



Blakeney Channel Coastal Community Team

Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2018 at 7 p.m., Blakeney Hotel, Blakeney

Attendees:

Don Glaister, Victoria Egan, Paul Bishop, Peter Roe, Morris Arthur, Frenesi Ewing, Alban Donohoe and William Coulet (WC), Exo Environmental Ltd

Apologies:

John Seymour, James Cowan

Didn't Attend:

Iain Wolfe, Neil Thompson

Chairman's Report:

- Minutes of the 18th April 2018 meeting were approved.

“Working with Nature” Channel options:

Before the meeting William Coulet (WC), Exo Environmental Ltd, had reviewed the survey results and put forward some *initial* ideas on some of the types of options that could *potentially* be used to help maintain the flow and depth of the channel and minimise further erosion at key points along the channel. These suggestions are seeking to work with nature to increase the tidal flow with the minimum amount of intervention possible.

The purpose of the meeting was to review these initial ideas and, if in agreement, commission a more detailed design with the remains of the group's funding so that we have some possible solutions and ideas to take forward to stakeholders and into any future funding cycles.

Any detailed design would have to include extensive justifications including what it hoped to achieve, the expected benefit and how long it was likely to last and would obviously need full approval from both regulators and land owners.

Briefly some of the options discussed were:

- 1) Northernmost corner (aka 'John's Corner'): In this area the channel is eroding the marsh and moving northeast with a sandbank forming southwest which is difficult to navigate. As the northeast corner has a gentle incline it would be possible to use brushwood bundles (usually hazel) to shore up the corner and reduce further movement. The bundles would have a 30-100cm diameter with small posts to help keep them in position. Something similar was used by the EA at the foot of some of the low lying newly rebuilt coastal path near the old wooden wreck to prevent erosion while vegetation took hold.

Brushwood has many advantages - it is an inexpensive, natural, locally



available product and with small amounts of training can be done by volunteers. It is also harmless to vessels and can easily be 'topped up' as it naturally degrades. Typical lifespan might be 5 years.

- 2) Bridge Creek: In this area WC was suggesting two wooden training sections might be the most suitable option. These would last around 15 to 20 years and would concentrate the fresh water marsh outfall into the centre of the channel on both the incoming and outgoing tides to improve the flow and crucially help the channel self-scour.
- 3) In stretches north of the dinghy slipway and opposite Blakeney Hotel large stretches of the channel have moved hard against the marsh bank rather than centrally in the available creek. This makes navigation difficult and is exaggerating erosion of the marsh, adding to the build-up of sediment. However this isn't an easy situation to deal with as the marsh banks are too steep and soft for something like brushwood to be used and hard training (for example groins constructed in wood or local stone) are unlikely to be popular with either the land owners, boat owners or other stakeholders. Possibly these areas would benefit from re-profiling the creek to re-align the channel – but without training structures in place the channel is likely to move again in time. Any such re-aligning of the channel could possibly be done using an amphibious craft with extractor.

WC did explain that any trainings structures many need to be that high as the scouring is needed at start and end of tide when flow is slower.

- 4) Carnser south east corner. Training structures might be useful here, but hard piling would give additional parking.
- 5) Opposite the Blakeney Hotel WC said they believe the channel is being deflected into the marsh due to the increase in moored boats and this channel movement is, they feel, likely to continue, even to the point of eventually leading to an area of marsh / sand / mud extending from the quayside which would be detrimental for both visitors and boat users. However PB commented the erosion continues in the winter when there are very few boats moored.

Hard structures to deflect the water and protect the bank might be a solution, but again, unlikely to be popular.

Although much more detailed work and justification will be needed, it was encouraging to look at ways of maintaining the channel. BC3T confirmed that they would like EXO to work up a more detailed design taking on board the comments made. It was agreed that after review by BC3T this design would be presented to the regulators and land owners for their comments. Subject to their response we would then seek to present the design to the broader stakeholder community.



Any other business:

WC reported that he had heard of a number of potential grants, including one to help remove abandoned yachts and another to help job creation and redevelopment in coastal towns, he will forward details to DG.

VE reported that it has been agreed that there needs to be a water level management plan in place for the Glaven Valley and the Environmental Agency have appointed Halcrow Group as consultants and are now actively looking to involve interested stakeholders.

Visits to the ports - WC will suggest some dates for our visit to Brightlingsea and VE offered to talk to Brancaster on our behalf as she had a meeting with them the following week.

AD and the group congratulated VE on her new role as National Trust interim General Manager for the Norfolk Coast and thanked her for her continued involvement in BC3T.

The group was sad to hear that DG is unable to carry on as Project Manager and thanked him for all his efforts over the last eighteen months. DG will continue as a member of the committee and we hope a new Project Manager can be found in due course.

Next meetings:

Wednesday 20th June

Wednesday 11th July

All meetings to be held at the Blakeney Hotel, Blakeney at 7 p.m.