Touching the Tide secures support

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Touching The Tide is a £900,000 HLF Landscape Partnership Scheme covering 125 square kilometres along the Suffolk coast between Covehithe and Felixstowe. The project is being led by the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in partnership with a wide range of local organisations and individuals in addition to local authorities and statutory agencies.

The project aims to encourage people actively to care for their coast promoting awareness and understanding of the area and conserving what makes the Suffolk coast so special. The Suffolk coastline is one of the most rapidly changing in Europe. Touching The Tide will include saltmarsh restoration projects and work to protect vegetated shingle at Shingle Street, Aldeburgh, and Orford Ness, as well as revealing the military and social history of the Martello Towers and the wider military heritage of the area.

HLF's Landscape Partnership grant programme - which has been running for nine years – helps conserve some of the UK's most diverse and locally distinctive landscapes by supporting schemes that provide long-term social, economic and environmental benefits for rural areas. It is the most significant grant scheme available for landscape-scale projects and is at the cutting edge of delivery.

Touching The Tide will work with a group of enthusiastic local people to mark the decommissioning of Orford Lighthouse, support a wide range of heritage-focused arts projects, work with local organisations and schools, and create new opportunities to enjoy the coast and find out more about its history. There will also be community archaeology projects where people can get their hands dirty doing real archaeology.

In particular Touching the Tide will work with partners and communities to improve understanding and appreciation of coastal change, aiming to discover new ways of working to deal with the challenge of coastal change and how it will determine the future of the landscape.

Stuart Hobley, Heritage Lottery Fund Development Manager for East of England, said: "The Suffolk Coast is such an extraordinary area; an ever-changing coastline which has such a personal connection to the communities who live, work and visit there. Our funding will help more people to experience and understand the historic environment around them."

Cllr David Wood, Chairman of both Touching the Tide and the AONB, said "It's great to be starting at last! We've been looking forward to this day since we first got a group of local people and organisations together back in 2009 and first sketched out the project that became Touching the Tide."

Therese Coffey MP, said "I welcome the Heritage Lottery Fund supporting this important and wide-ranging project combining natural resources with the rich history of the special Suffolk coast."

Notes to editors

The first major project to be run by Touching The Tide will be an underwater survey of the lost city of Dunwich* by Southampton University and local divers - taking place between 24th and 28th June.

Underwater Dunwich

The University's previous underwater survey work has explored the Dunwich of the 1580s and later. This part of the town's story is one that many people will recognise; once one of the largest towns in East Anglia and a major international port, it was progressively abandoned and lost to the sea as coastal erosion ate away at the town over the last 800 years or so. Five great storms between 1286 and 1350 swept away 400 buildings including 5 churches and the first Greyfriars Friary, blocked the harbour, and imposed a different coastline on the area. Until now, most of the ruins discovered on the seabed are known from existing maps dating back to 1587A.D. However, surveys in 2012 revealed many new possible sites of buildings, a number of which lie beyond the edge of the oldest maps, which is where the Touching the Tide comes in.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) extends from the Stour estuary to the eastern fringe of Ipswich and as far north as Kessingland, and includes the whole of the Suffolk Heritage Coast. It covers 155 square miles, including wildlife-rich wetlands, ancient heaths, windswept shingle beaches and historic towns and villages.

Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) team acts as a champion for the AONB, promoting its conservation and working in partnership with a range of organisations, all of who are committed to conserving Suffolk's unique landscape. Suffolk Coast and Heaths website.

Further information

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