



The Alde & Ore Association

Newsletter 53 - Spring 2020

Sea pink/sea thrift on the summer saltings



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In this issue- prepared before coronavirus lockdown

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The Chairman's note

It does not need me to say this but this has been an extraordinary winter and we have all seen the river and the shore in wild winds and storms. But while these are quite exceptional, they emphasise that the East Coast is in the front line of climate change, so we all need to think what we can do to reduce our use of resources, reduce waste as well as support all the efforts to secure resilient defences against sea surges.

In this Newsletter you will find many things from the joys of spotting wild life from the Butley, to the changing shoreline, to the progress in the development of the estuary plan, government spending on the estuary area, the ongoing monitoring the river defences, new rights of way signs, what is happening to the lighthouse, and more.

You will see, on page 11, the new chapter in the Estuary Plan volunteer management. The newly formed Alde and Ore Community Partnership is taking forward the remit in relation to guardianship of the strategy and communications with the community, working with the East Suffolk Drainage Board (ESIDB) and the Alde and Ore

Estuary Trust. The Association is very pleased to have a seat on the new Partnership and will play an active part in representing its aims in the interests of the estuary.

But while the community involvement moves into a new chapter, we need to express our huge appreciation to the former AOEP for achieving the development of a whole Estuary Plan which has formal endorsement as a document of material importance in planning, and for taking the Plan to the point where its construction on the ground can be implemented. Without that Estuary Plan, which took several years of continuous work to achieve, there would be nothing to be taken forward- there would be no river defence strategy. For all this, huge thanks must go to original Estuary Partnership, all volunteers, in particular, the chairman Edward Greenwell, Mandy Bettinson the Secretary and Andrew Hawes who as the engineer showed that it was possible to design such a plan. Thanks must go too to all the officers in the government bodies, in particular the Environment Agency, Natural England, the District Council. ESIDB and Suffolk County Council, who did so much to help the volunteer Partnership find its

way through all the processes and assessments needed to get to where we are today.

In the coming months, The Association and all members have much to look out for. There will be soon proposals for National Coast Path route between Aldeburgh and Bawdsey, at some point we will hear the results of government consultations last year on flood and coastal defence strategic management, and hints of likely future funding available for flooding, although as we can all see there are huge needs across the whole country. Also several of the power company proposals affecting this coast and AONB, are reaching not only consultation but actual planning application: if we think something is bad for the area each one of us has to make our points.

There are always Planning Applications popping up. Please be the eyes and ears for the Estuary on any plans because however hard we try to be vigilant it is possible to miss an application- so please tell us of any plan you come across affecting the estuary: don't assume we will see everything.

The important work on better marketing of the Association is seeing action plans nearing completion to widen the reach of the Association and to have more member involvement. The Marketing Group, to whom we are very grateful for the time and thought they have given to the project, have been meeting with Trustees to find ways to enliven engagement with members, existing and new, and hopefully encourage more volunteers to enable the Association to do so much more for the estuary and its enjoyment.

In all it does, The Association will continue to work to preserve and protect our estuary, to be a ginger group, a conscience and will continue its role as a source of constructive solutions to finding the way forward. We will still seek to steer policies to match the facts on the ground. And importantly, to help everyone enjoy the river.

With spring nearly here, I wish you all a lovely summer in and around the estuary.

Alison Andrews, Chairman
PS - keep well

Suffolk Coast against Retreat – SCAR

A report by Keith Martin who has been the Association's rep on the SCAR committee for several years and, by the time you read this, may have become its new chairman.



SCAR was the brainchild of the former Secretary of State for the Environment, and our MP, John Gummer – now Lord Deben, currently chairman of

the Climate Change Committee. He continues to support it as do the two present Suffolk coastal MPs, Dr Therese Coffey and Peter Aldous. This political support has given SCAR strength, extensive reach and an effective voice which is listened to by our public authorities. National figures from the coastal management environment are often pleased to be invited to speak at SCAR's AGM.

The group comprises those coastal community groups that share similar challenges along our beautiful but challenging and volatile coast here in Suffolk. It was established at a time when political support for coastal communities lacked the will to challenge the language of managed retreat and let the coast go. It gave small communities a platform to present a more combined front and demonstrate their determination to resist automatic retreat.

None of this is to say that encroachment and erosion can be resisted for ever. It is quite clear that it cannot. However, it has strengthened those voices that insist on exploring the alternatives and properly test whether or not we need to

give way quite so quickly to the sea.

This affects The Alde and Ore greatly at Slaughden. We all understand the vulnerability of the Slaughden bend in the river where it closes to barely more than 50 metres from the North Sea. One slip here and the Alde might discharge directly into the North Sea with very serious consequences for the entire estuary. The Association has commissioned research from Professor Pye into what this might mean so we are well informed.

And yet last year we found ourselves fighting to alter the 2009 Shoreline Management Plan, the document recording official government coastal management policy for each section of coast. This said that, at the most critical location on our coast, about 600m south of the Martello tower, where the rock armour finishes, the public policy would change to No Active Intervention from 2025, just five years ahead. The Pye advice was that this would lead to a permanent breach in the shingle bank protection within 20 years with dramatic consequences for the estuary.

That policy is being altered. Luckily, David Andren, in his foresight during the 2009 review, inserted a clause relating to the estuary plan then in early formation and which, eventually, triggered the formal review that has just taken place. SCAR strongly supported the stance taken by the

Association in that review.

SCAR exists to support those local communities that seek to help themselves but need advice and assistance in policy and other practical matters. It has taken a strong stance over the lack of consultation and poor information related to the Sizewell C proposal and has supported local communities in the Scottish Power proposals.

Issues like these exist up and down the Suffolk coast. The Benacre estate loses tens of acres every winter which has led to a serious threat to the Kessingland Sluice. Easton Bavents to Covehithe is extremely vulnerable. Southwold harbour requires serious repair and investment. Thorpeness has already seen private investment by residents into sea defences and they are discussing more. East Lane (Hollesley) has had major investment into rock armour defence but may need more. Bawdsey Manor beach has disappeared and is eroding the shoreline quickly.

These days, we have good support from our public authorities and bodies. The Environment Agency has transformed its approach and performance in recent years.



There is clear strength to be gained through working together and SCAR works to keep that going and to prevent a turning back to the days of defeat and assumed retreat.

However, we are alive to the challenge of climate change and its effect on the coast. These days it is more about achieving Resilience than resisting all Retreat – hence a name change to Suffolk Coast Acting for Resilience – still SCAR and still working for the long term future along the entire Suffolk coast.

Wanted - Trustees and Volunteers

help us all enjoy and protect the area we love

The Association could do so much more if we had more hands on deck!

Please consider being a Trustee or a volunteer.

Is there a favourite Alde and Ore area walk you would like to share with others and could organise - you could do it alone or with friends to help share the load.

Any organisation needs new Trustees, fresh ideas, new approaches, please consider whether you would like to help preserve and protect the estuary for all.

It would be great to have a Newsletter editor or team, rustling up news, discussion, history and pictures from all corners of the estuary- if you are interested whether individually or as part of a team, please get in touch.

Do you like managing and minuting? The Association needs an Honorary Secretary.

Do get in touch with any trustee you know or if not sure, please contact me-
Alison Andrews, aldeblackburn@aol.com 01728 452660

River defences

Start the Leap Year as you mean to go on!

With 44 km of river walls being surveyed annually by the Association's river defence team volunteers, the Environment Agency, gave a presentation on what to look for.



Ponding reported and repaired

Saturday 29 February saw most of the river defence committee volunteers and a few new recruits meet with Environment Agency to hear more about river defences and what makes for useful survey results. It was a fascinating morning. And huge thanks to Snape Maltings who provided the Trask room with coffee in support of the good cause working for the well-being of the estuary.

David Kemp, Coastal Partnership and Strategic Overview Team Leader, East Anglia Area, only just back from helping with the emergencies in the West Country, began with a background reminder of how and where walls might be overtopped in a 1:200 year surge event with a graphically animated model showing water depth. It showed all too clearly that the walls need to be kept in good repair to withstand these rare events which can be devastating if the walls are not in good condition.

Keeping watch on the state of repairs was essential. EA themselves cover all the land from Kings Lynn to East London generally once a year with LIDAR surveys enabling measuring of heights and using photographs from regular flights up the coast. Then putting all the evidence together, enables EA to focus the ground inspections likely vulnerable points.

An astonishing fact is that there are over 400 km of seawall (excluding river walls) in Essex which is more than all the Dutch have.

Reports from AOA defence walkers were very useful to EA to help pinpoint weaknesses where action is needed and where money might be fed into works plans. The reports also prompt urgent action, such as an AOA report last year meant that a breakdown in the wire netting holding the path south of Orford was repaired by EA workers promptly.

[In theory the repairs of footpaths fall to Suffolk County

Council Rights of Way Department but it is not well endowed with funds and therefore has to focus the most heavily walked areas.]

Adam Willis, EA Engineer, illustrated the different ways our clay river walls can deteriorate and pointed out the warning signs or poor condition including slippage, buckling or ponding and very bare areas with little grass which the walkers can look out for and report.

David Kemp also explained how government funding works - a complex mix of different pots of money available for capital expenditure, revenue for maintenance, and a few more. Only last year RPOW (Recovery Programme of Works fund) had provided EA with £180,000 to deal with a kilometre of weakness near Iken.

It proved to be an excellent morning- the walkers are now better informed to make good reports, how the reports are used and valued by EA was explained, walkers' questions and queries were all answered, issues relating to footpaths were aired, and how much thought goes into finding pots of money to make repairs: clearly the volunteer help from the AOA enables EA to work very effectively here and provides a running benchmark which itself helps prompt or plan for action. All were very grateful to EA for spending their time and providing a very interesting morning.

With the 2020 post spring equinox survey coming up soon, the volunteer surveyors are well armed!

If anyone would like to join the team please contact rogerbaxter@hotmail.com



Spotting weaknesses in the river walls- this one was reported and repaired.

Seals on the Butley River

Close observations by Roy Truman and fellow ferry rowers

One of the pleasures of being a ferryman is watching the changes that occur through a day's "duty". A ferryman's day takes in about half a tidal cycle, about 6 1/2 hours, and will include a high tide or a low tide or on rare occasions, both. The ferrymen keep a close eye on the tidal rhythms. These can be predicted in advance and the wily old hands will choose their duties to avoid the strongest of the "spring tides" which produce a strong, fast, outgoing stream and can make rowing even harder and getting the boat back on its mooring at the end of the day very tricky. Choose a duty starting around low water and, if the wind is from the East, you could find the boat aground. Not a good way to start the day.

The Butley's resident seals

The resident seals don't have the benefit of tide tables but still have a routine based on the tides. We can watch the seals from the benches on the Capel bank. Some days they do not move at all, save rolling over for a quick scratch, or having to slowly move up the mud as the tide rises. Adult common seals are sedentary. They do not move very far, finding their food as close to their home as possible. The young seals, however, range far and wide both to feed and to find their ideal starter home.

Our adult seals do not like to expend more energy on feeding than they have to so have developed a very clever technique to help with this. Watching the water's edge by the ferry on a calm day gives a clue. As the tide comes in and rises slowly up the mud, shoals of mullet can be seen feeding in the shallow water on invertebrates which live in the mud and move to the surface as the tide covers them. Small fry also take advantage of this feast. The tide runs into the gullies between the saltings, drawing in the mullet and the fry, followed by the predatory sea-bass.

It is no accident that our seals have made their home at the mouth of the largest of these gullies. They wait, basking in the sun, rolling in the cooling mud, until the tide has risen high enough for the gully to fill and then in they go. This makes perfect sense as the fish are easier to catch in the shallower



A Common Seal at Butley River

confines of the gully. When the tide turns, the seals heads can be seen bobbing about in the gully mouth as they try to catch their prey on the way out.

The seals are inquisitive by nature and, when they see an unusual activity taking place, will come along to investigate. Work parties often have spectators and it is not uncommon for the seals to pop up around the ferry and they seem particularly drawn to children and dogs!

There have been two resident seals in the river for at least six years and they are joined at various times by other visitors. The two most frequently seen hauled out are a large male with a ginger tint to his fur and a smaller female, dark grey when dried out. Visiting seals appear to defer to the resident male and approach carefully, looking for signs of acceptance, before settling close by. Younger, smaller seals tend to be tolerated more readily although they can be more restless and amuse themselves by sliding down the mud into the river then swimming at full speed and sliding back up the mud. I have observed one young seal performing this trick over twenty times in succession.

Passengers approaching from the direction of Pinney's pass quite close to the seals but, when asked if they have seen them, usually say they didn't. On my ferry duty days, I often set up my bird-watching scope on a tripod so visitors can have a close look at what they missed. It also gives me the opportunity, at a distance, to look into the private lives of these creatures who we share the river with. These are, it must be remembered, wild animals and should not be approached. When they feel safe and confident, and sufficiently interested, they will approach people and boats, keeping what they consider to be a safe distance.

Seal facts:

Common seals are less common than Atlantic grey seals with 50% of the European population living in Scotland. Common seals have a puppy dog-like face with nostrils forming a "v" shape while grey seals have a pronounced "Roman nose" with nostrils which are almost parallel. Common seals are also known as harbour seals and can swim at just a few hours old. Males may be up to 2 metres long, weigh up to 150 kg and live up to about 20 years. Females tend to be smaller and lighter but may live up to 30 years. If you see a seal resting on one side with their head and tail raised like a banana, it's a common seal. Grey seals can't do this!

Suffolk County Council's Notice on the Sailors' Path

Angela Sydenham writes about the posters which have recently appeared near footpaths around the Alde and Ore area.

A notice has appeared at the Snape end of the Sailors' Path on the North side, opposite the entrance to the Access Land. The notice advises the public that:

"An application [by the landowner] to deposit a statement under section 15A (1) of the Commons Act 2006 has been made in relation to the land (or lands) described below as shown edged red on the accompanying map."

Questions have been asked as to the meaning of such a notice.

This article attempts to answer these questions.

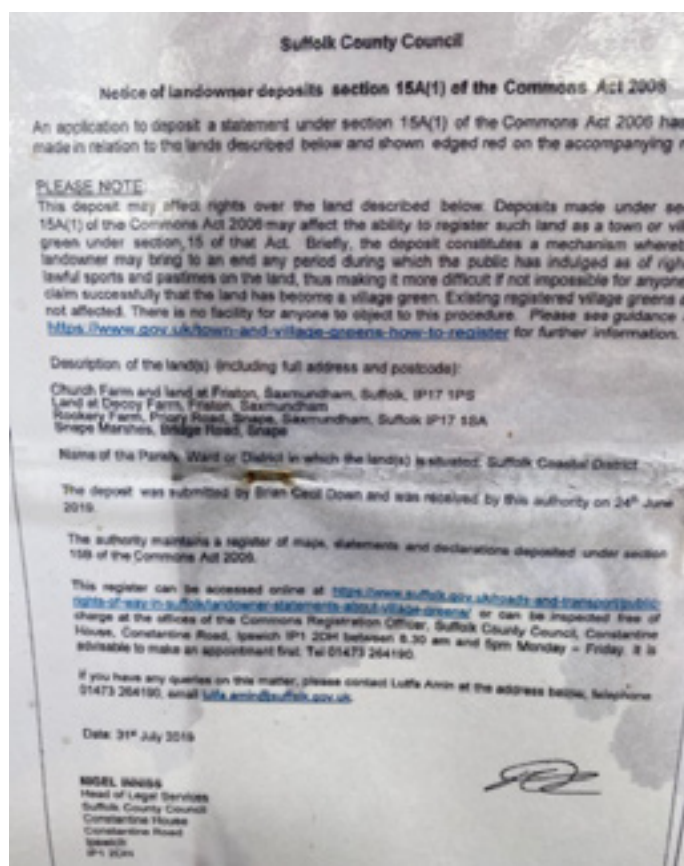
It must be stressed at the outset that the statement to which the notice refers does not take away any existing rights. It merely prevents new rights in favour of the public arising. The landowner can, of course, use the land for his own purposes and give others permission to do so. Any well advised landowner will, as a precautionary measure, lodge statements to defeat any future claims to new Public Rights of Way or Town and Village Greens (TVGs) over his land. Many such notices have appeared in the local area.

The Background

The law favours upholding long established use of land: two examples are Rights of Way and TVGs.

For public rights of way to be established on the basis of user, certain conditions must be fulfilled. A defined route must have been enjoyed by the public as *of right*. This means the use must be without secrecy (*nec clam*), force (*nec vi*) or permission (*nec precario*) for an interrupted period of 20 years before the right is brought into question. No right will be established if there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention to dedicate the route during the 20 year period.

TVGs may also be created by long use where land has been enjoyed for lawful sports and pastimes for at least 20 years before an application to register a green is made. The use must be by a significant number of the inhabitants of a locality or neighbourhood within a locality. The courts have given a wide interpretation to the phrase "lawful sports and pastimes". It includes dog walking, blackberry picking and tobogganing amongst other things. The use must, as with claims to public rights of way, be without secrecy, force or permission. Often the land claimed as



a green will bear no resemblance to a traditional village green. It may be just a scruffy piece of land.

Lack of intention to dedicate a public right of way may be shown by clear notices, physical barriers, and statements and declarations made in accordance with regulations. Landowners may also defeat an application for registration of a TVG by depositing a statement. The statement may be combined with a statement in respect of public rights of way.

Effect of Town and Village Green Statement

The landowner's statement has the effect of bringing to an end any period during which persons may have indulged, as of right, in lawful sports and pastimes on the whole or any part of the land. However, the statement must be lodged before there has been 20 years' recreational use as of right. If 20 years' use has already elapsed, the local inhabitants have one year after the deposit to apply to register the land as a TVG. Where use continues after the deposit time starts to run again and to prevent registration of a TVG the landowner needs to lodge a further statement before the elapse of 20 years.

Publicity and procedure by the local authorities

Publicity for the landowner's statement is set out in

regulation 4 of the Commons (Registration of Town and Village Greens) and Dedicated Highways (Landowners Statements and Declarations) (England) Regulations 2013, S1 2013/1774

“(1) As soon as practicable after receiving an application made in accordance with regulation 2, the appropriate authority must—

- (a) send an acknowledgement of receipt to the applicant; and*
- (b) publicise notice of receipt of the application in accordance with paragraphs (2) ...*
- (2) An appropriate authority must—*
 - (a) publish notice of the application on the authority’s website;*
 - (b) serve notice of the application by email on any person who has previously asked to be informed of all applications and who has given the authority an email address for that purpose; and*

(c) so as to bring it to the attention of users of the land, post notice of the application for not less than 60 days at or near at least one obvious place of entry to (or, if there are no such places, at or near at least one conspicuous place on the boundary of) the land to which the application relates”

The local authority is obliged to keep a register of maps, and statements under the Commons Act 2006 and declarations, relating to public rights of way, under the Highways Act 1980. The register, as the Notice states, may be inspected on line or free of charge at the offices of Suffolk County Council.

Final note

There is little need for concern. As stated above the statement does not take away any existing Public Rights of Way or TVGs. Nor does it take away the rights of the public given by the Commons Act 2000 to enter and remain on access land for the purpose of open-air recreation.

A big thank you to two Trustees

At the coming AGM two of our wonderful trustees will not be standing again for another three year term of office, having already done a good number of years and both have been and continue to be River Defence survey volunteers and ferrymen.

Simon Barrow joined the Trustees in 2005 and will have served for 19 very full years. As ferry leader 2007-2014, he brought his huge energies to build up the tremendous ferry team we have today including fun barbecues at his house to bring them together, annual lunches to say thank you not forgetting a timeless black felt ferry person’s hat which is the nearest thing they have to a uniform. In recent years, as well as taking his turn on the ferry, he has been addressing how to market the Association to a wider membership and seek to increase the support base to champion the protection of our estuary.



Simon: our marketing trustee

John Grayburn joined the Trustees in 2014 and for 6 years has been our invaluable lead and guru on the website and editor of annual reports, membership internet data base, communications and email systems. He has master minded and led numerous walks for some five years and still does all the paperwork for them.



John: our trustee walks and website guru

He has done most of this pretty much singlehandedly in recent years and it seems that reformatting the website, which he and we would like to modernise again, only happened three years ago. He has been and remains a ferryman, indeed taking Association members across on the walk last July. It is great that, while he will no longer be a trustee, he is very kindly going to help keep our communications going and up to date for a little while.

We shall miss them both but know they will still be actively supportive members. We have yet to find successors but we very much hope that others will feel that they would like to step forward and contribute as well as John and Simon have done.

Havergate Island

How time flies. 2019 marked 70 years since the RSPB signed the deeds for Havergate Island.

In the Spring 2019 newsletter, Aaron Howe of RSPB, wrote of the changes to the north of Havergate Island. On 6 September some 30 members had the opportunity to see the results at first hand, traveling over to the island by the RSPB boat, just restored into working order by Brian Upson, and on the faithful *Regardless* which ferries many visitors around and across the Ore from Orford.

In the morning there was a guided walk to the south of the island to see the now well established lagoons. These were remade after the 2013 surge breached the walls, to a lower and broader design so that, while the river can overtop at extremely high tides and in surges, the lagoons behind rapidly fill relieving back pressure on the walls which survive surges better and at the same time the water is refreshed for the many birds who enjoy the briny lagoons. Humans benefit too from the refurbished and shaped walls as Havergate Island provides some flood relief when the surges come up the river.

We learned that throughout the year the RSPB control the

water and salinity levels in the lagoons by adjusting the sluices to let the water in or out. In this way they manage the island's saline lagoons to suit many species of waders and ducks during the autumn and winter seasons. During the spring the island becomes one of the largest gull colonies in the East of England and is nationally important for lesser black back and herring gull. There is also have a small population of common terns and avocets that return every year to breed.

In the afternoon, after a relaxing time picnicking out of the wind either in the hides or the grassy dell just north of the ferry landing jetty, everyone could feast their eyes on the amazing new main and north lagoons. Just the scenery itself was fascinating with a new perspective of Orford Castle and church seen from looking out across the lagoon from the hide.

Of bird life, there was much to see. Favourites included several ringed plovers obligingly close to the right hand end of the hide. There were several shelduck and young, which we are all very familiar with throughout the estuary. A special prize sight were the two, may be three grey

Havergate view over North Lagoon towards Orford



plovers, who had found their way in the late summer to Havergate- with their distinctive grey head and shoulders and black face and chest, at some angles their markings looked quite badger like. There was much discussion -were we seeing redshanks or spotted redshanks which start passing through at this time. Fortunately Dave was on hand again to tell us. A common tern performed some antics for us too.

Expert skills in differentiating dunlin from knots, which are very similar in their near winter plumage but the former are smaller and less stocky, rapidly developed. Of course there was a favourite of many-the curlew. There

were a few early bar-tailed godwits and the so easily identifiable and cheerful oystercatchers.

Another wonder was 200-300 avocets which assembled together across the far side- through the telescope the RSPB kindly provided, there was an amazing view as they all, walking in unison, swished their beaks back and forth harvesting the shrimps which abound there (probably ones about an inch in size).

What a fantastic day, such a treat to be able to have so much time wandering and watching and all the time with the expert knowledge of our RSPB hosts at hand.

Avocets on North Lagoon



RECYCLING – moving away from plastic dependence!

Mindful that we should reduce waste to meet the challenge of climate change, not damaging the environment and habitats and depleting resources unnecessarily - for last summer's barbecue, we experimented with buying 120 sets of sturdy, not disposable, plastic cutlery which was wholly washable and usable for several years. We were delighted to end up, with 120 spoons, 112 knives and 108 forks. We will aim to get a 100% return.

While the plates were disposable, they were made of

pressed palm leaves and should compost well.

For drinks, ideas please! for non-plastic glasses: we do not want broken glass in our picnic places.

Finally, the table cloths were normal washable table clothes, thanks to Slaughden Sailing Club.

And big thanks to everyone who came to the barbecue for taking away everything they brought with them and leaving nothing behind, except some sat-upon grass!

Barbecue Team

Next Annual Barbecue Sunday 2 August 2020 Below Blackheath House

Subject to coronavirus restrictions being lifted

We are very grateful to Sir Michael and Lady Hopkins for very happily agreeing to have the barbecue in their garden overlooking the Alde - a wonderful location.

THE ALDE & ORE ESTUARY TRUST

SAVE OUR SUFFOLK ESTUARY

Update for the Alde & Ore Association March 2020

Paddle To The Pub

In partnership with our friends at Iken Canoe, we are organising a community 'Paddle To The Pub' fundraiser on the evening of Saturday 30th May. Setting off from Iken Cliff HQ and heading up the river to The Plough & Sail pub at Snape Maltings, we will be raising money to help upgrade the estuary river walls and protect our beautiful landscape from flooding as it did during the 2013 storm surge.

Iken Canoe are making their entire fleet of boats available for this special community fundraiser; Canadian canoes, sit-on-top kayaks, stand up paddleboards, 6-person catamaran canoes and even a motor boat! Groups, friends, families, couples and individuals are all welcome, though you must be 7 years old and upwards and able to swim.

With drinks and nibbles and glorious river views, we expect this event to be very popular, so please don't delay and book with Iken Canoe now. Full details of the evening, including timings and how to book, can be found on Iken Canoe's website.

Suffolk's Biggest Pub Quiz

Back in November, the Save Our Suffolk Estuary Pub Quiz raised a record amount for the fundraising campaign. Over

600 quizzers joined us at Orford Town Hall, The Lighthouse in Aldeburgh and 10 pubs along the estuary to help raise £44,000. Thank you to all the participants, landlords, pub hosts, volunteers and quizmasters, together with our local event sponsors, Best Of Suffolk and Pinney's Of Orford, who by supporting us allowed 100% of the funds raised to be used towards vital flood defences along the estuary.

Aldeburgh Festive Fundraising

Heartfelt thanks to Aldeburgh Bookshop team who sold over 1600 charity Christmas cards in aid of the Save Our Suffolk Estuary campaign at the end of last year, raising over £400 for vital flood defences.

In addition, we are grateful to Aldeburgh Jubilee Hall who raised £344 at the gala night of the Snow Queen in December. The community support received from fundraising initiatives like these serves as a reminder that we are very much "in this together".

National Heritage Lottery Fund

In collaboration with the Alde & Ore Community Partnership and the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board, we are now just beginning to prepare a National Heritage Lottery bid for between £2m and £5m which is likely to take a minimum of a year to prepare. If you have experience of the National Lottery process, grant writing or of developing community projects and would like to volunteer, please contact the Trust at info@aoetrust.org

2021 Flotilla

Plans for the timing of our next fundraising flotilla are constrained by the tide which needs to be running in the right direction, on a weekend, at a time in the morning when there is not too much river traffic and when the host locations (Aldeburgh Yacht Club and Orford Sailing Club) are available.



Unfortunately, the flotilla cannot take place again in 2020 as there are no tides that are right. (Some swimmers may recall that the tide wasn't in full flow towards Orford last year, which made the first half hour of swimming more challenging). **Looking ahead to 2021, possible dates for the flotilla are either Sunday 4th or 11th July** when we may reverse the 2019 route and set off from Orford, finishing in Aldeburgh.

Social Media

If you use social media, please do like/follow/share/tweet our posts and help spread the word. There are many people who love the estuary area but are not residents, and social media is a very effective way to reach many of them and encourage them to support the campaign too. We could be found on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at @SOSEstuary.

Partnership Update

As mentioned in the last newsletter the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership and Estuary Trust were discussing a restructure of both bodies. This has now been achieved.

A new Partnership called the Alde and Ore Community Partnership, AOCP, has been set up.

The reason for a new body is that the Estuary Partnership had completed the agreed Estuary Plan, designed so that once all the works are done the estuary river walls should be able to withstand a 1 in 200-year surge in 2050. Taking the works forward now enters a new phase.

The East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) has assumed legal and practical responsibility for the practical delivery of the works and is fully in charge of taking forward the constructional work to make this happen, including the current phase of submitting the business plan, applications for a government grant and consents for the initial project for the upper estuary (Snape, Aldeburgh and Iken) to the Environment Agency.

The new Alde and Ore Community Partnership will help to deliver the Estuary Plan for the Alde and Ore area. It will take forward

1. the guardianship of the Estuary Plan and
2. ensuring community engagement- communications with the Alde and Ore estuary community while the programme of works are in progress over the next few years.

The newly formed Alde and Ore Community Partnership (AOCP) is a larger body. It involves the whole community, with every parish bordering the rivers having a seat on the Partnership, together with a County Councillor, two District Councillors, as well as representatives from business, East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) and the amenity organisation,

that is the Alde and Ore Association.

The Partnership will continue to receive help and support from the national agencies Natural England and the Environment Agency, and locally from Coastal Partnership East.

The AOCP met for the first time on 30 January 2020 at a well-attended open public meeting at Orford Town Hall, with parish representatives and members of the public present. The AOCP elected Tim Beach (Snape Parish Council) as interim Chair, Frances Barnwell (Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council) as Vice Chair, and Alison Andrews has agreed to act interim Honorary Secretary.

At its second meeting on 27 February, the AOCP focussed on how best to achieve good communications within and beyond the estuary area. A comprehensive communications programme will now be drawn up by a smaller group with the aim of reaching all parts of the Alde and Ore communities with messages appropriate to needs and interests without overloading people. In this the AOCP will work very closely with the AOET and the East Suffolk IDB to avoid confusing duplication on matters dealing with the roll out of construction work and fund raising.

The new Partnership will work in close collaboration with the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, which is responsible for fund raising and providing grants to the East Suffolk IDB, is working to secure as much non-government funding as possible to complete the plan.

Anyone with a query or proposal may contact Alison Andrews email: aldeblackburn@aol.com.

The Estuary Plan can be found at www.aoep.co.uk. The Alde and Ore Estuary Trust web page may be found at www.aoetrust.org.

Spending By The Environment Agency on The Alde And Ore Area 2015-2019

It is useful to take stock sometimes. Very necessarily in the last 5 years the focus in the Estuary has been on developing the complete Estuary Plan and establishing how much government grant can be secured to deliver the Estuary resilience plan to ensure walls can withstand overtopping in 2050 even with sea level rise. But the Environment Agency has continued its work and spent £2.26 million on making good immediately vulnerable flood defences.

It is surprising how it mounts up and how easy it is to forget what has been done.

Where	Year	£' 000
Snape village walls	2015	225
Slaughden Beach rock	2016	760
Flood Cell 4 repairs	2016	225
Flood modelling for estuary plan - EA contribution	2017	60
Flood Cell 10 (Aldeburgh)	2017	600
Sudbourne beach recycling	2018	120
Iken north walls	2019	180
Grass cutting over 5 years *		90
Total		2,265

* Note: grass cutting is not about looks: cutting ensures that while grass swards are maturing, the root structure to bind the clay banks is encouraged to spread. A good grass sward is far more resistant to erosion from overtopping water

And Now Here Is Something We Can All Do

In the Autumn Newsletter we called for ideas to put together an Alde and Ore version of Monopoly?

We had two very good full responses, each taking a different approach and some individual suggestions for Chance cards. It would be great to have a few more ideas to help round out the very different ideas and also volunteers to be part of a team to put the whole project together.

Please use the Easter Holidays with your families to come up with your own ideas.

So far, one inventor, seeing the Alde and Ore as a readymade square, devised the eight necessary sets of 'streets' based on the many well-known sights around the estuary. The other thought of a very healthy educational game based on the model but with penalties for example 'Give three reasons why single-use plastic helps' and a

square which imposes 1953 flood damage and sea-defence costs on people, instead of income and super taxes. Another approach- 'you left all the standby lights on your TV and computers while you were away on holiday, make a donation to the Climate Change response fund!'

SO A PRIZE is being sent to each of the two entrants for getting the ball rolling.

Reminder- the idea was to put together the whole map, games rules, currency and humour into a set in environmentally friendly material to be sold in aid of the Estuary Funds needed to refurbish the river walls.

All replies, one idea or as many as you like, and project member offers, please, by 15 May 2020 please, to info@aldeandore.org or A&OMonopoly, 19 Lee Road, Aldeburgh, IP15 5HG.

The Ever Changing Shoreline

Putting together reports from the many coast watchers

Aldeburgh and Sudbourne: With the continuous high winds and stormy weather, this winter has seen huge changes, almost daily, along the shoreline bordering the river, ranging from a broad sandy beach at low tide, losing the shingle behind the huge rocks north the Martello Tower, as it was in the 1950s and three years ago, to wholesale switching of position of shingle along the shoreline.

The rocks put in place in 2017 on Slaughden beach can again be seen, having been buried under shingle by the sea over the last two years. The natural winter lowering of the beach, which all along the Anglian coast has been significantly more than usual this year, has also allowed Environment Agency to come in and remove the very dangerous distorted and sharp metal remains of groynes.

Further south, huge swathes of shingle have built up along the defences to the south of the Martello Tower. The cusp of shingle beach beyond the rock defences, carved out from a stretch of the haul road last winter, has broadened and built-up. So much so, that a caterpillar track vehicle was driven south across the high shingle beach then all the way to the Lighthouse, to help the repairs there, once a part of a gouge in the haul road nearer Martello had been filled in.

Orfordness Lighthouse: see article on page 14

Exceptional tides: On 10 February the top of the tide at Felixstowe was the 3rd highest tide since 1953. Luckily for the Alde and Ore area, although high the tides were very high, and indeed were it the sailing season, the Flying 15s at Aldeburgh could have sailed onto their launching trolleys on the normally dry river bank shore, the tide was not that close to 1953 levels. Orford similarly found the water height high but not extremely so.

Shingle Street: all this winter, those monitoring the river mouth at Shingle Street have found the entrance changing dramatically in shape, position and angle within days and within storms. It is truly a dynamic coast.



The wide shingle beach shelf which has built up over the last nearly two years



Looking north to Aldeburgh Martello tower

Association readers may like to see what is happening with the Lighthouse so here is a **Report from the Orfordness Light house Team**

We know everyone has been desperate to hear how Orfordness Lighthouse is doing after a raft of storms from October onwards, not least Ciara and Dennis just passed. Please forgive our reticence in updating you- we have been hard at work securing the future of the Lighthouse's artefacts and have not been in a position to state a clear way forward until now.

Almost immediately after volunteers hosted a visit from the children of Orford CEVAP school in October 2019, a severe storm hit Orford Ness, taking away the engineers' bungalow and the sea-side concrete plinth around the base of the lighthouse itself. Where days before the kids had joined hands and formed a ring around the lighthouse, much of the ground on which they had stood had been stripped away. It was clear to us then that the long-avoided time had come to dismantle the lighthouse if there was to be any hope of preserving any of the artefacts.

Months of negotiations ensued, not only to find a suitable demolition company that could work to our modest budget, but also to find a way forward with ten separate statutory and other bodies who all have an interest in the outcome of Orfordness Lighthouse's fate and her immediate, highly protected environment. During that process East Suffolk Council determined that Orfordness Lighthouse is now unsafe and ordered that it be taken down.

We have long known this day would come. In 2009 Trinity House determined (after a number of studies) that, for a raft of technical and regulatory reasons, their much loved Lighthouse could not be maintained where she was nor could she be moved. They chose to decommission the Lighthouse in June 2013, estimating that the building would survive only a short while before it succumbed to the sea.

This was the context in which Orfordness Lighthouse Trust took responsibility for the Lighthouse. As a Trust we committed to defend Orfordness Lighthouse where it stood for as long as possible, and if possible to preserve the artefacts after that. We are proud that, through the application of the "shingle sausage" defences, we kept the Lighthouse standing for years longer than anyone envisaged

We have enabled thousands of visitors, local and not so local, to visit the Lighthouse and learn about this iconic feature of the Suffolk Coast. Orfordness Lighthouse has been used as a location for concerts, music videos, student films, television documentaries and even a few proposals of marriage. We have had great fun sharing the building and the history of

the lighthouse with you and we know it has brought interest and a lot of joy to many people.

We have been fortunate to secure an agreement with Anglian Demolition, a company from Attleborough, to carry out the demolition work in a way which enables the Trust to preserve the key artefacts. In the lull between storms Ciara and Dennis plant was brought to site to make preparations to dismantle the building, demolishing the undermined oil-store and place the debris temporarily in front of the lighthouse to protect it from storm Dennis. They also managed a temporary repair of the track down from Aldeburgh and prepare the beach to provide a stable platform for the crane from RJ Cranes that will take down the Lantern Room from the top of the Lighthouse and then begin to take apart the rest of the building. We don't have exact dates for the demolition to begin as everything is weather dependent but the intention is it will be in the next few weeks.

We know there are a few questions left unanswered; we've updated you with all the certainties at this point. Please bear with us and we'll update you as the programme develops.

This does mean that there will be no more visits to Orfordness Lighthouse. We have had lots of requests from individuals and journalists requesting private visits. At this time our only focus has had to be the safe dismantling of the building and the preservation of the artefacts. . Unfortunately we do not have the capacity to take any visitors to the Ness. This process will be filmed as a time-lapse by the demolition company and this will be made available. With good binoculars you'll be able to see some of this from the land.

We shall keep you posted!

The Orfordness Lighthouse Team



Why we need to relaunch the Association

from Simon Barrow

Here is a short recap on why we needed this initiative, what it has achieved so far and what needs to happen next. The Alde and Ore Association Marketing Group (MG) has discussed developing ideas including several MG and Trustee sessions following research with members through an independently facilitated Focus Group (and a wakeup call)

1. The need for this work

Charities, like all other organisations, are wise to undertake regular reviews of their positioning and reputation. Nearly 30 years after the foundation of the Association this process was necessary. We knew that our membership numbers were static, with an older rather than younger age profile and which did not fully reflect the broader socio economic profile of the area.

2. What has been achieved so far

While that research highlighted enthusiasm for the idea of the Association as a membership group, there were criticisms and it prompted trustees to commit to a relaunch of the Association to a broader audience as well as increasing the level of engagement with existing members to inspire, attract and retain volunteers and trustees as is seen with other Suffolk bodies who demonstrate great energy, innovation and popularity e.g. Snape Maltings, and thriving festivals.

Here is our way forward on each of the major issues:

a) Our Independence

Trustees have concluded that it is better for the AOA to stay inside the new AOCF tent and seek to drive the Association's aims from within. All the AOCF members represent independent bodies and our independence will be well demonstrated by our behaviours so that independence is seen to be real. Further, Trustees have set up a small working group of three trustees so it is easier to discuss issues coming up before AOCF more quickly.

b) Our aims needed to be clearer

We will keep our founders historic but long mission (called 'The Objects' in our Constitution)
The Association exists to preserve and protect for the public benefit the Alde, Ore and Butley rivers and their banks from Shingle Street to their tidal limits and such of the land adjoining them or upstream as may be considered to affect them, together with the features of beauty and or historic or public interest in that area.

Our one sentence version (reactions welcome at the AGM))
The Alde and Ore Association aims to protect and preserve our estuary and the life it supports for us all.

We will keep our Strapline

The Alde & Ore Association: Your voice- your estuary

Our objectives : Separate to this we will be publishing specific objectives covering our campaigning for the estuary's interests, our listening and communications with members, taking action on policies or plans affecting the estuary, our climate change action, local initiatives and our own need to recruit more trustees and volunteers

c) Other membership bodies

There has been discussion about how to engage more effectively with other membership bodies including the AYC. We will form a task group to do this and report back to members.

d) An organisation which represents our members

We believe members join because they share our core beliefs and purpose. We will set up at least two independent local focus groups with members to review ideas for increasing the vibrancy of the Association across a broader membership..

e) Developing a more welcoming tone

We are already a big team of around 60 already if we add up Trustees, the MG, Butley Ferry oars people, River Defence Committee volunteer inspectors of river walls and all the others who help on the BBQ, the AGM, the walks and talks. That tells us that where there is a specific duty or idea people do come forward but we must overall demonstrate that a great team is one whose enthusiasm is infectious and to be asked to join is a compliment. We must as individuals become better recruiters- people buy people!

Final Thoughts

I am grateful to Alison and my fellow trustees for backing this programme of listening and renewal and thank my colleague MG members -William Eddis, Chris Gill, Frances Barnwell, Mark Goyder, Bobby Rusack and Susie Bridges. On a personal note, I told my fellow trustees last autumn that, given other commitments, I intend to stand down as a trustee while remaining a Butley ferry oarsman, RDC volunteer and an active member. Successor sought for the Marketing role.

Simon Barrow





Birgitta Bostrom

*Iken Church from Iken Beach at high tide on
a lovely summer's day -- summer is coming!*

Dates for your diary

Saturday 4 April 2020

Annual General Meeting of the Association, being held at Thorpeness Country Club, 10am refreshments for 10.30 start.

ADJOURNED WHILE CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS ARE IN PLACE

Friday 15 May 2020.

Association walk at RSPB Botany Farm Reserve at Snape guided by the RSPB

POSTPONED UNTIL MAY 2021

Sunday 2 August 2020

SUBJECT TO CORONAVIRUS PRECAUTIONS

Annual Barbecue on the grassy shore edge below Blackheath House, 12.45pm,
with many thanks to Sir Michael and Lady Hopkins

Possibilities to come:

A walk on Orfordness in late June may also be finalised. **POSTPONED**

Any volunteer or group to organise a walk in early September?

Contributions are always welcome!

Please send to the editorial team at info@aldeandore.org.
your observations about the Association and its activities, suggestions for articles, indeed articles,
for the Newsletter and your photographs. Digital images should be submitted as jpg files
and in the size of 1mb or more to guarantee print quality.

Please send to info@aldeandore.org

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that signed contributions may not reflect the views of the Association as a whole.