

Welcome to Issue 5

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Welcome to the autumn edition of the Coastal Partnership East newsletter.

The recent reports from the Committee on Climate Change and the Met Office have highlighted the huge future challenges facing our coastal communities especially on the Norfolk and Suffolk coast. We had already recognised the need to build the capacity within the team to help meet these immediate and future challenges. Therefore this summer and autumn we have been recruiting staff and also developing a new procurement system to enable us to more easily access a range of expertise with both local and national expertise to support our work through our new Dynamic Purchasing System.

Our recent diverse workload includes supporting the community in Hemsby who were particularly affected by the 'Beast from the East', developing options with them for the future of their coast and neighbouring villages in Winterton and Scratby. We are delighted to gain planning consent for the sand scaping scheme to better protect the Bacton and Walcott communities and gas terminal. Work to implement the scheme is expected to begin in Spring 2019. The project to reduce the risk of flooding to Lowestoft continues and planning applications for the tidal flood walls and the work to reduce the risk of flooding from river and extreme rainfall will be submitted at the end of the year. If planning is successful, then construction will begin in 2019.

Nationally we have responded to a House of Lords call for evidence for information and examples about regenerating seaside towns. We have also been supporting development of the FCERM 2050 Strategy being developed by the Environment Agency, which will provide key guidance on how we work into the future.

I hope that you find the newsletter both helpful and informative. If you would like any further information please do get in touch.

Bill Parker
Head of Coastal Partnership East



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What has happened and forward planning

Using technology to improve the way we work

We are responsible for the repairs and maintenance of almost 1000 coastal assets along the coastline between Kelling in North Norfolk and Landguard Point in Felixstowe. Critical to the repairs and maintenance work that we do on these assets is our monitoring and inspection programme; this work allows us to understand the condition of structures, ensure public safety and inform future coastal works programmes. This summer, we have been working to improve the monitoring of coastal assets by replacing current inspection methods with an online asset inspection tool.

The majority of management responsibilities along our coastline are shared by us and the Environment Agency (EA), so we have updated our asset database to be compatible with the EA asset data, therefore allowing future decisions to be as well informed as possible by both management authorities. Once complete, the updated data was uploaded to GIS software and a new inspection tool utilising smart phone technology has been developed 'in house' by the team. Currently being tested and following this all of our asset inspections will be carried out using the app, allowing improved and more efficient monitoring of coastal assets. There has been significant interest on a national basis to this low cost but highly efficient development.

Expanding the team

Our 10 -year investment programme and a review of growing and changing demands identified the need to expand our team in a number of areas.

Nathalie Harris has been working with us on a temporary contract however has recently been recruited as a Technical Support Officer. A new Assistant Coastal Engineer, Fiona Keenaghan, will be joining us on 10th December, both are based in the Cromer office.

Alysha Stockman, based in Melton, came to us as a Coastal Communications Apprentice in September 2017. She has proved an extremely valuable team member and we were delighted that she was successful in obtaining the new post of Partnerships and Engagement Support Officer.

Recruitment for a Coastal Technical Assistant and Coastal Engineering Assistant based in Lowestoft is well advanced and we hope these posts will be filled by the new year.

Developing our team

As well as expanding, we place great value on developing our existing team. We are delighted to announce that Alysha Stockman has recently completed her NVQ and graduated with our other apprentices at a ceremony held at Riverside, Lowestoft.

Callum Lee, our previous Funding and Data Apprentice also graduated and was voted as Technology Wiz of the Year by the other apprentices. Callum is now working for British Aerospace Engineering.

Working with our communities is an extremely important part of what we do, and we need to know how to do it well, planning, evaluating and improving how we do this to make sure that we are providing the best service possible to our communities. To do this we invest in professional communications training. Lucy Williams, Partnerships and Engagement Officer, has recently passed her Advanced Level Certificate with the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. Lucy hopes to go on to complete her Diploma in the near future.

Managing the coast in a changing climate

We have directly discussed and inputted into the development of the Committee on Climate Change report on Managing the Coast in a Changing Climate. The value of the report is that it strongly highlights to government the need to support local authorities and local communities to find long term solutions for coastlines that are vulnerable to coastal erosion. For more information on this, please see <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/managing-the-coast-in-a-changing-climate>.

Opportunities for involvement

First projects out on our Dynamic Purchasing System

Since our last newsletter we have issued our first four tender opportunities through our recently developed Dynamic Purchasing System. The first two opportunities, for the Day-to-Day Repair and Maintenance contracts for Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Council's coastline, have been awarded to the Water Management Alliance.

Contracts for the two live tenders, for SMP Policy Reviews at Bawdsey and Slaughden, will be awarded in November. Tender documents for a number of other opportunities are currently being developed and will be issued this year.

News from each local authority area

Suffolk - Ready to respond this winter - Lowestoft and Felixstowe

Our team continue to work closely with professional partners and the Suffolk Coast Forum to ensure that when we face an emergency or team are ready to respond appropriately and in accordance with emergency procedures.

Preparation and monitoring the wind and tide levels are key to our response and we are extremely grateful to the Environment Agency's resilience team for their support.

A protocol is in place for the closure of the Felixstowe flood gates involving our team, Suffolk Coastal Norse and the Environment Agency. We monitor weather regularly to ensure that we can enact the protocol should this be required.

In Lowestoft, our partnership with Waveney Norse and the Water Manager Alliance, with information supplied by the Environment Agency, means that we are in the best possible position to deploy the Lowestoft temporary flood barriers should this be needed.

An annual exercise took place in October to check our procedures and the equipment ahead of the winter months, this time testing the mobilisation overnight. The exercise went well, and lessons learnt helped us to develop our deployment plan. We are extremely grateful to the landowners who worked closely with us, helping the exercise to take place.

News from the forums

North Norfolk Coastal Forum

The North Norfolk Coastal Forum annual field trip met at the new Trimingham Village Hall. The Hall has just been opened and is a replacement for a facility that is at risk from coastal erosion which began as a Coastal Pathfinder project back in 2010.



Trimingham Village Hall



Trimingham cliffs

The project has been funded by a number of sources and has been a success due to the significant effort put in by members of the local community. The British Geological Survey lead a walk with the CPE team to explain and discuss the complex cliffs at Trimingham, this was very informative to all and stimulated some interesting discussions.

Suffolk Coast Forum Annual Coast and Estuaries Conference

This was the seventh annual coastal conference and we were delighted to welcome over 200 delegates and around 35 students to this year's event. The conference aims to provide a mix of speakers, workshops and a vibrant exhibition and this year was no exception.

Our morning key note speaker was John Curtin, Executive Director for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management with the Environment Agency. John's message about climate change was a stark reminder to our audience of the action we need to collectively take, this resonated throughout the conference programme. Afternoon key note speaker, writer explorer, geographer and presenter of the BAFTA award winning BBC's 'Coast' reflected upon how our coast was formed and the challenges and changes for those who live, work and visit there.

Feedback from the conference delegates and sponsors has been extremely positive. The Suffolk Coast Forum are extremely grateful to those who gave up their time to speak: Mark Dixon, Kevin Burgess (Jacobs) and Aisling Lannin (MMO). They are also grateful to all of those who designed and delivered the workshops. The conference is free to attend and was initially funded through public funds. Slowly it has attracted sponsorship and this year, we are very pleased to report that with the support of our sponsors, the conference was fully funded. Thank you to Balfour Beatty, Mott MacDonald, VolkerStevin, VanOord, Jacobs, Drone Survey, the Water Management Alliance and ENBE.

Project updates

Mundesley

A Coast Protection Notification has been published over the summer and the Outline Business Case has been submitted to the Environment Agency, this seeks a conditional approval of a key element of the schemes funding.

Hemsby

Following the unfortunate loss of 12 houses following the 'Beast from the East', we held drop-in sessions to share, with the community, the findings of a coastal management study that reviewed coastal processes and engineering options for managing the dynamic coastline at Hemsby.

In trying to identify suitable approaches in both the short and longer-term, with the community we have formed the Hemsby Community Liaison Group, comprised mainly of representatives of the Hemsby community.

Understandably, the immediate local concern is regarding this winter. The council has in place an emergency response plan and is also supporting Save Hemsby Coastline to re-position some interim defences to hopefully be more effective.

In the medium term, those present at the community liaison group meeting indicated they would like to work towards having a rock berm: a rock structure to reduce wave energy along the dune face that may in particular location(s) also have gabions (wire baskets filled with rocks). This would help to manage and reduce the rate of erosion; not prevent it. Further work on the viability of this approach is underway.

While this is being progressed, the community liaison group will continue to meet to explore a range of medium and long-term approaches. Other options such as roll back of vulnerable properties to adapt to the changing coastline are also being considered as an alternative approach for this stretch of coastline.

Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project

This project to reduce flood risk in Lowestoft has been progressing since 2014 in partnership with other organisations. A number of consultation and engagement periods have been held, the design of the walls, barrier and other elements have progressed, and the project team will be submitting planning applications for the tidal flood walls (advanced works) and for the construction of a flood wall and pumping station to reduce the risk of flooding from rivers and extreme rainfall.

The tidal barrier works are subject to a Transport Works Act Order and work to progress this is ongoing. Construction of the tidal barrier is challenging in Lowestoft as there is no opportunity to divert the channel whilst construction takes place. The project is working closely with Associated British Ports, the wind energy sector and other river users to find the best way forward, allowing the Port to remain operational. These discussions are well advanced, and the solution and the construction methodology is likely to be a first for this type of structure in the UK.

Repairs and Maintenance update

Update from North Norfolk

Works have been ongoing on the Norfolk coast to keep defences and beach accesses in repair. Key works have included the reconstruction of the Happisburgh beach access ramp, repairs to revetments at Bacton, including those protecting nationally important gas infrastructure (funded by the Bacton gas Terminal), repairs following formal inspections and day to day repairs. Further maintenance work is planned for the autumn.



Photos showing reconstruction of Happisburgh beach access ramp

Update from Suffolk

We have begun working with the Water Management Alliance (WMA), including introducing them to the coastal frontages where Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils have management responsibility for sea defences and other assets.



This process will raise awareness and place WMA staff in a good position to begin planning actual repair and maintenance works over the coming winter period. A number of the Councils' assets have already been inspected in some detail to highlight and agree works likely to be required. Our ongoing programme of inspections will add more information over the coming weeks, confirming our priorities and identifying areas where resources should be deployed.

We look forward to developing our working relationship with the WMA.

Working with the Water Management Alliance

The Water Management Alliance (WMA) is a group of five like-minded Internal Drainage Boards (known as IDBs) operating in the Anglian Region. Members include the Broads IDB, East Suffolk IDB, King's Lynn IDB, Norfolk Rivers IDB and South Holland IDB. Our members are all independent and democratically accountable statutory bodies who seek to protect 548,000 hectares in East Anglia.

The WMA works for and on behalf of other Flood Risk Management Authorities as well as community groups, Non Governmental Organisations and landowners. We also deliver significant flood risk management benefits and enhanced environmental outcomes on the ground.

An Internal Drainage Board is a type of local public authority that manages water levels in England where there is a special need for drainage. Here in east Suffolk, the East Suffolk IDB undertake works to reduce flood risk to people, property and infrastructure, and manage water levels for agricultural and environmental needs. They have permissive powers to manage water levels within their drainage district, carefully maintaining rivers, drainage channels, culverts, sluices, weirs, embankments and pumping stations. The East Suffolk IDB also play an important regulatory role, using powers to keep watercourses clear of obstructions. They set byelaws to ensure the watercourse network works efficiently, and they scrutinise planning and development in their area to mitigate its impact on the water environment and flood risk. They have statutory duties with regard to the environment and recreation when exercising their functions.



WMA staff

The WMA are working with us on the Coastal Assets Repair and Maintenance contract, which will to deliver approximately £700k over the next 2.5 years. This presents an opportunity for both us and the WMA to align resources and share expertise that will strengthen our partnership, build capacity and resource and serve local people with great value for money around the local coast.

If you would like to find out more about East Suffolk IDB or the WMA please contact pete.roberts@wlma.org or telephone: 01553 819600



National updates

Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group (LGA Coastal SIG)

The LGA Coastal SIG coordinated a workshop on behalf of the House of Lords to highlight key issues and ask in response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Coastal regeneration of Seaside Towns and Communities. 23 coastal local authorities were represented, and with 10 Select Committee members in attendance some great discussion was shared. The Committee will report their findings to Government in March 2019.

The annual study tour this year was hosted by Lewes District Council who focused on coastal regeneration with the recent House of Lords call for evidence in mind. Other learning included their new inshore wind power scheme and much more.

<https://lgacoastalsig.com/>



LGA Coastal SIG Chairman, Cllr Andy Smith, with members of the House of Lords Select Committee



LGA Coastal SIG study tour to Lewes District Council and Rampion wind farm