

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE SLAPTON LINE ADVISORY FORUM
HELD AT SLAPTON VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2008**

Present: Cllr John Baverstock – South Hams District Council
Alan Denbigh – Project Manager, Slapton Line Partnership
Charles Dixon – Strete Estate
Richard Foss – Stokenham Parish Council
Brian George – Devon County Council
Kate Gill – Strete Parish Council
Bill Ireland – Slapton Line Defence Group
Cllr Ian Longrigg – South Hams District Council
Jim McPetrie – Slapton Parish Council
Val Mercer – Slapton Parish Council
Jane Overton – Slapton Parish Council
Andrew Pound – H M Coastguard
Alan Robinson – South Hams District Council (Chairman)

Apologies: Cllr Bryan Carson – South Hams District Council
Nigel Hannaford – East Allington Parish Council
Andrew Pratt – Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre
Robin Rose-Price – Slapton Line Defence Group
Paul Taper – South Hams District Council
Simon Tonge – Whitley Wildlife Trust
Josie Trinick – Coleridge Association
Cllr R J Tucker – South Hams District Council
Pam Wills – Strete Parish Council

1. INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Alan Robinson introduced the meeting and acknowledged apologies forwarded.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Slapton Line Advisory Forum held on 18 June 2008 were approved as a correct record.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No public questions were raised.

4. PROJECT REPORT BACK

With the use of a PowerPoint presentation (attached at Appendix A, Alan Denbigh updated the Forum on the Slapton Line Partnership Adaptation Plan as identified in the updated progress report (attached at Appendix B).

The Forum was informed by Alan Denbigh of the following points:

- **Celebrate Start Bay 16 August 2008** – despite the poor weather, the event was very successful with approximately 600 people attending. The event provided a showcase especially in relation to local businesses and the activities in the area, particularly with regard to the Field Centre.

Another Celebrate Start Bay event had been arranged for Saturday 22 August 2009 with the hope to involve more local people. A member of the Forum suggested that the event should be more encompassing to the local area as a whole and to focus less on the Field Centre. A member of the Forum also queried as to how wide an area should be covered by the event and after some discussion, it was concluded that no hard line should be drawn geographically as businesses in Dartmouth, Salcombe, and even people in London, were interested in the Slapton/Torcross area and the road situation but, however, it would be useful to ascertain who were interested and what they could contribute to the event.

- **Business Marketing Forum held on 29 September 2008** – this event proved very successful with 23 attendees, with the main focus to encourage businesses to rethink their business strategies in the event of a future without the Slapton Line road. The attending businesses were offered one-to-one marketing planning sessions funded by the Partnership and which fifteen businesses have taken up. This programme will continue throughout December 2008 and into January 2009.

A follow-up event had been arranged for 26 January 2009.

- **General Leaflet and Boards Completed** – the boards had been put to use at various events. An additional board was created in order to inform the local residents of the bastion replenishment works by placing them on the contractor's fencing. The mobile boards were very useful for taking to various events but if they were to be fixed (ie in the bird hide or car park), it was suggested that they would need to be encased in a metal frame to be weatherproof. Furthermore, it was suggested that the boards needed to be flexible and updatable. This has already been incorporated into their design.

Interpretation panels based on the Slapton Time Line, as used on the Slapton Line Partnership website, are to be erected in the Memorial, Strete Gate and Torcross car parks.

Kate Gill requested Alan Denbigh to email her a copy of the Slapton Time Line.

Action: Alan Denbigh to email Kate Gill the Slapton Time Line

4. PROJECT REPORT BACK (cont'd)

- **Alternative Footpath** – A consultant from FWAG was looking at a possible route for a footpath between Stokenham and Deer Bridge and was discussing the footpath with the various relevant landowners.
- **Habitat Demonstration** – Alan Denbigh informed the group that he had visited Porlock, near Minehead, Somerset, in order to better understand the transition process from freshwater to saltwater (though this is not something predicted within 50-100 years for Slapton Ley).

The first stages incorporated the dying off of vegetation, including some trees, and the creation of areas of bare mud. Eventually though the landscape had settled to an 'intertidal' landscape with salt marsh vegetation thriving. There had been an initial loss of species of all types, but after transition, the landscape had returned to being equally rich.

Members of the Forum agreed that there were differences between Porlock and Slapton Ley though comparisons had been drawn in the past.

- **Contingency Plan** – Alan Denbigh informed the Forum that he had contacted various surgeries and schools regarding a potential road closure and to make them aware of the SLP website and newsletter as a useful means of communication of what alternatives were available in the event of the Slapton Line being closed.

Alan Denbigh confirmed the action point in the previous minutes with regard to the SLP website links to parish council sites.

Brian George informed the Forum that with regard to the bus services in the event of Slapton Line being closed, the Dartmouth and Kingsbridge services would be the most affected and would have to be reorganised. Brian George further informed the Forum that DCC could influence the subsidised bus services but not the commercial ones (ie Dartmouth was a commercial service). DCC did not have the power to tell commercial bus companies what alternative routes to take, but could make them aware of a possible future road closure scenario.

It was suggested that DCC or Alan Denbigh approach bus companies in the area to ask them what they would anticipate the likely impact to be of a potential road closure based on current passenger usage.

Action: Alan Denbigh to approach local bus companies

3. PROJECT REPORT BACK (cont'd)

- **Bastions**

Alan Denbigh presented to the Forum a time lapse film produced by researchers at Plymouth University that showed the results of a storm on Slapton Beach and the variability in the tides. The Plymouth University work presented at the annual Field Centre research day suggested that the bastions did appear to have an observable, beneficial value.

A member of the Forum suggested that the Slapton Line Advisory Forum should register as stakeholders in the South Devon and Dorset Coastal Action Group (SDDCAG) via Grahame Smith the coordinator.

It was felt that the SDDCAG did not always reflect the local situation and now was an appropriate opportunity for the Forum to make representations especially to outline how vital it would be for the SDDCAG to adopt the Scott Wilson recommendations and to hold onto the Line at any cost.

Action: Paul Taper / Alan Denbigh / Cllr Bryan Carson to liaise with the South Devon and Dorset Coastal Action Group on the feedback above from the Slapton Line Advisory Forum

- **Marine Bill**

It was suggested by a member of the Forum that the Partnership draw the attention of the public to Section 4 of the Draft Marine Bill – Coastal Access – via the SLP website in relation to the event of a breach of the road and the Ley that footpaths would be pushed back into private land (attached at Appendix C – Draft Marine Bill Section 4 Coastal Access).

Action: Alan Denbigh to include on the SLP website to advise of the Marine Bill

- **Future Plans**

- work with Field Centre on footpath repairs
- further work with local businesses on marketing work
- planning of Celebrate Start Bay II
- more Field Centre activities

4. BASTIONS UPDATE

In his absence, Alan Robinson summarised Paul Taper's Slapton Line Bastion Replenishment Report to the Forum (attached at Appendix D)

The report stated that the work to reconstruct all five of the partly eroded bastion structures was undertaken by AP Wakeham Plant Ltd at a cost of just over £7,000 which would be paid for jointly by South Hams District Council and Devon County Council.

A Forum member felt this sum to be very modest and enquired as to what SHDC budget the cost would be apportioned. Alan Robinson replied that he thought that it would be allocated from either the car parks or general repair and maintenance budget heads.

Brian George stated to the Forum that, in his view, it was good value to spend small amounts sporadically to maintain the bastions, especially if the maintenance works lasted for a couple of years and the on going monitoring demonstrated that the bastions do help to reduce the impact of wave action.

5. DCC HIGHWAYS REPORT

Brian George informed the Forum that DCC would try to create more passing places on the alternative route during 2009.

Brian also informed the Group that the resurfacing works planned to start on A379 between Carehouse Cross, Stokenham, to Torcross Village between 12 January and 13 February 2009 would probably be postponed for 12 months. The high cost of bitumen was one factor in this decision. After consultation with local businesses and parishes, it was concluded that if the work could not be completed by Easter 2009 then it would be more likely to take place in winter 2010. Brian stated that there was a very small possibility that the work would be started after Christmas but that he was 90% confident that the works would start in a further 12 months time.

In response to a query regarding planning permission for the realignment of certain sections of the Slapton Line road (land between A379 Torcross to Dartmouth Road and Higher Ley at Slapton) which was granted in 2006, the Forum was advised that the planning permission lasted for a 7 year period after which further approval would need to be sought for a time extension, therefore necessitating a reapplication to DCC by the end of 2011.

Cllr Baverstock queried as to when Alan Denbigh's current SHDC SLP contract came to an end and whether Alan would still be in post when the time came to reapply for the Slapton Line realignment planning permission. Alan confirmed that his current contract finished in April 2010.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was raised.

7. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Slapton Line Advisory Forum has been arranged for **Wednesday 17 June** 2009 at 6.30 pm at **Stokenham** Village Hall.

(meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 7.50 pm)