

Bawdsey Coastal Defences Update for Bawdsey Parish Council Meeting on 23rd April 2026

Introduction

- We submitted and had a planning application approved to carry out works on the coastal defences on 9th December 2022, which is valid for 3 years so work had to start by 9th December 2025
- The planning approval contains 13 planning conditions, which were discharged either in advance of the work starting or be adhered to when the works were being carried out
- The planning application we have had approved contains all the work we were advised as being necessary to repair/reinforce the whole of the coastal defences, which we explained in our submission would be carried out over several phases to spread the high cost associated with the work:

<https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/centralDistribution.do?keyVal=R3PC3FQXHLP00&caseType=Application>

- One of the conditions associated with the planning approval is that the work has to be carried out between the months of June to October, so we started work on the coastal defences in September 2025 once we have all the necessary approvals and consents in place
- Our planning application was submitted to East Suffolk Council on 17th March 2025 contains:
 - Details of the work we are intending to carry out in phase 1
 - Our plans and timetables to discharge the conditions attached to the planning approval
 - The Monitoring & Mitigation Plan
 - The Condition Survey of the sheet piling and Pulhamite cliffs
- Our application was validated on 5th August 2025 and partially approved on 16th September 2025, so we could proceed with phase 1 of the work.
- The information we have submitted is available to be viewed on the East Suffolk Planning website:

<https://publicaccess.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=STBF1WQX06O00>

Details of the Scheme

- The planning approval contained a condition to produce a "Monitoring & Mitigation Plan", which we have submitted following the production of a detailed "Condition Survey" of the coastal defences and Pulhamite cliffs
- Extensive surveys of the beach, coastal defences and Pulhamite cliffs have been undertaken (including 2 x drone surveys), which show the following results:
 - There has been NO significant erosion to the Bawdsey Manor coastal defences to date
 - The middle section of the sheet steel pile (SSP) seawall is in very poor condition due to a high number of voids in the steel
 - The Northern section of 50m is in better condition than the middle section ○ The Pulhamite Cliffs remain in a similar condition to that of 2021 (when the last detailed survey was carried out)
 - The beach levels in front of the coastal defences have changed since 2021:
- The southern half has continued to erode
- The northern half appears to have stabilized with no significant drop in beach levels and a small increase towards the northern end

- The erosion at the southern end has made beach access more difficult • The Monitoring & Mitigation Plan has been used to produce a technical design for the first phase of the works to the coastal defences

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- The proposed civil engineering work has been designed to stabilize the existing sheet steel piling (SSP) and “tie it in” to stable ground behind the top berm using ground anchors. More technical details are in our planning submission
- We started this work in the middle section of the coastal defences, as the Condition Survey has shown they are in very poor condition and have the biggest risk of failure

Phase 1 (Sept. 2025) Construction

- Consents were received from the MMO (Marine Management Organisation), Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency, CPA (Coast Protection Act) Consent & informed the Crown Estate
- Work started on phase 1 of the project in summer 2025, which was designed to “test” the technical design. I.E.:
- Installing 2 x 8m long ground anchors at the berm of the coastal defences
- Inserting grout and concrete in the cavity between the wooden and metal piling and
- Connecting the seawall back to the new ground anchors
- A section of 22 metres was completed before winter 25/26
- This represented a significant investment from PGL to protect our assets (buildings, grounds and Pulhamite cliffs) and importantly “test the theory” behind the technical design



2026 Update

- A condition survey of the coastal and estuary defences and a full drone survey was completed in March 2026
- The report highlighted further significant deterioration in the middle (100 metre long) section of seawall (directly under the Walled Garden and Bawdsey Manor). The holes in the side walls of the metal seawall have enlarged considerably, which could impact the stability of the seawall requiring us to reconsider our next steps
- We are currently looking at different methods of addressing these issues before winter

26/27 and will update further when we have decided on the best course of action