

# BROADS TOURISM FORUM

the voice of broads tourism businesses

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

4pm – 6pm

Bewilderwood, Horning Road, Hoveton

## Minutes

<p><b>Present:</b> Jamie Campbell – Hamilton Publications (Vice-Chair in the Chair) Tony Howes – Blakes Hire Boating/ Broads Hire Boat Federation Sam Bates – Broads Authority Gina Blaxill – Broads Authority (minutes) Lynne Finnigan – Business Link East Briant Smith – Broads Spirituality James Clabburn – Norfolk Broads.com John Lindsay – Clippesby Hall Debi Key – Greyhound Inn Simon Egan – Bewilderwood Roger Cawdron – British Institute of Innkeeping Barbara Greasley – Norfolk Broads Direct Peter Howe – Broadland Cycle Hire Bryan Read – Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust Bertie Collins – County Council Linda Matthews – Ludham Bridge Studio &amp; Gallery Clare Packer – Visit Norwich Lisa Howard – Visit Norwich Jennie Hawks – Broads and Rivers Open Churches Project Harry May – Maycroft Boat Services Ltd</p>	<p><b>Apologies:</b> Jane Cryer – East of England Tourist Board David McMaster – Awaydays Cris Emberson – Norfolk Tourism Robin Smith – North Norfolk District Council Hilary Nelson – North Norfolk District Council Hamish Melville – Broadland District Council Kirstin Hughes – Broadland District Council Paul Ashdown – Waveney District Council Daniel Thwaites – Barnes Brinkcraft Bruce Hanson – Broads Authority John Packman – Broads Authority Ian Russell – Wroxham Barns</p>
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### ITEM

### ACTION

## **BROADS TOURISM FORUM MEETING**

### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Vice Chairman, Jamie Campbell, apologised for the postponement of the meeting. He reported that he would be acting as chair.

Apologies were read out.

**2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008** (as previously circulated)

The minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 were approved as a correct record

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING**

**Festival of the Broads – 13-20th September 2008**

John Lindsay has taken this on at Clippesby and is coordinating the Festival. Any ideas of events that might be put on during this week should be put to him. Peter Howe mentioned a boat show on 21<sup>st</sup> September.

**4. SHORE MANAGEMENT DISCUSSION**

JC informed the forum of his belief that if any BTF businesses flood, the BTF should be active on their behalf.

Peter Howe commented that the BTF should be involved in future discussions so that everyone is notified of what goes on. Debi Key mentioned that there is a Hickling based group fighting the flooding issue. She suggested that BTF members could be included on their mailing list for updates on their progress. It was agreed that this would be coordinated by the Broads Authority: DK will forward the contact details of the Hickling group to Gina Blaxill, who will make sure BTF members receive updates.

DK

PH suggested that the BTF get on the governmental radar. It was agreed that JC would contact all local MPs and councils on the forum's behalf. Tony Howes voiced concerns that councils were not united on the issue – coordinated action by MPs is needed.

JC

TH asked whether the Broads Authority should be involved with the BTF over the issue. Sam Bates reported that the Broads Authority was already involved.

**5. BEWILDERWOOD – REPORT ON FIRST YEAR**

Simon Egan reported that Bewilderwood has been open for just over a year – it opened on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2007. The first year went phenomenally well. Bewilderwood made a million in a short season.

The rest of the item was conducted via questions and answers. The main points this brought out were:

- The May half term week is going well. In three days Bewilderwood has taken nearly £3,000.
- Bewilderwood will probably use parking attendants this summer.
- An Under Fives area, toilets and new pathways have been put in.
- There are plans to extend Toddlerwood, as this area is the busiest during weekdays.
- Bewilderwood are advertising via radio and Archant.
- At Christmas, there was a “snowy world” and a Father Christmas treehouse. SE does not know if this will be repeated in 2008 as there

were not enough people in 2007.

- Bad weather did not affect Bewilderwood too badly. Visitors seem to be prepared to wait until a good day to visit.
- Fifteen staff are employed on quiet days and forty on busy days. All rangers are first aid trained.
- SE is working on a project to cover the slides in wet weather.
- There will be a minibus scheme on trial in the summer. People will be picked up from Potter Heigham, Ludham, Horning and Wroxham.
- PH reported that cycle hire had done well and has been much helped by Bewilderwood. SE mentioned that a wood had been planted at the back of the park, so five years on there will be a cycle trail there.

## **6. FEEDBACK FROM OS OUTDOOR SHOW – 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> March at NEC**

John Lindsay was contacted in January by Lydia Smith asking if he was interested becoming a partner for the Outdoor Show.

JL's part of the stand cost £300. It was a good opportunity to drum up business and talk to potential customers. JL handed out Clippesby postcards and had a free holiday weekend at a pine lodge up for offer.

860 email addresses were collected. Anyone who spent £100 on leaflets is welcome to these and should contact Lydia.

JL thought it was good that Norfolk had a presence at the show – many people were interested in Norfolk and it was busy. The stand was well manned by people from Norfolk Tourism and the Broads Authority.

JL was in favour of doing the show again. He stated that next time it would be a good idea to get clued up beforehand as visitors wanted specific and relevant information. It would be good to have hand outs detailing canoe trails and walking routes.

JL stressed the importance of relevant people and businesses attending OS and PH thanked JL for going.

## **7. A DAY IN THE BROADS CAMPAIGN: Update**

Clare Packer, the Head of Marketing at Visit Norwich, reported that the production of the campaign's leaflet is nearly finished.

Originally a 20 page booklet was planned. However, due to lack of finance this has been reduced to 12 pages. The booklet is a third of A4 but opens out to A3. It is now at the proofreading stage. A draft version of the booklet was circulated for BTF members to see.

Requests/suggestions from previous BTF meetings have been taken onboard. Walking, cycling, boating, family fun, gardens, nature and more have been included in the booklet. It also contains discount vouchers.

BTF contacts and the Sustainable Development Fun have contributed financially to the campaign. Sustainable Focus gave £750 towards the booklet. David James of Global Tour Solutions contributed £250.

175,000 copies of the booklet are to be distributed via Leisure Target in early June. Copies will be mailed to all partners. Thirteen new partners have joined since last update, including the Greyhound Inn, Broadhouse Hotel and Richardsons, Stalham. PH suggested the booklet could be launched/coined with the new cycle hire leaflets for Broadland Cycle Hire.

CP will be in discussion with Archant about an EDP feature for the campaign on the week beginning 16<sup>th</sup> June. CP is hoping to pull in promotions via the Visit Norwich website.

PH praised the campaign and commented that something similar next year would be a good idea and it would be wise to start thinking about it no later than November – other similar publications come out earlier than June. JC commented that mid March would be a good time as it would reap the most benefits.

CP thanked Lisa Howard for her work on the campaign. It was agreed to think about and look at next year's prospects at the next meeting.

ALL

## **8. BROADS AUTHORITY WEBSITE**

Sam Bates reported that the Broads Authority would like a better website for tourists. The current website was commissioned two years ago with central government money and a tight criteria. There have been comments that it is overly complex and not too visitor friendly.

The BA have decided to work with the same company that produced the current website to ensure that the initial investment is not wasted. The domain name of the new website will be [www.enjoythebroads.com](http://www.enjoythebroads.com). Its function will be to attract people to the Broads. It will incorporate accommodation information and places to eat, which are missing from the current site.

The head of communications at the BA has talked to Tony Howes, who represented tourism businesses at the meeting. After the meeting at the Forum, other people are welcome to forward suggestions.

A basic entry on the website will be free for businesses and a highlighted one will incur a fee. The BA do not expect to make money from the website and it will not replace the Broadcaster. The BA is keen to incorporate moving video images onto the site and welcomes any suggestions from BTF members.

JL wanted to know whether the website would work as a promotional tool. SB said that it would and that the website would provide links to outside sites.

CP raised the issue of duplication with the websites of Norfolk Tourism and Visit Norwich and suggested it would be a good idea to communicate with them. SB agreed.

The target date for the completion of the website is April 2009.

## **9. REPRESENTATION OF BROADS TOURISM FORUM ON THE BROADS FORUM**

JC informed the forum that he had been advised that the BTF has a place on the Broads Forum. It has no statutory power but is a good network for exchanging views. Whoever represents the BTF on it needs to link properly with the BTF and serve the BTF rather than their own interests.

Mike Barnes is willing to take this position. Bryan Read queried this, stating that Mike Barnes does not usually attend BTF meetings. TH commented that the BTF representative needs to be agreed by tourism bodies, including Visit Norwich and Norfolk Tourism.

## **10. THE ROLE OF BUSINESS LINK EAST**

Lynne Finnigan, Business Advisor for Tourism and Leisure at Business Link East, thanked Chris Haycock and Bruce Hanson for inviting her to speak.

Prior to working for BLE, LF was Tourism Partnership Project Manager at Brecon Beacons and Tourism Development Officer at Medway in Kent. Now she is based in Norwich.

LF explained the concept of Business Link East:

- It is led by experienced business people and gives business support to small to medium sized businesses
- It is government funded through EEDA
- It gives individual and impartial advice, mostly for free.
- BLE does not fund businesses directly but can give links to people who can help.
- Business Link has consolidated into one brand across the Eastern region
- It has helped 81% of small businesses survive beyond three years.
- It can organize skills training and development.
- It can provide links to specialists e.g. in retail, farming, ICT
- Provides advisory email newsletter 'The Loop' (at a slight cost)

LF presented two case studies. At Strattons Hotel, Swaffham, BLE helped fund marketing and gave training to the staff. BLE provided similar services for Cranmer Cottages, Fakenham, which consequentially won the regional Enjoy England Award for Excellence in 2007.

LF asked who had used BLE before. Two members had. SE commented that BLE's advice had been spot on.

Business Link East's website address is [www.businesslink.gov.uk/east](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/east)

## **11. BROADS SPIRITUALITY AND ROLE OF THE CHAPLAIN**

Briant Smith explained that his role as chaplain began three years ago. After receiving a copy of the Broads Plan, he realized there was a market in people looking for spiritual experiences stimulated by the natural environment and wrote to the Broads Authority about it.

BS distributed a flyer detailing his role, which includes:

- Being there for people
- Producing publications

- Running courses
- Getting people to stop and look and interact with the Broads actively, e.g. through drawing and writing

BS also offers away days for staff to further their development. He is currently looking for places for next year's courses and is considering Horsea or Beccles. His day courses encourage a positive response to the Broads.

BS is keen for work experience to gain better insights into what it is like to work in various places/businesses across the Broads.

REcreation, BS' mini guide to the Broads, is just about to be published. This enlarges on BS' flyer. BS is also starting to write Broadside, thirteen booklets with different themes, for example, mills and bridges. His works are distributed in Tourism Information Centres and BS promotes them by going to outlets. JC requested BS bring copies of his publications to show the Broads Tourism Forum when he has finished them.

BS

## **12. GREAT YARMOUTH PORT AUTHORITY STAKEHOLDERS**

JC reported that for years the BTF has tried to arrange to have pontoon mooring facilities in Great Yarmouth for visitors from the sea. Marina development of the Waveney and Hamilton docks at Lowestoft will create a demand for visitors facilities in nearby ports. Neighbours need Great Yarmouth's facilities and the BTF needs to help.

BC commented that this is something he would like to see happen – it would bring different a clientele to Great Yarmouth. Barry Colman will help with this too and a result will be found to please all.

## **13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Jennie Hawks informed the forum that Open Churches week would take place on the first week of August. It will be opening on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> with a classic car rally from the cathedral to Ludham.

A number of members raised queries about the accounts. These will be circulated when dealt with by Daniel Thwaites. JC reported that the BTF was in funds.

DT

## **10. DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date and venue for the next meeting are still to be confirmed.

ALL