



River Deben Association

Review of River Users - Summer 2013 (rev Jan 2017)

1. Aims and Objectives

The Deben Estuary is an area of outstanding ecological importance resulting in International European and National designations (Ramsar, SPA, SSSI and part of the Suffolk Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty - AONB). The estuary provides habitat for many species of wading bird as well as migrating passerines and Brent Geese), other forms of wildlife including otters and seals.). It also provides important sailing activities together with rowing, water skiing, swimming etc, and is a much appreciated walking area. The estuary is valued for its tranquillity and natural beauty which is largely a result of the restricted vehicular access and access to the river being managed.

The results of two recent surveys showed that there was overwhelming support from all those who responded for maintaining the status quo on the river – all river users wish to retain its peaceful, tranquil and uncommercialised nature. The sustainable health of the estuary requires a pragmatic balance to be achieved in environmental, social and commercial needs.

Key Objectives: Establish the facts of the existing situation, express concerns and propose possible actions to retain the characteristics that make the site special.

The following aspects are considered:-

- Fairway
- Moorings
- Pontoon berths
- River based clubs
- River Businesses
- Swimming/fishing
- Youth activities
- House boats
- Sewage Works
- Tide Mill

2. Fairway

Fairway Committees are responsible to Trinity House for ensuring and maintaining a navigable fairway on the river Deben. There are four Fairway committees and in addition the control of short lengths of the river is covered by the Deben Yacht Club, Martlesham Creek Boatyard, Robertsons Boatyard and Melton Boatyard (ex Granary Boatyard). The river bed is owned by the Crown Estates. At present the total number of moorings on the river is 1060. The river- bed in the channel is hard gravel and its depth has not changed significantly within the last thirty years. The increase of siltation above Early Creek is causing problems for the fairway and moorings.

3. Moorings and Mooring Free Areas

3.1 Moorings: Administration of the moorings on the River Deben are controlled by the following:

Melton Boatyard: Drying out moorings adjacent to Melton Boatyard are controlled by the Boatyard. In August 2013 there were a total of 8 No. moorings.

Robertsons Boatyard: Figure 1 shows the extent of the fairway controlled by the Robertsons Boatyard which extends from a line of the sewer just upstream of the Tide Mill Yacht Harbour to a line level with the slipway. In August 2013 there were a total of 13 No. moorings.

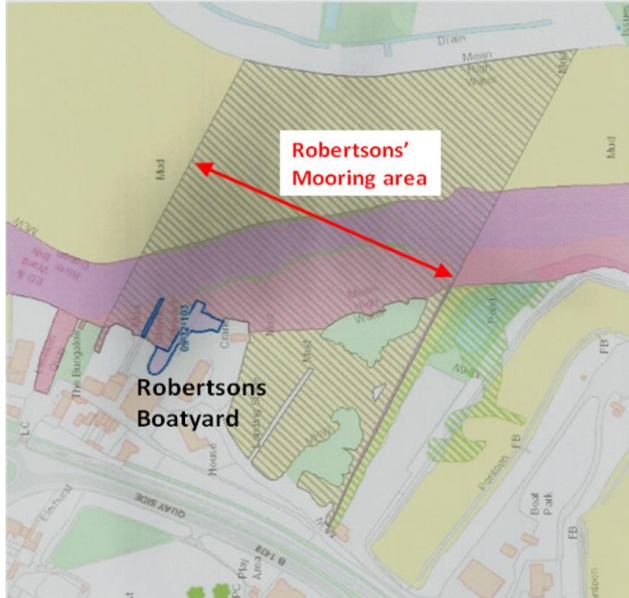
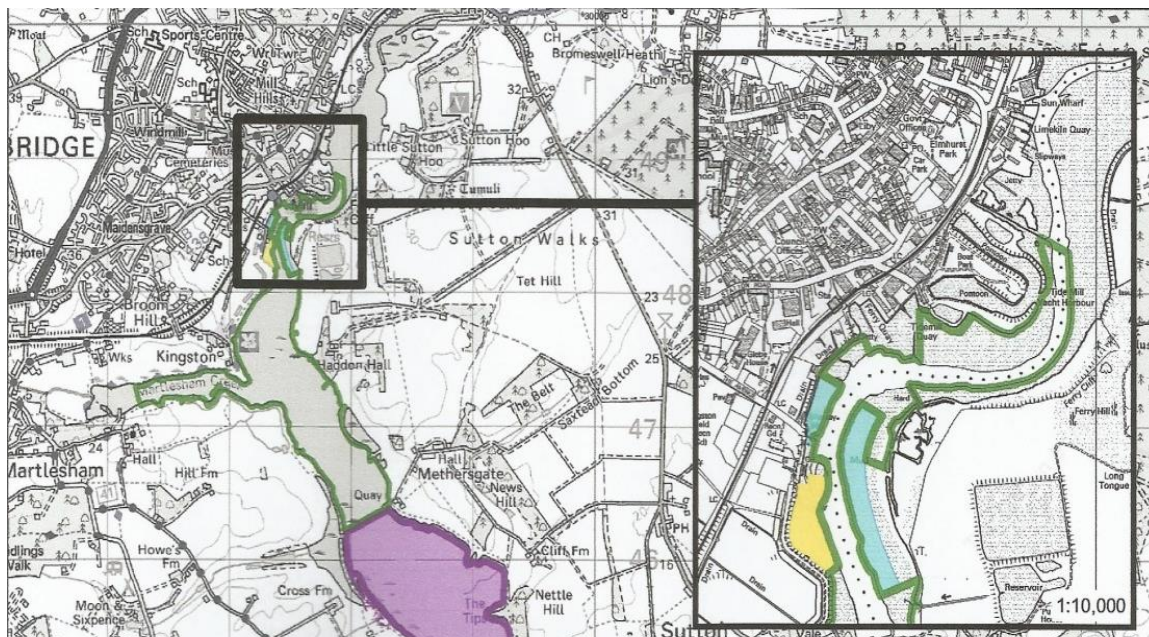


Figure 1: Robertsons Boatyard mooring area

Kyson Fairway: Figure 2 shows the extent of the fairway controlled by the Kyson Fairway Committee which extends from a line level with Methergate Quay to a line of the sewer just upstream of the Tide Mill Yacht Harbour, and Martlesham Creek up to the old Rectory Jetty. In 2016 the fairway administered by the Knoll Fairway Committee was transferred to the Kyson Fairway Committee. In April 2016 there were a total of 200 moorings but 40 of these were not being used.



Key: Kyson Fairway Woodbridge Boatyard Deben Yacht Club

Figure 2: Kyson Fairway, Woodbridge Boatyard and Deben Yacht Club mooring areas

Woodbridge Boatyard: Figure 2 shows the extent of the fairway controlled by the Woodbridge Boatyard. In August 2013 there were a total of 51 No. moorings (inc. 36 No. shallow mud moorings).

Deben Yacht Club: Figure 2 shows the extent of the fairway controlled by the Deben Yacht Club. In August 2013 there were a total of 23 No. moorings.

Martlesham Creek: The fairway controlled by the Martlesham Creek Boatyard extends west of a line level with the Old Rectory Jetty. In August 2013 there were a total of 22 No. moorings.

Waldringfield Fairway: The extent of the fairway controlled by the Waldringfield Fairway Committee extends from a line level with Early Creek to a line level with Methersgate Quay. In August 2013 there were a total of 220 No. moorings.

Ramsholt Fairway: The extent of the fairway controlled by the Ramsholt Fairway Committee extends from a line level with Red Farm house to a line level with Early Creek. In August 2013 there were a total of 206 No. moorings.

Felixstowe Ferry Fairway: The extent of the fairway controlled by the Felixstowe Ferry Fairway Committee extends from a line level with the Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club to a line level with Red Farm house. In August 2013 there were a total of 270 No. moorings.

3.2 Mooring Free Areas: Figures 3 and 4 show the areas of the river which, in general, are kept free of moorings.

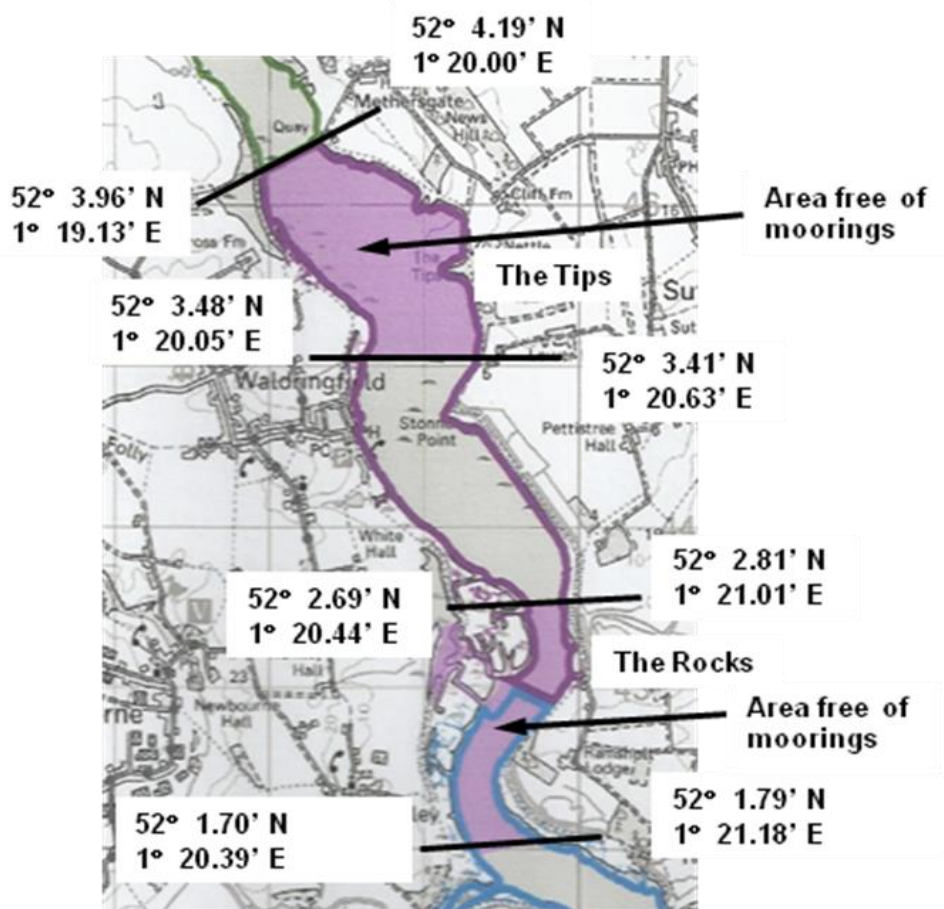


Figure 3: Areas around The Tips and The Rocks free of moorings

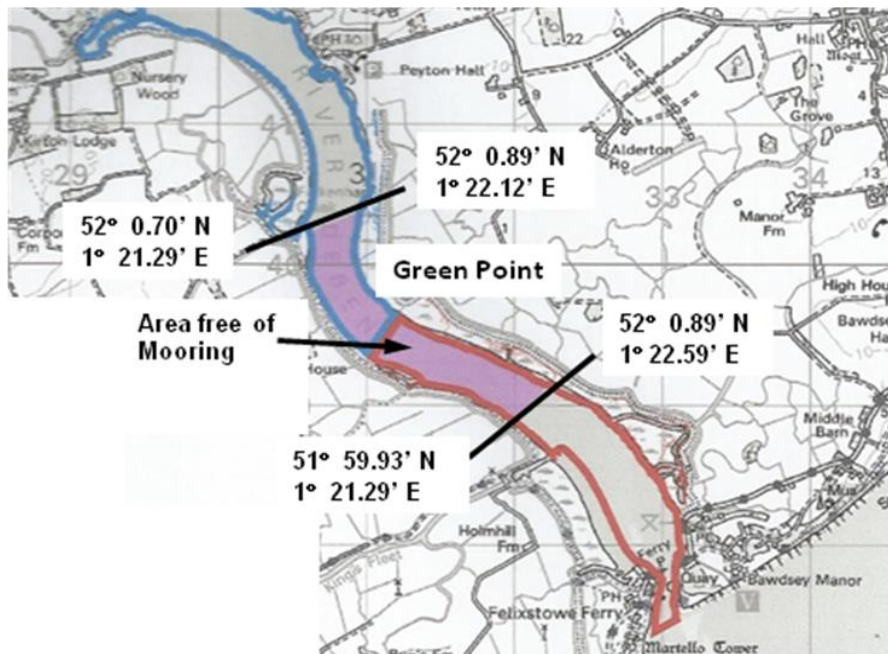


Figure 4: Area around Green Point free of moorings

4. Pontoon berths

The majority of pontoon berths are located in the Tidemill Yacht Harbour. The current total number of craft there is 213. Of these 173 are sailing yachts and 40 motor cruisers. The trend in recent years has been an increase in the number of motor cruisers relative to the number of sailing yachts and an increase in size of the sailing yachts.

Pontoon berths also exist at:

- Waldringfield Boatyard: 12
- Martlesham Creek Boatyard: 18
- Woodbridge Boatyard: 12
- Robertsons Boatyard: 8
- Melton Boat Club: 12
- Melton Boatyard (ex Granary Yacht Harbour): 26

5. River Based Clubs

Sailing Clubs: There are seven sailing clubs

Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club: Club activities include dinghy sailing & fishing.

<http://www.bawdsey.onesuffolk.net/clubs/bawdsey-haven-yacht-club/>

Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club: Provides Dinghy Racing and Yacht Cruising (see also Youth Activities) <http://www.ffsc.co.uk/ffsc/>.

Waldringfield Sailing Club: Provides Dinghy and Yacht Racing <http://www.waldringfieldsc.com/>

Kyson Point: This provides sailing for pupils at Woodbridge School

Deben Yacht Club: Provides Dinghy and Yacht Racing

<http://www.debenyachtclub.co.uk/>

Woodbridge Cruising Club: <http://www.woodbridgecruisingclub.org/>

Melton Boat Club: This is a small club chiefly for dinghy sailors

Water Skiing: The East Suffolk Water Skiing Club <http://www.eswsc.co.uk/>

Deben Rowing Club: <http://debenrowingclub.blogspot.co.uk>

6. River Businesses

Boatyards: Felixstowe Ferry, Waldringfield, Martlesham Creek, Woodbridge, and Melton
Tidemill

Tidemill Yacht Haven

Cafés: Felixstowe Ferry, Bawdsey Ferry, Woodbridge (3) and Melton

Pubs: Felixstowe Ferry, Ramsholt, Waldringfield and Woodbridge

Fishing: Felixstowe Ferry and The Rocks (shellfish)

Ferries: Felixstowe – Bawdsey, Woodbridge – Sutton (possible future one)

Pleasure boat trips: from Felixstowe Ferry, Ramsholt, Waldringfield and Woodbridge

Associated service industry: River businesses are interlinked with a wide service industry. This includes boat builders (not necessarily related to the boatyards), chandleries, yacht and dinghy spars and rigging, sailmakers, fishing tackle, new and second hand boat sales, insurance agencies, yacht brokers, surveyors, electricians, engineers, dredgers, welders, sand blasters, galvanisers, blacksmiths and upholsterers.

7. Swimming/Fishing

Swimming: Popular places for swimming are at Bawdsey Ferry, Ramsholt, The Rocks and Waldringfield. The Big Swim between Felixstowe Ferry and Waldringfield takes place each year (in September in 2013). Occasional swimming takes place on other parts of the river.

Fishing: This is not a major River Deben past-time activity at present.

8. Youth Activities:

Youth sailing training: This takes place at Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club, Waldringfield Sailing Club, Deben Yacht Club and Bawdsey Quay Water Sports Centre.

Rowing: Deben Rowing Club provides training for youngsters.

Sea Scouts: Sea Scout Group have free access to the river at Woodbridge and Waldringfield

9. Houseboats (live-aboards)

Houseboats are kept at several locations on the estuary. The total number is 84 (approx.) made up of:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Melton Boatyard: | 10 |
| Upstream of Melton Boat Club: | 5 |
| Melton Boat Club: | 6 |
| Robertsons Boatyard | 6 |
| Bass Dock (Woodbridge) | 31 |
| Martlesham Creek Boatyard | 8 |
| Felixstowe Ferry | 18 |

10. Sewage works outfalls

There are four sewage treatment plants within the Deben Estuary Plan area. One, situated on the other side of the Hollesley road from Rock Barracks, deals with sewage from the old Woodbridge Air Base site; it discharges treated effluent directly into a soakaway trench. It is operated by Severn Trent Costain Water Ltd; the effluent is closely monitored to ensure that it complies with the discharge consent issued by the Environment Agency. The remaining three are situated in Melton, Woodbridge (Martlesham) and Alderton and discharge treated effluent directly into the river. These are all run by Anglian Water who also monitor effluent to ensure compliance with their discharge consents.

Some houses at Felixstowe Ferry are known to discharge untreated effluent directly into the estuary – possibly acceptable on an ebbing tide! Other properties may discharge semi-treated effluent from septic tanks into the river via ditches.

11. Tidemill

The Tidemill operates from a small pond adjacent to the Tide Mill Yacht Harbour. The mill wheel turns on the falling tide and runs out of a small channel into the river.

12. Concerns and policy proposals

a) Flood defences

Concern: Less government funding for flood defence means that funds need to be sought locally. Failure of flood defences in some areas could cause a change in the characteristics of the river due to the increased volume of water entering and leaving the river each tide. Also failure of flood defences could make access to moored boats very difficult – instead of a grass banks and fields there could just be acres of mud. The Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP) is working in partnership with the Environment Agency, AONB and partners more widely to develop a management Plan for the estuary.

Policy Proposals: Flood defences are being considered by the DEP already.

b) Siltation

Concern: The navigation channel up river is getting narrower due to silting and yachts requiring moorings are getting longer. Although the actual depth of the channel is virtually unchanged (Trinity House is responsible for ensuring channel buoys are in the correct places). The problem occurs upstream of Methersgate and the deterioration increases further up stream. For example, the river at Robertsons Boatyard is silting up at a rate of about 150mm/year, mainly in the half tide region.

Policy Proposals: Dredging may be the solution in some areas with approval from NE, EA, SCDC, MMO; there are opportunities to use the silt but careful, cost effective, planning is needed. The mud can be used beneficially to restore and create saltmarsh and mudflats but will require monitoring and containment to ensure it recharges the habitats where it is required and does not move to places where it is not wanted (e.g. into the channel, smothering beaches which are used by picnickers and bathers).

c) Quality of water

Concern: Maintenance of good quality water in the river. There have been complaints about untreated sewage arising from houseboats, yachts and uncontrolled sewage discharge. This is unacceptable for swimmers, and others playing in the river.

Policy Proposals: This requires a long term solution and coordinated action by the authorities. Water quality is monitored and regulated by The Environment Agency under the Water Framework Directive. The estuary has been found to be high in Phosphates and nitrates and Natural England offers advice to landowners to assist with better management.

Provide on shore tanks and pump-out facilities for all vessels.

d) Access to the river

Concern: Increasing local population and tourism will create more pressure for public access to the river.

Policy Proposals: The DEP Access Group is considering this concern.

e) Moorings

Concern: Yachts are getting longer (and beamier). They are prone to slew across the channel under tidal and wind conditions when on a swinging mooring.

Policy Proposals: Set a limit to the number of moorings on the river to that shown in Section 3, through the Fairways Committees with the cooperation of the Crown Estates.

f) Open stretches of the river

Concern: The open areas of the river, free of moorings, are important visually, they provide clear areas for sailing, and have many environmental benefits (they partially coincide with the environmentally significant areas determined by the ELAC group). It is important not to reduce these areas further.

Policy Proposals: Retain areas of open water (free of moorings) to that shown in Section 3, through the Fairways Committees with the cooperation of the Crown Estates.

g) Houseboats

Concern: There is a need for a policy to control mooring numbers and location of moorings?

Policy Proposals: This requires a long term solution and coordinated action by the authorities (e.g. SCDC).

h) Personal Water Craft (e.g. Jet skis)

Concern: Many river users believe that PWC should not be used within the river estuary as the noise and wash caused by the activity disturbs the wildlife and can annoy other river users and those living close to the river.

Policy Proposals: Restrict access to the river for use of Personal Water Craft.

i) Speed on the river

Concern: Vessels travelling at high speed on the river can cause danger to other river users (e.g. swimmers children in small boats). High energy wake – which can occur at low and high speeds causes damage to the environment.

Policy Proposals: Seek to ensure greater awareness of the danger caused by speeding craft and damage to the environment caused by high energy wake.