

East Head Coastal Issues Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

9th March 2026 - West Wittering Estate

Present:

Clare Dolan	(CD)	Coastal Partners/CDC [Chair]
Max Ambrose	(MA)	West Wittering Estate PLC
Keither Rathbone	(KR)	West Wittering Estate PLC
Angela Marlow	(AM)	Natural England
Lee Walther	(LW)	National Trust
Katie Archer	(KA)	National Trust
Nicolette Pike	(NP)	West Wittering Parish Council
Richard Austin	(RA)	Chichester Harbour Conservancy
Alex Simmons	(SB)	Coastal Partners/CDC
Andy Pearce	(AP)	Coastal Partners/CDC
Patrick Byrne	(PB)	Cakeham Manor Estate
Stuart Dobbin	(SD)	Woodger Trust
Sam Box	(SB)	Guest speaker - Coastal Partners

Apologies:

Keith Martin	(KM)	West Wittering Parish Council
Uwe Dornbusch	(UD)	Environment Agency

Item Actions

1 Site Visit to East Head

The group visited the EHCIAG and walked from groyne 20 to 24.

Key discussions were held around changing beach levels, the potential to lower planking on groyne 23, and the removal of the damaged revetment structure to the rear of the beach at groyne 22.

Discussion around the frequency and outputs available from the Channel Coastal Observatory monitoring of the East Head / West Witterings frontage. CD to share processed monitoring report with the group.

CD

2 Actions from previous meeting (March 2025)

To review and markup any queries for the 'Terms of Reference', then circulate to the group for comment / discussion and sign-off. **Completed.** It was agreed that the Terms had served the group well in enabling Adaptive Management of the coast, so should remain largely unchanged, except for some minor amendments: 1) Bullet 3 should reflect the EA, rather than the involvement of Defra. 2) the Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy, is now approved, not a draft (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pagham-to-east-head-coastal->

**CD /
WWPC**

[defence-strategy/pagham-to-east-head-coastal-defence-strategy](#)). The terms should be revisited in the future when Local Government Reorganisation occurs. The updated agreement will be circulated for attendees to add their signatures and uploaded to WWPC once complete.

Discussion around the trigger points defined by the group in the document: 'Action Plan for the Continuing Implementation of the Adaptive Management Policy'. Closed. To be re-assessed should anything change within the next 12 months.

CD/AP

Share a link to Flickr for access to UAV flight imagery. Completed. MA shared link to imagery.

Look through existing CDC records and information to develop a timeline of events for consideration with the group. Ongoing. CD & AP to look through CDC records and discuss any additional information with MA.

RA

Circulate a copy of the Masters project. Ongoing. RA to share document following today's meeting. Available here: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0308597X17303871>

WWPC

Update EHCIAG document: 'The History and Origins of the EHCIAG'. CD to share with group following meeting, and document to be uploaded to the WWPC webpage for the group.

3 Changes / update from WWE and NT

West Wittering Estate

- Groyne 18-19: Beach levels have increased over the past year. Only monitoring in this location is the condition of the gabion baskets, although these are covered with sand and have remained stable.
- Groyne 19-20: Significant rise in beach levels upwards of 1m – identifiable from buried outfall headwall, but a steeper profile seaward.
- Groyne 20-21: Beach levels have dropped slightly in this area, as evidenced by the exposed roots of the Tamarisk on the crest of the beach. Beach profile has formed a more natural shape within this bay.
- Groyne 22: Proposal to remove the existing breastwork prior to the summer, as it is at the end of its life. Significant void to the landward side of the structure, and damaged planking noted on the seaward side. Removal may also reduce wave focussing and energy along the back of the beach against the structure. Still to be decided whether the whole structure is removed, or whether a height of 2-3 planks is left in place along the length.
- Groyne 23: Significant drop in beach levels from east to west side of structure. Recommendation to remove the top level of planking on the upper beach to allow shingle to bypass at this location. Up to 3 boards to be removed from the mid-point of the structure to allow bypassing of sand material. This can be reversed if needed, with planks replaced.

National Trust

- There were no dramatic changes seen over the past year.
- Some of the dune system was washed away at the top end of the spit during high tides, but the dunes are building up on the front face of East Head.
- There will be a refresh of the netting around the dunes over the next year.
- Some fencing was removed over the past year.
- Concerns around the enforcement of keeping dogs on leads around the dunes, and the best way to address this moving forwards.
 - Noted that other communities within the harbour also have issues with dogs off leads
 - Suggestion that it needs a member of staff to engage with dog walkers in the area to educate community of environment.
- Two ringed plover chicks fledged in 2025.

4 Next Steps – Action / Monitoring

G20-21:	No action. Ongoing monitoring over next 12 months.	
G21-22:	No action. Ongoing monitoring over next 12 months.	
G22-23:	Recommendation: remove existing breastwork prior to the summer to remove H&S risk from voids behind structure and damaged planking, and to reduce wave run-up against the structure. Ongoing monitoring immediately after removal and over next 12 months.	MA
G23 =>:	Recommendation: reduce planking level on groyne 23 by one plank on the upper part of the structure, and up to 3 planks in the mid-structure to allow further bypassing of material. Ongoing monitoring immediately after removal of planking to ensure expected movement of material is occurring. Further monitoring over next 12 months, with option to replace planking if needed.	MA

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>

WWE have a new member of staff starting, focussing on engagement, during March 2026. EHCIAG may be able to share information through WWE forums once new team member has started.

Important to share with the public why we are making changes to the revetment at the rear of the beach, and to groyne 23, for information. This can be done through WWE social media and potentially using the WWPC newsletter to raise awareness of the changes.

WWE / WWPC newsletters may also be able to share NT information going forwards.

6 Guest Presentation

Guest Presentation on CHIAP by Sam Box – adaptive management for Chichester Harbour, learning from EHCIAG approach. Strong link to community engagement as can't hold the line forever etc.

6 AOB

PB raised the importance of having a plan to monitor changes on the beach, historically and moving forwards. This will help to see and show the changes, through a combination of photographs, UAV data and beach monitoring data. CD to collate a summary of existing information and share with the group for reference.

CD

KM (absent) raised the discussion point around the potential of the group extending its area of interest to cover both Cakeham Manor Estate and Ellanore Point (east and west respectively). The discussion outcomes were that these areas were outside the scope of the group and would require new Terms of Reference. In addition, both the areas of concern have had recent feedback from key stakeholders and statutory consultees through their planning applications for the sites. This suggestion was not taken forward.

PB noted upcoming planning application for Cakeham dune management and spit management at Ellanore.

7 Date of Next Meeting

The group agreed to continue to hold the next meeting in March 2027. Additional meeting could be convened if there are issues requiring group discussion. CD to arrange meeting and send invite.

CD