

Navigation Committee

07 November 2024

Agenda item number 6

Chief Executive's report and current issues

Report by Chief Executive

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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1. Modelling of Flood Risk on the River Bure

- 1.1. The independent report commissioned by the Environment Agency which examines whether extra dredging in specific areas of the upper Bure would help to alleviate flooding risks has been published on the BFI website. A copy of the full 'Bure Loop

Dredging Scenario Report' report along with a summary paper can be found here [Broadland Futures Initiative \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk).

- 1.2. The £13,000 study was commissioned following a public meeting about widespread flooding during the winter of 2023/24. It was funded by a Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid.
- 1.3. The report used hydraulic computer modelling of different possible scenarios to determine the effect of additional dredging (beyond that undertaken by the Broads Authority for the benefit of navigation) of the area known as the 'Bure Loop'. The modelling was based on dredging to depths of 2.5 and 3 metres, almost a metre below the current navigation waterways specification depth. A range of both fluvial and tidal events were explored through the model, as was data collected during Storm Babet.
- 1.4. The modelling report concludes that additional dredging in the Lower Bure does not reduce the risks from flooding in the upper part of the catchment. The most significant impact is an increased risk of tidal flooding at the lower end of the river. Conservative estimates put the cost of the dredging for the Lower Bure beyond the current total annual Environment Agency maintenance budget for the whole of the Broads system. Furthermore, regular dredging would be needed to maintain the new depths. The additional dredging would also need considerable licensing requirements and environmental considerations such as the disposal of large amounts of sediment that exceed those produced during the current yearly Broads Authority dredging programme for navigation. The lack of significant benefits and high costs mean that the work is unlikely to be eligible for central government funding.

2. General Direction update

- 2.1. Following consultation at the Navigation Committee in January this year and with the proposed changes added, the Broads Authority resolved unanimously that a General Direction be put in place, to restrict all commercial vessels over 24m from entering the Broads, subject to a risk assessment to see if such vessels could be safely accommodated without a pilot. (Note: the intention is now for this to apply to all vessels over 24 metres). This was pending checks on the outstanding questions raised in the report.
- 2.2. The questions raised related to whether the "Open Port Duty" which applies to Harbour Authorities by virtue of the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847 would prevent the Authority from putting a restriction on vessels. After seeking legal advice, this does not apply as simply put, the Harbours, Docks and Piers Clauses Act 1847 does not apply to the Broads.
- 2.3. A draft General Direction is currently being produced. As is required, the General Direction must be published in the relevant local press, on the Broads Authority website and be sent to the statutory consultees which includes the Navigation Committee. If any of the statutory consultee's objects within the stipulated notice

period, minimum 42 days, then the matter shall be referred to the Independent Person as appointed jointly by the Broads Authority and the statutory consultees.

3. Swing Bridge opening times

- 3.1. Network rail have advised the Broads Authority of the opening times of the following swing bridges over the Christmas 2024 period:

Reedham Swing Bridge

Closes to navigation 18:00 Christmas Eve

Re-Opens to navigation during daylight hours on Christmas Day and Boxing Day. During the hours of darkness it will be closed.

Re-Opens to navigation 24/7 from 06:00 on 27 December 2024.

Somerleyton Swing Bridge

Will be left open to navigation from close of rail service on Christmas Eve until 06:00 on 27 December 2024.

Oulton Broad Swing Bridge

Will close to Navigation from 18:00 Christmas Eve and re-open at 06:00 on 27 December 2024.

4. Navigation patrolling and performance targets

- 4.1. The average navigation/countryside splits for the year it set out in Appendix 2. The figures show an 87% Navigation, 13% Countryside split. This variance in the planned programme was due to navigation tasks requiring additional time and staff absence. During the winter works program the variance will be corrected.

5. Sunken and abandoned vessel update

- 5.1. The sunken and abandoned update is contained in Appendix 3. This has been a busy period for abandoned and sunken vessels, most of which have been resolved or vessels removed by the Authority. We have issued one unserviceable vessel notice.

6. Planning enforcement update

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

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Date of report: 18 October 2024

Background papers: [Bure Loop Dredging Scenario Report](#)

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 02 October
2024/10/2024

Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 02/10/2024
05 September 2024

Appendix 1 – Rangers exercise of powers analysis

Table 1

Verbal warnings	Wroxham launch Wroxham and upper Bure	Irstead launch Ant	Ludham launch Hickling, Potter Heigham, upper Thurne	Ludham launch 2 lower Thurne and lower Bure	Norwich launch Norwich and upper Yare	Hardley Launch Reedham, Chet and middle Yare	Burgh St Peter launch Oulton Broad and upper/middle Waveney	Breydon launch Breydon water, lower Waveney and Yare
Care and caution	76	52	13	56	24	2	34	
Speed	1609	647	393	326	150	77	157	37
Other	208	83	13	18	153	13	31	10

Table 2

Written warnings	Wroxham launch	Irstead launch	Ludham launch	Ludham launch 2	Norwich launch	Hardley Launch	Burgh St Peter launch	Breydon launch
Care and caution	1	3			1			3
Speed	27	1		3	4	2	3	1
Other	10	15	5	3	2	16	8	5
Special directions	46	6	1		25	60	191	79

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	183	183	174	174	178	168	176	183
Volunteer patrols			1				2	
IRIS reports	14	6	4	9	7	14	7	23

Table 4

Broads Control total calls

Contact method	Number of calls
Telephone	13,390
VHF	1,975
Total	15,365

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	52.30
Broads Control	362	192.97
Team meetings, work planning	318	189.22
Partnership working	76	15.14
Assisting other sections	76	32.16
Billets and boatsheds	25	5.68
Launch – general		4.70
Trailers - general		0.27
Vehicle maintenance		4.46
Other equipment repair		3.45
Total	979	500.34

Table 2

Navigation duties

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Patrolling	2136	1355.86
Escorts	44	13.45
Prosecution files	0	13.78
Bankside tree management	108	20.71
Obstruction removal	26	11.69
Channel markers and buoys	30	12.94
Signs and boards maintenance	34	25.27
Adjacent waters	96	66.82
Reactive mooring maintenance	100.5	28.85
Total	2574.5	1549.17

Table 3

Conservation, recreation, countryside maintenance

Work area	Annual allocation (days)	Actual days to date
Fen management	146	15.07
Lake, riverbank restoration	100	0.00
Invasive species control	32.5	0.27
Other conservation work	145	30.27
Pollution response		2.09
Visitor site maintenance	194	111.99
Public Engagement	97	57.23
Public footpath work	38	9.49
Education work	69	2.84
Total		

Team total up to 30 September 2024

Percentage Navigation: 87%

Percentage National Park: 13%

Appendix 3 – Sunken and abandoned vessels current position as at 02 October 2024

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	Not affecting the navigation
Motor Cruiser	River Yare, Trowse	Vessel sunk behind rail bridge wooden fenders	Yes	Not affecting the navigation
Motor Cruiser	Barton	Vessel Sunk	Yes	Raised by owner
Aux Yacht	Oulton Broad	Vessel sunk at mooring	No	Raised by owner
Motor Cruiser	River Wensum, Trowse	Sunk at mooring, marked with yellow buoy	No	Waiting for dredging kit to be in area.
Aux Yacht	Oulton Broad	Believed abandoned	Yes	Vessel removed
Aux Yacht	Potter Heigham	Believed abandoned	Yes	Vessel removed
Aux Yacht	Somerleyton	Believed abandoned	Yes	Vessel removed
Motor Cruiser	Thorpe Marshes	Believed abandoned	Yes	Awaiting expiry of AVN.
Motor Cruiser	Wensum	Unserviceable Vessel found drifting	Yes	Vessel removed

Appendix 4 – Prosecutions dealt with in court for non-payment of tolls since 05 September 2024

Type of vessel	Fined	Costs awarded	Victim surcharge	Compensation
Motor	£40.00	£100.00	£16.00	£391.46
Sailing	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£52.00