

PRESS RELEASE 14 May 2012

THE ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP



Local people play a major part in the future of the Alde & Ore Estuary

For the first time for many decades, local people are to play a major part in deciding how flood defences in the Alde & Ore estuary should be managed at the launch of a new community-led body called **The Alde & Ore Estuary Partnership (AOEP)**. The AOEP will be launched on 17th May 2012 at Orford Town Hall from 3pm with a pre-recorded address by Richard Benyon MP, Minister for the Natural Environment and Fisheries. Nigel Gooding, Deputy Director for Marine and Biodiversity at Defra will be attending the launch on behalf of the Minister.

In order to be focused the new Partnership will be small, with no more than 12 members representing various communities with an interest in the estuary. Statutory bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Unit support the new Partnership and will be key advisors to it.

“The new body will make significant decisions about the estuary’s future” said Sir Edward Greenwell, Chair of the outgoing Estuary Planning Partnership. “This is a groundbreaking initiative. Significant responsibility for flood defence is being handed back after many years from national to local level, an opportunity to be welcomed and grasped firmly”.

The Partnership is partly a result of the recent Alde & Ore Futures process. It is also partly due to the fact that in future there will insufficient central government money to pay for all the flood defences needed. For some areas of the estuary there will still be 100% central government funding, in most parts partial funding, and in others none at all. Therefore alternative sources of funding will have to be developed, including contributions from those who benefit from the flood defences. Many people living and working around the estuary will benefit directly. The rich wildlife and the distinctive local landscape of the estuary are also enjoyed by a great numbers of people.

The main tasks of the new Partnership will be to:

- Decide on a strategy for flood defences for the whole estuary.
- Create a programme of work: which defences should be maintained or improved, to what standard, and in what order of priority.
- Raise the necessary funds, from national and local sources, to pay for the agreed programme.
- Oversee the delivery of this programme of work. The Partnership will not itself undertake the necessary engineering and administrative tasks, but will commission them from others.

The AGM of the Alde and Ore Association, who played a leading role setting up the AOEP, will take place at 3pm and will be followed by the conclusion of the Alde and Ore Futures project and the launch of the AOEP. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting is very welcome.

Ends

Media enquiries: Contact Sharon Bleese on 01473 706049 or 07795496032 during normal office hours

Notes for editors

Photo Opportunity: At 2:30 pm, Orford Town Hall - key members of the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership

Agenda and AGM papers can be found on www.aldeandore.org. All meetings of the full AOEP membership will be held in public and the first meeting dates are Thursday 24th May, Monday 18th June and Thursday 26th July all at 2pm in Orford Town Hall.