

Broadland flood alleviation project reaches 20 year landmark

A host of environmental benefits and flood defences for towns and villages around the Norfolk Broads are the result of a 20 year project reaching its conclusion.

Almost 2,000 homes and business and vital transport links are now better protected from 3 local rivers thanks to a multi million pound scheme from the Environment Agency.

There are also improved facilities for anglers, boaters, walkers and the many others enjoying the Broads for business or pleasure.

The completion of piling works at Burgh Castle on the River Waveney marks the final phase of the £140 million Broadland Flood Alleviation Project.

This project has improved flood defences, maintenance and emergency response services in the tidal areas of the River Yare, River Bure and River Waveney.

The project's achievements include:

Improved flood protection – 1700 properties and 5 previously undefended communities are now better protected from flooding. Over 240 kilometres of flood banks have been upgraded and 36 kilometres of banks realigned inland. Major transport links such as the A47 and Norwich/Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft railway lines are also better protected.

Agriculture and land management – around 30,000 hectares of land are now at less risk of being breached by flood waters. This includes, 24,000 hectares of prime agricultural land and 28 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Over 3 kilometres of overhead electric cables were moved underground.

Angling, navigation and recreation – over 5 kilometres of public moorings and 5 slipways were upgraded, new angling platforms provided and 100 kilometres of public footpaths improved.

Greener flood defences – by removing previously constructed hard edges, 28 kilometres of soft reeded fringes were created. These 'green defences' have new flood banks further back than before to allow the restoration of a traditional Broadland reed fringe.

Carbon saving – reclaimed materials were utilised with some 7.5 kilometres of steel sheet and timber piles reused. Materials have also been processed and stockpiled for reuse at later dates.

Benefits to biodiversity – there was a 200 per cent increase in the number of nationally endangered water voles during the course of the project. The thousands of biological records created by the project were passed to County Records Centres to contribute to the natural knowledge of the area.

Paul Mitchelmore, Environment Agency Project Manager, said:

This project has given us a unique opportunity to extend the life of these flood defences, and help to preserve the special qualities of the Broads. We now have a more sustainable flood defence system which will reduce the burden on future generations for its upkeep.

More than 1700 properties and 5 previously undefended communities are now better protected from flooding and 30,000 hectares of land is now at less risk of being breached by flood waters.

We have also been able to make improvements to public footpaths and several public boat moorings for the enjoyment of visitors.

Throughout the project we have actively engaged in developing close working partnerships with stakeholders to incorporate their views and opinions into our plans. Working closely with Jacobs and BAM Nuttall as Broadland Environmental Services Ltd (BESL) enabled us to provide a lasting solution to an area of unique value to the environment.

Donald Morrison, Jacobs People & Places Solutions Senior Vice President for Europe and Digital Strategies, said:

The Broadland Flood Alleviation Project will leave a significant legacy – safeguarding land and communities from flood, protecting local economic activity and providing an enhanced natural environment.

The project's success demonstrates that large scale improvement schemes with a strategic approach to improving existing flood defences can be accomplished within a nationally and internationally important wetland area.

The close collaboration within the core delivery team and stakeholder and landowner involvement in the detailed phases of public consultation has been central to the success of this project.

David McGowan, BAM Nuttall Business Excellence Officer, said:

Leading the development of innovative, sustainable solutions for rural flood protection schemes, this team maximised the use of material surrounding the work and minimised traffic through local communities. Repeating results along the 150 miles of defences, new habitats have been created for a variety of species to thrive. And over two decades, the project has provided employment and opportunities to develop skills for more than 1,000 local people,

leaving a lasting positive legacy for people living and working in Norfolk.

Future funding

As the effects of climate change increase, the Broads will continue to be eligible for potential funding through the National capital programme 2021 to 2027. This programme will see the government invest a record £5.2 billion in flood and coastal defences – double the previous investment – to better protect 336,000 properties.

The Environment Agency's [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#) will help prepare for more extreme weather and build a better prepared and more resilient nation.

Further information

The Broads (Broadland) is a wetland area of international importance in eastern Norfolk and north Suffolk. The Broadland grazing marshes, wetlands and fens all lie below current high tides. The riverside settlements face a future of higher sea levels. Economic activity in the Broads, whether it be through agriculture, local commerce, recreational boating, fishing or rambling is heavily dependent upon reliable flood defences.

Broadland is a 22,000 hectare area of broads in Norfolk and Suffolk, most of which is below sea level. It is economically valuable largely due to farming and recreation – in particular, water based activities such as boating, sailing and angling. The area also has important roads and railways, including those that link Norwich with Great Yarmouth

There was widespread flooding in 1953. Since the start of the project, tidal flood events have happened in November 2006, November 2007, December 2013 and October 2014. 1953 levels have been exceeded on at least 2 occasions. During these events there has been some overtopping but fewer breaches have occurred. A small number of riverside businesses and houses have flooded but flooding is usually confined to agricultural land.

Full list of key achievements:

Improved flood risk management

- Over 240 kilometres of flood banks upgraded, with over 36 kilometres of banks realigned inland
- 1700 properties and 5 previously undefended communities better protected from flooding
- Major transport links have also benefited including the A47 and Norwich-Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft railway lines.

Agriculture and land management

- 30,000 hectares of land protected from being breached by flood waters

- Including 24,000 hectares of prime agricultural land and 28 sites which are SSSI designated (Sites of Special Scientific Interest)
- Over 3 kilometres of overhead electric cables moved underground – improving the landscape and making the area safer for farmers and anglers.

Water

- 28km of hard, piled edges removed and replaced with soft reeded fringes. These 'green defences' are created by using a technique called setback – building a new flood bank further back and removing old piling next to the water to allow the restoration of a traditional Broadland reed fringe;
- This provides major landscape benefits as well as contributing to Water Framework Directive objectives. Angling, navigation and recreation
- 5.2 kilometres of public moorings and 5 slipways upgraded;
- New angling platforms provided;
- Setback areas provide 500,000 cubic metres of dredging disposal sites which create new areas for flood alleviation, habitat and recreation;
- 100 kilometres of public footpath improved, with over 5 kilometres surfaced for easy access. Delivered in partnerships with local authorities.

Environmental performance

- Use of reclaimed materials – some 7.5 kilometres of steel sheet and timber piles have been reused. Materials also have been processed and stockpiled for reuse at later dates;
- Almost zero waste created by reducing the amount of new materials required. Biodiversity
- 200 per cent increase in the number of nationally endangered water voles during the project;
- Creation of the largest temporary adder bank in the UK, some 300 metres long;
- Thousands of biological records created by the project now passed on to County Records centres to contribute to the natural knowledge of the area.

Public Private Partnership – Broadland Environmental Services Ltd

The 20 year project has been carried out as a Public Private Partnership Project for the Environment Agency. The contract was awarded in May 2001 to Jacobs and BAM Nuttall.

Under the agreement, Jacobs acted as consultant and BAM Nuttall as the contractor, working together in a joint venture as Broadland Environmental Services Ltd (BESL).

The programme's main purpose was to provide a strategic approach to improving the condition of flood protection in Broadland while engaging key stakeholders and the local community.

It included responsibility for design, consultation, strategy development, implementation and monitoring. By working in partnership, the project has provided a cost-effective, sustainable approach to flood defences based on strengthening existing flood banks and in some riverside villages, providing defences for the first time.

Broadland flood alleviation project reaches 20 year landmark

Unique scheme to improve and maintain 240km of flood defences in the Norfolk Broads, one of Europe's most important wetland areas

Charity Commission concludes compliance case involving The Runnymede Trust

[The Runnymede Trust](#) is a charitable think tank focused on race equality and race relations in the UK.

The regulator opened a case in April 2021 after receiving complaints about the charity's activity, including its response to the report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities ("the CRED report") and whether it was engaging in lawful political activity. As part of this, the Commission also examined whether the trustees acted in line with their duties and responsibilities in the way they made the decision to work with the Good Law Project to challenge certain public appointments.

The regulator's guidance makes clear that charities are permitted in law to campaign and undertake political activity, and to take up positions that not everyone agrees with, but that this must always be done in furtherance of a charity's purposes.

Following careful assessment of the concerns raised, the Commission says that it was within the charity's purposes to engage with and take a position on the CRED report and has found no breach of its guidance. It has welcomed the trustees' decision to strengthen the charity's internal policies and procedures on political activity, in line with the Commission's guidance on campaigning and political activity. It says such a review will help the

trustees ensure that the charity demonstrates party political neutrality and actively promotes its independence.

The Commission has also determined that the trustees did not breach their legal duties and responsibilities when they made the decision to work with the Good Law Project.

As part of its case, the Commission examined issues relating to party political neutrality and noted the appearance of a senior executive of the Runnymede Trust at an event organised by a political party, alongside several elected representatives and affiliated speakers. [The Commission's guidance](#) is clear that a charity can work with elected representatives, where doing so furthers its charitable purpose. But the Commission expects trustees to ensure that their charity's engagement with political parties and politicians is balanced so that they are not perceived to be supporting one party over another, in order to protect the Trust's independence and reputation. The trustees have given assurances that they endeavour to engage with a range of parties and political viewpoints.

Helen Earner, Director of Regulatory Services at the Charity Commission, said:

We take all concerns raised with us about charities seriously – whether they come from members of the public, parliamentarians, or the media. We treat all complaints with respect and assess them impartially and expertly against the legal framework. That is what the public expects.

In this case, we have found no breach of our guidance. However, we have told the trustees of the Runnymede Trust that they must ensure the charity's engagement with political parties and politicians is balanced.

It is not for us as regulator to tell trustees how best to further their charity's purposes. Charities are free to take up positions that are controversial, if the trustees come to a reasoned decision that doing so furthers the charity's cause.

But all charities must comply with the rules associated with charitable status. Being a charity comes with privileges, but also with important responsibilities. We expect the trustees and senior leaders of the Runnymede trust to pay heed to these responsibilities, as we expect all charities to.

The Charity Commission's case opened on 9 April 2021 and concluded on 17 August 2021.

[In a blog published in March](#), the Commission's CEO Helen Stephenson noted that "charities must be able to show that they are driven, not by the background, world view or political inclinations and interests of their leaders, but by their mission and purpose, and by the needs of the people or causes they

serve.”

Ends .

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
2. It is not for the Commission to determine whether a charity’s decision is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, but whether the trustees acted in line with the law in making the decision. This includes examining whether the decision was in line with the charity’s purposes, and whether the process of decision making by the trustees was in line with the law, [as explained in our guidance](#).

Charities unite to tackle health inequalities

- New membership of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance will ensure strong, diverse representation to reduce health inequalities
- Backed by £2 million per year to support members’ work
- People with mental health conditions, autism and those disproportionately affected by COVID-19 will shape policy to protect vulnerable communities

People’s voices and lived experiences will continue to be at the centre of health policy development and work to level up the UK, as the government welcomes new members to the voluntary community and social enterprise (VCSE) Health and Wellbeing Alliance.

Backed by £2 million a year, members including Age UK, Barnardo’s, Homeless Link, Hospice UK, National Autistic Society and Samaritans, will work together to promote good health and tackle inequalities across the UK.

The refreshed 19 Alliance members will ensure strong representation across the broadest range of lived experiences. They will represent the views of social care workers and older people, people bereaved by suicide, children and young people, people with learning disabilities and autism, those with mental health conditions, LGBTQ+ communities and minority communities, including refugees and Gypsy, traveller and Roma communities.

For example, pregnancy charity Tommy’s, heading up a maternity and neonatal consortium, will ensure views from a maternity and child loss perspective are represented in policy decisions ahead of the Women’s Health Strategy

launching later this year and the British Red Cross will represent all those affected by crisis, including those who have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 such as refugees and asylum seekers.

Health Minister, Helen Whately said: > The Health and Wellbeing Alliance is one of the key ways to ensure a range of voices are heard and reflected in government policy – their insight is invaluable. > > Over the last few years members have made an enormous contribution to a number of important policy developments ranging from improving access to services for groups affected by health inequalities and more recently ensuring the COVID-19 vaccination campaign reaches all communities. > > This refreshed membership of 19 charities is a fantastic opportunity to ensure we continue to hear from the most underrepresented voices and make sure important health messages reach those they affect the most.

The new Office for Health Promotion will also launch later this year and will spearhead national efforts to level up the health of the nation and close the gap on disparities.

The Health and Wellbeing Alliance is a key element of the Health and Wellbeing Programme and the alliance has already helped shape policy-making. The Alliance's work will continue to be of the utmost importance in developing guidance to protect our most vulnerable communities and ensure communities are made aware of important public health announcements that affect them through direct communication.

Naomi Phillips, Director of Policy and Advocacy, British Red Cross:

The British Red Cross is proud to become a member of the Health and Wellbeing Alliance and work with partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors to promote equality of access, experience and outcomes across our health and social care system.

COVID-19 has highlighted more than ever that where you are born, grow-up, live and work affects your health. Over the past year, health inequalities have been exposed and exacerbated – but there's also a renewed impetus to work across specialisms and sectors to address the issue and its underlying factors. Working with and through the Alliance, through fresh research with a focus on policy and practice change, the British Red Cross is committed to ensuring people can access the care and support they need, without falling through the gaps – no matter who they are or where they live.

Sarah Sweeney, Policy and Communications Manager at Friends, Families and Travellers said:

We're delighted to be included in the refreshed membership of the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance. It's of vital importance that decision makers in health and social care have the tools they need to address the often significant health inequalities that exist

within our society. The HW Alliance has had an important role in making our health and social care system more accessible and inclusive. We look forward to continuing this important work.

The full membership for the VCSE Health and Wellbeing Alliance 2021-2024 is:

- National Voices in partnership with National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) (Coordinator role)
 - Age UK
 - Association of Mental Health Providers (consortium with Association of Mental Health Providers, Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, Mind, National Survivor User Network, Rethink Mental Illness, Young Minds)
 - Barnardo's (consortium with Barnardo's, Friends of the Horn Foundation; Women's Inclusive Team; Himmat, QED Foundation; Communities Engage and Thrive Wellbeing Connect Services (formerly known as Ebony Peoples Association) African Community School (ACS), Minaret Community Centre, Approachable Parenting, Association of Muslim Schools UK, Education and Skills Development Group, Muslim Youth Helpline, Somali Community Parents Association, Somali Development Services, Mindful Peak Performance)
 - British Institute for Learning Disabilities (Bild) (consortium with Learning Disability England, National Development Team for Inclusion)
 - British Red Cross
 - Carers Partnership (consortium with Carers UK and Carers Trust)
 - Clinks
 - FaithAction
 - Friends, Families and Travellers (consortium with Roma Support Group)
 - Good Things Foundation
 - Homeless Link (consortium with Homeless Link, Groundswell, Pathway)
 - Hospice UK (consortium with Hospice UK, Marie Curie, Together for Short Lives, National Bereavement Alliance)
 - LGBT Foundation (consortium with LGBT Foundation and LGBT Consortium – other partners include a large range of VCSE organisations)
 - Locality (consortium with Locality and Power to Change)
 - National Autistic Society (Complex Needs Consortium with National Autistic Society, Sense, VoiceAbility, Embracing Complexity)
 - Race Equality Foundation
 - Samaritans (consortium with Samaritans National Suicide Prevention Alliance, Support After Suicide Partnership, We Are With You)
 - Tommy's (consortium with Tommy's, Sands, National Maternity Voices, the Pregnancy and Baby Charities Network, Five X More CIC, Muslim Women's Network UK and LGBT Mummies Tribe)
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Research: Behaviour change interventions to optimise antibiotic prescribing

Strategic behavioural analysis that aims to help understand and change behaviours related to antimicrobial stewardship and antibiotic prescribing.