

A report for parishes from District Councillor David Ritchie

November 8th 2022

Dear all,

The annual Coast forum Conference was a great success. Our keynote speaker, Tony Juniper, is an excellent speaker. He spoke with the added authority of now being the chairman of Natural England. He is still the practical conservationist who looks at what can be done in the real world to make things better. Also, he made the excellent point that government departments and agencies need to get out of their silos and work together. Now that he is closer to government, he can see the need for horizontal integration between these hierarchical top down vertically structured organisations. Different government departments will often look at the same problems separately from each other without connecting up.

My favourite example locally is the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project where I am chairman of the board. We have made great progress with property level protection, with a flood wall and a pumping station to protect from river flooding, and with tidal flood walls around the outer harbour. But if we are going to complete the project properly, we will need to close the funding gap, and build the tidal barrier. For this we will need the cooperation of the Environment Agency, DEFRA, The Department for Transport, The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities, The Treasury, and The Department for Business, to all cooperate with each other. The Environment Agency is being helpful and would like us to succeed. Peter Aldous MP is doing everything he can to join things up in Westminster.

At the conference I usually present the Sue Allan awards for outstanding contributions to the Norfolk and Suffolk Coast. We are able to make two awards each year. One for an employee, and one for a volunteer. I was delighted to announce that the first award was for Mark Johnson of the Environment Agency. We have worked closely with Mark for ten years and more. A richly deserved award. He is partly responsible for the good relations we have with the EA. To my surprise Karen Thomas, head of Coastal Partnership East, came to the lectern and started talking about awarding the second award – I had thought only one this year. It was a very well-kept secret: The Suffolk Coast Forum members had decided to award it to their chairman: The Sue Allen Award for, Outstanding Service to The Norfolk and Suffolk Coast, was presented to me! It is the only award I have ever received. I am honoured and very grateful and will always treasure it - long after I cease to be a councillor.

Best wishes,

David Ritchie

One of the two District Councillors for the Bungay and Wainford Ward of East Suffolk Council.

Chairman of Coastal Partnership East

Cabinet member for planning and coastal management at East Suffolk Council.

Chairman of the Suffolk Coast Forum

Chairman of the board for the Lowestoft Flood Risk Management Project.

Chairman of The Southwold Harbour Management Committee.

Chairman of the Local Plan Working Group.

Chairman of the Developers Forum