



Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association

SPRING NEWSLETTER

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Key concerns for Broads navigators

- *Dredging is needed throughout the Broads*
- *Moorings continue to be lost or fall into disrepair*
- *Methods being used by the Flood Alleviation Project are depriving navigators of many informal moorings*
- *Banks and staites need maintenance*
- *Broads Authority needs to find money to maintain and improve the navigation from sources other than river tolls*
- *Broads Authority needs to listen to local opinion*

Slow Progress on BA Private Bill

There is no need to change the headline from the Winter Newsletter! Since our last report the contents of the agreement between the RYA, BMF and Broads Authority have been incorporated into the main body of the Bill. A revised version of the Bill can be downloaded from the Parliament web site. A link is provided on the Broads Authority home page. The RYA / BMF agreement is available on the Campaigns page of the NSBA website.

At the time of writing (Feb 2008) the Bill is blocked in the House of Commons by objections from local MPs who want a debate on the Commons Committee rec-

ommendation that Defra and the BA should consider introducing an element of local democracy into appointments to the Broads Authority. Dr Packman rejected the suggestion because he felt that any change in the constitution of the Broads Authority would have to be repeated in “the other National Parks”. NSBA notes firstly that the Broads is not a National Park and secondly that the Authority has not been afraid to be a trail blazer in the past.

If the Bill passes its Third Reading in the Commons it will move to the Lords. A ten day period will be available for lodging petitions

against the Bill in the Lords.

The NSBA General Purpose Committee will not oppose the Bill in the Lords. It is satisfied that the agreement between the BA and the RYA and BMF has been incorporated on the face of the Bill. Thus the main criticism of the agreement by the Commons Opposed Bill Committee—that it might be unenforceable—has been overcome. Changes to the appointment method for the Navigation Committee could create concerns. We will be watching closely to see what impact the new system has when appointments are made in June.

The Right of Navigation

The law relating to the right to navigate is complex—well beyond the range of this writer’s understanding. There have been disputes about the right of access by boat to parts of the Broads over the years.

A recent dispute about the Authority’s proposal to fill in parts of two dykes at Jensen’s Island at Oulton Broad has brought the topic back onto the radar.

The most recent attempt to clarify the extent of navigation rights on the Broads was a report presented to the Navigation Committee in 1992 by Broads Authority Solicitor, Keir Hounsome. That report was accepted at the time and has been the basis on which the Authority has made decisions in recent years.

As a result of the questions that are now being asked

the Authority has decided to obtain an opinion from a QC. The NSBA is keeping in touch with this process and has refreshed its understanding of the 1992 report.

One interesting complication is that many of the cases about access in the past were settled before the origin of sections of the Broads as flooded peat diggings was understood.

NSBA Rules

The revised version of the Association's Rules was adopted at the AGM on December 3rd 2007.

The revised rules are published on the NSBA website and printed in the 2008 Green Book. The intention behind the revision was to maintain the spirit of the old rules but make clear the processes and procedures that would be followed to operate them.

BA Consultation - Development Control Policies

Between 31st December 2007 and 11th February 2008 the BA ran a consultation on their proposed Development Control Policies. This is a further stage in the development of the Local Development Framework, the latest approach to the UK planning system.

NSBA submitted a response welcoming the broad statements of intent aimed at fostering the economy of the area but fearing that the greater number of restrictive clauses could frustrate those intentions.

We said that restrictions on dredging disposal which exceeded the requirements of the Waste Management Regulations would be inappropriate and that the policy on development of new marinas appeared to be worded to make it virtually impossible for any proposed scheme to meet the many requirements.

We commented that the policy on residential moorings was worded in such a way as to suggest that other, non-residential moorings might be removed due to reasons of landscape,

local amenity or failure to contribute to the Authority's spatial strategy or strategic objectives.

We criticised the policy on bank protection as poorly worded, partly tautological and tending to confuse the Planning and Navigation roles of the Authority.

We supported the Authority's efforts to get government agreement to treat the Broads as a special case under PPS25—Development and Flood Risk.

".. a radical change to the method of appointment to the Navigation Committee after the conclusion of negotiations"

Appointments to the Navigation Committee

The Broads Authority agreed on 25th January 2008 to introduce a new method of appointing members of the Navigation Committee. Applications will be invited from anyone who wishes to apply. A selection panel comprising the Chairman of the BA, the Chairman of IWAC, the Chief Executive of BMF and the Chairman of the

NSBA will shortlist and interview applicants before making recommendations to the Authority. The Authority has also said it intends to consult "user representatives" about the recommended appointments before making its decision.

A key element of the agreement between the BA and

the boating organisations was the clarification and strengthening of the role of the Navigation Committee. Introducing a radical change in the appointment process to the committee after the conclusion of negotiations and without any prior indication of that intention has soured the relationship between the boaters and the Authority.

NSBA Regattas

The Ramuz Trophy will be sailed for under the burgee of the Norfolk Punt Club in YBODs on Barton Broad on Saturday September 6th 2008.

The Youth Regatta will be hosted by Waveney and Oulton Broad Yacht Club on Saturday 30th August 2008.

For more information see page 43 of the Green Book.

NSBA is grateful to the two clubs for volunteering to host the events.

Broads Forum to be reconstituted.

At its meeting on 14th February the Broads Forum considered recommendations that its membership structure should be altered. The total number of members would be increased from 22 to 24 and the number of representatives drawn from organisations concerned with "water based recreation" would be reduced from 5 to 3. NSBA wrote to the Chairman of the Forum, Jonathan Bowman objecting to this re-

duction in representation and questioning why the Broads Society and RSPB should be granted automatic representation while NSBA must go into a pool of fourteen boating organisations in order to seek representation.

NSBA is concerned that this is yet another change that will reduce the voice of navigation in the affairs of the Authority. It has made both Mr Bowman and Dr

Packman aware that boaters care passionately about the Broads and, if denied their voice within the structures of the Authority, will make it heard elsewhere. NSBA members tend also to be members of bodies like the BS, wildlife trusts and RSPB. The BA executive seems to take a very simplistic view of the structure and allegiances of its stakeholders. NSBA hopes this attitude is not shared by the Authority members

NSBA Recruitment Campaign

The NSBA is running a recruitment campaign. There are approximately 10,500 toll payers on the Broads and NSBA has just over 1000 individual members. This means there are many people out there who either do not know about the NSBA or cannot see the point in joining.

Mike Evans says, "To be effective we have to have your support. You may already be a member of a

club or association that is affiliated to the NSBA and feel that there is no need to join as an individual member. Political influence is a numbers game and it is important for us to demonstrate sizeable support. The more members we can point to, the louder our voice."

The Broads Authority have kindly agreed to include an NSBA recruitment flyer in each toll demand sent to boat owners this spring.

Anglia Afloat will include a leaflet in each copy of the March edition.

If you want copies to pass to other members of your club or moorings, contact Phil Ollier who will be pleased to send you some.

Please help to boost membership by persuading friends at your club or people who share your moorings to become members.

NSBA will be distributing 23,000 recruitment leaflets this spring

Nic Asher retains 470 World Championship

NSBA congratulates Nic Asher (WOBYC) and his crew Elliott Willis on retaining the 470 World Championship title in Melbourne. In a close contest they clinched the title by a narrow margin by winning the last race of the series.

GB 470 Olympics representatives, Nick Rogers and Joe Glanfield finished in ninth place. Asher said, "The World Championships were our primary focus for this year after missing out on selection for the Olympics. Now we want to make

sure Great Britain wins the gold medal in Beijing and we will be helping Nick and Joe as their training partners in the run up to the Games as well as getting our own campaign sorted for 2012 selection."

Defra maintains Broads Authority Funding

In December 2007 the BA was told by Defra that it would continue to receive additional funding for the next three years. For the last three years Defra has contributed an extra £500k per annum "for the good

management of the waterways". Now £500k in 2008/9 and £400k in each of the following two years will be provided. The toll level for 2008/9 had been set on the assumption that this money would not be forthcoming.

Dr Packman has told the Navigation Committee that the BA will spend half the additional funds on dredging navigable rivers and broads, on the basis that it contributes to the overall ecosystem.

Club Secretaries

Did you know that you can maintain the information about your club on the NSBA web site yourself? Contact Phil Ollier or the webmaster, Paul Douglas, webmaster@thegreenbook.org.uk, for details.

Joint Membership

The old NSBA rules and the newly adopted ones both allow for two types of membership, individual and affiliated organisation.

For some time now there has been a practice (not sanctioned by the rules) of

allowing couples to join for a single subscription.

When the new rules were being formulated, the Committee debated whether to formalise this by changing the rules and introducing some form of joint member-

ship. The decision was taken not to introduce a formal joint membership. It was also decided that no further applications in joint names would be accepted. Existing memberships in joint names will continue to be listed in the Green Book.

Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association

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Guarding the future of Broads boating

From the Chairman

The Broads Authority Private Bill is struggling to pass its third reading in the Commons. After lengthy negotiations Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association and the Royal Yachting Association have no objections to the Bill as now re-drafted, but one wonders whether it was at all necessary. It has been enormously expensive, divisive and will it really make any positive difference? The impression of the boating fraternity is that this was just another way of placing restrictions on boating, trying to reduce its importance to the Broads and in the eyes of some of getting rid of it all together. The Bill was promoted as being about safety. No one can argue with safety and if all it had dealt with was the Boat Safety Scheme and Third Party Insurance it would probably have been law by now. As it is, it drags its weary way through Parliament causing more dissent as it goes.

In order to protect toll payers, the Royal Yachting Association, Inland Waterways Association and British Marine Federation negotiated changes within the Bill and entered into a side Agreement with the Authority, principally

strengthening the constitution and position of the Navigation Committee; the bulk of this Agreement is now included in the redrafted Bill. At this point we felt that a lot had been achieved, indeed that our argument had carried the day. This is why we would have to see very clear changes that impinge on this Agreement before we could object further. This should not preclude any individuals from objecting or continuing to object if they can demonstrate that they would be disadvantaged by the Bill.

The recent decision of the Authority to change the method by which appointments are made to the Navigation Committee has been seen by many to be against the spirit of the Agreement. NSBA believes the intention to make changes to that process should have been made clear during the negotiations, not sprung on everyone at this late stage against the advice of, amongst others, the NSBA, Broads Society and the Broads Hire Boat Federation.

One final straw has been added to the toll payer's back. The Broads Forum is the mechanism for airing

- **The NSBA has a voice on the Broads Authority but needs more information and support from representative boat-owners.**
- **The NSBA supports the Broadland joint interests of recreation and conservation with navigation but urges balance and fairness by all.**
- **The NSBA is lobbying for improvements on issues including: dredging; moorings; river work and funding for navigation priorities.**
- **The NSBA stands firm against threats to close any part of the Broads navigation.**
- **The NSBA represents 43 affiliated organisations and more than 1000 individual members.**

the views of all stakeholders in the Broads yet we learn that the level of "water-based recreation" representation on the Forum may soon be reduced. The number of boating representatives has been recommended to fall from five to three and NSBA, with over 1000 individual members and 45 affiliated clubs and organisations, is reduced to sharing representation with thirteen other bodies. At the same time, other similar organisations not connected with boating get automatic places on the Forum. If this proposal is implemented, NSBA will reconsider its position in respect of the Broads Forum.