

# ALDE AND ORE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Final MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE SEVENTH MEETING OF THE ALDE AND ORE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP HELD ON THURSDAY 8 JULY 2021 AT 6.30PM BY ZOOM

## PRESENT:

Nominated representatives

Tim Beach (TB) Chairman

Ray Herring Cllr. (RH)

Andrew Greenwell

Ben Coulter (BC)

Council

Jeremy Hinves (JH)

Frances Barnwell (FB) ViceChairman

Georgina Lock

Alison Andrews (AA)

Jane Skepper (JS)

Harry Young

Chris Gill (CG)

Cllr. Snape Parish Council

East Suffolk Council (ESC)

Cllr. Boyton PC

repr. Butley, Capel St Andrew and Wantisden Parish

Chairman Cllr Iken PC

Cllr. Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council

Cllr. Snape PC

Alde and Ore Association

IDB Board Member

Business Representative

Treasurer

## ADVISERS/ATTENDEES:

Giles Bloomfield

David Kemp (DK)

Jane Maxim (JM)

Ed Boyle

AOET

Natural England

East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB)

Environment Agency (EA)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 5

## AGENDA

1. **Apologies:** Andrew Reid Cllr. Suffolk County Council, Peter McGinity Chair Chillesford Parish Meeting, Andrew Cassy Cllr. Boyton PC, Niels Peterson Cllr. Tunstall Parish Council, Peter Palmer Cllr. Aldeburgh TC, Bill Parker Sudbourne Parish Council, Edward Greenwell IDB alternate, Andrew McDonald (Comms Group), Karen Thomas CPE.

### 2. Declarations of interest

Those attending explained their interests during the introductions made by every individual present, The Hon. Secretary would send a reminder to one representative and also to who ever will be nominated to serve as the second ESC District Councillor after the by-election taking place that day.

### 3. Minutes of the meeting on 1 April 2021

These were agreed without amendment. (proposer BC, seconder JS)

### 4. Matters arising from the meeting on 1 April 2021 not otherwise on the agenda

Agenda Item 7. TB had, as he undertook, spoken with CPE about reviving the positive discussion with the infrastructure holders. CPE were willing to help and it was agreed to wait until matters around the clay issue were clearer.

### 5. IDB update on the Outline Business Case submission.

The Chairman introduced by recapping that the Outline Business Case had been submitted to the Environment Agency and been supported by the RFFC but because of the clay storage issue at Iken had been put on hold. Since the last meeting, the AOCP had, as agreed, issued a press release to express the strong views and accurate facts. He also had written to EA to press them at the key official levels and with the help of the RFFC chair had had conversations to express the very real concerns about the consequences for hundreds of people if the river defences were not improved in the near future and asked whether it was possible to provide for work discounting the clay at Iken. EA had not initially responded to

AOCP, AOET and others but now there appeared to be a conversation opening up, albeit glacially. He was hopeful as IDB had been invited to explore what the OBC might look like without the clay and the financial consequences of that. In relation to the investigation, GB added that the IDB were fully cooperating with the investigation and answering questions under caution.

JS said that several letters had been written by the IDB and related contacts and they had at least a response received from Sir James Bevan saying that EA too were trying to find a way forward.

RH reported that the Chief Executive of ESC had also had a meeting with EA, so EA were hearing about local concerns on several fronts. RF added that in his view the current lines of communications were the way forward but the position we found ourselves in was very unsatisfactory and was something EA would have to address internally later.

JM explained that it was the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust that gave the IDB the grant to prepare the Outline Business Case, which seemed to have ticked all the boxes in EA. The Trust had also written to key people pressing the case including Sir James Bevan, EA Chief, Rebecca Powell, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, and Simon Hawkins, EA. Responses had been deeply unsatisfactory but the strength of feelings in the area had been clearly expressed. Lord Deben, Chair of the Climate Change Committee, had also been written to. JM explained that the Trust could not take forward fund raising whilst the investigation was on going as it was not possible to say what the money was being raised for.

In a wider discussion including members of the public, the local views of great concern about the consequences of any delay and frustration with the current apparent impasse were re-emphasised. They felt that EA displayed no sensitivity to the public. TB said that all AOCP communications had brought out the strength of local feelings on the matter. It was concluded that there were a number of people and bodies keeping up the pressure, but it would do no harm if anyone wanted to and wrote to local councillors and the MP and keep the issue to the forefront of awareness.

GM requested that the EA Update press notices on the Iken investigations were communicated before being issued publicly as so far, the IDB were forced to respond at no notice: since the issue was very sensitive and could have several legal ramifications time was needed to make proper responses, but the public looked to IDB for immediate explanation or other reaction.

## 6. **Communications- Report back from AOCP Comms Group. Update:**

- i. TB reported that Andrew McDonald had kindly offered to come back and help on Comms issues.
- ii. On comments on the AOCP web site, which was being updated over time, JM said that he AOET pages were being addressed. She also suggested that the pages on the Estuary needed addressing as while she recognised that it was a material document, it was out of date especially in relation to costings and the prominence given to enabling development which had been dropped as a means of fundraising some three years ago. TB took the point and suggested that a small group would meet to discuss how best to address this presentation and update what is going on and asked for volunteers.

**Action: volunteers names to Hon. Sec.**

- iii. Charles Croydon (representing SCHU AONB) asked that the article on the web site on the Redshank survey inviting volunteers to help was updated to show that the survey was now continuing during the summer and autumn. AA was happy to do this as soon as the details could be supplied.

## 7. **Finance**

- i. The Chair said that on the ongoing discussion to provide administration funding for the Suffolk estuaries funding for the Partnership from the local authority/EA, were reaching a solution and it was likely that funding of £2,500 a year for three years for each estuary was likely to be arranged. DK explained the issue had been one of finding a new away to transfer money and a simple collaborative agreement with the not onerous on AOCP of providing minutes regularly. TB thanked DK for his help with this.
- ii. AA reported that a way forward had been found for HSBC to transfer a cheque, covering all the funds held by the former AOEP which it had made out to the AOEP, into the AOCP account which had been opened with the Ipswich Building Society. It was hoped this would be completed shortly.

## 8. **Any other business**

FB asked, given that the upper estuary work was still being delayed, consideration might be given to identify ways to do preliminary work on the Orford town river defences at an earlier date, as had been envisaged during discussion of the delivery of the lower estuary Business Case. This was taken note of.

**10. Dates of Next meetings**

The next meeting would be on **Thursday 16 September 2021 at 6.30pm**, by Zoom.

AA 9 July 2021

Agreed on 16 September 2021