

Southwold to Walberswick Flood and Coast Board
Minutes of meeting 11th September 2023 9.30am-11.30am

Attendees:

DB	Cllr David Beavan (Chair)	East Suffolk Council
KY	Cllr Kay Yule	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
CKR	Charles Krolik-Root	Coastal Partnership East
JC	James Cochrane	Coastal Partnership East
VG	Vanessa Gouldsmith (virtually)	Natural England
ABI	Andrew Blois	Landowner
AJ	Anne Jones	Landowner
PJ	Phil Jones	Landowner
SF	Simon Flunder	Southwold and Reydon Society

Apologies:

JT	Jamie Thompson	SHRBUA
PP	Paul Patterson	Coastal Partnership East
CF	Chris Finbow	Coastal Partnership East
JF	Jon-Paul Farthing	Coastal Partnership East
KT	Karen Thomas	Coastal Partnership East
ABu	Adam Burrows	Natural England
KB	Kerry Blair	East Suffolk Council
RS	Richard Steward	Blyth Estuary Partnership
PO	Philip O'Hear	Reydon Parish Council
JB	Josie Bassinette	Walberswick Parish Council
IB	Ian Bradbury	Southwold Town Council
MJ	Mark Johnson	Environment Agency
GW	Gary Watson	Environment Agency
ML	Cllr Michael Ladd	Suffolk County Council
MH	Matt Hullis	Suffolk County Council
GM	Graeme Mateer	Suffolk County Council

Welcome and introductions	<p>The Chair shared a round of introductions.</p> <p>The Chair noted the need to recruit a new member to represent Reydon. ACTION: CPE/Chair to recruit Reydon representative</p>
Review minutes and action points from the last meeting	The Board approved the minutes of the last meeting. All action points covered on agenda.
Preparing for a Southwold Coastal Strategy workshop including a recap on Resilient Coasts and governance	MF gave an overview of Southwold, which includes undefended frontage with soft eroding cliffs, hard defences, transition zones between these, natural soft dune systems, and estuary dynamics. For the past 30 years survey data and aerial photos have been collected collaboratively with the Environment Agency through the Anglian Coastal Monitoring Group. CPE now have drones as part of the Resilient Coasts (RC) project and are doing regular flights of Southwold and other locations to capture land use and monitor changes around storm surges.

	<p>In 2017/18 Waveney District Council did a study to look at options for hard defences and future costs, however, the partnership funding figures were very low for central government funding. The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) for Southwold is in many segments and looks at coastal processes and what is happening.</p> <p>MF explained what a strategy is and what one could do for Southwold. The Gorleston to Lowestoft Coastal Strategy breaks down in detail each SMP policy unit, including options, costs, and implementation in different scenarios. MF outlined the sections and appendices that make up a strategy, what information CPE already have, what can be done in house, and what might need a consultant.</p> <p>CKR shared that RC is a £9.6m Defra project, one of 25 across England and Wales taking place over five years to complete by 2027. It is about being more proactive and giving people options if possible. RC is using a catchment-based approach to look at the whole area and understand how the coast as a place operates. Southwold is great to demonstrate this as it has lots going on. The pilot sites are Southwold, Thorpeness, Pakefield, Lowestoft, Corton and Gunton, Great Yarmouth, Hemsby, Winterton, and Shotley. The plan for the pilots is a masterplan approach to bring together economic and development studies, wider teams from across the council, what different stakeholders place value on, asset mapping, land use, and infrastructure providers including their investment cycles and appetite for risk. The strategy for Southwold fits into the coastal adaptation plans work package of the RC project. CKR explained the governance for the project and where the Board sit within that. All pilots are included in the RC Board through town and parish council attendance. This Board fits into the existing groups section.</p> <p>PJ noted that getting in touch with CPE has been difficult in the past and asked for up to date contact details.</p> <p>The Board marked on maps the things they would like included or addressed by the coastal strategy.</p> <p>ACTION: CPE to share the presentations including the slide on governance ACTION: CPE to share up to date contact details with PJ</p>
<p>Readiness Assessment workshop</p>	<p>SR shared the readiness assessment provides a baseline of the current level of resilience and readiness of the community to adapt. This means that the change any actions have made can be measured. This feeds into reporting and evidencing for the Resilient Coasts project. The engagement in December showed what the community value but not their readiness or how aware they are. The assessment in Hemsby found that people’s views on climate change was different to expectations and the team needed to understand what people’s priorities were to be able to identify, take them into account, and find alternative solutions.</p> <p>JC shared an example readiness assessment and asked the Board to tick the questions they wanted to keep, cross out the questions to remove, and add anything missing.</p> <p>PJ asked what the readiness is to.</p> <p>SB confirmed it is readiness to adapt to a changing coast.</p> <p>SR added it is the Board’s opportunity to design this survey relevant to Southwold. SF asked why is just covers Southwold and added that to get a cross section of opinions the area needs to be widened.</p>

	<p>SB agreed and added that CPE need to stop calling the area Southwold. CKR suggested defining the area. The Chair suggested using Sole Bay. SB and CKR agreed.</p> <p>KY asked what weight is given to the assessment and its responses. SB added the whole survey is the start in terms of a baseline. At the moment decisions can be made but they are uninformed decisions. KY added that the local councils and councillors are already involved and are the heartbeat of the community. SB added the team need to find ways to engage people who are not interested or directly affected, and the assessment helps with that. Regarding the mental health question on the assessment, the Environment Agency social science team did a piece of work on people who are flooded, which gave more weighting to people who are at risk of flooding on the partnership funding calculator. CPE has pushed for coastal erosion and they are now doing a survey around that. Both of those pieces of work are evidence based.</p> <p>ABI asked what level of take up is needed for this questionnaire to be relevant. SB confirmed it is 10% of the population.</p> <p>The Chair suggested surveying businesses separately and before doing the strategy to engage people.</p> <p>SF suggested the introduction should say that this is a survey to cover Sole Bay and the reasons for it including its objectives. AJ suggested mentioning Potters Bridge in the introduction may get a higher response. SF added the Harbour should be mentioned. CKR agreed introducing what the issues might be to draw people in and give a reason for doing it. ABI suggested starting with the issues and what is important to them and then finishing with the section about them.</p> <p>The Board noted their comments on the printed out example questionnaire.</p> <p>PJ asked if the Board can take away the questionnaire and feedback. SB and CKR agreed.</p> <p>The Chair asked when the survey will go out and suggested winter 2023. SB agreed.</p> <p>ACTION: CPE to send out example questionnaire for the Board to feedback on ACTION: The Chair to send SB questions relating to the Harbour</p>
<p>Updates from Partners</p>	<p><i>ABu by email: Natural England update; poor nesting year in the Easton valley, water levels were too low for bitterns and the seaward side of the road was substantially tidal for much of the spring. Now the beach has sealed the water levels are too high for the nature conservation interest, Natural England have asked the EA to clear the outfall. On the Blyth we have been working with The Blyth Estuary Partnership to identify areas that would benefit from saltmarsh protection and encouragement works.</i></p>

East Anglian Coast and Estuaries Conference	<p>SB shared the conference will be held on 12th October at Wherstead Park, Ipswich and will be livestreamed for those who cannot attend in person. Tickets are available at https://www.coasteast.org.uk/east-anglian-coast-estuary-conference. The conference started in Suffolk in 2012, Norfolk joined in 2021, and this year includes Essex meaning that the whole of the East Anglian coast is covered.</p> <p>The Chair suggested SF get in touch with geography students that visit Southwold. SF agreed.</p> <p>ACTION: SF to invite geography students to the conference</p>
AOB	<p>The Chair noted the date of the next meeting is 30th November 2pm-4pm. The Board agreed for this to be held online.</p>