

Minutes of Meeting held on 26 October 2021 on Zoom



In attendance:

DR	Cllr	David	Ritchie	ESC (Chair)		AA		Alison	Andrews	AOCP
ASt		Alysha	Stockman	CPE (minutes)		MF		Madeline	Fallon	CPE
KT		Karen	Thomas	CPE		KM		Keith	Martin	SCAR
RR	Cllr	Russ	Rainger	ESC		ED		Emma	Dixon	WMA
DB	Cllr	David	Beavan	SCAR / ESC		JG		Julian	Gregory	EIFCA
GN	Cllr	Graham	Newman	SCC		JM		Jane	Marson	IDB
SA		Simon	Amstutz	SCH AONB		JF		Jennifer	Ford	MMO
RS		Richard	Steward	BEP		ASm		Andy	Smith	RFCC
CB		Christine	Block	DEP			Cllr	James	Mallinder	ESC
SB		Sharon	Bleese	CPE			Cllr	Keith	Patience	ESC
SK		Sam	Kench	NE				Adam	Rowlands	RSPB
GW		Gary	Watson	EA				Thomas	Yeung	CPE
CD		Corinna	Dietz	MMO				Tom	Chalker	CPE

Apologies: Graham Underwood (UoE), Tim Beach (AOCP), Andy Rouse (BCP), Mark Johnson (EA), Cllr Tony Cooper (ESC), Sharon Richardson (CPE)

1.	Welcome and introductions	The Chair shared a round of introductions.
2.	MMO licensing	<p>Jennifer Ford is one of the senior case managers in the marine licensing team. JF shared the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) is driven by the Government's aim for clean, healthy, safe, productive, and biologically diverse oceans and seas. As well as this the MMO support economic growth through enabling marine activities and development.</p> <p>JF shared the categories of activity that need a marine licence include construction, dredging, deposit/removal of a substance or object on the seabed or in the marine area, incineration, scuttling, and use of explosives. The MMO's interactive assistance tool advises if a marine licence is needed and may direct applicants to a self-service licence for low-risk activities. If a marine licence is needed, an application can be submitted through the marine case management system. When the MMO receives an application the business support team will estimate how much time it will need to be worked on and do an initial assessment. Once the estimate has been accepted by the applicant, it will be allocated to the case team who will do a technical assessment (week 2-3) and see if any assessments are needed such as a habitat regulations assessment. There will then be a consultation with statutory consultees e.g. Natural England (NE), Historic England, Environment Agency (EA) and the MMO can choose to consult any other interested parties e.g. IFCA or a navigation body depending on where the activity is. If the project is not an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) project it will be a 4-week consultation but if it needs an EIA it will be a 6 week consultation. The consultation responses will be reviewed and more information may be needed from applicants to iron out any issues raised during consultation. The application will then go through the decision recommendation and improvement stage where MMO draft any licences and then application completion where the licence is issued. At the moment the KPI is 13 weeks but the MMO are experiencing a backlog of cases. The MMO are recruiting people to work through the backlog and advise to get any applications in as soon as possible.</p> <p>JF added the coastal concordat is designed to help working between lots of different parties, for example, if there is an application that spans the intertidal zone and would require consent from another body as well as the MMO, they aim to work together to avoid any duplication of work. There should be a first point of entry provided to the</p>

		<p>applicant and a single lead authority appointed for carrying out the assessments. Not all local planning authorities are signed up to the coastal concordat and JF asked Forum members to share if they know any who would be interested in signing up.</p> <p>KM asked what falls under the self-service licence. JF confirmed it is for small activities such as scaffolding in the marine area, removing marine litter, minor removals. Self-service activity table: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/self-service-marine-licensing/self-service-activities-table</p> <p>KT added Coastal Partnership East (CPE) have raised the timescales for getting licences with the MMO locally and nationally through the LGA Coastal SIG. There are opportunities to draw down funds early for some of the capital works in the six year programme and KT asked if the MMO can prioritise some of those projects as they are limited by certain timescales for delivery.</p> <p>AA added with regards to saltmarsh restoration the licence is not affordable so important efforts to help protect and amend SSSIs are not being taken forward. JF noted this is similar with several other projects but due to the regulation the MMO still need to charge for their time. Defra are reviewing the exemption process at the moment so it may be something that gets reviewed. KT suggested a standardised approach and welcomed further discussion with MMO to support the estuary groups. JF agreed to work with the person leading the exemption review project to see if there is any scope for that and added the MMO can make recommendations to Defra on it.</p> <p>SA asked what the timelines of the review are and added saltmarsh restoration fits the government ambition of nature recovery and reductions in carbon. JF agreed to report back to the Forum on dates.</p> <p>CB asked if it is possible to make direct representation to Defra. JF agreed to find out if the public can or if they are just asking for recommendations.</p> <p>ASm asked if there is a consultation from Defra on the review and if the LGA Coastal SIG can raise it. JF confirmed the exemptions are reviewed every 3 years and the current review is in early stages. KT agreed it is something for the LGA Coastal SIG to get involved in.</p> <p>Added after meeting: <i>KT attended the November 2021 LGA Coastal SIG officer meeting with the national EA team and MMO licencing team. KT raised the issue of capital scheme hold ups through lack of MMO resources. LGA Coastal SIG and Coastal Groups Network attended national workshops with EA and MMO before Christmas 2021. KT suggested they consider exempting capital schemes and use the coastal concordat so that other authorities lead on permitting and consenting works as a short-term measure.</i></p> <p><i>KT also raised the issue of the saltmarsh restoration work and licencing issues that create a challenging process for grass roots projects and flagged that given the COP26 agenda and wider benefits of marshes for carbon, fisheries and natural flood risk management the approach needs revisiting and a follow up discussion is welcome.</i></p> <p>ACTION: MMO to confirm the timeline of the Defra review ACTION: MMO to confirm if the public can make direct representation to Defra</p>
3.	Thorpeness emergency situation update	<p>MF shared that CPE have been working closely with the Thorpeness community since 2010 on the best solution for the coastal frontage. The SMP policy for this location was reviewed and changed in 2014 from No Active Intervention to Managed Realignment to allow the community to manage the defences and adapt. In 2020 CPE was successful bid for ~£100k from the Defra Pipeline Fund to carry out detailed studies of the coastal processes and further assessment of the preferred option that came out of the 2014-2016 options appraisal and 2019 public consultation. Royal HaskoningDHV (RHDHV)</p>

		<p>were awarded the contract spring 2021. In February 2021 significant cliff erosion at the northern end due to winter storms took the existing defences and many metres of cliff face. This erosion continued into the summer and the community were asking what could be done before this winter to protect these properties</p> <p>During summer 2021, the homeowner of No 22 wanted to fund some temporary protection works for their property before the winter and CPE worked hard to get a rock revetment in place for this autumn. The design and the sizing of the rocks are the same as the design of the medium-term works that are currently being worked on. The revetment was 35m in length and is on the same footprint as the existing defences. The principal contractor was the Water Management Alliance who researched and used UK company KML in Cornwall to supply the Cornish granite. The barge, alongside two tugs, travelled from Cornwall to Suffolk and arrived on 10th October to offload 2500T of rock (3-6T each) and was finished within 12 hours. The contractors started placing the rock on 12th October and are due to finish this week. CPE continue to work with the community and RHDHV on outline design for the medium-term project.</p> <p>DB asked if the existing hard defence caused greater erosion to the north and if that could happen at Southwold and Easton Bavents. MF added part of the options appraisal in 2014-2016 was to look at the options that were suitable to not cause any change to coastal processes. Hence, the options are based on medium-term 20-25 years and looking at a trigger point for if at any point in the future it causes a change in coastal processes then it will be removed. The community are aware of that. The Chair asked if that was for the emergency works or the medium-term works. MF confirmed it is for both. The emergency works have been designed in the same way as the medium-term project as that had already started. In 2010 when the geobags went in that was designed to have no impact to the north and south and sediment transport.</p> <p>GN asked if there is any footpath access between Thorpeness and Sizewell beach. MF confirmed it is still closed and the footpath is diverted. CPE's Engineering Team are on site today to assess the signage but are going to keep the footpath closed as it is difficult to walk on low tide.</p> <p>ASm asked if the emergency works extend to the northern boundary of The Red House. MF confirmed the emergency work is mainly in front of No 22 with ~10m in front of The Red House. The medium-term work will be in front of The Red House. ASm asked if there has been any change in NE's position for the north end termination. MF added CPE are working closely with NE as part of the medium-term project and are working through the different options for the outline design at the northern end. SB added this is to make sure the project is appropriate on that coastline, and it is not at a point to be able to predetermine any positions. KT highlighted that this is part of a wider piece with the Innovative Resilience Fund and CPE are looking at the wider options for Thorpeness.</p> <p>CB asked if there is a place at the table for the community. SB added the community are at the table and involved in making decisions about what consultants to use and CPE intend to do that with contractors too.</p> <p>KM asked if something happened, and the rock was allocated elsewhere would the community member get their money back. SB added that the asset due to public liability belongs to East Suffolk Council (ESC) but if the rock gets allocated elsewhere because it is interfering with coastal processes then CPE would work with them as to what happens to that. CB asked who carries liability for the asset initially and throughout the project. SB added ESC carries public liability and will do for the new defence as well.</p>
4.	Conference update	<p>SB shared 2021 was the first year into the Forum's combined coast and estuary conference. The aim was to make it feel like delegates were attending in person as well as providing on demand content on and after the day. 288 people attended on the day, an improvement on 240 at the last in person conference, meaning a virtual conference did not inhibit people from taking part. The page views on the CPE website where it is</p>

		<p>hosted were 1033 and the on the day conference rating was 4 (very good). With the support of the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, a virtual careers fair and on demand content for schools were set up to encourage the next generation of people who are going to manage the coast. The careers fair has had 124 visitors (70 of which on conference day), 1400 page views (500 of which on conference day), average dwelling time of 11 minutes.</p> <p>SB suggested trying a hybrid event in 2022 (restrictions allowing) that is live streamed with some on demand content and a limited in person audience. SB also suggested the Orbis Centre in Lowestoft as a venue and asked Forum members for their support in pulling together the content.</p> <p>SB suggested the Forums consider transferring £2,500 of the remaining conference balance to the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project to bring down the cost of the careers fair build to under £10k. This will still leave a healthy balance of over £2k to begin the process of building next year's conference.</p> <p>The Forum agreed.</p>
5.	Sizewell C update	<p>KT shared that there have been some positive outcomes during the process but there are some unresolved issues with regard to what has been proposed by the project. ESC welcome early development of a coastal processes monitoring and mitigation plan and have been working closely with the MMO.</p> <p>AA expressed appreciation to ESC and CPE and supported the topic coming back to the Forum regularly.</p> <p>The Chair agreed.</p> <p>ASm asked about the long-term monitoring and mitigation outputs.</p> <p>KT added there is a requirement that all of the monitoring and mitigation programme has to be agreed with ESC and other partners before construction can start. The Marine Technical Forum becomes the group which monitors the programme. ESC want to make sure there are trigger points in the monitoring programme so if things start to change there is a process to escalate it if needed.</p> <p>SA added the temporary beach landing facility will have a significant impact on the natural beauty features of the AONB and asked members with statutory responsibilities to keep the applicant to task on minimising impacts from features such as the beach landing facility and hard coastal defence feature.</p> <p>KT added ESC are looking at how coastal monitoring needs and wider access, tranquillity etc. are connected up. ESC would like to see cross-hybridisation of the different monitoring programmes if the development goes ahead.</p> <p>KM highlighted the CMMP and how that is managed is going to be crucial.</p>
6.	SMP Refresh and EA Strategy	<p>GW shared phase 1 of the SMP Refresh is now complete and the documents are published for all the SMPs. Phase 2 is underway, and there are regular SMP lead meetings with colleagues at national and lead representatives of all the 22 SMPs. The Suffolk SMP Refresh is being led by ESC, who are pushing forward the agenda for the SMP Refresh and agreed actions to take it forward into next year.</p> <p>CB asked if the papers for the refresh are available.</p> <p>GW agreed to send a copy.</p> <p>ACTION: GW to send CB copy of the Suffolk SMP Refresh papers</p>
7.	CPE strategic update	<p>KT updated the Forum on CPE's key work including the SMP Refresh, Norfolk and Suffolk Coast Transition Programme, Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project and Pakefield.</p> <p>CB asked if the information about the LGA Coastal SIG can be shared. CB added the Bawdsey beach monitoring group have developed their concept of monitoring their local stretch of coastline and are looking at putting data online and asked how other authorities can use that and how the community can tap into other work being done.</p>

		<p>KT added the LGA Coastal SIG publish information on their website at https://lgacoastalsig.com/ . CPE are looking into reinvigorating the quarterly newsletter to give updates at a local level and there is opportunity to talk more through the Forum. KT asked MF to feedback to the Engineering Team about the monitoring programme.</p> <p>KM asked if there will be a consultation about the factors to initiate an SMP review. KT confirmed not and added there is a SMP policy review process in the SMP guidance. The current policy at Pakefield is Hold the Line but there is no defence with Managed Realignment in the end and No Active Intervention to the south. CPE are working with the community to explore whether or not a policy review is needed and what potential options or solutions there can be for managing the frontage.</p> <p>SB added CPE have been working closely with the Pakefield Community Steering Group and are working on getting the whole community up to speed through a community event and virtual consultation room. Early next year CPE will consider whether they might recommend a SMP policy change but will keep the Forum informed.</p> <p>KM asked when the public might see something from the SMP Refresh.</p> <p>SB added the SMP Refresh is not about changing policies but looking at the SMP as a whole and review the action plans.</p>
8.	Updates from partners	Deben Estuary Partnership – CB added the pilot exhibition/information centre at Bawdsey Quay was successful and DEP have agreed with PGL at Bawdsey Manor to continue for a further 12 months.
9.	Key dates and forward look	None.
10.	Suggested agenda items for future meetings	<p>The Chair noted keeping an eye on Sizewell.</p> <p>SB suggested updates on the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project, Pakefield, SMP Refresh Work Package 8, plans for engagement in Southwold and the virtual engagement room for the area from Southwold to Walberswick.</p> <p>CB noted the offer in NE's report to talk about the Nature Recovery Network and suggested something on what is happening to the rural land that abuts the coast and the rules and regulations landowners are following.</p> <p>SK agreed to ask Andy Millar to speak at the next meeting.</p> <p>JM suggested FWAG to present on the land abutting the estuaries and changing attitudes on that land and has a contact who can present on this.</p> <p>AA suggested energy projects and raised concern over the number of them along the coastline, lack of consultation locally as to whether it is suitable in areas with fragile cliff and AONB designations. AA asked if the Forum could address this and try to mitigate the damage.</p> <p>SA agreed and added there is some work around coordination. SA also suggested an update on the England Coast Path and the AONB's landscape lens project.</p> <p>SB agreed to put the landscape lens project on the February agenda and asked who SA and AA would like to speak on energy projects.</p> <p>SA agreed to share some contacts with SB and shared https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/offshore-transmission-network-review</p> <p>AA suggested a discussion on how everyone on the coast is perceiving it and invite an MP or someone from BEIS.</p> <p>KT added the Energy Projects Team at ESC have pulled together a paper on a significant number of proposals that are coming forward and suggested there could be a separate discussion bringing in somebody at ministerial level.</p> <p>ACTION: SK to ask Andy Millar to present on Nature Recovery Network ACTION: SA to share energy projects contacts/links with SB</p>
11.	Previous minutes	The Forum approved the minutes of the previous meeting.
12.	Any Other Business	None.