



**BRIEF NOTES & ACTION POINTS – Stour & Orwell Estuaries Management Group Meeting**

Date	01 May 2018			
Venue	Suffolk Yacht Harbour, Levington			
Time	10.00 – 12.00			
Attendees	Jane Burch Andrew Murray-Wood Charlotte Tomkinson Chris Keeling David Kemp Guy Cooper David Piper Cllr. Derek Davis Gary Richens Geraint Pugh Richard Wrinch Robert Green Barrie Powell	SCC SCC NE NE EA EA NT BDC SOS SOS SPC SPC SPC	Dina Bedwell Jim Warner Mark Nowers Peter Garrett Rob Dyer Rob Wise Nicky Spurr Martin Williams Eleanor Johnston Jerry Coleman Alan Garnham Simon Amstutz Paula Booth	SPC HHA RSPB BDC K&E IFCA NFU ECC SCC MMO ABP EIFCA AONB AONB
Chair	Jane Burch SCC			
Apologies	Rachel Langley Andrew Excell	EWT SWT	Sarah Barker Brenda Read	IBC HASA

**1) Welcome, Introductions & Apologies**

**2) Election of Chairperson**

Requests for nominations had been requested prior to the meeting, no nominations had been received. Jane Burch will continue as vice-chair and kindly offered to chair the meeting on this occasion.

**Nominations for chairperson requested – please email nominations to [simon.amstutz@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:simon.amstutz@suffolk.gov.uk) by 12 noon on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May.**

**Post meeting note: Peter Garrett has been nominated and duly elected as Chairman.**

**3) Minutes & Actions from last meeting**

Actions carried forward as follows:-

Simon (AONB) and Emma (NE) have discussed the matter of monitoring and are seeking to revitalise the monitoring group.

Paula (AONB) to follow up on bait digging awareness work with Charlotte (NE).

**4) Updates from Partners**

**Saltmarsh Group** – A sub-group of the Suffolk Coast Forum working on all aspects of saltmarsh including simplification of the licencing and consenting process with the MMO.

Guy (EA) is leading the work to look at evidence and data monitoring on saltmarsh restoration and creation projects. This aims to establish some consistency in the monitoring approach and build evidence base.

Funding – 4 applications to the EA Natural Flood Management levy fund including for area off Shotley Marshes, were unsuccessful. The focus of the fund is to protect properties from



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flood, but saltmarsh restoration work could not be linked directly to properties protected so the bids were rejected.

Defra Marine Pioneer (hosted at AONB) is continuing to look at innovative ways of attracting funding and investment for saltmarsh work. Paul Mackie (Coast Partnership East) is leading this work with the Pioneer group.

Essex University have undertaken work to attempt to value natural capital delivered by saltmarsh – this is almost complete and will be published on the Suffolk Coast Forum website in due course ([www.greensuffolk.org/suffolkcoastforum](http://www.greensuffolk.org/suffolkcoastforum) ).

Ongoing action to raise awareness and understanding of the value and rarity of saltmarsh, including talks to community groups etc.

**ACTION: All** - contact Jane if you are aware of any opportunities to deliver such talks.

A question was asked about whether a map of sites with licences for dredging was available for the purposes of co-ordinating activity for the beneficial use of dredgings. David and Guy (EA) reported that they were working on brokering links between donor and recipient sites, particularly for smaller marinas etc.

Jerry (ABP) reported that the port has a licence to dredge between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> September – it is likely that dredging will take place on 26<sup>th</sup> May this year and dredgings will be used to replenish the system. All data and monitoring info. relating to dredging undertaken by ABP is available on their website.

**ACTION: David (EA)** to circulate the report re. beneficial use of dredgings at a national level when available.

### 5. Pin Mill – update on matters associated with houseboats

Jerry (ABP) explained the 5 main issues:

1. Overboard discharge of effluent
2. The barge 'Blacksmith', should have moved on but remains in situ
3. Activities assoc. with Webb boatyard (ABP will be meeting early May)
4. Planning issues, structures without appropriate planning consent
5. No. of houseboats – only 28 officially permitted but approx.40 in situ.

A multi-agency meeting will be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May to progress actions to address the above matters. Jerry stressed the need for a representative of the MMO as the licencing authority to attend.

**ACTION: Eleanor (MMO)** to identify representative from MMO to take this forward.

ABP currently taking court action over non-payment of fees with an individual houseboat occupier. At present only ABP have the legal authority to take fees from houseboat occupiers. Work underway to provide the Pin Mill Bay Management Committee CIC with this authority. The CIC remit is for 'The Hard' only – houseboats outside of this area fall within a complex area of responsibility.

It was noted that Babergh District Council have a saved policy in the Local Plan relating to houseboats and Pin Mill specifically. It is anticipated this will be updated as part of their Local Plan review.

The formal response to the public consultation on the draft joint Local Plan for Babergh and Mid Suffolk is expected in September 2018.

**ACTION: Peter (BDC)** to alert the group of the next opportunity to comment on the Local Plan.



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**ACTION:** All with appropriate authority and responsibility to support the measures being taken by the multi-agency group to address the issues. Jerry to provide update on progress at next S&OEMG meeting

David Piper (NT) confirmed that either himself or Jonathan Rhodes – NT Operations Manager would attend future meetings re. Pin Mill. It was noted that Henry Bexley would no longer be involved due to a change of role.

### 6. AONB Boundary Review

The consultation on the proposed area to be included in the revised AONB boundary has now closed. All background papers and landscape assessment reports etc. remain available on the Natural England consultation website here: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/natural-england/suffolk-coast-and-heaths-aonb/> It is understood that c.125 responses had been submitted.

The AONB Partnership has formally responded to the consultation – see here:

<http://www.suffolkcoastandheaths.org/assets/About-Us/Boundary-Review/FINAL-Response-of-SCH-AONB-Pship-to-Boundary-Review-Apr-2018.pdf>

Natural England are due to come to the AONB Partnership meeting in July to offer an update on the outcome of the consultation.

**ACTION: Simon (AONB)** to circulate further updates to the group as they become available.

### 7. Upper Orwell Crossings Bridge Project

Suffolk County Council's Consultation Officer for the Ipswich and Lowestoft Crossings, Katherine Potts, provided a presentation on the three proposed bridge crossings close to Ipswich town centre and waterfront. A copy of the presentation will be circulated with the minutes. Further details on the scheme, including opportunities to get involved in the formal 6 week consultation expected to commence in Autumn 2018 can be found here: <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/transport-planning/upper-orwell-crossings/>

### 8. Shotley Gate – coastal access, erosion protection repairs and future work

Richard Wrinch (SPC) provided a background to the problems associated with cliff erosion and the work that had been undertaken to date to address this. Responsibility for repair does not rest with the district council or any other statutory agency and therefore the PC have sought to bring together interested parties to engage in a community led initiative which could attract funding from sources such as the Coastal Communities Fund. A meeting is to be held on the matter on 15<sup>th</sup> May.

Gary Richens (Shotley Open Spaces) summarised the works to date:

Phase 1 and 2 is a 265m long stretch of gabions filled with recycled concrete. Approx 60m of phase 2 requires some repair.

Phase 3 (not yet carried out) is 550m in length. The majority of this is owned by the PC with the exception of part of the length in as yet unconfirmed ownership. Part has been subject to DIY concrete repairs by residents.

MMO licence to carry out the works associated with the repair of phase 2 and the implementation of phase 3 expires in 2019, therefore there is some urgency in identifying a way forward.

The route is significant as a coastal path, but also in terms of it's role in securing the upper cliff, woodland and associated former refuse dump which has the potential to become exposed if protection is not in place.

**ACTION:** All with a remit to support a community led initiative or to assist with potential sources of funding to contact Jane (SCC) and consider attending forthcoming meeting at Shotley



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**ACTION: Peter (BDC)** to liaise with BDC Planning to identify whether any s. 106 monies have been allocated as part of the Ganges development for footpath, recreation, access improvements in the locality.

### 9. Action Plan Progress

Request that any updates are sent to Paula (AONB) to keep the document current.

Discussion regarding actions with little or no progress:

RAMS – no updates had been reported to any member of the group although it was known that contributions were now being included in planning conditions and potentially monies were being collected.

**ACTION: Derek** to ask planning officer for update and circulate this to the group.

**ACTION: Paula** to include a presentation on RAMS at next S&OEMG meeting

Query ref. wildfowling shooting, licencing and rights associated with this in relation to this.

**ACTION: Richard Wrinch** to follow up with BASC area manager and pass any information on to the group.

### 10. Proposed Fishery Order – Stour Mussel Farm

Peter Scott explained the detail of the proposal for a 5 year trial

Prior to the commencement of the trial a camera survey will be carried out across the potential areas to identify their suitability for the trial and to identify any ecological or topographical factors which may result in some areas of the identified zones being unsuitable for the trial.

The proposal involves the laying of native immature mussel stock on the cleaned bed of the estuary. These are harvested by boat, at high tide. Most operational activity is likely to occur over the winter months. 2 boats (c. 14ft) would be used, these would be located in the estuary – most likely at Harwich.

Peter confirmed that there would be no buoys or fixed equipment associated with proposal. They would operate on a high tide only and would move slowly through the mussel beds. The standard wording of the Order states that the limits of the fishery are 'marked out or otherwise made known'. It is considered that the working can be amended to delete the words 'marked out' to ensure that there are no future opportunities or requirements for buoys to be used as part of the scheme.

RSPB and NE have raised concerns regarding potential disturbance to the birds associated with the SPA. A meeting was held with NE in November 2017 to discuss the disturbance strategy which will take place for the duration of the trial to identify the limits within which the boats can carry out their operations without causing an adverse impact.

- It is proposed that there will be observation a day before the operation
- On the day of operations, observations by ornithologists both on the boat and on shore
- Further observations the day following observations from the shore, with potential for 2 further days should behaviour not return to normal on the day following the operations.

Area 5 is considered to be the most sensitive area and has been removed from the trial.

Peter noted that it was the view of Defra that the operation did not require an MMO licence.

If the trial is successful, it is the intention that an application will be made for a further order.



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It is proposed that there will be a Management Plan appended to the Order which will cover a number of details including:

A Memorandum of Understanding between the applicant and the RYA which states the aspiration to avoid any conflict between the fishing operation and the recreation use of the estuary. A meeting had been held with HASA to discuss this and in particular the use of race marks which would be unaffected by the proposal.

There is an obligation to avoid all marginal areas identified by the Harbour Authority and sailing clubs.

The right of navigation and anchoring overrides the Fishery Order.

A code of good practice in relation to communications with other vessels and river users to minimise any potential conflict between operations and other activities.

It is understood that HASA will hold their objection until such a time that the full details of the project are agreed by Natural England and the Environment Agency.

A follow-on meeting was held to discuss more detail with a number of recreational river users. Minutes of this follow-on meeting can be circulated on request.

### 11. AOB

It was proposed that a representative of the Stour & Orwell Society is invited to join the group.

**ACTION: Paula** to make invitation

### Stour & Orwell Forum

Save the date: 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018 9.30 – 14:00

Suggestions for speakers are invited, please contact Paula as soon as possible.

### Date of next meeting

30<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Venue to be advised.