

AOCP

Alde and Ore Community Partnership Update

In the year that sees the 70th anniversary of the devastating 1953 floods and the 10th anniversary of the 2013 surge flood that ended with 26 houses and a pub in Snape being completely flooded and some farm animals dying, the AOCP have wonderful news, announced on 26 January 2023.

The AOCP are very delighted to report that East Suffolk IDB received funding approval for Phase 1 Upper Alde & Ore Estuary Embankment Improvements of almost £12 million. This enables the commencement of the Whole Estuary Plan, the culmination of many years work within the Alde and Ore Estuary involving a multitude of individuals and organisations representing local communities, businesses and the environment.

The project is part of the Alde and Ore Estuary Plan which was approved after full consultation locally in 2016. The plan was drawn up by the volunteer Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership who also benefited from the help from government bodies including for essentials such as Habitat Regulations Assessment, Water Framework Directive Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal. The essence of the plan is to upgrade the river defence walls to secure resilience against rare but potentially highly destructive sea surges such as happened in 1953. The walls will be reconstructed broadly so that they can withstand overtopping, the flood water flows down a gentle backslope and water can then be released back into the river once the surge has passed. The design aims to be resilient against large surges in the year 2050 taking account of sea level rise and can be further adapted in the medium term (20-50 years).

The Alde and Ore Community Partnership worked closely with East Coast Suffolk IDB on the early development of this flood defence improvement scheme: the scheme provides both resilience and adaptation in a changing climate, reducing tidal flood risk whilst enhancing the environment of the estuary. The Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, the fund-raising body for the estuary, were able to fund the business case for this work from local donations and from a Garfield Weston Foundation grant.

The project is being run by ESIDB and will take four years with necessary preparatory work this year and construction taking place between 2024 and end 2027.

Meanwhile work is now well in hand to progress the business case for the lower estuary to seek the necessary approvals and further funding for the wall improvement to complete the whole estuary.

Over the next few years the Partnership, the ESIDB and the Trust will have extensive communications and actions to ensure that all communities know and can discuss what is happening with the roll out of construction plans. The Trust will be leading on securing funding to supplement that which can be provided by government.

The AOCP is very grateful to the many bodies and individuals, both in the public sector and as volunteers, who have played important parts in transforming the vision which started to be worked on in 2012 into becoming a reality.

Alison Andrews, January 2023

BCP

Bawdsey Coastal Partnership Update

No update at present.

BEP

Blyth Estuary Partnership Update

No update at present.

Coastal Partnership East

East Suffolk Council Coastal Management Team Update

No update at present.

DEP

Deben Estuary Partnership Update

No update at present.

Eastern IFCA

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities Update

Authority Meetings

The 50th meeting of the full Authority took place on the 14th of December 2022. At this meeting, the Authority agreed transitional arrangements for managing the wild shellfish fisheries and private aquaculture 'lays' in the Wash, in the context of delays to the formal implementation of the management mechanisms to replace the Wash Fishery Order 1992 (see below for an update on this). Members additionally considered and agreed a position on seaweed aquaculture within the district, to inform responses to planning applications. The minutes from this and previous meetings are available on our website: [Authority Meetings - Eastern IFCA \(eastern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/authority-meetings-eastern-ifca)

The next Authority meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 8th of March 2023.

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

Management

Eastern IFCA has been taking an Adaptive Risk Management Approach to managing the historic crab and lobster potting fisheries that take place within Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ to mitigate the risks of potting to the conservation objectives of the site, as advised by Natural England – the government's statutory nature conservation advisor.

As part of this work proposals are being developed for a flexible permitting byelaw as a framework for managing fishing in the MCZ. The views of stakeholders are being sought on this and on a review of four crab and lobster management byelaws inherited from Eastern Sea Fisheries Joint Committee, and the need for wider management measures throughout the district. For more information on the informal consultation, please visit: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/eastern-ifca-informal-consultation-management-of-crab-and-lobster-potting-fisheries/>

The Authority will consider the flexible permitting byelaw for the MCZ, as well as the need for wider management and changes to the inherited byelaws, at its next meeting on Wednesday the 8th of March 2023.

Research

Recently, the Research & Development Task & Finish Group has been working with Blue Marine Foundation to develop a research project that will aim to understand the levels of naturally caused damage to protected chalk features in the MCZ. This research project, if agreed, would further our understanding of the significance of damage to the seabed caused by fishing gear in the wider context of natural damage, and be used to inform proportionate management. Blue Marine Foundation are organising a meeting with fishermen who fish in or close to the MCZ to discuss whether this research would be supported by them, how it can be achieved, and whether it is feasible. The meeting will take place on the 14th of February 2023.

Stakeholder Involvement

The MCZ Stakeholder Group held its first in-person meeting in December 2022. The meeting was used to launch the informal consultation on the development of a byelaw (see above). Adaptive Risk Management is rarely used in England, so Group members were asked their views on the process so far. There was also an opportunity to hear about and discuss research work and see the equipment being used.

Stakeholder Group meetings are organised by the Marine Conservation Society's Agents of Change project and funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the LIFE fund of the European Union. The Group is open to anyone with an interest in fisheries management at the MCZ. For more information, visit www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/cromer-shoal-chalk-beds-mcz.

To join the Stakeholder Group, please contact Alice Tebb, the Group's coordinator at alice.tebb@mcsuk.org or on 07422 965 027. You can also follow the Agents of Change-run Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ Facebook page: [Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ | Facebook](#)

Management of the Historic Bivalve Fisheries in The Wash

Temporary Transitional Arrangements

The Wash Fishery Order (WFO) 1992 – a hybrid regulating and several order used to manage the wild shellfish fisheries (primarily cockles and mussels) and aquaculture 'lays' in the Wash – expired on the 3rd of January 2023.

In March 2020 the Authority decided that the replacement management system would be a byelaw to replace the regulating order element of the WFO to manage exploitation of wild stocks, alongside a new several order to manage aquaculture on private lays. Since this time the Authority has developed both the new byelaw (and associated policy on access to the fisheries) and several order in consultation with the fishing industry and both are at an advanced stage in the process leading to approval.

Despite the best efforts of all parties neither the new byelaw nor the new several order could be in effect before the expiry of the WFO. To ensure that the fishing industry is able to continue with business as usual the Authority agreed at its 50th meeting on the 14th of December 2022 to use [Byelaw 8: Temporary Closure of Shellfisheries](#) as a temporary transitional measure to bridge the gap between the expiry of the WFO and the new regulation coming into effect.

This has entailed the Authority closing the Wash cockle and mussel fisheries and immediately providing written authority (Wash Closure Exemptions) to those currently 'entitled' to a WFO licence and to lay lease holders to continue to operate in accordance with WFO regulations and licence conditions or the lay lease conditions as appropriate.

Under these temporary arrangements, the Authority is able to continue to manage the cockle and mussel fisheries as it did under the WFO until the new management arrangements come into effect. The Authority has taken every reasonable step to ensure that this process has been seamless for the fishing industry, issuing written authorisations proactively to existing licence and lease holders prior to the closure coming into effect.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wash-fishery-order-1992-replacement/>

Fisheries Management Plans

Following the UK's exit from the European Union, the Fisheries Act 2020 provides the framework for managing the UK's fisheries as an independent coastal state outside of the EU's Common Fisheries Policy. Under this Act, Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) will be the main tool for reforming national fisheries management.

The UK fisheries policy authorities (Defra, and the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) have recently published the [Joint Fisheries Statement](#). This lists 43 proposed FMPs. FMPs will be evidence-based action plans, developed in collaboration with the fishing sector and other stakeholders. Their purpose is to deliver sustainable fisheries for current and future generations. While some FMPs will be developed jointly by two or more fisheries policy authorities, others will be developed by a single authority for its own waters. Each FMP will specify the stocks, type of fishing and geographic area that it covers and the authorities responsible for its implementation.

In England, Defra is responsible for preparing the plans and has commissioned several organisations to deliver some of these. Although Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities like Eastern IFCA are not responsible for preparing the FMPs, we will contribute to their development as stakeholders, providing expert input and evidence and responding to Defra consultations as necessary.

Defra is currently developing six 'frontrunner' FMPs which are being prioritised for delivery in 2023. The plans will cover crab and lobster, whelk, king scallop, bass, channel non-quota demersal stocks and Southern North Sea and Eastern Channel mixed flatfish.

In December 2022, Seafish – the organisation commissioned by Defra to deliver the plans on whelk and crab and lobster – organised two stakeholder meetings in our district to seek views on initial proposals for whelk and crab and lobster management in English waters. For more information on the material presented at these meetings, please visit: <https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/upcoming-seafish-events-on-the-development-of-fisheries-management-plans-for-crab-lobster-and-whelk/>

For more information about Fisheries Management Plans, please visit the Government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fisheries-management-plans/fisheries-management-plans>

Kristina Gurova, January 2023

EA
Environment Agency Update

No update at present.

IDB
Internal Drainage Board Update

No update at present.

MMO
Marine Management Organisation Update

No update at present.

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 films

To help highlight the stunning beauty of the nationally designated landscapes and to explain the work undertaken in them to conserve and enhance the areas natural beauty, two new short films have been produced featuring breath taking drone footage and much more.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8sA2vwhZ1c&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DNrLcdXBSC4>

A new career opportunity for nature-loving young people

Young people in Suffolk and Essex are being encouraged to apply for a new work placement opportunity to help care for local wildlife and the local landscape.

The role is with the Coast & Heaths and Dedham Vale Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), and part of the wider New to Nature programme.

It is funded by The National Heritage Lottery Fund which looks for young and diverse talent from communities currently underrepresented in environmental roles - specifically young people who are from ethnically diverse backgrounds, have a disability or are economically disadvantaged.

The AONB Nature Recovery Assistant offers a young person (aged 18 to 25) a 12-month paid work placement, based in Ipswich. This full-time role will offer hands-on experience and the opportunity to assist the planning and delivery of practical nature recovery work, central to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

The application deadline is 12pm on Friday 17th February 2023. To find out more and apply, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/43ce8737>

£100,000 worth of grants available to conserve and enhance the AONBs

AONB grants are now open for applications across Essex and Suffolk. AONB grants annually award over £100,000 to community projects. The AONBs are keen to attract applications that benefit a wide range of communities.

More information at:

https://www.suffolk_coastandheaths.org/2023/01/09/more-than-75000-of-grant-funding-now-available-across-essex-and-suffolk/

<https://www.dedhamvalestourvalley.org/2023/01/09/more-than-30000-of-grant-funding-now-available-across-the-dedham-vale-and-stour-valley/>

AONB Partnership response to consultation on proposals for an offshore wind farm called North Falls

The Coast & Heaths AONB Partnership have responded to a consultation from North Falls Offshore Wind Farm Ltd for proposals for an offshore wind farm and associated onshore infrastructure. The response covers:

1. Impacts on the AONB of the offshore element
2. Impacts on AONBs from onshore elements (note plural AONB here is deliberate)

3. Potential socio-economic impacts on the AONB

The responses can be downloaded from:

<https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/managing/planning/nationally-significant-infrastructure>

AONB team partners with Suffolk County Council for climate and nature webinar

An online seminar, or webinar as it is sometimes called, was facilitated by the AONB team with colleagues from Suffolk County Council. Presentations covered the climate and nature crises followed about ideas for individual actions that can help address the impacts and drivers of change and the nature crisis. A recording of the webinar is available from:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yEO-jgixZ8>

The AONB team has moved to new offices. The new address is: AONB Office, Saxon House, Whittle Road, Hadleigh Road Industrial estate, Ipswich, IP2 0UH

Want more news about the AONBs...

Sign up for visitor and residents focused newsletters at bottom of these pages from our websites:

<https://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/>

Simon Amstutz, January 2023