

27th January 2005

EAST HEAD

REPORT BY MANAGER & HARBOUR MASTER

1. Introduction

1.1 On 4th November 2004 the Conservancy resolved that measures should be taken to protect East Head in the short and long term. This paper reports on the current physical condition of East Head, work that has been completed to date and the proposed way forward.

2. Current Physical Condition of East Head

2.1 Since the sand dunes at the Hinge first breached at the end of October, the breach has widened and, at the time of writing in late December, it stretches for about 70 metres running from behind groyne 24 north along the line of the berm. The indications are that East Head is unzipping from south to north, although for a two week period at the beginning of December the process slowed down during a window of benign weather.

2.2 The rock berm is doing the job for which it was designed, namely preventing a tidal channel forming through the breach in the dunes. Contrary to English Nature's concerns, there is no indication, at this stage, that the berm is causing damage to the dune system itself or causing a reduction in beach levels.

3. Work to Date

3.1 Work to date has been progressed through a number of meetings: internally of the Conservancy's East Head Working Party that now includes the Steering Group of Conservancy and Advisory Committee members; bilateral meetings with Chichester District Council; and a meeting of the East Head Liaison Group. This latter group consists of all the interested parties, namely CDC, HBC, EN, EA, WSCC, NT, West Wittering Estates and the Conservancy. All are represented at senior management level and all agree that there is a need to act in partnership to find a long term solution to the problem at East Head that satisfies the concerns of all interested parties. This is a significant step in the right direction and recognises the need for a balanced and not just a single interest solution.

4. Short Term Measures

4.1 The Liaison Group met on 13 December 2004 and agreed that the rock berm should remain in place whilst a scheme to protect East Head in the long term is developed and implemented.

4.2 It was also agreed, by the Liaison Group, that the breach in the Hinge could be repaired by recharging it with locally sourced material. This is an important

element of the short term management of the Hinge because there is a danger that if nothing is done, the loss of dunes may prejudice a long term scheme. However, English Nature and the District Council currently believe that any recharge should be behind the rock berm.

- 4.3 The Conservancy has sought an early implementation of a recharge option with both English Nature, the District Council and the National Trust. We have requested that, in order to slow down the loss of further unspoiled sand dune, and to stop the berm being outflanked to the north, material is recycled from the north-west tip of East Head back into the Hinge where it has been lost in front of the berm. It will act as a sacrificial barrier and is a process which, subject to prevailing weather conditions, may have to be repeated before a permanent solution is implemented. It is judged that this is a wise precaution and discussions are ongoing at officer level about the exact location of any recharge scheme.
- 4.4 It is hoped that Chichester District Council will undertake this work as part of their commitment to hold the line in the short term. It may however be necessary for the Conservancy to contribute to the costs in whole or part, depending on the size of the recharge and assuming an appropriate consent is forthcoming. The estimated cost of a 4K- 5K cu m recharge is £6,000. The matter is being considered by the District Council's Executive Board on 11 January and a copy of the report to the Executive Board is attached at Annex B. An oral report back on CDC's Executive Board decision will be made at the meeting.

5. Long Term Measures

- 5.1 The long term solution to the problem at East Head must flow from the Coastal Defence Strategy. It will simply not be possible to implement a scheme which is not included in the Pagham to East Head Coastal Defence Strategy because an ad hoc scheme may have an adverse impact on an adjoining sector of coastline.
- 5.2 It has been confirmed that the Conservancy will have early visibility of the options for the East Head section of the Coastal Defence Strategy so that we can work with others to develop an acceptable scheme. The first draft was due on 17 December but has been delayed until mid-January. We have been advised that the options for the future management of East Head will be very similar to those in the original iteration of the Strategy. The Conservancy's consultants (ABP MER) have, therefore, been asked to start doing an initial assessment on the viability of these options.
- 5.3 Assuming a scheme that satisfies all interests can be agreed with the regulators and the landowners, it will go for public consultation in the Spring 2005. At that stage, the Conservancy will try and establish whether potential funders are prepared to contribute to the cost of implementing the scheme. If they are, planning permission will be sought and, subject to gaining satisfactory planning consent and sufficient funds being collected, a contract to undertake the works may be let, after a proper tendering process.

- 5.4 It is possible that the District Council, acting as the Coastal Defence Authority, may be willing to take forward the gaining of a planning consent and to undertake the works for an approved scheme, but using money from public donations. This matter will be the subject of further discussions.
- 5.5 A possible timetable for the above process is:
- Jan/Feb 2005 Development of viable scheme(s)
 - Mar/Apr 2005 Public consultation on scheme(s) and selection of fundable scheme
 - May/June 2005 Preparation of Environmental Impact Assessment and Planning Application
 - July/Aug 2005 Consideration of Planning Application
 - Sep/Oct 2005 Tendering and contract action
 - Nov/Dec 2005 Works start on site
- 5.6 The detailed draft project programme is shown in the Gant chart at Annex A - (please can I record my thanks to Jim Robertson of the East Head Working Party for his help in its production). We have been advised that, in the view of the District Council, the timetable for this programme is over-optimistic. Nonetheless, English Nature share the Conservancy's view that early and speedy action is required and that we should strive to achieve this target.

6. Funding

- 6.1 In the short term, the East Head Working Party agreed that the residue of the East Head Defence Fund (£19,500) should be used to employ a consultant to advise on the viability of schemes in the Coastal Defence Strategy and other short term proposals. It would pay for the surveying and monitoring of the berm that was a condition of the existing planning permission. It will be used for the miscellaneous expenditure associated with establishing and running the Communications and Fund Raising Groups. It is also proposed that, if necessary, the Fund should pay for the recycling of shingling as outlined in paragraph 4.4 above. This latter proposal has yet to be considered by the Working Party.
- 6.2 The East Head Defence Fund would be insufficient for the development of an Environmental Impact Assessment and a planning application that could cost in the order of £60,000. Although the Conservancy would hope to receive substantial assistance from the District Council for some of this work, it is proposed that the Conservancy approve the expenditure of up to £60,000, from the Development Fund, for consultants to produce the planning application.
- 6.3 The Chairman has written to the Leader of the District Council requesting financial assistance with those elements of the planning application that directly relate to the interests of the District. Namely, the environmental, economic, social and local community elements of the East Head planning application. It is hoped that this request will be considered by their Executive Board on 11 January 2005.
- 6.4 The main financial challenge of this project will be in raising sufficient funds to pay for a scheme that is acceptable to all parties. It is not yet known what a

scheme will cost and how much will need to be raised from the community; fund raising cannot begin in earnest until it is. The East Head Working Party has agreed that a Fund Raising Group should be established under the Chairmanship of David Swayne (the Commodore of West Wittering Sailing Club). He is a member of the Working Party and he will be producing a fund raising strategy for its consideration.

7. Communications Group

7.1 The Working Party recognised the importance of keeping the harbour community informed of what the Conservancy is trying to achieve at East Head and what progress is being made. It will also have a major role to play in the fund raising process. To this end a Communications Group has been established under the Chairmanship of Ted Roose (ex Commodore Itchenor Sailing Club and a professional communicator) and he has been invited to join the Working Party and is currently pulling together a structure.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that:

- a. the approval given by the Chairman's East Head Working Party for the short and long term actions outlined in paragraphs 4 and 5 above are noted.
- b. the approval given by the Working Party for immediate expenditure from the East Head Defence Fund, in accordance with paragraph 6.1 above, is noted. Expenditure from the Defence Fund for the recycling of beach material into the Hinge, as a short term measure, is approved.
- c. approval is given for the expenditure of up to £60,000, from the Development Fund, for the preparation and submission of a planning application, for an agreed scheme, for the long term protection of East Head.

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Manager & Harbour Master