

SOMERTON PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 2021
AT 7.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Cllr R Starling (Chair) Cllr R Walters (Vice Chair)
Cllr T Jones Cllr J Clift
Cllr B Barker Cllr I Wright
G Lack (Clerk)

Also present:

B.Cllr J Bensly
C.Cllr R Hanton
Kellie Fisher Environment Agency
Mark Johnson EnvironmenAgency

1. To consider apologies for absence. Cllr D Crane sent her apologies as she had technical difficulties joining the meeting. Gavin Rumsey from the Environment Agency also sent his apologies.
2. Declarations of interest. Cllr Starling declared an interest as a member of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust and involvement with management at Martham Broad Reserve.
3. To hear a presentation by the Environment Agency regarding the Broadland Futures Initiative which is seeking stakeholder priorities for future flood risk protection in the Broadland area.

Kellie Fisher gave the following presentation. See Appendix 1.

4. The following questions were asked at the meeting and below are the written responses:
- 1. Is managed retreat now back on the cards? (submitted by Brian Barker)**
- The BFI can make recommendations regarding Shoreline Management Planning (SMP) policy but it cannot implement changes to existing policies.
- 2. Given that the sea wall and flood banks are in good condition what is the urgency in proceeding with a public consultation in the middle of a pandemic ? Why cannot the consultation be delayed until such time an**

**effective public consultation can be carried out i.e. face to face meetings.
(submitted by Ivan Wright).**

The coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on our public engagement planning throughout 2020. As a result of a continued ban on public gatherings or events, we took the decision to re-focus our efforts to online and virtual engagement. We felt this gave us an opportunity to reach those that sometimes do not get heard or are unable to travel to face to face events and likewise allows for us to all remain safe and protect one another during such difficult times. With recent interest in the BFI increasing and winter flooding, it is more important than ever to keep in contact with our stakeholders and reach more people at flood risk. Ultimately, our aim is to hear your views and opinions on flood risk and climate change in the Broadland area. With that in mind we are running our virtual exhibition and a survey from 18th January until 11th April 2021, giving you lots of time to get your thoughts across to us. As soon as restrictions are lifted we will be available to visit groups or individuals and begin planning face to face engagement.

We do also have the option for people to take part via post in this current round of engagement. We are offering the opportunity for people to request a paper version of the survey and will post them a copy. To request a copy they can email info@broadland-futures.org.uk, write to us at Broadland Futures Initiative, c/o Broads Authority, Yare House, 62-64 Thorpe Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR1 1RY or request a copy via telephone: (01603) 610734. On our BFI webpage there is also a copy of the survey form in a printable format that people can print from home or work, complete by hand and return by post to us.

3. Will dredging resolve flood risk issues?

The Broads are dredged in places for navigation purposes. Dredging across the whole of the Broads takes up roughly 60% of the Broads Authority's Construction team's time, so is a significant aspect of the work funded by toll payers. In general, dredging to reduce flood risk isn't the best long-term solution because rivers can quickly silt-up again and other measures such as building walls or storage upstream may be more effective. If undertaken incorrectly dredging can increase flood risk and erosion and alter the ecosystem and wildlife.

On much of the Broads, dredging for flood risk purposes is unlikely to be effective as the system is tidally influenced. This means that dredging will not reduce peak flood levels in the event of a tidal surge because any additional channel volume created is insignificant compared to the volume of the North Sea i.e. the tide will

still reach the same level. In fact, dredging could increase flood risk by increasing the amount of tidal water able to enter the Broads system and contribute to the erosion of river banks, due to an increase in water flow speeds.

We have a video on dredging available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mldiS-ACHvw&feature=youtu.be>

4. Will we see capital investment in East Anglia for flood risk projects?

The Environment Agency is investing £2.6 billion in its current programme of work. Yes, some of this money will be invested in projects located in East Anglia.

5. How does the BFI link with National policy and strategy?

The Defra flood and coastal erosion risk management policy statement was published in July 2020. This policy statement sets out the government's long-term ambition to create a nation more resilient to flood and coastal erosion risk. The BFI supports the aims and aspirations of this policy.

The Environment Agency has a statutory duty to develop, maintain, apply, and monitor a national flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) strategy for England. The Environment Agency updated this strategy for England, following a public consultation in 2019. Government adopted the strategy on 25th September 2020. Risk management authorities must now take the strategy into account in their activities and this includes the BFI.

The Chairman thanked Kellie Fisher for her presentation and closed the meeting at 19.30.

Appendix 1



Broadland
Futures Initiative

 SurveyMonkey

Broadland Futures Initiative

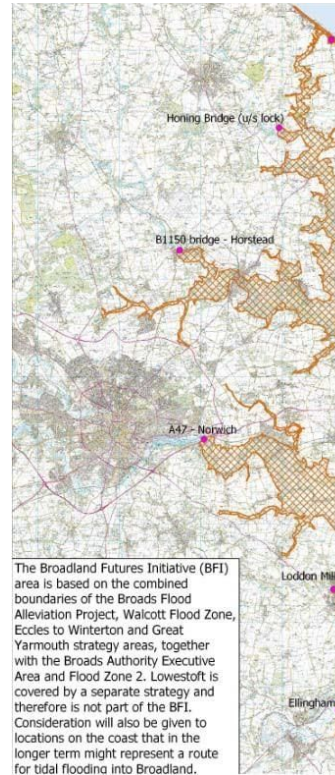
Presentation will cover:

- What is the BFI?
- Partnership
- Governance
- Baseline study reports
- Public engagement- why engage now?
- Next steps



What is the Broadland Futures Initiative (BFI)?

- A long term flood risk management plan for the Broads, Great Yarmouth and low lying coast.
- Considering all sources of flood risk.
- Responding to climate change.
- Making a resilient place.
- A plan for everyone.



Partnership

The Initiative has been set up by organisations responsible for managing coastal and inland flood risk.

- The Environment Agency
- County and District Councils
- Internal Drainage Boards
- National Farmers Union
- Water Resources East
- Broads Authority
- Natural England
- RSPB and Wildlife Trusts

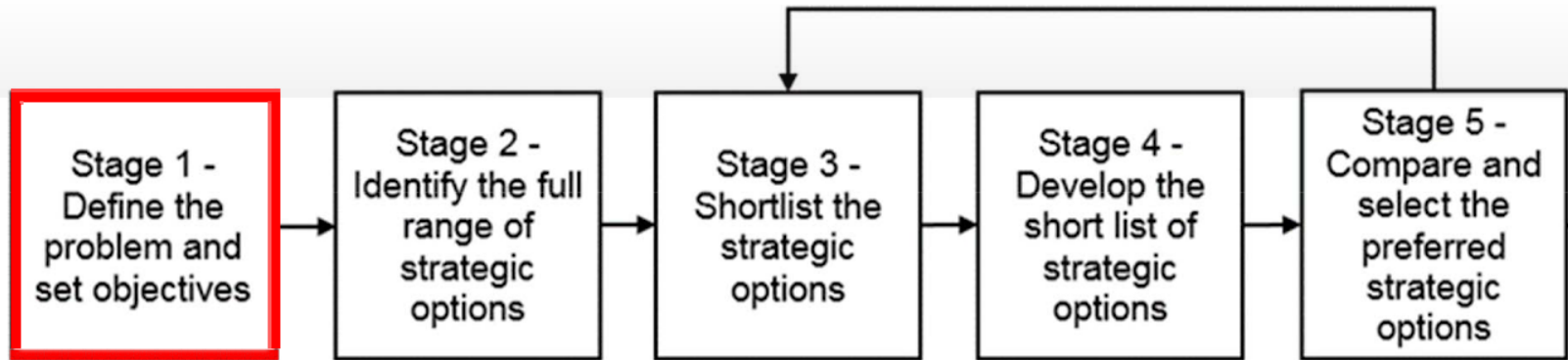


Governance

The BFI will work in partnership with **local communities** and other **stakeholders** to identify the way forward.

Democracy at the heart of decision making & engagement







Plan Area

Sets out a brief history of the plan area and how it has changed and adapted over time.

Nature of Flood Risk within the Plan Area

Summarises the sources of flood risk in the plan area including key flood events that have occurred in the past.

Evolution of the Coast within the Plan Area

Document describing the evolution and processes of the coast between Cromer and Great Yarmouth, with a focus on the low-lying Eccles to Winterton frontage.

Approaches to Flood Risk Management within the Plan Area

Describes current approaches to managing flood risk within the plan area. Including an overview of how flood risk management is funded.

Impacts of Flood Risk Management within the Plan Area

Overview of how flood risk management impacts the local economy, as well as the social and natural environment. It also describes how current flood risk management is influenced by these factors.

2019-2020 Engagement Activity – Why engage now?

- Mid 2019- Re-engagement survey – followed by series of awareness raising events around the BFI Plan area
- 2020 – Planned face to face events – followed by Covid-19 and re-planning



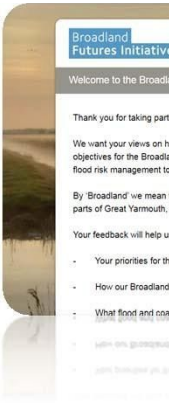
- Mid newsletters and Online



- 2020 /21 – planning and promotion of virtual exhibition

Engagement Update – Online Survey, Virtual exhibition

and more..



Next Steps

- Establish increasing connections with those organisations and individuals that come forward from our engagement activities.
- **Focus engagement activity to specific demographic groups.**
- Continue to produce technical baseline reports.
- Share digital newsletter on progress of the initiative with our key stakeholders.
- Embed democratic involvement and governance structure by convening our Elected Members Forum.
-



