

Bawdsey Coastal Partnership Annual General Meeting 2018
Alderton Village Hall, Saturday 10th March 2018, 10.00am

MINUTES

Present: Alison Andrews, Chris and Diane Ray, Joan Brookes, David Williams, Clare Terrell, Nick Rose, Richard Clarke, Tim Miller, Clare Walker, Peter Collicott, Gill & Brian Cromar, Richard & Sandra Steward, Robin and Mrs Whittle, Paul Hayden, Andrew Block, Barry Paul, Brian Johnson, Caroline Reekie, Catherine Lindsay-Davies, A.L. Page, C. Langley, P.N.O. Crick, R.J. Thirkettle, E. Aldous, G. Handford

Chair: P.N.O. Crick

Apologies: T.J.M. Green, C.W. Vaudrey, A.C. Rouse,

Item

1 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved

2 Matters arising

There were no matters arising

3 Treasurers report

C. Langley reported that there had been Income of £17,500, Expenses of £11,200 and a balance of £11,360 carried forward

4 AOB

No AOB raised

The business meeting ended

5 Chairman's report

Nick Crick presented the following report to the meeting:

Bawdsey Coastal Partnership

It is perhaps worth understanding why the BCP was formed. The Alde and Ore Estuary and the Deben Estuary have had partnerships operating for many years and they have both made significant progress towards protecting themselves from flooding. It was relatively recently, however, that the community as a whole began to realise that the 5 miles of coast in between these estuaries was very vulnerable. Indeed, if the defences on this part of the coast failed, the efforts of the estuary partnerships might become negated.

The BCP was formed to address this issue with members representing landowners, parish councils, residents and local businesses. The full membership can be found on the BCP web site. It was established as a limited company in 2015 and converted to a community interest company in 2017.

Its objectives are to:

- safeguard the special nature of the coast from Shingle Street to the Deben river mouth and its hinterland up to and including the coastal villages of Alderton, Bawdsey and Hollesley, all in the Suffolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- work with the responsible authorities to raise existing and any necessary new flood and coastal management infrastructure to a "fit for purpose" standard of 25-50 years;
- generate local contributions towards necessary Government expenditure.

BCP concerns itself with the ongoing management of coastal defences along the Bawdsey frontage which includes protecting Hollesley Bay, East Lane, Alderton and Shingle Street from tidal flooding and also considers the erosion risk to the cliff frontages further south extending to Bawdsey Manor and the mouth of the Deben.

In the past there have been successful partnership projects between the community and statutory bodies to raise funds and improve defences. In recent years the amount of government funding available to carry on protecting the frontage is constrained as a result of the methods used to allocate the very scarce funds which are available.

The BCP is therefore taking up the challenge on behalf of local communities and landowners as to how we can best manage the coast with the resources we have available and to establish what the options are for us, given the financial constraints to raise funds locally for action on the ground.

Through the Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan, local people were consulted on management options for this coastal area and the consensus has been to manage what we have and "Hold the Line". To this end the BCP sought technical advice from coastal engineers A Tindle and P Barber as to what holding our coast might look like and what it might cost to do so. The report

was commissioned by the BCP and administrated by the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board on our behalf. It was funded by the BCP mainly through contributions from local landowners.

This report has concluded that a capital project to protect this coast with rock using a combination of revetment and groyne structures with some shingle recycling is likely to be possible but will cost between seven and ten million pounds. The report also recommended over £125,000 of additional detailed coastal process studies due to the complex nature of our section of coast, before any final design could be confidently proposed. A summary of this report will be available on the BCP website along with the full report.

The report has highlighted some real challenges in terms of the funds needed to undertake this work and has not fully investigated the local effects this approach may have on adjacent coastal areas. There may also be other options which have not been fully examined. We are therefore working closely with statutory partners to establish what else we need to consider, against the background of the current Shoreline Management Plan policy of Hold the Line at East Lane Point and the Bawdsey Cliffs.

Due to the ongoing coastal change and funding challenges we face there is a need for a review of the frontage and all of the possible options that we can consider and utilise. As such we have an opportunity to work with SCDC, IDB, NE, and EA to better understand how we manage this stretch of coast in the short and long term.

Funding has been found through the EA to support some of the studies that are needed to give us more information about our options. These studies and discussions are taking place at the moment and BCP would like to know how best we can keep the local community informed. We have set up a new stakeholder database comprising some 70 individuals and we encourage any of you who have not signed up to provide us with an email address and let us know what information you would welcome and through which routes we can share this with you.

G. Handford (representing PGL) gave a short presentation

They have commissioned a report on the coastline surrounding Bawdsey Manor and are committed to working with BCP and DEP.

The Right Honourable, Lord Deben, Chairman of the UK's independent Committee on Climate Change followed

His talk is summarised here as it appeared in the *East Anglian Daily Times*

A Suffolk peer who advises the Government on climate change has warned coastal communities that weather is set to become more extreme and have a “much bigger impact” on our environment. “We must not kid ourselves about the damage that climate change is causing,” he added. “All the evidence is that it is likely to increase rather than the opposite.”

He highlighted changes in rainfall patterns, with long arid periods followed by “enormous quantities” of precipitation, as examples of weather phenomenon becoming more extreme. He also gave an example in Thorpeness, where 40ft of land was recently lost to the sea overnight, and pointed to seasonal changes happening earlier each year, which he said was evident to people living in rural communities.

Lord Deben, who was Suffolk Coastal MP John Gummer from 1997-2010 and also Secretary of State for the Environment from 1993-97, said Government policy on climate change and flood defences had suffered at times from blinkered attitudes. Whereas once Government had once been of a view “we know everything and we do everything”, he said Government now recognised the importance of involving local organisations, such as Bawdsey Coastal Partnership.

However, he said there was still need for greater “proportionality” in response from organisations, including the Environment Agency and Natural England, which he said should “get off their high horse”. Lord Deben said the organisations were often too reluctant to take action that might have a downside – even when it was for the greater good. “We really do need to take a more balanced view,” he said.

Despite his warnings over climate change, Lord Deben said “we are all very lucky” to be living at this time as people across the world were beginning to understand the need to take action. “We are not going to win the battle against climate change unless we win it locally, everywhere,” he said.

The meeting closed at 11.50am