

**Eastern Regional Committee Meeting 27 March 2010
Planning & Environmental Co-ordinator's Report**

As a general point CE endeavours to consult with local clubs and associations before commenting on environmental issues, however the time allowed is often very short.

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- 1 Thames Estuary (AYC of Southend on Sea area)**
- 1.1 CE attended the meeting of the Thames Estuary Partnership (TEP), Recreational Advisory Group (RAG) on 9 March 2010 in London. Main items of interest were:
- A presentation by the Environment Agency representative on 'Enjoying Water' a research by Brighton University into water related recreation. This was done for East Anglia some years ago but is now being extended to include other areas including the Thames;
 - The TE2100 (Flood Management) Project has submitted its draft plan to Defra and only two members of the team have been retained. Implementation will be bound in with the WFD River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) for the South East Region and with the Thames part of the Anglian RBMP.
 - 'Balanced Seas' MCZ project by Amy Pryor, where the intention is to use direct digital input of all information obtained from stakeholders; (see also item 10.2 below).
 - The Thames Tideway Tunnel has full approval and indeed borehole surveys upstream from Barking have started.
- 1.2 The next meeting of the PLA River Users Consultative Forum (Estuary) is scheduled for 21st May at Gravesend.
- 2 Crouch/Roach Estuaries (CAYF area)**
- 2.1 The next meeting of the Crouch Harbour Authority Advisory Group is scheduled for 7 April 2010.
- 3 Blackwater and Colne Estuaries (BaCSPA area)**
- 3.1 The next meeting of the Colne Estuary Partnership Advisory Group (CEPAG) will be held at Wivenhoe on 25th March. The meeting has now been postponed to 27th May and CE will be unable to attend (sailing).
- 3.2 CE attended an Essex Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) stakeholder 'drop in' at Marks Tey Village Hall on 11th March. At this he established that the eight pages of points raised in our detailed response of 21 December 2009, to the SMP proposals have not yet been taken into account. CE was promised that they would all be considered during the Public Consultation period. CE has written to the EA Project Manager confirming the need for our points to be taken into consideration if there is not to be a threat to recreational boating.
- 4 Hamford Water, the Stour & Orwell and Suffolk Estuaries Deben, Ore/Alde and Blyth. (HASA areas)**
- 4.1 CE was unable to attend the meeting of the Hamford Water management Committee at W&FYC on 4th February. The key items from the minutes were:
- Hamford Water Trust has been wound up and a new Community and Conservation Trust with similar objectives has been set up. The impact of this on HWMC is not yet clear;

- A Sub-Committee has been formed to meet monthly to conduct the HWMC's business, with minutes circulated to all HWMC members;
- It was agreed that the terms of reference and aims of HWMC should remain unchanged;
- Copies of the Hamford Water SMP, provided by CE, would be distributed to members for comment at the next meeting.

Next meeting scheduled for 6th May at W&FYC.

4.2 CE attended the Ore/Alde 'Futures' conference at Snape on 26th March. The main points were:

- There are multiple issues affecting the area and its communities and the sensible way to combine these and the various solutions is for Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM);
- The 'Suffolk Model' is to ensure interaction and intercommunication between all stakeholders so as to achieve, 'Shared Objectives', 'Co-ordinated Support Policy' and 'Delivery Action' all acting with each other to produce agreed solutions. The aim is to keep coastal communities sustainable in the long term up to 2031;
- The Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) is part of this process and is currently being finalised (See 5.2 below);
- The Aldeburgh Coast and Estuary Strategy (ACES) is being developed and will go out for consultation. CE has so far not been invited to participate, but having made contact with the EA Project Manager is confident at being involved in the next stage. It is evident that the SMP and ACES now replace the previously planned Alde/Ore Estuary Flood Management Strategy;
- Five topic areas have been identified as covering the issues and as study groups for solutions: These are: Communities(C); Business(B); Landowners (and Fishermen)(L); Environment, Recreation & Access(ERA); Arts & Culture(AC);
- Presentations were given by the lead persons for each group. Aldeburgh YC is represented on the ERA but was only able to show on the map produced by that group, spot boating activity and not over the whole estuary & coast;
- Much concern focuses on the Slaughden Bend and the likelihood of a breach, either occurring naturally or as a planned action. It was a common theme that the socio-economic effect of such a breach would be disastrous for the community. Assurance was given by the EA Consultants that the SMP has recognised this and the policy will be 'Hold the Line' (HTL) over the next 100 years;
- The groups generally are seeking to demonstrate the highest possible value for existing facilities in all sectors to set against the cost of maintaining the defences. (The Defra rules require a cost benefit analysis which produces a positive balance between 'value protected' and 'cost of protection', before agreeing to expenditure on such defences);
- There is a consensus that Public/Private Partnerships were the only feasible way ahead for funding defence projects, but some disagreement as to whether the lead should be Public or Private. The majority favour the Public lead primarily from the Environment Agency working with the other Agencies.

4.3 Brian Wales (ARPEC) attended a stakeholder meeting, on CE's behalf, at Southwold on 11th February to consider the options for preventing the possible closure of the harbour, due to the imminent collapse of the North Harbour Wall. These options were put out for consultation and CE wrote to Waveney District Council supporting the Southwold Sailing Club's view that only Option 5b (reinforcement of the whole length of the wall by anchored shuttering in front and concrete backfill) would provide an adequate solution to maintaining navigation in the Blyth.

Whichever option is eventually adopted by the Council, must, in our view, be implemented in such a manner so as to ensure that safety and freedom of navigation within the Harbour are not compromised or impeded and that the works do not diminish the Harbour's role or capacity as a recreational boating facility.

5 Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth (N&SBA areas)

5.1 We are still awaiting details of the form of the new bridge (opening or air height greater than 22m) for the Lake Lothing development.

5.2 We are still awaiting further information on the Suffolk SMP (Lowestoft to Languard Point) and on the Norfolk & Suffolk SMP (Kelling Hard to Lowestoft).

6 Wash, Ouse, Nene and North Norfolk Coast (Great Ouse BA, A of Nene River Clubs & NW Norfolk SA)

6.1 CE was again unable to attend the meeting of the North Norfolk Advisory Group (NNAG) under the Wash & North Norfolk European Marine Site (WNNEMS) on 24th February but was represented by John Bailey (JB) (ARPEC). The minutes are not yet available but JB has reported the following points:

- The meeting was for information only, no decisions were taken;

- Most people present were representing other bodies, with the exception of a Peter Terrington, who is very knowledgeable but his views were dismissed by Bob Smith (Harbour Master) (HM) as he did not represent an official group.
- The Sailing club sent no representation, although at least two people present were members.
- The Harbour Project Manager, Charlie Ward said that the banks were eroding faster than expected.
- JB asked the Harbour Master if the hook on the end of the bank was also eroding, HM said yes. JB asked if it would be rebuilt, the HM made no reply.
- JB also asked the Harbour Master if he had received the letter dated Feb 10th from Kate Moore, HM said yes. JB asked if he had replied, HM said no. (see also 6.1 above).
- It seems that the project was specified in an inexact manner by MFA which has allowed the Project Manager very wide licence.

6.2 CE attended a conference in Ipswich on 'Managing Coastal Change' on 22nd February. It was no surprise to hear that "The largest area of flood risk in East Anglia is inland from the Wash"! (see also 12 below).

7 Cambridgeshire (B&CAA area)

7.1 Nothing to report.

8 General Flood Management

8.1 CE attended a Defra stakeholder Flood Management Forum in London on 5th March. Items of interest were:

- The Government has reintroduced the Floods and Water Management Bill, which fell at the end of the Parliamentary term. It is currently in the Lord's having already passed through the Commons. We understand that the management of Reservoirs will now follow the procedure in the old Reservoirs Act so our concern that the clause regarding 'Prime Users of Reservoirs being made Managers of those Reservoirs' will not pose a threat to some Clubs. The Bill should receive the Royal assent before the election;
- Work has already started on implementation before the Bill becomes an Act, covering issues such as capacity and skills building, drafting of regulations and codes, etc;
- The Department and Agencies have been extremely busy since the floods last November. They are pleased that basing their works on the Pitt Report all Authorities worked well together and satisfactorily implemented nearly all the 92 recommendations from that Report;
- They are ahead of target on 'household resilience' (flood proofing) and protection. There will be a meeting in the Summer to achieve insurance for these households;
- There is to be additional funding for reservoirs;
- The EA have combined their flood information services for fluvial and coastal flooding and future connections will be on an 'opt out' basis;
- HR Wallingford is to set up a test centre for 'flood products' to a new British Standard;
- Flood levels will soon be available in 'real time' on the EA website;
- Flood Risk regulations 2009 came into force on 10 December 2009;
- Local Authorities, EA and Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) will have powers to flood land and increase water levels for environmental benefits;
- The question was raised, "why only protection for households not businesses etc.". We did not receive a satisfactory answer;
- There will be a single website for 'Flood Risk Management' covering all departments and Agencies;
- The aim is to confine the National Strategy as a set of Guiding Principles for local implementation and action.

9 Water Framework Directive (WFD)

9.1 The Ministerially Approved Anglian River Basin Management Plan (ARBMP) is available on the EA web site. CE is arranging a meeting with the Project Manager to discuss the next steps. Paul Rayner of South Eastern RYA and PEC is co-ordinating the RYA actions.

10 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)

10.1 CE attended the Natura 2000/MPA 'drop in' session at Harwich on 25th January. The meeting was swamped by Fishermen but CE eventually had a conversation with Dr Keith Weston, MPA Advisor, Norfolk & Suffolk Government Team, for Natural England. He was sympathetic to our concerns about any 'measures' that might arise from management of the Eastern Region sites that would be restrictive to recreational boating. At this stage it is too early to say what 'measures' there might be but he did not consider that we had much to worry about as the prime protection issue off East Anglia and in the Thames Estuary is the Red Throated Diver.

10.2 The Scientific Advisory Panel for the 'Balanced Seas' (Felixstowe to Hampshire Dorset Border) project has now been appointed, (they are just concerned with the science and not with any particular location or issue). Paul Rayner (RYA South East and PEC) is the RYA's representative on the Regional Strategy Group for 'Balanced Seas' CE will cover the Thames to Felixstowe detail and will be Paul's deputy. CE will also be the deputy for the similar Regional Strategy Group for the 'Net Gain' project that runs from the Essex/Suffolk Border to the Scottish Border; John Bailey (AERPEC) will cover the detail from Felixstowe to Wells and Nigel Pask (East Midlands RPEC) will cover from the Wash up the Lincolnshire Coast.

11 Offshore Renewables (Wind Farms etc)

11.1 The RYA is engaging with the developers that have been allocated areas for development in Round 3. Essentially, we will be returning to the arguments about exclusion zones not being necessary, being cautious that leisure boats are not squeezed into the main shipping channels and if all else fails securing corridors though the wind farms for all smaller vessels, including recreational boaters.

11.2 Construction work continues on site for the Gunfleet 1 & 2 project and when seen on 12th March 44 out of the 48 generators were operating and presumably producing electricity to the grid. Remaining work is the burying of the cables between towers and the sub-station. Regular progress reports are placed on our web site www.ryaeast.org.

11.3 Construction is progressing on the Greater Gabbard OWF and as at 4th March, phase 1 monopile installation is complete. Further cable laying is due to start in March. The developer, Airtricity, issues NTMs for fishermen now copied to us and on our website under 'Navigational Notes' and 'Greater Gabbard'.

12 Managing Coastal Change

12.1 CE attended a Government Office East (GO East) conference on Managing Coastal Change in Ipswich on 22nd February. Items of interest were:

- This was very much a 'Planning' conference;
- The largest area of flood risk in East Anglia is inland from the Wash!
- A presentation on 'Adapting to Coastal Change' covered issues such as 'resilience measures' for new and old buildings, Local Authority policy changes and implementation of Coastal Flood Management strategies;
- A presentation from the East of England Regional Authority on the 'East of England Implementation Plan', covering such issues as funding and addressing the 'fault line' between terrestrial and marine planning. The draft plan is to be put out for consultation in the Summer;
- In a discussion on 'New Planning Policy on Development and Coastal Change' (a supplement to PPS25), Michael Bingham of GO East affirmed that communities are central to implementation of this. He asserted that coastal communities must be helped to continue as long as possible. There is a need to strike a balance between economic prosperity and the consequences of coastal change;
- Commenting on the 'Regional Spatial Strategy' and 'East of England Coastal Change Pathfinders' (4 projects let out to contract covering 4 specific areas of the East Anglian Coast', the Regional Minister, Barbara Follet MP, said that the Government is very interested in the East of England progress on integration of the processes and policies. She added that perhaps the integration has been stimulated by the 'Blyth fiasco';
- The presentations and question sessions were followed by the usual workshops to solicit a our opinions/experience of 'Adaptation', 'Evidence and Science' and 'Governance and Funding'.
- Generally interesting day, but some of it rather dry. We need to see less of this eternal discussion and more action to defend our coast and facilities against the predicted sea level rise and increased storminess.

13 Nuclear Power Stations

13.1 No further information on the proposed developments at both Bradwell and Sizewell.