

MINUTES

Colne Estuary Management Group Meeting

Brightlingsea Town Council Offices,
15th September 2009, 10am

Present

John Partridge (JP) – Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners (Chairman)
Caroline Shotton (CS) – Colne Estuary Partnership (CEP)
Graham Underwood (GU) – University of Essex
Steve McMellor (SM) – University of Essex & CEP
John Claydon (JC) – Environment Agency
Peter Patrick (PP) – Tendring District Council
John White (JW) - Tendring District Council & St Osyth Parish Council
Trisha Martin (TM) – Tendring District Council
Michael Talbot (MT) – Tendring District Council
Bernie Hetherington (BH) – Brightlingsea Harbour Commissioners

Subject

Action

31. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from P Hornby, B McClean and G Eve.

32. **Minutes of the last meeting**

It was proposed by JW and seconded by PP that the minutes be adopted. Agreed.

33. **Matters Arising**

JP reported that that Advisory Group had supported the continuance of the CEP at the meeting held subsequent to the last Management Group meeting.

34. **Chairman's Report**

JP reported that since the last meeting of the Management Group and with the Advisory Group meeting having been held, the major development has been the provision by TDC of funding for the River Patrol. This was at the level previously provided by CBC and has allowed a worthwhile Patrol to be undertaken by BHC this summer. This has been very beneficial for down-river users and as expected, there have been problems for the up-river communities. Their complaints have been redirected to CBC. The continuing TDC funding for the CEP together with the funding from Anglian Water has been essential in enabling the Partnership to continue.

JP said that at the Advisory meeting where Ian Bliss of EA gave an overview of the Essex Shoreline Management Plan it was felt that a continuing CEP was the ideal forum for discussions of the Plan. It is therefore very good news that the CEP has a future and unless there are any questions he suggested moving on to item 35 on the agenda to receive a report from GU and SM as to how that future can be managed.

JW asked if there had been any prosecutions taken as a result of the River Patrol. BH reported that one prosecution had been put forward and was being processed by the police. A decision on this was awaited from CBC. He also reported that other incidents were pending or paperwork was being held for future reference in case of further offences.

GU asked how far up the estuary the Patrol was now operating and BH said only as far as the down-river boundary of the derestricted area. He noted that a request had been made by CBC for speed signs up-river but that they had restated there was no funding available for the Patrol.

35. **Report by Prof Underwood and Dr McMellor**

GU reported that Dr McMellor had started his post in March and progress had been good. He reported that he had been pushing various issues to CBC and had spoken to councillors at a meeting at Bradwell. He advised that they would be charging full rates to CBC for any work he does on the Bradwell studies as CBC were no longer funders of the CEP. GU stated that a combination of funding streams meant the future looked good for SM's post.

SM reported that the CEP website was now up and running and was showing at number 8 on google searches. He advised that links added from other members websites would help improve this. He asked that all members notify him of events and provide feedback in order to improve the site. He suggested that a public launch of the site was needed at some point.

Action

SM reported that he had represented the CEP in various consultations including the SMP and WFD which had been sent to all CAG and CMG members for comment. Few comments had been received.

He reported that Ian Bliss of the EA had offered to update the CAG on SMP progress at their next meeting but SM had suggested that him talking at the next but one meeting may be more useful after the CAG had a meeting to discuss the SMP.

SM also reported that TDC's LSP specifically mentions working with the CEP.

A discussion was then had on the sewage treatment works at Colchester and data provided by Anglian Water which SM had used to create GIS maps of nitrate levels and flow rates. He explained the maps and their use and limitations.

SM finished by advising on a number of future dates, including the draft of the SMP due out on 6th November, a CAG meeting in Nov/Dec (date tbc) and asked again that members provide feedback on the website.

Action

GU asked that full Parish Council representation be established on the CAG and that invitations to these meetings be extended to all.

Action

MT questioned the results of the Anglian Water data based GIS maps in terms of the danger posed by the level of nitrates shown and was advised that the water quality is still a 'good' environmental standard which is deemed safe for swimming, etc. GU said that the water quality was not monitored at non designated bathing areas such as Rowhedge where many people swim. PP suggested that it is hard for the public to understand the meaning if the data shown and SM said that the data was restricted by data collection pints and divisions had to be made somewhere.

MT asked if the CEP has good links with CEFAS and GU agreed this may be a useful link to make.

PP thanked SM for his presentation and expressed thanks also to GE and Anglian Water for their involvement in the study.

36. **Way forward**

GU suggested a CAG meeting should be held in early December. He also asked if the CEP logo could perhaps be added to the ferry signage in the future.

Action

SM reiterated the need for members to provide information for the website and GU added that publicity for the Partnership was vital. A discussion followed about who the website should be targeting and how better search results could be achieved.

JP reported that he had been chasing the £15,000 funding that John Jowers at ECC had suggested was available and had hoped to be able to have more information on this. Unfortunately the person he needed to speak to was on holiday but he hoped to have an update for the next meeting.

MT asked that thanks to JC be formally recorded as he was retiring the following day and this would be his last meeting. JP expressed appreciation of his valuable contribution and his honest approach and he was wished well for his retirement. JC advised that Phil Spearman would be attending CMG meetings in the future.

It was agreed that the BTC office was a convenient venue for the next CMG meeting and that a date, probably in February, would be circulated once a date for the CAG meeting had been agreed.