



MINUTES OF HICKLING PARISH STAITHE MEETING

27th March 2017
Hickling Barn
7.30pm

PRESENT AT THE MEETING

Attended by 34 people including parishioners, berth holders and stakeholder organisations.

1. 7.30pm Welcome

Jo Belsten, Chair of Hickling Parish Council welcomed all of those attending the meeting. Cllr Belsten gave a tribute to Harry Nudd who sadly passed away recently. Harry worked as staithe warden in Hickling until 2012 and when he retired it ended a family association with the staithe dating back nearly half a century. Sincere condolences were passed on to Harry's family at this sad time. Cllr Belsten introduced the speakers.

2. 7.35pm Broads Authority Update

An Update from the Broads Authority was read out and is appended to these minutes

3. 7.40pm Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) – Apology

Brendan Joyce gave his sincere apologies for not attending. He confirmed to Jo Belsten that the NWT are aiming for sale completion by the end in this financial year. Jo Belsten will take questions from the public and will pass them on to Brendan to be answered.

4. 7.42pm Upper Thurne Working Party

The chair Brian Wilkins of the Upper Thurne Working Party spoke about the interest from the sale of part of the broad and NWT plans. Kevin Hart attended a meeting in December and was asked if maintenance of the broad would change. Kevin had said regular dredging was important and that it would stay the same. Weed cutting was not handled well in the area from 200 to 2006. The Broads Authority will cut back as necessary but was noted that it had not been done in 2 years.

5. 7.47pm Hickling Windsurfing Club Update

The Chair Martin Harwood gave a talk that the club was started 35 years ago and that the sport is becoming increasingly popular with Great Britain winning more medals than any other country in the sport. A few of Hickling members have gone on to national competitions. 41 people came along to the come and try day. On 21st May will be the next come and try day and hoping for an equally good turnout.

6. 7.50pm Hickling Sailing Club Update

The Broads Liaison officer Sue Maisey spoke that the new season had just started with 200 berths for sailing dinghy's. There had been many changes – new equipment shed installed. The new extension at the back of the clubhouse on is hold due to short lease. Negotiations were curtly taking place.

Sue explained that here is racing every Sunday and from 19th April there would be evening racing. On the 13th May the sailing club would be holding an open day with all welcome. 30th April – 1st May, 1st-6th August and 30th Sept – 1st October are the clubs regatta dates.

7. 7.59pm Environment Agency Update

Steve Lane, E.A Technical and Special Fisheries Officer gave thanks to all for looking after the staithe. Steve explained that there was a problem with salt in December, which resulted in fish dying in Acle Dyke. Experts have been to assess problem sites and gave a report. To look at wash lands, site specific portable temporary barrier. There will be a trial to see if this works and if so will be rolled out to other areas. They are leading the way in research regarding prymnesium, many thanks is given for all involved in this.

8. 8.05pm Pike Anglers Club Update

General Secretary John Currie gave a talk about prymnesium virus that lives in the sediment. Moving it would be a danger. The Broads Authority has said dredging will be done in winter months, as it is more dangerous in warmer weather. He advised that there was to be 8 years more of dredging. The Broads Authority has a virus that kills the prymnesium however send a toxin resulting in fish dying. They are working with the Environmental Agency to do a trial to kill the virus & prymnesium but will the release a toxin.

9. 8.13pm Hickling Parish Staithe Working Party Report.

The report was presented and is appended to these minutes

10. 8.30pm Questions & Discussion Forum

It was raised that safety notices are an issue, currently looking at a better solution.

It was noted also that The Broads Authority plaque ink was running.

It was also raised that it is the 1st year of a plaque free toll and is now all computer based. Now it is going into its second year it raised the question of evasion and exactly how many are slipping through the net. It was noted that bigger staithe are checked and perhaps smaller areas are not having the same level of checking. It was raised that the rangers job is a lot tougher and perhaps a lot more long winded. The Broads Authority has not yet had any evidence that they have lost money over the new system. Glenn Wilson did point out that The Broad Authority Rangers have been round to ensure that people are paying.

11. 8.44pm Close

Mrs Belsten thanks all those present for attending and inviting all to stay for refreshments.

Appended Reports:

Hickling Parish Council Staithe Working Party Report Spring 2017

1. Income

This Year to the 15th March, we have collected £9381.35 in Dry Berth Fees, £7225.63 in Wet Berth Fees and £810 in launching fees giving a total income of £17,416.98.

2. Expenditure

Spending has been kept to a minimum this year, just postage and stationary, room hire and refreshments for the Staithe Forum, replacement winches shackles and strops (annual/6 month requirement), a short length of replacement Quay heading and cutting back the willow tree (cost shared with Pleasure Boat Inn). Our total expenditure has been just over £450, which is well within our £600 budget.

Predicted expenditure for the coming year is £500 to include buying new winches (x2) and strops (X 4), and purchase of materials to raise the benches, as well as postage, stationary and Forum meeting room hire and refreshments.

3. Slipways

As many of you will remember there were significant issues with the drop off at the end of the slips where the hard engineering of the slipway meets the soft muddy bottom of the dyke. This long-standing problem had not been resolved by installing concrete slipways. This means that at low water trailers are virtually impossible to winch back up once loaded if their wheels drop over the edge at the end of the slipway.

We are pleased to say that having installed markers, which show the drop off point and warning signs, users of the slipway have been better informed and the damage caused to winches by overloading has been substantially reduced. Thank you to everyone for taking notice of the signs and working with us to resolve the problem. As a result we have not had to use the combination lock. This is being held in reserve in case the problems reoccur.

Launching is free for Parishioners. Launch Fees for visitors are currently £6 for boats and £4 for canoes. A season ticket for visitor launching is available for £40.

4. Winches

These have to be replaced annually for health and safety reasons. Strops and shackles are replaced every 6 months. Boats with cabins and/or over 17ft in length are not allowed to use the winches.

5. Staithe Maintenance.

This years maintenance issues have been cutting back the willow tree, winch maintenance and replacement a short piece of quay heading. We do not have any further planned maintenance this year as the quay heading and slips are in good order. Please can all users of the staithe use the site with care and try not to churn up the grass as they bring their boats on site.

6. Fishing

Fishing has always allowed for Parishioners. Historically visitors were welcome, but this stopped in recent years. The Parish Council now allow visiting fishermen to use the staithe under strict rules and on purchase of a local permit £5 per day or £25 per season. At the moment this seems to be working with no problems reported.

7. Wet Berths

There are currently 24 people on the wet berth waiting list. We will be writing to everyone on the list to clarify if they wish to remain on it in the next month or so.

8. Dry Berths

There were 10 people on the waiting list and up to 5 vacancies from people who have given up their berths this season. We have contacted everyone on the waiting list and are in the process of allocating spaces to those who wish to take them up.

9. The Beach

The Beach formed part of the sale of the Hickling Broad Estate by the Major Mills Estate. We are waiting to hear if this will have any impact on Parishioners being able to use it. In the meantime, please can everyone remember that access to the beach is by kind permission of the Pleasure Boat Inn, so please clear up after your dog and do not leave litter there. Barbecues are not allowed on the beach under any circumstances.

10. Geese

We are currently awaiting the annual return of the feral geese. There have been suggestions about how to deter them from the Staithe and beach, but these are not necessarily acceptable to our working partners. Any suggestions for managing this problem will be very welcome.

11. Boat Covers

At the moment berth holders use a variety of covers and tarpaulins. Covers, which are not fitted, have blown off or leaked during the winter. The Staithe Working Party would like to suggest berth holders using fitted covers to prevent these problems.

12. Security

As most people will be aware, unfortunately we have had some thefts of outboard motors in the area and at the Staithe this year. We have joined the Broads Police Boat Shield Scheme to improve security and awareness. The Pleasure Boat Inn has become an approved information point for the scheme and a registered stockist of outboard engine covers. We have also asked all berth holders to record their outboard engine number with us so that the Police can be given this information in the event of crime.

13. Staithe Working Party Reports

The Staithe working party has produced a written report to the Parish Council each month this year. These are available in a file here this evening if anyone would like to see them.

14. Wet & Dry Berth Agreements

The current agreements are in place until April 2018. If anyone has any comments or would like additional matters to be included in them, please talk to any member of the Staithe working party during refreshments.

15. Administration

It is hoped that the Clerk from the new financial year will undertake the administration of the Staithe. A handover of paperwork and administration is planned.

16. Refuse

Following NNDC's decision to no longer provide a refuse collection service at the Staithe, the Pleasure Boat Inn has undertaken to pay for this collection meaning that we still have this facility. We are very grateful to them for this, not only because it keeps our village clean and tidy, but also because it will help to prevent littering of the Broad and rivers in the vicinity.

16. Thanks

Thanks are due to the members of the Staithe Working Party, to the owner and staff at the Pleasure Boat Inn for collecting the launching fees and allowing access across their land to the Beach, to the Police for their help and support following recent thefts, and to all the berth holders and users of the Staithe who have treated our facility with care and respect over the previous 12 months.

Broads Authority Report on the Hickling Broad Enhancement Project

Overview

The Hickling Broad enhancement work features two areas of reed swamp restoration using dredged sediment retained by a series of geotextile membranes held in place by post. There will also an additional area of protection of existing reed swamp vegetation with 150 metres of floating PVC curtain with integral goose guard mesh. The planned 3,500 m³ volume of accumulated sediment will be dredged from priority areas in the marked channel. Working in the Upper Thurne carries risks associated with the ever present algae *Prymnesium parvum*. This project has been designed with assent from Natural England to control those risks as far as possible and protect water quality. The long term benefits to the broad arising from this work will help improve conditions for its users and wildlife.

Outcomes

Work has gone fairly much according to plan.

Dredging has now stopped and the heavy plant equipment has ben removed from the site. Water quality testing has therefore now been reduced to weekly readings.

Reed rhizome planting along the edges of the restored reedbeds has been completed.

The second strand of work involves protection of existing reedbeds. Installation of the wave barrier curtain and goose mesh guard is planned to take place this week. The Broads Authority would like to thank Hickling Sailing Club for the use of their facilities to enable this to happen.

Drone flight photography of the work will take place in early April as per consent given from Natural England.