

THE ALDE & ORE ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No. 1154583



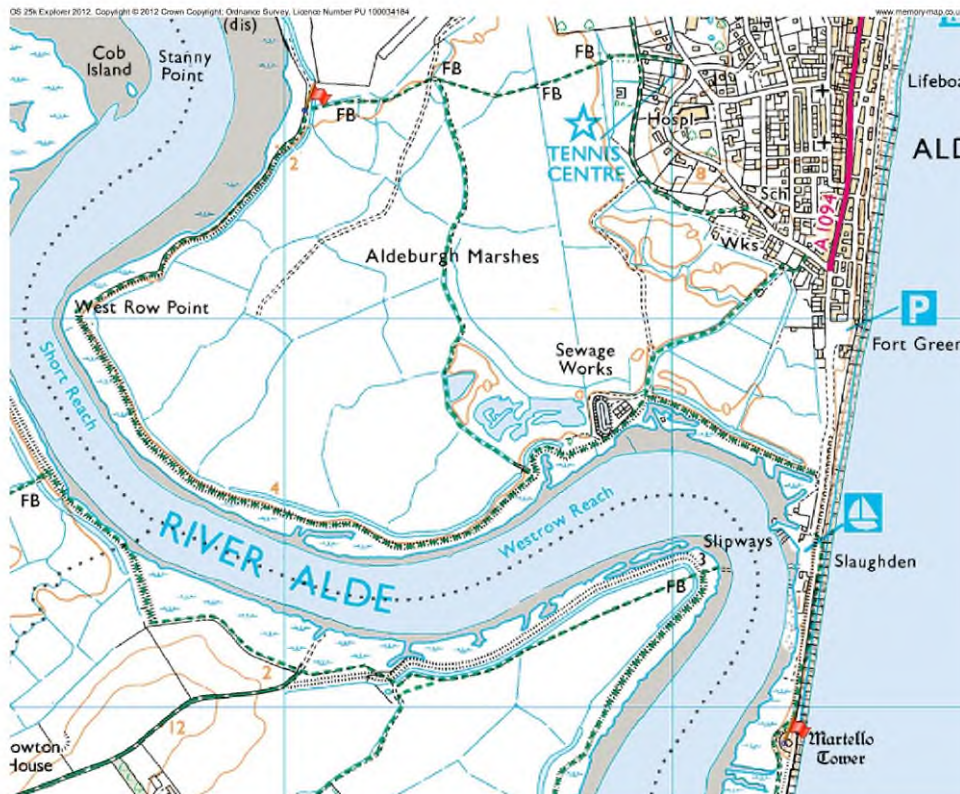
ALDE AND ORE ESTUARY ASSESSORS REPORT

NAME[S]: A Andrews + J.C.Hodrien	DATE OF INSPECTION: 7 th April 2026
FLOOD CELL: FC10	AREA OF ASSESSMENT: Slaughden Quay to Brick Dock

SUMMARY

River Wall/Armour	Saltings	High Tide Debris Line
Generally, the wall is in fair/good condition with the significant exception of a new area of seepage beneath the wall at (grid ref TM461557) and of continued and significant erosion by walkers on the top of the wall near Slaughden and of the steep sides of the walls near Brick Dock. (EA Visual Inspection Guide grade 3 or 4 need attention) Significant displacement of concrete armour blocks along the stretch, close to Brick Dock, has previously been noted. Comparison of year -on-year photographs suggest the damage has not increased much in 2025/6 In places the armour is hard to inspect due to debris accumulation and covering by algae.	Visual inspection suggests that the saltings are in similar condition to last year with a few areas of some erosion and degradation	There was little evidence of debris accumulation over the winter, except between West Row Point and Brick Dock. Here some was found close to the top of the wall. Overall, the amounts were less than found last year.

Area Surveyed:



OVERVIEW

Grid references throughout relate to Explorer Map 212

The annual survey of FC10s took place at low water between the hours of 09.15 and 13.00 on 7th April 2025. This date was chosen for best comparison with last year's report of early April when vegetative growth is low, allowing better inspection.

In general, the wall remains in generally fair / good condition but with some significant concerns some of which have arisen in the last year.

Highlighted in previous reports are a small number of collapsed / displaced blocks in the wall armour in a 20m stretch approaching Brick Dock.

The erosion, by walkers, of the footpath on top of the wall, particularly between Slaughterden Road and Slaughterden steps, is having a major impact and cannot be overemphasised. Originally a path of less than 1m was marked, today the whole top of that wall trodden into a footpath- some 3m wide.

A notable concern arising this year is evidence of new seepage beneath the wall at 462557.

Some degradation of the saltings in places is ongoing. Visual inspection alone suggests it may have accelerated in a few places over the last year. Conversely it appeared that there may be some slight accretion at the pilot saltings site at the Ionia. 463555.

A high-water surge of an estimated 0.75m was reported in late March. There is no significant accumulation of debris and the occurrence of blankets of algae in places on the saltings is less noticeable than two years previously, in 2024. There is no evidence of water overtopping the wall in this flood cell. Nor is there evidence of animal burrows and the slopes remain grassy without any tree or shrub colonisation.

The middle section which was reconstructed about 7 years ago is generally in very good condition, although the path is a bit thin on grass, but the sections at either end, in the north is narrower with steeper sections either side and at the eastern end has significant low stretches.

DETAIL

Footpath

Although, the winter months were wet, the top surface of the wall has completely dried out. The evidence of the erosive effect of a very high number of walkers is clearly evident particularly in the first stretch that leads from the sea wall 464556 to the footpath crossing the Town Marsh at 459557 (Westrow Reach). Significant depressions, of more than 6 inches regularly occur at approximately 5m intervals. Last year our visual inspection suggested the erosive effect of walkers to have reduced the height of the wall, on the river side, in one place 462/4557 to around 1.8m. Our estimate this year suggests it is even lower.





The colonisation of Alexanders (*Smyrniolum olusatrum*) has increased significantly along the first stretch of the footpath from Slaughden Road(TM 464556- 462-556). Last year its spread was estimated at 50m, this year it has doubled in length on the inland side of the wall. Individual plants can now be found along the length of the entire flood cell wall. In this first stretch, the contiguous colonisation by winter heliotrope- (*petasites fragrans*) remains evident, stretching for some 50 yards along the top and down to the base of the inland side of the wall.

River Wall.

No tree or shrub growth was noted, the non-river wall facing slope being mowed annually in late summer. No evidence of animal burrowing was seen.

The intervention by the Environment Agency in 2022 depositing protective rocks at 458557 is apparently effective, albeit this assessment is inevitably limited to visual inspection of the surface.

Seepage:

Our annual reports, since at least 2019, have raised concerns regarding significant puddling appearing on the town marsh side of the wall at approx. 456556 (where steps lead to a footpath across the town marshes). This apparent seepage from beneath the wall remains. Puddling, despite recent dry weather, is still clearly evident but no worse than in previous years.

There is a new are of puddling not seen in previous years at 462557. This is almost directly on the landward side below where the top of the wall has been worn, perhaps slumped to its lowest level . It is recommended that this in professionally investigated at an early opportunity. See photo below.



Since 2023, close attention has been given to fissures that appeared in several places **starting at TM 455554 going east wards** along at the river-side edge of the top of the new (2018) wall and the supporting slope. It remains that there is no new evidence of further slippage here or in other places albeit the fissure is hard to see given the grass.

Armour:

at Brick Dock:

The disruption of the blocks at 2-4 metre intervals for 20 metres or more remain about the same as last year as in the photo below at TM 449564



Also 3-5 weak places between Brick Dock steps and Brick Dock Jetty--Photo of one at TM450567, below



SALTINGS

Year-on-year visual inspection of the saltings has suggested that they are subject to erosion, and in places are in poor condition along the river wall from strong tides and in one spot near Aldeburgh sluice being trampled by picnickers and fisherman. In view of the protection they offer this is of long-term a concern.

Detail:

The saltings immediately west of Aldeburgh Sluice are showing signs of heavy footfall wear, as in summer if dry enough it is a picnic place among the remains of the sea pink.

Pilot saltings work at Ionia stretch 463556 continues in place : the hazel bundles are disintegrating but sea weed growth on remains still provide some stopping power for silt to drop; accumulation, if at all, is very slow.

Consideration:

Annual visual inspections give a very imprecise picture of the rate of degradation. . Examination of year-on-year photographs also fail to give a clear understanding of the rate of erosion and the widening of channels and if indeed this is significant. It can be affected by the light, state of the tide, when the last spring tide sweeping the area clean of debris occurred. Comparisons have been made of photographs over the years but only in a very few places can the extent of the change be positively identified. The conclusion of this team is the Association, or AOCP, if it is not done by Natural England, needs to organise an updating survey of the Estuary's saltings extent, since the last one was done in 2015 or look at the possibility of a regular drone survey which the River Defence Team can examine .

Further, consideration of photos over the years of the pilot trials, set up by Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership volunteers in 2017, to reduce the saltings erosion and help the accretion of silt through the use of stakes holding hazel bunds at strategic points, around 45555, is in hand but will be submitted separately from this report

DEBRIS LINE

In recent years the accumulation of debris has not been considered a problem. Significant blankets of algae first reported in 2024 on the saltings between Stanny Point 445565 and Brick Dock 448568. have not subsequently been so apparent.

Between West Row Point and Brick Dock there is a higher than usual level of debris - some 0.6m below the top of the river wall.

30 April 2026