

Decision made on coastal defences to benefit the future of Medmerry

The Environment Agency has now confirmed where the new flood banks will be built to protect the communities between Selsey and Bracklesham.

To give local residents the opportunity to learn more about the flood risk management scheme and discuss their ideas on how it can benefit their communities, two drop in sessions will now be hosted by the Environment Agency. These will take place at Selsey Town Hall on Saturday 14 November from 10am to 4pm and at Sidlesham Village Hall on Monday 16 November from 1pm to 7pm.

At a meeting in Selsey on Thursday 22 October, members of the Medmerry Stakeholder Advisory Group, made up of community representatives, businesses, councils and other interested parties, heard how their feedback has been used to help decide where the new inland banks will be located. Group discussions also highlighted opportunities for major benefits in improved public access, recreation and local tourism to be explored in the design of the scheme.

Following months of thorough investigations and modelling of the coast by the Environment Agency, decisions have now been made to create a single breach in the coastal banks and also to build new inland defences in the west near Bracklesham and in the east to protect Selsey.

The Environment Agency's decision focussed on three main issues key to the development of the scheme that will provide increased protection against flooding to 951 homes over the next 100 years whilst creating a tidal area for improving our region's wildlife habitats. The scheme will also protect key infrastructure in Selsey including the B2145 road, the wastewater treatment works north of Selsey and electricity substations.

The Environment Agency is currently in discussions with RSPB about taking over the long term management of the site, given their proven track record of managing places to benefit people and wildlife.

Joe Pearce, Environment Agency Project Manager, said: "Given the high risk of flooding at Medmerry now, we need to progress our work to build the scheme quickly. All comments from the group were fully taken into account during the consultation period before these decisions were reached and we thank all concerned for their invaluable input.

For further information contact Joe Giacomelli on 01903 832235 or Jan Leslie on 01903 832364. Out of hours mobile 07699 740959.

“By building new defences inland from the coast we can provide improved protection to manage flood risk to the west of Selsey and low lying communities over the next century. Without the scheme the future of Selsey’s community would be in doubt.

“It is also becoming clear that this project can bring exciting opportunities for local people, such as enhanced access and more wildlife for people to see.

“We are now on course to complete the necessary appraisal work by mid 2010 with planning permission sought by the end of next year. The new habitat to be created at Medmerry will help replace losses that will be caused by building flood defences needed to protect 25,000 houses around the Solent over the next 25 years.”

The next meeting of the Medmerry Stakeholder Advisory Group will be held on Tuesday 24 November when opportunities for access, recreation and tourism will be discussed.

Further detailed information on the Medmerry managed realignment scheme is available via our website at: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/medmerry>

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