

Colne Advisory Group Meeting 7th July 2011

Bob Seago -EWT
Jean Smith – St Osyth Parish Council
Leon Woodrow – Tendring District Council
Steve McMellor – CEP/ University of Essex
John Jowers -ECC
Peter Thistlethwayte - CPRE
Cathy & Christopher Kerrison – Colchester Oyster fishery
Alan Tyne – Wivenhoe SC
Brian Sinclair – Wivenhoe TC
Mike Downes - Nottage
Robin Cole - BHC
Graham Underwood- University of Essex
Caroline Shotton – CEP/BHC

Apologies

Gordon Eve – Anglian water
Chris Edwards - RYA
Graham Chasney - Colne YC
Nick Baker – Rowhedge Heritage Trust
Bernie Hetherington - BHC
(##)

1. Minutes of meeting on 11th November 2010– agreed

2. Water Quality & Sewage Treatment Works Improvements

GU reported past history of storm overflows, sewage inputs and , letters sent to orgs involved and MP's. Bernard Jenkins involved before and after election. He pursued with AW he had meeting with Chairman Peter Simpson of AW in March in Parliament. AW promised to accelerate programme of upgrades. Press release and details of upgrades planned were presented.

Cathy K – overflows? Any progress on this?

GU – we will follow this up too. Appears that capacity will be increased to be able to store extra storm overflow.

3. Balanced Seas and dMCZ update

GU – Marine & Coastal Access Act set out to provide ecologically sound marine zones, known as Balanced Seas in the south. Different system in Scotland. Part of conservation zone is to have reference areas (nature reserves). Conservation zone for the Colne-Blackwater almost follows SAC boundary with a small amount extra. Colne & Blackwater is likely to be CZ for the south east due to lagoon sea slug, eel and cliffs and foreshore at Clacton and native oyster. Final version goes to Defra and NE in September 2011 and then a public consultation and Defra, and MMO to be signed off.

SM – area selected, no news yet on how areas will be managed and what it will mean for stakeholders. Some reference areas have been set – blue mussel beds and native oysters. Likely these two areas will be the heavily protected areas.

BS – who will police? SM – no idea, separate committee will be formed to decide this. SAC, SPA etc will all be tied in.

GU – no extracting activities will be allowed at all in reference area i.e. fishing, anchoring, etc. Areas are far too small though to be good reference areas and science advice is to ask that areas be made bigger.

BSeago – no official consultation was done on Colne Point reference area with EWT.

BSinclair – traditional recreation area at second beach – any chance area will expanded to include this? Probably not.

CK – debatable whether any of the fishery area is included, but likely that an area will be in the reference area, depending on the actual GPS-drawn boundaries.

SM – recognised that in bulk of MCZ the commercial management of the oyster fishery is beneficial and no plans to restrict this. Reference area may be different though. Reference area has continually been moved away from objectionable areas and reduced area to allow this.

BM – how robust are maps? Data is very poor and based on existing information, no new research.

SM – a lot of maps have inaccuracies and driven by economics not conservation.

GU – None one is content, economic stakeholders are saying process driven by science, and conservation stakeholders say process too dominated by economics and they're not happy either.

CK – if species distribution data is wrong then CEP should write. SM – has been noted at every meeting so far and either not listening or don't have time to update maps. GU – example is that there are no pacific oysters indicated on Essex Coast. Deadline of 2012 to designate some sites or we contravene an EU Directive, so process has been rushed.

RC – can zones be enlarged or altered once designated? GU – Defra has currently said no, that lines must stand and won't change, even though they have been advised that they should be allowed to change to ensure they are correct and are serving their purpose.

BSeago – who is going to stop people extracting though? GU – supposed to be self policing as determined by stakeholders. Charts will not show areas as not navigational issue.

BM – new marine spatial plans will show zones but no idea of timescales for this.

GU – CEP will write to Bernard Jenkins and Douglas Carswell MP's raising concerns over lack of genuine stakeholder involvement and incomplete information.

JJ – will probably be policed by cross warranting on IFCA's. Will talk to Jim Pace about it. Could be GPS boundaries. New nuclear power station will have huge impact on whole MCZ debate.

4. SMP update

SM – few people had tried to contact Ian Bliss with no replies. SM tried to contact him but he is on leave so still no response.

BM – SMP process is going through IROPI system at present to discuss levels of compensatory habitat. Very close to approval as agreed by all parties and at last stage.

BSinclair – PR by the EA was appalling on sea walls consultation and he had to field angry residents questions.

GU – epoch plans are on CEP website along with MCZ plans and reports, which are also on Balanced Seas website.

5. Ferry Extension

RC – Foot ferry service been run for 7 years. Max 12 people plus dogs, bikes, etc. Plan to introduce extension to Wivenhoe, Rowhedge and Colchester in connection with public transport. Existing ferry at end of life, new ferry to be purchased. Rowhedge and Wivenhoe using existing pontoons and new pontoon at Hythe Quay is planned.

GU – timescale? RC – from next season.

CK – one way? RC – can be one way or both but restricted by tides so likely to be one way depending on what passengers want to do. PT – regularity? RC – timetabling needs to be looked at, probably one trip per day especially if midday tide. Would have to be bookable service and not on demand.

GU – useful for people living at University halls of residence and residents at Hythe, so day on beach promotion. RC need to look at promotion.

MD – Viking Saga? BSinclair – might find passenger quota from Wivenhoe Ferry service useful as at certain times of days there are no people around. Great idea to open estuary up to people who may otherwise not use it. Can liaise with Wivenhoe Ferry Jetty

JS – only problem may be only one boat? RC – will still use existing ferry boat too so have options.

BM – Who at CBC? CS – connections with EU funding and Neil Hopkins and Patrick.

GU – birdwatching trips? RC – yes ideal and promotion needs to be looked at. Will only break even so not about money making.

GU – possible ECC funding? JJ – CROW Act could attract all sorts of funding and could look at this. Maritime Heritage Centre would be good stopping point and is happy to put all these things forward. Also Sustrans.

GU – good to promote ‘good’ use of river.

6. Cooks Moorings

BSinclair – Cooks development conditions include plans for public access and to preserve wet dock and keep it as a useable facility for professional fishermen. Will be able to make provision for up to 6 commercial fishing boats in wet dock. Has cost WTC a lot of money and near to signing leases. 4 fishing boats and will have to pay for their berths for first time. Problems over the issue of dredging of wet dock and marine consultant suggested plough dredging for maintenance. As it was never dredged should be maintainable by boats using the area. Possible space for 2 or 3 other craft, preferably traditional boats. Public slipway there that is unusable as it only goes to high water mark. Will also be public car and dinghy park. Development has been well carried out. Jetty is not under WTC remit as too risky for WTC to take on but will be under the management of the residents management company but will definitely have public access.

GU – public launching? BSinclair – public slipway included purely so that there was public launching access, but can't be used. MD – spoke to developer but they said slipway was stopped when plans showed and now no use. BSinclair – encouragement to include canoe membership but hasn't happened yet. Only option would be pier or pontoon for launching. AT – WSC will always be hospitable to anyone wanting to launch.

7. Essex Coastal Forum

SM – Nicky Spurr working on setting up Essex Coastal Forum and asked if we wanted to be kept involved. Will be statutory bodies, councils, etc.

BM – mostly about implementation of bigger SMP actions.

SM – if we want information they will tell us if we want them to. JJ – the ECF had come about as a realisation that we have neglected our coastline for many years. Need consortium of people from river users to look at access. CEP should have as much input as possible. Substantial funding available.

SM – good way to get NE to engage with estuary?

JJ – Localism Bill will say that communities should have a say.

MD – education is key too.

SM – will respond to Nicky Spurr and ask to be able to feedback from CEP to the Forum. GU – suggest that Colne be a pilot study area for the ECF.

BSinclair – main problem now is ‘Romford Navy’ but more often now large power boats. In touch with Steve Collis re speed limits past Roman River and signage. RC – note made about River Patrol being solely funded by BHC now and no money from CBC and TDC.

CathyK – concentrate on funding for River Patrol again? GU – CEP will get in touch with Nicky Spurr re issues such as policing of speed limits, etc.

BSeago – also issues with kite surfers at Colne Point. Disturbance to Little Terns.

8. AOB

8.1 CK – Priors have applied for 24/7 recycling centre at Fingringhoe site originally linked to additional gravel extraction, but now waste processing site to landfill Fingringhoe Quarry. Goes against beauty of the estuary. Thames & Colne surveyors suggest up to 600 metre exclusion zone for development surrounding the transshipment site. Would like CEP to write to NE and ECC to object to the plans.

GU – application gone in? JJ – two processes – one is minerals policy, which has a statutory obligation for Essex to supply an adequate supply of aggregates (40 million tonnes to 2031) and if county doesn’t supply this, then it will be taken from wherever is chosen. Essex more sites than required and planning committee will determine which sites get permission. Fingringhoe may be likely to get permission due to plans for super barge as environmentally friendly way of moving aggregate. Other side is waste solutions. Stanway is one of biggest sites, also Basildon. Anyone who owns a site is allowed by law to put in request for permission and for it to be considered. Application is for inert waste.

CK – Application has been altered – one nearest WSC is construction/demolition waste. Can include timber, plastic, metal and some hazardous waste although mostly concrete, topsoil, etc.

GU – This is at an early stage and is there still opportunity to comment? JJ – yes there will be consultation. CK to pass details to SM and will be passed to all CAG members to comment and timescales will be checked.

BSinclair – WTC been advised and will more than likely be objecting.

JJ – gave information on waste and aggregate plans. There is a necessity to provide sites. Govt very keen on recycling which will have an impact on plans. Will be opportunity to voice views. If application is turned down it is more than likely to go to Appeal.

CK – transporting ballast into London not most economic or environmentally friendly way to transport ballast. Train and lorry is better.

8.2 GU – John Claydon replacement from EA? Robert Brown. Will try and get in touch with him.

8.3 CS – need to update contacts and invites list.

Next meeting?

Proposed date of **10th November 2011**