

East Suffolk Greenprint Forum – Water the essential element

14.9.2015



40 individuals took part in this lively and fast paced Forum. In a nutshell the summary is:

We live in one of the driest part of England yet we have an abundance of wildlife and an economy that relies on water. There are organisations, communities and individuals already acting to reduce wastage and improve quality of water, an example being Howard Nurseries. We all need to work together to make the best use of this precious resource, especially as the climate changes and pressures from development, population and aspirations increase and government funding pots shrink. This has already started with Anglian Water, Essex and Suffolk Water, Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Abstractors Group, The Environment Agency, the Met Office and others sharing data and working more and more in partnership on innovative, forward looking projects which benefit people and nature at the same time. There is more to do and we all have a role to play in the day to day world we directly influence and in the persuasion and political spheres.

Key points I noted from each of the main speakers:

Chris Gerrard, Anglian Water:

- 1) Anglian water continues to work hard to reduce leakages and has a target that goes beyond that which Ofwat notes as economically viable. We can support

reduction of potable water wastage by getting meters installed and following simple use reduction steps.

- 2) Partnership working to make best use of water is key part of their strategy – the Water Resources East Anglia project is one part of this.

Will Akast, Environment Agency

- 1) Phosphates in the water are something we all have a role in tackling, Anglian Water has installed expensive stripping equipment in some plants however we all need to check that nothing used at home, work or in community buildings contains phosphate.
- 2) Land management around water courses is critical – the right tree in the right place can lower water temp by 2-3 degrees. Bays can provide ideal spots for fish fry and plants. Carefully placed branches and curves can slow water upstream of towns and cities and reduce flood risk while improving the habitat.

Matt Hullis, Suffolk County Council

Felixstowe Peninsula project is an important part of a new approach to water management. It is a bringing together of all involved in water from the IDB which currently pumps fresh water out to sea to the farmers who plant crops based on the available water to find a solution that works for all now and in the future. <http://www.greensuffolk.org/flooding/hwmp/felixstowe/>

Peter Youngs, ESWAG

- 1) There is a history of good cooperation between farmers in Suffolk which is critical for the farmers (as supermarkets only deal with large amounts of produce), the economy and for the environment.
- 2) Water management including good irrigation is fundamental to crop production and income generation.

Simon Hooton, Broads Authority

Water management and forward planning is critical if we are to continue to enjoy our current recreation, business ventures and wildlife. See the Broads Future clip on Youtube <https://youtu.be/8RL9meFrxqo>

Another clip not mentioned but worth a look is: Water of Life clip on Youtube <https://youtu.be/JaxvFKsVyXg>

The Broads °Community is looking to engage all in sharing information and ideas on adapting to the predicted impacts of climate change and sea level

rise on this precious wetland landscape. Find out more on <http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/climate-change/broads-community>.

Keith Moore, Environment Agency

We spend a lot of time and money supporting new businesses as they start up and we don't want them to fail, especially not for something that is avoidable. For this reason on the 22nd October we will be launching a Business resilience toolkit and support package for small to medium sized enterprises. Details will be circulated.

Debbie Wargate on behalf of Howard Nurseries

A case study of a business who knows how critical good water management is for profit and the environment and one that has acted accordingly.

Visit planned for Friday 19th Sept 2015. 1.30 – 3.30. Contact Debbie Wargate to book.

Questions:

- a) How do I deal with smells from grey water diverted into a water butt?

Although not answered on the night some suggestions put forward are:

- 1) From experience avoid ex-shower & bath water storager! (this is backed up on <http://greywateraction.org/greywater-faq/>)
- 2) Grey water has to be used as it is produced and ideally needs to be treated <http://dwi.defra.gov.uk/research/completed-research/reports/dwi0778.pdf>

Anglian water has information on greywater on their website:

<http://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/how-you-can-help/using-water-wisely/greywater-reuse.aspx>

- b) Can anything be done about anti fouling paint usage in the River Deben and if so who could lead on this?

It is not within the remit of the holistic water management project but it was noted that the Environment Agency would be the lead on issues like this.

- c) Is there anything that can be done to tighten planning regulations further with regards to water retention?

It was noted that the planning system operates on a gradual improvement basis to enable developers to plan for tighter controls. This was challenged and the need for high quality drinking water for flushing toilets queried. A suggestion for incentivising feed in style for householders to install rainwater harvesting systems was made.

- d) Is there anything that can be done about mud on roads from farmers vehicles and irrigation

ESWAG run annual training which covers best practise to help landowners/managers reduce this even further than they already do.

Other news items

Community Enabling funds and contacts were promoted

AONB reservoir guide www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/assets/Planning/SCH-Farm-Reservoir-leafletWEB.pdf and non native species guide were promoted - AONB NNIPS guide was written by Dedham Vale AONB but is relevant for many river locations. Link is at: www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/publications/wildlife-and-landscape/ or directly at <http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/assets/Publications/Biodiversity/Dedham-Vale-Non-Native-Species-booklet1.pdf>

Howard Nurseries Gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show was mentioned. This was gained for the Tall Bearded Irises bred by Sir Cedric Morris and grown in peat-free medium Melcourt Sylvamix. Sir Cedric Morris lived in Pound Farm, Higham, Suffolk.

The Quiet Lanes initiative continues and is looking for volunteers to help develop it further. <http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/projects-and-partnerships/quiet-lanes-suffolk>. Speak to Neil Winship if you would like to help: 01473 736423 or neilwinship@directsave.net

Suffolk Coast Greeters is now looking for volunteers – people with a passion for their local environment who want to welcome visitors and inspire them with local knowledge and stories while taking them round areas they may otherwise miss. Visit www.suffolkcoastgreeters.org.uk to find out more.

The new SCDC headquarters are under construction. They are ideally placed for public transport and will be a step change in energy consumption and associated emissions. An officer group has been set up to research and make recommendations for a Green Travel Plan and measures that in our control to reduce the environmental impact of our move and subsequent operation.

Feedback

Of the 18 people who fed back, 12 liked the whole event with one quote as follows:

'Fantastic Range of speakers and themes. Lots of energy. Well organised and facilitated'

Three specifically liked the Met Office talk, one the local examples provided, one the theme of buckets and cupful's and another the new up river pumping stations.

Key messages taken away by those who filled in feedback form

- 1) Having a water meter installed is important – one person has pledged to do this
- 2) Water is a critical resource, the tendency of urban-man to take water and water recycling systems for granted needs to end,
- 3) Plenty of people are working on the issues. We can all do something. There is always someone to ask about a problem/solution.
- 4) Good water course management approaches
- 5) Knowledge of the Felixstowe Peninsular Project
- 6) We all need to prepare for the effects of climate change
- 7) Knowledge on how to use less water
- 8) The amount of water used in houses has decreased however there is more that could be looked at with regards new developments and a will to see building control tightened further and to include rainwater harvesting.
- 9) More research and forward looking needed by myself

Improvement points noted

- 1) Consider holding for slightly longer in the daytime to cover the range but allow time for questions.
- 2) Reduce use of Powerpoint – particularly slides with animations etc. in.

Topics requested for future Forums

- 1) Transport – cycling, walking, public, car sharing and electric.
- 2) Value to the economy of the natural environment (also raised in Felixstowe taking the town forward meeting July 2015)
- 3) Ecology of river and marsh management
- 4) Carbon Footprint - what we can do to reduce our own
- 5) More case studies or a report back on the case studies that were presented

- 6) Met Office and Anglian Water
- 7) Strategies, suggestions and stories (good & bad) for how and about persuading our friends and neighbours of the need and ways they can help to reduce their man-made contributions to climate change
- 8) Food – potentially two or three sessions: the environmental, economic and social impacts of the food we choose to eat following food from source (and implications there) to processing to our handling of it and consumption. Taking into account hidden costs and subsidies and then perhaps look at whether there are alternatives.
- 9) Energy – environmental implications of each option, including AD. (Additional note: Felixstowe taking the town forward meeting July 2015 raised this but on the practical application front)
- 10) End of life options environmental impacts
- 11) Resource depletion
- 12) Steady State economics

Other points made

Ensure forums are accessible by public transport

Encourage Environment Agency to insist on suitable planning conditions to prevent flooding