

**MINUTES OF THE ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP HELD ON THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013 IN ORFORD TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT**

Edward Greenwell (Chairman, Farmer Nominee)  
Guy Heald (Finance and Business)  
Brian Johnson (Boyton and Bawdsey Parish Council Nominee)  
Hugh Pilkington (Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council Nominee)  
Richard Marson (Aldeburgh Town Council Nominee)  
Alison Andrews (A&O Association Nominee)  
Jane Marson (Landowner Nominee)  
David McGinity (Butley Parish Council Nominee)  
Philippa Stewart (Iken Parish Council Nominee/Minute-taker)

**ADVISORS**

Emma Hay (Natural England)  
Jane Burch (SCC)  
Simon Amstutz (Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB)  
Bill Parker (SCDC)

**CONSULTANTS**

Andrew Hawes (Hawes Associates)  
Frances Barnwell (Retired Solicitor)

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES**

Colin Chamberlain

**APOLOGIES**

Amanda Bettinson (Partnership Secretary)  
Angie Mason (Householder Representative)  
Barry Leach (Aldeburgh and Orford Business Associations Nominee)  
David Savill (SCDC)  
Karen Thomas (EA)

**1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None to declare.

Action

**2. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> July 2013 were agreed.

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

- i) **FC'0'** AH said he had heard that the crest level survey of the Shingle Street area had been produced but no-one at the meeting had seen it. EA to confirm position. **KT**
- ii) Meeting between **AH** and Rights of Way team to look at Armoflex at Felixstowe to be scheduled. JB reminded the meeting how important it was to include Rights of Way team in discussion wherever possible as they have a statutory role. **AH**
- iii) **Brick Dock, FC10** The Chairman has drafted a letter to Charles Beardall at EA to express concern that the work just completed does not meet agreed criteria and may cause problems in the future. Meeting suggested the letter should also be sent to Rights of Way team and Councillor Graham Newman. **EG**
- iv) **RFCC** Bill Parker explained there would be no definite news on funding until after meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October. **BP**

v) **Sheep grazing** JM reported that payment for the work done would now be coming direct to her.

vi) **FC7 (Snape village)** EA re-costing has not yet been received.

KT

vi) **Orford Wall trial** Formal evaluation to be requested from SCC (both Highways and Rights of Way), Natural England and EA. AH to coordinate.

AH

vii) **Cycling on walls** Cycling is not supposed to happen on public footpaths. It is hard to police, however, and it may bring economic benefits to the area. The meeting agreed it might be sensible to look at ways of making some stretches suitable for cycling or build a cycle path behind/alongside the river wall, as a recreational resource.

#### 4. DEFENCES DESIGN FOR FLOOD CELL 5 (Iken)

AH circulated the designs at the meeting and will email them later.

AH

Main points were:-

- Iken is the first flood cell where a large part of the sea wall is not a public footpath.
- In some places the wall is too steep. Substantial amounts of clay will be needed to create the desired angle for the slope.
- Access for bulky earth-movers may be a problem.
- There is no evidence of grass-cutting by EA.
- Parts of the wall are not grassed but are covered in reeds which will extract more water. AH suggested removing reeds and hydro-seeding with a mix of grass seed and fertiliser.
- The cost was originally estimated at £759,000, but because of lack of footpath this is likely to be reduced to £620,000-£650,000.

Other issues raised:-

- Looking at the work that needs to be done across the estuary as a whole, it may be better to tackle all the worst areas first rather than completing each cell on a one-by-one basis (note: this could create some logistical problems and therefore increase the overall cost).
- It would be possible to use the blue clay extracted from nearby ditch clearance for raising/strengthening the walls. It would need to be stockpiled to dry out for at least one summer. Clay is expensive to transport so this is the preferred source for it.
- A permissive footpath along the rest of the Iken wall might release additional funding. However, even if permission were given, there would be a number of issues including the Iken nature reserve. The Rights of Way team would need to be involved.

#### 5. SALTMARSH PROJECTS

- The Iona site seems to be working well.
- Photos were circulated of work on the second Orford site. DMcG explained that more faggots were needed here to complete the line back to high ground at one end and the old wrecked boat at the other. The plan for a community event to coppice hazel on EG's land was liked.
- At Brick Dock, the use of energy fencing will allow for control sections without faggots, so making it possible to compare and contrast the results.
- At all three sites marked posts would help to measure the depth of the mud; however, volunteers would be needed to monitor them.

DMcG

ALL

#### 6. MEMBERSHIP OF PARTNERSHIP

- The Chairman read out a letter of resignation from Ben McFarland (RSPB/Ecological representative); BMcF said that he felt that AOEP's plans were not in keeping with his views and the policies of the organisations he was representing. The meeting was keen to ensure the continuing involvement of ecological organisations in order to achieve a balanced approach, which is considered essential. The suggestion of an Environment sub-group was discussed but may not be necessary as the representatives of the organisations concerned already meet frequently and work closely together. KT (EA)

- has arranged a meeting between the Chairman and Natural England, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, RSPB and the National Trust to agree the best way forward. KT/EG
- EG reminded members that they should arrange for substitutes if they are unable to attend a meeting. It is important that that all aspects of the community are represented at meetings and members were initially chosen with this criterion in mind. ALL  
EG undertook to remind all AOEP members of this by email. EG
- 7. SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL**
- This is an essential part of the decision process, providing clear evidence that AOEP has thought about all aspects in the round, and it will help to unlock funds. Input will come from the statutory consultees (Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Heritage). JB suggested that AOEP probably has most of the building blocks already, but it all needs to be put together as a coherent whole. The Sustainability Appraisal should mesh with the plan for the estuary and be consulted at the same time. Socio-economic interests should be included. The scoping report needs to be widely discussed with both statutory consultees (as above) and the local community.
- EG, AA, BJ will meet with BP to discuss how to put the plan together and the best way to format and present the information. EG
  - EG will circulate the AOEP Constitution and Strategic Approach to remind everyone of them. EG
  - A formal request was made to SCC to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal for AOEP once all the information has been collated.
- 8. ESTUARY TRUST**
- The revised wording allows for AOEP to be the sole member of the charity – though the Charity Commission (CC) may question this. The fact of being the sole member will make it even more important that AOEP is seen to be a widely representative body.
  - The meeting agreed to revert to the earlier wording of the Objects to avoid any possible perception that the environment was a secondary consideration. If this is rejected by the CC, as Farrers advise that it may be, the wording will have to be changed again. FB
- 9. ENABLING DEVELOPMENT**
- Given the small number of landowners involved, EG felt that the planned plenary meeting was not necessary and he would arrange one-to-one meetings with landowners. EG
  - The aim was to ask for gifts of land, to keep things simple. Such charitable giving should have tax benefits for the landowner.
  - The land would be sold with planning permission; in sensitive locations full planning permission might be needed before selling.
  - It would be sensible to use a planning consultant to advise on the suitability of the land proposed, to avoid wasting time.
  - It is likely that in many cases local estate agents already know of potential buyers.
  - SCDC is keen to start with a single test site as a learning process.
- 10. OTHER FUNDING MATTERS**
- Seedcorn money may be required to make progress on Enabling Development.
  - Before contacting landowners, it would be sensible to obtain advice on the tax issues. EG
  - Professional fund-raisers would only be used for advice.
  - Various other groups (Orford Lighthouse, Touching the Tide, Alde & Ore Association...) may end up competing for funds with AOEP, so clarity required on objectives, approach etc.
- 11. COMMUNICATIONS GROUP**
- The launch of the Trust is planned for May-June 2014, at Snape Maltings. All suggestions for speakers and contributors welcome. To be discussed further at next meeting. ALL

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday **28<sup>th</sup> November** 2013 at 2.00 pm in Orford Town Hall.

Then: Thursday **23<sup>rd</sup> January** 2014, Thursday **20<sup>th</sup> March** 2014.