

AOCP

Alde and Ore Community Partnership Update

On 7 October, in partnership with the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust and the East Suffolk Water Management Board the AOCP held a major open day at the Hoffman Building, Snape Maltings, for anyone interested to learn about the Estuary Embankment Improvement Plan. In the morning a steady stream of people came to see the excellent posters, prepared by CPE, describing what the issue was, what might be lost if the river defences were not refurbished, the resilience approach to the structure of the walls, funding and the timetable for doing the work.

In the afternoon a series of presentations were given by the organisations involved in the Estuary Project, about how they worked together, the proposed resilience project and what it entailed, the detailed preliminary on the groundwork needed in the run up to starting the major construction, the funding plans and communications. A good question and answer session went on for as long as people had questions.

Full details of the project can now be found in a Virtual Visitor Room which has been set up by Coastal Partnership East. You will find it on <https://aldeore.exhibition.app/>

Giles Bloomfield, ESWMB, and in charge of the project, also gave a very full account of the project at the great East Anglian Coast and Estuaries Conference 2023 at Wherstead on 12 October.

Currently extensive preparatory surveys are being undertaken to allow work to start on the ground for Phase 1 the Upper Estuary in spring 2024 with the aim of being completed by end 2027. Meanwhile work is progressing well on putting together the Business Case for Phase 2 the Lower Estuary.

Alison Andrews, October 2023

BCP

Bawdsey Coastal Partnership Update

No update at present.

BEP

Blyth Estuary Partnership Update

Nothing to report at present. We are still waiting for the HMC decisions on the Southwold Harbour Study.

Richard Steward, October 2023

Coastal Partnership East

East Suffolk Council Coastal Management Team Update

No update at present.

DEP

Deben Estuary Partnership Update

DEP Autumn Newsletter [DEP-Newsletter-Aug-Sep-2023.pdf \(debenestuarypartnership.org\)](#)

Thomas Yeung, October 2023

Eastern IFCA

Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities Update

Authority Meetings

There have been two full Authority meetings since the last update. At these meetings, the Authority has: discussed the due diligence of the proposed Wash Several Order; agreed amendments to the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023, the Crab and Lobster Byelaw 2023, and the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 as well as agreeing officers' recommendations on the 2023 Wash Cockle fishery, including the quota (TAC). Beyond Authority meetings, enforcement has now begun regarding the Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018.

The next meeting of the Authority will be held on 13th December 2023. For more information and to see the minutes, items, and agendas for Authority meetings, please visit our website: [Authority Meetings - Eastern IFCA \(eastern-ifca.gov.uk\)](#)

Shrimp Effort Monitoring - Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018

The Shrimp Permit Byelaw 2018 is now being enforced. Under this byelaw, a permit is now needed for commercial shrimp fishing anywhere in the district. In Suffolk, a 'category 2' permit is required. Anyone is eligible for a Category 2 permit and no fee is required to receive one. Permit holders need to align with gear requirements and provide monthly reporting of their shrimp fishing activity. These requirements will help to ensure monitoring of activity within and protection of Marine Protected Areas across the whole district.

Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023

Following formal consultation, amendments have been made to the wording of the draft byelaw to reflect feedback from stakeholders. These include removal of the power to make changes to permit conditions at extremely short notice; tightening of requirements around reporting of lost gear, increased discretion for permit holders around how they mark their gear, and the addition of discretionary elements to the enforcement around vessels hauling or using other fishermen's gear, to better reflect cooperative working arrangements in the fishery.

More information, including the wording of the draft byelaw and impact assessment can be found here: [Eastern IFCA Formal Consultation: Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023; Crab and Lobster Byelaw 2023](#)

Wider Crab & Lobster Management – Crab and Lobster Byelaw 2023

Following consultation, an amendment has been made to the wording of the draft byelaw to address an unintended prevention of fishermen from landing crabs or lobsters that were missing a single claw. The intention of the provision in question is to ensure only crustaceans that conform to minimum landing sizes are kept, and that individual parts of shellfish are not kept to circumvent these restrictions.

More information, including the wording of the draft byelaw and impact assessment can be found here: [Eastern IFCA Formal Consultation: Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds Byelaw 2023; Crab and Lobster Byelaw 2023](#)

Management of The Wash Cockle and Mussel Fisheries

Eastern IFCA is continuing to use interim measures under [Byelaw 8: Temporary Closure of Shellfisheries](#) to manage the cockle and mussel fisheries in The Wash while we await Defra's sign-off on the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021 (please refer to our previous partner update from the 8th February 2023 for additional context).

To ensure that this interim period has minimal impact on the industry we have undertaken the transition process from entitlements under the Wash Fishery Order 1992 to eligibility under the Wash Cockle and Mussel Byelaw 2021. With its conclusion, the Authority will be ready for a smooth transition into the byelaw.

A new method for establishing the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for the cockle fishery has been trialled this year, with the goal of establishing a catch limitation methodology that more accurately reflects the available stock that will be taken by the fishery.

James Teasdale, October 2023

EA **Environment Agency Update**

No update at present.

IDB **Internal Drainage Board Update**

Benacre & Kessingland Flood Management Project

The aim of the project is to provide a solution to significantly reduce all forms of flooding by constructing new flood defence embankments and pumping stations set further up the Lothingland valley to mitigate the serious risk of flooding from structural collapse and erosion outflanking of the Environment Agency Pumping Station.

Detailed design is complete and we are now moving into the "Pre-construction Stage", appointing Balfour Beatty to proceed with detailed planning, programming and engagement with stakeholders. We will also further investigate "value engineering" opportunities to possibly reduce costs.

Licences and consents such as Habitats Regulations Assessment, Natural England assent, Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP) have all been completed or applied for. Work is also underway to form legal agreements between the major stakeholders.

Water vole mitigation and monitoring has continued throughout the year. This work will continue throughout construction and beyond as essential works to achieve Natural England assent.

Coastal modelling report is complete providing advice and likely scenarios on the intertidal habitat creation and proposed sea breach design.

Balfour Beatty have re-assessed the total cost to complete the project. Due to well documented commercial reasons and not entirely unexpectedly, costs have escalated since the initial funding was applied for. The total is significantly higher than the approved amount. Therefore, we have had to submit a variation order to seek additional funding to the Environment Agency for their consideration. In this we have had to explain and evidence the reasons for the increase. It will now go through a review process where we will need to respond to queries and await confirmation of the additional funding prior to progressing into the Construction phase.

However, the project is not on hold, and we have approval from the project board to progress into the “Pre-construction Stage”, which will start at the beginning of November. We hope to start construction in 2024 on confirmation of the additional funding.

Kari Nash, October 2023

MMO

Marine Management Organisation Update

Marine Management Organisation

Marine Planning and Licensing:

In line with the [MMO's Corporate Plan 2022-2025](#) and a commitment to modernise our services, the Marine Planning & Licensing step back programme was launched in December 2022. This step back is an extensive end-to-end service review of all marine planning and licensing activities, with the aim of identifying potential improvements for both our customers and colleagues. It will also identify potential ways to improve integration between the planning and licensing services.

This is a three-year project that aims to meet the vision of being, “A customer-focussed marine regulator, who will provide an improved and more streamlined marine plan led licensing service to enable sustainable marine development in accordance with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009”.

As part of this programme, we want to hear from you, to understand your experiences of working with us and your suggestions or ideas for improvements. We are looking to engage with specific external stakeholders, so in the coming weeks we may be in contact to discuss this further. If you have any questions about the programme please contact us at MMOinsights@marinemanagement.org.uk with the subject header 'Project Information Request'.

Strategic Renewables Unit

The UK Marine Noise Registry (MNR) Beta update is now live. The MNR is a tool that was developed by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), on behalf of Defra and UK devolved administrations, to record human activities in UK seas that produce loud, impulsive noise for example, seismic surveys, impact pile driving and explosive detonation. Underwater noise negatively affects certain marine species, such as the harbour porpoise, and, therefore, strategic management is essential.

The new update includes features that will aid underwater noise management such as:

- Disturbance Assessment Tool
- Corporations Discussions Tool
- Downloadable data outputs

Full details can be found here: [Marine Noise Registry | Home \(jncc.gov.uk\)](#)

Louise Feavours, October 2023

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

AONBs for everyone...

Members of the AONB staff team have been putting on events at weekends and weekdays to maximise opportunities for everyone to enjoy the nationally designated landscapes. In July a small walking groups from the PHOEBE centre were taken on a guided walk at Wrabness, Essex in the Coast & Heaths AONB taking in the ancient Stour Wood, the House for Essex and bird watching a long the Stour estuary. This was an undiscovered part of the Coast & Heaths AONB for many in the walking group and an area that they very much enjoyed. The group have now been introduced to this area and the fact that this part of the AONB is accessible by train.

AONB Project nominated for nationally prestigious Bowland Award.

AONB Volunteer Adrian Silvertown has led an outstanding project to improve methods of surveying, leading to less use of paper, more accuracy and quicker data gathering. A new app allows those undertaking surveys to collect data on a smart phone and produce information on easily produced maps. Already over 60km of hedges has been surveyed and an estimated 400 paper forms been eliminated. The project has been nominated for the nationally recognised Bowland award and will be up against 3 other projects from AONBs across the country. Voting will take place in the first week of September at the national AONB conference.

New Lighting Guide developed for AONBs.

The AONB team have recently published guidance on lighting for the Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths AONBs. It is designed to inform developers on how to avoid any adverse impacts of lighting from development proposals, support Local Planning Authorities to make informed decisions and help the AONB team make knowledgeable comments on planning applications. Inappropriate lighting can be harmful to both humans and animals as well as impacting the tranquillity of the nationally designated landscapes.

The guide can be downloaded from our website:

<https://coastandheaths.org/2023/08/07/new-landscape-lighting-design-guide-published/>

Amendment to legislation relating to AONBs.

Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) is to be amended from a public body/statutory undertaker **shall have regard** to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty to **must seek to further** the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty. This follows an amendment to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill that is making its way through parliament.

The updates amendment was passed, follow a Third Reading on 26 Sept 2023. For those interested, you can watch Earl Howe's speech here:

<https://parliamentlive.tv/event/index/76159bab-ff35-4bc4-ae3e-fa614bc18198?in=12:08:57>

The published amendment is [here](#) (see page 5)

Secretary of State ministerial statement on protected landscapes.

Dr Thérèse Coffey, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs issued a written ministerial statement on 13 Sept 2023 on protected landscapes. Protected landscapes is a term often used to describe Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks. The statement included reference to:

- Enhanced management plans
- Establishing a new Protected Landscapes Partnership (between the National Association for AONBs, National Parks England, National Trails UK and Natural England)
- Confirmation of the extension of the Farming in Protected Landscapes programme to March 2025
- Confirmation of an Access to Nature programme in Protected Landscapes to March 2025

The full statement can be read at

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2023-09-13/hcws1021>

AONB chairs were invited meet with the Secretary of State to hear further details and ask questions. The announcement has been welcomed by many including the National Association for AONBs and National Parks England.

AONB Nature Recovery Plans published.

The Colchester Declaration, an offer made by the national AONB network to Government in 2019, included the commitment to publish a Nature Recovery Plan for each AONB. Since that time Local Nature Recovery Strategies have received funding from Government to identify suitable locations for nature recovery activities and build support for these from landowners and local people. The AONB team is delighted that its Nature Recovery Plans are already forming part of the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy and anticipate a similar involvement in the Suffolk Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Suffolk & Essex Coast & Heaths AONB Nature Recovery Plan at:

<https://coastandheaths.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Coast-Heaths-Nature-Recovery-Plan-Summary.pdf>

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