

East Head Coastal Issues Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

6th March 2025 - West Wittering Estate

Present:

Max Ambrose	(MA)	West Wittering Estate PLC
Keither Rathbone	(KR)	West Wittering Estate PLC
Oliver Pidden	(OP)	West Wittering Estate PLC
Angela Marlow	(AM)	Natural England
Lee Walther	(LW)	National Trust
Katie Archer	(KA)	National Trust
Uwe Dornbusch	(UD)	Environment Agency
Nicolette Pike	(NP)	West Wittering Parish Council
Richard Austin	(RA)	Chichester Harbour Conservancy
Bridget Wright	(BW)	West Wittering Parish Council
Andy Pearce	(AP)	Coastal Partners
Clare Dolan	(CD)	Coastal Partners
Patrick Byrne	(PB)	Cakeham Manor Estate – site visit only

Apologies:

Keith Martin	(KM)	West Wittering Parish Council
Stuart Dobbin	(SD)	Woodger Trust

#	Item	Actions
1	Site Visit to East Head The group visited the EHCIAG and walked from groyne 20 to 24. The group took a moment to reflect on the sad passing of David Lowsley, former Chichester DC Coastal Manager and founding champion of EHCIAG.	
2	Terms of Reference AP explained that Dominic Henly, the previous EHCIAG chair, had left his role at Coastal Partners / CDC in 2024. AP proposed that Clare Dolan take over the role of chair, which was accepted. AP introduced the current terms of reference, which members signed up to in 2013, and proposed a 'health-check' to ensure it remains fit for purpose. No obvious concerns were identified. AP to review and markup any queries, then circulate to the group for comment / discussion and sign-off.	AP

Discussion around the trigger points defined by the group in the document: 'Action Plan for the Continuing Implementation of the Adaptive Management Policy'; should coastal change occur requiring actions along the coastline. Request that members look at the trigger points and identify those that should be revisited by the group.

ALL

3 Changes / update from WWE and NT

MA briefed the group on coastal change over the previous 12 month and shared aerial images:

- G20-21: Beach levels have remained stable.
- G21-22: A surface water outfall was moved further landward, following crest erosion. However, beach levels have generally increased across this section of frontage.
- G22-23: Beach levels have remained stable, however there is a need to monitor the lower section of upper groyne 23, due to ongoing deterioration of the timbers.
- G23 =>: Beach levels have remained stable, with increased levels of shingle moving westwards.

LW noted that the winter period has been relatively calm, and there has been very little change along the East Head coastline. There have been a couple of overwash events of the spit over the winter, and it was identified that during Storm Pierrick (April 2024) all the fencing was washed out. Also identified that more shingle is moving westwards along East Head.

Noted that, prior to changing roles, Dominic Henly was asked to consider beach recycling plans should they be required. Potential sources of shingle included East Head spit, and Cakeham coastal frontage. It was noted that material would be placed at the back of the beach, rather than the front face. The works would likely need environmental assents / consents, but material would stay in the overall system. It was agreed not to progress this action - beach levels are currently healthy, and any interventions would likely be small and ad-hoc.

AP mentioned the Coastal Partners aspiration to develop a holistic BMP covering the East Head to Pagham frontage in the longer term, which could incorporate the EHCIAG frontage. This would bring together the existing beach works at Medmerry (EA), Selsey (CDC) and Bracklesham (CDC) with agreed triggers and actions. This will be considered over the next financial year by Coastal Partners.

MA to share a link to Flickr for access to UAV flight images of the frontage.

MA

4 Next Steps – Action / Monitoring

G20-21: Remove the two most landward piles from groyne 20 prior to Easter 2025.

The top row of gabion baskets will be removed prior to Easter 2025. Stones will remain in place, but wire will be removed, and a ramp created over the area for the summer period. This section of coast is expected to roll back, and the footpath will remain closed for safety.

G21-22: Any clay ridges along the beach crest to be smoothed out to reduce trip hazard.

G22-23:Planking to be lowered along upper section of groyne 23, and voids behind groyne to be profiled. Any trip hazards and metal tie bars to be removed. Lower section of upper groyne where it is attached to main structure to remain in place, but condition to be monitored.

G23 =>:No actions but monitoring of beach levels to continue.

5 Public Engagement

EHCIAC information is currently hosted on the West Wittering Parish Council website:

<https://www.westwitteringparishcouncil.gov.uk/east-head-coastal-issues-advisory-group>

Discussion was held around alternative methods of sharing information about the group, particularly around information boards and coastal change over time.

AP/CD to look through CDC records and information for any relevant information which could be translated into a timeline of events and shared with the group to consider next steps.

AP/CD

RA to circulate a copy of a master's project which looked at engagement of the EHCIAG.

RA

Recommendation to update EHCIAG document "The History & Origins of The East Head Coastal Issues Advisory Group". Noted that this document is useful for education groups.

UD to update a draft version of the document and share with the group for discussion. Once updated and approved, the document will be hosted on the West Wittering Parish Council webpages and circulated as required.

UD

6 AOB

FOR INFORMATION: RA mentioned that Chichester Harbour Conservancy are currently looking at the seagrass beds in the lee of East Head. They are considering the damage which current boat moorings cause to these beds and looking at the potential for eco-moorings in the area. There will be a meeting with Bird Aware Solent to discuss this.

AM mentioned that Natural England will be undertaking a condition survey of East Head over the summer period.

MA noted that in February WWE pushed the annual accumulation of windblown sand in front of the beach huts seawards and back towards the upper beach, rather than moving the sand to the water's edge. This was considered more efficient, and the material has moved slower than usual using this method for the time of year.

7 Date of Next Meeting

The group agreed to continue to hold an annual meeting each March. Additional meeting could be convened if there are issues requiring group discussion. CD to arrange meeting and send invite.

CD