

Breach of the River Deben at Ufford

Representatives from Bromeswell, Melton and Ufford Parish Councils attended a meeting on Tuesday 4th August to discuss the breach at the weir and the consequent closure of the footpath at Ufford Bridge, which was lost following last winter's heavy rainfall.

The meeting brought together landowners and farmers (all members of the Lower Deben Owners Group - LDOG), local organisations including Suffolk County Council Public Rights of Way (PROW) and the Deben Estuary Partnership and partner agencies such as the Environment Agency, the Water Management Alliance and Natural England, to hear about the vision and long-term plans for managing this section of the River Deben. They reviewed the historical development of the river and its water meadows and the challenges including climate change, flood resilience and the need to protect vital infrastructure such as the East Suffolk Train Line. They discussed the options for restoring public access and the steps needed to mitigate erosion and flooding in the area.

The good news is that everyone agreed that the reinstatement of the public footpath between Ufford and Bromeswell was a top priority. Work to prepare for its restoration is expected to begin within the next six weeks, marking an important first step towards reopening this well-used and much-loved route. The clearance of the dried-out channel from the Ufford Hole to Old Melton Mill, allowing water to flow back to the mill, will start in August. The pace and timing of further work will depend on detailed design, Suffolk County Council PROW support and funding.

Looking further ahead, the project aims not only to restore the footpath but to improve the resilience of the surrounding landscape. Plans are being developed to help protect the footpath, neighbouring farmland and the railway from the increasing challenges of winter flooding and summer drought.

The first phase of the work is now close to being fully funded, but significant additional funding will be needed to complete the wider programme. Many local residents and visitors have enjoyed walking this stretch of the Deben for generations, and there may be opportunities for those who value this special part of our area to support the project as it moves forward. Other avenues of potential funding are being actively explored including those associated with the Sizewell C project.

We will continue to keep residents updated with more information when available and as work progresses.

Issued by Bromeswell, Melton and Ufford Parish Councils - 10th August 2026