

NAYLAND WITH WISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL UPDATE ON CALEY GREEN

An 'open' Zoom meeting was held on 8 July to discuss various solutions to the erosion at Caley Green and the restoration of the revetment. Mary George, Chair of NwW Parish Council, invited Suffolk County Council Senior Ecologist Andrew Murray Wood and James Carr from the Environment Agency to explain the erosion problem, why urgent remedial action is needed and what the feasible options are.

In summary the current position is:

- Historically the deep reed beds in the curved area prevented erosion, but with their removal the rate of flow of the river has increased and rapid erosion is now taking place
- If the river bank remains unprotected then more of Caley Green will be eroded, a cliff edge will form and there will be a risk of flooding
- Whilst the replacement of reeds in this area would resolve the issue, the Parish Council wish to have an alternative option that would enable everyone to continue to enjoy as clear a view of the river as possible and to have access to the river
- A hard edge such as concrete or wood would result in the water bouncing off rather than being absorbed and lead to erosion problems elsewhere in the river system
- The Environment Agency are happy in principle to permit a 10m length of wooden revetment to replace the current length which has decomposed in order that river users can get in and out of the river as long as this has "overwhelming support" from the community.

In summary the proposed actions are:

- To insert coir bundles along the curved edge and up to the revetment
- The coir bundles to be seeded with low level native plants; these plants to be carefully selected so that they grow to an approximate maximum height of 45cm
- A small pocket of reeds to be planted on the green side of the stream/culvert to provide a habitat for fish fry and to protect the corner beside adjoining property
- To replace the current revetment with a 10m length, possibly with a launching/recovery platform for licensed recreational watercraft
- The southern riverbank between the revetment and existing reeds to remain clear as it is not prone to serious erosion

For full details of open zoom meeting and the working document that the Parish Council has drawn up to capture and explore all possible options please go to the website: It is anticipated that a planting plan will be agreed by the end of August and this will be shared on the website, along with any other updates on this project.

Suffolk County Council as landowner, and the Parish Council as licensed manager are fully committed to preserving Caley Green for the enjoyment of both wildlife and people. The necessary actions that are being taken are with the intention of preventing further damage to the green in an ecologically friendly way that will enable wildlife and people to live in harmony.

We invite residents who wish to make a comment to contact the Parish Council by email at this address caleygreenproject@gmail.com or via the box at the Post Office. Please include your address or postcode. All comments to be received by **31st August**. Please direct all comments to Nayland with Wissington Parish Council.

Please note that this email address will only be used for the purpose of comment about Caley Green and in line with GDPR regulations. See the Parish Council webpage for details of the Data Protection Privacy Policy.



MEETING WITH SCC & EA REPRESENTATIVES NOTES FROM THE ZOOM MEETING: 8TH JULY 2021

The PC hosted a Zoom meeting at which Andrew Murray-Wood, Senior Ecologist for SCC and James Carr, Technical Officer on the Biodiversity Team at the EA, James Finch and 9 residents attended.

Andrew Murray Wood, who said he was speaking purely as an ecologist suggested that vegetation round the bay would require more management 'in the right way' in future.

James Carr answered a number of questions. Considerations for granting permits to undertake work look at proposals and whether there are any flood risks. At this site he would like to see the reeds by the inlet from the stream retained as they provide cover for creatures entering the river.

He had no objections to 10 metres of wooden revetment near the bench but added that harder revetment solutions affect the flow and can cause problems just downriver; it was pointed out by a previous property owner that the property next door and those further down had their own revetment protection.

On the suggestion of Aqualog revetment for the other stretch of the bay James said this could be considered and would give greater erosion protection; it is heavier to work with and may be more expensive. It was pointed out that the wooden revetment and Aqualog would not incur the cost of regular maintenance that coir planting would require..

On the question that rivers naturally want to meander and that the inner bend gradually silting up may exacerbate the erosion James said this is true but slow flow on this part of the river and the introduction of erosion control would eliminate the problem.

When asked what plants are being suggested Mary George said this wasn't decided. It was pointed out that this is an important consideration and should be declared. A resident said that plants will expand, self-seed and the stronger varieties will become dominant; Mary George replied they would need to be managed.

When it was suggested that the swans and ducks, which like to get onto the Green, would find it more difficult to do so, Andrew Murray-Wood said that was not an issue. He added rivercraft entering the river over the coir roll would need to be discouraged, although James Carr said it was quite resilient.

A resident said they liked to look out and see reeds, not people, cars and signs, they would like it to be natural and not look urban.

Another resident said that we live in human and natural world; the river should be for people, wildlife and navigation and a lot of people enjoy it from Nayland, Leavenheath and other local parishes. So much access has been lost already; he recalled villagers swimming by the by-pass in the past.

James Finch concluded recommending a compromise should be sought; further options should be looked at considering a balance of views.

Are the goalposts and facts shifting and the Parish Council contradicting themselves?

- In the PC's Caley Green update it says "the rate of flow of the river has increased", at the recent Zoom meeting James Carr said there was: "slow flow on this part of the river"
- In the SCC & PC joint statement (June CT) it said: "... have **NO** plans to block out the view of the river at Caley Green for visitors or the properties of residents at the southern end of Bear Street." In the PC's 'working document' (point 2.2) it says "maintaining as clear a view of the river as possible".

Furthermore in the PC's update, (by bullet point):

- (2) it says "a cliff edge will form and there will be a risk of flooding". There is no flood risk – that's what the sluice gate and flood relief channel are for, when the river is high the water is diverted away from the village.
- (4) It says "A hard edge such as concrete or wood would result in the water bouncing off rather than being absorbed and lead to erosion problems elsewhere." The riverbank further downstream is very adequately protected by residents' revetments or by thick overgrown reeds on the Meadow side.
- (5) "the Environment Agency are happy in principle to permit a 10m length of wooden revetment to replace the current length which has decomposed in order that river users can get in and out of the river as long as this has 'overwhelming support' from the community." At the Zoom meeting James Carr said "he had no objections to 10 metres of wooden revetment near the bench". His comment "overwhelming support from the community" was regarding a jetty.
- (7) "plants to be carefully selected so that they grow to an approximate maximum height of 45cm". In the working document published online on 15th July it states planting would be "maintained at a maximum height of 1 metre." The list of plants is still not available, but the only plant that would keep near that scale is Marsh Marigold; that is toxic and wouldn't support the river bank, it's a marginal plant for shallow water. The other plant mentioned in the working document, Water Iris, grows to 100-150cm.

What A Fuss For a Piece of Mud and a Fish or Two by Chris Hunt

If there is one thing to come out of this Coronavirus business it's the use of these Zoom meetings. Such a meeting recently occurred to discuss the 'issue' of Caley Green. Such meetings do enable a selection of interested parties to take part. However at the end of the day they do have a restricted audience and of course fail to have a traditional shouting match so some issues are not so forcibly put or pertinent points made. Also, and I may be wrong, there don't seem to be any widely available records of the event or decisions made.

Let's be honest. The point of any discussion about Caley Green is to get the use of the Green, river and road parking stopped. At the meeting the general condition and use of the river was discussed. It must be realised at the outset that a Right of Navigation does exist along the river - with 'Reasonable' use. The general state of the waterway was mentioned and is worth emphasising and that is the amount of reed growth. The river below the weir downstream to the Anchor and beyond is a disgrace, barely passable. Beyond that there is bank erosion far more serious than that at Caley Green. This whole section needs attention. It is noticeable that fewer works are carried out on the waterway and although we are told this helps wildlife, let's be honest, it's really about financial cutbacks.

But back to the Green. Problem one; erosion. There is a scheme put forward to prevent erosion of the north bank at the bend of the river. In the past a timber revetment had been installed. It would make sense to renew this and extend it to protect the bank into the corner. The mass of reeds on the opposite bank should be cleared as this must cause the current to increase

towards the opposite bank making the erosion problem worse. It seems Caley Green will remain a suitable launching point for small craft and being, as I understand it, Suffolk County Council (SCC) property it is beholden to the Council to protect the bank.

Problem two, people using the river. Well as already mentioned they have every right to do so. There are some interesting statements from the Environment Agency (EA) about this issue. The Agency (as indeed is SCC I think) is charged with driving up active recreation at the same time relieving pressure on traditional tourist 'hotspots' in the Stour corridor by spreading out tourist activity. People have always been boating and swimming in the river.

The EA developed the River Stour waterway Plan. The aims of this include "...preventative maintenance for slipways and portage points, brushing and weed control, providing better access facilities over the whole length of the navigable river ensuring public safety and protecting the natural environment" My copy is a few years old but I am sure there is a website saying much the same thing.

The use of the River Stour is a valuable local, indeed National, resource and much has been done to improve water quality and the river is being used fully to meet modern health and leisure requirements. Once the village was held together by work, worship, shopping and school. Now the bonds are found in self interest, house prices and leisure, whatever form these take. A remote self-centred rural community is over - things happen that may upset but usually have to be controlled and tolerated.

What should be done at Caley Green? Simple, extend the revetment as above. Provide a decent public information board (put it in the bus stop) a good example of this can be found at Groton Croft, near Boxford. That'll sort it!

Just a few of my initial thoughts on the 'PC's update' and their 'Working Document'.....

I believe the update is scare mongering and contains exaggerations as a means to an end; it's blatantly obvious that the writer is set on the plan to plant along the riverbank by hook or by crook.

The working document:

- **1.1** Contrary to what is stated green oak revetment is not short lived and is tough. Oak revetment will not increase visitors. Replacement of 10 metres will be accepted by the EA and the PC have a grant towards the cost, if they do it in 2021.
- **2.1** There is no need to bring (20 tones!) of silt in from somewhere else. There is enough silt in our river, use that to build up any lost bank and there will be no contamination. Machines to do this are available locally. See photo on page 22
- **2.2.6** Contrary to what is stated the stone/rock used in gabions is a natural material, they last 60 years and give shelter for fish spawn and provide habitat for invertebrates and small plants to naturalise. As does rock roll revetment.

- **2.2.7** Aqualog rolls (which James Carr did not dismiss) are an organic long lasting revetment and can provide habitat for wild flora and fauna. As James said, it may be a bit heavier (he didn't say unwieldy!) and more expensive than coir roll but there would be no maintenance cost needed as there would be with planted coir. Who's paying for that? It won't be the EA! The document says the material is not sourced locally but neither is coir, that's made from coconuts!

- **2.3** The document states "Coir rolls may include species that grow taller than desired". There is no MAY about it, they will. There is no mention, as there has been up to now, of a fence to protect the planted coir from damage - an oversight, or deliberate omission?

And finally there was no mention of the extraordinary meeting; in the last PC meeting report it has a 'date to be decided' status.

So for those that love Caley Green, use it or just admire the view do read both sides (the story and the facts) and make your comments.

CALEY GREEN: *The Myths*

RIVERCRAFT TRAFFIC

It appears that there is some thinking that Caley Green has become a popular location for rivercraft to set off from and travel downstream through Nayland. This is not correct.

A survey was carried out over the late May Bank Holiday weekend when the weather was fair to warm. It revealed that the majority of craft going downstream (through Nayland) come from upriver and many originate from the craft hire companies based in Sudbury and elsewhere and that most of the craft launching from Caley Green belong to serious paddlers and they tend to go upstream. This is no surprise as the river upstream from Nayland is far easier to navigate and more picturesque than that downstream which is shallow, overgrown and requires portaging.

“Is Caley Green the source of increased rivercraft through Nayland?”
“No”

THE COVID EFFECT

During 2020 there's no doubt Covid-19 did create an increase in visitors to the Green and an increase in those using the river in canoes, kayaks and paddleboards. As the country has opened up the number of visitors to the Green has declined and will do so further as people are able seek more exciting places, here and abroad, to spend their leisure time.

The number of rivercraft may also decline.

That said, the River Stour Trust and Dedham Vale & Stour Valley AONB are promoting the enjoyment rivercraft can bring and several companies and riverside restaurants have taken advantage of the trend and tempting options are being offered. There are numerous deals from companies in Sudbury on 'Paddling Adventures' and 'Paddle 'n' Pub' and the Anchor Inn at Nayland is one of the pubs included; there are even one way options where the craft is collected from the pub by the hire company. Rivercraft hire from Wiston is also popular.



A group of ten Canadian style canoes parked up for an organised 'paddle 'n' pub' Sunday lunch

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY...

The research we have done and advice we have been given over the last few months includes that from two companies who are experts in the field of river management and erosion solutions; Leeks Landscape Group and Salix River & Wetland Services. Both have been very helpful; we have learnt a lot!



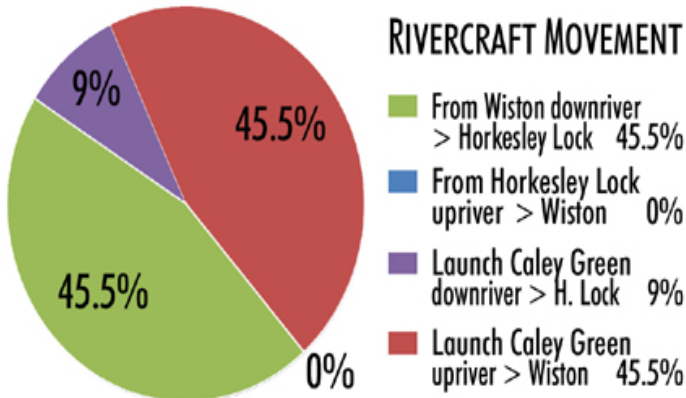
The versatile and manoeuvrable Truxor performs a wide range of river maintenance tasks including pump desilting

Suppliers have also been helpful; the cost would depend on location and quantity but as a comparison per linear metre planted coir is £28 whereas rock roll is £37. But of course planted coir will incur ongoing maintenance costs. Solutions such as Aqualog roll, oak revetment and rock gabions are other

options that would not incur ongoing maintenance costs.

When it comes to financing... There are a number of residents who would be willing to donate to and / or raise funds to pay for 'the right solution' to the erosion on the bay at Caley Green. Therefore saving expenditure from the public purse. However, the offer to pay for revetment was turned down a few years ago and the erosion was allowed to get worse.

RIVERCRAFT MOVEMENT



ENGAGEMENT WITH RESIDENTS

It seems that the Parish Council (PC) are - despite being made aware of considerable resident concern and alternative solutions - still not really listening. They have published a 'working document' (which the PC Chair says may be changed, and other documents added) and are inviting comments.

“Are the Parish Council & SCC really listening to residents?”
“You decide”

However, at the July PC meeting they discussed the timescale for getting this work completed in the autumn/winter. They did not seem to consider that public opinion may be against the proposals.

The petition of 110 names previously submitted (but barely acknowledged) has gained further names.

James Carr of the EA, at the Zoom meeting, said *“He did not want people to feel aggrieved”* and that *“biodiversity has flourished in Nayland”*. Well it appears quite a number of people do feel aggrieved and feel that 30 or so metres of extra biodiversity is not necessary. It is already a space for the enjoyment of both wildlife and people, where wildlife and people do live in harmony.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For those who would like to know more on the background of this issue, possible alternative solutions and the reasons why many residents are deeply concerned take a look at:

www.naylandandwiston.net

If you have any queries contact:

Sally: johnansal@live.co.uk 262675
or Lorraine: lorraine.nayland@btinternet.com

If you wish to send us a copy of your responses to the Parish Council as a record please do so.

CALEY GREEN: *Other Options*

EROSION CONTROL SOLUTIONS

A number of concerns regarding proposals by the Parish Council (PC) to reinstate and protect the riverbank from further erosion in the bay at Caley Green remain unanswered. The PC have repeatedly said that they have considered options other than planted coir but, other than wooden revetment and Nicospan, have failed to answer what those options are and why were they rejected?

There are many solutions for protecting riverbanks from erosion and it is sometimes necessary for a combination of solutions to be used.

The location at Caley Green is well used by residents and wildlife, so the river edge should be capable of withstanding that use. Some options, including planted coir roll would prohibit the enjoyment of residents.

The affects the changing flow of the river, due to excess reed growth just upriver, should also be considered; this will have added to the erosion at the Caley Green Bay. The silting and reed growth on the inner bend of the river will also have an affect.

Possible solutions using natural materials may include:

AQUALOG ROLLS

Aqualogs™ are used for preventing erosion and supporting the reinstatement of banks, while providing a stable, long lasting habitat. Aqualogs are an organic long term revetment made from a very durable and naturally occurring German coal industry by-product. Xylit is a tough, woody fibre made into Aqualog biochar fibre rolls which is exceptionally long lasting and flexible, and can provide an alternative habitat for wild flora and fauna.

ROCK ROLLS

Pre-filled Rock Rolls are a robust and permanent revetment for use around river banks, shorelines and reservoirs. They provide an instant flexible solution to many scour problems and are capable of resisting high velocities and shear stress in rivers. Rock Rolls provide a solution which can support healthy invertebrate and even native crayfish populations. They also accrete silt and can be fully vegetated.

ROCK/STONE FILLED GABIONS

A gabion is a rock-filled wire cage that provides strong long lasting erosion control of rivers, canals, etc especially those with steep banks. They give shelter for fish spawn and provide habitat for invertebrates and plants to naturalise.

GREEN OAK REVETMENT

Extension of the wooden revetment has been discounted; some representatives of the EA have said they would prefer this wasn't used for the whole area but an application for a permit giving a case for this choice has not been submitted and therefore not declined.

SPILING, FAGGOTS & FASCINES

If live material is used it will require regular maintenance/copping to avoid excessive growth of vegetation.

Willow spiling involves weaving live willow rods between live willow stakes set into the affected bank at regular intervals. It will achieve a dense top growth which will need maintenance and form a root mat to withstand erosion.

Fascines are long bundles of woody vegetation buried at the bottom of the riverbank in shallow trenches. Live plant bundles sprout and develop a root mass that will hold the soil in place.

Faggots can be constructed from small diameter living or dead material bound tightly together; Hazel faggots use dead wood, willow can be living or dead material.

PLANTED COIR ROLLS

Coir roll is biodegradable and disappears within a few years, by which time the plants will be well established and take over the task of preventing riverbank erosion. Plants commonly used for this are robust varieties with strong root systems that will stand up to strong water flow, such as: Reeds, Greater and Lesser Sedge, Yellow Flag Water Iris, Common Rush and Purple Loosestrife. These all grow to over 3 feet high; once

“Is planted coir the only sustainable solution?”
“No”

established, the roots and rhizomes of the plants will trap silt and extend the area that they can colonise.

Less suitable alternatives are for this location: Tree revetment, log jams, retaining walls, Riprap hard armoring, Geotextiles, TrapBag® and Nicospan.

PLANTING OPTIONS

The Parish Council are still not revealing what variety of plants are proposed to use in the coir roll; this is an element of the proposal causing concern. However, it is likely that whatever is planted over time the reeds and other species will introduce themselves. Similarly, if a variety of plants are chosen the more robust species will come to dominate the water's edge. And if a single variety of plant is chosen the area is likely to look out of keeping and 'urban' (to use a word raised in the recent Zoom meeting) - see the photo where use of Flag Irises (mentioned at a PC meeting) is demonstrated.



Yellow Flag Iris grows to 100–150cm (39–59 ins)

MARSH MARIGOLD

This has been mentioned by the PC however *Caltha Palustris*, aka King Cup or Marsh Marigold is a rhizomatous herbaceous perennial plant of wet meadows, marshes and wet woodlands, or a marginal plant in very shallow water. It can be used in coir mattresses to establish boggy areas but is not used in coir rolls to prevent erosion of riverbanks. It has yellow flowers in early spring and reaches a height and spread of 50cm.

Toxicity is of concern with this plant, as it contains glycoside protoanemonin; contact can cause rashes or blistering, ingestion can cause spasms, hepatitis, jaundice or paralysis. Should this be introduced where children play and dogs are walked?

Plants usually used in planted coir roll include the following:

WATER IRIS: Aka Yellow Flag, *Iris pseudacorus* is a rhizomatous perennial forming extensive colonies growing to 100–150cm (39–59 ins). It has yellow flowers from May to July.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE:

Lythrum salicaria is a perennial plant with upright stems to 1.2m tall, clad in narrow, willowy leaves, and small vivid purplish-pink flowers in dense terminal spikes over a long period in summer.

GREATER POND SEDGE: *Carex riparia* is a vigorous spreading rhizomatous perennial with linear, glaucous green leaves and tall stems bearing stout, erect, dark brown flowering spikes in early summer. It has a height and spread of 1.5m (59ins).

LESSER POND SEDGE: *Carex acutiformis* has creeping rhizomes forming spreading dense clumps reaching 123cm (48ins) or more. It has narrow leaves and purple-brown spikelets.

FLOATING SWEET-GRASS: *Glyceria fluitans* is a grass with creeping rootstock, a thick stem which rises to one metre.

COMMON RUSH: Soft Rush, *Juncus effuses* grows in large clumps about 1.5m (59ns) tall and is invasive.

“Why have the proposed plants been a secret?”