



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 online on Monday 7 December 2020 at 4.00 pm

Present: Members of General Purpose Committee

In attendance: Potential future members of GPC, for experience subject to election at next AGM

1 Directors'/Officers' Insurance

With two legal experts on the GPC the question was highlighted and it came to light that NSBA does not have directors'/officers' indemnity insurance. **The** GPC has been looking into this with our broker, Alan Boswell. Permission was granted to spend up to a specified amount on the premium following investigation.

p.m.n. Cover has been obtained as an extension to existing policy at cost of less than £100.

2 Response to Covid

This was raised retrospectively. In the last lockdown there was disagreement between the advice given by the BA, who are informed by DEFRA (Environment), and the RYA who are informed by DCMS (Sports). The BA did not allow the use of motor boats because DEFRA classed them as a method of travel, which was not allowed, and did not class them as a form of recreation, which was allowed by DCMS. NSBA may have missed an exposure opportunity and should look to any future lockdowns for an early summative message. Wide discussion included:–

- BA perspective is that breakdowns may generate additional issues and others could be put in danger.
- The contention was put that BA had not fully appreciated the Regulation which clearly said that folk were allowed to go for recreation and motor boating is recreation.
- Elsewhere in England the use of motor boats was permitted on the basis that a lot of sailing boats have engines and they could use those anyway.
- NSBA was probably correct for reputation reasons in not putting forward its ideas, because if any member were caught out and fined they would not be best pleased if they had followed a differing NSBA advice. NSBA had published the RYA guidelines.
- In the first lockdown the rules were fairly loose about how owners went to their boats; the second lockdown was different with the threat of prosecution. It appears reasonable for owners to inspect their own boats and BA should be guided to take a more positive attitude.
- BroadsBeat had been encouraging about owners checking their boats due to the number of thefts. Despite this, a different experience was presented where a member who went to check his boat and change some faulty batteries was assertively questioned by a senior officer over his presence; a full written account of this occurrence was requested by the Chair, with a view to pursuing further.
- A different scenario was related where a member in wishing to move and lift his craft had jumped positively through various hoops of communication and explicit risk assessment (informing boatyard, and Broads Control) before proceeding without repercussion.

3 **Bridges**

Network Rail (NWR) has been pursued about Christmas openings and there has been an interim response about Reedham. NSBA has investigated various scenarios for transporting the bridge operator across the river so that the bridge can remain open, however without BA support this is not likely to be fruitful; we are still pursuing this matter. Somerleyton will remain open to navigation over Christmas. NWR are still to respond regarding long term plans for Trowse Bridge and there was an article in the EDP on 7 December 2020 about it.

Both BA and NWR are continually being reminded of the legal obligation not to impede navigation.

The problem remains that the penalty for not keeping a bridge open to navigation is paltry and insignificant to a large organisation (NWR).

BA have previously taken Counsel's Advice on this matter and hold the response-document which could be useful to support compliance. NWR has been tackled on their prognosis for ensuring longterm non-failure of the bridge but with as-yet nil response. While NSBA has raised this issue to a high level with NWR, BA remain unsupportive.

At Mutford the lock is operational but trains are moving across the rail bridge as a snail's pace. NWR have admitted that the rail bridge drops some four inches when trains cross it. It is imperative that access is kept clear for even the tallest vessels wishing access the sea.

4 **Members' Survey**

Survey Monkey has been purchased and some outline questions have been prepared. There will be two separate surveys, one for members and a different one for clubs. The questions will be divided into five sections as follows:-

- Profile of the member/club (to categorise respondents)
- Questions based on the previous NSBA survey of 2012 regarding strengths/opportunities (to provide a level comparator with the previous survey)
- Perspective of the Broads (feedback support for BA, in absence of their own survey)
- What should NSBA be focusing on (to inform NSBA's future direction)
- What social media do members use (to inform of multiplicity of platforms and how these are used)

5 **Committee Individual/Officers' Roles**

A list of committee responsibilities had been circulated with request for individuals to accept these; there was no disagreement subject to some clarification post-meeting for new members.

6 **Other Meetings and Representations**

A recent Magistrates' ruling about fishing rights may have a possible knock-on effect on navigation rights. It was felt that while Magistrates might make a ruling with regard to fishing, the right to navigation cannot be impinged except by legislation. Further focus discussion post-meeting.

The Chair will be attending a Lake Lothing Third Crossing HAZ-ID meeting this Friday, 11 December.

7 **Date of next meeting**

The AGM is scheduled for Monday 11 January 2021 at The Holiday Inn, Ipswich Road, Norwich, NR4 6EP commencing at 7.30 pm but gathering from 7.00 pm. Please will members let our Administrator know if intending to come in person, or would prefer to attend online.

As this date clashes with a proposed GPC meeting the GPC to be brought forward to Friday 8 January, to discuss the BA's NavCom agenda for Thursday-14 January 2021. Time to be decided. p.m.n. Subject to ongoing Covid measures, the AGM schedule is still to be wholly confirmed.

8 **AOB**

Flag Officers' Event to be scheduled by invitation for Friday 19 March 2021.

The meeting ended at 5.20 pm