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1. Introduction

Much has happened nationally since our last newsletter – the Brexit vote, new Government Ministers... Our newsletter focusses on providing you with brief updates on the many flood and coastal activities taking place both nationally and locally, providing links for those of you wanting to know more.

2. National reviews into flooding

The Government has recently released two reports which followed the 2016 floods in Cumbria and elsewhere, looking at the country's flood resilience and ways to manage it better in the future - the [National Flood Resilience Review 2016](#) and the [EFRA committee review](#). Both reports support greater use of Natural Flood Management (NFM) measures such as holding water upstream, improving ways to describe flood risk to the public and ensuring key infrastructure and utilities are more resilient to extreme flood events. There is also a commitment to investment in the deployment of temporary flood defences and more scientific research into long term flood risk. The EFRA report also suggested changes to the Environment Agency and flood governance structures but these are not widely supported politically.

3. Updates from the coast and estuaries

3.1 Suffolk Coast Forum's 5th annual community conference, 'Suffolk – towards a resilient future for our estuaries and coast' was held in October at Snape Maltings. The conference focussed on future planning and new ways of working around our coast and estuaries. Delegates heard from leading UK environmentalist Tony Juniper; Daniel Johns, the head of adaptation at the Government's advisory UK Committee on Climate Change; Dr Therese Coffey, Suffolk Coastal MP and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Defra with responsibility for flood and coastal management and Mark Farrah, from conference sponsor Balfour Beatty. Watch the conference [film update](#), created by talented young filmmakers from Suffolk One, to see a highlight of some of the people and projects helping to build a resilient coast and estuaries in Suffolk. Conference presentations can be accessed from www.greensuffolk.org/about/suffolkcoastforum.

3.2 The [Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group](#) continues to champion coastal management and lobby for improvements in funding and legislation. It has recently held meetings with the new Minister responsible for flood and coastal management, Dr Therese Coffey and continues to work with Defra, DCLG and Treasury and bodies such as the Marine Management Organization to bring about a better legislative and funding framework for coastal management. A key issue for coastal authorities is the changes to Revenue Support Grant which will reduce the funding available for maintaining coastal assets.

3.3 The Marine Management Organisation is currently developing the [South East Marine Plan](#), which covers our coastline from Felixstowe around to the Essex border. Further public consultation will take place next spring 2017.

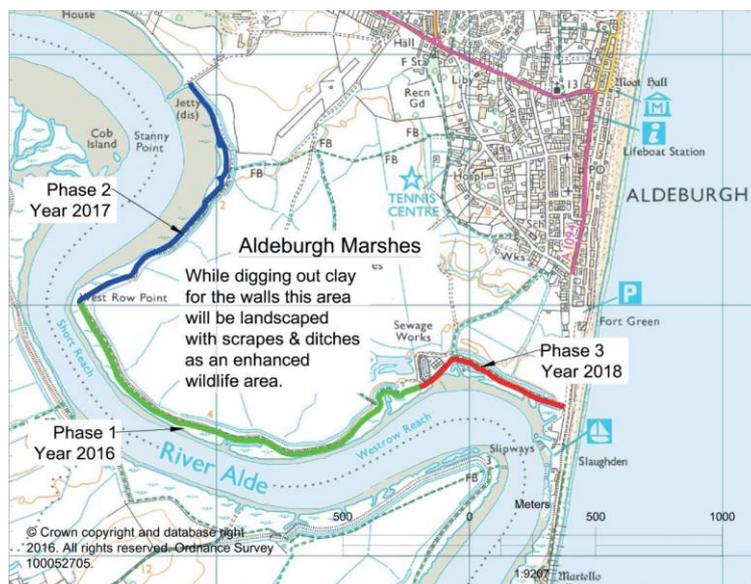
3.4 An informal consultation with stakeholders has recently been undertaken to discuss the designation of further **Marine Conservation Zones**. In Suffolk two are proposed - the Alde Ore Estuary and Orford Inshore. A presentation from Natural England (NE) can be viewed [here](#). NE will provide advice to Defra in February 2017 and a formal consultation will take place in summer 2017.

Natural England continues to progress the delivery of the England Coast Path. The two sections in Suffolk that are currently being progressed are from [Hopton to Aldeburgh](#) and the [Stour estuary](#). NE will present its initial thoughts to the Suffolk Coast Forum and other local partnerships early in 2017 ahead of a formal consultation period.

3.5 The Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership's Estuary Plan was finalised in June 2016 and is now a material consideration in planning terms.

Almost immediately work commenced in the Upper Estuary on the Aldeburgh Marsh Wall, a 3-year project costing £1.98Million. This project will include landscaping and enhancing an area for wildlife and wintering birds for which this area is so well-known. (Map right)

The next project will be to commence work at Snape Maltings this autumn once consents and funding are agreed, and the north wall protecting Snape village will have additional reinforcement in spring 2017.



3.6 The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB plays a key role on our coast, working in partnership with businesses – particularly the tourism industry, farmers, communities and environmental organisations and gets involved in practical conservation works. This year a ‘Join In’ campaign was launched to encourage visitors and residents to get involved in conserving and enhancing the area. The Beachwatch programme is one of the flagship programmes for volunteers on the Suffolk coast, which in 2015 collected over 1.2 tonnes of litter from our beaches.

A study, part of Heritage Lottery funded [Touching the Tide](#) project, due to be presented to a special AONB Partnership meeting on 15 December 2016, investigated the *Landscape impacts of coastal defences* which will help inform future decisions about managing the coast landscape.

3.7 The stretch of coast overseen by the [Bawdsey Coastal Partnership](#) has suffered further erosion during the past year - with a breach into the saline lagoon north of the sea wall at East Lane, Bawdsey, and further erosion of the cliffs in front of Bawdsey Manor. The Environment Agency, in preparation for the winter, has built up a reserve of rock at Bawdsey for emergency repairs. We all understand this is not a long term solution to the management of this area and various studies have been commissioned to provide the community with options to discuss. As with many other areas of the coast, the key problem will be to source the funds needed to deliver any management option.

3.8 At present there is little activity by the **Blyth Estuary Group** as the key lands adjacent to the Blyth

are on the market. Meanwhile, the group is working with partners to commission a technical survey on the southern side of the harbour entrance on wave dissipation to enable full use of the north dock wall.

3.9 Coastal Partnership East, a new partnership comprising Great Yarmouth Borough, North Norfolk Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils' coastal management teams is now six months old and has made excellent progress so far. The formation of the Partnership is an extremely important step in how the coast in Norfolk and Suffolk is managed; the partnership sees local authorities working together, sharing and benefitting from joint expertise, and taking advantage of a larger resource of local knowledge and a higher degree of efficiency.

(Picture right – Cabinet Members signing the Partnership Agreement)



3.10 The Deben Estuary Partnership continues to progress the refurbishment and improvement of estuary flood defences with current works on Flood Cell 4 (Shottisham). This will raise the level of protection for that wall to the adopted 1 in 75-year level. One final flood cell - FC1, Bawdsey Marshes – now needs attention. Elsewhere in the estuary work to manage saltmarsh continues. Building on the success of saltmarsh projects within the Deben the DEP are considering a more strategic approach to saltmarsh management and will be trialling novel ways to gain investment in this work, tapping into the natural value of the estuary environment. Housing development around Felixstowe, Woodbridge, Martlesham and Kesgrave will inevitably bring increased numbers of visitors and additional pressure on the estuary environment and the DEP continues to monitor the effects of disturbance and press for robust and appropriate mitigation.

3.11 The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) has a remit to manage the inshore fishing industry to provide healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry. Some of the key pieces of work which will have positive effects on the Suffolk Coast and Estuaries are:

- Young, pre-spawning fish are often found in estuaries and irresponsible fishing here can have a disproportionately large effect on larger fish stocks. The IFCA is developing options on how to manage those netting activities;
- The IFCA is looking to implement management of the crab and lobster fisheries throughout the district to ensure that they are being fished sustainably;
- The IFCA is bringing in permanent whelk management measures to replace an emergency byelaw which has been in place since April 2015.

3.12 Benacre Pumping Station and the Kessingland Levels: This site is located to the south of Kessingland. The low lying land is drained through a pumping station located on the coast which is under threat from ongoing coastal erosion. A Partnership comprising the Environment Agency, the Internal Drainage Board (IDB), landowners, Waveney District and Suffolk County Councils and the local communities are working to deliver a joint scheme to provide drainage to the Levels and reduce flood risk to Kessingland properties and the A12 road.

3.13 Slaughden: Works to place rock north of the Martello tower are now complete and will be monitored regularly. Options are being developed to look for a long-term sustainable solution for this vulnerable area. The [Suffolk Coast Forum](#) recently gave its backing to include the consideration of a 'Shingle Engine' as one possible option. Work is proceeding to consider the environmental and recreational benefits/impacts and how the estimated £6-9 million funding could be found.

3.14 The Ipswich Flood Defence Management Strategy – Ipswich Barrier: Managed by the EA, works on site continue to progress well, initial dredging of the barrier site and temporary navigation channel has been completed and temporary scour protection installed. The main Cofferdam in which the barrier will be built is now completed and work on installing the 48 foundation piles is underway. Work has also started on some of the connecting walls, in and around the Wet Lock Dock. The Barrier remains on target to be operational in

early 2018, enabling Ipswich to be protected to a 1 in 300-year Standard of Protection in 2106, protecting 4,000 properties and businesses from the risk of tidal flooding.

3.15 The [Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project](#) will reduce the risk of flooding from the sea, from rivers and from extreme rainfall. This £28m project is on-track for completion in 2020. Current activities include reviewing the pluvial/fluviol flood risk modelling and options, and ground investigations for the sea wall and tidal gates. It was disappointing that despite a strong application to Government no additional funding for the project was announced in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, this leaves further work to secure the required funding.



Further maintenance of the Kirkley Stream and its flood storage area has recently been completed with the support of the Water Management Alliance.

Picture left – newly created inlet to cleared flood storage area on Kirkley Stream.

To reduce the tidal flood risk prior to the tidal gates being installed, 1,400m of temporary flood barriers have been purchased, with funding from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee levy. When needed these barriers will be installed by the Internal Drainage Board and Waveney Norse.

3.16 The [Stour and Orwell Estuaries Management Group](#) was set up in the 1990s to promote a sustainable future for the Stour and Orwell estuaries through the management of human activity in a way that is compatible with the conservation of the estuarine landscape and wildlife. Currently Government policy seeks to facilitate an increase the nation's housing provision and economic growth which means an increasing need to manage the impacts on wildlife and habitats. In 2016 an updated [Strategy](#) was published by the Group, outlining the key areas of focus for the partnership over the next five years and beyond, recognising the potential impacts of climate change and economic growth.

A [proposal for a trial mussel fishery in the Stour Estuary](#) has recently undergone a second round of consultation and is now being considered by Defra. A wide range of organisations expressed concerns relating to both the initial consultation process and actual proposals.

4. Updates from other flood management projects

4.1 The [Suffolk Flood Risk Management Partnership](#) continues to oversee the inland flood projects and [investigations](#) into significant flooding - including the subsequent delivery of recommendations. It is also the key forum for discussions about the delivery of sustainable drainage (SuDS) in new developments. One issue of particular concern, echoed by the Flood Scrutiny sub-committee, is the difficulty in securing the adoption and long-term maintenance of SuDS. This is not a problem unique to Suffolk and many organisations are seeking better options and lobbying Government.

4.2 [Debenham Flood Risk Management Project](#): A number of options have been investigated - large upstream reservoirs; smaller natural flood management measures to hold water upstream; a better channel to get water away from the village; property-level resilience and an improved warning service. The challenge with Debenham is the river is fed by three tributaries and in order to significantly reduce flood risk, upstream storage is needed on all three of these tributaries, which means the costs outweigh the benefits and thus we cannot seek public money to do the work. At present this is not a viable option, not only in terms of cost but also because we need landowners willing to provide the land for water storage. We have a few landowners

willing to put in small upstream storage measures, which also helps to reduce siltation and improve water quality. These will provide some reduction in flood risk and will be progressed next spring. We are also hoping to do more of this type of work if willing landowners come forward. In combination with these small features, property level resilience and an improved warning service will be looked at in more detail.

4.3 Gardiner's Close, Bury St Edmunds:



This project arose out of a Section 19 investigation into property flooding. Phase 1, initial clearance on non-main river section of the River Linnet was completed earlier this year.

(Picture left shows one section of the watercourse after clearance)

However, Phase 2 has been delayed until the spring due to difficulties in obtaining landowner consent with regard to tree removal and EA's request for further modelling of downstream flood risk. This phase will involve the construction of an embankment to protect the properties and increase the storage capacity of the flood storage basin.

4.4 Needham Market: A business case is currently being developed for a range of measures across the town to reduce flooding from the River Gipping and surface water. This includes some potential 'quick fixes' such as Property Level Resilience for frequently flooded homes, extension and raising of a flood wall along Crown Street to keep the river out, with associated pump to remove surface water and optimum maintenance regimes. A number of further options are looking at modification and removal of structures around Hawk's Mill and Bosmere including weirs and locks.

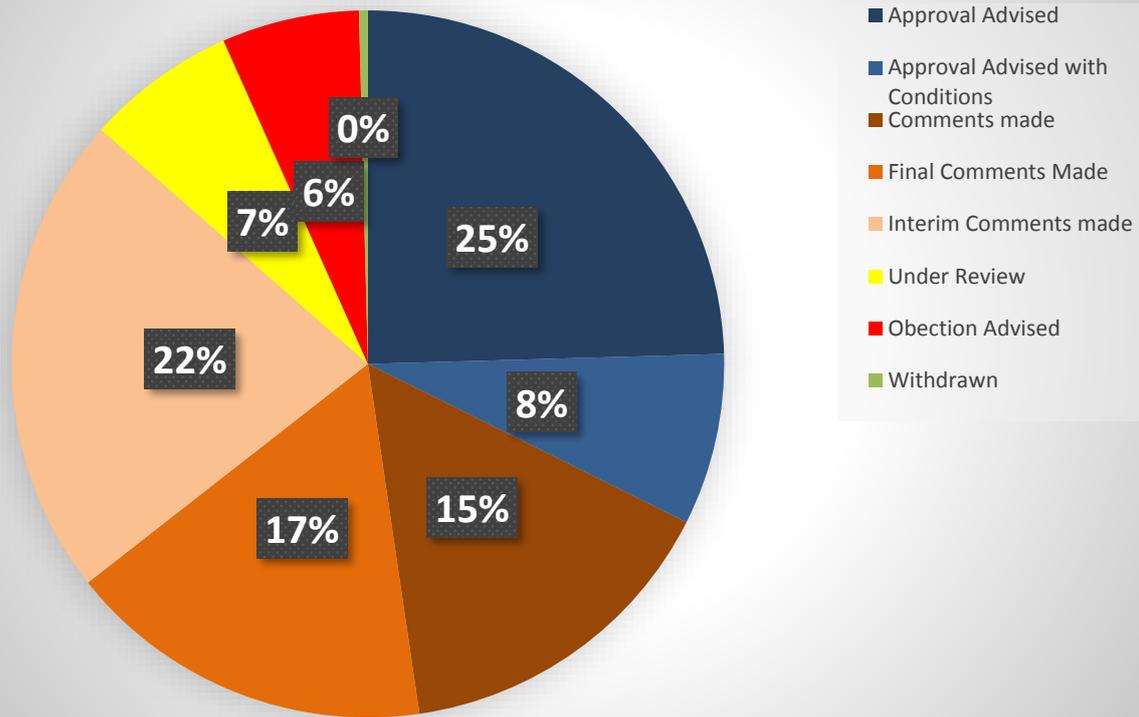
4.5 Sudbury and Great Cornard Flood Risk Management Project: This area is Suffolk's fourth priority area in terms of flood risk, both from the river and surface water. A study into the flood risks and options to manage the risk has just commenced. Local stakeholders will be invited to discuss the project in the spring once the first stage of study has been completed.

4.6 The Anglian Eastern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee recently voted for a 5% increase in flood levy. This funding is vital to support the development of flood and coastal projects, to enable small projects to access a proportion of national flood funding and to support the maintenance budget. The Central RFCC, which covers the west of Suffolk will vote on their levy in January.

4.7 Lawshall: A relatively small scale project has been designed to reduce flood risk to properties in the village. The project involves improving the local ordinary water course network, work will commence when permissions from all relevant landowners have been received.

4.8 The County Council in its role as **Lead Local Flood Authority** acts as a statutory consultee for all major **planning applications** considered by local planning authorities. The diagram on the following page shows the current status of the 500 applications received since December 2015. Applications are considered by engineers in the Floods and Water Team at the County Council and recommendations passed to the planning authorities. These engineers are assigned to specific planning authorities, so they can develop local knowledge and a rapport with the teams involved. The SCC officers also spend regular days working from the planning authority offices, initial feedback is that this co-location is beneficial to all parties, enabling a clearer understanding of the practical issues faced by the planning officers and greater knowledge about the impact SuDS can have on a development. It also allows the opportunity for the Flood and Water Engineers to advise planning officers about issues related to smaller development that do not require a statutory response.

Major Planning Applications - Current Status



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