

AOCP

Alde and Ore Community Partnership Update

The new Alde and Ore Community Partnership had its third meeting, but its first by Zoom, on 11 June 2020. It welcomed the news that following a lengthy consultation with the Environment Agency, the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) has submitted the outline business case to request Government funding towards works at Aldeburgh, Iken and Snape. Since the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Board have done so much work over the past few months on the case, the review process will be a quicker route than was originally planned. The outcome from the Environment Agency is expected in the autumn, as the innovative nature of the project will mean that it is likely to be closely scrutinised.

Once feedback has been received, work can then commence on the second business case which enables the ESIDB to bid for funding for works covering Boyton, Butley, Chillesford, Gedgrave, Orford and Sudbourne. The whole estuary programme of works will take some 7-8 years to complete.

The Community Partnership also discussed and approved a new communications strategy, which will make sure that we and our partners at the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust and ESIDB continue to work closely to ensure all with an interest in the Alde and Ore Estuary kept informed of any progress. It is one of the main aims at the Partnership to make sure everyone has a voice in this crucial programme.

Alison Andrews, July 2020

S&OEMG

Stour and Orwell Estuary Management Group Update

No update at present.

BCP

Bawdsey Coastal Partnership Update

No update at present.

DEP

Deben Estuary 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 required stakeholders, within a single integrated solution, for the harbour and estuary.

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.

On a further disappointing note, the Fair on the Green, that was scheduled for Sunday 2 August, has been cancelled due to the implications of staging the event to a large and expectant audience while Covid-19 prevails and the impact of mass gatherings on the Town would compromise social distancing requirements.

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, July 2020

Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Update

More AONB

The Secretary of State confirmed the extension to the Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB on 7 July 2020 to include additional areas along the southern edge of the Stour estuary in Tendring, Essex and two beautiful small river valleys, the Samford Valley and the Freston Brook in Babergh District, Suffolk. In total there is now 38 square kilometres more designated landscape following the announcement, that's 9.5% bigger. See <https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/2020/07/07/new-aonb-boundary-review/>

AONB Grants

Despite the current lockdown the AONB has been able to distribute grants to a total value of nearly £90,000 across 50 projects. Panel members were particularly keen to support projects to aid recovery and adaptation and help back a small percentage of the available funds to support further projects later in the year. See <https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/managing/grants/>

Littering

AONBs, beaches and National Parks have seen an unwelcome increase in littering. There have been numerous examples across the two AONBs that have caused distress to residents and responsible visitors and real problems for livestock and wildlife. DEFRA have produced a video to raise awareness of the issue-it can be seen at <https://twitter.com/DefraGovUK/status/1274613022808395777> or downloaded from <https://we.tl/t-EivRtBq2cT> (via We Transfer) for further sharing.

New Era for the AONBs...

On 1 June the AONB team welcomed Alex Moore da Luz into a new role in the team, that of AONB Nature Recovery Officer. The role has been created by rejigging current funds and seeks to meet the aspirations of the Colchester Declaration (An AONB network pledge to meet the wildlife and climate crises) and the review of nationally designated landscapes undertaken by Government.

Outstanding AONB Newspapers: Available online.

The distribution of the AONB newspapers has been interrupted by the current national emergency. However, the two newspapers, full of stories and a celebration of 50 years since the designations of the two AONBs are available on line. Please note that the '50 things to see and do' in the AONBs was written before the current

restrictions on movement-save them for once we are through this crisis-I'm sure we will all need to get outside and will want to support those businesses in the AONBs.

<https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/visiting/visitor-guides/additional-guides/>

<http://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/publications/dedham-vale-and-stour-valley-newspaper/>

BeachWatch Results for 2019 are in...

428Kg of litter removed...48 litter surveys carried out...nearly 5 miles of beaches surveyed...1,076 volunteers took part...22,095 items of litter removed...1,398 plastic food wrappers removed...69.2% of litter was plastic or polystyrene...

A fantastic volunteer effort and we are grateful for everyone that took part and contributed to this valuable work for the AONB and marine environment.

Simon Amstutz, July 2020

IDB

Internal Drainage Board Update

We have been as busy as ever over the past few months as land drainage is classified as a key service and we have been busier than ever during lockdown.

Benacre and Kessingland Flood Risk Management Project

East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) and Water Management Alliance Officers are supporting Waveney Lothingland and Lower Yare IDB and continue to make progress on this progressive partnership project. We were very pleased to receive funding of £3.2m from Government in last week as part of £170m pot announced to accelerate work on shovel-ready flood defence schemes.

Suffolk Estuaries

ESIDB continue to provide support to the local estuaries in Suffolk. We submitted the outline business case to request Government funding towards proposed river wall works at Aldeburgh, Iken and Snape and expect to hear the outcome from the EA in the Autumn, as the innovative nature of the project will mean that it is likely to be closely scrutinised. This is the culmination of over five years work with the ESIDB, AOEP, EA and the Alde & Ore Estuary Trust (AOET) working together in partnership to achieve this milestone.

Once feedback has been received, work can then commence on the second business case which enables the ESIDB to bid for funding for works covering Boyton, Butley, Chillesford, Gedgrave, Orford and Sudbourne. The whole estuary programme of works will take some 7-8 years to complete.

We continue to support the Holistic Water Management project at the Felixstowe peninsula and the current Interreg proposal led by Suffolk County Council (SCC). Linked to this, the IDB are working alongside SCC having successfully bid for a Defra Water Environment Grant by SCC for saltmarsh restoration and pump management at Falkenham with works looking to begin this autumn/

Emma Dixon, July 2020

Coastal Partnership East

East Suffolk Council Coastal Management Team Update

During these difficult times, CPE have successfully navigated the reactive issues that the COVID-19 virus and subsequent Government 'lock down' have presented our industry. We have worked hard across CPE with our 3 councils and partners to manage the impacts of the lock-down and the need to primarily work from home and we have maintained a high level of service throughout the past 14 weeks.

We have continued to deliver on a range of fronts without a disruption to service including:

- Continued delivery of capital flood and coastal risk management work – notably Lowestoft
- Application for a large number of significant external grants and funding (over £60M bids in total) to undertake our work with the fantastic news that we have been awarded £43.5M for the tidal walls and barrier work and can now progress the entire LFRMP for Lowestoft. Other bids have been made for Thorpeness and Pakefield
- A phased return to site supervision and coastal monitoring roles as lockdown restrictions eased
- Ongoing management and communication regarding beach safety, cliff erosion and WW2 structures
- Rapid movement to ‘virtual’ engagement of several coastal communities whom we need to continue to support where there is significant coastal risk
- Management of community and partner expectations for several engagement events in the CPE diary which can no longer take place
- Review of the Sizewell C Development Consent Order in relation to coastal management matters
- Preparation for the largest and most challenging engagement event we have undertaken virtually to facilitate the towns and parishes responding to the Sizewell DCO (up to 90 participants). A similar but smaller event will be held for those with purely coastal interests.
- Embedding learning from the recent Mott MacDonalds – Regeneration of seaside towns study and ongoing learning from EA’s national Icarus project at Hemsby.
- Continued engagement with national organisations about funding and policy post-Budget to get the best we can for our coastal communities
- Consultation responses to the EFRA committee on Floods and National Environment Audit Committee on the Wind Energy Sector.
- Active participants in online/telecon meetings regarding national advice on flood and coastal matters e.g. RFCC, LGA SIG, Coastal Chairs Group.

- Forward Look
- Embarking on delivery of Tidal walls in LFRMP this September through a ground-breaking ceremony with Government and partners
- Reviewing and embedding the EA’s FCERM 2050 strategy in our business and preparing for opportunities linked to the new Defra Coastal Policy including progression of the Coastal Losses-Innovation in Funding and Finance Project (CLIFF) to the next phase of testing.
- Ongoing support for our Suffolk RMA partners, notably SCC on Pluvial and Fluvial work in Lowestoft and IDB at Benacre.
- Close working with EA and wider Anglia coastal local authorities on the next 6 year Anglian Monitoring programme including further development of the Collector App and potential for shared resources.
- Development of a ‘grab bag’ approach to emergency response for our coastal erosion frontages ahead of winter 2020/21 to allow us to be prepared across the CPE patch and engage with our most vulnerable communities with the widest possible suite of possible options - should a cliff erosion issue arise.
- NERC UK Climate Resilience Embedded Researcher Scheme- (UEA/Tyndall Centre with support from several research bodies).
- Coastal Launch Pad Initiative. The project has now completed, and we are assessing the outputs.
- Aries Doctoral Training Partnership The PhD studentship is offered and funded jointly by the ESRC-funded SeNSS and NERC-funded ARIES Doctoral Training Partnerships and will be mentored at the UEA.

Karen Thomas, July 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, 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.

SMP policy reviews

We have worked closely with East Suffolk Council and partners on the assessment of policy options for Slaughden and East Lane, Bawdsey.

The Slaughden review progressed well. The Client Steering group along with an Alde & Ore Estuary Partnership representative have developed, with technical specialists from Jacobs, the options that are available for the long term management of the site. Once East Suffolk Council have approved the changes we will progress approval through RFCC and EA.

We undertook a similar approach at Bawdsey. Working with partners, including Bawdsey community representatives on this challenge. Our understanding is that it is not possible to take forward a policy change at this time. We will continue to monitor the site and look forward to working with Bawdsey Coastal Partnership and the community representatives in the future.

Emerging projects

Funding has been sought to undertake significant repairs to areas that were damaged during the spring storms this year. This includes 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.

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 expect the initial reports soon. 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 was submitted for approval in May 2020. It is currently progressing through the scrutiny process and a decision is expected in late July.

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.

Gary Watson, July 2020

Eastern IFCA

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities Update

COVID-19 Update

Eastern IFCA have adapted working strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our priority has been 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. Our engagement with industry has primarily involved supporting fishers and making them aware of financial support available, which has been positively received. Where possible, we have continued vessel and shore-based enforcement patrols, with social distancing restrictions in place, around the district. The team have been deployed in revised methods and have continued to successfully conduct shellfish samples for environmental health.

Eastern IFCA's June Authority Meeting was cancelled due to social distancing restrictions. The next meeting will take place remotely using video-conferencing technology on Wednesday 9th September.

Fisheries Improvement Project – Southern North Sea Crab Fishery Unit

The Marine Conservation Society's *Good Fish Guide* rating for Southern North Sea Edible Crab has been recently downgraded, with significant economic impact on industry members across the district. Eastern IFCA are evaluating the sustainability of crab and lobster fisheries in the district, with a view to develop management measures if needed, to ensure sustainable fishing. At a meeting with fishery stakeholders it was decided to collaborate to improve the sustainability of the fishery through an industry-led Fisheries Improvement Plan (FIP). The FIP aims to identify and address sustainability concerns and work towards a more sustainable stock.

Closed Area Byelaw 2020

Our officers are to recommend further closures to be included in this Byelaw, following the completion of informal engagement with industry in March 2020, which will be presented to the Authority at the September meeting. 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.

Shrimp Permit Byelaw

Officers are continuing to finalise permit conditions for this byelaw following responses to our formal consultation that closed in March 2020. We are working to identify the most suitable management measures to deliver the mitigation outlined in the completed Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the shrimp fishery.

Cockle Fishery

The annual Wash Fishery Order 1992 Cockle Fishery opened on June 21st and will remain open until the end of October or until the total allowable catch (TAC) is exhausted (whichever is first). Annual surveys to enable the opening of the fishery were revised due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite restricted survey data this year, working closely with Natural England, data was drawn from previous years to provide sufficient evidence to ensure the fishery could open without adverse effect on The Wash and North Norfolk Coast EMS (via HRA), enabling the calculation of a quota (TAC) for the 2020 fishery.

Highly Protected Marine Areas

In June 2019, the government announced a review to examine the potential introduction of Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs). The findings from the report, published in June 2020, covered 25 recommended areas with recommendations for how the areas should be identified and managed. For more information, including links to the full report, please see the following news item on our website: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/highly-protected-marine-areas-report-published/>

Engagement

In person engagement with the fishing industry undertaken for multiple management workstreams have been delayed as a result of the pandemic. As a priority, we are investigating how we can continue to hold meaningful engagement while observing government guidance.

Recreational Fishing Enforcement

During the pandemic, Eastern IFCA have been using social media to publicise recreational fishing regulation to support enforcement activity along the coast, particularly with focus on Bass and Mackerel species, following reports of undersized catches and large amounts of fish being caught and retained.

Imogen Cessford, July 2020

NE

Natural England Update

England Coast Path - Update Suffolk stretches of the England Coast Path

Work continues to progress on the England Coast Path - a new National Trail around all of England's coast.

A European court judgement in April 2018 affected how Natural England should assess the impact of England Coast Path proposals on environmentally protected sites. Progress slowed as a result. However, we have now adjusted our approach to ensure compliance with this judgement, and are working hard to ensure as much of the England Coast Path as possible is open by 2020.

Over the last few months a number of staff have moved on from the team including James Lamb, Araminta Adams, David Waldram and Fiona Taylor. This leaves us short staffed in this financial year. We will not however be recruiting to fill these vacancies as we expect our resource needs to reduce over the year as we move to the establishment stage of delivery on an increasing number of stretches.

All Natural England Staff have been working from home since late March due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We have been unable to use our offices, travel for work or undertake site visits and this has limited the work we have been able to do. In particular we are currently unable to publish our Coastal Access Reports for the remaining Suffolk stretches as this requires access to our offices. We expect to continue working from home for some time to come but with a slow easing of restrictions on site work where this is essential and it can be done safely.

Suffolk Stretches

Harwich to Shotley Gate - Kim Thirlby & Sally Fishwick.

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- We published our proposals on 22 January 2020. The 8 week period for public comments closed Wednesday 18 March 2020.
- The appointed person has determined the admissibility of the objections received & notified objectors of this.
- The next stage is for Natural England to submit their comments on the objections and representations received to the Secretary of State.

Shotley Gate to Felixstowe Ferry – Darren Braine.

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- We published our proposals on 15th January 2020. The 8 week period for public comments closed Wednesday 11 March 2020

- The appointed person has determined the admissibility of the objections received & notified objectors of this.
- The next stage is for Natural England to submit their comments on the objections and representations received to the Secretary of State.

Felixstowe Ferry to Bawdsey –Giles Merritt & Sally Fishwick.

- Stage 3 (Propose)
- We have nearly finalised the Coastal Access reports and Overview.
- The HRA is completed and the NCA is in draft form. It will then be QA'd before sign off.
- We expect to publish our proposals when we can safely access our offices again, which is likely to be this autumn.

Bawdsey to Aldeburgh – Jonathan Clarke & Darren Braine.

- Stage 2 (Develop) and Stage 3 (Propose)
- We are finalising one remaining aspect of the alignment and are drafting our Report chapters and Overview.
- The HRA and NCA are underway.
- We expect to publish our proposals when we can safely access our offices again, which is likely to be this autumn.

Aldeburgh to Hopton-on-Sea – Sally Fishwick.

- Stage 4 (Determine)
- We published our proposals on 29th January 2020. The 8 week period for public comments closed Wednesday 25th March 2020
- The next step is for the appointed person to determine the admissibility of the objections received & notify objectors of this.

Natural England will then submit their comments on the objections and representations received to the Secretary of State.

Francesca Shapland, July 2020

Suffolk Saltmarsh Group
Suffolk Saltmarsh Group Update

The last meeting of the SSG in early March considered the SSG's next steps and plan for 2020/21 work. The key themes for SSG are Monitoring, Engagement, Materials and Operations, Licensing and Consents, and Funding. We have created a draft SSG Action Plan around these themes and started to prioritise those actions just as Covid-19 lockdown arrived. We have however continued to update the plan and a number of important actions have been progressed by Pete Cosgrove ahead of his departure from the AONB post and Marine Pioneer project ending. The SSG will meet again over the Summer to monitor progress and officers are considering the latest information coming from Government regarding potential funding opportunities for natural capital delivery projects like saltmarsh and intertidal habitat restoration. We remain linked to the Defra Marine Pioneer and will embed any earning we can from the programme. We hope with these national plans a approaches that there may be new opportunities for saltmarsh and intertidal habitat projects in Suffolk and for the estuary and community groups who are keen to deliver them.

Karen Thomas, July 2020

Marine Pioneer

Suffolk Marine Pioneer Update

No update at present.

MMO

Marine Management Organisation Update

The [Second three-yearly report for the East Marine Plans](#) was published at the end of March. The monitoring report found that progress was being made towards 10 of the 11 objectives. There have been significant changes to the policy context since publication of the East Marine Plan in 2014. There has been an increase in use of the marine plan, with greater cohesion with terrestrial planning. Following our recommendation, the Secretary of State made the decision to amend or replace the marine plan. There is no statutory timeline for this to be completed within, but we will consult with stakeholders at the appropriate times.

Following the consultation on the South East Marine Plan, a [12 Week Consultation Summary](#) was published earlier this week outlining the comments received on the plan and each policy area, as well as general actions that will be taken. This will be followed by a Modifications Report when the plans are adopted. The South East Plan is due to be published in 2021.

From an operational and Covid-19 perspective, the MMO are [restarting our coastal operations](#) to support the fishing industry which includes resuming coastal and sea-based patrols. This is in addition to the [Support Available to the Fishing Industry](#), such as the Fisheries Response Fund. Our offices remain closed, but we continue to provide our services whilst working remotely.

Georgie Sutton, July 2020