

Norfolk and Suffolk Boating Association

Summary Minutes of General Purposes Committee meeting held online on 7th June 2021 at 5.30 pm

Present: 11 members of GPC

1 One resignation was accepted (for personal and family reason).

The Treasurer intends to resign at the next AGM; full membership needs to be considered for invitation to fill this slot soonest, so that a meaningful handover can take place.

2 **Previous Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of 12 April were accepted. There were no matters arising.

3 **Chairman's Report**

This dealt with an RYA(East) meeting. An unfortunately difficult affair on 27-April. Moving forward the meeting structure will be reviewed and greater focus placed on current issues rather than mundane standing items.

- RYA(HQ) website is undergoing a digital transformation, to go live by end of May;
- Cruising Conference (November 2020) had been a huge success;
- The DEFRA/DCMS mismatch in messages regarding Covid permitted activities has been shared with HQ and through a local MP(Waveney);
- NWNSA, as non-Broads, has been approached for whether they wish to see greater inclusion for their affiliation to NSBA (also offered chance of input to next NSBA Newsletter); nil response; NWNSA is an affiliated to RYA(East) organisation in its own right, though much smaller than NSBA and their representative does not necessarily see a conjoining being of any priority;
- Request put to HQ for guidance to local port representatives;
- NSBA has brokered a link between BA and HQ for new safety videos;
- There is an 'Action Plan' afoot for how the regional volunteer teams may go forth; despite inputs from some committee members, a bit of a black-hole of nil feedback as yet;
- Region's Minutes should be shared to all clubs in some form, as perhaps a newsletter or verbatim or in précis; a draft proposal was not available;
- Comment was made that NSBA's The Green Book and Newsletters were absolutely exemplars and, "... if only some people would provide half the information which NSBA works with, I should be overwhelmed ...", was one bit of feedback; *[NSBA should recognise that, notwithstanding what criticisms might be heard from-time-to-time, its local contribution to affiliates is far-and-away more extensive and better than any other boating association within RYA(Eastern Region), possibly within England or even Britain!]*
- NSBA reported that both accesses to The Broads were experiencing vexing issues of closures due to Bridges (road at Gt Yarmouth and rail at Lowestoft.); agreed that HQ's support should be sought for applying pressure to keep navigation flowing, also pointedly calling for BA's support to be a mediating influence for keeping at least one access/egress point open at all reasonable times;

- Dinghy Fleet bookings have seen a resurgence with the full summer holiday booked out (rather than previously only the first two weeks); generally now well used and worthwhile.

Haven Bridge (Gt Yarmouth): requires bridge-aircraft indicator; PeelPorts as operator sees this as BA responsibility since the indicator would sit within the Broads realm, while BA see Haven Bridge as being outside of their responsibility. Some serious head-bashing for a sensible solution to action is needed. Latest news is that the remedial electrical works are nearing completion and the bridge should return to normal operations soon as soon as testing has completed.

BA's Safety Videos: While a liaison was brokered by NSBA between BA and RYA at level of working desks, the feedback on some points of quality is underwhelming; a disappointment and GPC might be moved to offer some mitigation?

Sinking(s): The issue of sinkings and removing such boats has been taken up variously; an issue which appeared to have been settled. Nevertheless the manner in which, affected by public holidays, key personnel had been unsighted and an apparent lack of effective internal BA liaisons until pointed out will be raised in due course.

River Works Contractors: Closure of Haven Bridge has prevented the selected contractor for Breydon Piling Works to access the Broads navigation (stuck downstream of Haven Bridge and not prepared to move during unsocial out-of-hours timing); an alternative potential contractor was not retrospectively given the job, with BA's own dredging personnel moved off dredging and onto the Breydon works. This state has been challenged with head of River Engineering and will be taken forward.

Events: Monday 3 May **JBo/BW/BF** conducted a video call to discuss the way forward for both the Broadland Youth Regatta and the Ramuz trophy. The BYR is to be run at NBYC, will doubtless run smoothly without concern for NSBA; nevertheless there has been early liaison with NBYC. The Ramuz is to be run at Filby and is of greater concern so a site walk was conducted at Filby on Sunday 16 May to discuss needs and plans; this was very productive and lots to go forward with for obtaining additional boats, radios and other equipment; this group has the event in-hand and working up effectively (separate email report).

BA/BHBF/NSBA heads meeting: An invitation has been received for next meeting on 1 July.

Broadland Marina: On Monday 24 May there was a development group meeting at East Suffolk Council to discuss a strategy for the future of Oulton Broad. The meeting had been precipitated by a BA Planning issue for developing a new marina complex at Oulton Broad over the navigation bed actually owned by ESC; Officers had 'regularised' an agreement between the developer and ESC for a lease/income without approval of or informing Councillors. This is now in effect, however, serious consternation was expressed by all four Ward Councillors in attendance at action-beyond-remit of officers; it appears that there may be a call for internal or public enquiry! Local Parish Council are encouraged to accelerate their proposed Neighbourhood Plan exceptionally to include a 'Blue Plan' for what should be permitted or not over the waters of the Broad. The cost of mooring within the new facility is very nearly double the cost of mooring elsewhere at River Waveney facilities; the net effect was compared to second home purchases squeezing out local economy by over-pricing.

Gull Wing Bridge Project: A development meeting for the Lowestoft Lake Lothing 3rd Crossing on Friday 21 May; the meeting was chaired by local MP(Waveney); NSBA made the point that there were some six pinch-points for access between the North Sea and the Broads of which there are four current works projects in hand, (viz: Carlton SwingBridge (Network Rail), Haven Bridge (Norfolk CC), Gt Yarmouth 3rd Crossing and Lowestoft 3rd Crossing)
Two further potential pinch-points at Mutford Lock (Broads Authority) and Mutford Road Bridge currently are clear of any project works.

What is important for Navigation is that no two accesses are potentially planned for blocking at the same time.

There has already been some reputational damage in Europe for not visiting the Broads because one cannot get in, or if that is achieved then might not get out ... not worth visiting! (even reported in local press).

Local MP Peter Aldous (Chair of meeting), responded with thanks, and that the point was recognised and well made to shift some focus onto Navigation as well as where everyone looks, ie the roads.

Information shared with BA Chief Exec.

4 **Meetings**

There was recognition that in some situations the NSBA as overarching local association may be asked to step in as arbitrator between its members and member-organisations for local boating issues

5 **The Green Book**

Invoices and payments are holding up; there have been no requests for additional copies for next year's round.

6 **Bridges**

(a) NSBA accedes to pragmatism in keeping Reedham bridge closed to navigation over Christmas; Somerleyton to remain open; Carlton to respond to pre-booking

(b) Network rail's recent media news regarding maintenance programme for three bridges over three-years.

(c) GPC members to share with their own MPs the point in chair's report about keeping North Sea access open

7 **Wild Swimming**

General recognition of this media-publicised activity as on the increase, together with other cheap and easily accessed forms of water-sports; BA should be encouraged to raise profile under 'safety' aspect to inform both participants and visiting boaters. How easily to identifying toll-payers also needs consideration.

8 **Broadland Youth Regatta and Ramuz events**

BYR at NBYC, Ramuz at Filby; liaison with NSBA is proceeding (separate report)

9 **Nav Com meeting 10 June**

No burning issues on the Agenda; both previous Minutes and budget appear quite positive and there is reflection of NSBA's previous input; proposals for Carrow Road Bridge need to be watched carefully and a five year closure is deplored; potential future engagement for the East Norwich MasterPlan for coherence with boaters in mind and the additional attraction of a new Norwich Marina. South Walsham slipway is a public asset which must be retained.

10 **AOB**

Repackaging of dredgings in lieu of peat-digging, at a profit, should be considered by BA.

Meeting closed at 6.45 pm