

ALDE AND ORE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Final MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE ALDE AND ORE COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP HELD ON THURSDAY 26 JANUARY 2023 AT 6.30PM IN ORFORD TOWN HALL MEETING ROOM

PRESENT:

Nominated representatives

Tim Beach (TB) Chairman	Cllr. Snape Parish Council
Peter Palmer (PP)	Cllr. Aldeburgh TC
Ben Coulter (BC)	repr. Butley, Capel St Andrew and Wantisden PC
Peter McGinity (PM)	Chair. Chillesford Parish Meeting
Jeremy Hinvre (JH)	Chair. Iken PC
Gary Wingrove (GW)	Orford and Gedgrave PC
Bill Parker (BP)	Vice Chair Sudbourne PC
Oliver Morgan (OM)	Cllr. Tunstall PC
Edward Greenwell (EG)	IDB alternate
Alison Andrews (AA)	Alde and Ore Association
Harry Young (HY)	Business Representative
Frances Barnwell (FB)	Vice Chairman AOCF
Chris Gill (CG)	Treasurer
Caroline Donsworth	representing Aldringham and Thorpeness PC

ADVISERS/ATTENDEES:

Giles Bloomfield (GB)	East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB)
David Kemp (DK)	Environment Agency (EA)
Jane Maxim (JM)	Alde and Ore Estuary Trust
Karen Thomas (KT)	Coastal Partnership East
Sharon Blease (SB)	Coastal Partnership East

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 3

AGENDA

Apologies:

1. Cllr Andrew Reid, SCC, Cllr Russ Rainger East Suffolk Council, Andrew Cassy/Andrew Greenwell Boyton PC, Ray Herring Cllr. East Suffolk Council, Jane Skepper IDB Alternate, Elizabeth Stanton AOET, Ed Boyle Natural England, Andrew McDonald Comms Group.

2. Declarations of interest

Declarations of Interest forms for 2023 would be circulated. No other interests were declared.

3. Minutes of the meeting on 29 September 2022

These were agreed taking in an amendment to para 9i that the Flotilla "raised £45000 after direct costs", (not net of costs). (proposer PM, seconder PP)

4. Matters arising from the meeting on 29 September 2022 not otherwise on the agenda

None, all were to be covered under the agenda.

5. IDB Update on the Outline Business Case submission.

Prior to the meeting, an Information Fact Sheet headed 'Upper Alde & Ore Estuary Embankment Improvements' had been circulated announcing that the Business Case for Phase 1 of the Whole Estuary Plan, for the Upper Alde and Ore Estuary, had been approved with grant funding in total of £11.941m. The Fact Sheet included outline details on how the work would be organised over the four-year programme, what the benefits would be and that in this Phase the flood cells to be covered were Iken (FC5), Snape Maltings (FC6), Snape Village (FC7) and Aldeburgh Town Marsh (FC10). Preparatory work would be undertaken during 2023, enabling the construction work to take place between 2024 and end 2027.

GB introduced the agenda item about the successful bid for the project saying that since the last meeting there had been a number of developments and actions leading to the IDB obtaining full approval of the Business Case and grant funding, so enabling the upper estuary part of the project to go ahead.. The news received loud applause.

GB said that the Information Sheet set out the next steps to get the project moving and added that the construction manager would be Pete Roberts, who had been closely involved in the Aldeburgh Marshes Phase 1 wall project a few years back. This would enable GB to refocus on completing the Business Case for Phase 2, the Lower Estuary, which would take some 12-18 months.

The Chair, TB, recorded his great thanks to the many people involved in achieving this major step, in particular he mentioned Giles Bloomfield, Karen Thomas, Sharon Bleese and David Kemp and members of the Partnerships.

TB explained that of the almost £12 million funding, some £8 million was from the main Environment Agency FCERM-GiA funds, some £3 million from local authority money allocated by the Regional Flood and Coast Committee and the remainder had been bid for from a number of other smaller government and charity funding pots. It was agreed to provide AOCF with the details of the funding sources. *These have been given to insert into the minutes for ease of reference and are as follows:*

Funding Breakdown;

<i>Upfront assessment & OBC</i>	<i>£, 250,000 Alde & Ore Estuary Trust Grant (sunk costs to date)</i>
<i>FCERM Capital Grant</i>	<i>£, 8,046,000</i>
<i>Local Levy</i>	<i>£, 3,004,000</i>
<i>Partnership Contributions</i>	<i>£, 120,000 – Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)</i>
<i>Partnership Contributions</i>	<i>£, 771,000- IDB Public Works Loan (PWL)</i>
	<i>£, 11,941,000</i>
<i>Total Project Cost</i>	<i>£, 12,191,000</i>

GB also commented that a great deal more funding had been secured than had been considered possible in the early days of drawing up the Plan. He then asked the IDB and AOET what they would like from the AOCF to help make the project happen, not just the work but, messaging, going round to communities and explaining what would be happening and where. He stressed that now the focus of planning would turn to the Lower Estuary to complete the whole estuary approach. So good news for the whole estuary.

In discussion of questions raised the following points were made:

Time scale of works - GB said the Iken FC would take about 3 years, the Maltings was an early priority and the Aldeburgh FC about 2 years but the exact order of working in the flood cells depended on details to be sorted out, such as timings suitable for sustaining wild habitats. GB hoped that the work on developing the time lines would be completed and issued by May-June time. TB added that from the point of view of the AOCF, having some sort of work programme, such as a Gant chart setting out the timelines, including not only work but plans for communications would be important.

What was involved in preparing for the lower estuary plan? - GB explained that he and DK had already looked at the whole estuary economics assessments and had derived economic benefit figures for the upper estuary, which had been used for its business case, for the lower estuary and for the pumping stations replacement programme and already had an indication of indicative funding possibilities of some £12 million. The next steps included assessing environmental impacts and addressing coastal squeeze where, while the upper estuary was healthy, concern remained within the lower estuary saltings. More detailed work was needed with Natural England, EA and discussions with the RSPB in the Boyton area where possibility of options existed. Environmental work would also involve looking at the many new emerging markets for environmental benefits such as carbon

sequestration which might also yield potential funding sources. IDB would be working with AOET and CPE on those aspects. GB said completion was just a matter of time not an impossible task.

6. A Resilient Future for our Coast Karen Thomas, Coastal Partnership East

Karen Thomas very kindly came to give a presentation of an overview of the impact of climate change on our coast and all the work being undertaken by Coastal Partnership East along the Suffolk and Norfolk coasts to deal with the challenges of a soft eroding coast, old and new sea defences, and pluvial, river and surge flooding as they affected homes and communities and infrastructure. (This was a slightly shorter version of a presentation given at the October 2022 Norfolk and Suffolk Coast Annual Conference.) *(Copies of the slides are available, please ask AOCF Hon Sec)*

She explained that, while a 2018 report found over 300,000 homes on the coast of England were under threat from coastal erosion, even by 2021 the situation had not changed and the Climate Change Committee stressed that the situation was becoming even more serious. The Government had then created a scheme under which authorities could bid for funds to undertake new and innovative projects as well as traditional approaches to address the issues including assessing coastal viability. CPE had secured a significant sum to create and manage a number of ground breaking initiatives combining traditional and new approaches and applying them in different types of locations. They were working with the Environment Agency and local authorities to develop ideas. She gave examples of investing for the future including the complexity of the Lowestoft situation, finding ways to deal with houses falling in the sea and action for the inhabitants before then, managing health and safety on beaches with rapidly changing levels and dangerous soft cliff edges and many more.

The coast was changing at a rate that nobody had expected and so more innovative programmes were needed to tackle this, ranging from creating a greater awareness among residents of the potential dangers and how to be aware of them and take mitigating action, rather as people currently use the Environment Agency flood warnings and advice, to a more planned approach of moving dwellings or employment inland and doing this in several places along the coast to trial ideas in situations with different physical changes to be addressed. The aim of coastal management was to tackle problems before they became acute, to cease being reactive, plan for adaptive approaches and to be about 'place', and to look at temporary and permanent solutions. People, environment and the economy needed all to be built into plans to manage for the future. There were other new ideas such as creating new engineering approaches, involving infrastructure providers in projects rather than them working in isolation, possibly new sand scaping protection. as for example tried approaches using rocks were now challenged by the huge increase in the price of rocks.

She said that as all the work of CPE was highly innovative and positive and was being seen as such nationally, that raised the profile of our Suffolk and Norfolk coasts needs and characteristics. This included pointing out the fact that the East Coast may be called the energy coast and while new energy sources were needed, it was clear that bringing in energy resources on such a soft eroding and fragile coast required addressing. Finally, KT explained that among this work CPE would be helping the Alde and Ore develop its funding and planning approaches. KT was thanked warmly for her fascinating presentation.

In commenting on all the innovative ideas KT had presented, BP asked whether the AOCF needed to address new solutions in its Lower Estuary planning: at a national flood and oceans conference he had seen emerging new ways of adapting landscapes, of re-evaluating the value of assets such as walls, of using nature in a different way for secure new funding sources. GB said there was a lot wrapped up in such ideas. In the case of the 2013 event, it was clear that the lower estuary walls are in a better state than the upper estuary had been. The IDB were always looking for new funding sources and they needed to be available within the time scale of developing the estuary plan. But adaption, resilience, environmental services such as saltmarshes and carbon sinks should all be in the mix. BP asked if IDB had a Plan B if current thinking for the Lower Estuary did not work. GB replied he was confident that we have a way forward, bearing in mind the state of the lower estuary and government funding but IDB were already looking at new approaches, ways of securing new funding and he thought it not necessary to look at a Plan B. Other points made in discussion included exploring ideas within the context of securing grant from large bodies such as Heritage Lottery; the need to re-engage people in the Lower Estuary as very little had happened in recent years; the basic aim of the Plan to protect by resilience homes, work and land; and as early as during the upper estuary development new ideas such as Tidal Lagoon Power had been examined closely but although that was found not to suit the estuary; the Plan is owned by the Partnership and any changes made to it would be have to be done within it.

TB concluded the issues had been discussed over the years as the plan had developed and new ideas had been and could be considered and taken in as plans developed, so getting the business case developed with an open mind was the way forward.

TB also said it was recognised that there needed to be a review of the Estuary Plan anyway. JM also asked for a review of the plan to see what no longer applied or needed adjusting such as changing the out-of-date costings including changes in property prices, and the ways for fund raising. TB agreed there should be an action point to review the plan involving AOC, IDB and the Trust.

Action AOC lead with ESIDB, AOET

7. Possible code of conduct for leisure pursuits in and around the rivers

TB reported that both the AOC and Alde and Ore Association had been asked in the last two summers about what might be done in relation to some speedboats driven at great speed adversely affecting wildlife. He had made some enquiries and Aaron Howe, RSPB, had agreed to try and pull something together. TB was to meet him on 22 February and would report back. Charles Croydon, who attended AOC regularly as a member of the public, asked if he could help: agreed that he would go to the meeting too.

8. Communications

- i. GB explained that IDB would be working with CPE Specialists to develop Comms Strategy for next stages, He suggested there were three prongs to communications - IDB would lead on Re-engaging community with regard to Lower Estuary OBC development, whilst providing regular updates on construction delivery, the Information Fact Sheet issued that day being the first, communications in relation to fund raising where AOET would lead and communications with the wider community by the Partnership.
- ii. AA said that now the estuary project could get underway work on completing the information posters which the AOC had seen and commented on in draft could be brought into their final shape. These would be used to inform local communities, including at open days and other consultation and information meetings, and to prepare a virtual exhibition. She was very grateful that Sharon Bleese, CPE, was going to provide support on all this.
- iii. SB explained that she had a large comms team and CPE would be helping with all the estuary communications.

9. AOC Admin Finance- end of year report

CG spoke to the summary sheet for the year ending 31 December 2022 which had been circulated. Overall the AOC had sound finances with a total of £14,343 in the Suffolk Building Society. Until now expenditure had only been on the regular upkeep of the AOC website but with the project approval, spending on communications would be needed. The year 2022 saw a deficit of £750 but this was covered by the Environment Agency grant of £2500 paid in 2021.

DK confirmed that arrangements were in place for a new grant to come in 2023: this was appreciated.

Turning to the Balance Sheet, CG said that while some of the funds inherited from the AOEP were restricted, as circumstances had changed, thought was being given to talking to the parties involved about their possible release. TB thanked CG for his work as Treasurer.

10. Election of Officers

In the absence of volunteers to take up the Officer roles, the present holders were prepared to stay on another year. There was **unanimous agreement** that Tim Beach would continue as Chairman, Frances Barnwell as Vice Chairman, Alison Andrews as Secretary and Chris Gill as Treasurer. Peter McGinity noted that there had been a lot of work particularly for the Chairman and thanked him for all he had done.

11. Any other business

- i. TB drew attention to the fact that in 4 days' time it would be the 70th anniversary of the 1953 flood when large parts of the estuary and house had been flooded and the river walls breached in many places, and December this year would see the 10th anniversary of the 2013 surge that had resulted in 26 houses and a pub in Snape being flooded. During this year there would be a number of events marking these anniversaries, including a new film of old photographs, films and memories which had been produced by Coastal Partnership East. SB said she would be very happy to send the link to anyone who wanted it- so far it had gone out to 30 parishes, societies and schools.
Link to CPE Floods film can be requested.
- ii. BP said that the National Trust had found archive pictures of the 1953 flood over Orfordness and if anyone wanted to see them please could they get in touch with him. *Link to Orfordness flood photos can be requested*

- iii. GB said that RSPB were putting in a bid for international recognition as UNESCO Natural World Heritage Site recognising the importance of wetland in the coastal zone. This related to the hugely important role the landscape setting gives migratory birds along the East coast of UK. Link <https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/rspb-england/posts/a-bid-to-make-the-uk-s-wild-bird-superhighway-a-new-world-heritage-site> and <https://democracy.nelincs.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/RSPB-EastCoastFlyway-NWHS-Application.pdf>.

12. Date of Next meeting

The next meeting would be on **Thursday 30 March 2023 at 6.30pm, probably in Snape Village Hall**

AA

9 February 2023