

South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

# **South Devon AONB Estuaries Steering Group Meeting**

to be held at

**10am on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018**  
at  
**Follaton House, Repton Room**

## **Agenda & Papers**



## **AONB Estuaries Steering Group Membership**

Dart Harbour Authority	Mark Cooper James Dodd
Devon County Council	Cllr Jonathan Hawkins DCC member - TBA
Duchy of Cornwall	Tom Stratton
Environment Agency (Catchment Based Approach)	Rob Price
Natural England	Christine Singfield
National Trust	Gary Calland
Salcombe Harbour Authority	Cameron Sims-Stirling Hugh Marriage
South Hams District Council	Rob Sekula Cllr John Green

### **AONB Unit staff attending**

AONB Estuaries Officer	Nigel Mortimer
AONB Manager	Roger English
AONB Office Manager	Vanessa Gray

## Agenda

- |        |   |            |
|--------|---|------------|
| Item 1 | Introductions & apologies for absence   |            |
| Item 2 | Notes of the last meeting 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2017 & any matters arising  | Page 4     |
| Item 3 | Estuaries Officer's current activity report, and priorities for the next period – presentation & verbal report  | Page 9     |
| Item 4 | Estuaries and Catchment priorities for the next 12months and longer term?   | Discussion |
| Item 5 | Financial report, budget and Memorandum of Agreement  | Page 11    |
| Item 6 | “Round the table” session - any topical issues to be raised by members of the Steering Group - National & Regional Coastal & Estuary Catchment Issues |            |
| Item 7 | Dates and venues for 2018 meetings  |            |

## Agenda item 2

### MINUTES OF THE SOUTH DEVON AONB ESTUARIES PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP MEETING

Held at Follaton House, on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017

#### 1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

##### Those present were:

Mark Cooper	MC	Dart Harbour Authority
Lesley Garlick	LG	Devon County Council
Cllr Jonathan Hawkins	JH	Devon County Council (part)
Adam Parnell	AP	Salcombe Harbour Authority
Rob Sekula	RS	South Hams District Council
Cllr John Green	JG	South Hams District Council
Nigel Mortimer	NM	AONB Estuaries Officer
Roger English	RE	AONB Manager
Vanessa Gray	VG	AONB Office Manager

##### Apologies for absence were received from:

Tom Stratton	Duchy of Cornwall
Rob Price	Environment Agency
Christine Singfield	Natural England

#### 2. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING (17<sup>th</sup> January 2017) AND ANY MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 In response to a question, it was stated that the Frogmore catchment partnership action fund project had been very successful in engaging with the 'converted' but struggled to engage others – we need to attend more non-specific but popular community events such as the Frogmore Regatta.
- 2.2 **Action 1 (CS):** Carry forward the action to email DHNA with information about the Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) proposals for the Dart. NM suggested that if selected to be a MCZ, it would likely be because of the extent and importance of the habitats, for example mudflats and saltmarshes, rather than for individual species.
- 2.3 JG suggested that following endorsement of the AONB Estuaries Management Plan (EMP) by the Estuaries Steering Group, SHDC should also be approached to formally adopt the EMP. **Action 2 (NM/RS):** To agree and action an appropriate adoption/endorsement process with South Hams DC. Explore combining with the potential for a presentation to elected members on Estuary Partnership work.
- 2.4 In response to a query regarding the Natural England focus on water quality in South Devon, NE reported that the Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary area has been identified as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) (see <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?x=357683&y=355134&scale=1&layerGroups=default&ep=map&textonly=off&lang=e&topic=nvz>). Note that there is a slight mapping error on the Slapton area that is still to be corrected. It is noted that certain catchments will require more effort, for example in the Kingsbridge catchment there is less of a flushing action as there are no major rivers draining into the estuary. Lessons learned from this area will be applied elsewhere. There will be a Natural England NVZ workshop with local farmers on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2017 – NM will be giving a presentation on the estuary and nutrient related issues.

#### 3. ESTUARY OFFICER'S CURRENT ACTIVITY REPORT AND PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT PERIOD

- 3.1 The Estuaries Officer gave a report on his recent activity. A full list was provided within the meeting papers. In discussion:

- The EMP and the AONB Management Plan should be read in conjunction with each other. The current EMP is due to be reviewed by 2024, to co-ordinate with the end of the next South Devon AONB Management Plan (revision 4, 2019-2024).
- Funding was obtained from Defra to produce local marine biosecurity plans individually tailored for each South Devon AONB estuary. The plans aim to encourage the local boating community's awareness and ownership of the issue, and necessarily promote the prevention of further Invasive Non-Native Species arrival or spread. Each highlight those INNS already present and those to keep alert to; prudent guidance to minimise their spread and how to report their sightings. Mooring managers have been approached to send the information out to their mooring holders along with annual dues, etc. The Carpet Seasquirt may rapidly cover and smother surfaces such as mussel beds or vessel hulls reducing their efficiency. Pacific Oyster are already an issue in the Yealm, with some people cutting their feet on them. Together with NE & Cornwall Wildlife Trust, funding has been applied for to encourage & establish local community volunteer groups to help survey for local INNS and trial the removal of Pacific oysters.
- There have been a number of formal education events at local schools involving field trips and classroom activities. Where these have been seen to be particularly successful, the children have gone on to raise an awareness within their own families.
- Always keen to find new and innovative ways to raise awareness, 'The Drip', a five-minute animation was commissioned to draw attention to local catchment water quality issues and helping to nudge viewers towards a more active involvement in its care. The animation has been viewed at least 25,000 times and we intend to use the 'H2O Heroes' concept within our future campaigns to promote positive change.
- The next meeting of the South Devon Catchment Partnership is in January [10am Friday 26<sup>th</sup> Jan'18, Cary Room, Follaton House].
- There has been an issue during Salcombe regatta with water balloon throwing and resultant littering endangering marine life. One suggested alternative was to replace the balloons with jelly, however, it was felt that this was replacing one waste with another. There was a general discussion to see what could be done to enforce byelaws and police what happens at the next event. AP suggested writing an open letter to the Council, Regatta Committee etc. to build up a momentum for behavioural change.
- The discussion on plastics widened:
  - MC – There have been initiatives in Dartmouth for example the film 'A Plastic Ocean' was shown at The Flavel in Dartmouth to a sell out crowd of over 200 people. Tickets were priced at £10 with the surplus going to the Marine Conservation Society. Also, Marks and Spencer offered to take back plastic food wrap which proved to be very popular.
  - JG – Our (Newton & Noss) Parish Council has an environmental policy. It would be worth distributing a template policy to other Parish Councils to encourage them to discuss, adopt and promote their own environmental policy – encouraging a local sense of pride, action & ownership.
  - MC – Worthwhile setting key performance indicators (KPIs) for the environment. A Dart Harbour/Estuary Environmental Management workshop was facilitated by the AONB Estuaries Officer & was well attended. There were both 'Bens and Non-Bens' present which underlined the need to have both present when discussing the environment. NM has been requested to reform a Dart Estuary Forum for spring 2018, there shall be two meetings a year with both the Parish Councils and SHDC invited. JH would like District Councillors included as they already attend Parish Council meetings.
  - AP – there are fifteen separate asks that encourage behaviours to improve water quality. Suggest keeping it simple with one idea that can be focussed on completely. People are overwhelmed and sometimes confused by the number of messages on the same subject. A simple message of no more than 5-10 bullet points is more likely to succeed. The example of Padstow [Penzance] was cited, Britain's first 'Plastic Free' town, where they aim to eliminate all single use plastics such as straws and take away coffee cup lids.
  - JH – Perhaps have a plastic free Dart. Encourage all Parish Councils to have their own environmental policy by providing a template policy that they can adapt. Campaign for local businesses to exchange plastic straws for paper and to change to biodegradable coffee lids. Would like the AONB Estuaries Officer to attend the next council meeting

and send out information for District Councillors to distribute and communicate. AP - Anna Turns and Amanda Keetley are local plastic free champions who may be able to assist with a plastic free Dart. The AONB Estuaries Officer has applied for funding for them. Businesses could display a sign championing their commitment to a plastic free Dart. Rockfish should be encouraged to monitor nearby bins in Dartmouth.

- LG – suggests a top 5 list of actions for each category of audience i.e. home owners, boat users and businesses. For example, home owners to minimise sink food waste disposal, boat users not to flush in the estuary etc. AP mentioned the RYA's GreenBlue message, "one flush from a boat contains the same amount of bacteria as 250,000 flushes through the sewage treatment process." *Do not flush* signs have been produced that can be put on the flush lever on boats.

**Action 2 - (AP):** to provide a quantity of these to MC.

- NM – The EU directive to remove phosphates from detergents means that the number of dishwasher tablets still containing phosphates is diminishing in number, possibly nearing zero now as the new rules have been in place since the start of the year.
- JG There is a water quality issue on the Yealm, if the water quality fails once more the shellfish produced in the estuary cannot be consumed. A summer event in 2016 could not go ahead due to water quality issues. AP South West Water have said that 80% of the water quality tested is less than excellent and generally the reason is farm run off. The next meeting will be spring 2018.

**Action 3 - (AP):** Advise JG who to contact to be involved in the meeting.

**Action 4 - (NM):** Arrange a meeting between JH, JG and Cllr Jacqi Hodgson, to arrange a potential presentation on estuaries & catchment management work to an appropriate meeting of the SHDC Full Council.

- The AONB Estuaries Officer assisted with the coastal and estuarine sections of the new South Devon AONB Planning Guidance produced earlier this year, and the launch event. Work is still ongoing on the development of a Construction Environmental Management Plan Production Guide and the adaption and adoption of the extant EA Pollution Prevention Guides as proposed within the AONB Planning Guidance.
- Environmental management pages prepared for the Salcombe Harbour Guide 2018. MC – suggested ensuring these pages look less like an advert, so boat owners are less likely to skip these pages. NM had already been in some discussion with the By The Dart about the Dart Harbour Guide 2018
- The next meeting to discuss the South West offshore marine plans will be in the first half of 2018 [7<sup>th</sup> March'18 – Plymouth]. MC highlighted marine policy issues where the local harbour authority has not been notified of planning applications where they should be involved, such as slipways.

**Action 5 - (MC):** Write to MMO and SHDC reinforcing that Dart Harbour are a statutory consultee.

RE – the AONB would not normally be informed of householder applications however the type of working relationship the AONB has with the planners, in particular the landscape officers, means that this second application has been raised with the AONB. There may be an opportunity for the harbour authorities to develop a similar relationship.

AP – (in reference to light pollution) the Harbour Authorities have powers to extinguish any lights that could be mistaken for navigation.

#### 4. ESTUARIES AND CATCHMENT PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS AND LONGER TERM

- 4.1 New Dart Estuary Forum will be in place by February 2018.

- 4.2 Expecting to hear about a funding bid, submitted via the EA, from Defra on the Catchment Based Approach related projects. This will include support for ways to improve awareness such as producing notices and stickers.
- 4.3 Marine biosecurity. A bid has been made to set up a local community group. There was a general discussion on marine biosecurity, including suggestions such as
- Inform boat jet washers what to look out for when pressure washing boat hulls. It was noted that Premier Marinas will have their own site bio security plans. The suggestion of half day training on bio security for these teams would be reliant on securing funding.
  - Oil response mapping for Kingsbridge/Salcombe is now complete.  
**Action 6 - (RE):** distribute copies to AP. Check if this exists for the Dart and whether it would need updating.
  - It was suggested that South West Water should be encouraged to attend the Estuary forums. If unable to attend SHDC could choose to hold a hearing looking at water quality and South West Water would be expected to attend.  
**Action 7 - (NM):** send the contact details to JG prior to the Yealm Estuary meeting.

## 5. FINANCIAL REPORT AND BUDGET

- 5.1 The AONB Manager reported that the budget had been capped for a number of years. There have been initiatives to reduce overheads, such as the reduction in hosting fees. Efficiencies generally have helped balance the budget to date however it would now be very difficult to trim any further. After next year the budget will need to be increased.
- 5.2 A key activity of the AONB is to seek other sources of income such as potential cost recovery when providing training.
- AP – NM could be invited on courses being run by SHA.
  - RS – Potential for Yealm funding to improve water quality.
- 5.3 There is generally a small shortfall each year. There is a small project reserve that could be used if required, for example if funding applied for is not awarded. This year the budget was boosted with Catchment Based Approach funding.
- 5.4 The AONB Manager corrected Note 1 on the financial report in the meeting papers: the year end ring-fenced reserve will be £30,000 not £27,000.
- 5.5 SHDC have focussed on their funding shortfall and are looking at discretionary grants and partnerships etc. A decision on the SHDC contribution has not been made. Final budgets will be set in January or February 2018.
- LG - DCC funding should be secure for next year.
  - AP – SHA budgets are set in August and their £10,500 contribution for next year is included. If seeking to increase the SHA contribution the AONB will need to ensure they are in discussion ahead of the August deadline.
  - MC – The DHNA budget for the environment has increased, there is an opportunity for NM to influence the spend.
  - Answering why invoices for partner contributions are not raised until January of each year, the AONB Manager stated that this is the earliest Defra accept an interim claim covering 9 months of activity. Historically all invoices have been raised together, however going forward earlier invoicing can take place where acceptable to the funding partner.

## 6. SOUTH DEVON ESTUARIES PARTNERSHIP MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

- 6.1 The original Terms of Reference for the South Devon Estuaries Partnership were adopted in 2008. The proposed Memorandum of Agreement (in development) updates and builds upon the terms of reference to ensure that the document remains fit for purpose going forward. All partners will be encouraged to sign off the new agreement to take effect for the financial year 2018/19 onwards.

- The MoA will require partners to indicate the contribution that will be made the following year.
- The revised MoA will be more business orientated in nature.
- Having the revised MoA in place will assist the AONB in applying for funding.

## **7. “ROUND THE TABLE” UPDATES**

- 7.1 AP - leaving SHA in three weeks. An interim position is being advertised prior to recruitment of a permanent replacement.  
The SHA five-year plan has been produced. This includes provision for additional pontoons due to be in place for summer 2018. They will need NM to assist with MMO licence applications etc.
- 7.2 MC – Mooring holders prefer pontoon berths over trots. Pontoons could replace trots with no overall increase in the number of moorings.  
Will be working closely with SHDC as DHNA does not own any land. The wall is a flood defence, the steps should be cleaned as required and the scrubbing grid needs to be looked at from a health & safety and environmental perspective
- Some boats have toppled while on the grid.
  - There are environmental concerns if boats are scrubbed while on the grid.
- The grid requires maintenance and some notices providing guidance on use.  
There will be a new ferry between Dartmouth and Noss.  
The public slipway by the higher ferry in Dartmouth will be developed. This is currently with SHDC and the RNLI.  
The new Dart Estuary Forum will have an environmental focus.
- 7.3 LG – retiring at the end of the year with no replacement until April at the earliest. Thanks from partners were given for the many years of support and service.
- 7.4 RS – There is a calculation for the cost per resident of planned major developments, money is then put aside to mitigate the impact of the new residents. For example, a development of 300 houses generates £5-6,000. This is a potential source of funding for appropriate projects.

## **8. DATES AND VENUES FOR 2018 MEETINGS**

- 8.1 Spring meeting, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018 10am-12noon at Follaton House – Repton Room confirmed
- 8.2 Autumn meeting, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018 10am-12noon at Follaton House – Dining Room confirmed



## Agenda item 3

### South Devon AONB Estuaries Partnership Period Report

December 2017 to March 2018

The purpose of this brief report is to give an indication of the work carried out by the Estuaries Officer over this period – further details are available on request.

#### Headliners:

1. Full suite of South Devon Estuaries Biosecurity Plans published
2. Two successful funding applications in partnership with the Environment Agency

#### Detail:

3. Estuary Forum Meetings
  - i. Salcombe-Kingsbridge spring meeting
    - Organisation, co-ordination, chairing and note editing
  - ii. Dart Non-Beneficiaries meeting
4. Biosecurity Plans
  - i. All five individual plans completed and adopted.
  - ii. Copies available via the South Devon AONB website.
5. Projects
  - i. In development
    - Dart Estuary Forum
      - Preparations ongoing
      - Meeting date required\*
    - Marine plastics
      - Local 'Plastic Clever' project
    - Batson community saltmarsh
      - Management discussions and facilitation
  - ii. Catchment Based Approach activities
    - Partnership hosting, funding & grant, Strategic Monitoring Review, core working group meetings and workshops
    - Continually raising of wider water quality issues within all associated AONB works
    - Preparation of several project funding applications, 2 successful
      - Dart steel-piled quay-wall habitat enhancement trials
      - 'Holiday Footprints' project to encourage holiday makers to engage more with sustainable waste management
    - Site inspection of stream erosion taking place above Cellar Bay seagrass beds, Yealm estuary
  - iii. Beach clean events supported – several local beach cleans supported incl. corporate events and BBC Radio Devon event
  - iv. Awareness raising articles prepared
    - Harbour Guide 2018 pages – Yealm, Salcombe & Dart Harbours
  - v. Formal education events
    - Thurlestone Primary – beach clean
  - vi. Community Events
    - Yealm Bioblitz 2018 preparatory meetings
  - vii. Talks and presentations
    - South Devon Ramblers - Estuary Conservation Management
  - viii. Research projects assisted
    - University of Plymouth – effectiveness of antifoulant paints on non-native species settlement
    - University of Leeds – biosecurity for Invasive Non-Native Species
  - ix. Planning & MMO license consultations

- Yealm
  - Coastguard Cottages quay
- Salcombe-Kingsbridge
  - Old Vinery boathouse marine license
  - Southpool seawall 'pre-app' advice
- Dart
  - Noss-on-Dart development
  - Dolphin shipyard
  - Steps at Aishe
- Neighbourhood Plans
  - Salcombe discussions
- x. Conferences & workshops attended
  - South Devon Marine Planning workshop
  - Coastal Futures Conference
  - Devon Local Nature Partnership Conference
- xi. Hosting of a work experience placement student from University of Plymouth

### **Priorities for next 6 months**

6. Dart Estuary Forum inaugural spring 2018 meeting
7. South Devon Catchments Partnership, Catchment Based Approach – co-hosting of partnership, progression of potential project funding applications
  - i. Holiday Footprints project – production of leaflets, fliers & guidance stickers – attendance of local events; Salcombe CrabFest, Frogmore Regatta & Kingsbridge Farmers Market
8. South Devon Plastic Clever project
9. Marine Biosecurity - NE funding bid successful - setting-up and coordination of new estuary 'citizen conservation groups - surveying and monitoring INNS presence, Pacific oyster control management
10. Technical responses to planning and development applications and enquiries as required
11. Technical responses to Marine Plan consultations and potential further tranches of Marine Conservation Zones
12. Further work within AONB to explore alternative income generation
13. AONB Estuaries Management Plan – map generation and publishing as hardcopy and web-based document

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Estuaries Steering Group notes the current activity and progress report.