



PRESS RELEASE

Natural England and Parish Councils debate the future of the Broads

Natural England is today (Monday 23 June) meeting with representatives from some of Norfolk's parish councils, along with the Environment Agency, to discuss its report on the effects of climate change on the Broads.

Natural England's Regional Director, Shaun Thomas, said: "We welcome the opportunity to meet members of the parish councils and have an open and honest debate about the effects that climate change will have on our region and in Norfolk in particular.

"I am conscious of the concerns felt by communities who could be impacted by sea level rise, and the need for help to enable communities to adapt to climate change.

"Natural England recognises that environmental and social solutions need to proceed in tandem and, informed by the Broads report, we will engage with Government and communities to find an approach that allows successful and long-term adaptation to climate change."

Mike Walker, Secretary of the North East Norfolk Coastal Partnership Group, added: "We're very pleased that Natural England and the Environment Agency are taking the opportunity to have this discussion. This is a positive step in the right direction.

"The blame that has been attached to Natural England for raising the possibility of letting us being "inundated" by the sea in fifty years time is almost completely inaccurate. The effect of the misunderstanding has been to cause widespread anxiety and people have lost confidence in their communities believing that they will be lost to the sea in the near future. This is simply not true.

"It is vitally important that the agencies that are responsible for shaping and influencing policy on coastal management explain the current plans clearly and work with communities on helping to produce a shoreline management plan that is backed by the communities it covers."



Steve Hayman Coastal Manager for the Environment Agency in the region said: “Through all our meetings and discussions with local people we are very aware of their concerns and worries about their future. Sea levels are rising along the coast and we’ve already seen the damage that winter storms can bring. Now, more than ever, it is important that we look at the options open to us, and the implications of these for the local communities.”

ENDS

Notes for editors:

- 1. The meeting is by invitation only.**
- Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas. We conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity it brings.
- For further information please contact:

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The **Environment Agency** press office: Catherine Burbage on 01733 464139.

Mike Walker, Secretary of the **North East Norfolk Coastal Partnership** Group, 07767 257271.

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