

AOCP

Alde and Ore Community Partnership Update

Since the last update in July the AOCP held its fourth meeting in September, by Zoom.

The estuary organisations, AOCP and Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, as well as ESIDB, are waiting to hear the outcome of the outline business case submitted to Environment Agency to secure approval for the first part of the Estuary project, both in flood approval terms and as being eligible for grant in aid. Until there is news on this, further work on implementation and communications with the local community is limited.

Never the less the AOCP has continued to ensure that all the necessary background governance is in place. At the September meeting the Constitution of the new AOCP was agreed, and is now available on www.aocp.co.uk. The Partnership considered the development in the plans for communications and further work being on this. The Partnership also addressed the commitment of the Partnership to monitor the impact of coastal squeeze on the habitats of the estuary: it agreed that the working party with members of the Partnership, Environment Agency, Natural England and ESIDB, bringing in other experts as necessary, should continue its work reporting annually to the full Partnership, and expect the first 5 year report within the next few months (noting Covid limitations may affect progress)

The AOCP has asked whether the proposed works further north up the coast contained in power company applications for development, both SZC and Scottish Power Renewables, sufficiently address the long term implications of consequential changes on coastal flows and sedimentation on the dynamic and fragile Suffolk coast in the context of the long term implications for the estuary's coastal shingle border.

Alison Andrews, November 2020

BCP

Bawdsey Coastal Partnership Update

No update at present.

BEP

Blyth Estuary Partnership Update

Prevailing national and regional circumstances do, currently, somewhat preclude any meaningful advancement in relation to progress on safeguarding the Blyth Estuary. Meanwhile, the estuary is at the mercy of nature and the constraints of a District Council mired in establishing a new governing body at a time that is not conducive to either.

As a group, the BEP has supported the creation of the HMC for Southwold Harbour because it believes that such a body has the potential for bringing together each of the necessary stakeholders, within a single integrated

solution, for the harbour and estuary. That the establishment of an HMC appears to have been deferred until early 2021, merely defines the amount of prioritised emergency responses to the prevailing pandemic.

This statement alludes to a preferred multi-agency approach to the whole estuary that is being examined and the Partnership is committed to such an approach.

It is to be hoped that the 2021 Fair on the Green, that raises money for the Partnership's use, might be able to take place on 1 or 8 August next year.

Ian Bradbury, November 2020

Coastal Partnership East

East Suffolk Council Coastal Management Team Update

The Partnership continues to deliver a range of project-based and strategic outcomes during the COVID pandemic for our most 'at risk' communities along the Suffolk coast. Pluvial and fluvial works in Lowestoft are well-advanced and following the full funding of the LFRMP by Defra- we are progressing the tidal walls construction in early 2021 with a ground-breaking ceremony likely in January. The tidal barrier construction will follow with delivery of the full project by 2026. The team are working closely with communities at erosion risk in Thorpeness and Pakefield exploring options for short term and longer-term adaptation. Following, bad weather and storms earlier this year where we saw significant beach erosion the operational team have completed the majority of urgent and routine works through our repair and maintenance programme ahead of this winter season. As we saw significant increases in visitor numbers to beaches around the country when Covid Restrictions eased this summer- we also saw a rise in safety concerns associated with behaviour of some visitors- as such we have launched a new Beach Safety campaign to raise awareness and help keep people visiting the Suffolk Coast safe.

The team is now working through the Innovative Resilience Fund application and over the next 10 weeks we will be engaging with partners to explore options – our current focus will be how we support coastal communities transition from where we are now to a climate resilient position in the future with a suite of funding, finance, planning and technical options to support the transition.

CPE are currently using bespoke Collector App, and Survey 123 technology, to carry out their annual asset inspections and monthly monitoring of vulnerable frontages. CPE have now invested in SANDS, a coastal Management specific software, in order to provide project managers with contemporary analysis of geomorphological data. This software has already supported projects in Thorpeness, Southwold, Felixstowe, Pakefield, Lowestoft, Gunton & Great Yarmouth.

Karen Thomas, November 2020

DEP

Deben Estuary Partnership Update

Despite the restrictions imposed by Covid 19 the Deben Estuary Partnership has been able to make progress with a number of issues.

Work has continued, albeit slowly, to resolve outstanding questions related to the work needed to enhance the wall of FC1, Bawdsey Ferry to Ramsholt. This presents significant challenges and much time has gone into examining the merits of schemes to increase the height of the wall or allow overtopping. While the integrity of the defence is of strategic importance for the estuary as a whole Government finance for a scheme is highly unlikely, putting the onus to find funding on the landowners and community. The DEP was fortunate in being awarded a CIL grant to cover costs of preparatory work, but landowners will have to turn to enabling development to raise capital to fund a scheme. To this end, an informal meeting has been held with Parish Council Chairmen from neighbouring villages to consider possible options.

The Deben is currently the focus of interest for a number of proposed research projects. One of these, led by Helene Burningham from UCL and Simon Read from Middlesex Universities (and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council) **Imagining the measure of change**, explores new cross-disciplinary approaches to environmental governance. This involves collaborating with the DEP to connect people and action to explore the concept of change. The launch in March could not take place due to covid 19 restrictions, but an exhibition was organised in Woodbridge with all the material that had been gathered about the river (<https://debensoundings.wordpress.com/>). Over 200 people came during the week and were able to talk about estuary matters and ask questions. This interaction highlighted connections which would not necessarily have taken place and has triggered new ideas about how the public can engage with the project.

Helene Burningham (UCL) has also submitted an application for a UKRI Citizen Science Collaboration Grant to look at how **Citizen Science** can aid decision making. The project would refer to the work of the Bawdsey Monitoring Group and look at how the value of the data they collect can be maximised.

Photoposts – Following on from the Bawdsey Monitoring Group’s sustained work measuring beach levels at Bawdsey Ferry and coastal frontage, the DEP is pleased to support the evolving project using fixed point photography to monitor coastal and estuary change. Posts will go up at Bawdsey Ferry, along the coastal frontage and are being considered at Melton, Waldringfield and Hemley. The visual records collected will combine with the beach measurements and cross reference to weather data drawn from the community weather station.

The DEP was pleased to learn that work is to go ahead at Kingsfleet. The plans to reinstate fringing saltmarsh within the truncated channel area to the north of the pipework is welcome. The DEP trust that the current plans have recognised the benefit accruing from work carried out in 2013 that extended the length of the borrow dyke channel and successfully raised bed levels within the complex.

The DEP submitted a response to the consultation on the Coastal Adaptation Supplementary Planning Document.

Christine Block, November 2020

Eastern IFCA

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities Update

COVID-19 Update

Eastern IFCA are continuing to adapt working strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our priority continues to be the health and safety of our staff and stakeholders. The Eastern IFCA office has been closed for the duration of the pandemic, our officers have been working from home in line with government guidance and we have maintained a distanced presence on the coast. Following the cancellation of the 40th Authority meeting, Eastern IFCA have since successfully held the 41st Authority meeting, and several sub-committee meetings, using online software. Hosting the meetings online is set to continue in line with government guidance for the next Authority meeting on 9th December 2020.

Fisheries Improvement Project – Southern North Sea Crab Fishery Unit

We are working with industry to develop a Fisheries Improvement Project for the Southern North Sea crab and lobster fisheries. We have finalised a needs assessment and a proposal for the project that has now been shared with industry members with the view that they will lead the project.

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ

In October 2020, Natural England published their report underpinning their advice to Eastern IFCA that active potting impacts the chalk on the MCZ through the ropes, pots, and anchors. Although individual incidents of damage are small scale, they have a significant cumulative effect on the whole MCZ chalk feature. Natural England therefore advise management specifically on the complex, rugged chalk. This will include the prevention of stored pots on the site, as well as the implementation of a lost gear recovery system. Eastern IFCA together with Natural England are committed to working closely with the fishing industry to mitigate the impacts on chalk, while also seeking to minimise impacts on industry. For more information, please read a full summary on our website [here: https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020_10_15_Cromer_Shoal_Media_Release.pdf](https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020_10_15_Cromer_Shoal_Media_Release.pdf)

Closed Area Byelaw 2020

Officers recommended a further suite of closures under the Closed Areas Byelaw 2020 at the Authority meeting in September 2020. These recommendations were agreed by the Authority and officers will shortly be reviewing the responses to the formal consultation which closed on 9th November. As with the previous iterations of the Marine Protected Area byelaws the focus of the Closed Area Byelaw 2020 is spatial restrictions on bottom-towed fishing (e.g. dredges and seabed trawls) in areas of sensitive habitat. Measures in the new byelaw will include two additional small closures in The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC, closures in Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SAC, and a change to the closure at Horseshoe Point in the Humber Estuary.

Whelk Permit Review

Our 2020 assessment of the whelk fishery in our district highlighted some risks to the sustainability of the fishery. To inform the development of new permit conditions for the fishery, the authority sought the views of industry in the context of the outputs of the assessment. This consultation ended on September 1st. The authority has since directed Officers to develop revised permit conditions and agreed that the current conditions will be maintained until such times as new permit conditions are approved by the Authority.

Imogen Cessford, November 2020

EA

Environment Agency Update

The Environment Agency manages river and coastal flood risk. It also has a strategic overview role on the coast. Government Grant in Aid funds are administered through the Environment Agency. We work closely with all risk management authorities to support projects and bids for government funds.

The following update covers the key locations from an Environment Agency coastal flood risk management perspective.

Coastal Erosion at Benacre Pumping Station and the Kessingland Levels

We continue to work with Waveney, Lower Yare & Lothingland Internal Drainage Board, Water Management Alliance, local businesses and other partners on a long term solution for the Kessingland Levels. Our Regional Flood and Coastal Committee has funded the necessary technical work studies to develop a Business Case for a project to deliver the project.

Southwold North Initial Assessment

Working closely with East Suffolk Council we have funded a project to look at the options available for the ongoing protection of the northern Southwold frontage. This area is managed by both authorities. The Initial Assessment concluded that a scheme will be required in the coming years for the area and should be incorporated in to future

programmes. We will continue to work with East Suffolk Council to establish what funding opportunities are available for a project.

Emerging projects

We are planning works to the frontage at Felixstowe Ferry, immediately in front of Harbour Villas and repair works to the embankments near the Wolsey Bridge in the Blyth Estuary.

Potters Bridge, Easton Broad

Recent weather events have caused the outfall on Easton Broad to fail. Rainfall events created high water levels on the Broad and flooded the B1127 road at Potters Bridge for a prolonged period of time. An alternative short term solution has now been found and the levels are currently controlled.

The EA manages this site for the designated features of the Easton Broad valley which are dependent upon stable water levels in the spring and summer months. We are working closely with NE and others to establish the best way forward for the sustainable management of the site.

We encourage Suffolk County Highways to investigate future options for the management of the road and the bridge.

Shoreline Management Plan Refresh

We have worked closely with EA national colleagues on the refresh for the Suffolk SMP. This work is proceeding and we have recently received the initial reports. Generally the refresh team found the Suffolk SMP to be sound and fit for purpose and the recommendations are likely to be relatively minor. This is largely due to the good governance of the plan principally through the activity of the SCF and the client steering group.

Suffolk Estuaries

The business case for the Upper Alde and Ore Estuary has been submitted for approval through the EA Large Project Review Group.

Repairs to the wall at Kirton Creek on the Deben Estuary were carried out in June and July 2020 and are now complete. Meanwhile, discussions continue regarding a scheme to protect Bawdsey marshes.

The storms in February caused some damage to the defences adjacent to Wolsey Bridge on the Blyth Estuary. Plans are in train to address the situation.

The Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy – Ipswich Barrier

The Ipswich Tidal Barrier was formally opened earlier this year in February. The project, costing £67M, better protects 1600 homes and 400 businesses against tidal surges.

Mark Johnson, David Kemp and Gary Watson, November 2020

IDB

Internal Drainage Board Update

Further to the COVID-19 outbreak and Government advice, our operations staff have reviewed the operational programme and working methods in order to ensure the safety of staff.

Assessments for scoping, machine work and M&E work have been developed and more attention has been given to social distancing, staggering breaks and not undertaking activities in close proximity. This has allowed machine based routine maintenance and scoping to continue.

Environmental staff have had their work prioritised and risk assessed to allow essential maintenance scoping and mitigation work to take place for capital schemes and maintenance, to ensure works can proceed following the lockdown period.

Lowestoft Temporary Flood Barrier Public Sector Cooperation Agreement with East Suffolk Council

A joint WMA/ESC duty officer training session was completed live via Zoom on 2 September, reviewing operational procedures and running virtual duty officer training scenarios. On the evening of 8 September an overnight deployment training exercise was held jointly with WMA and Norse operatives and management teams. ESC officers were present to view the deployment. Approximately 100m of temporary flood barrier was fully deployed with pump present at the ABP port/quayside area adjacent the main Bascule Bridge control building off Waveney Road. The overnight deployment training was a success and proved again the worth of annual refresher and new personnel training opportunities prior to the start of the main winter flood season. WMA duty officers are now providing the contractual winter cover to manage deployment of the temporary flood barrier should a significant tidal surge be forecast at any point for the east coast.

Benacre and Kessingland Flood Risk Management Project

Water Management Alliance Officers are supporting Waveney Lothingland and Lower Yare IDB on this progressive partnership project. Outline project costings have now been finalised and the Board is now working towards closing the funding gap. Once funding has been confirmed, the project will be able to submit the Outline Business Case to the Environment Agency. Natural England have also received a grant from the 'nature recovery' agenda, some of which is to be used commission some habitat design options for the Kessingland Valley (coastal, inter-tidal and freshwater)

Suffolk Estuaries

ESIDB continue to provide support to the local estuaries in Suffolk.

Work to the Kings Fleet outfall will progress later in autumn 2020. This will address the current collapsed steel sheet piling at the outfall run. Works to install new pump control equipment and a variable speed drive will also go ahead to reduce the velocity of discharge water. That combined with the lower overall volume sent to the pump due to Felixstowe Hydrocycle (FHC) taking more of the surplus flows will lead to an overall reduction (but still meeting minimum sweetening freshwater flow into the estuary) in pumped discharge. Statutory licences are in the process of being applied for to enable the above works to be delivered.

A working partnership has been established with FHC in terms of their new pipeline and pump house work. We assisted FHC earlier this year with urgent water vole mitigation at the site of their future pumped extraction point/soke dyke embankment interface.

Emma Dixon, November 2020

MMO

Marine Management Organisation Update

The focus of the marine planning team has been on the Draft North East, South East, North West and South West Marine Plans which are due to be adopted in Spring 2021. For those who operate south and inland of Landguard Point (Ipswich, Babergh and Mid-Suffolk), we are currently running our [baseline monitoring survey for the Draft South East Marine Plan](#). This will help inform our future monitoring efforts as set out in the [Marine and Coastal Access Act \(2009\)](#) Section 61. Following feedback we received last year we have updated the surveys to make them more accessible to all stakeholders. The surveys are voluntary, but we would appreciate your participation in completing and submitting any survey that is relevant to you by **Tuesday 15th December 2020**. Please contact Georgie Sutton (Georgie.Sutton@marinemanagement.org.uk) for more information or a copy of the privacy policy.

We have a new marine planner in the South East, Lucinda Robinson, who will cover the area from Felixstowe to Dover. Please get in contact with Lucinda (Lucinda.Robinson@marinemanagement.org.uk) if you would like any further information on the Draft South East Marine Plan.

Following the decision to amend or replace the East Marine Plans based on the recommendation of the [Second three-yearly report for the East Marine Plans](#) we will consult with stakeholders at the appropriate stages.

The MMO are running a series of events to prepare the fishing industry for 1 January 2021. Our Operations Director, Phil Haslam, will provide updates on the latest guidance and information. The call will be useful for active fishing businesses fishing in both UK or EU waters, fishers who direct land catch into the EU, and merchants and companies that export fish and seafood to the EU. You will also have an opportunity to ask questions or you can send your questions to us in advance to Communications@marinemanagement.org.uk. The call for the East Marine Area will take place on **Tuesday 24th November 13:00-14:00** on Zoom ([link to meeting](#)).

Georgie Sutton, November 2020

NE

Natural England Update

No update at present.

S&OEMG

Stour and Orwell Estuary Management Group Update

No update at present.

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Update

AONB volunteers return and are then suspended again.

The fantastic AONB volunteers had to be stood down during the lockdown one due the current pandemic. Following discussion with health and safety experts, our employing local authority and other organisations that facilitate volunteer activity the AONB team started up facilitating volunteer activity in a limited way. However following the proposals for a second lockdown volunteer activity facilitated by the AONB team is once again suspended. We once again thank the volunteers for their efforts to conserve and enhance the natural beauty and special qualities of the AONB and associated project area.

Nature Recovery Plans: Your Views Sought...

The Government's Glover Review into designated landscapes published in November 2019 encouraged AONBs to do more for Nature Recovery. This follows on from the national AONB network's 'Colchester Declaration' to play its part in nature recovery. Local AONBs are developing plans via Nature Recovery Plans. Your thoughts are welcome so please take a few minutes to engage in the consultations at:

<https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/2020/08/03/nature-recovery-survey/>

AONB Partnership submits Relevant Representations on Sizewell C proposals.

The AONB Partnership has submitted its Relevant Representations to the Planning Inspectorate. The submission concludes that it cannot support the proposals due to the significant negative impact on the purposes of the AONB designation, to conserve and enhance of natural beauty.

The AONB Partnership concur with the National Policy Statement for Nuclear Power Generation (EN-6), Annex II, para C.8.73 that states: *there is the potential for some long lasting adverse direct and indirect effects on landscape character and visual impacts on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB, with limited potential for mitigation.* The full AONB Partnership relevant representations can be downloaded from:

<https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Suffolk-Coast-and-Heaths-AONB-Partnership-Rel-Reps-SZC.pdf>

AONB Prospectus for Government's Spending Review.

The national AONB network has delivered a prospectus to Government outlining costed proposals for work to deliver the Glover Review, (a Government commissioned review of National Parks and AONBs). It includes proposals on nature recovery, conserving landscapes, connecting people and nature, strengthening economic recovery. Copy available from simon.amstutz@suffolk.gov.uk

Beachwatch.

The AONB team supported 18 groups during a restricted Great British Beach Clean, events were in line with Covid guidance. Adnams donated a bottle of its new beer, Kobold, to each volunteer aged 18+.

AONB Sustainable Development Fund ‘recovery’ grants awarded.

The AONB Sustainable Development Fund panel made up of representatives from the environmental, commercial, education sectors along with AONB chairs have awarded a further £16,500 across 16 projects. Projects receiving grants will benefit the environmental, economic and social well-being of the AONBs. The panel were delighted with the quality of the applications and were pleased that they were able to support work to help mitigate the impacts of the current pandemic.

AONB Partnership submits its position on current offshore wind farm proposals.

The Coast & Heaths Partnership has submitted its position on the ScottishPower Renewables proposals to the Planning Inspectorate. The *Written Representations* outline concerns relating to the visual impact of the proposed development on the reasons for the AONB designation, the impacts during construction and the in combination impacts with other energy project proposals. The submitted comments can be downloaded from: <https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/managing/planning/nationally-significant-infrastructure/>

AONB snippets:

- A company is selling wall maps of AONBs, see www.themapcentre.com
- The AONB team has responded to the Government’s consultation on planning reform. Contact simon.amstutz@suffolk.gov.uk for a copy of the response.
- A survey in Suffolk relating to the creation of ‘healing woodlands’ to support the recovery of communities impacted by the current pandemic. See <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/HealingWoods/>
- AONB workshop on how national landscapes could enhance their engagement with a broader section of society can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clgcu2d0GZM&feature=youtu.be>
- DEFRA funding of £5,202 has been made available to each AONB for increasing the understanding of the Countryside Stewardship/Environmental Land Management schemes to farmers and land managers

Simon Amstutz, November 2020

Suffolk Saltmarsh Group

Suffolk Saltmarsh Group Update

Following a lot of momentum behind the group when we held workshops last year, SSG produced an Action Plan for 2020/21 which we hoped would form the programme of prioritised actions to be delivered. Despite all parties ‘signing up’ to the Plan it seems limited resource can be allocated to deliver those actions. Challenges from MMO licencing and setbacks in funding projects have meant that saltmarsh projects coming through have dropped off and dedicated resource from key organisations that have responsibilities for saltmarsh improvements have been lost.

SSG was always intended to act as a strategic group to support grass roots work by tackling the ‘difficult’ to do issues faced by the local estuary groups. Without dedicated resources for saltmarsh project work to support local groups work has curtailed and COVID 19 has compounded this issue.

SSG remains in place to offer strategic support to facilitate projects with many willing partners and community representatives, so perhaps the most obvious action to take forward at this time is that bodies that have saltmarsh

and intertidal habitats within their remits consider their resources, look to any funding that might be available and re-instate dedicated officer(s) to support community projects with their data, evidence, consenting and funding needs. The SSG Chair will look to facilitate a discussion on this with relevant partners in Q3.

Karen Thomas, November 2020