

Environment Agency (EA) Meeting summary 15.1.24

IPC Clerk Celia Merrill, Russell Smith, and his colleague Tim.

Russell Smith

Asset Performance Advisor, North Devon

Environment Agency |

It was good to establish a dialogue with the local EA team.

The EA team charged with any urgent repairs or ongoing maintenance covers all the North Devon coast down to Hartland. In recent years the team has been reduced from 15 to 5 people. As it usually takes several men to undertake any one job, usually only one task can be done at a time.

Much of the EA's work is to work with nature, rather than battle against it. Weeds are usually left along the sea wall, rather than be sprayed with chemicals. Small flowers are insect food.

Sand builds up as it cannot be deposited naturally beyond the ferry jetty, which is why that beach area is mainly mud.

The EA is no longer able to deposit any build-up of sand out in the Estuary, as this would smother any wildlife on the seabed. Any sand distributed up by the sand dunes will work its way back to the main beach.

The slip way as far as the crook in the wall, the adjoining path, and railings either side are owned by EA, as is the wall in between. The beachside railings have recently been repaired.

The slipway extends down as far as under Johns kiosk. The kiosk is meant to be moveable, so they speculate that there might be wheels under the wood cladding.

The EA agreed with Christie Estates that they will not put any barrier or other scheme to prevent vehicular access to the beach.

There is no public right of access for any vehicles onto the beach, from either slip way, to launch or attend to boats. Any boats moored should be registered with Pete Short, and he would assist with access for maintenance.

IPC's lease with the Crown Estate prohibits vehicular access.

No signage is permitted on the EA railings.

The walls (delineated in red on the land reg document, as far as part of the yacht club car park) are owned by EA. The ferry jetty is owned by Christie Estates.

All the walls are concrete clad in stone. Any loss of stone will not affect the integrity of the wall. There is a seasonal programme of works to repair the walls. Any urgent matters take the team away from routine maintenance.

Fixings for small boats are not permitted along the sea wall. Those that are currently there will get a notice to remove them, but then are often replaced by boat owners.

Drains at the bottom of the slip way are cleared of sand every 2 weeks or so, but can block again very quickly.

Flotsam beyond the sea wall opposite Johns is cleared regularly, but it only takes one storm and it builds up again.

The level walkway between the wall and rock armour is a water collecting drain. Public access is tolerated but not formally permitted. The slip way beyond the flood gates (closed for the winter) does not have public right of access.

The 4 folding benches behind the sea wall were probably placed with EA permission, but maintenance is the responsibility of the IPC.

The flood gates are owned and operated by the EA. It is probably 6 years since the flood gates were closed, but they are maintained regularly.

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