

**MINUTES OF THE SLAPTON LINE ADVISORY FORUM MEETING
HELD AT SLAPTON VILLAGE HALL ON WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 2011**

Present: Cllr John Baverstock – South Hams District Council (SHDC)
Alan Denbigh – Project Manager, Slapton Line Partnership (SLP)
Kate Gill – Strete Parish Council
Joan Mason – Stoke Fleming Magazine Editor
Trevor Mason – Stoke Fleming Parish Council
Andrew Pratt – Field Study Centre, Slapton Ley
Alan Robinson – Corporate Director SHDC - Chairman
Robin Rose-Price – Slapton Line Defence Group

Apologies:

Jim Morrison – Devon County Council - Highways (DCC)
Paul Taper – Senior Engineer, SHDC
Simon Tonge – Whitley Conservation Wildlife Trust
Robin Toogood – AONB Manager, SHDC
Nik Ward – Natural England

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 (SLAF) held on 8 December 2010 were approved as a correct record.

Update on action points from the previous meeting:

Item 6 Devon County Council Update - Action: That Jim Morrison consider erecting '*unsuitable for motors*' signs in advance of Hansel (near Merryfield) to deter drivers using satellite navigation systems who were getting stuck in Hansel, which had been happening several times a month.

Alan Denbigh informed the Forum that this action was still outstanding and that he would continue to chase Jim Morrison regarding the Hansel signage.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no queries or items raised for discussion during the Public Question Time.

4. PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT

Alan Denbigh presented to the Forum his Project Manager's Report and the following points were raised for discussion:

Pathfinder Project

Both Alan Denbigh and Robin Toogood (AONB Manager) had attended both the Final Event and the Regional Event and would like to share the information they gleaned with the Council in relation to the roll-back solutions. In north Norfolk, due to erosion, the coastline was losing up to 15 metres annually. This had rendered coastal properties, in danger of falling into the sea, uninsurable. Therefore, a roll-back pilot scheme was being developed with the idea to move community assets inland. Land could be purchased whether by public or private means with planning permission obtained. The properties could then be bought or leased back. This was a useful principle to adopt in the case of coastal erosion endangering properties on any coastline.

Education Video

A video which explained the Slapton geomorphology, road loss and positions of the various stakeholders had been well received. This video was being used not only by the Field Centre but was also available on YouTube and on the Slapton Line website - <http://www.slaptonline.org/>

Wartime Slapton

An archive of photos had been collected from a number of sources which cover the wartime period and this had been put together in a presentation of eight panels which were exhibited in the Field Centre information trailer over Easter and were now in place in the Start Bay Inn foyer at Torcross as part of the Tourism project.

Business and Tourism

The Pathfinder project had enabled a bid to the South Devon Coastal Local Action Group (SDCLAG) fund to be pursued and successful completion of a small bid to take a number of tourism ideas forward. These ideas were presented at a meeting on Thursday 26 May to Start Bay residents and businesses. The proposals included:

- Welcome to Torcross signage including leaflets
- Business-based interpretation trail
- Bird hide enhancement and bird call trail
- Geomorphology signage
- Slapton Chantry signage
- Google Map overlay for Start Bay
- Walking trail improvements
- Liaison with businesses

The project would link to a number of other interpretation projects including Hallsands updating, Start Point updating and Beesands fishing panel

Shingle Path

Alan informed that the shingle vegetation exclosure plots had been improved by the Field Centre using additional fencing on the seaward side to prevent plants growing in the shingle from being stepped on.

4. **PROJECT MANAGER'S REPORT (cont'd)**

Torcross Tank

For the first time, a full list of those who lost their lives during Exercise Tiger had been established at the tank site. The list was verified by the tank company working together with US relatives of those lost during the disaster. The replacement panel was proposed as an alternative to other larger scale suggestions made earlier. The old cairn style arrangement was replaced with a metal pedestal and GRP panel. The panel was available in time for both ceremonies this year on 16 April and 28 April and was dedicated by Laurie Bolton, one of the relatives of those lost in the Exercise.

Torcross Duckery

Alan Denbigh is working with Torcross village representatives to help them repair erosion damage to the Ley bank at the 'duckery'. The Field Centre, English Nature and Stokenham PC had been liaised with. The intention was to place a plastic mesh where the grass had been destroyed and fill it with gravel. A price quote was awaited for the work and once received it was hoped the work would be completed within three weeks. Robin Rose-Price expressed his appreciation for the SLP's help with the duckery.

Emergency Planning

The Slapton Line Partnership (SLP) had responded to a recent enquiry from the Devon Police Authority and Jim Morrison informed that he had attended a Flood Planning meeting and had given them the SLP contingency plan.

5. **BEACH SURVEYING REPORT**

Alan Denbigh presented to the Forum the following report from Paul Taper, SHDC Senior Engineer:

"Although coordinates for the four most important bastion beach cross sections were forwarded to the Plymouth Coastal Observatory last year, it seems that they have not been forwarded to the surveyors for inclusion in the cyclic beach sectioning process. I will follow this up as it makes comparison difficult when the nearest section PCO is 55m north of bastion no. 4.

"South Hams engineers carried out a check section on Bastion no. 4 last week and the date has been compared with last autumn's profile. There has been a reasonable accretion of material seaward of the bastion's toe with little or no change in the spring low water zone.

"A view on the need for reshaping the bastions can be taken at the end of the summer. Localised remodelling of the bastions may be all that is required and not require such heavy plant as previously used. Perhaps Devon County Council could use their connections with South West Highways to carry out the works with South Hams District Council making a contribution."

It was noted that Bastion no.4 could be remodelled and that the erosion was not caused by wave action but by people walking or sliding over it to get to the shoreline. (Note: a diagram of a section of Bastion no. 4 is attached to the minutes).

5. **BEACH SURVEYING REPORT (cont'd)**

It was queried as to why and how accretion of shingle occurred. The Forum was informed that the longshore drift took the shingle north to the Strete Gate end and that constructive easterly winds were beneficial in maintaining the shingle levels but that too much easterly wind had a detrimental effect on them.

At the Slapton Line Steering Group meeting held on 2 June 2011, it was agreed that no further works would be undertaken to augment the bastions now, but that the situation should continue to be kept under review in case works were needed at a future date.

Cllr John Baverstock had been monitoring and reporting on shingle levels at the Torcross end of Slapton Beach over the past year and asked if the SLP would like him to continue with this exercise. It was agreed that Cllr Baverstock would continue to monitor the shingle levels during the winter months only.

6. **DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL UPDATE**

In the absence of Jim Morrison, DCC Highways, Alan Denbigh asked the Forum if there were any highway issues they wished to raise.

Robin Rose-Price had previously requested in the SLAF meeting in December, on behalf of Torcross village, that DCC retain the bollards at the north end of the promenade adjacent to the sea wall as the majority of the residents would like the promenade to remain a car free zone. He also requested that double yellow lines be introduced on the north end to deter slipway misuse. Brian George, who was then the DCC Highways representative, advised he would pass this request to John Halliday.

Robin asked as to what was happening with the proposed pedestrianisation of the promenade and Alan Denbigh said he would contact John Halliday for an update. Cllr Baverstock also said that he would chase the matter via Stokenham Parish Council.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

1. **Ian Longrigg**

The Chairman informed the Forum that Ian Longrigg had sadly passed away in the past week and acknowledged the part that he had played in the Slapton Line Advisory Forum as well as the Steering Group.

2. **Monument Car Park Steps**

The issue was raised regarding the steps to the beach at the monument car park. The majority of the steps had collapsed and therefore could result in injury. It was identified that SHDC was responsible for the steps although they were not actually dedicated steps. Due to erosion, material had become loose and was a hazard for people stepping onto it.

ACTION: Alan Denbigh to liaise with Kate Cassar, Head of Assets at SHDC

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS (cont'd)**

3. **Drainage Tunnel at Torcross**

The issue of the drainage tunnel that ran through Torcross was raised in relation to the fact that it required shingle clearing from it again. It had been identified in earlier meetings that wherever the culvert ran under then that respective area was the responsibility of the owner but where it ran under the road, it was the responsibility of DCC Highways. It had also been established that Torcross was in danger of flooding from the Ley if the drainage tunnel were to become blocked. It was also noted that the period of concern was between April and August of any given year.

The question was raised as to who the official contact was for the culvert, which was confirmed to be Jim Morrison of DCC Highways, who could be contacted on telephone number 01392 380160.

4. **The Future of the Slapton Line Advisory Forum Meetings**

The question was asked as to the future of the Slapton Line Advisory Forum meetings as attendance numbers had decreased. It had been ten years since the major storm damage of the Slapton Line with no other major event occurring, therefore should the same level of activity and meetings still take place.

It was noted as to whether the Steering Group and Advisory Forum should merge but it was decided this was not a good idea as the Steering Group's function initially was to respond to a crisis and then subsequently to drive the Slapton Line project.

Alan Robinson directed the Forum to page 2 of the minutes of the last meeting where it stated that "Alan Denbigh was in the process of compiling an exit strategy but that SHDC would wish to keep the lines of communication open when the SLP project came to an end and this would probably happen through the AONB unit. Alan Robinson reiterated that when the SLP project came to an end, the local business community would need to build on what had been achieved through the external funding and take ownership of future actions to adapt and plan for change."

When the Slapton Line was closed due to the storm in 2002, initially various groups got together to deal with the crisis but they didn't know who to contact. However, it was acknowledged that electronic communication structures were now well in place through the SLP's website and via local parish clerks to enable less meetings.

It was, therefore, decided that the Slapton Line Advisory Forum should meet annually with the next meeting to take place in the spring of 2012. However, in the event of an emergency, a meeting could be hastily convened to deal with the relevant issues.

7. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

4. **The Future of the Slapton Line Advisory Forum Meetings (cont'd)**

ACTION: Sue Amos to cancel the Strete Village Hall booking of 30 November 2011 and arrange a meeting in the spring of 2012

ACTION: Alan Denbigh to contact the other SLAF members to inform them that the meetings would now be held annually and to gather their views on this subject

8. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Slapton Line Advisory Forum is to take place on **Wednesday 28 March 2012** in **Slapton Village Hall** at **6.30 pm**.

(Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 8.00 pm)