

CLYMPING PARISH COUNCIL

Notes of a meeting with the Environment Agency (EA)

at 5 Crophorne Drive

on 26 January 2018

1. **Present**

Cllr A Findlay (Chairman)
Cllr H Burrell
Cllr J Shears
Val Knight (Clerk)
John Smith (Environment Agency)
Saleena Hansraj (Environment Agency)

2. **Welcome**

Cllr Findlay welcomed everyone to the meeting and round the table introductions were made. Cllr Findlay outlined an Agenda and said that the Parish Council was concerned about the storm damage and erosion to the Clymping beach frontage. This was not only because of the threat to nearby dwellings but also because of the beach's importance to both the community and to visitors who enjoy the beach and walking along the coast.

3. **Storm Brian October 2017**

The EA confirmed that they had inspected Clymping beach following Storm Brian and the main damage had been sustained at the western end of the beach.

Key points were:

- The 5th Groyne East of Poole Place rock groyne which had undergone several repairs in the past had been washed away by the storm and there were no plans to replace it due to cost. There are also technical difficulties in attempting to replace the 5th groyne.
- The tank traps already on the beach and rocks were re-distributed from the 5th Groyne to the 4th Groyne to support the groyne and reduce shingle loss at this location
- After Storm Brian some shingle appeared at West beach. Shingle was recycled from West Beach and from the mouth of the Arun (Littlehampton Harbour Board removed the shingle from the harbour and placed it on the beach for us to recycle) to Clymping legal and non-legal sections in November and December 2017. The EA were given special permission by Natural England to continue recycling into the first 2 weeks of December. Prior to this the EA had been monitoring the beach but there had not been sufficient shingle to recycle
- The flint walls were not part of the sea defences and had previously been knocked over by the landowner for safety reasons.
- The section of the beach from the car park west to Poole Place is the subject of a legal agreement as set out in the EA Arun to Pagham Strategy

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/469503/F1516_0552_A2P_Strategy_Appraisal_Report_v3.0.pdf

4. **Storm Eleanor January 2018**

The EA confirmed that they had inspected Clymping beach following Storm Eleanor and damage had been sustained at the eastern end of the beach where there had been a breach and the sea water and shingle had washed onto a private access road.

Key points were:

- The EA had attended within a few hours and cleared the road and used the shingle to block the breach.
- The section of the beach from the car park east to West Beach is described as the non-legal frontage in the EA Arun to Pagham Strategy where the strategy for this section is defined as ‘do minimum’ (i.e. patch and repair until it becomes too expensive – budget for the year is £20,000)
- In response to a question about whether the section of wall where the breach occurred could be reinforced, the EA said we are considering options to patch / repair this section to prolong the life of the beach in line with the ‘do minimum’ policy described in the Arun to Pagham Strategy. We are also willing to help and advise the local community on options for the longer term. Due to the ‘do minimum’ policy we couldn’t justify government expenditure in this location in the long term but there is nothing to stop the land owner or community looking for a solution. This would be subject to all the usual planning permissions being granted, permits being issued by the EA and MMO license to name a few.

5. **What are EA doing?**

- The EA said Clymping legal frontage is an ‘eroding beach. There are potential plans in the Arun to Pagham Strategy for a “Bund” between Elmer and Clymping in the vicinity of Poole Place which would reduce the risk of back door flooding to Elmer i.e. from Clymping
- The EA are looking at positioning rocks / something similar along the non-legal frontage where the beach breached in Storm Eleanor. Costings are being obtained but available funding is limited.
- Shingle is recycled when possible, normally in the Autumn Subject to funding more shingle could be recycled from Littlehampton Harbour in Spring as it becomes available.
- Shingle is normally recycled from the beach nearer to Littlehampton (West Beach) which is designated as a SSSI but restrictions by Natural England limit when this can be done. The EA have assent to take shingle from 3m below MHW between Littlehampton harbour arm and 850m East of this point between 1st October and 30th November. Recycling from within the SSSI must not be undertaken in December, January and February. This avoids the peak period for overwintering Sanderling. In exceptional circumstances when shingle accretes in the area between the western harbour arm and the first wooden groyne additional recycling can take place from March onwards.
- Repairs had been carried out to the breastwork of the groynes prior to Storm Eleanor and before shingle was recycled to this area.

6. **Debris on the Beach**

The Clerk had asked Arun District Council whether they would clear debris left following the storm (rusting metal perhaps from WW2 structures). Some rusting

metal is protruding from the earth bank and the EA said this should be referred to the landowner. A response from Arun is awaited.

Cllr Shears had asked about volunteer beach cleaning and the Clerk drew attention to website pages relating to volunteer beach cleaning: <https://www.arun.gov.uk/clean-ups> and <https://www.mcsuk.org/beachwatch/volunteers>

7. **Funding Options**

There was a discussion around options and funding opportunities for works which could be carried out. For instance, a rock groyne could cost upwards of £200,000 and the EA could approve a scheme but could not afford to fund it given the existing Strategy and budget restrictions, so the scheme and works and ongoing maintenance costs would need to be independently funded.

Possible Funding sources which could be investigated included:

The National Trust

The National Flood Forum

Sussex Community Foundation

National Lottery – Heritage Funding

Local Supermarkets (e.g. plastic bag fund, Co-Operative Community Fund)

Crowd Funding

Aviva

Energy Companies

Arun District Council

Private contributions

Clymping Parish Council (Clerk to advise on any expenditure restriction)

8. **Possible Schemes (to be funded independently)**

Before funding could be investigated scheme options would need to be considered and evaluated. The EA suggested a site meeting for Councillors and local landowners (adjacent to the beach) to visit Selsey where two schemes could be observed in close proximity. Firstly an inland “Bund” has been constructed which had resulted in the Medmerry Nature Reserve and secondly a rock revetment & fishtail groyne. The date for the site meeting is likely to be mid-March.

This could then be reported on briefly at the 27 March meeting of the Parish Council with a proposal to hold a public meeting if appropriate at that time.

9. **Communications**

It was felt that communications between the EA and residents/Council could be improved and the EA agreed to provide a quarterly update to residents which would be published in the Village News. The EA would also be prepared to attend a Public Meeting (see item 8 above).