

Motion 1 - Hoylake beach raking, March 2020

Proposed by: Councillor Liz Grey

Seconded by: Councillor Pat Cleary

This Council believes that environmental policy should be evidence based and respect the views of Government environmental bodies.

Council notes that;

In January 2020, Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission published a joint statement declaring that they support and promote actions to restore

“natural habitats such as wetlands, sand dunes and salt marsh” and “use nature to reduce the impact of floods while removing carbon from the atmosphere and improving habitats for wildlife.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environmental-bodies-set-joint-vision-to-tackle-climate-change>

It is clear from recent media and social media coverage that there are diverse views within the local community, with many strongly in favour of a more natural approach to beach management. Natural England request that we engage with residents to enable greater education about the environmental, flood protection, health and well being and economic benefits of natural beach development.

This council accepts that the national and international designations; SSSI, Ramsar, SAC and SPA, need to be better protected. The previous style of beach management has led to the SSSI designation being classed by NE as “*unfavourable: declining*” and threatens numerous habitats and species.

This council further accepts the NE advice that the changes along our coastline are inevitable, potentially of great interest and of environmental value. This is especially true in the current environment and climate emergency.

This council recognises the importance of following the guidance of Natural England in the development of a new, evidence-based management plan for Hoylake beach. Having received a report outlining what we should and should not do regarding maintenance of the beach, it would be unwise and improper to ignore it.

Council notes that the report makes it clear that NE want us to pursue a management plan that works with ever changing natural coastal ecosystems and not to destroy them.

Council further notes that NE urges us to apply the precautionary principle.

This council therefore supports the continued cessation of raking and spraying on Hoylake beach. The Council will cooperate fully on all data requested by NE and will work to develop new plans that are consistent with NE advice.