

Broads Tourism Forum

Notes of the meeting held on 28 March 2007
at Whitlingham Country Park, Trowse, Norwich

Present: Daniel Thwaites (Barnes Brinkcraft – Chairman), Jamie Campbell (Hamilton Publications – Vice-Chairman), Crispian Emberson (Norfolk Tourism), William Bent (A T Bent Properties), David McMaster (Awayadays), Jennie Hawks (Broads and Rivers Open Churches Project), Peter Howe (Broads Cycle Hire Association), Tony Howes (Broads Hire Boat Federation), Chris Haycock/John Lindsay/Jean Lindsay (Clippesby Hall), Louise Rout (Fairhaven Garden Trust), Vikki Walker (Hunters Yard), Caroline Coe (Ivy House Country Hotel), Robert King (King Line Cottages), Linda Matthews (Ludham Bridge Gallery), James Clabburn (Norfolk Broads.com), Christopher How (Norfolk County Council – from 4.45pm onwards), Alison McTaggart (Repps Parish Council), Eppie Zandvoort (South Norfolk Council), Lesley Warner (Top Dog Catering), Michael Nutt (VisitNorwich), Darren Newman (Waveney District Council), James Knight (Waveney River Centre)

Broads Authority Officers: Bruce Hanson (Head of Recreation and Tourism Development), Sam Bates (Visitor Services Manager), Adrian Vernon (Head Navigation Ranger), Russell Wilson/Paul Bolton (Whitlingham Country Park Manager/Ranger – in respect of agenda item 6), Lesley Sayer (Secretary/Administrative Officer – Notes), Hester Clack (Secretary/Administrative Officer)

Action

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, including some new faces.

Apologies had been received from: Paul Ashdown (Waveney District Council), Jean Blowers (Hoseasons), Jane Cryer (East of England Tourism), Bert Collins (Great Yarmouth Borough Council), Mike and Jane Hodgson, Robin Godber (Treasurer), Ken Gaylard (Broads Hire Boat Federation) and Bryan Read (Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust/Hunters Yard).

The Chairman reported the sad news of the recent death of Mervyn High of City Boats. A moment's silence was held to remember Mervyn.

2. NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 JANUARY 2007

These were agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING

(a) Broads Tourism Forum Website: Update

James Clabburn reported that the website would go live soon, subject to information being received from members (webmaster@norfolkbroads.com). Regarding the members page, permission was sought to include members contact details on the website and there were no objections in this respect.

(b) Broads Interpretive Project: Update

See notes of last meeting for background. Crispian Emberson provided a brief update to the Forum. Members were requested to contact CE (crispian.emberson@norfolk.gov.uk) with ideas for interpretive projects as there was the capacity to include approx. four more projects.

All

(c) Great Yarmouth Tourism Consultation Document

The Vice-Chairman outlined the specific proposals which related to Broads tourism within the consultation document along with his responses to these, which he had sent on behalf of the Forum.

(d) **Broads Tourism Officer Post**

See notes of last meeting for background. Crispian Emberson explained that a response was still awaited to the funding proposal which had been submitted.

4. **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The Chairman read out a report received from the Treasurer (see attached).

5. **BROADS TOURISM STRATEGY: UPDATE**

Bruce Hanson outlined four main areas of recent work, namely on an interpretive project, reviews of tourism services (information provision, events and boat trips), the production of the 'Wild Days Out' leaflet and on the Broads Quality Charter (2007 brochure due out on 30 March, with 12 further establishments receiving Charter status this year). Regarding the Broads Quality Charter, he reported that VisitBritain hoped to roll out the scheme nationally in 2008.

In response to a question regarding the Green Tourism Business Scheme, BH reported the GTBS were in the process of setting up training workshops for businesses. Peter Howe also advised he had received his second visit from the GTBS two weeks ago.

The Vice-Chairman noted the trainee millwrights scheme had received funding which was good news as this initiative had come directly from the Forum's tourism strategy.

6. **WHITLINGHAM COUNTRY PARK: OVERVIEW AND FUTURE PLANS**

A presentation provided by Russell Wilson gave an overview of the Country Park. RW explained how the Park was created, current facilities at the Park (including two broads, visitor centre, Norfolk County Council outdoor education centre (OEC), water meadows, woodland), wildlife to be seen, the educational work undertaken (including social inclusion, forest schools project, work with children) and future plans (interpretive strategy being developed).

It was noted that the OEC would be running cycling courses this year. Peter Howe encouraged the OEC to join the Broads Cycle Hire Association.

7. **BROADS AND RIVERS OPEN CHURCHES PROJECT**

A presentation provided by Jennie Hawks gave an update on the Open Churches Project, including achievements to date and future aspirations. It was noted that Open Churches Week would be held from 5-12 August. JW expressed her disappointment that information leaflets and websites in general did not mention churches. It was hoped that more churches would be opened by the end of September 2008 and that they would be treated as part of the tourism landscape.

8. **'A DAY IN THE BROADS' CAMPAIGN**

See notes of last meeting for background. Michael Nutt confirmed the campaign was going ahead and had been launched prior to the Forum's meeting. 175,000 leaflets had been produced and would be widely

distributed. He expressed his thanks to the Forum for supporting the campaign. The website was due to go live the same evening and would be upgraded with further editorial and members were requested to contact VisitNorwich with any information (lisa.howard@visitnorwich.co.uk).

All

The Chairman highlighted this as a good example of partnership working to promote the Broads as a holiday destination. Crispian Emberson requested VisitNorwich provide members with a PDF of the leaflet for their use.

MN

9. **'WILD DAYS OUT' LEAFLET**

Bruce Hanson explained the Tourism Strategy had identified the chance for businesses to capitalise on the unique environment of the Broads in a publication bringing together the range of nature activities available. The Forum had therefore worked on this and a leaflet had now been produced with an 80,000 print run.

Louise Rout noted the Fairhaven Garden Trust had been omitted from the publication. BH apologised for this very unfortunate oversight which would be addressed in future print runs.

BH

Once again the Chairman highlighted this as another good example of partnership working. A PDF of the leaflet would be provided to all members.

HC

10. **FUTURE OF THE BROADS TOURISM FORUM**

Chris Haycock explained that following some discussion at the last meeting he wished to open up for debate the structure of the Forum, including its purposes and achievements. In this respect he referred to the Chairman's opening speech at the earlier launch event which he felt encapsulated the Forum's purposes (see attached).

Issues

- Current membership narrow and some meetings poorly attended by businesses.
- Lack of permanent officer post holding the Forum back, need an officer dedicated to sourcing funds and grant aid.
- Membership fees insufficient and too low. Issue of credibility if fees raised, also fee must be appropriate to avoid excluding smaller businesses.
- Independence of the Forum is important (not seen to be run by the Broads Authority) and the Forum needs to be self-funding.
- Meetings need simplifying and enlivening.

Possible Solutions/Responses to Issues

- Membership drive needed, awareness-raising that the Forum exists. Current members should also actively encourage others to join.
- Invite Broads Authority's funding officer to advise on grants available (which will differ between Norfolk and Suffolk).
- Could establish a membership grading scheme, charging fees according to the size of the business. Alternatively, increase the fee for all (£50 felt to be an appropriate amount).
- Agreed the Forum's independence is important, but noted that the support received from the Broads Authority, Norfolk Tourism, VisitNorwich and other organisations has been invaluable and is important.
- Perhaps hold two main meetings per year (conference-style, focusing on

key issues such as training, grant aid, green tourism). Sub-committees could be set up to discuss specific issues (canoeing, cycling, catering, boating, etc). Also idea of holding a "Festival of the Broads". Agreed networking is extremely important.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Annual General Meeting

The Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Forum – on 6 June 2007 – would also include the Annual General Meeting. In this respect he noted that the Treasurer would be retiring and that his term as Chairman would also come to an end. It was hoped that the next Chairman would come from a land-based tourism background. Regarding the position of Treasurer, he declared his interest in taking on this role. Furthermore, it was hoped to expand the Executive Committee to six or seven officers.

Members were requested to consider these matters, along with the proposal to form sub-committees, prior to the AGM on 6 June.

All

Barnby Broad Mud Pumping

The Vice-Chairman wished to know how the Broads Authority could justify its expenditure of public funds on a private asset such as Barnby Broad. Adrian Vernon explained the Authority's duties in relation to conservation and its responsibility, along with that of Natural England and other bodies, to maintain habitats for the value of wildlife. He also noted that the expenditure had been met from the additional National Park Grant received and not from navigation (see press release attached).

Planning Policy Statement 25: Flooding

Robert King raised his concerns regarding the above policy and its effects on Broads tourism. Adrian Vernon explained this was a national policy and that the Broads Authority had also highlighted its concerns in this respect with national government. It was agreed to include this as an item under 'Matters Arising' on the next agenda and to invite a Broads Planning Officer to attend.

HC

Bewilderwood

James Knight asked when Bewilderwood would be opening to the public and also noted that a preview opening event for members had been agreed in the past. It was noted that the official opening date was 21 May. Crispian Emberson would contact Simon Egan regarding a preview for members.

CE

Maternity Leave

The Chairman reported Lesley Sayer's imminent maternity leave and thanked her for all her hard work on behalf of the Forum. Lesley introduced Hester Clack who would be covering her post and it was noted that all correspondence should be directed to Hester (hester.clack@broads-authority.gov.uk).

All

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS (meetings held from 4pm to 6pm)

Wednesday 6 June 2007 and AGM – Norfolk Broads Yacht Club, Wroxham
Wednesday 19 September 2007 – Venue TBC
Wednesday 21 November 2007 – Venue TBC

The meeting ended at 6.05 p.m.

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR BTF MEETING 28 MARCH 2007

Daniel - Please give my apologies to the meeting for not attending.
Thank you for giving the Treasurer's Report on my behalf.

Balance in Bank as at 28/3/07 £ 7,612.66

This figure includes 31 fully paid up subscriptions, grant from
Broads Authority re Nature Trips leaflet and part NCC grant

Less cheques issued this week:

Norfolk Broads Yacht Club deposit	£ 100.00	
Broads Authority Nature Trips leaflet	<u>5,000.00</u>	<u>5,100.00</u>

Net balance as at end of March 2007: £ 2,512.66

Expected expenditure to end of financial year (31/5) £ 1,500
(mainly room hire, meeting expenses, web site)

Expected income to end of financial year £ 1,500
(NCC Grant, refund from BA and NBYC)

This should leave a balance in the bank of approx: £ 2,500.00

This figure has been 'earmarked' towards funding for the post of permanent officer to
administer the running of the Forum.

Robin Godber, Hon Treasurer

**'A Day in the Broads' Campaign:
Launch Event held on 28 March 2007 at 3.30 p.m.**

Extract of Speech from Chairman of the Broads Tourism Forum

"The Forum was set up in May 2004, with the help of the Broads Authority and local businesses, to represent and provide a strong and unified voice for Broads tourism-related industries. It has at its heart a desire for all types of businesses to work together - including boating, attractions, accommodation, restaurants and pubs, activities and shops - to be active and forward looking, working towards improving the quality of the visitors experience and promoting the Broads as a high quality and sustainable destination.

Press Release: 22 March 2007

Mud Pump Restoring New Life to Suffolk Broad

The Broads Authority's mud pump has begun its first big job since it underwent a major refit, pumping out silt at Barnby Broad, in Suffolk, to help restore its valuable aquatic life.

The privately owned broad, a special site important for wildfowl and water plants, has only a foot of water in it. Nine thousand cubic metres of nutrient rich sediment will be removed over the next three months to increase the water depth to four to five feet, which will allow water plants to re-colonise and provide an improved habitat for the birds. Agricultural run-off, which has caused the broad to silt up, is now being diverted away from the broad.

The Broads Authority's Projects Team has refitted the equipment with a sparkling new pump and wheelhouse. A set of wheels enable the pump to be pushed in and out of the water at remote sites such as Barnby where the ground is too soft for heavy lifting machinery to operate.

The pump sucks up the mud, then pushes it along an 800 metre pipe and deposits it on a field which will later be restored as a grazing marsh. The Broads are not natural features and this technique is an essential and very effective method of maintaining their important value for wildlife. The restoration of this 2.5 hectare broad is part of the Authority's ongoing programme to bring life back to eight broads funded from additional National Park Grant.

Barnby Broad is not generally open to the public but on July 11th 10 am –12 noon the public will have a rare opportunity to join a Broads Authority countryside ranger on an orchid walk around this secluded and valuable broad. Meet at Keeper's Cottage off A146 at the Barnby Bends (the white house with a flag pole in the garden. Grid reference TM 483903) Bring stout footwear or wellies. Cost £5 adults, £3 children.