



**NOTES OF MEETING HELD AT 10.00HRS ON WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER
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 and County of Swansea
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:

Ziggy Otto	CCW
Trevor Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council
Dusi Thomas	Dŵr Cymru-Welsh Water
Lyndsey Rendle	CCC

2. ANNUAL APPOINTMENT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

BB took Chair temporarily. Nominations / renominations were requested. All agreed JH to remain as Chair and DH as Vice-Chair.

3. MINUTES OF 21 JULY 2009

Minutes received and agreed they are accurate following two small amendments ie. P1 – delete 'Draft' from title and P4 should read 'to north side of Burry Inlet'.

4. MATTERS ARISING

JH had not written to CCW re clarification of status of old Regulation 33 advice. Consensus was not to carry forward this action as too much time has passed.

BB still awaiting information on finances from CCoS.

AB didn't circulate METOC document to RAG, as DCWW wish to manage circulation of the document, but gave contact details at Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water so that individuals could request it from them directly.

BB had invited Reena Owen (CCoS) and Dave Gilbert (Carms CC) to Pembrokeshire Marine SAC seminar on 24 September, but neither had responded. Seminar went well with a good turnout from senior managers from Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, WLGA, Crown Estate, EA, MOD, WAG Fish and Marine Policy. Follow up Technical Seminar to be held in November.

RW had forwarded info on north side of Burry Inlet re: leased foreshore.

AB reported on Common Scoter Condition Assessment. Condition of the scoter feature of Carmarthen Bay SPA remains favourable. Numbers of common scoters counted on ground-based surveys peaked at 6,189 in 2007/08. This was substantially fewer than in previous winters (numbers peaked at 24,460, 20,287 and 14,412 in 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07 respectively). BTO, who undertook the 07/08 survey, identified that, although the five-year mean for the site remained above the 16,000 bird favourable condition threshold, it would drop below this value within one or two winters if numbers remained at similar levels. Fortunately, the 08/09 ground counts, undertaken by WWT in February 2009, recorded a peak count of 22,930 birds, providing reassurance that peak numbers were comparable to those of a few winters previously, and that the feature remains in favourable condition.

CCW have small amount of funding for winter 2009 count, but no money for future surveys. Assumed no aerial surveys carried out but need to check this.

There is a lack of security in funding for the long term monitoring of the site ie. the only feature of the SPA. The health of the ecosystem is important in the 'fluctuations' of the scoter population. Smaller populations occur in the Dyfi estuary. There are gaps in our knowledge regarding what is causing fluctuations. We need to request this information and copies of reports/outputs/interpretation from CCW ornithological specialists (Siân Whitehead) to help us manage the feature. Need for continued surveillance. Draft letter to be circulated to RAG first for comments. **ACTION: JH / AB**

ACTION ALL: to send JO any further personal contacts for contact list.

Work programme sub group meeting held on 8 September: No matters arising. Notes from meeting accepted.

5. ANNUAL REVIEW MOU AND TOR

MoU – accepted and reconfirmed

ToR – accepted and reconfirmed

6. WORK PROGRAMME

This was revised on 9 September 2009.

Timeline re-written for documentation and consultation, taking note of committee cycles etc. We are now in the 5th section and nearing the end of internal consultation on the management scheme. End of year is target for pressures and threats section. Initial suggestions for broad actions are being added to Technical Annexe. Action planning set for first quarter of 2010 (note: took 2.5 years to achieve this in Pembs. Marine SAC). After formal sign off by RAmembers aim to go out to public consultation during 4th quarter 2010.

Emphasised that this is the RAG work programme, not merely the Officer's. Discussion took place on how RAG would like to approach Action Plan for each relevant authority. Starting point after Technical Annexe 6 is more complete (in early 2010) is to meet with CCW to discuss activities in relation to the conservation objectives. The SAC officer could go and talk to each authority but they need to read Reg 33 advice and prepare for the meeting with ideas and actions they will take forward. This is very time consuming as demonstrated by Pembs. Marine SAC Officer.

ACTION: ALL in next meeting to plan more succinctly a plan of action.

Discussion regarding Technical Annexe 6 took place. Question regarding whether all background needs to be explained here and once brainstorming has taken place with all organisations, can the information be distilled if necessary?

ACTION BB: put on Agenda for next meeting to talk more about how exactly the RAG is going to undertake the actions and how WAG Fish can be engaged in the process.

Discussion on fisheries took place - the engagement of WAG Fisheries Unit in the management scheme development process is critically important. BB has spoken to Vicky Swales (WAG Policy) about this and she has undertaken to again pass the message on to her line managers. There are lots of unknowns with WAG Fish status, sign-off etc. Wales Fisheries Strategy Implementation Plans recently published (produced by marketing and strategy unit of WAG Fish) focus on actions to develop fisheries and do not mention anything regarding SAC action or the environment.

Combines Sewage Outflows (CSOs)- potential infraction proceedings as complaint with Europe re: Burry Inlet (featured on Panorama programme 3 weeks ago – see links http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8234000/8234744.stm and http://news.bbc.co.uk/panorama/hi/front_page/newsid_8238000/8238883.stm and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/8241051.stm>).

Liaison with SMP2 developments is critical to EMS. We are invited to a Stakeholder meeting in November.

Work programme agreed by RAG and caveats noted.

7. BUDGET AND RESOURCES

Went over Budgets and Accounts Summary (21 Sept).

BB/JO not paying pension so staff on-costs are over-estimated

ACTION: DH to speak to Paul Roach at CCoS to find out exact figures.

Income – only the PCNPA and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water amounts have been added in as confirmed. SWSFC contribution will end this FY. CCW/EA funding to be confirmed. Possibility of restoration of contributions from CCoS, PCC and CCC unknown but unlikely. Income shown is worse scenario amount. The buffer from carry forward takes us through this year and most of the next financial year.

ACTION: RW to follow up how CCW are going to fund ie annually or every 3 years.

ACTION: SJ to chase up CCC again re contributions to the RAG.

Noted that all other SACs are struggling, especially those with no reserves.

ACTION: BB to use work programme and budget as bidding documents.

Need to establish whether RAG group, BB or RAG representatives should be the one to approach organisations for funding. Consensus was that it should be the RAG rep with support from the RAG/CCW/WAG ideally. The SAC Officer alone can only do so much.

Reported that at CCW, Maggie Hatton-Ellis now charged with an overview of SAC resourcing, to ensure equitable funding, and consistency between all EMSs.

ACTION: ALL to report back on progress at next meeting or before

Need confidence to know that we can proceed to consultation stage with secured funding.

Suggested that we write to Diana Reynolds re: fisheries and the importance of EMS as she has stated her support for SACS/EMS. **ACTION: GEMS/BB** to raise at GEMS meeting next week.

WBP ecosystem working groups – marine group chaired by Louise George, WAG Marine Policy and secretariat Aethne Cooke (CCW). One of first tasks was to identify policy actions from WBP Marine Ecosystem Group to WBP Policy Group. One being that the WBP and WAG recognise the importance of Natura 2000 sites in delivering BAP targets and objectives.

Funding isn't just for SAC Officer post, but as a resource contributing to group/collaborative projects. More funding is needed for implementation of the Management Scheme and monitoring, otherwise it will all fall apart.

Local Authority Biodiversity Champions should be made aware of SACs/EMS etc by local authority RAG rep.

7. EMS OFFICER CONTRACT RENEWALS

Looked at in main context of work programme and budget. Lengthy discussion by RAG when BB and JO left room. Further discussions with BB when he re-joined meeting. JO then asked to return to meeting. Outcome was that BB contract to be renewed on 4 day a week basis. CCoS/DH/BB to organise meeting to look over budgets further. **ACTION DH/BB**

If resources allow, may be extra help needed from JO if available during consultation phase, otherwise, JO thanked by RAG Chair for her work and contract to end on 31 October.

9. WAG CONSULTATION ON FISHERY ORDERS

Proposals for future management of Several and Regulating Orders including Burry Inlet RO currently managed by SWSFC. The two options are do nothing or pass to EA who may have regulatory function and statutory remit. This ticks the box for Marine Stewardship accreditation. Potential problem is the 'one stop shop idea'. EA made bid to run all sea fisheries in England and Wales. They also stated that if resources were available, they would manage Welsh inshore fisheries (already manage RO in Dee Estuary). After April 2010 we have no idea how much sea fisheries they will oversee. They will be the relevant authority for cockles on SAC RAG if consultation proposal is accepted.

Several orders and regulatory orders clumped together in consultation document. No explanation given to future orders.

Closing date for consultation is 20 November.

ACTION: RAG to comment and correspond by email as closing date is before next RAG meeting.

10. MANAGEMENT SCHEME

Covered in other sections of Agenda.

Still some RAG members to feed back on Management Scheme to BB.

ACTION: ALL

Technical Annexe 6 work in progress.

11. EMS OFFICER REPORTS

JO reported:

- Contact list nearing completion – approx 470 people on it, divided into sectors ie farming, fishing, tourism, leisure and recreation, business and industry, community. Being added to continuously as new contacts arise.
- Have been out speaking to people about CBEEMS along Millennium Coastal Path and most people had no idea what the EMS was or where it is.
- Other companies (mostly involved in leisure/recreation and tourism) had no idea they were working within Carmarthen Bay. Highlighted importance of an information sheet/leaflet to educate people on where the EMS is, what it is and why it is so important. If people don't know about it, why would they want to be involved?
- Also made contact with lots of organisations on contact list to establish the name of the owner/manager/director or person in best position to be involved (plus email address) and receive the literature.
- Questionnaire usually taken to events now amended and translated to use as information gathering tool.
- Information sheet designed and produced and translated. These 2 will be sent out to all email contacts with covering email. Those only with postal addresses to be written to with covering letter (plus questionnaire and info sheet). Hopefully a postage paid envelope will be provided (via CCoS).
- Investigating grazing intensity – massive lack of information available. Spoke to WAG Llandovery and Carmarthen. Although farmers/commoners have to complete a form every May (Single Commons Registration) taking up their grazing rights, no info on who has taken up those rights and no info on actual amount of stock they do put out on the marsh. They can also claim from the Rural Farm Payments Agency who may have some information. Spoke to CCoS Rory Cridland also and they keep no info on the marsh. They are going to look back at old records and let me know the max numbers allowed out on the marsh (and who has the right to the land but not the amount). The license is for the land not for the person so anyone can give their rights to somebody else so impossible to keep track because it is common land. Ratio is 1 horse and 1 cow to 5 sheep.
- One Voice Wales agreed to send out email to all the Community Councils they have emails for.
- Have been out twice taking photos around the bay as far as Pembrey to build up a library of images to be used in publicity.
- Had info stall at Gower Show in August and at WBP conference at University of Glamorgan in Sept.
- Approached 'Coast' magazine with a view to writing an article on CBEEMS to raise awareness. Have to submit some ideas in line with the style of the magazine eg a walk somewhere in the Bay, mentioning wildlife highlights along the way etc.
- Liaison with David Jones (Pembs Coastal Forum) regarding their recreation audit contacts.

ACTION: ALL – to check over Information Sheet and to send back any comments or amends by end of week.

BB: Concentrating on responses to consultations and Technical Annexe 6.

12. 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.

EA – Review of Consents ongoing, target March 2010.

Llanelli Sand Dredging may abandon licence to dredge Helwick Bank in exchange for increased long-term assured access to the NOBEL Banks.

b) Research and monitoring reports

ACTION: RW – to give BB information (scope of the study) on CCW research contract regarding evolution and coastal geomorphological change in the Burry Inlet. Due to be reported on soon.

SWSFC have GIS monitoring data of vessel activity for 3 years (to end of 2009). This work is ongoing. **ACTION: PC** to provide information.

Otter work continuing.

High Cetacean activity in mid Bristol Channel reported this year with superpods of dolphins. Aggregate dredging should take this into account in any impact assessment.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Revised WAG TAN 5 Nature Conservation & Planning published Sept 2009 – includes offshore EMS

WAG MPA Consultation re Marine Conservation Zones by Dec 16th. **ACTION: RAG** to respond. Draft response by email. **ACTION: BB**.

SMP2 Stakeholder meeting 3 November, at National Botanic Gardens. Drop-in session between 10am and 5pm.

Minutes from 2009 meetings to be uploaded onto website. **ACTION: BB**

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 3 December 10.00

Meeting closed at 13.45