

## **BLYTH ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP**

During the past year the Blyth Estuary Group changed its name to the Blyth Estuary Partnership. This change symbolises the Group's transition from its initial role as a protest group, contesting the flawed science behind the Environment Agency's initial report on the estuary, to its current role as a facilitator of a long-term solution for the estuary. As such the Partnership brings to together local and central Government bodies and agencies, plus adjoining communities, landowners and businesses.

The Partnership is currently working on a strategy for the estuary which it hopes to publish by the Autumn. Following which will be an extensive period of local consultation. The strategy will cover flood protection works and associated funding, including an impact assessment. The target date for publication of the final strategy is mid to late 2019.

One of the issues facing the Partnership is the potential conflict between the interests of Walberswick in having the highest possible flood bank adjoining the Blyth and the interests of the Blackshore residents and businesses, who see flooding of the Walberswick marshes as a way of reducing flood levels during tidal surges. The flood bank adjoining the Blyth is an important economic artery for the Village, with the people counter registering over 63,000 users in the eight months since the end of August. Expect this to be a significant local issue.

Finally, since making my presentation to the Annual Parish Meeting, the Chairman of the Partnership, Councillor Sue Allen, has sadly passed away. This was very sudden and a shock to us all. Sue was a tireless campaigner for the Blyth, her energy and knowledge of local government will be truly missed.

James Darkins  
Vice-Chairman