

Welcome to the 27th annual barbecue

This is the update the Chairman was going to give to all those attending the 27th Annual Barbecue but with the raging winds and rain outside the marquee and a very happy, if somewhat crowded, party going on inside, announcements were strictly to thank our hosts the Skepper family and Lizzie Clark who organised the whole event so splendidly.

“Welcome everyone. The annual barbecue gives us all the opportunity to see our beloved river from a different perspective, visiting lands off the normal tracks around the estuary.

Today I would like to express our great thanks to the Skepper family for allowing us to come to this special riverside site. Here we have the opportunity to appreciate the saltings close to and get a feel of being close to the river what it is like with just the walls we are sitting on to protect the land behind, the coming second hay harvest and water bore holes providing irrigation for the field vegetables on the higher land and not least the houses as this stretch of flood cell goes all the way down to Orford.

Keeping estuary going, as you all know, is now requiring a huge effort by the local community. The government agencies we work with here seek to be very helpful and assist the work to restore the river walls. The river walls need substantial work doing every 50-70 years, as it had been done down the centuries. The walls are just clay and settle. Surges will find the weaknesses so we must keep the walls in good repair. The estuary plan is basically on course as confirmed by the latest modelling, but there are some final details in the light of the modelling to be tweaked on what work needs to be done as the walls vary so much in quality and survivability. The Alde and Ore Estuary partnership (AOEP) and Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET) hope to have the final costing for the work which needs to be done in the light of the modelling we spoke about earlier this year. The cost will be some £12m, possibly a bit more and the Government we hope will come up with about £2m.

Very briefly, on **the shingle wall** on Orfordness the Environment Agency have all the necessary pieces of the jigsaw in place to restore the shingle wall in the autumn.

As a community we are now seeing a strong wave of **further fund raising led by the AOET** - the most impressive action being the covering of the Suffolk Hotel in the centre of Aldeburgh with huge Flood posters to create awareness, to reach the peak summer residents population. It seems many people do not realise that, if we do not get together and raise the necessary funds, we could lose the estuary, the river, the sailing, the value of the area which affects the local economy and indeed the value of all our houses, so I do **hope you can all reach out to friends and encourage them, not just yourselves, to contribute to the Trust to keep the landscape going for the coming generations.**

I know people can be confused by the several estuary bodies, but we each have different and complementary roles - the Association is concerned with all matters affecting the estuary and protecting its features and what it offers us all: the Partnership has the estuary plan and programme of works to make the walls well able to with stand a huge surge even in 2050: and the Trust is raising the money to do that and ensure the money is well spent.

Within the Association we are currently seeking to know if we are doing what our members want and how we can broaden our appeal. The Association has been going for 27 years. A couple of

years ago we consulted out members and as a result strove to make clear that the Association is the voice for the estuary - 'Your Voice - Your Estuary.'

Now Simon Barrow, our marketing trustee is working with 7 members who have kindly volunteered to help to think through what we need to do to increase the membership both in age downward and in area around the estuary and to secure greater involvement of members and the community in the work of the Association. Being an organisation of some 1700 or so members means we carry weight when we lobby local or national government whether in planning matters to government policies on spending flood defence money or commenting on any new legislation - the most recent example being we are delighted that the government chose not to make the Alde and Ore Estuary an MCZ - that would have been quite unnecessary, indeed excessive regulation, as we already have a strong range of legislative tools to protect the environment and its wild life.

If any of you have ideas, even as simple as asking all family members to join, or each member bringing in two more to something more dramatic increasing membership and appeal or simply want to comment we are going in the right direction, please let Simon or me know to add to the thinking.

And again I very much would like **an additional trustee** who could take **on planning matters** and **volunteers to take charge of the Newsletter** from Derek Bingham, who has done a fantastic job for many years, finally retires after the next edition. You may feel it is not for you but I am sure among you someone knows of people with the right expertise who would enjoy working to help keep all aspects of our estuary in good heart.

No expertise is required on **11 September** when the **Planning Inquiry** on the developer's appeal against the ruling for him to put 43 new houses at **Brick Dock**. If you feel strongly **please come along** on 11 September and any of the 4-8 days or so afterwards to the Aldeburgh Community Centre.

Last but by no means least, **I am very grateful to Lizzie Clarke** who has magnificently tackled setting up the Annual Barbecue. She has left no stone unturned in seeking to source and set up the marquee, facilities, and all the food we have been so enjoying. Our thanks to her nephew Chris and his wife Liz-Ann for all their hard work including managing the parking and to the 15 or so people who have provided the fantastically delicious and varied salads to accompany the barbecue by Stannards. With so many individual contributions we have a lovely cornucopia of all our local fruits and vegetables each presented with a special individual recipe. Please can we show our appreciation.

if anyone here would like to carry forward the annual barbecue tradition next year, or be willing to help with part of the work whether organising the facilities and site, the meats or the salads and puddings I would be very pleased to hear from you, as, with all we do to preserve and protect the enjoyment of the river, the more hands on deck the easier it is.

Thank you all very much for braving the weather and coming here and now please enjoy the excellent puddings which Lizzie has found for us."