

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SLAPTON LINE STEERING GROUP
HELD AT FOLLATON HOUSE, TOTNES, ON MONDAY 26 JULY 2010**

Present: Cllr B E Carson South Hams District Council (SHDC)
Alan Denbigh Slapton Line Partnership (SLP) Project Manager
Cllr I Longrigg SHDC
Alan Robinson SHDC Strategic Director (Community) – Chairman

Apologies: Cllr J H Baverstock SHDC
Simon Dunsford Natural England
Jim Morrison DCC Area Engineer
Andrew Pratt Field Studies Council (Slapton Ley)
Paul Taper SHDC Property Services Senior Engineer
Robin Toogood AONB Manager - Chairman
John Wardle Environment Agency

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chairman, Alan Robinson, acknowledged the apologies forwarded to the Group.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 25 January 2010

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 25 January 2010, were confirmed as a correct record.

Update on action points from the previous meeting:

The Chairman, Alan Robinson, made reference to the following action points contained in the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2010:

- Pg 4: Alan Denbigh and Andrew Pratt to establish the route of the drainage tunnel:- Alan Denbigh informed that Group that the route of the culvert as well as the responsibility for it was still unclear.

The seaward end of the tunnel becomes blocked with shingle at times causing flooding of the road as well as disturbing nesting birds on the Ley with raised water levels. This problem was usually resolved between the Field Centre and DCC who would arrange for a digger to unblock the outlet. The meeting was concerned with the potential for a more serious blockage or tunnel collapse which would then cause more serious floods, potentially flooding Torcross. Currently it was unclear who would take responsibility for this. Alan Robinson suggested that Alan Denbigh write to the Devon County Council (DCC) Solicitor, referring to the Environment Agency's concern, and to obtain legal advice with regard to the ownership and responsibility.

Action: Alan Denbigh to write to DCC's Solicitor to obtain legal advice on the ownership and responsibility for the drainage tunnel

- Pg 4: Alan Denbigh to establish from the Communications Office the cost for a member of their team to keep and maintain the communication lines for the Slapton Line Partnership (SLP):- Alan Denbigh informed the Group that it would cost approximately £4,000 a year based on around two days a week.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 25 January 2010

Update on action points from the previous meeting: (cont'd)

- Pg 5: Alan Denbigh to produce a revised Exit Strategy for the next Slapton Line Steering Group (SLSG) meeting:-
Alan Denbigh handed out copies of the draft Exit Strategy (attached to these minutes) and explained that the areas that had been amended were those highlighted in grey and the document was intended to be a working document that could be revised before the end of the Pathfinder project.

After some discussion as to whether the Slapton Line Advisory Forum (SLAF) should meet once or twice a year, it was agreed that SLAF should meet twice a year, as at present.

- Pg 6: Alan Denbigh to circulate the LAG Bid for comment:-
Alan informed the Group that the Local Action Group had decided to conduct a review on tourism projects, and that depending on the outcome of this, which was expected in August/September 2010, he hoped to resubmit a bid.

It was confirmed that all the other actions had since been implemented or were either work in progress or covered in the agenda items below.

3. DCC HIGHWAYS REPORT

Jim Morrison was unable to attend his first meeting of the Group (having taken over from Brian George who had now retired) because of car problems.

In a previous meeting of the SLAF, a member had requested a traffic survey to be carried out in the high holiday season to best determine if there was a greater peak flow. At the time, Brian George confirmed that a traffic survey was planned to take place in August 2010 and the Group wondered if the survey had been organised and was ready to be implemented for the imminent start of August.

Action: Sue Amos to email Jim Morrison for an update on the traffic count for August

4. BASTIONS REPORT

In the absence of Paul Taper, Alan Denbigh summarised Paul's report to the Group and informed that a check on the bastions had been carried out on 10 May 2010. (See Bastions Report of July 2010 and Bastions Survey of May 2010 attached to these minutes).

Alan informed that a meeting had taken place between Paul Taper and the Plymouth Coastal Observatory (PCO) with the result that the PCO would incorporate bastion survey data into their surveys which are carried out during each spring and autumn as well as to carry out an annual post storm event survey on request. This would mean that there would be less doubling up on data collection.

5. PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT

a. DEFRA Adaptation Project Contract

Alan Denbigh informed the Group that the Slapton Coastal Zone Adaptation Project was now formerly completed and that he had submitted his final report (circulated with the agenda) to DEFRA which had been “enthusiastically accepted”. Alan acknowledged that the adaptation work could not have been achieved without the grant from DEFRA.

Alan Robinson reiterated that when the SLP project came to an end, the local business community would need to build on what the external funding had achieved and take ownership of future actions to adapt and plan for change.

The section entitled ‘Land Charges Statement’ on page 5 of the report that Alan submitted to DEFRA was discussed. This section stated that when prospective home purchasers for the Slapton area carried out a local Land Charge search, they would now be alerted to the potential of coastal erosion and the possible loss of the Slapton Line (A379). In the South Hams coastal area there was a relatively small number of properties at risk from coastal erosion during the next 25 year (SMP) period. People buying property near the coastline should investigate information from the Environment Agency and the local Land Charges office in order to understand what the future risks were likely to be. Alan Denbigh informed the Group that DEFRA staff had discussed a ‘buy and lease back’ scheme for properties at risk although this was before the recent change of government. .

b. Pathfinder Project (report circulated with the agenda)

Alan stated that the successful bid to the DEFRA Pathfinder project had enabled continuity to the SLP Adaptation project as well as to provide funding to the Educational Programme targeting local primary schools to work with the Field Centre and to enhance tourism in the area.

c. Car Parking Capacity in the Event of the Loss of the Middle Car Park

Alan Denbigh handed out a report containing recommendations and considerations for the replacement of lost car park capacity on Slapton Line in the event of the loss of the Middle Car Park due to a breach of the road (see report attached to these minutes).

Further, Alan informed the Group that Ken Carter, Head of Landscape and Leisure, had included the car park item on the agenda for the next Asset Management Group meeting.

6. ENHANCING THE TOURISM POTENTIAL OF THE AREA DISCUSSION

Alan Denbigh had asked for views and ideas from the members of the Slapton Line Steering Group as to how best to enhance the tourism potential of the area and how to do more to showcase the heritage and attractions of the region.

Discussions had taken place previously about having a visitors' centre in the area and Alan Robinson reiterated that from the Council's perspective it could not take any responsibility for the cost of building and maintaining such a centre especially in the current economic climate. However, the Field Centre's mobile information trailer, available in the summer months, offered much the same information as a tourist centre by providing visitors with information of events in the area.

Further, it was also reiterated that the Council had a programme for reducing its level of investment in promoting tourism in the South Hams and had established a new partnership with the private sector and Visit South Devon had now taken on this responsibility.

One idea that was forwarded was that of creating a viewing point to look at Slapton Sands and the Ley from the top of the hill before descending down to the beach.

Cllr Longrigg enquired as to whether anything could be done to the path on the seaward side of the Slapton Line as it appeared poorly maintained and was difficult for people to walk along and almost impossible for wheelchairs. Alan Denbigh responded by saying that this path was not the official Slapton Line path which ran alongside the Ley on the other side of the road and therefore the Land Management Group would be unresponsive to requests related to this path. The path on the seaward side was where the pioneer wild flower shingle habitat had been created along the Slapton Sands Shingle Ridge. People walk on the vegetated shingle and loose material is worn away and if the ridge path was to be improved, it might protect the plants more.

Alan Robinson requested Cllr Longrigg to email Alan Denbigh with his concerns over wheelchair access along the path and for Alan Denbigh to discuss the issue with Andrew Pratt.

Action: Cllr Longrigg to email Alan Denbigh with his concerns regarding the seaward path along the Slapton Line

The Celebrate Start Bay event, held over the last couple of summers, had proved very popular and had attracted visitors as well as local residents. Cllr Carson enquired as to whether Celebrate Start Bay would be a regular annual event after the Slapton Line Project ended. Alan Denbigh responded by saying that the event took a lot of time to organise, and that he hoped that with the preparatory work completed by the Project and colleagues (particularly Liz Davey in AONB), that the Field Centre could run the event with the help of the local business community and parish councils in the future. The framework for the event organisation was all in place and could be handed over as a package to the Field Centre.

7. FUTURE MEETINGS

SLAPTON LINE STEERING GROUP:

- **Monday 22 November 2010** at 2.00 pm in the Dining Room
(please note this meeting replaces that arranged for 25 October 2010)
- **Monday 23 May 2011** at 2.00 pm in the Dining Room

SLAPTON LINE ADVISORY FORUM:

- **Wednesday 8 December 2010** at 6:30 pm in Strete Village Hall

(Meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and concluded at 3.15 pm)

Project Plan and DRAFT Exit Strategy		
Bold headings under Activity denote items funded by the DEFRA Project		
Project Item	Activity	Suggested Exit Strategy
1: Project Management And Community Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop project management and delivery framework. • Develop community consultation and engagement framework. • Local business consultation / study & support economic development and adaptation measures. • Develop linkages with other relevant projects and sites. 	Continue with Steering group activities 2 x per annum. Advisory Group ?
2: Public Communication Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade and updating to website; • Publication of community newsletters (6 editions); • Publicity and pr specialist – part funded • Installation of 3 on-site information panels at carparks – part funded; • Installation of information display at location to be decided (eg Torcross or Slapton Ley Field Centre); 	<p>Continue with communications :</p> <p>The partnership agreed in October 2002 to jointly fund communications for the partnership. Prior to the adaptation project this activity was led by SHDC 'badging' communications on behalf of the Partnership. Suggested activities :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - newsletter (frequency ?) - Website updating (and responding to enquiries) - Event-related press releases - Crisis communications <p>The suggestion is that, beyond externally funded activities, SHDC should revert to nominating one person as the SLP contact who should attend all meetings and manage the production of all communications, though some elements of this (eg newsletter) could be sub-contracted (eg in part to a tourism sub-project).</p> <p>Based on 2-3 days per month cost estimated at 4k annually</p>
3: Adaptation Of Local Small Business Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake study of business catchments and customer patterns; • Establish a small business forum for the area; • Delivery of advice & assistance to small businesses, focusing particularly on marketing, business planning, grant availability, in retail, catering, craft and local produce sectors. • <i>Further developments could include a collaborative local marketing campaign, specialised business training or other economic development activities</i> 	<p>Continue with business forum directed tourism activities.</p> <p>DEFRA bid enables tourism work to continue including Environmental Tourism officer based at SLFC and directed by businesses supported by LAG bid and matched by SLFC and SLP/DEFRA funds</p>

<p>4: Develop Of Environmental Tourism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced programme of environmental activities & events centred on Nature Reserve – part funded; • Production of tourism promotional materials (leaflets etc); • Repair to paths eroded by trampling pressure on the shingle beach head; • Sustainable & environmental tourism info incorporated into marketing produced by tourism operators • Provision of “visitor information points” in surrounding villages; • Provision of marketing support, “green” business audit & environmental advice. • <i>“visitor infrastructure” improvements (eg: hides, viewpoints, carpark presentation, interpretation panels)</i> 	<p>Support for SLFC/NNR has enabled some of these activities to carry on beyond the project :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - information trailer - Celebrate day – self funding framework being developed - Information points – interpretation boards - Audio tour - SLFC linked into business forum - Support for research day - Support for environmental tourism officer - Shingle path support, plus investigating vegetated coastal shingle bid <p>To be continued as part of the business directed officer funded by LAG</p>
<p>5: Habitat Adaptation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop habitat adaptation plan with priorities and costings; • Subject to securing necessary agreements, undertake a practical pilot project to “migrate” or extend key freshwater wetland habitats up the feeder valleys. • Completion of consultant’s study: future scenarios for Slapton Ley NR & habitat adaptation options. • <i>Major habitat “migration” and adaptation works.</i> • 	<p>The lead on habitat adaptation would pass to the Slapton Nature Reserve Land Management Committee.</p>
<p>6: Policy Integration</p>	<p>Incorporation of Slapton coastal management policies and adaptation measures into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Framework; • Second-generation Shoreline Management Plan; • Nature Reserve Management Plan; • (4) AONB Management Plan; • 	<p>Integrated into other policies and that SHDC had mechanisms for dealing with this.</p>
<p>7: Assessing Vulnerability Of Torcross</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk/probability analysis of threat to property of flooding and erosion in accordance with PAGN guidelines. 	<p>This issue would be re-visited at a future time.</p>
<p>8: Contingency Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and adoption of contingency plan for responding to storm events and erosion of the road. 	<p>The lead for updating the Contingency response to road breach is DCC.</p> <p>In addition the project has assembled a Contingency manual which captures all the related issues and supporting documentation.</p>

9:Re-Alignment Of Sections Of Main Coast Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realignment of the main coast road away from the beach-head will be carried out reactively subject to criteria agreed in response to future erosion events. 	The realignment of the main coast road was identified as the statutory function of DCC.
10: Improve Alternative Routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of passing places on inland minor lanes will be undertaken incrementally as funding allows. 	DCC would take the lead on the alternative routes. Passing bays would be progressed on a one a year basis if the maintenance budget permitted.
11: Traffic Adaptation Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion and adoption of traffic adaptation plans for school transport, service buses, refuse collection services, emergency services; • Development of re-routing plan for HGVs and delivery vehicles; • Development of re-signing programme for main approach roads in the wider South Hams area. • Installation of main signage programme • <i>Installation of remotely controlled electric signage on key road approaches</i> 	Completion by DCC mid 2010
12:Development Of Options For Alternative Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current car parking capacity, future scenarios and options for adaptation • Consider alterations to car parking to include seasonal addition to capacity to compensate for loss caused by coastal erosion, and enhancements to presentation of existing car parks. Investigate alternative sustainable transport opportunities (park and ride, cycle hire, public transport, etc). • <i>Physical improvements, alterations or extensions of car parks, if required.</i> 	Car parking options report to be completed for next meeting
13:Development Of Alternative Inland Coast Path Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of options for an alternative inland coast path in anticipation of the eventual severance of the existing coast path by coastal erosion – part funded. Development of options for an alternative inland coast path in anticipation of the eventual severance of the existing coast path by coastal erosion – part funded • <i>Construction of new inland coast path</i> 	Complete alternative footpath not approved by NNR – but agreement of part of route achieved as a result of Ecological Impact assessment.
14: Coastal Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of regular surveys to monitor shingle levels on the beach together with the ecology of the shingle barrier and the Ley – part funded. 	It was agreed that Paul Taper would continue to monitor the shingle levels on Slapton Beach. It was suggested that it would be helpful if all data was coordinated into a common base of information, using sources such as Plymouth University. A compilation of the organisations and contact details is available in the contingency manual.

<p>15: Sharing Best Practice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a national conference on innovative coastal management at Slapton, based at Slapton Ley Field Centre, aimed at professional practitioners • Give presentations to (up to) 8 relevant conferences at local, regional and national level. • Publish articles in (up to) 8 relevant professional journals • Training courses and field visits for schools, universities and professionals to be hosted at Slapton Field Centre 	<p>Conference took place at Slapton on March 11th.</p>
<p>Additional: Maintaining Beach Levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance or extension of shingle “bastions” positioned to protect vulnerable sections of road. 	<p>Bastion maintenance continues as joint SHDC/DCC funded activity.</p>

Slapton Line Bastions, July 2010

A meeting was held in the middle car park on 14th June between myself and Nathan Sykes of the Plymouth Coastal Observatory. We discussed the ways in which both bodies' survey and record beach movement and whether it would be possible to combine our efforts and reduce duplication.

Nathan kindly offered to incorporate half a dozen of the cross sections, which South Hams regularly monitor, into the cyclic survey which they carry out during February/March and September/October. He would also be prepared to carry out one post storm event survey, per year, on request. This work would be undertaken at no addition cost to South Hams.

The information would enable us to decide whether "topping up" of the bastions is required during late autumn and how much material has been eroded during the winter storms.

There is a slight problem in that the PCO data comes in the form of coordinates rather than an Autocad drawing. However the grid base is common to both surveys and it should not be too time consuming to plot the sectional data and compare it with our archive information.

A month earlier we were lucky enough to have the assistance of Julia Bradbury of Countryfile in recording levels of the bastion near the memorial. Unfortunately she drove the telescopic survey pole into the shingle with such gusto that it was half a metre shorter at the end of filming!

Ross and I carried out our own survey after the film crew had left and the present beach profile is very healthy.

P. Taper
Senior Engineer
South Hams District Council

Planning for replacing Lost Car Park Capacity on Slapton Line

Alan Denbigh Updated May 2010

1. Summary

The (middle) memorial car park at 138 spaces (plus additional contingency) represents just under 40% of the public parking capacity in the Slapton Line road area. It is under threat in two ways; from reduced capacity as erosion continues, and loss of access when the road becomes permanently unusable.

A breach would also result in Strete Gate and/or Torcross eventually becoming cul-de-sacs and the car parks would have to have accommodate regular bus turning.

The car parks in the area are currently only at capacity during periods of good weather in the school summer holidays, and hence major investment now is difficult to justify at this stage. This document maps the options available now.

2. Recommendations

- **Strete Gate:** Consider land acquisition now of relatively small parcel of land adjacent to the car park here (approx 0.2 acres). In the short term this could create additional peak overflow parking space by installation of ramp access, stock fencing and gating at a relatively low cost. A fall back option might be to have a formal dialogue with the landowner/tenant now about these options.
- **Torcross:** Formally approach the Nature Reserve to agree a contingency 'exchange' of land liberated from the reduction of the (leased) middle car park land against seasonal extension of the **Torcross** car park. This may simply require access.
- **Sands Lane Slapton:** Regarding potential '28 day' parking, verify any restrictions on use of land adjacent to Sands Lane (by checking with Whitley Trust).

3. Strete Gate Car Park Capacity 101, Owned by SHDC

There is land of suitable gradient to take additional car parking to the north of the current car parking spaces, though levelling is required. There are currently no arrangements to access this potential overflow. The additional space is currently accessed by going back out of the car park, turning left up a narrow track (with no passing places) and then turning left into the field. This space could be accessed through the existing car park by creating a new entrance to the field.



The cost to create an additional 60 spaces on a fully levelled permanent surface is approx £140k¹. A lower cost but less capacity seasonal option would be to create the access and not resurface the field, but install gates and stock fencing (with option for stock to graze outside summer months). An approximate cost for this would be around 7k plus land purchase/lease costs.

Options

- Create new entrance through the main car park
- If capacity was permanently increased the main access should be improved (it is currently single track and creates something of a bottleneck)
- Turning space for buses from Dartmouth would need to be created in the event of a breach (an earlier scheme has mapped the layout for a bus stop here)

4. **Memorial Car Park** Capacity 138 plus overflow Leased from : Whitley Trust
Damage to the seaward edge of the car park is likely to lead to the reduction in capacity of this car park even in the short term, though since 2001 this has not happened.

There is overflow parking which is opened by the field staff/beach warden on busy days.
Other considerations:

I have had informal discussions about 'trading' sections of this car park against extension of the Torcross car park with Andy Pratt. He has invited the discussion to be raised at the Land Management Committee at Slapton.

5. **Torcross Car Park** Capacity 83 – additional 36 in layby; Leased from Whitley Trust, space is provided for 4 coaches.



Potential overflow area.

A survey of this area was made in May 2010 by SHDC showing what the capacity achievable here could be in summer months assuming that the ground was dry and stable (as when inspected) ²

¹ Ref email from Randallsimmonds to Paul Taper – total cost including resurfacing existing and removing excavated material is £194k . Dispersing material on site and not counting the other car park surfacing.

² File ref: Torcross overflow car park options SHDC survey may 2010.pdf

Other considerations:

- Bus turning capacity would need to be provided here in the event of breach.
- The car park extends beyond the protection of the Torcross sea wall so it may be vulnerable, though it does have sheet piling along the beach head adjacent.
- An extension similar to that available at the memorial car park for use seasonally in the event of road breach may not require surfacing

6. Potential Car Parking Torcross – Stokenham

There appear to be few sites before reaching the Stokeley Farm shop turnoff from Torcross. There are some relatively level fields here adjacent to the road .



The photo view shows the road which goes from the A379 towards the farm shop (turning right out of view). The shop has ample car parking capacity for the shop (whose use is again seasonal). Some people reportedly already park here and walk to Torcross without paying car parking charges. The car park is well positioned for a potential new footpath route around the Ley which is under discussion, though no agreement yet reached (or likely to be reached in the near future). For the future a consideration would be a pay to park system with refund

or 30 minutes free for shop users. This arrangement could provide a revenue split with the landowner. The surface is currently non-metalled.

7. Potential Car Parking - Slapton Turnoff

There are some fields which appear to be accessible and relatively flat that could be used for short term 28-day parking.

a. Overflow parking for the Field Centre is intermittently provided using an adjacent field owned by the Whitley trust and farmed by tenant Jim McPetrie. He is however potentially more interested in offering the first field on the right (travelling up Sands Lane towards Slapton). This has previously been used as a camping area with up to 50 tents, which he discontinued after perceived disapproval from SHDC.

b. To the left of Sands Lane there are some more suitable fields owned by Michael Crowson (01548 580069/580 341). According to Mr Crowson there are a number of covenants on the land which was at one time owned by the Whitley Trust restricting its use. Though he doesn't seem interested in car parking as an option.

It would be useful to verify any restrictions on these two area.