committee

03 April 2025

Agenda item number 11

## Chief Executive's report and current issues

Report by Chief Executive

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### Purpose

To provide a briefing on significant matters relating to the maintenance and management of the waterways.

### Broads Plan context

All strategic actions under Theme C: Maintaining and enhancing the navigation.

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## Contents

1.	Updated Tolls On-Line System	2
2.	National Park Grant	3
3.	Navigation patrolling and performance targets	3
4.	Sunken and abandoned vessel update	3
5.	Planning enforcement update	3
	Appendix 1 – Rangers' exercise of powers analysis	5
	Appendix 2 – Ranger duties: total time allocated and actual days	7
	Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 17 March 2025	9
	Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 09 January 2025	10
	Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for navigation offences since 09 January 2025	11

# 1. Updated Tolls On-Line System

- 1.1. The updated tolls on-line system was delivered on time and at a modest cost of £7,750 with a total project cost of £28,600 which covered the upgrade of the core system, its initial assessment and configuration of the cloud environment. It means that the Authority has a supported environment, ensuring reliability & performance, high availability and enhanced security, removing the need to maintain and replace multiple on-premises servers. The new system makes it easier for toll payers to pay on-line. Every printed toll account had a unique 8-digit reference number on it which, when used in conjunction with their Broads Authority reference number, allows boat owners to instantly create an online account and to pay their tolls. The previous system required a PIN letter to be printed, enveloped, franked, and posted out, that process and related costs is now redundant.
- 1.2. There are considerable administrative and cost advantages to the Authority from on-line payments. For example, while it costs £1.23 to post an individual toll reminder, all online accounts were emailed out at a total cost of 86 pence.
- 1.3. As of 13 March, 315 additional owners had signed up to Tolls Online since the new system went live. 1,698 payments have been processed, 1,058 (62.3%) of those were online payments. Online payment is up 49% on the same period last year.
- 1.4. A couple of issues have arisen this year: requests for staged payments and the charges for hired picnic boats.
- 1.5. **Staged Payments**

The Broads Authority has not offered staged payments for all private boat owners because of the increased administrative cost, risk of defaulted/non-payments and the charge being payable in full on all vessels on the water for more than 28 days in a season.
- 1.6. We recognise the financial pressures that some of our owners are under. Up until now when there are exceptional circumstances such as severe financial or personal problems, we will work with boat owners to achieve compliance in a timely manner and have offered to spread the cost over a period of three months from April to June.
- 1.7. The issue was last discussed with Committee in June 2023 when the members did not support offering staged payments to all private owners.
- 1.8. Having given the matter careful consideration, the Authority is now prepared to offer a three-stage payment schedule to those that have requested this facility because of financial hardship. The payments will be due on 1 April, 1 May and 1 June, and subject to the addition of an administrative fee of £25 per year. This fee will help to offset some of the increased costs of collecting staged payments.
- 1.9. This arrangement will be for an initial trial year, and we will report back to the Committee on its performance.

#### **1.10. Picnic Boats**

One of the more recent developments in the hire boat industry has been the development of picnic style day boats. Picnic boats often include a toilet, hot and cold running water, a sink, a kettle and hob. Their primary use is as a day boat and they are charged the day boat toll.

1.11. This issue of the charges for day boats and hired motor cruisers was discussed in the 2005 Tolls Review. The charges for motor cruisers were reduced in recognition of the importance of vessels serving as the primary accommodation for a Broads holiday and the decline in their numbers.

1.12. The Tolls Team have identified a few boats that appear to be incorrectly registered as motor cruisers rather than day boats and they will be following this up during the year.

## **2. National Park Grant**

2.1. At the time of writing the Authority was still waiting for formal notification of its National Park Grant for 2025/26. The indications are that there will be a reduction in revenue grant offset in part by a capital allocation. This may provide an opportunity for investment in improving facilities for the boating public.

## **3. Navigation patrolling and performance targets**

3.1. The report of the significant use of powers by the Rangers is in Appendix 1, and the range of duties undertaken by the Ranger Team in Appendix 2. While average navigation/ countryside splits are still higher on the navigation side, with planned work now underway on the countryside sites this figure is moving into line with the 80:20 target.

## **4. Sunken and abandoned vessel update**

4.1. There have been a relatively large number of vessels sunk over this period, many being vessels left in wild moorings and either filled with rain or caught up during high tides, leading them to sink. Ownership details for the vessels are being pursued where possible. Where the owners of a sunken vessel are known, we have worked with them to raise the vessels.

4.2. There are two vessels requiring external contractor to raise due to the size of the vessels. As with the other vessels, we will seek to recover the costs for removal from the owners.

## **5. Planning enforcement update**

5.1. There are no further enforcement matters with navigation implications to report.

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Date of report: 18 March 2025

Appendix 1 – Rangers exercise of powers analysis

Appendix 2 – Ranger duties total time allocated and actual days

Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 17/03/2025

Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 09/01/2025

Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for navigation offences since 09/01/2025 09  
January 2025

## Appendix 1 – Rangers’ exercise of powers analysis

**Table 1**

<b>Verbal warnings</b>	<b>Wroxham launch</b> Wroxham and upper Bure	<b>Irstead launch</b> Ant	<b>Ludham launch</b> Hickling, Potter Heigham, upper Thurne	<b>Ludham launch 2</b> lower Thurne and lower Bure	<b>Norwich launch</b> Norwich and upper Yare	<b>Hardley Launch</b> Reedham, Chet and middle Yare	<b>Burgh St Peter launch</b> Oulton Broad and upper/middle Waveney	<b>Breydon launch</b> Breydon water, lower Waveney and Yare
Care and caution	76	53	14	60	24	2	34	
Speed	1736	699	408	334	150	80	171	44
Other	241	88	15	19	153	15	33	36

**Table 2**

<b>Written warnings</b>	<b>Wroxham launch</b>	<b>Irstead launch</b>	<b>Ludham launch</b>	<b>Ludham launch 2</b>	<b>Norwich launch</b>	<b>Hardley Launch</b>	<b>Burgh St Peter launch</b>	<b>Breydon launch</b>
Care and caution	1	3			1			3
Speed	35	1		4	4	2	3	1
Other	17	26	5	3	2	22	10	5
Special directions	46	10	1		25	60	191	89

**Table 3**

Launch patrols	Wroxham launch	Irstead launch	Ludham launch	Ludham launch 2	Norwich launch	Hardley Launch	Burgh St Peter launch	Breydon launch
Launch staffed by ranger	214	211	198	197	205	191	204	214
Volunteer patrols			2				3	
IRIS reports	19	8	7	10	9	17	8	26

**Table 4**

Broads Control total calls

Contact method	Number of calls
Telephone	18,498
VHF	2,538
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,036</b>

## Appendix 2 – Ranger duties: total time allocated and actual days

**Table 1**

Broads Authority corporate duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Training	122	93.65
Broads Control	362	277.30
Team meetings, work planning	318	302.14
Partnership working	76	15.68
Assisting other sections	76	37.91
Billets and boatsheds	25	16.55
Launch – general		8.48
Trailers - general		1.69
Vehicle maintenance		5.41
Other equipment repair		9.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>768.53</b>

**Table 2**

Navigation duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Patrolling	2136	1740.59
Escorts	44	27.50
Prosecution files	0	20.07
Bankside tree management	108	48.34
Obstruction removal	26	13.45
Channel markers and buoys	30	17.06
Signs and boards maintenance	34	32.97
Adjacent waters	96	72.77
Reactive mooring maintenance	100.5	42.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>2574.5</b>	<b>2015.05</b>

**Table 3**

Conservation, recreation, countryside maintenance

<b>Work area</b>	<b>Annual allocation (days)</b>	<b>Actual days to date</b>
Fen management	146	45.95
Lake, riverbank restoration	100	0.00
Invasive species control	32.5	1.28
Other conservation work	145	64.86
Pollution response		2.09
Visitor site maintenance	194	146.72
Public Engagement	97	59.26
Public footpath work	38	11.25
Education work	69	2.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>821.5</b>	<b>334.26</b>

**Team total up to 04 March 2025**

Percentage Navigation: 86%

Percentage National Park: 14%



## Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 17 March 2025

Description	Location found	Action	Notice affixed	Result
Motor Cruiser	Old River Yare, Thorpe	Vessel sunk at owners moorings	No	Not affecting the navigation
Motor Cruiser	Sutton/Stalham cut	Hull only, marked with yellow posts	No	Hazard removed as part of reedbed creation project
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Trowse	Vessel sunk behind rail bridge wooden fenders	Yes	Will be raised at next spring low water
Motor Cruiser	Polkeys Mill, Lower Yare	Vessel sunk in channel. Divers engaged to remove vessel	Yes	Vessel scheduled to be removed from 24/03/25
Sailing Barge	Berney Arms	Vessel sunk just outside channel. Removing while equipment in area for vessel above.	Yes	As above
Motor Cruiser	Cantley	Vessel sunk at mooring	No	Raised by owners using insurance
Motor cruiser	Wensum, downstream of rail bridge	Vessel sunk at mooring, marked with buoys	No	Waiting for kit to be in area to remove
Motor cruiser	Thrope Island, Yare	Vessel sunk at mooring	Yes	Vessel raised and recovered
Dayboat	Beauchamp Arms River Yare	Vessel sunk on wild mooring	Yes	Vessel raised and recovered
Auxiliary Yacht	Langley Dyke, River Yare	Vessel sunk at wild mooring	Yes	Waiting for kit to be in area to remove

## Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 09 January 2025

Type of vessel	Fined	Costs awarded	Victim surcharge	Compensation
Sailing	£440.00	£220.00	£176.00	£197.26
Motor	£120.00	£100.00	£48.00	£332.46
Sailing	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£169.20
Motor	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£424.81
Motor	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£221.64
Auxiliary Yacht	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£163.92
Motor	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£313.99
Sailing x2	£660.00	£200.00	£264.00	£124.08 & £90.24
Motor	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£443.28
Motor + Not Registered	£440.00	£200.00	£176.00	£277.05
Aux Yacht + Motor	£440.00	£200.00	£176.00	£163.92 & £387.87
Aux Yacht + Not Registered	£660.00	£200.00	£264.00	£300.57
Motor	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£277.05
Motor + Not Registered	£440.00	£200.00	£176.00	£240.11
Motor	£440.00	£200.00	£176.00	£221.64
Motor	£220.00	£200.00	£88.00	£221.64
Sailing x2	£660.00	£200.00	£264.00	£124.08 & £90.24

## Appendix 5 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for navigation offences since 09 January 2025

Type of vessel	Offence	Fined	Costs awarded	Victim surcharge	Compensation
Dayboat	Failing to navigate with care and caution, navigating whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs	£120	£540	£96	£0
RIB	Speed	£440	£450	£176	£0
Sports boat	Speeding	£80	£200	£32	£0
Sports boat	Speeding	£300	£270	£120	£0