



Alde and Ore Association, Alde and Ore Community Partnership and Alde and Ore Estuary Trust

Alison Andrews speaking on behalf of the Alde and Ore Association, Alde and Ore Community Partnership and Alde and Ore Estuary Trust, all volunteer organisations.

The Alde and Ore Estuary is very important to the wellbeing of the Town, its residents, businesses and the wonderful natural surroundings we have inland as well as on the coast.

There are three organisations who currently all play their part in ensuring that the estuary stays in good shape. Over half its banks are in fact man-made: some of the river walls were built as early as 1168, with those by Aldeburgh in 1500. These walls keep the water out, protect homes and businesses and provide good agricultural land and for many of us a wonderful place to walk, bird watch, sail and canoe. (Without the walls this Old Generator Station could in an exceptional surge be flooded.)

The walls have to be repaired every 50-70 years as they are made of clay and that slumps and erodes. It is our generation's turn to redo the walls and if we don't instead of having one Hazlewood flooded marsh, all the land near the river would become like that. Hazlewood is a great view and provides an amazing wildlife habitat but our heritage is the huge variety of the estuary landscape and the homes it provides.

Currently after 10 years hard work, the vital plans to improve the river walls are now coming into operation so that these are to be brought to a standard to withstand sea surges, our greatest threat, until at least the year 2050 and beyond. The approval for the plans to do this in the upper estuary (Snape down river to Aldeburgh) and the substantial government grant to go with it, £11 million, was announced a year ago. A huge amount of essential



preparatory work to get the walls to the standard you see in the centre section of the Aldeburgh river walls, has been going on. This autumn we should see the start of wall improvements at Tunstall and Snape Maltings, in 2025 Snape Village and in 2026 moving the upper part of the Aldeburgh marshes near Brick Dock, with the lower part near Slaughden in 2027.

The Association was the driving force in the setting up of the Alde and Ore Estuary Partnership which had the task of drawing up a viable whole estuary strategy to ensure the continuation of the rivers. Having done that the AOEP task morphed into the Alde and Ore Community Partnership so that every Town Council, including Aldeburgh, and all the parish councils with parts of the estuary within their area has a representative on the partnership and can contribute to the guardianship of the strategy and be very much involved in the communications as the works progress. The actual construction work is being done by what used to be called the Internal Drainage Board, now called the East Suffolk Water Management Board.

The government only provides part of the necessary money, so responsibility for raising funds needed to fill the gap left by limitations on government funding, falls to the Alde and Ore Estuary Trust. This essential contribution is needed for the upper and lower estuary (Aldeburgh south to Orford and Shingle Street) as the estuary is a single flood unit. It is hoped to get another £10 million from the government for the lower estuary, but the community in the widest sense needs to find about £20 million. The AOET is leading on this. Much of it will come from trusts, foundations, the Heritage Lottery Fund, philanthropists and donors but this summer you will see the third fund raising flotilla from Aldeburgh to Orford on 28 July -do join in or come and see it.

The Association, as well as continuing to support the drive to renew the estuary defences, mostly last done over 70 years ago after the terrible 1953 floods, also looks to take care of the estuary area by - regularly surveying the state of the river walls; challenging planning applications which would destroy



the look and feel of this area of outstanding natural beauty, now called National Landscapes; providing enjoyment as its volunteers run the Butley Ferry which provides useful and fun short cut for walkers and bicyclists; recently has started monitoring the water quality in the estuary and is commissioning its third ten yearly survey of the economic value of the Alde and Ore area so we have ready to hand proof of the value of the area and the need to protect it.

Alison Andrews 25 April 2024