

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Alde and Ore Association held at 10.30am on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019 at Thorpeness Country Club**

### **PRESENT:**

**Committee** Alison Andrews (Chairman), Colin Chamberlain, Keith Martin, Roy Truman, Simon Barrow, John Grayburn, Richard Brunt, Roger Baxter, Diana Paterson

**Members** 80 members present. List held by the Membership Secretary.

**APOLOGIES:** Birgitta Bostrom, Mr and Mrs John Aitken, Thomas Barrow, Peter Brooks, Sir Ian Collett Bt, Susan Cullen, Rosemary Draper, Peter and Margaret Fife, Andrew Freese, Sara Hinton, George and Stephanie Knight, Liz Marks, Jane Maxim, Christopher Neill, Patrick Nicholls, Anne Page, Mr and Mrs Mike Redmond

### **1. MINUTES**

Minutes of the previous AGM of the Alde and Ore Association, held on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2018, were taken as read and approved.

### **2. TRUSTEES' REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

The Chairman began by emphasising that the Association was concerned with all matters involving the preservation of the Estuary. Drawing attention to just one item in the Annual Report on the Brick Dock Planning Inquiry, a major success in the past year which had upheld the refusal of planning permission, she showed the importance of the Association's participation in securing a good outcome. Outcomes such as these did not just happen but involved cooperation with sympathetic groups such as the Suffolk Preservation Society, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, the RSPB, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Natural England and the Aldeburgh Society in order to put the estuary's case. There had been different members of the Association present on each of the five days of the hearing. The Association had specifically drawn the Inquiry's attention on the first morning to the fact that as most of the proposed dwellings would have a view over the Estuary roof heights would be high and inevitably more conspicuous than had been appreciated. The Association had also helped identify the viewing points surrounding the site for the Inspector to visit and to facilitate these, so that she realised how deleterious the plans were. Further, an Association member had also pointed out that some 6,000 people a year, not just a few as the applicant's Counsel had remarked, would have direct sight of the development from the Estuary itself. This showed that The Association very much needs more volunteers who can work on campaigns such as this for the common good. The Annual Report was then duly noted.

The Chairman turned to give her annual update on activities from the start of the current year. She hoped all members had received the recent Spring Newsletter 2019 which included the review of activities. She warmly thanked Derek Bingham for his stalwart support as editor of the newsletter over many years.

The Chairman drew attention to the very well-attended Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership (AOEP) and Alde and Ore Estuary Trust (AOET) Drop-In Session and annual community meeting at Snape Maltings on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019 when more detail about the Estuary Plan had been unveiled. The

Chairman also remarked on the positive fundraising initiatives which the AOET had announced at the community meeting and in particular the recent grant from the Garfield Weston fund of £400,000 plus an additional £100,000 under a matched funding arrangement. Other fundraising events by members of the community had included the Orford wine-tasting event and a concert at Orford, The Chairman urged members who had any fund-raising ideas to discuss them with Jane Maxim, the Chairman of the AOET Fundraising Group.

The Chairman emphasised that while river defences were not the only issues of concern in the estuary, if the defences were not kept good condition there would not be all the good things that depended upon their being in place that everyone enjoyed. It was hoped to be able to spend part of David Andren's generous bequest on the Orford frontage, ahead of the completion of the upper estuary in 2020: detailed plans and checks, that there would be no great penalty in getting government grant if the work went ahead the rest of Flood Cell 4 were being made.

Another important part of the Association's continuous work was planning: the Chairman said that the Association had submitted comments (see the website) to Sizewell C and Scottish Power Renewables consultations because of the long term fears for coastal erosion and the impact of the extraordinary projected increase in road traffic on travelling for those wanting to enjoy the estuary during the long construction phase. There were at the moment, unless anyone knew otherwise, no major plans in sight- but if anyone spots something, please would they let The Association know as its members are its eyes and ears.

The Association had continued its much appreciated programme of summer walks. Two more were planned for 2019, one on 6<sup>th</sup> September which will be led by the RSPB involving a walk observing the wildlife on Havergate Island, and the other, inspired by William Eddis, would involve a walk, along the river walls to accompany the AOET's fund-raising flotilla of boats, kayaks and swimmers on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July. Further details of both walks and the arrangements for joining them would soon appear on The Association's website.

It was hoped the popular Annual Barbecue would be held on Tony Bone's land at Brick Dock on a Sunday in August but so far, disappointingly, no organiser had been found. The Association wished to avoid the need to use a professional organiser for these events as it would mean an extra £5 or £6 on ticket prices. The Chairman therefore appealed for a volunteer to come forward to organise the event.

The Chairman observed how the activities of The Association had evolved over its 28 years. In the 1990s, the emphasis had been on planning and walks and then by the turn of the century it had turned more to commenting on the Government's changing proposals for an estuarine strategy and seeking to ensure that the estuary got its fair share of funding to pay for the maintenance of the river walls. By the 2010s, after the Alde and Ore Futures exercise, the emphasis was on developing with its AOEP partners the strategy for the estuary flood defence plans for the benefit of people, the economy and the environment. The Chairman emphasised that with the emergence of the AOEP and the AOET, The Association still had a vital role to play in relation to the Estuary Plan not least because of its mission and large and interested membership. In particular, it was important that it continued to challenge as well as support plans and monitoring, and to commission or provide supporting science in relation to the future of the estuary. The Chairman mentioned the recent very successful 'Healthy Estuaries Presentation' at Aldeburgh Yacht Club.

The Chairman paid tribute to the important contribution being made by the Marketing Advisory Panel, a group of volunteers brought together by Simon Barrow, which had been thinking how The Association could improve its offering in the future and in particular attract a greater proportion of younger members. (The activities of the Group is more fully described in section 6 below). The Chairman thanked the Group for their contribution which was of importance for the future development of the Association.

Opening the floor to discussion on her update, the Chairman was asked by Mandy Bettinson whether it might be possible to open the flotilla fundraising day walk to sponsorship so that further money could be raised for the AOET and it was agreed to look it into this.

### **3. ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

In the Treasurer's absence, Colin Chamberlain presented the Accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. The Accounts were in good order and had been approved by Ensors as independent examiners and a certificate to that effect was to be found at page 13 of the Report and Accounts. On the Summary Statement on page 7 it was explained that the substantial fall in 'membership fees and donations' was largely explained by the inclusion of a final tranche of £10,000 of the donation from the David Andren estate in 2017, and that in fact the membership fees, although falling slightly in 2008, were broadly the same. Turning to the note on Income on page 10, total income was £19,000, the apparent fall in income since the previous year being again explained by the receipt of the Andren donation of £10,000 in the previous year. The Barbecue receipts were up £157, the walks receipts down over £500 owing to fewer number of walks but the Ferry had enjoyed a bumper year with income of £3,256 which had included a remarkable 400 cyclists. Interest on cash deposits was up. Turning to the note on Expenditure on page 11, this was £13,893 in total. The costs of the marquee and food for the Annual Barbecue had risen by some £500. The extensive repair and improvements on the jetties undertaken by Roy Truman and his ferrymen had involved costs of £3,428. There was also very good news for 2019 in that Roy Truman had successfully secured a grant arranged by the AONB, payable by EDF, for £3,000 for which he is to be congratulated. Newsletter costs were about the same but the AGM costs had risen as a result of having to send an additional mailing. The donation of £1,000 was a contribution to the legal costs of the Brick Dock inquiry. The net surplus for the year was therefore £5,744, half of it from general account and half interest on the investment of restricted funds. The General Account at the year end therefore stood at a total balance of £44,550. The Restricted Fund representing the David Andren legacy at the year end stood at £623,802. The grand total of general and restricted funds therefore stood at £668,352 at the year end.

Opening the floor to discussion on the Accounts, a number of members mentioned receiving two copies of the AGM papers one in a personal capacity and another as a member of the AYC. It was explained that the intention was that this should not happen: all members receiving duplicates in this way were asked to notify John Grayburn. Other members mentioned that where couples were both members that emails had been sent to only one of them which became a problem when the recipient had not passed a copy on to the other member. The Chairman promised that the Association would examine its systems to put this right too.

Mark Goyder picked up on the point made in relation to the Accounts that there had been no increase in subscriptions in 28 years and wondered if this implied that members were thought not to appreciate the value of their membership. The Chairman acknowledged the point saying there had to date been no necessity to increase subscriptions as expenses such as those for newsletters were still covered and all events were costed to be as far as possible self-funding and there were still funds to meet commissioned reports, the Association had not treated this as a priority . However, the Association was considering further developing activities and also had not yet found a new Honorary Secretary, so the extra administration, perhaps including a paid secretary, might well involve a review of subscription rates. Others mentioned the benefit of having more volunteers so that the Association could undertake more projects. Rufus Gilday said that he believed that where there were specific projects which needed funding that the money could be raised “in ten seconds”. The Chairman also noted that subscriptions were an issue that might come up under the discussion of the marketing Group’s work.

The Accounts were unanimously approved: Richard Marson proposing and David Gordon seconding the resolution.

#### **4. ELECTION OF TRUSTEES**

The Chairman referred to changes in the membership of the Committee and thanked Sally Walton for all her hard work and wise counsel during her period of service as Hon Secretary and the search was now on for a successor to fill the role. The Chairman also thanked Grant Lohoar who had now retired from the National Trust and had been our contact with that body for many years: it was hoped that the contacts would be continued. Good relations were also maintained with the RSPB and it was thanks to Aaron Howe that that we looked forward to the Havergate Island walk in the summer.

The Chairman called a roll-call of the existing Committee members in order to thank them for all their efforts:- Trustees Birgitta Bostrom (Treasurer), Colin Chamberlain (Legal Advice), Simon Barrow (Marketing), Keith Martin (Marine Conservation and now also Planning), John Grayburn (Webmaster and Events Organiser) and Roy Truman (Ferry Master) together with the co-opted members Richard Brunt for the Wild Fowls, Roger Baxter who was responsible for the River Defence Committee annual surveys of the walls, and Diana Grayburn the Membership Secretary.

John Grayburn and Keith Martin were both due to retire by rotation and had both offered themselves for re-election. Both were unanimously re-elected on a show of hands by the members.

#### **5. MARKETING**

Simon Barrow introduced a discussion on the work of his Marketing Advisory Group which comprised William Eddis, Frances Barnwell, Bobby Rusack, Suzie Bridges, Mark Goydar and also Rufus Gilday who stood as adviser on the relationship with the Aldeburgh Yacht Club. Simon said we did not know anything about our membership, other than names and addresses, except that it appeared to be ageing and was perhaps not as engaged as much as we might like. The Group had produced a preliminary plan which had received extensive comments from all the Trustees, for

which he was grateful, before producing a revised plan. Following that the Group had engaged with the data management consultants Direction Forward in a meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and they were now preparing a report on data management issues. This had been followed by a meeting of a Focus Group which had been arranged by Frances Barnwell to probe people's attitudes on the Association's activities and thanks were due to Frances in pulling this all together. The Focus Group had 17 participants, which did not include Simon nor any other trustee as was good practice, and was as diverse in composition as possible with about half over and half under 50 years of age and at least one third female and a balance by reference to periods of membership. Their discussions have been guided by an excellent independent facilitator, Sarah Ladbury supported by Judith Golder. A draft of the Focus Group discussion has now been prepared and is with the individual members for consideration and they have been asked to give their feedback to Sarah. The next step after that is for the Committee to consider all the comments and formulate a plan to be taken forward with members. Simon concluded by saying that perceptions were important and he was determined in future to avoid the perception that the Association was just an 'elderly clique'. The Association he felt should be an influential membership-driven organisation but there was work to be done to realise its full potential.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

David Gordon paid tribute to the work of Alison Andrews, as well as the Trustees Alison had mentioned, as an able and hard-working Chairman and there was enthusiastic support for this tribute from the meeting.

There being no further business, the formal proceedings of the AGM were closed at 11.30am

