



MINUTES OF MEETING

Thursday 22 September 2011

WELSH WILDFOWL CENTRE, PENCLACWYDD, LLANELLI

Present

Jane Hodges (JHs) Chair	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)
Blaise Bullimore (BB)	EMS Officer
Anne Bunker (AB)	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Kate Collins (KC)	Environment Agency Wales (EAW)
Alex Harding (AH)	CCW
Deb Hill (DH)	City & County of Swansea (CCoS)
Simeon Jones (SJ)	Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC)
Eve Read (ER)	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water (DCWW)(Environmental Policy)
Lindsey Rendle (LR)	CCC
Trevor Theobald (TT)	Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)

1 Welcome, apologies & domestics

Apologies:

Eifion Bowen	CCC
Ged Davies	EAW
John Hogg (JHg)	EAW
Fergus O'Brien (FO'B)	DCWW

2 Minutes of meeting 8 July 2011

Agreed without amendment.

3 Annual (re)appointment Chair & Vice-chair

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

JHs resumed chair.

4 Matters arising from minutes of 8 July 2011 & not on the agenda

Item 3; scoter monitoring. Action completed, but further agreed JHs to write to Mike Camplin encouraging the integration of marine bird monitoring with the remainder of marine monitoring work undertaken by CCW.

Action: JHs / BB

Item 3; presentation on EAW work in Burry Inlet - carry forward.

Action: JHg

Item 3; clarification of proposed duration of EAW's automated monitoring in Burry Inlet - carry forward. **Action: KC**

Item 3; commissioning authority and source of copies for Cefas report Burry Inlet report – carry forward **Action: KC**

Item 6; secure job descriptions for other EMS officers post adoption of management schemes – carry forward. **Action: BB**

Item 8; determine status of two extant SO applications for Burry Inlet – carry forward. **Action: AB**

Item 9; establishment of working group to investigate establishing wetland systems remains an aspiration.

Agreed: further news and opportunity for engagement would be welcomed at the appropriate time; DCWW requested to keep RAG briefed. **Action FO'B / ER**

5 Management Scheme consultation

Noted:

The consultation went live on the website and was e-mailed to relevant and competent authorities on 23 Aug.

Postal and e-mail notification went to all coastal Community Council clerks (31 by email, 7 by post) and all stakeholders on contact list (108 by email, 32 by post) on 30 – 31 August. (Significant unexpected time had been required to bring the address list up to date).

Media release sent to 16 newspaper and local radio contacts (mostly supplied by CCW press officer) on 31 August with publication date of 1 September. Only the *South Wales Evening Post* and *This is South Wales* website are known to have carried the item.

The three County L.BAP officers were asked to cascade to their mailing lists.

(Notification was included in the UK national CMS e-mail newsletter following the meeting)

Members confirmed that:

- the consultation has been cascaded as required within their parent authority;
- all pre-agreed external cascades had taken place;
- hard copies had been placed at the agreed locations specified in the previously circulated list;
- links to the consultation notification on the CB&E website had been or were being added to their authorities websites ¹.

Management scheme seminars have been offered to all relevant and competent authorities and, to date, arranged for City & County of Swansea and Carmarthen County Council. A presentation to Carmarthen LBAP partnership has been arranged. EAW requested a meeting to discuss details in the MS.

Four responses had been received to date, though none via the website. The web submission form had been checked and confirmed as functioning.

CCoS will be unable to meet the 31 October deadline for response because of their Committee timetable.

Other members to confirm their response timetables and advise if responses will be later than 31 October. **Action ALL (except CCoS)**

No internal responses had been received by member representatives to date.

¹ Only PCNPA & DCWW confirmed to date.

Agreed: RAG reps to remind colleagues of consultation and to secure engagement as appropriate.

Action: ALL

5 CCW MPA management review

Noted:

AB summarised the background to the review and referred to the questionnaire addressed at the last meeting.

Following circulation of the draft review document for comment (including by RAG members) from 30 Aug to 13 Sept. the document is being finalised for presentation to CCW Directors, then the MPA Management Board and to WG by the end of the calendar year.

The very draft nature of a long document coupled with the short time scale for response were assumed to be the reasons for the lack of response from members, though FO'B had submitted comments *via* Pembs Marine SAC and BB had also submitted detailed comments.

Members welcomed:

- the recommendations for WG to be more proactive and to give direction to other authorities to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of the Habitats Directive ;
- the acknowledgement that RAG model works and fulfils the Directive's purposes;
- the recommendation that funding to maintain RAG working, particularly EMS Officers, should be continued.

Other key draft recommendations were discussed; specifically:

- concern was expressed about the proposed Wales-wide management steering group: it was unclear how the interests of local as distinct from Wales-wide relevant authorities would be accommodated and the risk of either disenfranchising or alienating non-national RAs was noted; the wisdom of creating another all-Wales structure was queried and the value of RAGs for securing local buy-in which a Wales-wide group may compromise was noted;
- splitting the coast into seven management units centred on EMS and extending RAG's remit to encompass management in intertidal SSSI generated a mixed response: the lack of statutory basis, the differing statutory roles of the different RAs and CCW's statutory responsibilities with respect to SSSI made it unclear how such a proposal could work;

Members asked the CCW reps to feed back the RAG's recommendation that CCW consider these proposals more carefully.

Although the deadline for comment had passed, any outstanding crucial issues should be forwarded to CCW *via* AB as soon as possible.

Action: ALL

6 Future work programme

Noted:

The immediate term work programme will focus on promoting the MS consultation, dealing with queries and then the responses to the consultation.

A skeleton work programme listing summary tasks for the period following finalisation and launch of the MS had been circulated prior to the meeting, together with a synthesised list of actions ascribed to the RAG in the MS Tech Annex 3 (long term management objectives and actions).

The EMS officer's work programme will flow from the RAG's programme.

The list of RAG actions was discussed at length.

Agreed:

It will be necessary to refine the prioritisation of the high priority actions.

Compiling a detailed work programme is premature in advance of the final MS being in sight.

Post-MS finalisation work programming will not be delegated to the work programme sub-group but undertaken by the full RAG. Members to consider the list of actions in advance of, and discuss in detail at next meeting.

Action: ALL

7 Budget & resources

Noted:

A budget summary to date had been circulated prior to the meeting.

KC reported that EAW would make a contribution this FY.

This, together with the salary savings from BB having taken unpaid leave in August, will result in an estimated end of the FY balance of approx £4,800.

BB contract had been renewed to end March 2012.

Agreed:

Commence invoicing process for current FY immediately.

Action: DH / BB

The workload following adoption of the MS will continue and require continued employment of an EMS officer and funding. DH to circulate letter to all RAs requesting contributions for following FY to support implementation of the MS.

Action: DH / BB

8 EMSO report

Noted:

BB had taken leave from mid July – mid August, the last two weeks being unpaid compassionate leave.

Additional to the focus on the MS consultation:

WBP conference 14 – 15 September, Carmarthen; BB given presentation on EMS in Wales and advertised MS consultation. Well received, though disappointingly poor amount of conference timetable given over to marine issues.

Swansea Bay conference 20 Sept.

Liaison with Swansea University SEACAMS team:

- following suggestion from BB, SEACAMS interested in taking lead on a Burry Inlet conference to follow up those held in 1975 and 1996. SEACAMS have contacted the Estuarine Coastal Sciences Association (ECSA) who have expressed tentative interest in having it as one of their annual UK conferences in 2013. Concept welcomed in principle by members;

- research opportunities in the Burry Inlet relevant to the EMS.

Agreed: invite SEACAMS team to next meeting to brief RAG on SEACAMS work and opportunities.

Action: BB

Noted:

Liaison with Pembrokeshire Marine EMS officer and Wales Environment Link marine team to feed into WG Inshore Fisheries Group issues. Two agenda items and backing papers for the 21 Sept South Wales IFG (attached to minutes) were specifically relevant to CB&E EMS: Burry Inlet cockle fishery and a proposed Regulating Order for Three Rivers.

The claim in the RO paper that the WG Fisheries Unit has attempted “to keep all interested parties {including environmental interests} fully informed of developments at all stages in this process.” although no contact whatsoever has been made with the RAG.

Agreed:

Proposal for RO welcomed – and noted that it aligns with action identified in MS.

WG Fisheries continued failure to engage with the RAG remains a significant concern, particularly in the both these issues addressed at the IFG.

Chair to write again to Graham Rees, Head of Fisheries Unit, expressing this concern and requesting appropriate level of engagement. BB to circulate draft prior to sending.

Action: JHs / BB

Forthcoming

Carmarthenshire LBAP presentation 11 October

EAW cockle mortality report launch / seminar Llanelli 25 October

9 RA updates

Noted:

Burry Inlet cockle stock survey in June 2011 showed only c.800 tonnes to be present but with a massive spatfall. Fishery was open this year for 37 licence holders; a maximum legal size of 20 mm was introduced to protect breeding stock. Ochwr Draw School Beds remained closed to fishing despite considerable opposition and objection from cockle gatherers who maintained that the surveys had underestimated available stocks.

Cockle stocks in Three Rivers estimated at c.1,700 tonnes at Llan-y-bri, though as few were of M(min)LS WG had decided to keep Three Rivers fishery closed this year.

An estimated 12,000 tonnes of intertidal seed mussel was present at Whiteford Point this year. CCW had assented 2,000 tonnes to be taken by hand gathering, with fishery to end at 30 September.

A revised version of the Burry Inlet MoU had been received from EAW (JHg) the previous day; it had been forwarded to members, though at the very end of the working day and no members had picked it up prior to the meeting.

Agreed: BB to scrutinize revised MoU and identify synergies and / or any inconsistencies with management scheme.

Action: BB

Noted:

Ad hoc observations of bait collection are being carried out by CCC rangers in the Llanelli area and recorded systematically. Advice was requested on how to maximize information without creating additional workload.

Action BB / AB to discuss and liaise with SJ

9 OTHER BUSINESS

Noted:

A series of public meetings about the Atlantic Array wind farm development in the Bristol Channel are being held by RWE Renewables.

Comments are being sought on the proposed Penclawdd Flood Alleviation Scheme options and measures (part of the SMP2 process), with a public meeting in Penclawdd on 27 September. DH plans to attend. BB is unable to attend but will submit comments.

Wales Environment Link had recently produced a report investigating the use of voluntary management in the protection of marine biodiversity (download bi-lingual summary here: [SUMMARY](#) or full copy of report here: [FULL REPORT](#)).

10 Date(s) and agenda items for next meeting(s)

10.00 – c.15.00 hrs Monday 28 November 2011, Penclacwydd Room, Penclacwydd

Agenda items:

- Annual review and reconfirmation of MoU and ToR
- SEACAMS presentation
- Work programme planning

NB - please plan for a meeting extending to mid afternoon

Meeting closed at 12.45