

## **Pagham Harbour Community Forum: Minutes**

27 November 2013

Selsey Centre

On the panel:

- Chair: Cllr Margaret Whitehead (WSCC)
- Charlotte Eastley (Head of Countryside Services WSCC)
- Rob Carver (RSPB Site Manager)
- Adrian Thomas (RSPB Project Manager)

Q = question from the floor

1. Welcome; reminder of how the Forum works (Adrian Thomas)
2. Site Manager's Update (Rob Carver)
  - The RSPB has set up a weekend Wildlife Explorers club for 8-12 year olds, with five volunteer leaders. The group will meet once a month to do activities such as pond dipping and bug hunting. The Friends of Pagham Harbour donated £1000 to help the group's establishment.
  - The RSPB team has run a successful events programme. The new events programme leaflet was available at the meeting to take away.
  - There has been lots of volunteer-based work undertaken, including site management such as clearing glades in Owl Copse
  - The steps down to the shoreline at Church Norton were replaced, funded by the Friends of Pagham Harbour
  - Volunteers have previously participated in the national Wetland Bird Survey, once a month counting all the birds in the harbour at high tide. A team now also undertakes low tide counts.
  - The Forestry Commission has reissued the grant allowing the team to manage Norton Priory Woods as part of the SSSI.
  - Slipe Field has been cultivated with a seed mix suitable for Turtle Doves, which is supported by an Environmental Stewardship grant.
  - The RSPB is looking to secure funding to restore Tern Island.
    - Q: Is the membrane under the island working.
    - RC: Plants are self-seeding from above
  - Wildlife highlights in 2013 included a good year for butterflies, very good numbers of Chiding Pink, 2500 Brent Geese regularly in the winter, plus 1500 Wigeon and 200 Pintail.
  - Work is underway with Manhood Wildlife & Heritage to survey and research the Water Vole population.
  - Roe Deer are increasing in number around the Harbour.

### **3. Agenda items raised in advance by members of the public:**

- Progress with Local Nature Reserve agreements: The RSPB is making slow but sure progress with turning the LNR agreements from bipartite (between WSCC and the landowner) into tripartite (between WSCC, the landowner and RSPB). AT explained that it is just a formality – it just makes sense for the RSPB, as day-to-day managers of the Harbour, to be party to those agreements.
- There has been a rumour that there had been changes in the rules about beach use along the stretch between Pagham Yacht Club and Pagham Spit - this is not the case and the rumour is unfounded.
- A member of the public presented a letter to say that North Wall is in unknown ownership. Charlotte Eastley confirmed that this does not affect WSCC's ability to maintain the footpath.

- Cllr Ray Radmall (Pagham PC) gave an update on the current situation regarding the rock revetment flood risk management work at Pagham Beach
  - A concern was raised about the amount of vegetation in the Harbour. It is largely a plant called Spartina, sometimes known as Cord-grass, which is a kind of salt-loving grass. Its populations around the country tend to wax and wane, which does affect the areas of mudflats and of other saltmarsh plants, but there is practically very little that can be done to control its fluctuations, and by and large it doesn't have a damaging effect on other wildlife in the long run.
5. AOB.
- How should the RSPB announce Forum meetings?  
It was agreed that the RSPB should formally inform the parish clerks ahead of the Community Forum taking place
  - Next meeting's Chair announced as Cllr Bernard Smith
6. Date for next meeting: To be set for in or near June 2014