

Orford and Gedgrave Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting 19 May 2021 Report from the Alde and Ore Community Partnership (AOCP)

The Alde and Ore Community Partnership took over from the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership in January 2020 in taking forward the refurbishment of the flood defences to keep the estuary alive.

The Alde and Ore Community Partnership (AOCP) involves the whole community, with every parish bordering the rivers able to have a seat on the Partnership, together with a County Councillor, two District Councillors, as well as businesses, East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) and amenity organisation representation. The Partnership will continue to receive help and support from the national agencies Natural England and the Environment Agency, and locally from Coastal Partnership East.

The original AOEP completed its task to prepare and consult on an agreed Estuary Plan: this was designed so that once all the works are done the 44 km of estuary river walls should be able to withstand a 1 in 200-year surge in 2050 (such as was seen in 1953). As the next step-

: the East Suffolk Internal Drainage Board (ESIDB) assumed legal and practical responsibility for the practical delivery of the works and is fully in charge of taking forward the constructional work to make this happen, including submitting the business plan, applications for a government grant and consents for the initial project for the upper estuary (Snape, Aldeburgh and Iken), to the Environment Agency.

: the new Community Partnership is taking forward the guardianship of the Plan and communications, including consulting with the Alde and Ore estuary community and providing it with a voice while the programme of works is in progress over the next few years.

: the new Partnership works in close collaboration with the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, which is responsible for fund raising and providing grants to the ESIDB, is working to secure as much non-government funding as possible to complete the plan.

The AOCP has met quarterly since January 2020. In the first half of the year, it followed the final preparation and submission of the detailed flood defence proposals and application for grant. During the whole year it has completed the preparation of its revised constitution and developed its communications plans. (Since March 2020 meetings have continued, including inviting members of the public to attend, but, given Covid restrictions, via Zoom.)

Early in 2021, the AOCP learned that the outcome of the defence proposals was on hold as the Environmental Agency is investigating the deposit of clay at Iken in the period up to September 2018 (which the Partnership understands was for use for repairing or re-building the river defences). The Partnership considers that the proposals are independent of that deposited clay and that the economics of the proposals are sound and so, with the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, is pressing the Environment Agency to allow the project to go ahead as soon as possible.

Once the current delay has been overcome, work can then commence on the second business case which enables the ESIDB to bid for funding for works covering Boyton, Butley, Chillesford, Gedgrave, Orford and Sudbourne. The whole estuary programme of works will take some 7-8 years to complete.

Hon Secretary Alison Andrews, May 2021

The Estuary Plan can be found at www.aoep.co.uk. The Alde and Ore Estuary Trust web page may be found at www.aoetrust.org.