

Shotley Parish Council



PUBLIC MEETING STATEMENT

Phase 3 Coastal Erosion Protection Project

The Facts

The Shotley Parish Council has never stated that Phase 3 will not be progressed or supported, just that it cannot lead on it.

To date, the only requirement we have in place to facilitate Phase 3 is a **Marine Management Licence** which would allow works to be carried out if the project went ahead, and the **deadline of which can be extended as necessary**.

- Babergh District Council **are yet to approve a planning application** for the works (which is yet to be finalised or submitted)
- Relevant **statutory bodies are yet to confirm** in writing **that they approve it and have finance available to support it** (SCC, BDC, EA, NE RSPB, SC&H AONB)
- **Permission from the relevant land owners is yet to be granted** (the strip adjacent to single layer gabions at end of the path and the entire section between (and including) the picnic area and the start of the Heritage Park)
- **Quotes for the works are yet to be requested**, considered and approved
- **The tender process is yet to be confirmed** due to Brexit implications
- **Funding** for the project, estimated at **£250,000.00** three years ago, **is yet to be applied for and secured**
- The Parish Council itself **IS NOT PERMITTED TO INCUR EXPENDITURE IN COASTAL EROSION OR SEA DEFENCES MEASURES**

What happened in Phases 1 and 2 and what will be of Phase 3?

Due to an anomaly in the Coast Protection Act, **no statutory body has responsibility for coastal erosion in this area**, which in normal circumstances would fall to the District Council.

Back in 2008 a group led by B Powell and R Cushing set about a self-help project using tyres and rubble, which ran into difficulties with waste regulations. As a result, Cllr Guy McGregor and Mrs Jane Burch (Coastal Officer) agreed to lead a partnership, working with the Parish Council, Environment Agency, Babergh DC, Natural England, AONB and others to raise funds and find technical solutions to the problem. The result was Phases 1 & 2 of the erosion project, followed by the purchase of the Shotley Cliff in 2012.

Behind the gabions which were laid to protect the cliff, **a new footpath was also established** – with the Parish Council using their powers under Section 43 of the Highways Act. These powers were used to **allow the PC to act as fund holder for the erosion project**, based on the protection of paths within the cliffs.

The intention was to undertake **Phase 3 of the project when funding could be found**, which the **SPC is still keen to progress**.

Unbeknown to most parishioners, the apparent success of Phases 1 and 2 did not come without its problems and so, as a result of:

- a) **Unauthorised works carried out in 2011/12**, which breached all consents and exposed the Parish Council to external scrutiny
- b) **Excessive expenditure** incurred for which the PC had no Legal Power
- c) The risk that the Parish Council would be **expected to continuously maintain the area, which it cannot afford**
- d) **Land ownership uncertainties**
- e) **Recommendations from the Babergh Monitoring Officer and Suffolk Constabulary** (which had to be discussed under confidential meetings due to its nature)

The Parish Council has referred to SCC Coastal Policy Management for support and guidance.

We have already met with the Coastal Policy Manager, who has agreed to work with the PC **to pull together the original group of statutory partners to find funding and expedite repairs, as well as discuss Phase 3**. Minor repairs have already been promptly carried out by the SPC and are ongoing.

The success of such a complex and costly project depends on a positive, professional and cohesive relationship between all parties involved.

For correct information about this and any other Shotley Parish Council matter, please contact us via:

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