

THE NAYLAND WITH WISSINGTON ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY WAS HELD VIRTUALLY IN APRIL 2021 AND WAS ATTENDED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC. CALEY GREEN WAS INCLUDED IN THE PARISH ASSEMBLY AGENDA. THE CHAIRMAN REPORTED THE OUTCOME OF MEETINGS WITH ENVIRONMENT AGENCY BIODIVERSITY AND NAVIGATION OFFICERS, SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL (landowner), RIVER STOUR TRUST, BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL, MEMBERS OF THE DEDHAM VALE AND STOUR VALLEY PROJECT TEAM AND NAYLAND WITH WISSINGTON PARISH COUNCIL (Licensees).

QUESTIONS RAISED BY RESIDENTS AT THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY WERE FORWARDED TO THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY. SEE RESPONSE BELOW. THIS RESPONSE WAS ALSO REPORTED AT A COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING AND THE SUBSEQUENT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING.

“As Environment Agency representatives at the meeting we sought to reassure and consider all concerns from local residents including the valued view of the river. We believe that by working together we can achieve restoring the eroded riverbank and revetment to its previous alignment without further harm to the environment. Low native riverbank plants could protect the Suffolk County Council Green from further bank loss and allow an attractive river view. In answer to your questions:

1. Nicospan is a brand name for geotextile mesh which can be used along river or canal frontage where a permanent revetment is required. It is made out of plastic so is neither natural nor biodegradable. Coir is a natural material (coconut fibre) which can be used to perform a similar function with a number of benefits. In combination with natural vegetation it can be used to re-establish a natural bank with no lasting plastics involved. We would always prioritise using natural materials where they will do the necessary job. In this situation coir will last a few seasons which will be enough to allow low bank vegetation to grow densely enough to provide natural erosion protection on this outside bend of the river.

2. The portage platforms built by the Environment Agency (such as those up & down-stream of the Nayland horseshoe weir) are considerably shorter than the 10 metres of revetment here. There is sometimes a short wait for paddlers as people launch but usually people are respectful, courteous and friendly. Our portages are typically around 2.5metres long.

3. The Environment Agency would consider an application for permitting the construction of a launching platform particularly if it had overwhelming local and landowner support. We are aware that many local people value the local tranquillity and such a feature might encourage more public use of the area as a honey pot site. Whilst we are the navigation authority we also have a duty to enhance water quality and conserve river wildlife. When river craft are spread across the whole length of the navigation there is less overall impact, however visitor pressure can be particularly felt locally at launch sites. It may be that low key usage of the area might be more sensitive to this location given there is no car park or other facilities here. Once a site becomes well known on the internet the publicity is difficult to undo. The well-used Granary at Sudbury, Dedham Mill and the Cattawade launch sites all have car parks, some hard standing and more facilities.

From memory I would have said that the Bures platform is approximately 6-7 Metres long. (Although it received our consent it is not an Environment Agency structure.) It is well used but the distance to the river from the road and car park tends to limit use/abuse of the site.

4. Under its founding 1995 Environment Act, The Environment Agency has a legal duty ‘to *Conserve and Enhance the Environment*’ in all it does. Extending hard revetment is not something we take lightly as it results in loss of biodiversity and river habitat. In addition hard revetment has a knock on effect down stream of causing further erosion over time (often on other people’s property). The

current bank erosion here has resulted from loss of the soft vegetated edge of bank habitat (which naturally absorbs impacts of currents) and there is now a silty bay which, if erosion continued, would outflank the downstream river frontage. Allowing rivers to become widened in this way usually has negative impacts on water quality as they tend to become slower moving, shallower and muddier. This is not something we would particularly wish to encourage. In case anyone hasn't seen the impact of bank loss here I attach two aerial photos showing the loss over time which has been exacerbated by the wholesale removal of bank vegetation.

I stress that we feel there is a middle way here that will protect the river bank habitat, allow views but without total removal of all vegetation. We would aim to see low native vegetation planted – if elements of this did become too tall some of the tallest flowering stems could be cut high up by the landowner.

Environment Agency