



**MINUTES OF THE ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP
HELD ON THURSDAY 21st MARCH 2013 IN ORFORD TOWN
HALL**

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| PRESENT | Edward Greenwell | (Chairman, Farmer Nominee) |
| | Alison Andrews | (A&O Association Nominee) |
| | David McGinity | (Butley Parish Council Nominee) |
| | Philippa Stewart | (Iken Parish Council Nominee) |
| | Richard Marson | (Aldeburgh Town Council Nominee) |
| | Brian Johnson | (Boyton and Bawdsey Parish Council Nominee) |
| | Ben McFarland | (Ecological Representative/RSPB) |
| | Barry Leach | (Aldeburgh and Orford Business Associations Nominee) |
| | Guy Heald | (Finance and Business) |
| | Amanda Bettinson | (Partnership Secretary) |

Advisors

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| Karen Thomas | (Environment Agency) |
| Emma Hay | (Natural England) |
| Jane Burch | (SCC) |
| Trazar Astley-Reid | (Suffolk Coast & Heaths Unit) |

Consultants

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| Andrew Hawes | (Hawes Associates) |
| Frances Barnwell | (Charity Lawyer) |
| Ronagh Witthames | (Funding) |

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| APOLOGIES | Hugh Pilkington | (Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council Nominee) |
| | Angie Mason | (Householder Representative) |
| | Jane Marson | (Landowner Nominee) |
| | Bill Parker | (SCDC) |

1. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** **Action**
None to declare

2. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**
Minutes of 14th February 2013 were agreed.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**
 - i) **The Ham Creek** landowners meeting had not yet been rearranged.
 - ii) **The Alde-Ore & Deben Liaison Group** is non-executive and will be used only to discuss common issues. Any decisions will be made by the relevant partnership committee.
 - iii) **'53 Floods:** The Alde and Ore Association confirmed that a DVD of Angie Mason's film is in production and will be available at the Association's AGM on Saturday 13th April at Thorpeness Country Club at 11am. The film will be shown following which the Guest Speaker, Andrew Hawes, will discuss the survivability of the river walls as they are today.
 - iv) **DMcG** reported that Ipswich Records Office would be happy to archive the photographs collected for the exhibition. **HP** to liaise. **HP**
 - v) **Habitat Creation visit:** **TAR** will circulate dates for a visit for AOEP members to visit Wallasea Island and Abbots Hall Farm in Essex when the weather improves. Richard Pipe to be included. **TAR**

vi) **Community Plan:** **RM** reported that Aldeburgh Town Council had arranged an initial open meeting on 27th April to identify important aspects of the community plan. It was hoped that flood defences would be one of the areas discussed.

vii) Jane Burch agreed to send the link for the SMP document on the Suffolk Coast Forum website

JB

viii) Minute 4(ii) no further soundings had been received as to how best to approach the strategic works programme for the estuary and **KT** thought it would be best to just test the system.

ix) **FC'0'** no levels had been received from the EA – it was agreed Andrew Hawes would discuss with Richard Pipe.

AH/RP

4. **FUNDING**

Ronagh Witthames introduced her paper on funding. It was agreed that a group representing businesses, parish councils (who also represented the general public) should be initiated to discuss the main issues and to make recommendations on the next steps. Fundamental to the funding was support for 'beneficiary pays', i.e. that all those who benefit from the defences which would include householders, businesses, farmers, sailors, visitors and tourists to the area all, in some way, should be helping to raise funds for the upkeep of the walls. Comments on the paper were as follows:-

- EA maintenance budget should be included on a separate line under FDGiA funding, which was for capital expenditure.
- It must be accepted that in the wider national interest farm land should be retained to ensure our own food production and should not be allowed to be lost. Once lost the land will never be regained.
- It was worrying that it appeared there were still some members of the public that saw funding the defences only as a landowner issue, and that the work completed by the Alde and Ore Futures project seems to have evaporated. It was important to get the message over that 'we are all in this together'.
- It was agreed that different audiences needed to be targeted, businesses, householders and indirect beneficiaries. It will be important to identify these groups as it will be necessary to connect these into any application for FDGiA funding.
- **RM** noted that it was important not to forget the sea front at Aldeburgh which was a key ingredient as well as the river. However, **KT** advised that although Aldeburgh has a high benefit to cost ratio, 100% FDGiA funding was never guaranteed.
- It was agreed that enabling development was a key way of raising funds. It was unlikely that any plots within the flood plain could be used.
- Whether fund-raising should be mandatory or voluntary was discussed. Although voluntary levies would not bring in substantial sums, it was thought a very useful way of getting the message across to the community and could provide an annual revenue stream. It was noted that Shottisham village had agreed to pay £2 per household as part of the parish precept for flood defences. A number of ideas had been discussed locally but it was thought that some businesses would only contribute to those that directly benefited their company.
- Mandatory taxes: The IDB can raise rates, but only on 25 year old rating list valuations. RFCC has two routes for funding flood defence. One is through Flood Defence Grant-In-Aid (FDGiA), which is central government money for capital schemes only. The other is the Local Levy, agreed by and paid by the three County Councils (Norfolk, Suffolk & Essex). This money is used largely for maintenance. They have discretion over the level of this and could be asked to increase it. The utilities (Anglian Water etc) have a 5 year financial programme so time would elapse before any funding could be forthcoming. The EA are at present discussing their climate proof funding nationally.
- **JB** noted that SCC/SCDC should be listed as financial partners, as should RSPB and NT.
- **JB** noted that it would be an advantage to consider schemes that had a wider remit

RH

RH

than the Alde-Ore and could include the Deben.

- **It was agreed** that a Communications Group should be set up and **KT** suggested contacting Sharon Bleese (EA) for professional help. Karen Thomas, Barry Leach, Philippa Stewart, Trazar Astley-Reid agreed to join the group and discuss a communications plan. The Annual Community Meeting on 23rd May would be part of the Communications campaign. **PS**
- **It was agreed** to set up a Funding Group and Edward Greenwell, Guy Heald, Philippa Stewart, Frances Barnwell, Alison Andrews and Amanda Bettinson volunteered. **AJB** to arrange the initial meeting. **AJB**

5. **ENABLING DEVELOPMENT**

EG had discussed enabling development with Bob Chamberlain (SCDC) who was drafting criteria to be used for assessing sites. It was understood that enabling developments could not be used for social housing. The plots that had been agreed some 2 years ago with Gerry Mathews were now known but it was thought an advantage to have initial discussions with the parishes to establish their views. **EG** would be writing to the District Councillors to ask them to discuss the issues with their parishes. **EG/AJB**

6. **BUSINESS ASSOCIATION FEEDBACK**

Barry Leach reported that it was evident from discussions at the Orford Business Association that there is still a view that the flood defences should be addressed by the farmers rather than the community, and more effort needs to be invested in getting the message across and producing a more positive culture that all beneficiaries need to be involved in supporting the funding effort.

7. **COSTINGS FOR DESIGN WORK**

Andrew Hawes discussed the timings and costs for the next phase of his design work which included his fee proposal for the engineering designs, nominating contractors, specification and delivery. The costs were as detailed on the agenda item 6. **AH** thought it would take roughly a month to complete the necessary work for each flood cell (approximately 8-9 months work) **AH** suggested that to avoid contractors taking the contract risk, which would increase the price by about 25%, it was suggested that contractors should be paid by the hour which would allow close supervision of progress and budget spend. Other comments raised were:-

- Frances Barnwell commented that the Charity holding the funds for this work would have to be confident that there were no excessive risks.
- When work commenced the AOEP would, through the IDB, clear with the relevant landowners that access to their land was agreed.
- The work would have to be restricted to the summer months only, to reduce the damage to other areas. Should a footpath be closed alternative pathways would need to be agreed for walkers.
- Work on each flood cell would be completed in total in that flood cell so that all areas are brought up to a 1:200 standard and will then remain untouched for probably the next 25 years. It was hoped to complete two to three flood cells per year but this would be heavily dependent on weather and available funding.
- **AJB** agreed to re-circulate the priority matrix with the updates of the footpath lengths. **AJB**
- **JB** recommended that the estuary works programme should be submitted for FDGiA funding as a whole so all surveys needed to be completed beforehand. This effectively means no application can be made until the end of the year.
- It will be necessary to ensure the appropriate environmental assessments were completed for the estuary as a whole and therefore necessary to agree the proposals for overall estuary management (i.e. hold the line) for the next 50 years, but it should be understood that any alterations with realignments would compromise the environmental assessment. **JB** suggested asking the RFCC to fund the environmental assessment but it could be underwritten by the IDB and A&O Association if necessary.
- **AH** agreed to provide the designs/costs for Flood Cell 10, which is the Partnership's

highest priority flood cell, by the end of April for the 2nd May meeting.

8. **SALTINGS PROJECTS**

DMcG reported that some costs for elements of the materials required for work on the 3 sites were still to come in and that there was a 4-6 week wait for delivery of some items. The issue of whether the MMO licence was required was still unresolved. As the Jackson Trust trustees were visiting Suffolk on 29th April and wished to visit the site they were funding (Site 4 - £9,400), it was hoped that some materials could be delivered to enable at least the start of work prior to their visit, should all permissions be received in time.

[The day following the meeting the MMO agreed that any work that is agreed by the EA as a flood defence measure is not a licensable activity under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 article 19 as works to coastal or flood defences if undertaken by, or on behalf of, the Environment Agency (EA) are exempt.] Work on the 3 sites already funded can now go ahead.

DMcG

9. **THE ESTUARY TRUST**

Frances Barnwell (a retired solicitor who has worked with Farrers) and Guy Heald had met with Farrers Solicitors for an initial, no fee, discussion on the proposed charity. Having considered the issues raised in FB's note of the meeting, it was agreed that the charity should be established as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and that the 'foundation' model, where the trustees are the only voting members, would be preferable to the 'Association' model, which provides for a wider voting membership. Some names for the new charity were floated e.g. Alde and Ore Flood Management (or Defence) Trust, but after some discussion, it was agreed that further consideration should be given to possible alternatives.

Objects: It would be necessary to ensure that the Charity's objects were wide enough to avoid any unintended consequences in the future and should include protection of the coast as well as the river. The interim constitution of AOEP would provide a useful starting point.

A number of names were discussed as prospective trustees, but for the moment the following agreed to stand: Guy Heald, Frances Barnwell, Richard Marson (and Richard Pipe who was not at the meeting). Further trustees may be proposed at a later date. It was felt important to ensure the charity had significant high profile and solidity to appeal to Government, local funders and national charities that may be approached in the future.

Activities: **FB** noted it would be important to understand the activities with which the charity will be actively engaged i.e. whether commissioning contractors or applying for planning permission on enabling development sites would be part of the trustees remit. This would help to inform the choice of appropriate trustees. The tax situation including capital gain and income/tax relief for donors will need to be considered with care.

It was agreed that the Partnership will instruct Farrers. [**post meeting note:** Farrers will be sending a letter scoping the work to be undertaken with a formal estimate of the cost involved in setting up the charity.]

FB

10. **ANNUAL COMMUNITY MEETING**

The Annual meeting will be held at Thorpeness Country Club on Thursday 23rd May at 6pm. Guy Heald had made arrangements for Hutton Swinglehurst, Head of Flood Risk for Marsh UK, who with Guy Carpenter (a global Insurance Broker), and Landmark Information Group (a digital mapping and land data intelligence provider), have created Project Noah, a flood risk reinsurance pool which hopes to ensure that home insurance in flood-prone areas is widely available.

11. **DATES FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 2nd May in Richmond Old Dairy, Gedgrave Road
Wednesday 10th July in Orford Town Hall 2pm

AJB/25 March 2013