



**MINUTES OF MEETING
THURSDAY 19 JULY 2007
WILDFOWL & WETLANDS TRUST, PENCLACWYDD, LLANELLI**

Present

Jane Hodges (JH) Vice-chair	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)
Blaise Bullimore (BB)	EMS Officer
Anne Bunker (AB)	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Phil Coates (PC)	South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (SWSFC)
Sally Curran (SC)	Environment Agency Wales (EAW)
Jill Howells (JHo)	EAW
Simeon Jones (SJ)	Carmarthenshire County Council
Ziggy Otto (ZO)	CCW
Rebecca Wright (RW)	CCW

1 Welcomes & apologies

Apologies:

Deb Hill Chair	City & County of Swansea (CCoS)
Trevor Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)
Isabel Macho	Carmarthenshire County Council
Dusi Thomas	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water (DCWW)

JH (vice-chair) chaired the meeting as Deb Hill, Chair, had tendered apologies.

JH welcomed members; introductions were made for the benefit of SC.

2 Minutes of meeting 26 April 2007

Received without amendment.

3 Matters arising from minutes of 26 April 2007 & not on the agenda

Item 3, *noted*:

- CCW / David Tyldesly roadshows had been attended by several members;
- report that WAG had appointed CEFAS to undertake assessment was incorrect (having possibly been confused with a different assessment process); information for assessment being provided by CCW; meeting between CCW (ZO & Rhian Jardine), PC and Glyn Perryman to progress appropriate assessment of proposed Regulating Order scheduled for 14 August.

Item 4: Action to secure financial records from CCoS accounts department not completed; carry forward.

Item 5(a):

- meeting / presentation to Carmarthenshire County Council Heads of Service still not rearranged. Carry forward action to secure this *via* Eifion Bowen. **ACTION: BB & SJ (& IM)**
- no response received from members as to priority for diverting time to production of an information sources bibliography. *Agreed:* develop bibliography as longer-term, background task rather than as a separate priority task at present.
- meetings with SWSFC SFO's facilitated by PC had proved very useful and informative.

Item 5(c): no recommendations for designers had been received.

Item 6: one further completed score card had been received (from Dusi Thomas). *Agreed:* one final call for completion by members yet to complete the card. **ACTION: ALL OUTSTANDING**

Item 7: no action taken on R&CA awareness raising strategy. *Agreed:* recirculate and all to take appropriate action. **ACTION: ALL**

Item 8: PC requested that CCW be added to those expressing concern about opening the Three rivers cockle fishery and reiterated that he had requested information on recent feature condition assessments from CCW.

Noted:

- the assessments were of conservation status (cf feature condition) and have yet to be finalised.
- BB has requested copies of the assessment of all the site's features on behalf of the RAG and will forward to members on receipt. **ACTION: BB**

Agreed: conservation status assessment to be agenda item for discussion following receipt.

4 Budget

Members were referred to the budget document dated 14 March circulated for the previous meeting as no further updates have been made since (the detailed finance information needed to do so have not yet obtained from CCoS accounts as noted above).

Noted, actions for members:

- to obtain written confirmation of commitments for current FY and forward to BB & DH, and initiate MoAs or other formal paperwork as appropriate;
- to prepare for the RAG's forward resource planning exercise due at the next meeting in line with para 6.2 of the RAG's MoU;
- in advance of the above, to commence internal bidding to secure resources for following FY

ACTION ALL

Noted:

- BB had been in discussion with Charlotte Gjerlov (CCW) and had a meeting with Jennifer Dack (EAW) planned regarding resource contributions.
- request that CCoS issue invoices for contributions significantly earlier than in previous years.

ACTION: DH

5 Management strategy

Noted:

- amended strategy document (v 3 dated 16 October 2006) had been recirculated with agenda. Members were again asked to confirm Welsh language requirements, and approve and adopt document (refer minute 4, minutes of 16 November 2006).
- (reminders) - the principal target audience for the management scheme is relevant and competent authorities; despite the aspiration for a concise document; it is likely to be a substantial size; demand for detailed information is likely and will be included in technical annexes; it is intended only to produce hard copies only for relevant authorities (and possibly the most relevant and key competent authorities) and to produce a fully bilingual summary (“glossy”) document for wider dissemination.
- based on the experience of other sites, most had ultimately included significant amounts of supporting detail in order to meet the requirements of their RAGs.

Agreed: all members to determine their authority’s final position on the language requirements for the final, full document (including or excluding technical annexes). **ACTION: ALL**

Noted:

- BW wished to clear strategy with CCW’s HQ International Sites Officer prior to its adoption.
- PC queried the ‘ICZM approach’ that the Menai Strait SAC was reported as adopting instead of a management scheme.
- a single precise mechanism for meeting the requirements of the Directive is not stipulated in the Regulations; as long as the requirements are met, alternatives to a management scheme are acceptable. The management mechanism for Plymouth Sound & Estuaries SAC is effectively nested within the Tamar Estuaries Consultative Forum (TECF) structure which predated the SAC but provided a vehicle for implementing the requirements of the Directive.
- the most recent advice from Kate Smith, CCW North Wales, is that no firm decisions on the development of management requirements for the Menai Strait SAC have been agreed.

6) Pressures, threats & issues report

Noted:

- draft document circulated prior to meeting;
- feedback received from AB and PC;
- positive progress commended.

Agreed:

- revise in light of comments received and recirculate as version 2 in Word format to enable members to make comment more easily;
- carry forward action to respond, and again include on agenda for next meeting. **ACTION: ALL**
- use of term “commit” in para 1, line 3 rather than “aspire” endorsed as it refers only to the subsequent three bullet points rather than deliverables or any potentially contentious actions.

Noted:

- the scope of features (what components are encompassed within each feature) remains unclear and ambiguous to members. CCW action to clarify was suggested.
- (reminders) - the distinction between activities / operations (addressed by this document and the management scheme) and plans and projects and their assessment; that although conceptually

distinct, there are potential overlaps; that consented plans & projects may have consequential implications for the future management of activities / operations.

- the identification of pressures or threats in this document does not, of necessity, imply either a significant risk or the need for change in management, but more likely the need for risk assessment.
- obtaining consensus on the degree of risk presented by some activities / operations is likely to be to be both time consuming and difficult to achieve.

7) Work programme

Noted: updated document (dated May 2007) circulated with agenda with one amendment, RAG consultation on pressures & threats report.

Agreed: thorough review of work programme to be undertaken at next meeting as part of RAG's annual planning exercise (MoU para 6.2).

Website

Noted:

- domain name (cbeems.org.uk) registered; account created; new website live with effect from 21 June 2007. Feedback received from AB, JH and PC.
- deletion of old Carmarthen Bay SAC site hosted by CCoS and its replacement with a forwarding page has been requested but not actioned as of two days prior to meeting.
- no attempt to build Welsh language version and no effort to raise profile of new site pending feedback from remainder of RAG. **ACTION: ALL TO COMMENT**

Agreed:

- promote website and initiate Welsh language version if no further comment received from members within two weeks (by close of play Friday 3 August). **ACTION: BB**
- use commercial translation service if translation unavailable f.o.c. from CCoS.

Liaison.

Noted:

- successful and informative meetings had been held with SWSFC Sea Fisheries Officers;
- meeting / awareness raising presentation to Carmarthenshire CC remains outstanding despite BB and IM's efforts. Action to unblock noted above.

8) EMS Officer report

Noted:

- the need to start from scratch with liaison with some AMs (including South Pembro / West Carmarthen) as result of Assembly election.
- the letter sent by BB to local AMs, MPs and MEPs had been limited to an invitation to the recent liaison surgeries.

- minutes of the last Welsh GEMS meeting had been circulated with the agenda. The GEMS plan to continue to develop the elected members awareness raising strategy. No further issues were raised by members when invited.

Liaison surgeries etc

Noted:

- The CBE EMS panels were on display at the Swansea BBC Breathing Cities event on 9-10 June; BB attended on Saturday 9th. Although the event was an unqualified success, little interest had been shown in the CBE panels.
- A joint EMS display was mounted with Sue Burton, Pembrokeshire Marine SAC at the Pembrokeshire Fish Week launch in Milford Haven on 23 June; the 1 July Saundersfoot event was cancelled on the day because of bad weather.
- AB assisted at the Milford Haven event. About 50 invitations to the liaison surgery had been issued but none attended (apologies received from Jill Evans, MEP; Nic Ainger, MP; Nick Bourne, AM).
- display panels have proved to be of little interest at this type of event. Instead attention seemed to be best grabbed by live marine life (however common) and giveaway “toys” (the Breathing Cities event also demonstrated that video shown on large screens and a personality were also clear attention-grabbers).
- the trialled attempt to replace stand-alone but poorly attended liaison surgeries (both Pembs Marine and the single CB&E experience) by linking with appropriate well publicised and attended public events cannot be regarded as successful in terms of specifically raising awareness of the site and development of the management scheme. However, it clearly demonstrated the potential to capture ‘hearts and minds’.

Agreed: maximising the opportunities provided by such ‘hearts and minds’ events through the provision of giveaway promotional items showing the CB&E website address should be considered. Of the items identified, pens were agreed as the having the greatest potential for remaining in circulation, being used and most likely to be seen for the longest period of time. Costs to be investigated. **ACTION: BB**

Noted: the display panels have been kindly hosted at WWT Penclacwydd when not in use at events; *agreed* that even if they receive little attention, having them on display was far better than not.

Aquatic change conference, Plymouth, 4 – 6 July

Noted:

- conference interesting and valuable; useful material on: estuaries; distinction of natural v global v local anthropogenic change; investigation and identification of causal relationships; links between science and management (focus on DPSIR approach).
- the CCW stand had had many reports on monitoring in CB&E EMS or relevant to the site that BB had been unaware of. A request for copies has been made to CCW. A copy of a report of commissioned reports, with the relevant reports highlighted, was tabled and circulated; BB to forward to members.

Agreed: all to make greater effort to make relevant outputs from their organisations better known to members.

Other

Noted: the proposed virtual MPA centre (www.ukmpas.org) is being developed by the Marine Biological Association under contract from Natural England and with financial assistance from CCW. The website is live as a holding page but with no content as yet.

9 Relevant authority updates

a) information exchange

(PC) WAG consultation on the future of fisheries management around Wales is anticipated in near future (less than a month).

(PC) The proposed Marine Bill was not included in the government's announcement of Bills to be included in the next Queen's Speech.

(BB) The long awaited revised Habitats Regulations are intended to come into force on 21 August 2007 and are available on line¹.

(PC) Approximately 40% of the Burry Inlet cockle stock died over the period 2-3 June. The north side of the Burry Inlet remains open. There are early indications of good spatfall in both Three Rivers and Burry Inlet.

(SJ) Following changes in duties of, a new manager current staff, a new Burry Port Harbour manager is currently being recruited.

b) research & monitoring reports

(AB) CCW are undertaking an in-house experimental investigation into the recovery of intertidal *Zostera* beds from damage caused by vehicles and simulated cockle gathering.

(PC) Cockle mortality research:

- contract for a desk study in process of being let to Bangor University by South & West Wales Fishing Communities with funding provided by SFIA and CCW (budget c £30k);
- Bangor University have submitted a funding bid to NERC;
- CEFAS are analysing occasional samples of cockles collected by SWSFC from Three Rivers and Burry Inlet for pathological analysis to try to establish possible causes of death.
- The June mortality event appeared to coincide with bloom concentrations of phytoplankton species of *Pseudo-nitschia*, a species responsible for occasionally fatal Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning in humans. (Note added subsequently to the meeting: as the ASP toxin, domoic acid, is not considered to have an effect on shellfish², it does not appear to be an obvious likely candidate for causing the cockle mortality)

¹ Revised regulations: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20071843_en.pdf

Explanatory memorandum: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/em2007/uksiem_20071843_en.pdf.

Offshore regulations: http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2007/uksi_20071842_en.pdf

Additional information available from WAG website at:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/env_cons_management/conservation_biodiversity/habitats_directive/?lang=en

² See for example: http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/af_domoic_acid.pdf and http://66.102.1.104/scholar?hl=en&lr=&q=cache:JgPXw3yHZ5YJ:www.uta.edu/biology/grover/classnotes/5101/domic_acid.pdf+link:XPX12sPjVIYJ:scholar.google.com/

- Weekly phytoplankton samples are being collected by SWSFC and analysed by CEFAS.

(BB) CCW feature monitoring

- Reports of monitoring work in CB&E EMS 2004-06 noted above.
- Intertidal monitoring fieldwork had been recently undertaken by a contractor supported by CCW staff. BB had been invited by the contractor to observe but with only two days notice had been unable to accept offer.

(BB) Recreation activity surveys

- BB to attend forthcoming SW Wales Coastal Recreation Audit meeting. Members were asked to consider contributing from the budgeted research allocation should resources be constraining the Audit.
- Information on the EA's national Strategic Planning for Water-Based Sport and Recreation project is available from the contractor's website at www.brighton.ac.uk/waterrecreation.

(JHo) EA are currently preparing 'functional reports' on specific issues (eg water quality, water quantity) to inform stage 3 of the RoC process for CB&E.

(BB) A Pembrokeshire otter surveillance project using volunteers to routinely record and collect spraint which began several years ago under the auspices of the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC has been reinvigorated in collaboration with the Pembrokeshire BAP. As the project now potentially extends into Carmarthen Bay, members were asked to consider attempting to extend it further, and supporting it in collaboration with Carmarthenshire BAP, in part as a mechanism for collecting information on coastal use by otters, but also as a means of raising awareness of the EMS and developing engagement.

ACTION: ALL TO CONSIDER

10. Other business

The most recent Pembrokeshire Marine "F list" definitions and decision tree for determining generic management options was tabled for information.

11. Date(s) of next meeting(s)

Potentially changed from 19 to 18 September 2007 pending DH's availability. Subsequent dates provisionally agreed as 28 or 29 November. Both dates will be confirmed as soon as possible.

NB: several agenda items for the September meeting are likely to be substantial; **please plan for a meeting that extends into the mid-afternoon.**

Meeting closed at 13.00 hrs