



# NORFOLK & SUFFOLK BOATING ASSOCIATION

President: R I Card      Chairman: B Falat  
www.thegreenbook.org.uk

**Minutes of the Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association General Purposes Committee Meeting held on Monday 11 April 2022 at 6.30 pm at The River Garden, 36 Yarmouth Road, Norwich, NR7 0EQ**

**Present:** Ben Falat (**BF**), Mark Collins (**MC**), Julia Bower (**JB**), Richard Card (**RiC**), Peter Mantle (**PM**), Robert Middleton (**RM**), Chris Balls (**CB**) Claire Grasby (**CG**)

**Online:** Jamie Campbell (**JC**), Karen Wightman (**KW**),

## 1. Apologies for absence

Brian Wilkins (**BW**), Rachel Card (**RaC**)

**BF** wished to introduce an amended Agenda to the one originally published. This was sent out during Monday afternoon. It was not well met. **JB** explained that the protocol for sending out an Agenda is that it should be received by the members of the committee a week in advance of the meeting so that they can prepare what they might want to contribute. The new Agenda appeared to put a finance report back on when **RaC** had been specifically told not to report to this meeting. **RiC** described the whole debacle as a shambles. Some members had not received the Agenda and it was decided to stick with the original and for the Chair to take insertions wherever best possible.

## 2. Minutes

Two changes had to be made to the Minutes of 28 February 2022. First, Jamie Campbell appeared as both present in the room and online. The former has been removed. Second, **RaC** requested that the words 'due to an accumulation of disparate items mostly related to lockdown issued (eg low recovery in advertising income and return of expenditure on events).' be deleted from the record as she had not reported them at the meeting.

## 3. Matters arising

**Item 9** – **RiC** reminded the meeting that we still need to do a skills audit before allocating duties to members of GPC.

**Item 16** – **RiC** asked if **BF** had gone ahead with NSBA'S nomination for an RYA Award. **BF** thought that his nomination would be carried over from last year but it was suggested he contact RYA and make certain of that. **Action BF**

**Item 7** – **RiC** said that although thanks for contributions to the Green Book by **KW** and **PM** were minuted, the other volunteers were omitted. Thanks go to **CE**, **RaC**, **MC** and **BF** for their invaluable help.

## 4. Chairman's brief spoken report

**BF** said that NSBA appears to have lost some direction. There are campaigns to address but we

are not doing visibly enough about them. We have a list of duties but there are too many for the current GPC to cover adequately. It would be better to prioritise a few and achieve them efficiently. The skills audit and the duties all need focusing on. **JB** said that the purpose of the NSBA is to promote and protect the navigation for all boaters: it is quite clear. **RiC** said that the Strategies Group had drawn up a list of organisations that we need to have a rapport with on certain occasions eg Norfolk Wildlife Trust. **RM** would like to see the list. This had been sent with the proposed amended Agenda. He said that we do not talk together as a group often enough but there is no reason why we do not contact each other and discuss certain matters.

**RiC** said that in the past the adopted procedure set out in 2012 was that all reports should be written and sent to GPC at least twenty four hours before the start of any meeting, and that we should return to that. **BF** will create a small group to discuss the way forward. **Action BF**

## 5. To receive the Membership and Administrator's Report (JB)

**JB** had previously distributed the Membership Report but due to ongoing problems with the googlegroup no one had received it. **JB** had not realised this and apologised.

There has not been the usual response to the flyer sent out with the tolls letters as in previous years. There is no obvious reason for this.

The Horning Boat Show is taking place on Saturday 30 April from 1000 to 1600. **JB** has booked a pitch, which is free to NSBA. **JB** to send out an email to GPC requesting volunteers to help with our pitch. NSBA owns a gazebo which needs to be located beforehand. **Action BF and JB**

**JB** has booked The Arlington again for the FOE next year and the Holiday Inn for the AGM.

## 6. Nav Com papers

**BF** started by saying that he thought the issues on the Nav Com agenda are fairly benign this time.

The issue of the safety videos arose. **BW** had commented prior to the meeting that there are still deficiencies. **MC** said that there is a problem about how hired boats treat sailing boats. He said that hire boat operators are cutting corners and not taking sufficient notice of the videos. They need to be promoted and pushed a lot more. One hire boat yard, Hippersons, have set up their booking system so that a booking cannot be completed until the hirer has watched the videos. Other hirers should take a leaf out of their book.

The question of staged toll payments had been raised. **RiC** said that there is a precedent for this with the hire boat companies so it should be possible for individuals. We should also press for online payments.

**MC** suggested that when prosecutions are reported it should not be just the name of a boat but the sail number that is published eg there is more than one boat called Zigzag and it is unfortunate if the wrong boat is recognised as having been fined.

The BA say that it rests with the landowner to control tree growth and they can only deal with growth which overhangs the water. **MC** said that landowners should have a compulsion to allow the BA to cut back tree growth and this suggestion had been included in the response to the Landscapes Review Consultation by the BA.

**MC** referred to the BA Chief Executive's report to the Nav Com which raised the issue of

speeding. **MC** said that the BA can improve how they handle speeding but we can improve what we do. It was suggested that we put something in our next Newsletter and highlight to members the fines for breeches of the speed limits. **RM** asked if a message could be sent to our affiliated clubs setting out the rules and fines of speeding.

**Action JB**

**RiC** said that a compromise has been reached over Barton Staithe. The BA say that the parish council need to get planning permission to change the use to a private staithe. A short strip is to be retained by the BA where the water point is. However, there must be stern on mooring and very short term for taking on water only, particularly well signposted.

## 7. Update on progress re weed on Hickling Broad (MC)

**JB** had circulated some testimonies provided by organisations (two of whom are affiliated to NSBA) who operate on and around Hickling Broad and previously sent to **MC**. As can be seen from the testimonies all of these organisations have had/continue to have problems with weed, whether it be growing, floating or cut.

**MC** had previously circulated a paper on the weed at Hickling. **MC** concluded that more weed is a 'good thing' because it is a sign of improved water quality. He suggested that Hickling Broad would benefit from better signage so that boaters do not venture outside the channel. He said that the firms around the Broad are adapting well to the situation. As suggested in the Minute taken from the Upper Thurne Working Group the BA are willing to assist if the local populace wish to engage in weed collection. He said that the mean rise in water is 16 cms, due to climate change, which stops hire boats going under Potter Heigham bridge rather than the problems with weed. **CB** reminded the meeting that the water levels in the Upper Thurne are controlled by pumping rates from marsh drainage and are not dependent on climate change.

**RiC** reminded the meeting that it was held in *Micklethwait v Vincent* (1892) that not only is there a public right of navigation on Hickling Broad but that it extends outside the marked channel. This is to be brought to attention when NSBA and BA next meet. **MC** said that boaters cannot expect to navigate the whole Broad if it is not safe to do so. **RiC** picked up on what Hickling Broad Sailing Club had said in their testimony about safety especially for children. **JC** drew attention to the testimony of Whispering Reeds and Robin Richardson. Robin Richardson suggests that the problems on the upper Bure coincide with work done on the lower Bure.

## 8. Green Book

**KW** gave a big thank you to everyone who had helped with the Green Book this year. **RaC** has continued to look after the fixtures and **PM** has done an excellent job with the advertisements. There has been some positive feedback.

The one problem that has remained is that some clubs do not respond with their details until the last moment. We recognise that some clubs do not have their AGM's until the New Year. **MC** said that this is unacceptable and that all clubs must be made to deliver by the date requested. **BF** suggested that that was wishful thinking, with everyone working to the same timescales, probably right through approximately to end of February. **KW** is anxious to get the Green Book right.

**KW** asked that we all let her know if we have any spare Green Books. We had a discussion about whether or not we should hand over 52 books to the BA and it was decided that we would not at this stage.

## 9. **Flag Officers' Event**

**JB** reported that we had a good attendance and that the new time of a 6.00 pm start seemed to suit the attendees. The food was good and it was mostly eaten. There was some concern among the guests about the presentation on the Landscape Review for which the focus ranged too far from navigation and too much on farming and agriculture practice (which had been specifically agreed as beyond the scope of NSBA).

The main thrust of the presentation was about farming and agriculture and only the last few minutes related to the navigation. Paul Savage of the Broads Society had prepared a paper with suggested comments for individuals to submit to the Review. This as pre-prepared was subsequently shared by email to attendees while NSBA's approach was to take away a learning exercise for its own submission.

**RM** suggested that in future we have a GPC member on each table. We can reserve a chair. **RM** was also not pleased that the Broom Owners Club had read out a statement which was basically telling NSBA what to do.

The screen and acoustics were fine. Parking was a little difficult but **JB** will send a map out next time with a suggestion to park in Town Close.

## 10. **Roles of GPC members**

This item was dealt with earlier in the meeting.

## 11. **Platinum Jubilee Celebrations**

**BF** wants NSBA to take a lead in the local celebrations and has tried to engineer this. There is no suitable venue for a water event except Oulton Broad. **BF** has been trying to squeeze Suffolk Lieutenancy for information about their parallel Harwich celebrations on 18 June. Several of the local hostelrys are engaged and it is hoped to raise some sponsorship for advertisements. At the moment there is a question about insurance. **BF** would like to run the pageant as a WOBYC event.

All entrants to the Harwich event will receive a pennant. **BF** has been trying to find out what it will look like. He has been looking at a pennant measuring 36 inches by 18 inches at a price of £12.00. **JC** commented that a £10k grant may be available through RYA for Platinum Jubilee celebrations; Mark Pendlington (Suffolk Deputy Lieutenant) may be able to assist; **JC** will provide **BF** with contact details.

## 12. **BA's Waterways Management Strategy and Action Plan (MC)**

**MC** had previously submitted a paper to the GPC. Although this plan was accepted by the BA and again by the Nav Com in June 2021 **MC** does not think it is too late for us to have an input. **BF** again explained that this Action Plan was in the June 2021 Nav Com papers but that gave us only three days to comment and it was not long enough. NSBA had at that time volunteered its engagement to fully scrutinise, however that offer was ignored. It went straight to the BA and was adopted within just three weeks. **BF** had complained that this was bad practice.

The Action Plan sets out dredging requirements, the principles of water management, dredging management techniques. It says that the water levels on Hickling Broad have risen over the years. The BA's current 5-year Plan ends this year and a new Plan is to be set up with greater

annual flexibility and we should transmit these to our clubs. Indeed, we always have done so in the past. There has been a suggestion that Breydon should be dredged to a depth of 2.5 metres but the finance is not available to do this. **JC** suggested that the changed dredging depth with attendant effect on water currents will probably become the single most impactful issue on plant growth throughout the Broads. **BF** concurred that a shallower channel would likely impact wider spread of salinity to the margins with consequent impact on environment.

**RiC** said that we should be clear in our minds what our role is. **MC** said that GPC must all read and analyse the document and come back with our own views. **MC** called on **CG** and **JB** to write articles for Social Media and the Newsletter respectively. This was beyond **CG**'s comfort zone and **JB** did not agree to do it. Following the committee's reading of the document volunteers will be called upon to summarise accordingly into a single source.

**RiC** suggested that this matter be resolved outside of the meeting.

**Action BF**

**13. Date of next meeting**

This will be on Monday 6 June 2022.

**14. AOB**

**RiC** mentioned the Boat Safety Scheme Consultation. Do we want to respond?

**BF** suggested a possibility of holding a team racing event to commemorate Mike Evans. Discussion was deferred for the time being.

**MC** had presented a paper on a proposed Induction Pack for new members of the Committee. He said that at the moment we do not have such a pack and neither do we have some of the documents that should go into it. He said that his paper is a basis for an action plan but needs nominated individuals to prepare certain documents. **RM** said that this is vital. **JB** is to ask GPC members what they would like to sign up for.

**Action JB**

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm.