

## Workshop on Managing the Broads Environment for The Future – Follow Up

The concept of a Broads wide voluntary group is not a new conversation. It is one that has been discussed in meetings, over coffee and on the riverbank many times. But when the 3 of us sat down and talked after last autumn's saline and avian flu issues we felt this was the perfect time to breathe new life into this idea.

Of course, the process of moving any concept into something real and tangible can be a formidable undertaking. This is especially true within the Broads where a rich mosaic of interests and management creates a complex landscape. It's an undertaking that needs the involvement of all stakeholders which is why we were delighted to engage with so many of you at June's meeting. We are grateful for all your time and engagement, not only on that day, but also prior to and continuing after. We also send our thanks to those who were unable to attend the meeting but have provided their thoughts and ideas since.

It's taken some time to bring all the thoughts and ideas together in a way that was more than just a simple list. We wanted to present an outcome that captures the passion and enthusiasm for this concept, and the energy of the day's discussions. We hope we have done justice to the ideas, possibilities and concerns that were expressed, and that this inspires the energy needed to take the next steps of turning concept in to reality.

Duncan, Kelvin and Paul

### The Need

The 1<sup>st</sup> workshop identified the need for additional resources within the Broads. This exercise produced a list of tasks that are currently resourced, or have the potential to be either partially/fully, resourced by volunteers. As you can imagine it's a big list, one that ranges from simple observation and intelligence gathering through to complex technical tasks. While there is still much work to be carried out on verifying and prioritising those tasks, it is clear almost every area of the Broads Management will benefit from additional resources.

Some of those tasks are already being carried out by volunteers, this is both inside and outside existing management groups. Many volunteers work under established organisations and their efforts are recognised as an important section of Broads Management. However, there are many others working either independently or in smaller groups which often fly under the radar. Their knowledge, experience and efforts are equally important, but often unrecognised or ignored.

It became clear from the workshop notes and from wider discussions that many of these volunteers, especially in the less recognised groups, are working in silos. They are often unaware of the activities or available resources of other individuals or groups leading to missed opportunities or duplicated work. We know that in some cases individuals or small groups are working with risk or management practices that are not sufficient to allow others to engage with them.

There are also plenty of tasks that are just simply not being resourced, and another group where only minimal activity is being provided. Yet these are tasks which successful management of the Broads requires if it is to remain as we know it today. Our Environment is only going to become more demanding from the pressures that both climate and increasing population place upon it. It's unlikely that any increases in taxpayer funding will be sufficient to keep up with these demands, increasing the reliance on NGO's and the community to help

manage our environment. Indeed, the Environment Agency have made it clear, that their funding doesn't now enable them to meet all the needs of the environment in the Broads.

The Broads community is a passionate one, yet discussions with most organisations reveals an increasing struggle to recruit new volunteers. However, there is no shortage of passion and energy for Broads issues, albeit in some cases it doesn't manifest in the most positive form. They are plenty who say they want to help, want to be involved, yet somehow these people are unable to find the engagement that works for them.

We have concluded that there is a need for a new voluntary organisation within the Broads, one that can bring together the less recognised efforts, and engage with a wider section of the community. An organisation that can fill the resource gaps and grow to meet the environment's changing demands.

### The Concept

The 2<sup>nd</sup> workshop explored the shape and direction that any new organisation should take. With four separate groups discussing the same mini agenda, it was heartening, upon review, to see so much commonality in thinking.

It is clear a new organisation should be independent of the statutory organisations. This would enable flexibility, agility and be free of fiscal restraints, including the ability to access different funding streams. Its management board should represent the wider Broads community, working under either a CIC or CIO structure. It should have a framework that allows the organisation to build steadily and robustly, allowing individual skills and experience to drive supported development of each specialist area.

Without doubt the new organisation needs to build credibility and accountability, the essence of creating the confidence required to be tasked with a wide range of activities. To do so we believe that a paid management level is required to manage a volunteer workforce.

It is important that the new organisation has a clear and strong brand, one that reaches out to the community with clear identity and purpose. At the same time being inclusive and collaborative, ensuring that it adds resources and not simply replace existing efforts.

There are two words that stand out to us, ones which we feel encompass the essence of the above, and that as we have worked through the findings of the meeting has become a working title.

### Broads Guardians

(Guardian = protector, defender, preserver, champion, custodian, warden, keeper, guard, conservator)

We envisage an organisation that provides a common set of approved working practices covering Safety, Conduct, Communications, etc that can be adopted by small organisations, groups or individuals. An induction to become accredited as a "Broads Guardian" would provide assurance of working to a quality standard and recognition as part of the Broads Management.

Working to a preapproved and recognised standard should lead to increased confidence and engagement, better communication and sharing of resources. The Broads Guardian Scheme would provide a framework to allow specialist areas to be developed as and when suitable individuals step up.

As an example, we have some very passionate bird rescue volunteers that work almost every day on the Broads. Their work is vital to birds in distress, but undocumented, has minimal risk management and goes unrecognised. Those individuals could be supported under a Broads Guardian Scheme to develop a fully functioning and managed program. Once in place this opens opportunities for funding, cross resourcing and inhouse training of volunteers from other interest groups.

Using such a framework would allow individual volunteers to work safer, develop skills, increase engagement and work more efficiently. At the same time allow established organisations to join or support the accredited scheme, improving communication and reducing silo working. It will be important to create a sense of community which supports its volunteers to develop personal and professional skills and bring ideas to the table.

### Next Steps

We are currently very much at the concept stage, with many, many questions to answer, details to define and ideas to develop. As we mentioned right at the start, to be successful this initiative needs a stakeholder wide input, and we are once again reaching out to all of you.

We are looking to bring together a group of 10-12 people that can commit to around 5 hours a week for a couple of months to bring together a business plan. Together we will explore and answer the outstanding queries and questions needed to take this concept to the next stage, and of course apply for funding.

We have already managed to secure £5000 of FIP money to improve and expand the Saline Data Collection Program that has been running within the Angling Community, and we have submitted an expression of interest to the HLF Species Survival Fund. We will know by the 28<sup>th</sup> Aug if this is accepted to move into the full application phase, which requires many thousands of words to define both the objectives, outcomes and set up the governance needed for such an appropriate scaled grant, let alone have it ready by the 26<sup>th</sup> Oct.

If you are interested in helping move the concept to the next stage, please contact anyone of us, with the next few weeks.

Once again thank you for your valuable input in to this process so far and we hope that we can count on your support to get to the next stage.

Duncan Holmes, Kelvin Allen, Paul Rice.

## Workshop on Managing the Broads

### Exercise 1 Task Identification – Summary of Discussion Groups

- Water Testing
  - Salinity,
  - Temp,
  - Nutrient,
  - BOD,
  - DO
  - Bacteria
- Riverfly Monitoring,
  - Recording
  - Interpretation
- Invasive Species
  - Awareness
  - Monitoring
  - Management.
- General Observation
  - Intelligence gathering
  - Asset Performance
  - Public Interaction
- Fish Population Surveys
  - Citizen Science
- Wildlife Disease
  - Prevention
  - Treatment
  - Clean Up
- Public Engagement
  - Presentation of Data, i.e. interactive map
  - Advice
  - Publicising
- Prymnesium
  - Monitoring
  - Treatment
  - Fish Movement
- Saline
  - Monitoring
  - Environment Protection
  - Fish Movement
  - Barrier operation
  - Bubble Curtain deployment
- Pollution Events
  - Monitoring
  - Assistance Cat 3 incidents
- Fish and Wildlife passes
  - Installation
  - Monitoring
- Asset operation and maintenance
- Platforms and Slipway maintenance
- Footpath clearance
- Litter Picking

## **Workshop on Managing the Broads – Exercise 2 Structure and Operation**

### **Management Structure**

Independent (of Government?) Steering Group/working group/round table  
Broad Membership  
Framework Objectives  
Build Slowly  
CIC for public money  
Constitution  
Charitable objectives  
CIO/Trust with insurance  
Management Board  
Trained personnel on rota

### **Identity and Brand**

Broad cover (Broadswatch, Broads Community Rescue/response)  
Broads Guardians  
Like RNLI but with Wildlife rescue, Saline Incursion intervention, Prymnesium intervention, Pollution, Flood, Observe/Report/Watch.  
Needs terms of reference, steering group/working group all-inclusive and collaborative  
Inclusive  
Clear Identity and purpose

### **Risk Management**

Outsource possibility  
Statutory confidence  
Water Safety  
Manual Handling  
PPE  
Basic to high level training modules/competencies  
Public liability  
Financial Risk

### **Communications**

Existing resources – public/social media  
Website, maybe information page style, read only with email contact details  
Professional SEO and Social Media (non-emotive)  
Dedicated contact number for public  
Dedicated contact number for partners  
Use animal rescue and climate change in publicity as encourages donations/funding  
Volunteer selection  
Internal coms, command and control

### **Funding**

Sponsors  
Business – e.g. Aviva, Anglian Water, Brooms, Essex/Suffolk Water  
Charitable donations  
FIP, FIPL, HLF  
Paid for Services  
Overheads provided e.g. Desk space  
Broads become a Research area