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## **The Moors at Arne Project, Stakeholder Liaison Group**

**30 October 2018, 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)

Neil Watson - Environment Agency Coastal Engineer (Wessex)

Vanessa Dare - Environment Agency Comms and Engagement Officer

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

Dante Munns – RSPB Area Manager

Ian Alexander – Natural England

Matt Akers – Environment Agency – Flood and Coast Risk Management

**Chair** – Peter Moore, Independent Chair

Representative of Ridge Farm

Representative of Ridge Yachting Centre Ltd

Ridge Residents

Representative of Redclyffe Yacht Club

Representative of Dorset Wildlife Trust

Representative of Purbeck District Council

Representative of Ridge Moors Action Group

Representative of Dorset Bird Club

Representative of Arne Parish Council

Representative of Perenco

### **Welcome**

Welcome and introduction by the Chair. Brief recap of ways of working of the group for those that missed last meeting, note that these groups are not decision making but provide a forum for discussion and can influence certain elements of the project. Note that some of the presentation material for this evening is shared with attendees for their comments, and are in draft format. Also reminder to respect others and that we hope to have honest, open discussions.

### **Review of notes from last meeting**

One change was noted – a representative of Ridge Residents Association attended. No further changes requested.

### **Brief project update and discussion**

The project team gave a brief overview of the work that is continuing including modelling work and preparation for the public exhibition. The main embankment alignment has been slightly changed, see slide, to better protect some existing freshwater habitats. An update to the project programme was shared. The main change is that the detailed design stage is now expected to take 2 years, not the 1 previously hoped for. In addition the construction phase is now shown to cover 3 summer seasons, to hopefully allow the use of as much site won material as possible. This will allow time for treatment / drying / mixing / etc. This is our current estimate, expect further changes in the future. Question asked if this will impact costs: no do not expect these to change significantly, however they are still estimates. Question asked about the Groundwater Meeting held in September, this was well attended by residents, our Consultant gave 3 presentation to explain the findings so far. Question asked if the ecological surveys so far had shown anything unexpected: not so far, confirmed what we expected.

### **Workshop on Public Access**

Kevin, Ian and Dante introduced the workshop by giving an overview of the expectations of the partner organisations. The Visitor Access Principles were discussed. Attendees were asked to share their Hopes, Fears and Expectation for public access to the site. In summary these included Hopes: traffic impacts and disturbance will be minimal, there will be access for residents and visitors. Fears: traffic will cause disturbance to residents. Expectations: safe managed access, special access for locals, scheme not to be imposed and public access is possible.

Questions were asked about how many visitors there are to the existing RSPB reserve, if Sunnyside Car Park would be large enough for all the additional visitors and how people would get from Sunnyside Car Park to the new reserve.

There followed a short discussion about the numbers of visitors and how they could be managed. It was noted that this new reserve could be very attractive for bird watchers to visit. Attendees were asked to work in groups and consider the Visitor Access Principles and draw on a map their suggestions for how visitor access could work, what facilities might they like / expect there to be provided and where.

Feedback on ideas to the group included consideration of cycling access along the Arne Road, separating pedestrians and cars, water borne, how to manage dog walkers, could a one way system be implemented using Soldier's Road and New Road.

The group then discussed why the lagoons were being proposed on the western side of the site, if these are the main attraction to birds (and watchers) could they not be sited away from Ridge? The project team briefly explained the rationale for the lagoons in the west. The north western area of the site is currently designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and the legislation requires us to use a hierarchy of decisions. Ideally we avoid impact, this would be hard here, if we created a smaller intertidal area on the east of the site, the SPA would be hard to manage in an acceptable state as a small, isolated and increasingly wet pocket of grassland. The next best option is mitigate, which in this case would mean providing the same services to the wildlife in a different way, the purpose here is a feeding and roosting area at high tide, this could be provided by a lagoon (as proposed). We now expect this to be technically possible to provide and so we propose to put a lagoon in the north western area of the site. The project team were previously exploring the options of

putting lagoons in the east (which, being outside of the SPA, is classed as compensation – the final point of the hierarchy which is only used if avoidance and mitigation are not achievable), in case there was a technical reason why mitigation (lagoons in the west) was not possible.

### **Public Exhibition – draft display boards**

The next Public Exhibition is 28 November at Wareham Town Hall from 2-7pm. The draft display boards were displayed and attendees were asked for their comments and suggestions for improvements.

### **Next Steps**

The project team are continuing with both their investigations and the outline design work. The group discussed possible dates for their next meeting and concluded that early February would be a good time.