



EMS Officer Blaise Bullimore

MINUTES OF MEETING

10.00 WEDNESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2008

WILDFOWL & WETLANDS TRUST, PENCLACWYDD, LLANELLI

Present

Jane Hodges (JH) 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)
Kate Collins (KC)	Environment Agency Wales (EAW)
Deb Hill (DH)	City & County of Swansea (CCoS)
Rhian Jardine (RJ)	CCW
Simeon Jones (SJ)	Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC)
Trevor Theobald (TT)	Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)
Dusi Thomas (DT)	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water (DCWW)

1 Welcome, apologies & personnel matters

Apologies:

Isabel Macho	Carmarthenshire County Council
Rebecca Wright	CCW
Ziggy Otto	CCW

Introductions were made for the benefit of RJ, attending on behalf of Becky Wright.

2 Annual appointment Chair & Vice-chair

BB assumed the Chair for this item.

DH advised that she would welcome the nomination of another member as Chair.

AB, noting the contribution as Acting-chair made by the current Vice-chair, JH, during DH's prolonged sick leave, proposed JH as Chair and DH as Vice-chair.

Having confirmed there were no other nominations or volunteers, JH accepted AB's nomination.

Proposal carried unanimously.

JH assumed Chair for remainder of meeting.

3 Minutes of meeting 7 July 2008

Minutes received without amendment

4 Matters arising from minutes of 9 July 2008 & not on the agenda

Noted:

Item 3:

- DT's investigation of availability of consent data in hand. **ACTION: DT**
- No volunteers to undertake contact list refresh exercise had been identified by members.
- Members were reminded to make and take opportunities for CB&E EMS awareness-raising within their organisations; to identify further opportunities for inclusion of CB&E information in their RA's public facing operations; to secure corporate links to the CB&E EMS website. BB had not been advised of any further action by members. **ACTION: ALL**
- No further news on securing recommencement of financial contributions from CCC; no prospect of contribution from PCC this FY but a bid to be submitted this autumn. **ACTION BB / TT**
- Members were reminded to ensure relevant colleagues aware of RAG support for SW Wales Recreation Audit and of the need for SMP2 to take account of the EMS. **ACTION: ALL**

Item 4a: meetings between the WFFA, SFC and WAG fisheries following up the scallop dredging consultation were imminent.

Item 4b:

- letter had been sent to WAG as agreed but no response had been received (nor from Environment Division as copy addressee);
- recent ministerial announcement that WAG had decided to go ahead with disbanding SFCs and taking direct management responsibility for all Welsh fisheries
- references to WAG contribution to RAG working in the announcement were not encouraging;
- BB in receipt of advice that RAGs should make direct approach to new head of WAG fisheries, Graham Rees;
- members remained deeply concerned for the future of fisheries management input to the RAG.

Agreed: maintain watchful alert and approach WAG fisheries when seems appropriate.

Noted:

Item 4c: Wales Fisheries Strategy was not open to further amendment except for factual accuracy.

Item 5a: Revision of Regulation 33 advice currently out to contract; publication of revised advice still anticipated as end of this calendar year.

Item 5b: RW had contacted Andrew Peterken as actioned; BB had subsequently contacted AP and was waiting for a response as to his availability.

Item 5c:

- scoter monitoring was not funded in April budget but is earmarked for funding in the event of resources available in the autumn budget out-turn;
- members remained concerned, particularly in light of further recent reports of decline in the population;
- resourcing uncertainties made the development of a long-term monitoring strategy difficult and there is not currently one in place.

Item 7: Despite the PITs report being recirculated and the information gap filling task clearly described, as requested, there had again been a nil response from members.

5 EMS Officer – requested temporary reduction in hours& work programme implication

Noted:

- BB referred to his e-mail of 6 August informing members that he had been appointed as Pembrokeshire Marine SAC officer on a part-time basis for a 12 month period to cover maternity leave. In order to avoid having to resign, BB had requested a reduction from 4 to 2 days per week for the period of the above contract. There had been a difference of opinion between members as to the acceptability of the request. CCoS had made an interim agreement of 2 days / week for two months pending agreement being reached at this meeting.
- BB read a personal statement correcting erroneous statements and suggestions contained in one or two of the responses to his request, and suggesting possible ways to deal with the shortfall in time.
- BB gave members an overview of progress with the management scheme document to date and responded to questions.
- Members were reminded by the chair that the MS is primarily the RAG's tool, and therefore needs to be fit for the RAG's needs.
- A systematic and objective process and assessment to determine management requirements and action is essential to ensure both that all decisions were defensible and no poorly known but real issues were missed.

The likely impacts of a reduction in hours on the work programme were discussed at length;

Noted:

- BB was confident that he could meet the existing timeline for production of a draft document subject to the caveats that:
 - it would be a draft for internal RAG consumption only;
 - all other tasks except attending meetings were postponed or delegated elsewhere;
 - relevant authority members make the contributions required of them in a timely manner;
 - the draft did not include a detailed Action Plan (noting that this section alone of the Pembrokeshire Marine document had taken two years to complete, and a further 18 months for all members agree).
- Progress will be dependent on the pace of the slowest contributing member and on the availability of revised Regulation 33 advice.

Agreed: production of the MS document remains the RAG's top priority.

BB withdrew from meeting; notes taken by TT during BB's absence.

Agreed:

- Extend the interim 2 day / week agreement for a further month (to three months);
- reissue BB contract for two days / week to 23 July 2009 (date of expiry of current contract) with revised job description limited to delivery of draft MS; **ACTION CCoS**

both of the above subject to confirmation, *as soon as possible*, of agreement by relevant authorities;
ACTION: ALL APPROPRIATE RAs

- Recruit a 12 month, 3 day / week, back-fill to cover remaining aspects of work programme as soon as possible; job specification to be drafted and working hours to be confirmed subject to resources;

ACTION: CCoS / Work-programme sub group members

BB rejoined the meeting.

The meeting broke for a presentation from Clare Eno, Senior Fisheries Policy Officer CCW, and Chris Frid, Professor of Marine Biology Liverpool University, on CCW's "Mapping the sensitivity of benthic habitats to fishing in Welsh waters" project.

6 Budget & finance

a) Budget report and RAG contributions.

Noted:

- 2007- 08 final summary report circulated with agenda.
- The c. £1500 mismatch between CCoS reserves figure and calculated carry forward into 2007-08 had not been possible to reconcile to date; the 2007- 08 and 2008 – 09 budgets and projections were based on the lower (reserves) figure.
- A shift to a two day / week contract until July (or Sept) 2009 would free up some resources budgeted for conferences, travel etc.
- RAG contribution confirmations for the current FY had been obtained by Julian Atkins.
- Invoices for the current FY should be sent as soon as possible (scheduled for second quarter). **ACTION: CCoS**
- EAW's MoA for current FY requires completion and sign-off prior to invoicing. **ACTION: EAW**

b) Planned expenditure

i) Otter survey

Noted:

- proposal circulated with agenda;
- value of similar survey, followed by establishment of volunteer spraint recording and collection project in Pembrokeshire Marine SAC;
- although proposed cost is more than the research budget for the current FY, no resources had been expended on research in the previous two years although the same amounts were budgeted each year.

Agreed: proceed with contract to Otter Consultancy, subject to:

- confirmation that single tender permissible under CCoS finance rules; **ACTION: CCoS**
- sufficient resources remain in the budget following determination of costs of EMS officer backfill;
- modification of existing proposal to source existing information to specifically include Local Records Centres.

ii) Contacts refresh

Postponed for consideration pending recruitment of back-fill post.

iii) Bait collection survey

Postponed for consideration pending discussions with Mike Camplin regarding CCW's bait collection survey contract.

7 Annual review MoU and ToR-

Agreed: reconfirm existing documents.

8 Review liaison structure - postponed

9 Generic management options

Noted:

- Generic management ("F-list") options paper tabled.
- Members briefed on purpose and desirability for RAG consensus; members asked to consider with respect to the issues identified in the "PITs" report and to attend the next meeting prepared to assign GMOs to issues.

10 EMS officer report-

Noted:

- Except for leave, most time since previous meeting had been devoted to developing the MS document.
- Bannerstands have been delivered. Initial deployments: CCoS Civic Centre (action DH); Millenium Coastal Park Discovery Centre and County Hall Carmarthen (action SJ); Pembrokeshire County Hall (action TT) and PCNA (action JH).

11 Relevant authority updates

a) information exchange

Noted:

(PC) management issues with mussel hand gathering at Whiteford.

(PC) Three Rivers Regulating Order – appropriate assessment still awaited.

Blue marlin stranding at Saundersfoot.

b) research & monitoring reports

CCW fisheries sensitivity reports recently published (see notes on CCW / U of Liverpool presentation to RAG below).

EAW led, cockle mortalities research workshop in Swansea imminent.

EAW have contracted Water Research Centre to review Bangor University CAMS report on research to date.

(PC) SWSFC biodiversity officer working with Swansea University on ray tagging project.

(AB) CCW intertidal monitoring field work being undertaken this week.

12 Other business

None raised.

13 Date(s) of next meeting(s)

Confirmed: 10.00 hrs, Weds 3 December 2008.

No date set for subsequent meeting.

Meeting closed at 15.15.

Note on Clare Eno and Chris Frid presentation to be added following receipt of powerpoints from Clare Eno.