



MINUTES OF THE ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP HELD ON THURSDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2014 IN ORFORD TOWN HALL

Minutes agreed as of 4th December

PRESENT	Edward Greenwell Guy Heald Alison Andrews Jane Marson Richard Marson Tim Beach Peter Smith David McGinity Brian Johnson Frances Barnwell Bill Parker Karen Thomas Rodney West Barry Leach Mark Johnson Amanda Bettinson	(Chairman, Farmer Nominee) (Finance and Business) (A&O Association Nominee) (Landowner Nominee) (Aldeburgh Town Council Nominee) (Snape Parish Council Nominee) (Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council Nominee) (Butley Parish Council Nominee) (Boyton and Bawdsey Parish Council Nominee) (Secretary AOET) (SCDC) (Environment Agency) (Ecological Representative for RSPB, NT, SWT) (Aldeburgh and Orford Business Associations Nominee) (Area Coastal Manager, Environment Agency) (Partnership Secretary)
CONSULTANT	Andrew Hawes	(Hawes Associates)
ADVISORS	Jane Burch Emma Hay Giles Bloomfield Haidee Stephens	(SCC) (Natural England) (IDB Engineer) (SCHU)
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC		Angela Sydenham, Chairman AOET David and Jane Dark, Iken Lindsay Clubb, Tunstall PC, Jane Wheeler Blore
APOLOGIES	Lizzie Hammond	(Householder Representative)

1. The Chairman welcomed Haidee Stephens, the newly appointed Estuaries Officer, and looked forward to her help and advice on the Saltings Group.

Action

MINUTES were agreed with the exception that Frances Barnwell asked for the Estuary Trust to be referred to by the full name of Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET). The Chairman pointed out that as there were so many organisations' names starting with 'Alde and Ore' it was less confusing referring to The Partnership, The Trust and The Association.

2. **MATTERS ARISING**

i) **EG** noted that Phil Camamile, CEO IDB, had agreed how the roles and responsibilities were split between the IDB and The Partnership. The Partnership was responsible for strategic approval, prioritising of plans and fund raising while the IDB would be responsible for accessing Grant in Aid funding, obtaining consents and permissions, tendering, procuring and supervising contract and upgrading work until

completion.

ii) **Bill Parker** to confirm the exact terms agreed after the CIL consultation and how these would impact on enabling development. He was also asked to confirm the draft ED criteria adopted by SCDC.

BP

iii) The Suffolk Coastal conference on the 8th October would be attended by Jane Marson, Alison Andrews and Amanda Bettinson. The Estuary Plan, one complete set of flood cell plans, saltings photographs and newsletters would be on the lunchtime stand.

3. **SNAPE WALL UPGRADING**

Giles Bloomfield (IDB) updated the Partnership on the work currently in progress on the north river wall at Snape. The wall, in some places as low as 2.1m, would be brought up to around 2.6m depending on the amount of clay immediately available, with a back face incline relaxed to 30°. It may take 1-2 years for this to settle. However the improved crest width now enables emergency repair vehicles access. The marshes are wet but provided the weather holds transporting the clay on site should be manageable. Over 4000 tonnes of clay had been delivered so far and approximately 200m of construction had been completed in the second week of being on site. A suitable strong grass mix will need to be applied once the wall is complete. We are extremely grateful to Teresa Cook of The Crown at Snape for allowing the clay deliveries access through the pub car park.

The overspend costs at the moment are about £25K which it is hoped will be covered by local contributions from the landowner and potentially the community and the clay contractors. If more clay was available a further 6600 tonnes would be required to raise the wall to 2.7m costing £110K (£45K overspend) or 7500 tonnes to gain 2.8m costing £130K (£65K overspend). Weather, clay and funds will be the determining factors as to whether this is possible. It was felt due to the tight timescales it may be difficult to arrange the £5K community flood repair funds and it may be more realistic to ask those that were flooded in December to ensure that their properties were fully protected and contributions to improve the culverts could be discussed at a later stage when an upgrade scheme next year is considered after the modelling (see 9.2) had been completed. Arrangements would have to be made for any contributions to be made to the Estuary Trust. **BP** agreed to confirm whether there was a possibility of accessing the GCLG Flood Protection Fund as this work would be improving flood protection. [later confirmed as the Business Support Grant]

BP

If further excess clay was available it may be possible to arrange other sites for storage provided it was used within 12 months which is a mandatory EU legislator rule under the Environmental Permitting Regs 2010. **KT** was asked to confirm if this rule could be relaxed. [post meeting: *KT has agreement in principle that EA will work with AOEP to develop a pragmatic approach to this issue.*]

KT

Andrew Hawes commented that i) even at 2.8m there would be flooding, ii) it could not be assumed that anywhere would be a suitable clay stock pile site as additional transport costs to site are expensive and have to be considered iii) the top soil seed mix dressing would be important.

Giles was congratulated on his professional handling of the project.

4. **ENABLING DEVELOPMENT**

EG informed the Partnership that SCDC have yet to discuss in full their report on the sites submitted but it will be important to compile a brief for planning consultants to work up a generic case for supporting the enabling development covering:

- the risks of the “do nothing” approach
- the social, economic and environmental drivers of our Estuary Strategy, and the

community benefits it would bring

- the physical and engineering works that will need to be done to fulfil the Strategy
- the need to provide funding for the great majority of those works from local sources
- the conclusion that Enabling Development offers the best way of raising the substantial capital sums needed in a relatively short time scale

BJ agreed to prepare a brief for 3 named consultants and arrange ‘tenders’ and interviews.

BJ

The next steps would be:

- Suffolk Coastal District Council provide list of sites on which they will consider granting planning permission, in confidence.
- EG to consult Landowners to confirm, or not, that they are still willing to donate sites
- Parish Councils to be kept informed about progress by District Councillors, but at this stage still in generic terms.
- Planning Consultant constructs generic case for Enabling Development in compliance with brief given to him by AOEP.
- District Council consults publicly, including especially with Parish Councils, on AOEP generic case for use of Enabling Development, along with the list of sites that they propose for this purpose and which are still on offer from landowners.
- Preparation for planning applications done by site owner, with option of using arrangements offered by agent acting for AOET. This work consists of site survey, environmental, contamination, various wildlife, access surveys, etc, as required by District Council.
- Transfer of site to AOET once it is ready for SCDC planning approval.
- Application for planning permission by agent acting for AOET who will be the landowners at that time.
- Transfer of sites by AOET with planning permission to developer.

JM

BP noted that there would be 6 weeks ‘purdah’ prior to national/local elections next year and district councillors may change. It would be important to have any response from SCDC prior to 1st March 2015.

The Chairman reported that there had been a Freedom of Information request to SCDC for information on the sites but this was refused as the sites had been offered in confidence at this stage.

FB enquired about the timing of Enabling Development vis a vis the Sustainability Appraisal, both of which were currently ongoing. **KT** noted it would be important to establish the number of houses/sites that would be required to produce the required funds so that the SA can identify the ‘sustainability’ of that number of properties on local resources. Value of every site would be variable but it was thought approximately £50K would be an average value per plot for a dwelling on a site of say 5-10 plots. **BL** noted that there were now certain cases where building sites had no value (beyond existing use value) because of S.106 requirements etc.

5. SALTINGS RESTORATION

DMcG reported that the mud levels at all three sites were now being monitored every 3 months but it was too low/early for any spartina to establish. **JM** asked that the Ferry

Point project should also be included in the monitoring. Further sites are under discussion and it would be important for Haidee Stephens to input to this. **EG** suggested that both short and long term sites should be considered so that a programme for the next few years is agreed. **GB** noted that there may be community participation funding available from businesses who are looking for carbon off-setting opportunities but the level of carbon absorptivity saltmarsh was attributed was not known. It was understood that the saltings at Hazlewood Marsh were starting to establish at the edges and it was agreed that the Partnership would be happy to contribute to work on the marsh from restricted funds held in for saltings restoration.

Action: **DMcG** to progress monitoring including Ferry Point and to agree sites for discussion at the next meeting.

DMcG

6. **WEB SITE**

It was thought very important to have a high level public profile particularly as The Partnership was in the forefront nationally of pioneering community partnership work. The present arrangement hosted by SCHU gave good information but it was considered difficult to access and an independent website would give far more flexibility and control. **JM** noted that it would be paramount to keep the site updated and Peter Smith had volunteered to be web master with the proviso there was some training and the workload was not excessive. **KT** noted that the web design element may be an opportunity for local work experience students. Haidee Stephens felt that it would be advisable to start with a traditional static site but that would be updated at least monthly. A group with Lizzie Hammond, Barry Leach, Jane Marson, Amanda Bettinson and Peter Smith should meet to discuss proposals.

LH/BL

7. **NATURAL ENGLAND SITE IMPROVEMENT PLANS (SIPs)**

Emma Hay noted that only EU funded sites were being assessed and that the NE document was still evolving. Concern was raised that some assumptions, if carried out, might jeopardise the Estuary Plan. A mid to long term view was taken by NE but the Estuary Plan and EA now take a more realistic shorter term view, with the intention to review it as evidence of actual sea level rise and other changes emerged over time. **AA** felt the SIP offered a very narrow view and that other issues (housing/fishing etc) need to be considered as is done in the Estuary Plan. **GB** felt that costs were underestimated. **EH** agreed all costs need to be firmed up and some of the actions had already been superseded, and a more inclusive view will be prepared at a later stage. There would be new advice to come on coastal squeeze issues in the estuary during the Sustainability Appraisal but the NE SIP had to be completed to unlock EU funding. The EU precautionary principles had to be followed to avoid any adverse impact on the sites. It was agreed that **EG/AA/RW** would meet to discuss any further response.

EG/AA

8.

FOOTPATH TRIAL

Due to a misunderstanding on the design standard of wall heights, it is now not possible to use the Orford wall for the footpath trial as the wall is too low. The first 400 metres of the Slaughden wall footpath is now under consideration. **JB** noted that the IDB will manage the contract for 3 different surfaces to be laid but a secondary trial will be located at Martlesham on the Deben which will provide a spill way to assess how well the surfaces survive overtopping. Andrew Hawes, noting that his supplier was in a position to provide one of the surfaces immediately, hoped that this work could be completed prior to the onset of winter before the path gets dangerously muddy. A meeting was scheduled for 16th October to finalise the project. It will be important for public engagement on this project and SCC would be producing a questionnaire for local people to give their views. It was agreed that Jane Burch would send Giles Bloomfield the specification for the trial.

JB/GB

[Afternote: the footpath trial has subsequently been moved entirely to a site at Martlesham which is a spillway, and therefore likely to overtop.]

9. **THE ESTUARY PLAN**

AA discussed the plan which had been submitted to SCC for a Sustainability Appraisal and emphasised this was very much a working document. EA/NE would be discussing the coastal squeeze issue but it is hoped that with Hazlewood Marsh, Lantern Marsh and possible habitat creation at Boyton the saltmarsh target in this estuary is sufficient. The EA/Pye modelling results would be available early next year. It was felt important to continue all this work in parallel and **JB** would confirm that no further information was required at this stage. It was also agreed that an approximate figure for the number of dwellings which would result from the enabling development would be advisable for SCDC to calculate the services required.

JB

10. **HAZLEWOOD MARSH**

1. Jane Wheeler Blore informed the Partnership that a temporary bund had been completed to enable a main wall to be constructed on the eastern side of the marsh to protect approximately 10 acres of grazing land from permanent inundation. The Landowners were in discussion with the Golf Club whose land abutted theirs but are not aware of SWT's plans. Free drainage issues need to be discussed and agreed.

UPPER ESTUARY SURVEY

2. KT explained that the survey to model the upper estuaries at both Snape and Butley will also cover any wider flood risk given that Hazlewood and Kings Marsh are flooded, any potential altered flood risk on the Butley should the Boyton scheme go ahead, and the RSPB have lowered walls at Havergate Island. The survey will take 15-30 days (depending on costs) in November and there will be equipment on fixed structures (e.g. jetties) as well as on the river bed. Mariners will be made aware of sites. There will also be a whole estuary LIDAR survey at low water before November. By the end of the year results will be fed into a two-dimensional model and Ken Pye, as an independent reviewer of the EA work, will provide three-dimensional modelling.

SLAUGHDEN

3. KT discussed the state of the coastal defences at Slaughden and the work in progress to agree an urgent solution for this area. Advice had been sought from Professor Julian Orford and the late Professor Andy Bradbury. Both their findings were similar but are 'on hold' for the moment due to Professor Bradbury's recent death. Consideration is being given to tying in with the Clacton scheme as an opportunity to use rocks from Norway (a possible scheme in the region of £5-6M). An options appraisal needs to be carried out once work on the ground and the two reports have been combined. This would include considering a 'shingle engine' at the moment being researched by The Crown Estates. **RM** noted that it was crucial some work was done before the winter even if it was only a sacrificial shingle recharge to protect the wall during the winter.

11. **BOYTON REALIGNMENT**

Modelling for this project is funded but if the project were to proceed then additional funds would need to be sought in addition to government funds (as it is understood the saltmarsh target has already been met in the estuary). A LIFE project proposal is being considered by a number of partners including EA and SCC which could potentially support the scheme at Boyton if it goes ahead.

12. **AOB**

EH noted that there are plans to accelerate the coastal path within two years but the timetable for Suffolk was not known at present.

NEXT MEETINGS will be 4th December at 2pm in Orford Town Hall

