

Summary

The Broads Society is a non-governmental, voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving and enhancing the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. It is a membership organisation offering a voice for all who love the Broads.

The Broads face many challenges, and the need for strong and united civil society engagement has never been greater. As the Broads Society approaches its 70th anniversary, we will enhance our ability to preserve and enhance the Broads through a strategy that will improve governance, build membership support, and implement beneficial programmes in recreation, environment and heritage, including volunteering and scrutinising planning applications.

Introduction

Founded in 1956, the Society campaigned in the 1960s and '70s to protect the Broads as Britain's premier wetland. In 1971 it was amongst the first areas to be recognised as an internationally important landscape under the Ramsar Convention (<https://www.ramsar.org/>).

The Broads has an equivalent status to a national park under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Geo6/12-13-14/97>) and is protected under the [Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Act 1988](#) supplemented, extended and clarified by the [Broads Authority Act, 2009](#).



The title “Broads National Park”, adopted by the Broads Authority in 2015 for promotional purposes, recognises the area’s equivalent credentials and special qualities¹. In addition to its irreplaceable environmental and heritage assets, the Broads is unique in the national park family in containing a 200km navigable inland waterway of national and international significance.

¹ The term National Park is widely but not universally accepted in the Broads and is used by the Society as a useful shorthand, without prejudice to the fact that the Broads Authority’s special legislation is not changed in any way by use of the term which, in formal settings, requires further explanation or is best avoided. The Broads share the same purposes as defined in the 1949 Act, i.e., to protect the history, land, and wildlife and to allow people to enjoy and appreciate it. However, there is a third very important purpose: to maintain the navigation.

Purpose and Values

Our members share a common purpose to help secure a sustainable future for the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads as a unique and protected landscape in which leisure, tourism and the local economy can thrive in harmony with the natural environment.

The Society celebrates and enjoys the Broads, but with climate change, rising seas, biodiversity loss and other major challenges to the landscape, there are concerns about the future. As the “Voice for the Broads”, we will bring our members and partners together to consult, collaborate and campaign towards new, shared goals. Our approach is inclusive and collegiate, and we believe that a credible, thoughtful and constructive approach is best.

Our Current Situation

The Society has significant strengths, including a proud campaigning history and a supportive membership that shares an inclusive approach to the Broads’ economy, landscape, ecology and heritage. However, we recognise that changes are needed, and we will review our constitution and governance and improve our financial base. Crucially, we will deliver better services to our members, build our support base and extend our influence through improved communications in an era when social media are key.

Our Approach

The Society uses the graphical model below to illustrate how our commitment to good governance and membership development frames a three-pillar programme in recreation, environment and heritage.



Organisational Goals and Objectives

To enhance our services to members, we will provide better public benefits, communicate well, listen to our constituency, be affordable, accessible and efficiently organised, and build stronger partnerships.

The Society intends to:

- Adopt and implement the [Charity Governance Code](#) in a planned and achievable way.
- Bring forward to members at an EGM or AGM, options for improvements to our constitution, aimed at managing governance and liability in the framework of the Charity Commission.
- Attract new trustees as needed following a skills audit; and implement procedures for induction, training, and performance enhancement.
- Establish responsible policies on conduct, health & safety, equality, diversity & inclusion, privacy, safeguarding, complaints and other matters.
- Prepare a financial strategy, including procurement procedures and risk assessment.
- Prepare and implement a marketing and communications strategy, including a brand guide.
- Create and empower five Committees of the Board to address:
 - Finance and Administration
 - Marketing and Communications
 - Activities and Events
 - Planning
 - BroadSword

The Society will consider plans for a Stakeholder Group to advise on its work and will monitor and evaluate progress in achieving this strategy.



Programme Goals and Objectives

The Society will:

- Provide a range of benefits to the Society's membership and the public, including campaigning and advocacy, awareness-raising, information, publications, field events and visits, indoor events including presentations, briefings, lectures, debates and conferences, opportunities to scrutinise planning applications and to volunteer in many arenas.
- Deliver a programme of benefits to members and the public on the theme of *Recreation*, appealing to those interested in boating and paddleboarding, walking, angling, birdwatching, natural history, swimming, photography and all other outdoor pursuits appropriate to the Broads, to encourage health and wellbeing, and to advocate maintenance and improvement of the navigation infrastructure, including sustainability and accessibility for all.
- Deliver a programme of benefits to members and the public on the theme of *Environment*, including enhanced awareness of the climate and biodiversity crises and the need for nature recovery; constant improvements in controlling pollution and habitat loss; advocacy for the mitigation of drought and flood in the Broads, for the protection of habitats and wildlife; and promotion of the Broads environment nationally and internationally.
- Deliver a programme of benefits to members and the public on the theme of *Heritage*, including review of all planning applications submitted to the Broads Authority; improved awareness of the Broads economic and built heritage; support and advocacy towards heritage restoration and conservation programmes; visits to heritage buildings and centres of artisanal craftsmanship; and presentations or debates on the importance of the Broads Heritage nationally and internationally.

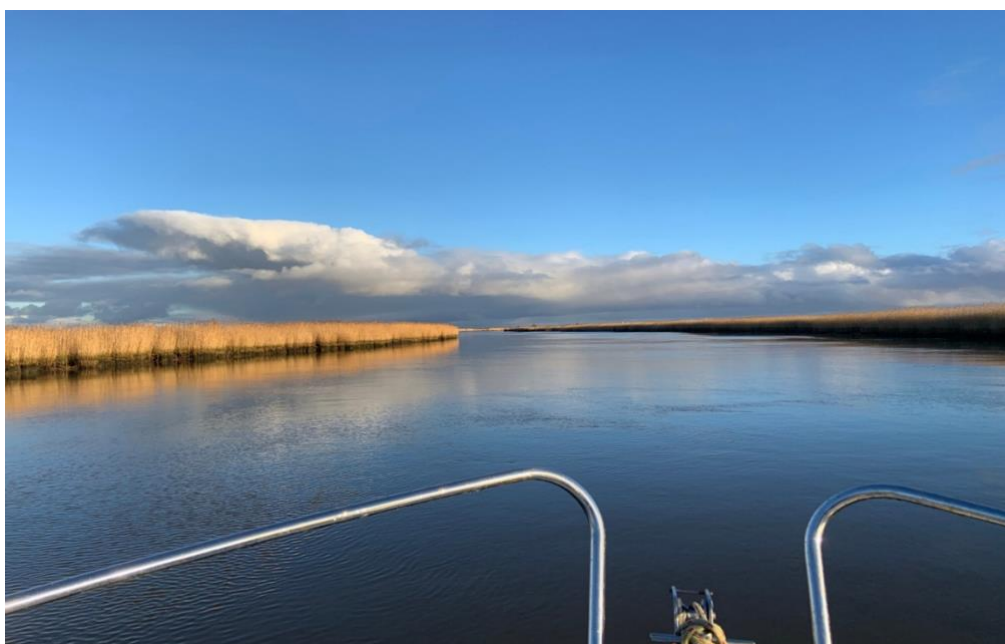


Communications

In support of all these plans, the Society will communicate effectively, raise funds and build partnerships. During the period under review, the Society will redevelop and launch its website as a gateway and information service for members, and further develop its social media offering.

The Society will continue to publish and deliver its flagship magazine, *Harnser*, bringing content into line with new and emerging partnerships, policies and strategic and operational objectives.

In all matters, the Society will communicate with its trustees, members and partners via email, videoconference and other means.



Fundraising

For many years the Society has successfully covered its expenses from membership dues (ca. 80% of income) and unplanned, unsolicited gifts and legacies (ca. 20%). As we approach our 70th anniversary, we will raise funds by:

- Increasing the number of members by 20% so that membership subscriptions cover 100% of the Society's running costs.
- Appealing to members for voluntary donations and legacy commitments to extend our work.
- Increasing Parish Council and corporate memberships based on clear benefits.
- Increasing membership of recreational organisations, also based on clear benefits.
- Applying for governmental and philanthropic grants in support of the Society.

Partnerships and Cooperation

The Broads Society respects the statutory organisations that maintain and manage the Broads landscape, including the Broads Authority, Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board, and others, and will maintain close relations with their members, committees and officers, seeking and offering support and advice as needed, commenting on strategic plans and operations when appropriate, and supporting the services these organisations deliver for environmental management, planning, flood control, development and navigation.

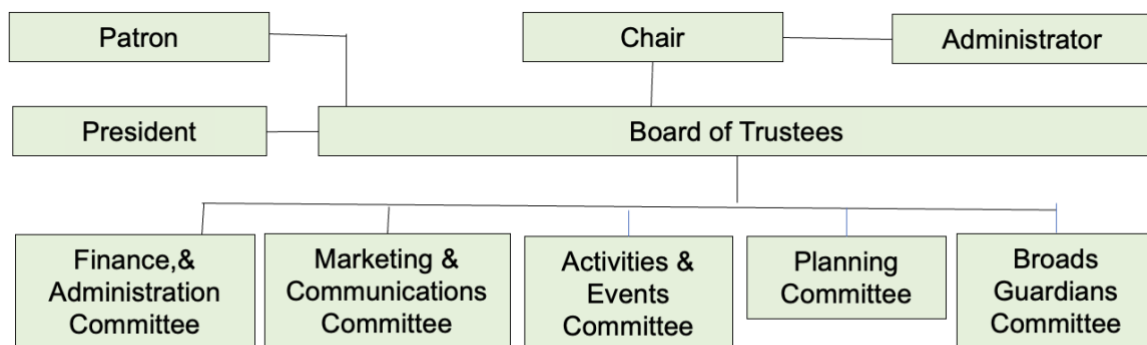
The Society will engage positively with respected umbrella organisations such as the *Broadland Futures Initiative*, the *Campaign for National Parks* and the *Inland Waterways Association*, amongst others. The Society recognises the benefit of partnerships with like-minded organisations in presenting member benefits, such as field and indoor events, publications and campaigns, and will associate closely with the *Broads Charitable Trust* and the *Museum of the Broads*, amongst others.

Trustees, Staff, Members, Volunteers and Organisational Structure

The Broads Society has one part-time administrator, no property other than a part-share in a listed wooden building (the Eel Sett at Candle Dyke) and modest financial assets. The strength of the organisation lies in its members from whom the Society draws its board of trustees, committee members and volunteers (see the organisational chart below).

At the same time as building our membership, we will reinvigorate and extend the volunteer base under the new brand name Broads Guardians. Volunteers will be managed professionally, in accordance with best practices and legal requirements, and in close partnership with those who need volunteers to help achieve their objectives.

The Board of Trustees will meet in odd-numbered months of the year. Committees will meet in even-numbered months, and their Chairs will report to the Board. The Annual General Meeting will be held in November, and Extraordinary General Meetings will be held as needed. Sub-committees may be formed as needed and will report through their respective Committees.



Organisational Chart

