



**MINUTES OF MEETING
4 OCTOBER 2006
WILDFOWL & WETLANDS TRUST, PENCLACWYDD, LLANELLI**

Present

Deb Hill (DH) Chair	City & County of Swansea
Blaise Bullimore (BB)	EMS Officer
Anne Bunker (AB)	Countryside Council for Wales
Phil Coates (PC)	South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee
Kate Collins (KC)	Environment Agency Wales
Jane Hodges (JH)	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
Ziggy Otto (ZO)	Countryside Council for Wales
Simeon Jones (SJ)	Carmarthenshire County Council
Jeff Morgan (JM)	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water
Trevor Theobald (TT)	Pembrokeshire County Council
Rebecca Wright (RW)	Countryside Council for Wales

1 Welcomes & apologies

DH welcomed members.

Apologies: Isabel Macho (Carmarthenshire County Council).

SJ apologised for having to leave the meeting early at 12.30.

2 Minutes meeting 10 August 2006

Received without amendment.

3 Matters arising from minutes of 10 August 2006 & not on the agenda

Item 1. Noted: JM acknowledged receipt of letter from the Chair, which had been discussed with his manager. JM has secured DCWW's commitment to continued participation and hopefully also to resource contributions. A formal reply will follow.

Item 3. Letter to David Poulter remains outstanding.

ACTION: DH

Noted: KC had investigated the cockle mortality report to EA and had nothing further to report.

Noted: the suggested name change for sub-group had been agreed at sub-group meeting (refer notes of sub-group meeting 18 Sept 2006).

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Item 5. CCW are considering repeating Habitats Directive 'road-shows' directed at relevant authority members, managers and planners, possibly early in 2007 but not before amended Habitats Regulations and revised WAG TAN5 are published.

Item 7. BB still waiting for electronic copies of draft leaflet.

Noted: Costs of exhibition boards determined. Price reflects quality. Expenditure estimated as £300-400.

Agreed: to purchase the same make as Pembrokeshire Marine SAC and Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum which appear robust and good value and will enable compatibility as and when required. However, purchase would be postponed as there is no immediate need at present.

Item 8. Helwick Bank PI Inspector's report has been forwarded to WAG. Publication is not expected before end of the calendar year at earliest.

4 Annual election / re-election of Chair

Noted: MoU paragraphs 4.1 and 6.2 bullet 4 require the Chair to be appointed or reappointed on an annual basis. However, the chairmanship has not been reviewed or reconfirmed for some years.

BB temporarily took the chair.

PC proposed DH be re-elected; JM seconded; carried unanimously.

DH resumed chairing.

5 Sub-group meeting of 18 September 2006 & matters arising

Notes of meeting received without queries.

Agreed: sub-group notes would not be posted to the website.

6 Review of RAG Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding

The 2001 ToR and MoU, and proposed revised 2006 versions had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Noted: both had been overtaken by time and amendments had been made to bring them up to date. Additional amendments had been made to the preamble of the ToR to improve clarity and its reflection of the Habitats Directive.

No further amendments to the ToR were proposed.

The following further amendments to the MoU were discussed and agreed:

- reference to Vice-chair added paras 4.1, 4.2 and 6.2.4;
- requirement for audited accounts was removed and replaced with a clear requirement for the provision of balance and details of income and expenditure;
- identification of a specific time of year to (re)appoint chair, report income and expenditure and plan future budget requirements was added. September was agreed as optimum to allow time to

report previous FY's accounts whilst enabling members to submit resource bids for the forthcoming FY.

Agreed: there was no requirement for formal re-endorsement by member authorities, but that members should copy the revised MoU to their authority's management for information as appropriate.

ACTION: ALL

Agreed: the revised ToR should be posted on the website.

Agreed: to circulate copies of the revised ToR and MoU highlighting the changes made.

ACTION: BB

7 Management scheme strategy

BB guided members through the briefing papers circulated.

Noted: the documents on damage definitions and modification of factors were for background and to assist with risk assessment of activities in due course.

Noted: the 'F list' document listed the high-level generic management options referred to in the management strategy.

BB also referred members to the briefing document on scope and purpose of management schemes received at the meeting of 10 August 2006.

A detailed and lengthy discussion of the strategy document occupied most of the remainder of the meeting.

Agreed: the strategy was a valuable and informative document.

Noted: although many clauses and their rationale were discussed in considerable detail, relatively few amendments were made and most were to improve clarity rather than alter the substance.

Agreed: a revised version, highlighting changes, should be circulated.

ACTION: BB

Key agreements included:

- the vision statement detailed at section 1, para 3, was endorsed without amendment and members agreed it should be included on the website;
- the order of the strategic objectives was amended, objectives 1 and 4 were combined; new objectives - to raise awareness and to ensure integration with other relevant marine biodiversity conservation – were added;
- an additional reference to the identification of potentially useful underused regulatory tools.

The determination of management strategies, requirements and actions (section 3g) was discussed in depth. Two particular underlying issues that influence the identification of management requirements and actions were debated:

- the biological (and physico-chemical) scope of the designated features. PC was concerned about the implications for management of a broad interpretation of the biological scope of habitat features.

Agreed: explicit confirmation of the exact scope is required.

- the extent to which the RAG as a whole would wish and expect to influence, and could or should influence in practice, any plan, project, permission or other authorisation, or any consequent action, that was part of the statutory function of individual relevant or competent

authorities, within the agreed and overarching strategic direction provided by the management scheme. The degree to which consensus on management action (*cf* high-level strategic agreement on the needs for management) could be reached, agreed and incorporated into the scheme document was discussed at length and the sentiment expressed in the draft strategy was allowed to stand unmodified, although it was agreed that the text could be clarified.

Agreed: further discussion and explicit agreement of precisely what individual relevant authorities are committing themselves to is required.

Agreed: members to seek confirmation whether their authorities' Welsh language policies and needs require production of the full management scheme document as a bilingual document, or as an English-only technical document with a bilingual summary. **ACTION: ALL**

Following the prolonged discussion of this agenda item, the meeting's remaining business was truncated and / or postponed.

8 Work programme

Noted: draft work programme based on BW's presentation to meeting of 10 August was circulated 17 August 2006

Noted: amendments are needed to accommodate the reprioritisation and bringing forward of development of the management scheme strategy. Other tasks therefore need to be rolled back on the time-line. Added to the already optimistic timetable, this roll-back has implications for the proposed completion date.

Agreed: roll back the date for a Liaison Forum meeting to the week of 5–9 March 2007

Agreed: discussion of other issues would be postponed.

9 Budget planning

Agreed: despite its importance, detailed discussion was postponed.

Noted: BB had begun collating information on the budget but there remains considerably more work to be done.

Agreed: action should be taken to cost the work programme promptly so as to inform the discussion on budget planning. **ACTION: BB**

Agreed: members to seek confirmation / reconfirmation of their authority's resource contribution commitments for the current and next FYs. **ACTION: ALL**

10 EMS Officer report

Note: most of report postponed.

Noted: BB recommended members read the EMS workshop briefing note circulated prior to the meeting as many of the issues were of interest and relevance.

Noted: a Wales EMS officers' working group has been established and is due to meet on 30 October 2006.

Noted: BB will be attending meetings on 19 October 2006 to consider fisheries information, data and research, and management of bait collection around the Pembrokeshire coast (expressly including Carmarthen Bay) organised by Sue Burton, Pembrokeshire Marine SAC officer.

11 Relevant authority updates

Note: this agenda item was truncated.

Noted: following discussions with SFC and other affected parties, a WAG consultation on a proposal to dissolve SFCs and take all fisheries management in-house is anticipated soon. In the event WAG go ahead with their proposal, it is unclear whether WAG would become a relevant authority, and the implications for the RAG and management of the SAC are potentially substantial.

Noted: several members had attended a meeting with research staff from Swansea University to discuss investigation into recent cockle mortality in the Burry Inlet. Ruth Callaway, Swansea University, had subsequently requested written suggestions to inform research funding proposals for investigating cockle stock mortality and potential population enhancement.

Noted: SWSFC and fishing industry representatives have been in discussion with School of Ocean Sciences, Menai Bridge, and an initial funding bid to the WAG for a research project is being collated by the South & West Wales Fishing Communities.

Agreed: PC to circulate bid letter and supporting documents.

ACTION: PC¹

Agreed: members that attended the meeting would respond individually to RC, and any member that did not attend but knows something about the situation or wish to contribute suggestions should also respond directly to RC.

ACTION: PC, BW, DH

Noted: the WAG are believed to be close to advertising a proposal for a Three Rivers Regulating Order.

Noted: ZO referred to two recent research reports of potential interest to members and suggested the addition of a secure, members-only, section to the website to ease sharing of such documents. Sharing such documents via the site's website was endorsed though it was agreed that access to documents in the public domain should not be restricted.

¹ Completed. PC circulated documents by e-mail Fri 06/10/2006.

12 Other business

Note: this agenda item was truncated.

Noted: BB introduced a 'score-card' developed for assessment of marine protected area management as part of the UK's contribution OSPAR MPA development. The score-card is a high level assessment, based on a World Bank / WWF initiative and drawing on IUCN assessment principles, that requires no collection of data and which has been tested in several English EMS; completion of the assessment as a group exercise was reportedly as swift as 45 minutes.

Agreed: BB to circulate the score-card and members will complete it, independently of each other, as far as they are able, and that the combined assessments be considered at the next meeting.

ACTION: ALL

Noted: (JH) CCW review of (planning) consents (RoC) workshop for local authority's planners involved in RoC pilot on 10 October 2006. Both PCNP and CCoS will be attending.

Noted: (DH) the recent publication of Swansea Environment Strategy (available on-line at www.environmentcentre.org.uk/sef/strategy.htm)

Noted: CCW have been consulted on two mussel Several Order applications for the Burry Inlet, one large (c 270ha), one small.

13 Date(s) of next meeting(s)

Next meeting confirmed as 10.30hrs 16 November 2006, followed by sub-group if necessary.

Subsequent meeting provisionally agreed as 10.30hrs 18 January 2007; date and venue to be confirmed.

Meeting closed at 15.10