

Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP)

Steering Group Meeting on Mon 26th June 2023 10.00

Richards Room, Martlesham Community Hall IP12 4PB

1. Welcome and Introductions

Simon Read and Peter Youngs jointly chaired the meeting in Christine Block's (CB) absence. They were thanked for their excellent work in covering for a lengthy period.

Present: Peter Youngs (PY), Simon Read (SR), Malcolm Hodd (MH), David Kemp (DK), Andy Smith (AS), Colin Nicholson (CN), Sue Quick (SQ), Thomas Yeung (TY), Ed Boyle (EB), Eamon O'Nolan (EO), Rachel Smith-Lyte (RS), Charles Lloyd (CL), Ruth Leach (RL), Jane Hall (JH), Dee McLeavy (DM).

Visitors: Environment Agency- Lucy Green & Richard Kerridge-Conium, Melton PC - Nigel Brown (NB).

2. Apologies

Helene Burningham (HB), Bev McClean (BM), Simon Amstutz (SA), Jamie Whittle (JW), Jeff Hayward (JH), John Cole (JC), Andrew Excell (AE).

3. Minutes of Last Meeting

These were read and approved by the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Business

Finance – Peter Youngs

- The transfer of funds to Unity Trust Bank has been completed. £125k is in a Deposit Account receiving interest. £10k is in the Current Account. The arrangements are still cheque and paper statement but not online.

Management Arrangements – Peter Youngs and Simon Read

- SR explained the current situation regarding DEP. The original Chair of Trustees, Graham Henderson died pre-covid leaving PY as Secretary of DEP Ltd (Charity) with SR, JC and MH remaining as Trustees. PY added that the Trustees are responsible for administering funds and there is an appointed Accountant.

- CB has been Chair of the DEP Steering Group since 2009 but due to personal circumstances has not been actively involved for some time, leaving a real vacuum of knowledge. DK hoped CB was well and congratulated her on a marvellous achievement. These good wishes and thanks were supported unanimously. **AP1 PY/SR to relay.**
- In the absence of the current chair this meeting appointed TY as Interim Chair (Proposed by CN and seconded by SR) and CN as Interim Vice-Chair (proposed by SR and seconded by TY). It was noted that the term of office of the current chair had expired but the new interim positions would need to be confirmed for a term of 2 years at a General Meeting to be held in the Autumn **AP2/Exec Committee.**
- **Post Meeting Note:** *PY continues as Treasurer for the time being but has previously made known his wish to stand down by year-end.*

Thomas has extensive experience in environmental consultancy, most recently working with Coastal Partnership East, he is an enthusiastic sailor and Vice-Commodore of the Deben Yacht Club.

Colin brings professional experience of information management and governance to the DEP and is the Co-Chair of the River Deben Association.

- SR also introduced DM as the new administrator. Having worked on the DEFRA Marine Pioneer Project and coordinated Going with the Flow/Tides and the Deben Estuary for Woodbridge Riverside Trust, Dee brings much experience of community engagement projects to the organisation.
- AS declined to be nominated on this occasion but wished to be available for advice on planning issues. He had circulated a document via Suffolk Coastal Forum – DEFRA Funding for Flood & Coastal Management Projects.
- Various attendees were not clear on the make-up of the Steering Group. As Stakeholders can be described as the Deben Community, are all Town and Parish Councils invited to attend meetings? AS suggested Felixstowe TC should be included. As TY looks forward to a new Partnership Plan focused on “Change in the Estuary”, the new Executive Committee will clarify the structure and circulate it with the Constitution including any suggested changes e.g. Honorary Positions, for discussion at the autumn meeting.

AP 3 Exec Committee

6. Current Projects

Flood Cell 1 Peter Youngs

- PY advised that there had been no change to the situation to date.
- CL and MH discussed the relevant responsibilities of the Trustees and the Landowners. CL was clear that DEP did not have the qualifications to decide what remedial works are undertaken, however MH insisted that

under the terms of the CIL grant, the Trustees must ensure whatever is proposed is best use of the money.

- There was some misunderstanding that a full proposal from the Internal Drainage Board (IDB) had been sent to the Trustees but this does not appear to have been received. It is also understood that the IDB had expressed interest on an earlier occasion. CL will ask Phil Camamile (CEO, WLMA - IDBs/Water Management Alliance) to make formal contact asap to open up channels of discussion again. **AP4 CL**
- Some discussion ensued regarding the areas of responsibility of the IDB. DK confirmed that East Suffolk IDB would expect to manage drainage and defence infrastructure within its own district but the EA has a veto over flood defence work through the FRAP (Flood Risk Activity Permit) if necessary.
- CN once more commented that the CIL grant should be returned to the ESC if not used as intended, leaving future actions to the landowners, Internal Drainage Board and Environment Agency.

Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) Helene Burningham.

- HB reported via SR that the Deben Marine Centre exhibition on Bawdsey Quay now has electricity partly due to £300-worth of works funded by the Environment Agency's 3Cs project. It is once more open at the same hours as Bawdsey Radar Trust Transmitter Block. It is an excellent public resource explaining how the Deben works and people should be encouraged to visit.
- Volunteers from Bawdsey and Alderton man the Centre. A public event is proposed but unconfirmed for 27th July for the 3C's project, items to be covered would include: the entrance to the river, the history of Bawdsey and Hollesley frontage, Bawdsey to Ramsholt and Peter Wain's research into the Mediaeval settlement at Bawdsey and Alderton. This event would be assisted by local historian Peter Wain and Mark Bailey - Historian at UEA.
- Images from the photopost installations are input into the Deben Inlet site for ongoing research along with measurements from Bawdsey Beach and the tidal gauge on the Quay.
- **Post Meeting note** Links to Deben Inlets, Deben Marine Centre, Photopost images and Deben Soundings can be found via the DEP website or direct at:

<https://suffolkinlets.wordpress.com/>

<https://debensoundings.wordpress.com/>

<https://debenmarinecentre.wordpress.com/>

<https://sites.google.com/view/debenphotoposts/about>

Estuary Plan Simon Read.

- SR had circulated the first proposals of how to structure the plan under headings that aligned with the existing plan with some additional sections and possible names under each sub-heading. He added that the new plan

is now about “Change” and should include climate change. This document had been circulated prior to the meeting but few comments had been received.

- Timing will be crucial if the intention is that it should be supplementary planning guidance as last time a crucial deadline was narrowly missed after a lot of hard work. He pointed out that due to the publication of the new Local Plan, DEP is obliged to review the Estuary Management Plan. AS suggested that the planning section of the estuary plan should be considered independently.
- Since the publication of the 2015 Estuary Plan, Landowners have evolved from mostly being agricultural landowners, some of whom have subsequently resigned from DEP. **AP5 PY** to approach landowners again. The landowner situation is now very complex and inclusion of other landowners such as National Trust, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Waldringfield Nature Reserve and PGL (Bawdsey Manor) should be considered. Correct representation under the constitution needs to be borne in mind.
- DK encouraged a move forward under the new Interim Chair and Interim Vice Chair. He made clear that Shoreline Plans do not cover the Estuary so this is an opportunity for the DEP! His observation is that the existence of the DEP organisation is the envy of other regions within the Environment Agency.
- TY emphasised that the Plan is why we are here.
- With no further comments the Executive will take the initial proposals forward to create a workable plan. **AP6 Exec Committee**

7. Reports from Stakeholders

- SUFFOLK COAST AND HEATHS AONB Simon Amstutz/Bev McClean
No updates received.
- ENVIRONMENT AGENCY David Kemp
DK wished to record thanks to the residents during the repairs at Felixstowe Ferry. Their support during the works was much appreciated.
- SUFFOLK WILDLIFE TRUST Andrew Excell
AE had circulated an update on the Martlesham Wilds project. DK commented that the Environment Agency do offer help with intertidal creation.

8. Any Other Business

Water Quality EO

Woodbridge Climate Action Centre

<https://www.woodbridgeclimateactioncentre.org/> continue to take samples testing for E.coli. No reduction shown. They are talking to Anglian Water about a possible solution. Martlesham Creek Wastewater Treatment Works has

been costed for a £500k solution. This would be run as a follow-up trial of a solution which has already shown some success at Southwold. Approval would be required from the Environment Agency before this could be progressed. Anglian Water indicated that they could fund this.

DK advised that water quality is a top priority for the Environment Agency Chair.

Post Meeting Note: *AP8 CN will write to the Environment Agency Chair (in the absence of specific lower management,) on behalf of the DEP, to encourage the granting of Environment Agency approval for the Martlesham-based trial.*

Coastal Footpath RS and others

- RS asked if the meeting was aware of the ongoing issues along the private road from Wilford Bridge towards Sutton Hoo where walkers are not permitted to access the National Trust, Sutton Hoo property. TY advised that it is a common misapprehension that everyone can walk anywhere but understands this particular road is still under consideration by Natural England as a potential part of the Coastal Footpath. It is currently a private road with no public right of way for walkers.
- SR reported that there are still issues under negotiation and in the hands of Natural England eg Bawdsey to Ramsholt and Martlesham Wilds, and added that flood defence walls are not default footpaths. DK explained that footpaths are not maintained by the Environment Agency who only maintain walls for Flood Cells that are considered “economic”. Suffolk County Council Highways have footpath responsibility.
- NB had heard rumours that Melton will definitely flood within the next 10 years? DK assured him that sea level rise will affect the Deben generally but the walls at Melton are all in good condition. There is no specific reason for flooding within the next 10 years although it is likely that over-topping will occur somewhere at some time in the future, but there can be no guarantee of where or when.

Other Matters

- AS wished to repeat thanks to PY and SR for steadying the ship in CB’s absence.
- The new Interim Chair TY explained he is not a “fount of all knowledge” but would be relying on expertise from within the Group.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting will be advised asap once the Constitution has been consulted. **AP7/TY & CN**

ACTIONS

AP1 PY & SR To convey congratulations, thanks and well wishes to CB.

AP2 Exec Committee Organise Autumn General Meeting to confirm Interim Chair and Interim Vice Chair positions.

AP3 Exec Committee Clarify the Steering Group structure and circulate it with the Constitution including any suggested changes eg Honorary Positions, for discussion at the autumn meeting.

AP4 CL To ask Phil Camamile to send the IDB proposal to the Trustees asap.

AP5 PY To approach Agricultural Landowners for further involvement.

AP6 Exec Committee Take forward the initial proposals for a new management plan structure and sub committees, into a workable plan.

AP7 TY & CN The DONM will be advised asap – see AP2

AP8 CN To write to the Environment Agency Chair (in the absence of specific lower management,) on behalf of the DEP, to encourage the granting of Environment Agency approval for the Martlesham-based Waste Water Treatment trial.