



giving
nature
a home



Environment
Agency



The Moors at Arne Project, Stakeholder Liaison Group

9 October 2019, 17:30 – 19:30, Wareham Town Hall

Attendees:

Project Team

Helen Morgan – Environment Agency Project Manager

Kevin House – Environment Agency NEAS (National Environment Assessment Service)

Catherine Farrugia - Environment Agency Advisor (Flood & Coast Risk Management)

Neil Watson – Environment Agency Coastal Engineer (Wessex)

Matt Phillips - Kier

Dante Munns – RSPB Area Manager

Chair – Ron Curtis – Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Risk Manager Wessex East)

Representative of Ridge Farm

Representative of Ridge Yachting Centre Ltd

Representative of Ridge Residents Association

Representative of Redclyffe Yacht Club

Representative of Birds of Poole Harbour

Representative of Ridge Moors Action Group

Representative of Dorset Bird Club

Representative of Arne Parish Council

Representative of CPRE

Representative of Open Spaces Society

Two Ridge Residents

Welcome

Welcome and introduction by the Chair.

Review of notes from last meeting

Notes from last time agreed, if any attendees would like a copy of the notes printed for them, please email the project team: TheMoorsAtArne@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Brief project update and discussion

The project team have completed the outline design phase of the works and are moving into the detailed design stage.

The Environment Agency survey boat has been out doing a bathymetry survey along the River Frome up to Wareham, part way up the River Piddle and down into the western end of

Poole Harbour, approximately to a line north from the end of the Arne Peninsular. Results from this survey are not expected to be available till after Christmas and will be made available to everyone. This survey is to improve our understanding of the existing sediment regime as discussed last meeting, a second survey is planned in spring 2020.

The proposed locations of the banks has not changed since we last met.

Environmental Impact Assessment – Screening and Scoping Request

Kevin gave an explanation of the screening and scoping process with the Local Planning Authority (Dorset Council) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

We believe the project does require an Environmental Statement as part of the planning application. The screening process will confirm that Dorset Council think the same. The scoping process is about us agreeing with Dorset Council the scope of the Environmental Statement. This is important to make sure we are spending our time and resources on the issues that are significant and important. Dorset Council are due to reply to us soon and the response will be on their website. The Environment Agency and Natural England both have procedures in place to fulfil their statutory duties as consultees and ensure the responses are independent from the project team.

We expect the response from Dorset Council imminently but do not expect the MMO response till January.

Flood Risk (Freshwater) update

The flood risk assessment to establish the viability and any impacts of undertaking the project is a very complex, technical piece of work. The slides give an overview of the type of things that are being considered and assessed as part of the development of a report. We have a water level recorder on the Furzebrook, just downstream of the Arne Road crossing. This has been recording water levels since early 2018. The combination of freshwater and tidal events that will be considered in the flood risk assessment will be based on current guidance, at the moment this will be based on a Defra R&D paper as shown in the presentation.

The presentation included example results from the flood risk assessment and give a flavour of the information that will be available in the report, it is all quite technical as the subject is a complex one. We will have a public meeting to share the results in more detail, just as we have already done for groundwater and surface water. This will give people time to study and understand the results.

Public Access

Further consideration has been given to where the proposed visitor paths could go. The area to the south of the embankment is likely to be very wet so here, the path is likely to be along the top of the embankment, however we will have to consider how much disturbance this might cause to the birds.

Providing the path to the northern lagoon, is a real challenge as the lagoon bund will be narrow, with water on both sides. People walking along here will likely disturb the birds unless some sort of screening is included, but this would look out of place and unnatural.

Lower walkways would get covered by the tide which could lead to people getting stranded when the tide comes in. The team will continue to explore what can be provided safely.

Two possible locations are being looked at for the disabled car parking space, by Bankgate cottages in the east would provide access along the existing tracks to a view point. Parking by the end of the western embankment could provide a more level route but there are risks with being on top of the embankment. A question was asked about how the RSPB would enforce the use of the disabled car parking spaces– this would likely be managed in a similar way to the existing spaces at the Arne Moors reserve.

Opportunities for including cycle routes have been explored but are challenging as the ground will be very wet.

Traffic monitoring will be done over the October half term holiday to give us a better picture of how vehicles are currently driving into and around the Arne Peninsula.

Open access land – there are three areas of open access land within or close to the site boundaries, as shown on the slide with an orange outline.

Open forum

A question was asked about how where the material for the embankments would come from? The ground investigation has shown that some of the material can be excavated from the site. We don't yet know how much but we are working to maximise the percentage that we can win to reduce the amount being imported. We don't yet know where the material will be imported from, as it depends on what sort of material we need, we will explore local options as much as possible.

Next Steps

The group discussed possible dates for their next meeting and agreed that February would likely be a good time, depending on when the project team have more information to share.