

Minutes of the Meeting of the Slapton Line Partnership Steering Group Stokenham Village Hall, on 7th March 2018

Jess Bishop (Flood Risk Officer, Devon County Council)
Julian Brazil (Devon CC Cllr for Kingsbridge & Stokenham & South Hams DC Cllr for Stokenham)
Peter Chamberlain (Devon County Council Environment Manager),
Vicky Croughan (Communications, South Hams District Council) Eamon Crowe (Natural England)
Alan Denbigh (Chair, Slapton Line Partnership)
John Fewings (Neighbourhood Highway Team, Devon County Council)
Dan Field, (Senior Specialist in Engineering, South Hams District Council)
Cllr Richard Foss (South Hams District Council Councillor for Allington and Strete)
Kate Gill (Chair, Strete Parish Council)
Jon Grimes (Natural England)
Jonathan Hawkins (Devon CC Cllr for Dartmouth & Marldon)
Tom Jones (strategic planning, community and environment SHDC)
Lee Dennison (Slapton Ley Site Manager, FSC)
Diane Lethbridge (South Devon AONB)
Val Mercer (Slapton Parish Council)
Julian Payne (Environment Agency)
Dr Amy Plowman, Director of Conservation and Education Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust
Andy Pratt (Head of Slapton Ley, Field Studies Council)
Piers Spence (Chair, Stokenham Parish Council)
Dr Kit Stokes, (CMAR Plymouth University)

1. Update on road damage of 1st March following Storm Emma

Peter Chamberlain (PC) reported that a damage assessment had been made. Extensive damage had happened to the sections either side of the section retreated in 2001 (north of Sands Lane, Slapton turnoff) including undercutting and a significant drop which made it clear that emergency works to protect the damaged road was pointless. DCC were assessing next steps.

John Fewings (JF) reported that the plan was to clear the shingle by end of Friday 9th March and noted that signage about diversions would be updated and water filled barriers would be installed to ensure that road closures were adhered to.

Action : Vicky Croughan to work with colleagues at DCC to provide details about advisory routes in communication and local alternative routes to be promoted locally. Updates would be provided via email bulletins and press releases also via SLP website.

2. Possible Reinstatement

PC reported that the damage had occurred in the sections where previous planning permission had been obtained, Environmental Impact Assessments had been made and a regime of habitat management had been implemented in order to reduce ecological impact.

There was a discussion around whether reinstatement was the right thing to do with a consensus that at some point we will lose the road and that this was likely to be the last major investment in repairs. It was noted that the Beach Management Plan included a section recommending the road retreat activity but also longer term mitigation and adaptation including communications and designation of a Coastal Change Management Area.

Dan Field (DF) reported that he hoped to obtain an overlay of before and after along the road from drone data to full impact on defences and the road.

PC and Jon Grimes (JG) and Andy Pratt (AP) agreed that information would have to be exchanged including the extent of plans and likely mitigation work required. JG said there was a need to ensure that the mitigation work needed was assessed and completed urgently.

There would be liaison between Natural England (NE), the FSC and DCC (including over any other ecological issues) and JG said that NE would be as flexible as possible.

John Fewings (JF) said that DCC is getting on with topographic surveys and there is a lot of activity going on to progress the next stages.

Amy Plowman representing the Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust stated that, in principle, as land owner they would not stand in the way of retreating the road, but formal agreement will have to be agreed at the Trust's AGM on 29th March where there were a number of new trustees attending.

3. Funding

There was no funding currently on the table and at this stage no Emergency Funding available and the recent bid to ESIF (European Structural and Investment Fund put in by SLP/DCC had failed (as had all of the bids in that round) because it didn't meet growth criteria)). Though the work on the Beach Management Plan would lead to an application for funds this needed a more detailed 'Outline Business Case (OBC) before this funding could be made available.

(As the meeting closed news came in from Sarah Wollaston that funding had been agreed by the Secretary of State for Transport to provide £2.5 million to repair the road.)

4. Timetable of Reinstatement of Damage including car parks

CLlr Julian Brazil asked about the likely timetable once funding was assured.

PC said that things were considerably speeded up as a result of having planning permission already in place and because of the mitigation work. Timing partly relates to cost and, if the cost of the road repairs is kept under £1m, the tendering process is considerably simplified. It would take weeks to get cost estimates from contractors also to remove the remaining road (which provides minimal protection). It is difficult to estimate but it is hoped to reinstate at some point during the summer.

DF reported that the cutback was such that the gate in the overflow Memorial car park was overhanging the beach. Resurfacing where required would take place as soon as possible on the damaged surface at Torcross and the Memorial car park

The issue of retreating the Memorial itself was raised by Kate Gill and the meeting noted that there was keen local interest in this.

On behalf of the meeting the chair thanked Peter Chamberlain and his colleagues from DCC who had worked hard including over the weekend to assess the damage and progress preparations for repair and reinstatement.

Action AD to locate records of previous action taken when Memorial retreated last time and provide to DCC.

5. Presentation on Storm Emma

Dr Kit Stokes from Plymouth University CMAR presented data on Storm Emma which was an extreme event which created waves peaking at 8.17 m which suggested it was at least a 1 in 100 return period storm. He showed videos of the damage and the cut-back in profiles. Shingle had been cut back from the northern section and deposited on the southern sections so Torcross now had a large amount of shingle. In places several metres in beach height had been lost.

Shingle beaches react very quickly and there are two main mechanisms going on – a longitudinal movement and a transitional cross shore movement – where shingle will slump down the beach but will often return fairly quickly.

6. Presentation on Beach Management Plan (BMP)

Dan Field and Alan Denbigh provided a brief presentation on the BMP

The background was that the Plan had not been in the Environment Agency's 5 year plan and would not have taken place before 2021. With the lowering beach levels and the need for reactive repairs (2014-16) in March 2016 the SLP meeting agreed that the production of the Beach Management Plan should be brought forward (funded by EA, SHDC and DCC)

As a result of the BMP process we now have a better understanding of the coastal processes, we've looked at revised funding rules which have indicated that funding should be accessible via Flood Defence Grant in Aid. We've reviewed the associated economic benefits and tested which measures are likely to be eligible, and drawn upon other the improved understanding of both technology and whole life costs from other BMP's. As a result we have been able to assess 38 options, in line with best practice.

These have been narrowed down, taking into account how effective the measures were likely to be, the whole lifecycle costs, their impact on the landscape in addition to environmental designations and their long term legacy:

	Activity Description	Required Works	Indicative Costs
1	Maintain the existing EA Torcross defence		£380,000* *Separate EA funding
2	Maintain the sheet pile wall installed in 2016	Annual inspection primarily to check steel condition and toe level.	tbc
3	Upgrade and improve the remaining section of concrete seawall which was not repaired during the 2016 emergency works	50m sheet piled construction (as per 2016)	£250,000* *due to pile length and specification
4	Upgrade and improve the existing rock revetment to increase protection against erosion and overtopping	Assess existing rock armour to determine suitability and whether it can be used to protect the most vulnerable sections.	£500,000
5	Reactive road realignment	To be implemented as and when required	£300,000 - £600,000* *dependent upon extent
6	CCMA Adaptation Plan	Prepare future generations	£50,000
7	Beach recycling	Solution could still be implemented to bolster areas where beach levels are low. Option would require further modelling work to increase certainty and be considered in conjunction with beach control structures.	£1,278,200* *excludes control structures

The funding assessment arrived at a figure of £1.79 million total funding available through the Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA).

Beach recycling remains a possibility but there are uncertainties as to how effective it would be , with The key outstanding questions include, where is recycled material best placed, what quantity would need to be recycled, how long is it likely to last?

Kit Stokes provided a short presentation on what modelling work could be done to try to answer these questions. Points made included that a storm, in one event, can move a lot more shingle than we can afford to. Current modelling approaches the problem by breaking it down into 2 different analyses – longshore changes and cross-shore. The cost of the modelling was around £20k but would use a lot of existing work and data that Plymouth had already completed.

It would be able to determine 'thresholds of vulnerability' in specific pinch points including the Torcross sea wall and hence would be interesting for the EA to know if emergency shingle movement had some value. The meeting agreed that it would be worth further investigation.

Next Steps:

AD explained that following the finalising of the BMP, we would have to put together a detailed plan for the Environment Agency known as the Outline Business Case, to produce this current estimates were £50k – however a short version had been identified so this may reduce the cost (this cost was refundable as part of the FDGiA funding process) . This process would be necessary to get further funding and would include the commercial case for proceeding, procurement statements and permissions required.

Action: It was agreed that the non-technical summary of the BMP would be circulated for comment by AD and DF and that a full copy of the BMP would be made available for download.