



Blakeney Channel Coastal Community Team

Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2019 at 2 p.m., Blakeney Hotel, Blakeney

Attendees:

Don Glaister, John Seymour, Peter Roe, Morris Arthur, Paul Bishop, Frenesi Ewing, Victoria Egan

Apologies: Neil Thompson, James Cowan, Iain Wolfe, Alban Donohoe

Chairman's Report:

N/A

Comments on the Previous Meetings:

VE had just sent out comments on the minutes of the meeting between the National Trust and FE and DG on 3rd May

Project Managers Report:

The meeting started with the group commenting on K. Pye's review of EXO's Initial Design:

FE : While the tone was often negative, K. Pye did state that he felt the scheme would work in the short to medium term. But Geoblocks will be contentious with many people unless evidence indicates they are essential to keep tidal flow to Blakeney Quay.

While the historical comparisons with previous surveys had shown widening and reduction in depth in most samples along the channel it was frustrating not to have quantifiable figures to help predict a rate of change. Perhaps we can do a small proof of concept to see how Geoblocks will age and blend in over time if they are accepted by stakeholders?

JS : We either do something or do nothing. Anecdotally we believe the channel is silting up as the bank's collapse. We may be apprehensive of the use of Geoblocks but if we move away from them what do we do with the sediment?

MA: Questioned the severity of the Pye's view on geoblock as they are used elsewhere in far bigger harbours. To say they would need to withhold a storm force of 23m per second was, he felt, unreasonable as that was an extremely rare event and a more typical storm would run at 13 or 14m per second.

PR : We have survey evidence that the channel is silting up.

PB : Also felt we lack quantifiable evidence and that we would need to wait and undertake another round of surveys. Perhaps we should look to undertake the work on the Carnser corner while we wait and re-survey?



JS : agreed that we should undertake another series of surveys to help us quantify a rate of change, which, if present would give us a stronger case.

DG : So, to summarise, a) we want to continue to undertake periodic surveys and b) if we undertake an engineering project, we look at either the Carnser corner or the area around Bridge Creek?

JS: Asked whether we are concerned that the EA works might increase the flow of water into Bridge Creek increasing the risk it will flow across the Channel and cause the opposite bank to collapse. He suggested we contact the EA to discuss training or diverting the water to a more northerly direction.

VE: The EA work is part of their ongoing river maintenance project due to run from April 2019 to March 2020. After the 2013 tidal surge it was recognised that it was necessary to improve river flow and EA have re-adopted [some] rivers. The work includes clearing weeds and dredging the route that comes out through the 2 sluices from the Freshes. A spur of the Glaven river runs into Blakeney Freshes, so the water on the Freshes is not just storm / rain outflow. After a tidal surge it is important to be able to flush the salt water off the fresh water marshes as quickly as possible so, if a flood is predicted, fresh water is held back by a large sluice under the road at Cley for flushing. In the last storm surge one of the sluices wasn't working, so the maintenance schedule has been increased.

She reminded the group that there had been a project to look at turning the 'Bridge Creek' overflow northwards but it had not been possible due the increasing height of the marsh to the north.

Victoria had also asked the National Trust's Coastal Leads to help identify other communities facing the sort of issues we are – possibles are:

Studland on the Isle of Purbeck, particularly with the navigation into Poole

The Coleraine Harbour Commission have a training structure on the River Bann (<http://coleraineharbour.com/>)

River Gannel estuary in Crantock, Cornwall, it is understood there is a modest training bank and they are trying to understand how useful it is. [FE checking the spelling I found this link which might be worth a read?

<https://www.biggreensurfschool.com/single-post/2018/05/08/Moving-Gannel>]

Other possible might be Sandbanks Jetty in Dorset or St Michael's Mount in Cornwall.

VE also mentioned that it in the long term it might be possible to beneficially use dredging waste from the Channel (due to the change in waste management legislation) to help maintain levels - in the past the National Trust were not necessarily adverse to using dredging waste to improve the height of the freshes, however this had not been possible in the past because of the designation of the freshes land. But in the future the Freshes *may* lose this designation if the EA move into 'rollback management' phase in the next epoch.

DG: asking VE about funding for maintaining the Carnser Corner. However, she responded that any requests for financial assistance would be unlikely to happen



quickly as it is not in the current National Trust budget. There would also need to be a cost benefit analysis before National Trust funds could be assigned.

[VE needed to leave at that point.]

DG: reported that Natural England are about to appoint a PHD student to undertake research on tidal movements and where the sediment is coming from – but this would be just a desk review of historic data.

JS: Asked what do we do next. The lack of any indication of prior approval from the National Trust prior to permit application makes it harder to proceed. He commented that we are probably in a fairly unique situation as most of other National Trust land is remote so their policies do not necessarily consider the impact, they have on adjacent small communities such as ours. He suggested two possible sub projects – extension of the hard around the Carnser Corner and contacting the EA to discuss the work they are doing to the sluices.

FE: suggest a possible 3d project – installing the brushwood bundles in the north east corner (opposite John's corner) where there is a lot of Channel movement to the north east.

DG: We would need to raise a small amount of funding to repeat the survey. The previous full survey cost about £6,000. DG asked can we objectively measure the reduction in the amount of time we can use the tide, channel and harbour moving forward i.e. can we show there is less time per tide that it can be navigated, or less tides per month?

Next Steps:

- Review the case studies of similar coastal areas provided by the National Trust
- Talk to the EA about the current works and problems around Bridge Creek
- Liaise with EXO to quote for a repeat of their surveys and confirm the costs
- Talk to the Parish Council about the Carnser Corner

Next meetings:

Weds 24th July – The Blakeney Hotel, 7pm