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## **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Wednesday 13 April 2011**

**CANOLFAN TYWI CENTRE, DINEFWR FARM, LLANDEILO**

### **Present**

Jane Hodges (JHs) Chair	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)
Blaise Bullimore (BB)	EMS Officer
Alex Harding (AH)	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Deb Hill (DH)	City & County of Swansea (CCoS)
John Hogg (JHg)	Environment Agency Wales (EAW)
Lindsey Rendle (LR)	Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC)
Martin Stephens (MS)	EAW (for item 5)

### **1 Welcome, apologies & domestics**

Apologies:

Eifion Bowen	CCC
Anne Bunker	CCW
Simeon Jones	CCC
Fergus O'Brien	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water
Trevor Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council

### **2 Minutes of meeting 17 February 2011**

Agreed subject to deletion of minute 6, bullet 3: a funding contribution from EAW in 2011-12 is not definitely impossible.

### **3 Matters arising from minutes of 17 February 2011 & not on the agenda**

*Item 3, IFG membership; noted:*

- As agreed, Pembs Marine had written to WAG Fish advising of the agreement between south Wales RAGs regarding their joint nomination.
- WAG's response had indicated that EMS representation / membership of the IFG was not assured and was subject to other nominations including any nomination from CCW.
- Following liaison with Wales Environment Link regarding membership it has become clear that conflicting stories on CCW's position on membership are in circulation.
- A second round of IFG meetings has been held but the nominated environmental interests (in the south at least) had neither been advised or invited.

- AH asked to obtain definitive clarification of CCW position and to advise both WAG Fish and this RAG. **Action: AH**

*Reconfirmed:* on the basis that a large proportion of the southern IFG area is within EMS and because IFGs have a role in development of local fisheries management plans, representation of RAGs on IFGs is essential.

*Agreed:* given uncertainty, no further action could be taken at this time, but to advise PM officer of this RAG's continued endorsement of need for EMS representation on IFGs.

*Item 3, EA monitoring buoy:* presentation to be included in this meeting.

*Item 3, clarity of CCW conservation objectives:* noted:

- DH had circulated advice letter from David Tyldesley (David Tyldesley & Associates) to CCoS as agreed, however the letter had not included reference to lack of clarity of the conservation objectives.
- DH advised that David Tyldesley had commented in a meeting that although the conservation objectives refer to "acceptable standards" (for water quality) they do not specify what these standards are and this imprecision is unhelpful; however, there was no formal record of the meeting.

*Agreed:* DH and AH to approach colleagues that had attended the meeting to obtain notes they had made; AH to also request, via colleagues, CCW response to the Tyldesley comment.

**Action AH / DH**

*Item 3, scoter monitoring;* noted:

- Report had been circulated to members
- Meaningfully monitoring migratory species features that spend a minor proportion of the year within a UK N2K site is a challenge
- Agreed: monitoring focus for Carmarthen Bay SPA needs to be as much or more on the condition of the habitat and prey availability as on absolute numbers of birds, which are subject to many other pressures outwith the site and not necessarily indicative of SPA condition.
- Limitations on CCW's monitoring capacity (resources etc) need to be acknowledged.
- CCW asked to review its approach to monitoring at least Carmarthen Bay SPA to accommodate understanding of feature behaviour and ensure that its monitoring is best fit for purpose.

**Action: AH**

*Item 6, translation;* agreed: CCC to determine possibility of providing translation of management scheme free of charge as contribution in kind to RAG.

**Action: LR**

*Item 7 & 8a, Burry Inlet fisheries management plan and cockle mortality report;* noted:

JHg offered to arrange a presentation to the next meeting on the EAW's work in the Burry Inlet, to include fisheries management and output of cockle mortality report which is still in draft.

**Action: JHg**

*Item 8b, SEACAMS;* noted: BB had had one exploratory meeting with the manager of the Swansea University SEACAMS team and has a further more detailed meeting in partnership with Pembs Marine officer on 18 May.

#### **4 Management Scheme**

Draft rewritten short-form management scheme circulated prior to meeting.

*Noted:*

- Main MS document had been rewritten as agreed at previous meeting.
- Differing understandings of the management measures section had led to an initial redraft of that section which ran to several pages. As a consequence, a one day workshop had been held with CCW and the RAG Chair (AB, AH & JH) to finalise a further redrafted management measures section.
- E-mailed endorsement and a single minor suggestion had been received from Eifion Bowen, CCC.

The chair extended thanks to BB for the prompt production of a document that met the criteria identified at the previous meeting; BB further extended thanks to AB and AH for their contributions.

*Agreed:*

- Revised version was “fantastic”.
- Document should be sufficiently future proof to be able to accommodate ongoing initiatives, such as Living Wales / NEF.
- Accept EB’s suggested addition to accommodate site enhancement as well as prevention of degradation.
- Add text box on first page (replacing image) highlighting value added by RAG as series of short ‘headlines’ to bring RAs together at beginning of document.
- Not to add a glossary as would duplicate glossary in technical annex and risk considerably lengthening the document.
- Status of and cross reference to technical annexes clear and appropriate.
- Give all members - present and not present - until 6 May for further comment and to suggest additional value-added ‘headlines’.
- Following receipt of further comment, finalise document and share with competent authorities and submit for RA authorisation for consultation.

**Action: ALL**

## **5 Water quality monitoring in Burry Inlet** (Additional item not on agenda)

Martin Stephens, Analysis and Reporting Team, EAW Llandarcy, provided a briefing on recent EAW monitoring in the Burry Inlet. The pdf of the briefing note tabled and appended as an annex to these minutes covers the main points of the presentation.

The monitoring results support the emerging conclusions of the cockle mortality report that water quality is highly unlikely to be the cause of the cockle population depletion; the final cockle report is due out later in the spring / summer.

In addition to the automated monitoring buoy, passive samplers are being deployed until March 2012 by Defra to investigate levels of pharmaceuticals (including veterinary drugs) and other organic compounds.

The RAG extended their thanks to MS for his presentation.

*JHg and MS left the meeting at 12.00 hrs*

## **6 Work programme**

*Agreed priorities:*

### ***Finalisation and release of MS for consultation***

- Finalise MS document (see agenda item 4 above)

**Action: ALL / BB**

- On completion:
  - initiate as soon as possible RA approval of release for consultation; noting that approval for consultation does not mean signing up to the MS or its contents as it stands; **Action: ALL**
  - share MS document with competent authorities. **Action: BB**
- Determine agreement on which technical annexes must also be included in consultation and require advance approval prior to release for consultation (and therefore need finalising):
  - Determine whether one or more of the annexes need to accompany the MS document when submitted for approval for release (and, if so, which); **Action: ALL**
  - All members to advise which annexes should accompany the MS document for the public consultation (suggest TAs 2 & 3). **Action: ALL**
- RAs to either:
  - provide written approval for release of the MS for public consultation at the next RAG mtg (noting there is no specified format for approval, it is whatever is appropriate for each organisation); or
  - if not possible by that date, determine timeline to obtain that approval and advise at next meeting. **Action: ALL**
- Edit and restructure what have now become technical annexes (proposed order of priority TA3, 2, 1, 4). **Action: BB**

*Agreed:*

All R&CAs to be included in consultation

No further dialogue on proposed detailed management measures to be pursued; comments to be invited as part of consultation

### ***Publicity for consultation***

*Agreed:*

- Focus consultation via website
- Notify all on current contacts list (including representatives of former Liaison Forum and interests groups), Local BAP Groups (and request cascade to members), Burry Inlet Management Advisory Group (via EAW).
- Arrange media release, potentially via CCW press officer; AH to investigate. **Action: AH**

*Noted:* considerable further work is required to prepare new website before hosting the consultation.

*Agreed:* hard copies to be printed only as and when stakeholders have no computer access.

## **6 Budget & resources**

Draft summary accounts for 2010-11 and budget forecast for 2011-12 circulated prior to meeting.

*Noted:*

- The combination of a slight underspend for the year, reduced contributions from RAs and a very tight budget for 2011-12 results in a forecast balance of around a thousand pounds at the end of FY, down from a reserve of over £30k at the beginning of 2010-11. Only CCW, PCNPA and WWDC have made a financial commitment to contributing to the RAG in 2011-12.

- The budget for liaison with R&CAs is minimal and no allowance has been made for spend on public engagement during consultation.
- MS production costs are limited to translation costs and an extremely minimal allowance (£50) for production of copies on CD or printing. Absorption of translation costs in-house by one of the RAs as a contribution in kind would be helpful help. (See minute 3 above, LR to investigate translation by CCC f.o.c).
- BB's contract has been extended to the end of Sept 2011; on strength of budget forecast DH has requested a further extension to the end of the FY. **Action: DH to secure**
- Possible EC funding opportunities being investigated by GEMS, led by Pen Llyn SAC RAG.

## 7 EMSO report

*Noted:*

- Minimal time spent on tasks other than revision of the MS.
- GEMS workshop on common priorities between Welsh EMS and relationships between MS and CCW Special Sites Action Database. BB to circulate notes of workshop when available. **Action: BB**
- Liaison Wales Environment Link regarding EMS representation on WAG's Inshore Fishery Advisory Group.
- Attended Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum led workshop on Marine Spatial Planning consultation.
- Taking leave until early May with effect from today.

Future plans include:

- Presentation to the September 2011 WBP conference in Carmarthen; CB&E and BB were nominated by other GEMS members because of conference location. On assumption that public consultation on MS would be under way at this time, agreed BB should draw attention to this in presentation **Action: BB**
- Liaison mtg with SEACAMS project on 18 May

## 8 RA consents updates (confidential)

See confidential annex

## 9 Other business

*Noted:*

Following an initial review of EMS management in 2010, CCW will be undertaking a more comprehensive review later in 2011; this will include more thorough effort to obtain the views of relevant and competent authorities than the on-line questionnaire previously carried out. Proposals to centralise management at the expense of site-based RAGs are anticipated therefore careful scrutiny of and response to future CCW consultation on this issue was encouraged.

## 10 Date and of next meeting

10.00 hrs Friday 8 July, WWT Penclacwydd.

Meeting closed at 13.25

