

‘Save the Deben’ Campaign Group

Press release: 29/8/23

“We are deeply concerned as to the likely impact on the Deben estuary that the proposed withdrawal of this legislation will have” Ruth Leach, co-founder ‘Save The Deben’ campaign group.

The area is recognised as an internationally protected Ramsar wetland, a nationally protected SSSI and AONB area and recently it includes a locally protected area, the RSPB site at Martlesham Wilds.

According to Defra the Deben Estuary is a protected site and under Natural England’s recommendations proposed housing development should be subject to nutrient neutrality legislation which can prevent an increase in nitrates and phosphates in the watercourse.

Nutrient mitigation strategies include purchasing surrounding land and turning it into wetlands or woodland or leaving it fallow so that run-off carrying excess nutrients from housing development sites can be absorbed into the ground before reaching a watercourse. Mitigation land is recommended to be maintained for 80-125 years according to Natural England.

Further nitrates and phosphates drain from the increased sewage volume from new housing developments being added to an already overloaded Victorian sewage system and water treatment works. Nutrient neutrality measures could also include a private water treatment plant

If nutrient neutrality legislation is lifted the result could be an excess of nitrates and phosphates seeping into the river Deben which can affect Ph as well as causing algal blooms causing a reduction in oxygen levels which impact fish and other aquatic life negatively, resulting in further damage to our already threatened river environment.

In the light of this announcement, ‘Save The Deben’ campaign group invites comment from Rose’s developers regarding provisions for nutrient management at the planned development of the old Council offices at Melton which has been postponed as well as comment from the developers of Brightwell lakes as to how they will address the issues.

“We continue with our application for designated bathing water status at Woodbridge which obligates the upgrade of wastewater treatment works by the water companies in nutrient neutrality areas.”