



**NOTES OF MEETING HELD AT 10.00HRS ON TUESDAY 21 JULY 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)
Simeon Jones (SJ)	Carmarthen County Council (CCC)
Judith Oakley (JO)	EMS Officer (notes)
Rebecca Wright (RW)	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

1 Welcome, apologies & personal matters

Apologies:

Julian Atkins	City & County of Swansea
Deb Hill	City and County of Swansea (CCoS)
Ziggy Otto	CCW
Trevor Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council
Dusi Thomas	Dŵr Cymru-Welsh Water

Deb Hill was on sick leave from work and the RAG sent their best wishes to her.

2. MINUTES OF 26 MARCH 2009 & 15 MAY 2009

Minutes received without amendment.

3. MATTERS ARISING

JA has been forwarding SMP2 information to BB. As JA is leaving, the Planning Dept. contact will now forward.

JO had sent thanks to HP & PW for their presentation at last meeting.

WAG Fisheries meeting – BB (in Pembrokeshire Marine SAC role) had had 1 ½ hr meeting with Head of Fisheries Unit plus Heads of Policy and Enforcement and Vicky Swales, Policy Officer, and Head of Marine Policy and Viv Collins, Policy Officer. Focussed on obligations of Habitats Directive and Regulations, how EMS management contributes to meeting Assembly environment and sustainability targets, the Pembs Marine Action Plan, WAG Fish engagement with all RAGs and integration all RAG management schemes with Welsh Fisheries Strategy implementation plans.

Engagement with EMS was agreed by both Heads of Fisheries Unit and Marine Policy – very positive. Legal status of WAG Fish Unit as a relevant authority after 1 April 2010 remains unclear; BB had previously raised the issue with CCW and WAG Marine Policy.

Environment Agency may have greater role to play in fisheries.

ZO/BB action remains outstanding.

BB action on P4 still outstanding re: awaiting answers on small amounts of money – **ACTION BB**

BB contract extended to 30 September 2 days per week (as at 20 July).

JH to write to CCW for clarification on status of old and new Reg 33 – **ACTION JH**

ACTION AB – to circulate final METOC document to those who request it.

CCW loaned BB document ‘Identifying biodiversity opportunities’ to inform SMP2.

5. PERSONNEL ISSUES

In DH’s absence BB reported that JO is in post until 31 October 2009. BB contracted to 30 September. RAG must decide on BB’s contract from these dates. BB stated he would be happy to continue 2 days per week until JO’s contract ends. After this, he would prefer to return 3 days per week rather than four. The decision by the RAG will partly depend on the ongoing financial resources of the group.

RAG felt they couldn’t discuss this today as 3 members of the group who needed to be involved were absent. Agreed it should be an urgent item on the next meeting agenda, but in the interim a Work Programme sub-group meeting prior to 18 September (ie prior to JA leaving CCoS) was agreed to address these issues.

Date for this sub-group meeting and agreements reached by sub group to be circulated to the rest of the RAG. JA’s presence at this meeting agreed to be important. **ACTION BB**

6 RAG RESOURCES

BB suggested it would be useful to get out invoices for this financial year before JA leaves. EA MoU requires initiation and signing. CCW, PCNPA, SWSFC and DCWW to be invoiced. – **ACTION BB / KC / JA / DH**

Need to get bids in for money and financial commitments before next meeting at end of September. – **ACTION ALL**

Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire County Councils again need to be urged to renew financial contribution – **ACTION BB / ALL as opportunity arises**

Point raised that there needs some discussion/agreement on the need for greater awareness and understanding of the roles and work of the RAGs in Wales by CCW, thus helping to secure appropriate levels of support (including funding) in the future.

BB noted that the ‘footprint’ for most local authorities in marine SACs is small as they are mainly subtidal, but that the local authority footprint in Carmarthen Bay is relatively large because of the relatively large intertidal area, yet the local authorities financial contribution is still little or none.

Pembrokeshire Marine SAC RAG are organising a seminar for senior managers on 24 September. It may be possible to secure invitations for neighbouring authorities. Suggested that Reena Owen (CCoS) and Dave Gilbert (Carmarthen) should be invited. – **ACTION BB**

At last GEMS meeting, all were concerned about funding. CB&E and PM RAGs have reserves to act as a buffer, other RAGs do not.

7. MANAGEMENT SCHEME DRAFT

BB thanked by RAG for getting management scheme to this stage. Feedback has only been received from CCW, PCNPA and JO.

BB has continued to work on completing Technical Annex 6.

The RAG were happy with the general content but feel it is too vast and the text needs to be reduced in places, in some cases by moving text to technical annexes.

The Management Scheme was discussed in detail, page by page, highlighting any amendments and BB noted comments on master copy.

The following main points were agreed:

- Summarise framework – ie. Summary to be pulled forward from c pg 6 & repeated
- Move most of section 1.2, legislation, to Annex
- Some scene setting needed at beginning including geography/map (use formal CCW map to show boundaries)
- Conservation objectives need to be emphasised more
- Include footnote re: RAMSAR definition on page 6
- Where dates are mentioned, check they are still relevant and whether they need to be included or not
- Condense 1.4.2/1.5 on page 7-8 to avoid repetition and overlap
- Summarise last 2 paragraphs on page 19
- Include all common and scientific names unless quoting from other sources eg Habitats manual
- Page 31 activities and operations first sentence to be re-written
- Table 2.1 add footnote explaining what ‘confidence’ specifically relates to

Action Plan 5.3: only generic management objectives are included at present and no actual actions are established. Actions will be developed from the *generic management option(s)* and *management action(s) required* identified at the end of each activity section in Technical Annex 6 (Assessment of threats and pressures).

The actions may either be broad and agreed by the RAG, or the detailed actions developed by each relevant authority to meet the identified required management. It was agreed to include broad, agreed actions. Further information on what activities are threatening the site is still required.

All agreed that the SAC action plan will be reviewed annually. Possibly, an annual report will be produced by the RAG but this will be revisited as it may prove too time consuming.

ACTIONS:

CCW lease foreshore of whole North Gower from Crown Estate – **RW** to provide information on what the lease grants and reserves.

SJ – to chase up colleagues for feedback in Carmarthen, regarding management scheme.

AB – to email CCW for condition assessment of SPA regarding the common scoter, based on evidence.

ALL – to contribute to completing Action Plan with BB

8. EMS OFFICER REPORTS

JO reported:

- Has been spending time working on list of contacts. Not yet physically contacted the people on the list.
- Has been meeting with and setting up various contacts around Swansea University and Swansea Metropolitan University, together with Burry Port and Swansea marinas and local fishermen.
- Will be organising a seminar in August with Swansea University research staff re: the designation and management scheme.
- Will be attending Gower Show on 2 August with CBEEMS display.
- Have permission for RAG to put a small amount of text and an image on the Carmarthen bird club website.
- Checked all links work on new website and all amends given to BB to change.
- Old website has now disappeared and points to new website.
- Collated list of other websites mentioning CBEEMS and also papers published regarding Carmarthen Bay – may be useful addition to website.
- Have been attending GEMS meetings and was involved in Marine Education Framework project (contracted by *MarLIN*) and meeting recently at Aberystwyth (CCW).
- Have been gathering information from local fishermen and other users of the bay regarding perceived concerns to the area eg levels of bass stocks, conflicts of interest between trawling and other fishing methods and jet skis launching from caravan park near WWT Llanelli.
- Have been bringing consultation response opportunities to BB attention eg Defra consultation on proposed minor amendments to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 - If circumstances require, the proposed changes would allow the Secretary of State, after consultation with the appropriate nature conservation body (eg Natural England or the Countryside Council for Wales) to restrict (through the establishment of a temporary nature conservation order), any person from carrying out an operation on land or water, within or outside a European site, which appears to the Secretary of State to be capable of destroying or damaging the interest features of a European site. Defra would welcome responses to this consultation paper by **3 August 2009**. PC had responded.
- Also Defra: Consultation on secondary legislation for England and Wales under the Marine and Coastal Access Bill: Part 4 Marine Licensing. This is a first consultation on some of the secondary legislation that will be produced under 'Part 4: Marine licensing' of the Marine and Coastal Access Bill. The consultation sets out some initial ideas for how applications for a marine licence should be processed and determined; what the appeals process for appealing decisions of the marine licensing authority should look like; and which activities should be exempt from the need for a marine licence and on what conditions. The closing date for this consultation is **22nd September 2009**.

- **ACTION JO** - to send out contacts list for RAG to add to – ACTION ALL

BB reported he has been spending time on the Management Scheme and Technical Annexe 6.

10. RELEVANT AUTHORITY UPDATES

a) information exchange

Cockles update – dying in same pattern as last 2 years at least. Joint Inter-agency study being carried out locally by Swansea University, monitoring sites on both sides of the estuary. Some information was being collected but not yet analysed due to a shortage of funds. Control site was at River Dee but cockles there dying also. Environment Agency overseeing whole project. Prof. Mike Elliot at Hull University is co-ordinating the scientific elements of the project. Swansea University, Bangor University, Hull University, CEFAS and EA decided the priority was to collect data. Swansea University researcher contract ends on 31 July. Then a data compilation exercise needs to take place. PC commented that there appeared to be a coincidence between plankton (as deduced from shellfish biotoxin monitoring) and recent cockle mortality, being just one of the possible links being investigated.

EA – Review of Consents for Burry estuary by March 2010 – includes all 3 designations referred to as Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries EMS on the proforma. In talks with Dŵr Cymru and trying to come up with best environmental outcome. The focus is on phosphorus. Have done scenarios for 3 water works another 6 remaining.

RBMP/WFD – nothing heard since consultation closed at end of June. BB had not, in the end, found time to respond.

A Personal Watercraft plan is in development for Burry Port.

Reported that Directors at CCC have been discussing resources for EMS but unsure of outcome. Although an undertaking had been made by CCC to review and hopefully reinstate contributions to CB&E EMS following BB meeting the Director of Regeneration and Leisure in 2008, nothing further has been heard.

Issues reported of access, bird food and physical disturbance during mussel hand-gathering at Whiteford Point

b) research and monitoring reports

CCW have let a project with Bangor University looking at the geomorphological evolution of the Burry Inlet. Modelling work is being undertaken based on various scenarios eg sea level rise. A meeting has been set up with National Trust and EA will be involved. Also looking at training wall and breaches and effect of this on wider area. It may lead to follow up work. Project will be completed this financial year. Similar work is being carried out on Dyfi and Dee. A large hole has developed on Whiteford Beach in the past years. CEH are undertaking transect monitoring back in to the dunes. There is dramatic erosion to the seepage line of freshwater. The project will continue for at least a year.

SWSFC are carrying out crab tagging on Gower. Ray tagging is ongoing.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

JO- Several ‘threats’ reported by JO including PWC increasing in use at Gateway caravan park, Llanelli. Possibility they may start hiring them out or advertising PWC plus camping as they have a

slipway. Should zoning be introduced to move the jetskis up the estuary the other side of the Loughor bridge?

Concern remains regarding jellyfish (especially the barrel or dustbin-lid jellyfish *Rhizostoma octopus*) in Carmarthen Bay. Swansea University have been notified by a Chinese company who have a desire to harvest them for human consumption. The sustainability of this proposal may be an issue, especially as jellyfish are an important food for leatherback turtles which are listed as a 'critically endangered' species under CITES.

Concerns from local fishermen reported regarding FV 'Our Josie Grace' trawling in the Bristol Channel targeting grounds where local boats are already fishing with net or rod & line. Reports of decline in bass. PC commented that these were long standing matters of resource apportionment and gear conflict that have recently again come to the fore. WAG Fish have had meetings with the participants to try to broker an agreement. According to ICES assessments, bass stocks are healthy, and recruitment appears good.

JO undertook ray tagging with SWSFC and Swansea University off Aberavon Beach. Hoped the next trip is within Carmarthen Bay to give overview of rays there.

Both CBEEMS officers attended Pembrokeshire Fish Week launch at Milford Haven with a display on Carmarthen Bay.

BB said the Green paper on the Review of the CFP is a comprehensive far reaching document and should be consulted. Available from:

http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/reform/consultation/index_en.htm

SAC review in England being undertaken by JNCC.

PC- Welsh Review of Sea Fisheries Committees – It is intended that SWSFC will end in April 2010. EA may have a greater role in estuaries. But WAG will not be consulting any further as they consider the matter to have been covered by the 2008 consultation.

PC - Debate on Marine Bill 7 July – IFCA and Assembly members held to account by Parliament – information available at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmpublic/marine/090707/am/90707s01.htm>

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2008-09/marineandcoastalaccess.html>

12. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tues 8 September – 10 am WWT Llanelli - Work programme sub group (personnel issues)

Wed 30 September, 10 am WWT Llanelli – RAG

Meeting closed at 2.00pm