

Suffolk Saltmarsh Group
Minutes from SSG Meeting of 19th February 2018
Deben Room, East Suffolk House, Melton

Agenda

- 1) Welcome, Introduction and Apologies KT/SA
- 2) Partner updates from each estuary group. ALL
- 3) Natural Flood Risk Management Funds
- 4) Marine Pioneer Update
- 5) Suffolk Saltmarsh Pilot- Deben Pilot (PC/JB)
- 6) Working groups to progress strategic issues on behalf of the Partnerships- workshop
- 7) Agree Minutes of previous meeting
- 8) AOB including Date of next meeting

Actions Arising

- 2a. SR to have a conversation with Melton Boatyard regarding there dredged material. Need to confirm terms of their license
- 2b. All to note: Grant Lohar offered tentative agreement to help or facilitate with works at Sutton Hoo.
- 2c. SA (et al) to report on the likelihood of Nick Collinson supporting the Sutton Hoo project
- 2d. (unassigned) A discussion regarding the operation of the sluice at Falkenham is required with the Environment Agency
- 2e. All the note that most works undertaken in the estuaries are completed using natural materials and as such, will degrade within a specific lifespan. Any bid for funding should account for the need to maintain the work.
- 2f. Following a discussion around monitoring across the estuaries, ST noted Sam Lew and the University of Hull's work using (freely available) satellite data to monitor vegetation types. PC to bring this work to the group's attention.
- 3a. GC to produce laymans guide to EA food risk funding pots for dissemination to SSG
- 4a. PC to provide synopsis of Devon Marine Pioneer saltmarsh work to SSG
- 4b. SR to request of Coastweb group knowledge of planned saltmarsh conferences and other opportunities to share saltmarsh learning that may already exist.
- 4c. KT to contact Colin Scott (ABPmer) to enquire about ABP's web-based platform of all managed realignment projects to identify if this (or similar) would be of value to needs to Suffolk.
- 5a. JM took to identify the RSPB's digital animations/media relating to saltmarsh and bring these to the attention of the wider group.

Actions outstanding from previous meetings:

- 3.1 JB to organise a meeting of consultees to identify what their expectations and/or requirements of sanctioning a strategic licence would be. The meeting should focus on a strategic licence that has common application for all estuaries but uses the Deben as a focus. The aspiration would be to build a picture of understanding from across consultees within 6 months.
- 3.2 KT to circulate details of the Humber estuary strategic licence.
- 4.1 GC notes need for an MMO licence for this work to progress (further details will be forthcoming from GC in coming weeks). The experience of this could be useful learning. GC is encouraged to share this learning with the group when appropriate to do so.
- 4.2 GC to supply figures for demonstrating the flood defence value of saltmarsh required for the supporting business case in developing this project to this group.
- 4.3 EH to circulate AOEP monitoring table
- 4.4 KT to circulate monitoring package for Waldringfield

1) Welcome, Introduction and Apologies KT/SA

In attendance: Karen Thomas, (KT, Chair) Emma Dixon, (ED), Jacqui Miller, (JM), Christine Block, (CB) David McGinity, (DmG), Guy Cooper, (GC), David Kemp, (DK), Graham Henderson (GH), Simon Amstutz, (SA), Pete Cosgrove, (PC), Jane Burch, (JB), Simon Read, (SR) Richard Steward, (RS), Sarah Zins, (SZ), Stephen Thomas, (ST)

Apologies from: Robin Whittle, Steph Jones and Emma Hay

Following round table introductions, SA provided a brief synopsis of the election process ran as per **Action 1.2, 17/11/17**. No further nominations for the role of chair were made from those tabled at the last meeting. A fair and due process, as administered by SA, elected Karen Thomas as the Suffolk Saltmarsh Group's Chair.

KT acknowledges changes made to the agenda are intended to better reflect the estuary partnership approach. Comment is welcome on the success of this.

2) Partner updates from each estuary group. ALL

Blyth (RS)

RS notes that the Saltmarsh on the Blyth is accreting rather than eroding, as experienced by other Suffolk estuaries. Current monitoring work focuses on measuring the depth (growth) of saltmarsh using bamboo poles in addition to horizontal growth in areas of managed realignment. RS notes the river is eroding as it adjusts to unplanned managed realignment circa 50 years ago. Erosion is noted in the North East banks of the Blyth, where wave fetch extends to 1km.

KT queried the monitoring approach in the Blyth – RS notes the use of GPS RTK (?Unsure what RTK is) which offers georeferenced data to an accuracy of 10-20mm. This equipment can be made available to other monitoring work if needed – approach RS.

Alde and Ore (DmG)

DmG notes a repair to the existing twin wall structure on the river and the intention to add a third outer wall. This repair work will raise the level to ensure a common final height of the wall. This work has been funded by the Environment agency and has MMO approval.

A submission has been made for a 450m stretch of improvements near Sudbourne. This application is expected to be acceptable to the Environment Agency but it is acknowledged that the works necessitate undertaking habitat surveys which will take time to complete. The work is expected to commence in August.

DmG updated on the Natural Habitat Management fund for Brick Dock. DmG notes that work has previously been completed as recently as 2015 but this was not entirely successful. The current intention is to progress new works differently from previous efforts. The bid still requires consenting.

DmG notes he has been in contact with parties working on saltmarsh projects in other estuaries, notably Claire Mainard from Tayside. DmG raises the question as to how those working in Suffolk may learn from works elsewhere in the country and how Suffolk estuaries can best share our experiences.

Deben - Kyson Point (SR/GC)

SR and GC are in discussion concerning the EA funded works for Kyson point. SR provided a handout depicting an annotated 2003 LiDAR image of Kyson point. The image clearly shows the fragmentation of the islands at Kyson point. The intention is to use brushwood structures to bridge

the gaps identified in the image such that the seabed is effectively raised. SR notes that this approach is approved by IFCA because it eliminates the possibility of the works becoming a fish trap.

GC notes that the saltmarsh islands at Kyson point have been relatively stable for the past 15 years. The brushwood works would be built up to the height of the islands (circa 1.5m). This would aim to reduce the gradient to the island cliffs and so promote accretion. An estimated 1000 bundles are required for this work.

KT, DmG and JB offer experience from past works, noting lead-in time for so many bundles will be an issue. DmG acknowledges the value of volunteer workers from the AONB who were able to pack and bundle <90 bundles per half day.

GC notes that in 2021 National Flood Management funding will end. EA colleagues will work within the system as far as possible to facilitate funding through this change.

Deben – Sutton Hoo

SR recounts meeting Grant Lohoar (National Trust) and PC at Sutton Hoo in January to discuss the potential for future works and need for monitoring.

Monitoring at Sutton Hoo stopped 2013/2014. Visually the bed level has improved, with the cliffs notably smaller than they once were. Geese are however having a noticeable negative impact on the extent of vegetation of the marsh. Works are required to address the tidal attenuation fencing which is being outflanked, causing erosion of the wall. SR suspects a breakdown of the tidal sill has occurred, noting obvious 'slumping' of the wall. A large ebb delta exists outside the wall. SR suspects that the disposal of dredging material by Simon Skeet at Melton boatyard could be moved to enhance protection of the wall.

SR will be meeting with Carol Reid to discuss potential works at Falkenham. JB notes she has put in for NFRM funding –acknowledging that any such works are very much the remit of the DEP. JB notes this particular project bid is linked in with the wider holistic water management and there is a requirement for the IDB to do improvements. JB notes that the relevance of links to the wider Defra Pilot project around consenting reform. All should accept the bid as being highly speculative, given the fund is for people and property where as the proposed works at Falkenham are focused on environmental protection.

Stour and Orwell (JB/SR)

JB acknowledged that there are no current saltmarsh projects planned or starting on the Stour/Orwell complex, other than the longstanding one at Levington. JB has put in speculative bid for regional flood risk funding for a project at Shotley marshes. JB notes the advice she was provided with was to put in bids for full (£50k) amount for projects where they appear and look to continually refine project(s) should one or more progress.

SR notes that Levington has experienced a loss of vegetation across the entire marsh frontage in recent years. SR has recently added more brushwood bundles in Levington creek to minimise losses. An estimated 30,000 Cubic metres of sediment has been pumped, under licence within the Levington project. The location of future works are expected to move further upstream in line with Jonathan Dyke application for a new licence for the works this year. SR is producing a summary report of the works completed at Levington over the past 4 years.

SA raises the point that local residents have expressed concerns as to a project funded by the AONB's SDF grant fund resulted in blocks being introduced to intertidal habitat at Bradfield. The funding was to protect intertidal habitats from vehicle damages.

Actions:

- 2a. **SR to have a conversation with Melton Boatyard regarding there dredged material. Need to confirm terms of their license**
- 2b. **All to note: Grant Lohar offered tentative agreement to help or facilitate with works at Sutton Hoo.**
- 2c. **SA (et al) to report on the likelihood of Nick Collinson supporting the Sutton Hoo project**
- 2d. **(unassigned) A discussion regarding the operation of the sluice at Falkenham is required with the Environment Agency**
- 2e. **All the note that most works undertaken in the estuaries are completed using natural materials and as such, will degrade within a specific lifespan. Any bid for funding should account for the need to maintain the work.**
- 2f. **Following a discussion around monitoring across the estuaries, ST noted Sam Lew and the University of Hull's work using (freely available) satellite data to monitor vegetation types. PC to bring this work to the group's attention.**

3) Natural Flood Risk Management Funds (DK)

DK updated on the state-of-play regarding funding bids made to the Natural Flood Risk Management funds from projects within the estuaries.

- Bids at Ham Creek and Falkenham have progressed
- In addition, bids exist for Bawdsey marsh wall and Brickdock. There is little clarity as to when one might expect to hear back as to the success of these bids.

Three Pots of NFRM exist:

- a £14m national pot of funding (GC accessed this for Deben works)
- a £1m national pot (accessed by project on Havergate island in A&O)
- £750k Regional pot with a £50k project maximum – the above bids and those mentioned by JB under the Stour and Orwell update have accessed these.

DK notes that the national pots are largely for fluvial flooding– only 2 of 24 project applications are coastal. DK notes that the Environment Agency are doing all they can to help support coastal flood defence works through such pots.

Action:

- 3a. **GC to produce laymans guide to EA food risk funding pots for dissemination to SSG**

4) Marine Pioneer Update (PC) (Paper circulated with agenda)

The remit of the Marine Pioneer is outlined in the circulated paper. In short, the Pioneer offers an excellent opportunity to benefit from shared learning with the Devon pioneer site and facilitate shared learning more widely. Particular issues or questions should be raised directly with PC. In regards to shared learning 3 actions were taken;

Action:

- 4a. **PC to provide synopsis of Devon Marine Pioneer saltmarsh work to SSG**
- 4b. **SR to request of Coastweb group knowledge of planned saltmarsh conferences and other opportunities to share saltmarsh learning that may already exist.**
- 4c. **KT to contact Colin Scott (ABPmer) to enquire about ABP's web-based platform of all managed realignment projects to identify if this (or similar) would be of value to needs to Suffolk.**

5) Suffolk Saltmarsh Pilot- Deben Pilot (PC/JB) (Paper circulated with agenda)

- Only £1500 of the original bid has been spent, leaving over £4000 unspent thus far
- Unspent money can be given back to SDF providing an end of year report demonstrates how spent monies have met the objectives of the bid.

- The original bid included work towards engagement of the wider public on saltmarsh. A conversation surfaced regarding the barriers to communicating the conservation NGO's have faced previously and how digital media is seen as a fruitful investment in the age of social media.
- The theme of addressing Change emerged as a useful subject to engage upon, with members acknowledging the challenge of unknown.
- In terms of delivering engagement and communications, the group were inconclusive in their understanding of which organisations might be best placed to house communications plans for such media (AONB/SCF/SSF or individual estuary groups)

Action:

5a. JM took to identify the RSPB's digital animations/media relating to saltmarsh and bring these to the attention of the wider group.

6) Workshop Session on progressing SSG Working groups

KT facilitated a workshop to identify the role of working groups supporting SSG and the personnel supporting them. Working groups were mooted for;

- Licensing and Consenting
- Evidence, Data, Monitoring and Analysis
- Engagement
- Funding

The outputs of this workshop session are provided below.

LICENSING & CONSENTS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a template license approach for each partnership to use 2. Explore a strategic licence with MMO 3. Test the fast track system (AOEP have done a successful application) 4. Negotiate a framework of agreed criteria with NE / RSPB/ IFCA etc to speed up process
<p>Q's & Comments</p> <p>How do we get the evidence for consents easily & cheaply? Is 1. or 2. more useful?</p>
<p>Who: Jane Burch, Guy Cooper, Jacqui Miller, Sarah Zins, Karen Thomas</p>

EVIDENCE DATA MONITORING & ANALYSIS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review existing data (Deben Pilot) 2. Highlight data gaps or new needs (Deben Pilot) 3. Look at estuary monitoring programmes & support with funds & resource 4. Offer guidance & support to estuary groups on saltmarsh monitoring approaches and agree consistent / comparable methods (Kyson & Sudbourne / EA)
<p>Q's & Comments</p> <p>What data are we collecting? Need comparable data sets / standardisation / data quality Find a repository to hold data in consistent format & share Potential student project – literature review? BTO Bird Surveys / EIFCA – join up with other data collectors BEP'Ship - monitoring saltmarsh edges in Blyth Spring 2018</p>
<p>Who: Guy Cooper, EIFCA, Richard Steward, Robin Whittle (RDA)</p>

--

ENGAGEMENT

- | |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Raise awareness of estuary partnership work – how can SSG help?2. Raise awareness of value of saltmarshes & highlight to businesses / investors / communities / public3. Raise awareness to raise funds |
|--|

Q's & Comments

Comms plan template for Pships to use Promote saltmarsh code / celebrity endorsement / ambassador Animation to explain value of saltmarsh Deal with concept of change Stewardship – enhancing sense of ownership Engagement with landowners / custodians of saltmarshes Need fact & figures

Who: Emma Dixon, Steff Jones, Sarah Zins, Christine Block, Karen Thomas
--

FUNDING

Make links to DEFRA Marine Pioneer (ongoing) Develop a pilot to 'value' saltmarsh (ongoing) Establish viable funding sources Create investment plan for estuary group work

Q's & Comments

Establish what makes it appealing to investors Seachange / AONB / NFRM

Who: Peter Cosgrove, Paul Mackie, Jane Burch, David Kemp, Graham Henderson, Karen Thomas

7) Agree Minutes of previous meeting (Minutes circulated with agenda)

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Outstanding actions are listed on page 1 of this minute

8) AOB

No additional matters were raised

9) Date of next meeting

SCF Forum set for 9th May 2018