



**MINUTES OF THE ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP  
HELD ON TUESDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2014 IN ORFORD TOWN  
HALL**

**DRAFT FOR AGREEMENT AT MAY MEETING**

<b>PRESENT</b>	Edward Greenwell Guy Heald Alison Andrews David McGinity Brian Johnson Jane Marson Hugh Pilkington Richard Marson Rodney West Philippa Stewart Frances Barnwell Amanda Bettinson	<b>(Chairman, Farmer Nominee)</b> (Finance and Business) (A&O Association Nominee) (Butley Parish Council Nominee) (Boyton and Bawdsey Parish Council Nominee) (Landowner Nominee) (Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council Nominee) (Aldeburgh Town Council Nominee) (Ecological Representative for RSPB, NT, SWT) (Iken Parish Council Nominee) (Estuary Trust Trustee) (Partnership Secretary)
<b>ADVISORS</b>	Jane Burch Karen Thomas Emma Hay Trazar Astley-Reid Bill Parker	(SCC) (Environment Agency) (Natural England) (Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB) (SCDC)
<b>CONSULTANTS</b>	Andrew Hawes	(Hawes Associates)
<b>GUEST</b>	Professor Ken Pye	Independent Scientific Consultant
<b>MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</b>		<b>12</b> (Including Dorothy Casey SWT, Andy Millar NE, Trevor Wilkinson, Richard Wilson, Sir John Wheeler, Jane Wheeler Blore, Brian Wales RYA)
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Barry Leach Lizzie Hammond	(Aldeburgh and Orford Business Associations Nominee) (Householder Representative)

- 1.           The Chairman** welcomed the members of public who attended to hear a summary of Professor Ken Pye’s report on the affects of the breaching at Hazlewood Marsh. Professor Pye is an environmental geoscientist who specialises in geomorphology and sedimentology. He was commissioned to establish whether the breaching at Hazelwood Marsh following the December 2013 surge would materially alter the velocity and volume of water in the estuary and whether this would have an effect on other flood cells or the wider estuary. **Action**

Professor Pye first gave a brief summary of the history of the area and estuary as a whole and explained that he had referred to previous modelling to assess the likely options. He explained the maximum surge tide height recorded at Lowestoft on 6th December 2013 (3.26m OD) was higher than at Orford Quay (3.06 m OD) but the tidal curves during the surge showed a similar pattern. The maximum skew surge (difference in height between predicted high water and observed high water) at Lowestoft was 2.06 m and at Orford 1.66 m OD of a 3 metre increase in water levels. Prof. Pye noted that it can be difficult to agree an accurate event figure, but the surge tide was between a 1:100 and 1:200 event – but pointed out that a 1:200 event at Lowestoft could become a 1:20 in the estuary.

As regards Hazlewood Marsh, the 2009 crest level survey showed significant areas of wall below 2.5m OD. The tide was above 2.5m OD for a period of 3.5 hours and inevitable breaching and back wall damage resulted. It was known that this wall was unsustainable and in the Alde and Ore Futures document it was stated that the remaining life of the wall was within 5 years although the EA had intended to maintain for the short term, i.e. about the next 20 years.

Prof. Pye discussed a number of options from **i)** do nothing, **ii)** temporary repairs, **iii)** widen breaches with sills or slipways, **iv)** complete rebuild ?£2.7M which is out of the question financially, **v)** 1Kilometre managed realignment ?£250-300K, which would provide some intertidal habitat and, after some time to regenerate, some fresh water marsh **vi)** managed realignment with a new bund to protect local properties and water supplies (not yet costed).

Professor Pye stated that complete abandonment of the defences would have only a small effect on the estuary velocities with an increase of +6% at Slaughden and -6% at Iken. However, it may be necessary to conduct further hydrodynamic assessments and consider whether some realignment at Boyton would be necessary to offset the velocities further up the estuary. Increased sedimentation was possible higher up the estuary and a small benefit from a lower level of tide was possible at Snape but there is limited data available in these two areas so no firm conclusions could be made.

Prof Pye also noted that the estuary was flood dominant i.e. sediment was brought up the estuary rather than being washed out by the tide and that the shear stress was higher at the mouth of the estuary and patchier further up. Mud accretion was about 5mm a year so it would take in excess of 100 years to acquire the correct level to enable saltmarsh to establish in some areas (saltmarsh is restricted to the area between mid neap tide level and high water spring tide level), but vegetation round the edges of Hazlewood Marsh could start to establish in the next year.

Professor Pye would be in a position to make his final report within two weeks.

**Dorothy Casey** from **SWT** thought that the managed retreat option was attractive and gave the best wildlife outcomes, as although there would be a reduced area of freshwater habitat it would produce an area of intertidal habitat and saltmarsh. **Karen Thomas** noted that the EA are still awaiting a national decision as to the agreed funding for all surge damaged SAC/SPA reserves and whether, in fact, a freshwater marsh has to be retained. If it is not retained it remains unclear at present whether there will be a need for compensatory habitat elsewhere. However, discussions with the residents, landowners and SWT could continue to agree the best outcomes for all concerned, always subject to funding constraints.

**KT**

**It was agreed** that Karen Thomas should progress the residents meeting and await clarity from the EA on funding and whether the freshwater marsh is retained in situ or has to be sited elsewhere.

2. **APOLOGIES AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**  
**Apologies received from Barry Leach and Lizzie Hammond**  
Declaration of Interests - None to declare

3. **PREVIOUS MINUTES of 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2014**  
The minutes were agreed other than to cut the 2nd sentence from The Estuary Trust minute 8. Amended minutes will be available on the website.

**DMcG** updated the partnership on the Saltmarsh projects: he had arranged 2 days of coppicing in Butley Woods and the group had made 50 faggots. It was disappointing that few volunteers had materialised from the A&O estuary but it was thought sufficient

notice had not been given to alert the community. It was hoped that through the parishes the wider community could be encouraged to volunteer for these types of projects and so involve **everyone** in the work of the partnership which was considered important. Volunteers are also required to monitor the growth in sediment which is crucial to show the success of the trials and enable further financial support to be forthcoming for further projects. **AH** advised of one volunteer in Aldeburgh. [post meeting Karen Thomas/EA volunteered to take on monitoring duties] Two teams were required for Aldeburgh and Orford. **TAR** agreed to provide a guide in terms of method and timings of quarterly monitoring. Further restoration projects are under consideration for FC6 Iken Cliff, an area on FC3 at Chillesford and possible further work at Ferry Point. **Action DMcG** to progress.

**TAR**

**DMcG**

#### 4. **FOOTPATH TRIAL**

Jane Burch discussed the footpath trial following the assessment and meeting of the Orford Chantry wall upgrade. The proposal for a footpath trial is to improve, not jeopardise the flood defence and Andrew Hawes had proposed that a small section of interlocking blocks should be trialled on the Slaughden footpath as it has very high footfall. The site is still to be finally agreed and flood defence consent, right of way and landowner approval is yet to be obtained along with costs and sustainability of the various surfaces.

AH noted that hoggin surfaces currently in use are not compatible with overtopping as the flood resistance of the defence is reduced during an overtopping event as the hoggin surface is washed away exposing the bare clay underneath. With no grass cover as protection further erosion and possible breaching could result. AH agreed to supply a variety of possible surfaces to view prior to the trial. JB asked for any comments on her draft proposal should be sent in by 30<sup>th</sup> March.

**AH**

#### 5. **THE ESTUARY PLAN**

Alison Andrews introduced the plan as the overarching template as the basis for work on the defences for the next five or six years at least, which would be subjected to a Sustainability Appraisal to cover the Habitat Regulations, Water Framework Directive and all environmental regulations. It was noted that the Single Street Settlement may be in the process of setting up their own partnership to cover the area, at the moment referred to as FC0, the boundary of which still has to be finally agreed. It was noted that the hydraulics in the area between FC0 and FC1 were complicated and a full assessment needed to be completed before any decision could be made. **It was agreed** that Bill Parker would source a map of the area. AH still had not received the crest level survey and Karen Thomas was asked for this to be sent as a matter of urgency.

**BP  
KT**

**JM** noted that a good proportion of freshwater marsh was now under Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) and this should be a feature in the flood cell documents. Other comments were made to cover issues of adaptation to climate change, challenges particularly with reference to Hazlewood and Boyton, expanding the executive summary and mentioning coastal issues at Slaughden. A final draft would be available for circulation prior to the Annual meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May when the document will be discussed in detail with the community.

**AJB/AA**

#### 6. **EMERGENCY PLANNING PRE SURGE EVENTS**

JM agreed to work up the draft proposals with the IDB and EA to a more structured and strategic plan.

**JM**

#### 7. **UPGRADE DESIGNS FOR FC10 (ALDEBURGH) AND FC1 (BOYTON)**

FC10 - AH discussed his re-designs for FC10 following the poor quality work completed last year by EA contractors and the pressing need for improvement work to the back slope angle which is too steep. The area is now covered with broad leaved weeds not grass. Anchored double twist galvanised UPVC coated mesh would be laid on the back

slope to provide 1:200 standard of protection. The design for the section of Slaughden Footpath trial was also included in this flood cell.

FC1 – the borrow ditches were close to the wall in some places but there were wide corridors of good grass cover between the ditch and wall. AH also submitted a **potential** realignment scheme which could provide flood storage at the lower end of the estuary and attenuate tidal surge levels further upstream. This would need to be balanced with the Hazlewood Marsh options and would require further modelling to quantify the benefits to the estuary.

**8. ENABLING DEVELOPMENT**

EG advised the partnership he had discussed a draft plan of 38 sites offered by landowners that range from Bawdsey to Friston. SCDC were to consider some of their own ideas of larger sites next to key villages to join the package. It was thought that there were advantages of producing the portfolio of sites to be advertised together once they had been discussed in detail with the parishes concerned.

Initial discussions with Trustees and Clark and Simpson had taken place and agreement in principle had been reached on proposed charges. Immediately SCDC had agreed the portfolio of sites the partnership would be in a position to discuss with the parish chairman. The sites would not be sold until planning permission had been obtained and the land was in the hands of the charity.

**9. ESTUARY TRUST**

FB noted that the Trust was considering their policy for Conflict of Interest, Grants Policy and audit process and how it should be implemented.

**10. PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL MEETING**

Attendees for the annual meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> May were agreed. Parishes had already had prior notice of the meeting but partnership leads for each flood cell were to contact their representatives as soon as possible. EG/AJB/AA would agree the documentation to be circulated and a meeting with leads

**ALL**

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Alison Andrews advised the partnership that the report on the Association's Economic Assessment would be discussed at the Association's AGM on 5<sup>th</sup> April at 1100 in Thorpeness Country Club.

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May and Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm in Orford Town Hall.