

Annual report 2022-23

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Chief Executive: John Packman

A hot topic

At last, climate change has become a hot topic. Public awareness of the need to take tangible action is higher than ever and this is encouraging further action to tackle the issue.

Obviously, by its very nature and remit, the Broads Authority has always been concerned for the environment, and from its early days promoted such things as environmentally friendly boating in the form of sailing, canoeing and electric boating.

More recently, our CANAPE project, Creating A New Approach to Peatland Ecosystems, and Nature for Climate Peatland Grants, have transformed the way we plan for managing the Broads landscape. The good news is that the Broads, along with other peatland areas, has the ability to make a significant contribution to combatting climate change, and you can read more about it within this report. All this work must and will go on developing, along with other efforts to reduce global warming and mitigate its effects.

There's lots of good news on a shorter timescale too. One project that stands out is our new Accessible Days Out in the Broads National Park video, which you can also read about in these pages.

This review year has seen publication of the latest version of the key document setting out future plans for management of the Broads as a whole. The Broads Plan 2022-27 was published in autumn 2022. You can read more about it [here](#) and you can read the full document on our website.

Whether your interest is in finding out about what the Broads can offer you now, finding out about what you can do for the Broads, or understanding more about the position of the Broads in the wider environment, we hope you will find this report of interest and we look forward to keeping in touch with you.

Bill Dickson
Chairman, Broads Authority



Keep in touch

- For details about our projects please go to broads-authority.gov.uk or see our contact details on page 2.
- For regular updates on our work you can read Broads Briefing, our monthly online newsletter. To subscribe, go to [Monthly newsletter \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk).

- If you'd like regular news about places to visit and things to do, you can also sign up for our Visit the Broads National Park newsletter by going to visitthebroads.co.uk/newsletter.

Get involved

- If you'd like to contribute your ideas, go to [Broads Engage \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk).
- If you'd like to find out about volunteering, go to [Volunteering \(broads-authority.gov.uk\)](https://broads-authority.gov.uk).

Conserving and enhancing the environment

Conserving and enhancing the Broads environment, both land and water, forms one part of the Broads Authority's remit. Here's a selection of project news from over the last year highlighting just some of our work in these areas.

Broads Plan

The latest version of the management plan for the Broads, the Broads Plan 2022-27, was published in autumn 2022. This is the key management plan used by the Broads Authority, governing all areas of our work and setting out a vision for the future of the Broads. It is developed through consultation with partners, stakeholders and members of the public.

The plan has six themes:

- Responding to Climate Change and Flood Risk
- Improving Landscapes for Biodiversity and Agriculture
- Maintaining and Enhancing the Navigation
- Protecting Landscape Character and the Historic Environment
- Promoting Understanding and Enjoyment
- Connecting and Inspiring Communities

The launch event was attended by a wide range of strategic partners, including representatives from the Broads Hire Boat Federation, the Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association, Natural England, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, the National Farmers Union, the RSPB, Norfolk Rivers Trust, wildlife trusts, water companies and others, all with a vital role to play in the future of the Broads. The plan seeks to ensure that the Broads connects with and inspires a wide range of communities and people from diverse backgrounds with diverse experiences, including people who may never have been to the Broads.

While the Broads Plan is published by the Broads Authority, it has always been a partnership strategy representing the joint vision of the Authority, our partners and our many stakeholders. You can read the plan at

broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/strategy/broads-plan-2022

Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI)

Raising awareness of the BFI and its aim to create a framework for future flood risk management that better copes with our changing climate and rising sea level is an important part of this partnership's work.

The BFI team has been working with stakeholders such as the Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association and the Upper Thurne Working Group, and gave a presentation to Great Yarmouth Borough Council's Environment Committee to share more about the BFI strategy with its members and allow opportunities for them to share their thoughts.

In November 2022 the BFI hosted a virtual event for Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association members, which was well-attended and supportive of the BFI. It was an opportunity for members to listen to the project team talk about the flood risk management strategy that is being developed as well ask questions and raise topics of interest. These included salinity, the prospect of a tidal barrier and responsibilities of risk management authorities.

The event with the Upper Thurne Working Group was a pilot workshop, with a good attendance and a range of stakeholders taking part in the exercises. These included how the attendees could prioritise the BFI strategy objectives, and identifying what flood risk management actions may be suitable in future within the Upper Thurne catchment and further afield. The BFI has been reviewing and collating all the information provided on the day.

Great Yarmouth is a key part of the BFI strategy area and the project team was invited by the borough council to give a presentation to their Environment Committee, which took place in November 2022. The project team highlighted the importance of the town within the BFI area, as a concentration of people and property at risk, and a potentially influential location at the mouth of all the Broads rivers. The coastal location also means that the town is directly exposed to sea level rise and increasing food risk. It was also an opportunity to emphasise the links between the BFI and the recently established Resilient Coasts project, which is managed by Coastal Partnership East on behalf of Great Yarmouth Borough and East Suffolk District councils. The project runs for five years covering several coastal communities and its vision is to create a toolkit of options that enable the people, economy and environment to transition to a climate resilient coast. This ambition matches that of the BFI, which anticipates working closely with the Resilient Coasts project.

For more details on current BFI work, please go to

broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/climate-change/broadland-futures-initiative

Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL)

The FiPL programme is progressing well in the Broads. It was developed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and provides funding to farmers and land

managers to carry out projects that support the environment, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide public access opportunities or support nature-friendly farm businesses.

The programme started in July 2021 and has now been extended until March 2025, and is a key mechanism for achieving Broads Plan objectives, particularly within the plan's themes of Responding to Climate Change and Flood Risk, and Improving Landscapes for Biodiversity and Agriculture.

You can read more about the scheme on our website, including how farmers or land managers from the private, public and voluntary sectors can apply for current funding.

broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects/farming-in-protected-landscapes

From CANAPE to FibreBroads

The CANAPE project, Creating A New Approach to Peatland Ecosystems, with funding from the European Regional Development Fund North Sea Region, concluded in December 2022. The project has restored peatlands and developed paludiculture (wet farming), bringing economic benefits.

The Broads Authority then secured a £1,125,831 Nature for Climate Peatland Discovery Grant for the Broads Peat partnership, which focused on developing peatland restoration projects, through its Broads Peat Discovery Project. This grant was funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and administered by Natural England.

A grant application to finance restoration of Buttle Marsh, near How Hill, was submitted to the Nature for Climate Peatland Restoration Grant Scheme by the Authority.

In spring 2023 work began on developing plans for the next phase of the Broads Peat partnership's work. A successful application

to Defra's Nature for Climate Paludiculture Exploration Fund was made. The new project, FibreBroads, runs from June 2023 until March 2025. Broads Peat key partners and supporting authorities, building on those involved previously, now include: the Broads Authority (lead partner), Norfolk FWAG, Norwich University of the Arts, Hudson Architects, Wetland Products, Palladium, Norfolk County Council, the Environment Agency, the Broads Internal Drainage Board, New Energy Farms, the National Farmers Union, Defra (funding agency), Anglian Water (funding agency) and Natural England (fund administrator).

You can follow current progress with FibreBroads on our website at

broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects/fibrebroads

northsearegion.eu/canape

Sharing views

In October and November 2022 the Broads Authority held a series of events as part of public consultation on the draft Design Guide for the Broads and the latest version of the Local Plan for the Broads. These consultations will help to shape new development in the Broads area at a very early stage.

In the Local Plan, the Authority sets out policies that help determine the outcome of future planning applications. The consultation focused housing, residential moorings, landscape, wildlife, green space, design and navigation. For the part of the Borough of Great Yarmouth that also lies within the Broads Authority area there was also a focus on residential caravans, and gypsy and traveller sites.

Results from an initial survey about the special character of the Broads were used to develop the draft Design Guide, which will help people submitting planning applications for new

development to have a clearer idea at an early stage of what is likely to be acceptable in the Broads. It should help to ensure that applications relate well to their surroundings and enhance the Broads with development that is sustainable, increases biodiversity, improves accessibility and contributes to the local area.

People were able to talk to our planning staff about both the guide and the plan at the events, and give their views as part of the consultation, which closed in December 2022. The responses are contributing to the final Design Guide and next version of the Local Plan, to ensure that they reflect the needs and requirements of the local community. A further consultation period on the next version of the Local Plan will take place in early 2024.

For further details please go to

broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/transparency/consultations

Water, Mills & Marshes

This wide-ranging Broads Authority programme, which includes many partners and is financed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, will now finally conclude in June 2024, though many of the projects will continue to evolve.

One of the main focuses of the programme has been restoration of drainage mills and the project to restore six mills was almost complete by spring 2023, with the final restoration work due to be completed at Mutton's Mill on Halvergate Marshes in summer 2023.

Several 2022 interpretation projects gave visitors an insight into the past and future of the mills and other features of the Broads landscape.

An exhibition at the Museum of the Broads at Stalham, From Sails to Blades, provided a history of wind power in the Broads and its impact on the landscape. In the southern Broads, Water, Mills & Marshes worked with

the Friends of Hardley Mill and Julian Claxton, a local filmmaker, to create a video offering an in-depth look into the history and workings of one of the few remaining operational drainage mills in the Broads. The video is available on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su5xCGL4imA>

Most comprehensively, Water, Mills and Marshes hosted a Hidden Heritage Conference in October 2022 at the University of East Anglia (UEA). There were presentations from staff of the Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Aerial Perspectives on the Broads, The Waterside Heritage of the Broads), the Curator of Archaeology at Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery (Monastic Landscapes in the Broads Area), and UEA Professors Rob Liddiard (World War Two in the Broads) and Tom Williamson (The Landscape of the Broadland Marshes), as well as many others. The series of talks was presented in association with Norfolk Archaeological & Heritage Research Group.

watermillsandmarshes.org.uk

Thanks to our group volunteers

Individual volunteers make an amazing contribution to Broads Authority projects each year, but we also benefit from long-standing group volunteers, who belong to groups that lend their support to our work.

The Broadsword Group is made up of volunteers who are also all members of the Broads Society, which describes itself as ‘the voice for the Broads’. Every year, during the autumn and winter months, they help our maintenance

team with riverside tree management tasks. In preparation for these tasks, Authority staff work with landowners to identify priority sites and put access agreements in place. The work involves cutting back and thinning trees on the river edges and using the cut material to make habitat piles. The locations are usually quite remote and the volunteers, along with equipment such as chainsaws, bow saws and loppers, are often transported to sites by water. A lot of sheer physical effort is involved in dealing with the trees, this year in the upper Bure area, clearing riverbank trees between Caen Meadow and Belaugh.

Another long-standing and experienced group of volunteers is the Beavers. This group goes out to volunteer on the second Sunday of every month, and the volunteers turn their hands to whatever is needed to help the maintenance team carry out practical conservation tasks set by the ecology and design team. Working right through the year, their work can vary with the seasons, as can the wildlife they see. Recent Sunday sightings included red kite, snipe and several marsh harriers.

We also benefit from the help of occasional groups of corporate volunteers. One such group attended our volunteer action day at Cary’s Meadow. Over the day volunteers undertook management of bramble and scrub to create a mosaic of different habitats, of different age and structure, to increase biodiversity of the site.

As ever, we are extremely grateful to the groups and individuals who do so much for the Broads.

Understanding and enjoying the Broads

Promoting understanding and enjoyment of the Broads, both land and water, and protecting the interests of navigation, form the other two parts of the Broads Authority's remit. Here's a selection of project news from over the last year highlighting just some of our work in these areas.

Stay safe

The Broads Authority continues to develop safety provision within the Broads. The Port Marine Safety Code requires harbour authorities to base their policies, plans and procedures on a Formal Safety Assessment, and to maintain a Safety Management System to control the identified risks to a level as low as reasonably practicable. You can find the latest information at

broads-authority.gov.uk/boating/navigating-the-broads/safety/port-marine-safety-code/safety-monitoring

In preparation for the start of the boating season in spring 2022, we contacted all hire boat operators in the Broads to bring them fully up to date with the new requirements included in the Hire Boat Code, a national code of practice, which came into effect on 1 January 2022.

Other measures included a communications safety campaign and a review of the nine animated boat safety videos, which are used to provide vital information for hirers ahead of their visit.

Norfolk Show

In summer 2022 the Norfolk Show was able to operate again, after a break of two years due to the pandemic. The Broads Authority was pleased to be able to return with the Broads Village, including Broads businesses such as the International Boatbuilding Training College, voluntary sector representatives such as the Norfolk Wherry Trust and public sector

organisations such as Broads Beat. Stands gave participants the opportunity to discover, enjoy and care for the Broads while keeping safe. Activities included pond dipping, Broads badge making, a marsh tools quiz and using throw-lines.

There was a great response from the public and one group of visitors that always stands out for being numerous, enthusiastic and appreciative is school groups. Visitors overall make the two days of the show as well as the many days of preparation very rewarding.

The show is also a good opportunity for all staff to work together on a project – rangers, planners, and staff from safety, operations, administration, communications and other groups are all involved. Volunteers play a big part too in bringing the Broads to a wide audience, some of whom may otherwise not have the opportunity to see all that the Broads National Park has to offer.

Seasonal preparations

As every year, an extensive programme of maintenance and dredging was carried out in preparation for spring 2023.

From October 2022 until March 2023 dredging took place from Malthouse Broad to the River Bure, on part of the River Ant and at Oulton Broad.

Extensive work was carried out at Broads Authority 24-hour moorings. Repair or replacement of mooring posts, mooring end barriers, timber, quay heading, capping, a

mooring pontoon and a sign frame took place at Coltishall, Belaugh, Caen Meadow, Wroxham Island, Ranworth, St Benet's, How Hill, Gay Staithe, Deep Dyke and Reedham. Work started on re-piling about 90m of sheet pile and refurbishing the timberwork at Neatishead Staithe, completed by mid-April 2023. At How Hill the path was topped up on the downstream section of the mooring and repairs were made to the Repps bank at Potter Heigham. A replacement gauge board was installed at Ludham Bridge and replacement electric charging points were installed at Ranworth and Reedham.

Hoveton Riverside Park

In 2021 the Broads Authority carried out a survey to find out what the communities of Hoveton and Wroxham, and visitors to the area, most valued about Hoveton Riverside Park and what improvements they would like to see in the future.

Work has since begun on repairing degraded footpaths to make them accessible to all, funded by a Removing Barriers grant from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, designed to improve access within national parks. The existing paths had become narrow and uneven, so they are being widened and levelled to make them suitable for wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs. The path from the canoe launch point to the viaduct was frequently muddy and flooded in winter, so a new raised path has been installed that will remain dry throughout the year.

This is part of the continuing programme of work to make the park safer and more accessible, including providing a better approach for visitors taking a trip on Ra, the Authority's accessible solar-powered boat, which operates from the park. Work is continuing through 2023-24, and will also include improved signing and interpretation of the park environment.

Accessible Days Out in the Broads

This is the title of the Broads Authority's new video highlighting some of the more accessible places to visit in the Broads National Park. It was launched to coincide with English Tourism Week in spring 2023 and is available on YouTube. [youtube.com/watch?v=4KvfMIZ416g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KvfMIZ416g)

There are suggestions for boating and land-based things to do, and an example of holiday accommodation, plus tips on where to eat and shopping, and how to get help and advice. With the involvement of Broads visitors and service providers it demonstrates that with some research and planning, the Broads does have many options for accessible days out.

Hall Farm Cottages, Mississippi River Boats, the Nancy Oldfield Trust, the Barton Broad Boardwalk, Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve and Fairhaven Woodland & Water Garden are among the places featured.

The video is supported by expanded information for accessible days out on the Authority's visitor website, available at [visitthebroads.co.uk/discover-the-broads/accessible-visits](https://www.visitthebroads.co.uk/discover-the-broads/accessible-visits)

Rails, Sails & Trails

This is just one example to show in more detail how the Broads Authority is developing activities with young people. In 2022 Rails, Sails & Trails helped to introduce 245 young people to what, for many of them, was a new world – the Broads. The project was managed by the Authority's education staff, with funding from the Community Rail Network, which includes Greater Anglia's Wherry and Bittern Lines, and with support from many of our partners.

The aim was to provide opportunities for young people and families who wouldn't usually see the Broads to get out into the landscape by train, which was also a new experience for some. The

project took schools, youth groups and families by rail to destinations along the Wherry Lines – the railway network connecting Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

On their journey through a typical Broads landscape, school students learnt about the history and wildlife of the Broads, and how trains gradually displaced the wherry – the local, traditional trading boat – as the main form of transport across the region. Walks, games, presentations and other activities were key parts of their days out.

Groups included participants from New Routes Integration, a local charity supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants through promoting cross-cultural integration and community awareness.

Youth groups, and asylum-seeking families being supported by New Routes Integration, ventured to Oulton Broad and Lowestoft for summer fun and games, guided by our education staff.

One important stop on the Wherry Lines is Brundall, home of Broom Boats. The station at Brundall is right by the boatyard and Broom Boats provided a history poster in advance to give an introduction for school students. They gave access to their customer toilets and outdoor tables, plus indoor picnic benches for when the weather demanded. They also introduced us to Julie Bolus, who has her studio at the boatyard and co-runs Norfolk Art Club. She adapted her illustrated booklet (available for families on hire boats) for Rails, Sails & Trails, and she provided all the resources and tuition for school visits.

Rails, Sails & Trails has continued with these activities through 2023.

Small world

The Broads Authority's work on climate change spans its entire operations, from decarbonising its works programme, to helping local farmers lock carbon into soils and working with local authority partners to actively manage the impacts of climate change within the Broads area. But enjoying the Broads in the future depends on far wider actions.

Alongside other UK national parks, the Authority commissioned a survey (published in July 2022) from Lancaster University-based Small World Consulting Ltd, to estimate the carbon footprint of the Broads as a whole and suggest ways of reducing that footprint.

The research measured the emissions from the Broads (from land use, resident and business activity) and calculated emissions by visitors travelling to and from the Broads. It produced a set of recommendations for how the Broads can transition to a low-carbon economy by 2050. The report says:

'The emissions assessment in this report is designed to bring every relevant area of carbon management into perspective for policy makers. A transition to a low-carbon future for the Broads entails strong action in many areas: construction, home energy, food production and diets, travel and transport, business energy use, the nature of tourism and the visitor experience, the circularisation of the material economy (including repair, maintenance, renting and reselling of consumer goods), and significant changes in land management.

The challenge is to find a coherent way of bringing these policy areas together, one that adds up to more than the sum of its parts and delivers an enhanced experience of living, working and spending time in the National Park.'

Expanding wetland restoration, paludiculture (wet farming) on peat soils and regenerative agricultural practices for other grassland and cropland, and using our local planning authority and navigation powers were all identified as key areas to pursue, which in turn involves working with residents, local businesses and other organisations, as well as visitors, in order to enable change to take place with satisfactory outcomes for all.

The report suggests that for visitors one of the most significant actions they can take to reduce their emissions is to use public transport, where possible. For example taking the train (instead of driving) from Norwich to Wroxham to hire a day boat cuts the CO2 produced during the journey by 80%.

You can read the full report at broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/climate-change

Revenue accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

A summary of the Broads Authority's consolidated income and expenditure for 2022/23 is set out below.

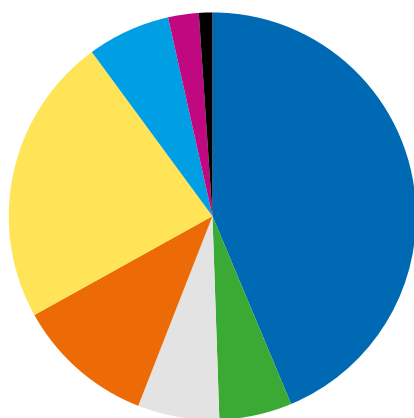
National Park Grant is awarded to the Authority in recognition of the Authority's status equivalent to that of a national park. It is spent on matters relating to conservation, planning, recreation and information and design. The level of revenue National Park Grant has remained static since 2019/20 but during 2022/23 for the first time we received a capital grant of £1.26m.

Navigation activity is self-financing from tolls paid by users of the Broads waterways.

Although the Broads Authority Act 2009 removed the statutory requirement to maintain separate general and navigation revenue accounts, there is still a requirement to prepare

a report at the end of each financial year describing the navigation income received by the Authority and the navigation expenditure incurred during the year. A copy of this report is available on the Authority's website.

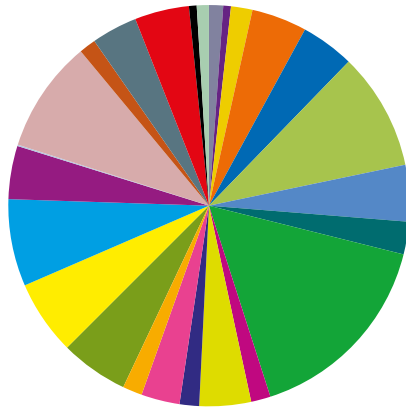
The Authority is required to prepare a full and detailed Statement of Accounts in accordance with guidelines issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). These accounts will be scrutinised by the Authority's External Auditors and are made available for public inspection. The audit has not been completed for 2022/23 and the draft Statement of Accounts can be viewed on the Authority's website or can be obtained from the Director of Finance, Broads Authority, Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich, NR1 1RY.



Income

	£'000
● National Park Grant (Defra)	4,784.6
● National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant - Water, Mills & Marshes Delivery phase	632.5
● Natural England - Nature for Climate Fund Peatland Discovery Grant	709.3
● Tolls from hire craft	1,204.3
● Tolls from private craft	2,516.7
● Other National Park income	721.7
● Other Navigation income	266.1
● Interest	117.1
TOTAL INCOME	<u>10,952.3</u>

Expenditure



	£'000
Asset management	129.7
Biodiversity strategy	69.8
Collection of tolls	196.9
Communications (including education, events, design and interpretation, tourism and UK Communications Team)	506.5
Development management	489.6
Dredging	1,076.0
Equipment, vehicles and vessels	517.4
Fen and tree management	298.4
Finance (including insurance and National Park Grant Capital items)	1,834.2
Governance	178.7
National Lottery Heritage Fund - Water, Mills & Marshes Delivery phase	472.7
Human resources	178.3
ICT	352.5
Legal services	178.6
Management and other costs	622.5
Natural England - Nature for Climate Fund Peatland Discovery Grant	682.0
Practical maintenance	797.3
Premises and property management	487.3
Projects	12.5
Ranger services	1,028.4
Safety	153.5
Strategy (including strategy and projects, Broads Plan, CANAPE, cultural heritage, climate change and FiPL)	420.5
Visitor services (including boat trips and yacht stations)	498.0
Volunteers	70.4
Waterways strategy	110.9
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>11,362.6</u>
Contribution from reserves	410.3