

Southwold to Walberswick Flood and Coast Board

Minutes of meeting 13th July 2022 2pm-4pm

Attendees:

DB	Cllr David Beavan (Chair)	East Suffolk Council
SB	Sharon Bleese	Coastal Partnership East
MF	Madeline Fallon	Coastal Partnership East
SR	Sharon Richardson	Coastal Partnership East
AS	Alysha Stockman	Coastal Partnership East
PP	Paul Patterson	Coastal Partnership East
PO	Philip O’Hear	Reydon Parish Council
RS	Richard Steward	Blyth Estuary Partnership
ABI	Andrew Blois	Landowner
WW	Will Windell	Southwold Town Council
JT	Jamie Thompson	SHRBUA
AJ	Anne Jones	Landowner
PJ	Phil Jones	Landowner

Apologies:

GW	Gary Watson	Environment Agency
SF	Simon Flunder	Southwold and Reydon Society
IB	Ian Bradbury	Southwold Town Council
ABu	Adam Burrows	Natural England
FJ	Fiona Johnson	Coastal Partnership East
ML	Cllr Michael Ladd	Suffolk County Council
SK	Sam Kench	Natural England
JB	Josie Bassinette	Walberswick Parish Council
DR	Cllr David Ritchie	East Suffolk Council
KT	Karen Thomas	Coastal Partnership East
JC	James Cochrane	Coastal Partnership East
MJ	Mark Johnson	Environment Agency
KB	Kerry Blair	East Suffolk Council
MH	Matt Hullis	Suffolk County Council
GM	Graeme Mateer	Suffolk County Council

Welcome, introductions, minutes and actions from last meeting	The Chair shared a round of introductions.
Update from the Environment Agency	<p>Update by email from Gary Watson: We are currently developing a project to repair voids and sheet pile damage to the EA Easton Bavents sea wall and continued clearance at Easton Broad outfall. Both these sites currently have access restrictions in place from Easton Bavents landowners. We are consulting our legal advice team on how best to proceed with these important projects.</p> <p>The Chair noted the ongoing access issue.</p> <p>Update by email from Adam Burrows: Update from the Easton reedbed; bitterns boomed and nested late as the water levels did not come up until mid April when the beach sealed, we still have one nest feeding young. Marsh harriers have now almost finished fledging. Water levels have remained good throughout.</p>

	<p>The Chair raised concerns about the low water levels.</p>
<p>Southwold Harbour Study update</p>	<p>MF shared the draft report was presented to the steering group and Harbour Management Committee earlier this year. The report looked into the potential options for the Harbour at a strategic level and the costs of those options for an investment plan for the Harbour going forward. Royal HaskoningDHV are going to refine the executive summary to reflect the feedback received and present that to the Harbour Management Committee and Advisory Group in September. The report should be finalised in the autumn.</p> <p>The Chair asked if Royal HaskoningDHV are going to model the passive spillway options. MF added they can. Royal HaskoningDHV have finished that part of the contract so it would need rescoping going forward and reengaging contracts for any future work.</p> <p>SB added it would need a conversation with KB as the contract may be beyond the point at which it can be extended.</p> <p>PO highlighted the importance of the modelling.</p> <p>SB suggested the Blyth Estuary Partnership could contract Royal HaskoningDHV themselves as they would not have procurement rules.</p> <p>ABI added the Blyth Estuary Partnership would like the modelling included in the report and options rather than a separate study.</p> <p>SB agreed to speak to KB about how that can be progressed.</p> <p>ACTION: SB to speak to KB about progressing the passive spillway modelling</p>
<p>Resilient Coasts Project</p>	<p>SB informed the Board about the Resilient Coasts Project. SB noted the Southwold Neighbourhood Plan has a small section on the coast which acknowledges climate change but the Board could add some value to set out what could be done in Southwold.</p> <p>PO added the Reydon Neighbourhood Plan has a section on flood risk and erosion which could also be drawn on. As part of that, Reydon Parish Council would support planning applications for relocation of housing at risk of erosion and support the SMP proposals for protecting vulnerable areas; and would support planning applications aimed at raising money to improve the estuary defences. PO emailed the neighbourhood plan to AS.</p> <p>The Chair added Walberswick are working on their neighbourhood plan at the moment.</p> <p>PO asked that Southwold, Reydon, Walberswick and the estuaries are viewed collectively. PO also asked if there are short comings nationally, if it would be useful for the Board to meet the MPs for this coastline.</p> <p>SB agreed and added the governance of this project means that DB as Chair will sit on the FCRIP Board, and that Board has a direct link nationally.</p> <p>PJ shared Easton Bavents have developed a masterplan that was agreed in 2018 and are continuing to work on it. PJ offered to share more information about the masterplan with the group.</p> <p>The Chair suggested adding it to a future meeting agenda with a paper.</p> <p>SB and PJ agreed.</p> <p>ACTION: Include Easton Bavents masterplan on future meeting agenda</p>
<p>Public engagement</p>	<p>SR shared an example virtual engagement room and asked the Board what they would like to see on the boards, what media should be included and what subjects to bring to people's attention or have a say on.</p> <p>PO suggested Easton Bavents including the landowners plans and how they work with the Environment Agency and Natural England on the reed beds; Royal HaskoningDHV report recommendations and options; potential coastal defences in Southwold; and any issues at Walberswick.</p>

	<p>SR suggested finding out about what people value in the area and what is special to them. PO agreed.</p> <p>SB suggested including the Reydon and Southwold Neighbourhood Plans and reports from the Initial Assessment and Harbour Study. SB also suggested including any progress, aims, or objectives from the community resilience group and how people can join.</p> <p>The Chair suggested an in-person engagement event in addition to the virtual room.</p> <p>SB added the intention is to hold an in-person event over a couple of days somewhere fairly central so that people can start to view some of the thoughts and feedback on what they value, their views about the challenges faced, what is missing. Gathering this information will help to move things forward.</p> <p>The Chair agreed.</p> <p>SB asked the Board what times would be suitable and suggested 1pm-8pm.</p> <p>PO agreed as that might encourage some working people to attend. PO added that Southwold Town Council has an online newsletter and Reydon is doing a quarterly physical newsletter that is delivered to every house which could advertise the event.</p> <p>SB asked the Board to share any other local publications that could be used for advertising the event with AS.</p> <p>PO added there is the Southwold Organ and Southwold Gazette and shared contacts with AS.</p> <p>SB asked the Board for venue suggestions.</p> <p>The Chair suggested the Stella Peskett Millennium Hall, where the Harbour Management Committee meets.</p> <p>PO added if the first event is successful, it would be useful to have a second one in Reydon Village Hall.</p> <p>SR asked how many notice boards there are around the town and who is responsible for updating them.</p> <p>The Chair agreed to help with updating notice boards nearer the time and share details on Facebook. The community emergency group is moving but having issues with getting people engaged and may need some support on that.</p> <p>ACTION: Board to share details of local publications with AS</p>
<p>Southwold Studies Overview</p>	<p>MF shared the 2018 Initial Assessment Report looked at the town coastal defences, north Southwold and options for the concrete seawall and rock groynes and costings. This report used a traditional optioneering approach and Flood Defence Grant in Aid calculations, which were quite low and would not give much funding. Now that Southwold is a pilot location for Resilient Coasts, CPE have contracted Jacobs to look at the whole sediment cell (south end of Benacre Ness to the Harbour).</p> <p>The Chair asked about a timeframe for this piece of work.</p> <p>MF added it is very high level and conceptual in terms of working with the Resilient Coasts project and therefore has quite an open scope. Initially, it will be 6-12 months but CPE can feed more in going forwards.</p> <p>PJ commissioned a topographic survey of the Easton Bavents frontage and agreed to share if helpful.</p> <p>MF agreed.</p> <p>ACTION: PJ share topographic survey with MF</p>
<p>Potters Bridge update</p>	<p>The Chair shared an update from Cllr Michael Ladd: The Suffolk County Council Transport Strategy Team is currently drafting a technical note on the long-term options for the B1127 at</p>

	<p>Potters Bridge. This is in the context of recent flooding events and likely cessation of the Environment Agency’s current activities to protect the habitat and the likelihood of increased flooding events due to negative climate change impacts. This technical work is a desk-based study looking at relevant options as well as providing an indication for the potential costs of a replacement structure with more resilience, which would need to be higher and longer due to likely poor ground conditions on site, the highway network impacts of permanently closing the B1127 including journey times and the cost to benefit ratio of any long-term mitigation schemes. The strategic traffic modelling of the local network has now been completed and the report is being finalised for discussion with local stakeholders in the near future. It should be noted that Suffolk County Council does not currently have funding for a long-term solution. Any solution that may be proposed is likely to cost several millions of pounds, therefore this report is likely to be used as evidence for any future bids to national funding bodies as it is beyond the level that could be locally funded at the present time. In addition to the above Suffolk Highways have made contact with Reydon Parish Council and local emergency committee member to develop a process to ensure robust mitigations can be established. In the event of a future flood event this will ensure that robust road closures are installed with advance warning boards and signage. A draft process flow and traffic management design has been completed and is going through internal review. One of our community engineers will then discuss with the relevant parish committee members to ensure that proposals can be enacted seamlessly when required.</p> <p>DB added Reydon Parish Council have purchased a water level monitor for the broad which will be published on their website to share the water levels.</p>
Other partner updates	Covered above.
AOB	None.
Date of next meeting and close	<p>The Chair suggested another meeting in the autumn. PO suggested meeting after Royal HaskoningDHV have presented their final report to the Harbour Management Committee and Advisory Group in September.</p> <p>ACTION: AS arrange next meeting</p>