

Minutes of Meeting held on 22 July 2020 on Zoom



In attendance:

DR	Cllr	David	Ritchie	ESC (Chair)		GN	Cllr	Graham	Newman	SCC
AS		Alysha	Stockman	CPE (minutes)		JG		Julian	Gregory	EIFCA
KT		Karen	Thomas	CPE		JMa		Jane	Marson	IDB
FS		Francesca	Shapland	NE		AM		Andy	Millar	NE
TP		Tamzen	Pope	CPE		DK		David	Kemp	EA
TB		Tim	Beach	AOCP		SB		Sharon	Bleese	CPE
MA	Cllr	Melissa	Allen	ESC		RW		Rob	Wise	NFU
TC	Cllr	Tony	Cooper	ESC		AA		Alison	Andrews	AOCP
JM	Cllr	James	Mallinder	ESC		MF		Madeline	Fallon	CPE
AR		Andy	Rouse	BCP				Helen	Cufley	BMSDC
RS		Richard	Steward	BEP				Keith	Martin	SCAR
GS		Georgie	Sutton	MMO				Nick	Khan	ESC
DB	Cllr	David	Beavan	SCAR / ESC				Andy	Smith	RFCC Rep
SA		Simon	Amstutz	SCH AONB						

Apologies: Mark Johnson (EA), Steff Jones (SCC), Cllr Derek Davis (BDC), Greg Hall (AW), Christine Block (DEP), Cllr Tony Goldson (SCC), Cllr Carole Jones (IBC), Matt Hullis (SCC), Cassandra Clements (BMSDC), Sarah Barker (IBC), Lisa Chandler (ESC), Philip Ridley (ESC), Cllr Richard Rout (SCC)

1.	Welcome and Introductions	<p>The Chairman shared a round of introductions.</p> <p>The Chairman highlighted the recent funding received for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project and the Benacre and Kessingland Flood Risk Management Project.</p>
2.	Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project	<p>Tamzen Pope shared with the forum that the banks of Lake Lothing are underdeveloped, underutilised and at flood risk. The project will help support the development of that area. TP added the power park and surrounding area are also at risk of flooding.</p> <p>The project has been allocated £43.5m from the Green Recovery Fund, which the government have developed to encourage shovel ready projects to deliver, promoting the construction industry and the growth of towns.</p> <p>TP shared that property level protection measures are currently being installed to 120 properties around Lowestoft. These include flood doors, flood boards, waterproofing on walls, non-return valves, non-return gulleys, and replacing air bricks.</p> <p>TP informed the forum that a combination of demountable defences and concrete flood walls will be constructed along Hamilton Road to protect the power park area. This will tie into high ground at the end of Hamilton Road. The defences will start again with flood gates at the port entrance and flood walls along Waveney Road to Station Square. North of the navigation channel will be demountable defences and then the tidal barrier. The flood walls will then continue in the yacht club area with glass walls and demountable defences.</p> <p>TP explained the process of constructing the tidal barrier. Concrete units will be precast along Lake Lothing, which will be transported onto a barge and floated into position. The units will then be lifted, rotated, and placed in the channel.</p>

		<p>The project is working closely with Balfour Beatty to deliver a legacy and social value. This includes local apprentices, utilising local businesses, supporting community groups, and potentially combine social value benefits to the town with the Third Crossing.</p> <p>The Chairman asked why at Velda Close there will be a pumping station as well as a flood wall. TP added the pumping station is to deal with the surface water flooding along the roads and the flood wall will deal with the river flooding from Kirkley Stream.</p> <p>Andy Smith congratulated the team on the project's progress. The Chairman shared his congratulations for the Coastal Partnership East (CPE) team.</p>
3.	RFCC Update	<p>Tim Beach informed the forum that through the Engagement Group over the past 18 months, the RFCC have been making sure there are coherent plans in place across stakeholders; investment is efficient, targeted and risk-based; and enough is being done to provide a link between the Environment Agency (EA), LLFAs, other risk management authorities, and stakeholders.</p> <p>TB added the Anglian Eastern RFCC visited Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex to talk through the coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks.</p> <p>TB invited the forum to input the long-term strategic plan for investment through the local RFCC representatives.</p> <p>The Chairman asked if TB joined the RFCC due to his role with the AOCP. TB added he was involved in the response to flooding in Snape in 2013 and so was interviewed to be an EA appointee on the RFCC and subsequently joined the AOCP.</p> <p>JMa asked whether the RFCC engage with the different departments of the EA where there can be issues or departments not communicating with each other. TB confirmed this is part of his role and the Engagement Group is looking to make sure that the quality of that work is carried out. TB accepted that there is more work to do on that.</p>
4.	SMP Refresh and EA Strategy	<p>David Kemp shared that meetings have been held for all SMPs along the Suffolk coast and the reports are expected to be released around the end of August. The coastal group members will then see the reports and the Refresh will become bottom led.</p> <p>SMP Explore is on its way, which will be a better way of accessing the SMPs on the internet.</p> <p>Each coastal group (a collection of SMP area that meet) will be receiving £20k to help them deliver generic actions.</p> <p>The second epoch of SMPs begins in 2025, which will bring about 165 different policy changes for SMPs across the country.</p> <p>DK added the EA Strategy was put in front of parliament and launched on 14th July. It has three ambitions: climate resilient places; today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate; and a nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change. Messages on resilience have been strengthened and the government's commitment to net zero has been included. The Strategy also looks at better recognition of farmers, landowners, and land managers in managing flood risk. Also included are the next FCERM programme, which has £5.2bn and the £200m resilience programme.</p>

		<p>The final strategy will be published late this year, following parliamentary scrutiny. Next year action planning with stakeholders and a transformation planning programme will be drawn up.</p>
5.	National Update (CPE, SIG, local authority)	<p>Karen Thomas shared that the unprecedented national budget is great news for the country and flood and coastal risk management industry.</p> <p>The CPE team have been working hard during the COVID-19 period to ensure that programmes do not slip and to get on with business as usual. CPE are reviewing what has come out of the EA Strategy and Defra Policy and trying to understand what this means for CPE and schemes such as at Lowestoft and Benacre.</p> <p>KT added that CPE are working with the EA and Icarus on a national project looking at engagement, communication, and adaptation principles within the Hemsby area.</p> <p>Through the Efra and Environmental Audit Committee consultations, CPE are making sure that the Norfolk and Suffolk coast is seen as a national issue that needs to be addressed as the impacts of erosion, climate change, and sea level rise are most keenly felt on the coast.</p> <p>KT informed the forum that CPE have been working across their councils to make sure that local plans embed the planning policy coastal change management areas and link to the SMP Refresh. KT shared that she has been asked to lead the adaptation working group for the LGA Coastal SIG and Cllr Angie Fitch-Tillett from North Norfolk District Council will be the member lead. CPE have also been asked to have roles in the funding and FCERM policy team working group and SB will be on the beach and water safety group.</p> <p>CPE have also applied for some smaller funds and put proposals together for Pakefield and Thorpeness. These projects are already in the programme to support the community partners, but CPE have not heard back on the proposals.</p> <p>KT added that CPE have put in evidence to ask for a much more joined up approach across the wind energy industry as a number of different developers are able to come ashore with pipelines and cabling. A recommendation has also been submitted to say that developers should be contributing to a strategic community fund in Norfolk and Suffolk.</p> <p>The team are looking at the Sizewell C Development Consent Order from a coastal perspective as well as working with wider East Suffolk Council (ESC) colleagues and statutory partners. KT highlighted that CPE are holding an event on this on 13th August and invited SCF members to hear about what CPE and ESC think the key issues still are coming out of the DCO application.</p> <p>KT noted the in terms of winter preparedness, CPE want to make sure there is a grab bag approach to incident response particularly around erosion frontages as there was unprecedented beach lowering last winter and it may not necessarily come back this summer.</p>
6.	Zurich Update	<p>Sharon Bleese informed the forum that CPE are working with the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance and London School of Economics to establish a baseline. Through a series of actions and a metric an understanding of how resilient a place is can be achieved. This project is the first UK pilot and about 1500 homes and 800 businesses are being surveyed in Lowestoft.</p> <p>A stakeholder workshop was held in November 2019 and was attended by communities, businesses, and risk management authorities. This was followed by a round of key informant interviews.</p>

		<p>The household surveys will be conducted online and flyers will be posted. This the first step in identifying how resilient people are currently.</p> <p>SB shared the next step is to establish how resilient businesses are through business surveys. The project may also look at mentors within businesses who have a resilience plan in place.</p> <p>In two years, Zurich will come back and measure how much flood resilience has increased. Work will be done before then to see if Lowestoft is a gold, silver or bronze in terms of resilience and this will be looked at again when Zurich return to see if Lowestoft has improved.</p> <p>Phase 2 of the project will work with Anglian Water, the EA and Groundwork to build up resilience champions within communities, business mentors, and link nationally with the Business Emergency Resilience Group. These messages will eventually be passed into schools and the project will pass the baton. The aim of this is to build resilience champions at grassroots level in schools.</p> <p>SB added this could be developed nationally into something like a kitemark, which could be used to assist with bids for funding.</p> <p>AR noted reference to the grab bag concept and asked if there are any examples on other schemes.</p> <p>SB added there are two types of grab bag, one is physical, and one is a plan. SB explained the Zurich Project is a physical grab bag, providing a community with some basic resources to help them to respond during an event. An erosion grab bag is a suite of measures that can be referred to when faced by an emergency to bring in either internal or external partners to take action in a certain way.</p> <p>KT added that as a team, CPE cannot do everything and following some challenging conversations last winter at a few locations, other council departments and partners need to be involved. The grab bag is about wider coordination around erosion frontages.</p>
7.	Updates from partners	<p>AOCP – TB shared that AOCP are waiting to see if they have been successful through the IDB for money to progress with works. JMa added there should be a positive answer in the next couple of weeks.</p> <p>S&OEMG – SA added that the chairman of the S&OEMG, Peter Garrett, has recently moved on from his role. There is currently no chairman, but the group will seek to address that at their next meeting. The southern shore of the Stour has achieved AONB status.</p> <p>AONB – SA shared the AONB are looking at a scheme or procedure to get some limited volunteer activity going again. The AONB are waiting for some advice from the Marine Conservation Society about restarting beach watch projects.</p> <p>EA – DK added that the EA have some money to complete the works at Felixstowe Ferry where there was damage after storms in February. Works at Kirton Creek have been completed. There is also a possibility of a new capital dredge at Harwich Haven.</p> <p>EIFCA – JG informed the forum about recent media coverage on people foraging on the foreshore around the country. That activity varies from gang type activity with large groups collecting shellfish, which goes into the food chain and there can be problems if the shellfish beds are not classified and therefore not subject to the testing regime. Locally, there have been issues on the Stour and Orwell at Trimley with families and at Shotley, which has ben indicated as gang type activity. EIFCA have been working with partners to deal with the issue and it has receded for the moment.</p> <p>NE – AM shared some of NE's larger pieces of work include Sizewell C, offshore wind farms and cabling, and ports. The news about the grant award for Kessingland was fantastic as it is a project NE fully support. AM added this area can be used to test the nature recovery network, which is coming out of the government's 25 year plan. AM highlighted this will become more mainstream in 2021 and is likely to come with funding for projects around nature recovery.</p>

		<p>Nature reserve staff have found increased levels of litter, waste, vandalism and pollution since lockdown. NE is getting an uplift from Defra this year in Grant in Aid which will allow for SSSI management and condition monitoring.</p> <p>JMa asked if signage could be put up where the England Coast Path goes round the estuary because she has experienced disturbance since lockdown.</p> <p><i>Natural England response (added after meeting):</i> <i>Our proposals for establishing the England Coast Path between Bawdsey to Aldeburgh are still under development and we don't expect to publish them until this winter. Once they are published everyone will have 8 weeks to send in their comments on these proposals. This might include asking for specific signage to aid access management where issues have been identified. Establishment of the trail won't start till our proposals are approved by the Secretary of State (with or without modification) and it's likely to be at least couple of years before any new rights commence.</i></p> <p><i>If you are experiencing problems now, please contact Suffolk County Council who are your local access authority and seek their advice.</i></p> <p>AR asked if Habitat Regulations assessment will be done for the England Coast Path on the Deben. AM added this has been done. AR asked if this is available to see. AM agreed to check whether the assessment is in the public domain.</p> <p><i>Natural England response (added after meeting):</i> <i>Yes, a Habs Regs Assessment has been undertaken for the stretch of the England Coast Path which runs between Felixstowe Ferry and Bawdsey. We are also undertaking a nature conservation assessment which will cover all other features of nature conservation concern (including SSSIs, MCZs and undesignated but locally important sites and features) These will both become public when they are published alongside our coast path proposals for this stretch of coast this Autumn/Winter. Everyone will be able to read these and send us their comments on them.</i></p> <p>Marine Pioneer – SA added Peter Cosgrove has now finished at the Suffolk Marine Pioneer and the funding from Defra has ended. To see the final documentation, the forum can contact SA.</p>
8.	Key dates and forward look	<p>KT shared the Sizewell C town and parish council event will be held next week. There will be a dedicated coastal event for SCF members held virtually on 13th August 10am - 12.30pm. An invite will follow shortly.</p>
9.	Suggested agenda items for future meetings	<p>The Chairman suggested an update on the Benacre and Kessingland Flood Risk Management Project from the Water Management Alliance (WMA). KT added the WMA could also support a presentation from the Alde and Ore.</p> <p>JMa requested a presentation on the England Coast Path in Suffolk. AM agreed to find out if there would be an update. ACTION: AM to find out if NE would be happy to give an England Coast Path update at the next meeting.</p> <p>SB added she would be happy to give an update on Pakefield and potentially Thorpeness.</p> <p>AR requested a presentation from Eastern IFCA. JG added he is happy to give an update.</p> <p>KT suggested an update on CLIFF.</p>
10.	Date of next meeting	<p>SB suggested sending round a doodle poll for a November meeting. ACTION: AS to send round a doodle poll for a couple of weeks in November.</p>

11.	Previous minutes	Approved.
12.	Any Other Business	<p>AA asked if the comments on the SMP consultations were available to see. SB added Slaughden's virtual engagement tool is being developed, which will go back to the public and share the results of the consultation. The consultation comments will be included in that.</p> <p>AA raised concerns over the offshore wind cabling coming onshore and damaging the heritage coast. The Chairman agreed that the coast is vulnerable to the major energy developments. JM added ESC are working hard to defend what east Suffolk has that is unique and special.</p> <p>Andy Smith requested the slides be shared by link. ACTION: AS to share a link to the presentation with the forum.</p>
		Close at 16.30