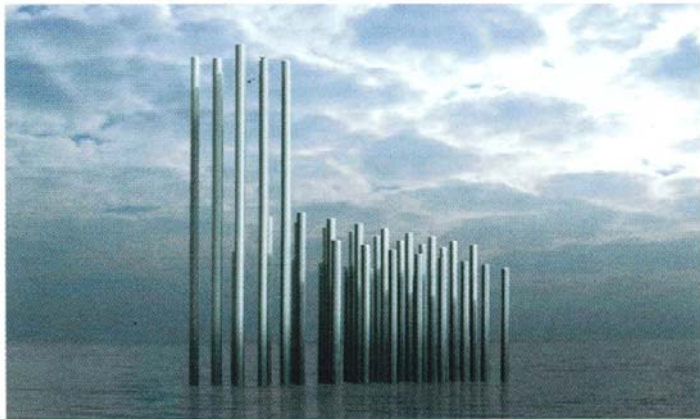


While the unveiling of the Dic Evans sculpture was less controversial than the larger Gormley sculpture, it was not without its detractors. Some people are concerned that the money should have been spent elsewhere, typically on local schools and hospitals rather than art. But the £40,000 cost was raised by the Moelfre Partnership specifically for the statue. Individuals and companies were inspired by the project and gave generously, funding it in just 6 months.

Art is rarely universally applauded. But the vast majority do admire the Moelfre statue and believe it draws people to the village throughout the year. Mike Williams states proudly: 'It's put us back on the map.'

Regeneration

Controversy is now raging over a planned installation off the coast of north Essex, billed as the *Angel of the north* for the east coast. The idea by German architects Anne Niemann and Johannes Ingrisch is to rebuild the



lost church of medieval Walton, lost to the sea through coastal erosion. The 'church', to be constructed by 2012, will be made of stainless steel poles reaching towards the sky, half a mile from the coast.

Roger Evans of The Walton Forum, a voluntary community organisation for the regeneration of Walton, enthuses: 'The project will bring economic revival to an area with some pockets of severe deprivation and will give people a different view of north Essex from the one generally held.' He stresses that the money will not come out of the public purse.

Local opinions are predictably split on the bold plans for the *Lost church*. Ex-RNLI Crew Member John Fletcher, now a lifeboat training coordinator, was initially against the project but, following a presentation by the architects, now supports the project wholeheartedly.

From a sea safety perspective, John stresses that there should be no added danger to vessels as no yachts should come into such shallows and any radar would pick up the massive steel structure anyway. John admires the plans artistically and he too thinks it will revitalise the area: 'This town needs something to make it as popular as it was in the 50s and 60s.'

Time will tell, but it appears unlikely that the sculptures explored on these pages pose a significant threat to public safety. They certainly give great joy and inspiration to thousands and bring much to their local communities. Contemporary art will always antagonise a minority, and intrusions into the natural environment of the sea rile many more but, at best, sculpture adds successfully to the beauty and diversity of our coastline.