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## **MINUTES OF MEETING**

**Wednesday 16 May 2012**

**WELSH WILDFOWL CENTRE, PENCLACWYDD, LLANELLI**

### **Present**

Jane Hodges (JH) Chair	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)
Blaise Bullimore (BB)	EMS Officer
Ged Davies (GD)	Environment Agency Wales (EAW) (Pembrokeshire Environmental Management Team Leader)
Alex Harding (AH)	CCW
Isabel Macho (IM)	Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC)
Eve Read (ER)	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water (DCWW)
Julia Williams (JW)	Welsh Government (WG) Marine Branch
Jon Willington (JWn)	EAW (Carmarthenshire Environmental Management Team Leader)
Jennifer Dack (JD)	WG Living Wales / EAW (agenda item 2)
Stuart Thomas (ST)	EAW (agenda item 3)
Dave Tavner (DT)	EAW Burry Inlet Cockle Regulating Order officer (agenda item 3)

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

#### Apologies:

Eifion Bowen	CCC
Anne Bunker	CCW
Kate Collins	EAW
Deb Hill	City & County of Swansea
Simeon Jones	CCC
Fergus O'Brien	DCWW
Lindsey Rendle	CCC
Trevor Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council

John Willington was introduced as the primary local Environmental Management Team contact / representative on the RAG from now on, additional Kate Collins in her role as biodiversity officer.

All other guests and new representatives were welcomed.

## 2 Sustaining a Living Wales green paper presentation

Jen Dack, on secondment from EAW to WG Living Wales team, gave members a presentation (attached as handout) on the 'Sustaining a Living Wales' consultation green paper .

Acknowledging that the document is very light on reference to the marine environment, JD nevertheless attempted to identify marine linkages where possible.

The presentation stimulated a long, and somewhat philosophical, discussion.

The need for marine and terrestrial planning to be joined up was agreed.

The ecosystem based approach to management already established in and for the marine environment, *inter alia* by the Marine Framework Strategy Directive, was acknowledged, though it was agreed that this does not equate to marine environmental managers having yet acquired all necessary experience in implanting the ecosystem approach or integrated spatial planning.

Considerable concern was expressed by some members regarding the utilitarian approach to the environment expressed in the green paper; others welcomed the intent to give the statutory environmental agencies a duty to support economic growth.

The importance of government leadership, the primacy of European legislation and the recognition that there will always likely be a necessity to refuse certain economic developments to safeguard the environment were all recognised and acknowledged.

*Members thanked JD who left the meeting at c.11.30.*

*Agreed:* forward a note of thanks to JD following the meeting.

**Action: BB**

## 3. Cockle management update

ST introduced Dave Tavner as the new Burry Inlet Cockle Regulating Order (BICRO) officer.

*Noted:*

- ST is stepping back from cockle issues but will retain responsibility for Shellfish Waters Directive implementation issues.
- The recent Burry Inlet stakeholders workshop / meeting generally rejected the scientific findings of the final cockle mortality report; however, it appears that a large number of other stakeholders do broadly accept the findings.
- A Burry Inlet Management Advisory Group (BIMAG) was to be held that afternoon, with five cockler representatives plus reps from processors, to discuss the draft RO management plan and to seek advice on its circulation for consultation.
- EAW undertook bring the draft plan to the RAG for discussion and consultation.
- The plan is a high level framework document which advocates taking forward the recommendations detailed in the cockle mortalities report.
- DT will be the RAG's main contact for BICRO issues from now on and will attend RAG meetings as necessary.

*ST and DT left the meeting at c.11.45*

## 4 Minutes of meeting 23 February 2012

Agreed without amendment.

## 5 Matters arising from minutes of 23 February 2012 & not on the agenda

*Item 4:* Review outstanding actions on EAW and advise KC / JWn of those remaining valid.

**Action: BB**

*Item 4:* Agreement to invite John Clark, RSPB Futurescapes manager, to give presentation to next RAG meeting reconfirmed.

*Item 5:* Further approach to MoD had not been made as a consequence of Management Scheme meeting with WG (see item 6 below).

*Item 5:* IM to follow up seeking an invitation to Pembrey Conservation Group when opportunity arises.

**Action: IM**

*Item 11:* IM and BB to liaise over Atlantic Array resources.

**Action: BB / IM**

## 6 Management Scheme

A note of a meeting held between RAG members and the EMS officer, CCW and WG on 29 March 2012 had been circulated with the agenda.

*Noted, WG:*

- consider that the future of EMS management will be driven by the CCW MPA management review; formal advice has been received from CCW; WG will consider the advice from the MPA review in the context of the Living Wales agenda;
- had previously overlooked that CB&E and other MSs were in effect “telling” ministers what to do; MSs must be in language that all R&CAs find comfortable;
- suggest there is an opportunity for CB&E RAG to create a new model, but the RAG should beware of trail-blazing at the present time;

*Noted, EAW:*

- have residual concerns regarding some of the detailed text;
- consider that, whilst retaining its legal purpose, the MS needed to deliver wider range of targets under Living Wales;
- consider that the MS must be integrated with the CCW Special Sites Database.

In the subsequent discussion it was *noted*:

- In response to EAW expressing the view that EMS management objectives need to be realigned to deliver Living Wales socio-economic goals, WG reaffirmed that Living Wales will not set aside obligations arising from the Habitats Directive, that the long term purpose of EMS management remains meeting obligations of that Directive though EMS management needs to accommodate socio-economic goals where possible.
- Greater clarity is needed on the practical implementation of Living Wales in order to progress a new approach.
- EMS management to deliver FCS contributes to other European Directives, eg WFD and MFSD.

- In combination, the changes / clarifications in position of WG and EAW will have substantial implications for the CB&E MS, all other Welsh EMS MSs and the delivery of the Habitats Directive in EMS in Wales.
- WG have received CCW's formal advice for future MPA management; a key recommendation is the establishment of an all-Wales, overarching, strategic, steering group. WG was not able to share Welsh Government response at this stage as the advice is yet to be considered, but one of the key principles in going forward is that there must be consistency between EMSs, and between MSs and conservation objectives, which will be best achieved by taking a more strategic approach. RAG members considered that a new steering group, if set up, must recognise all the work done to date and that all relevant parts of WG must fully engage with the process.
- Regardless of RA/CA status, WG undertake management functions that are undertaken by RAs in England (MMO, IFCAs), as identified in the Habitats Regulations, (including management of non-fisheries marine life exploitation as well as fisheries) which are critical to the effective management of Welsh EMS.
- There is no proposal to devolve fisheries management from WG to the new single body.
- The issue of how future fisheries management in EMSs will be addressed remains uncertain
- WG will be looking toward CCW to provide them with MPA management advice directly, hence RAGs will need to ensure CCW's advice, and Special Sites Database, reflects MS assessments and priorities.
- Limited resource availability for marine management is a major constraint.
- Failures to pool resources and information need to be recognised and addressed.
- The MS is integrated with the CCW Special Sites Database and has been since the use of the database was extended to include marine sites - almost all the actions identified for CB&E EMS in the database originated in the draft MS; discussions regarding further integration are on hold pending the improvements in the database's functionality and utility by CCW.

BB also *queried*:

- How will the proactive / preventative / good practice etc measures that the MS encompasses be carried forward if they don't fit the reactive / high pressure criteria required for inclusion in the SSD.
- How will it be possible for the MS to inform CCW advice and SSD? How can RAGs secure the necessary CCW support to identify the measures necessary to address the "observations" on activities managed by WG.
- In the absence of a dialogue with WG Fisheries, how and from where official information on fishing activity - distribution, intensity, timing etc- may be obtained to inform assessment of pressures and threats from fishing activity and to develop advice that will stand up to scrutiny.

*Agreed*:

- EMS management will need to take into account the aims of Living Wales; however, the primary driver for management will remain the Habitats Directive.
- All existing work on the MS to date stands.
- The MS remains a framework for integrated working for RAs to deliver their obligations for EMS management.

- Further development / amendment of the MS will be put on hold for the foreseeable future.
- The MS document as it stands may be used as a working draft by those RAs that have signed up to it.

*IM left the meeting at 12.30*

*GD and JWn left the meeting at 13.00*

## **7 Budget & resources**

A current budget summary and forecast had been circulated with the agenda.

*Noted:*

- CCW are planning to contribute £5k in 2012–13 rather than the £10k advised by JW at the previous meeting and subsequently confirmed by CCW HQ, as the other £5k has been allocated to Cardigan Bay SAC as a Regional decision. JW expressed surprise and disappointment and undertook to discuss with John Hamer, CCW HQ. **Action: JW**
- CCC and PCC had made last minute contributions of £1500 and £1k respectively at the end of the last FY.
- CCoS hope to make a contribution from last FY which will reduce the amount to be drawn down from the reserve through the amount is not yet known.
- The working budget was based on the above, but disregarding CCoS's unknown contribution.
- The budget could sustain the EMS officer working 3 days / week to the end of the FY at most, with a *very* small allowance for project working; 2.5 days / week would allow slightly more project resources or a bigger safety net for the end of the FY which may be useful given the even greater uncertainties likely at that time. Given the agreement to suspend further work on the MS for the time being, the time requirement needs to be informed by the tasks the RAG require undertaking.
- The Pembrokeshire Marine SAC officer works 2.5 days / week, spending on average 80% of her time on RAG support, care and maintenance tasks, liaison etc, with the remainder on project tasks.

*Agreed:* the EMSO's working hours need to be reduced but, since only three RAs were present by this time, agreement as to whether to renew the EMSO contract as 2.5 or 3 days / week from the end of June would be made following consulting the all RAG members. **Action: BB ✓**

CCoS to renew contract according to consensus.

**Action: DH ✓**

## **8 Future work programme**

Only EMSO work programme discussed, not RAG work programme *per se*.

*Agreed:*

- Priorities for EMSO will depend on length of working week.
- Previously identified tasks for MS implementation remain valid.
- Core RAG support / care and maintenance tasks, including reactive and routine liaison, website maintenance, maintaining awareness of relevant current issues etc, need to be first priority.

- Other, more project-based tasks require agreement and prioritisation; however, production of Actions Guidance Notes for local authorities, contributing to outreach opportunities and, in particular, data / information gap filling were considered important.
- JW undertook to liaise with WG Fish regarding possibilities for information gap filling for effects of fishing on sensitive habitats. **Action: JW**
- BB to list tasks that will not be addressed. **Action: BB ✓**

## 9 CCW MPA management review

A briefing note provided by CCW was tabled for information.

The review and WG response was addressed under item 6.

## 10 Fisheries issues

Addressed under items 3 and 6

## 11 EMSO report

*Noted:*

- Contract expires at end of June.
- Leave taken at end of March to reduce carry-over to meet CCoS requirements; a few further days leave planned in coming weeks.
- Attended NATUR Living Wales conference, GEMS meeting, South Inshore Fisheries Group meeting (deputising for Sue Burton, Pembs Marine SAC), Burry Inlet Stakeholder Group workshop / meeting; CMS conference on management of development in EMS.

### *Upcoming events*

BB joining a PM SAC organised liaison / PR day at sea with local MPs and AMs, end May.

WCMP Conference, July (assuming contract extended).

CCW MFSD training day, mid June.

GEMS officers liaison phone conference.

## 12 RA updates

DCWW improving CSO telemetry monitoring equipment on CSOs, focused on discharges to or close to designated shellfish and bathing waters.

Four recent CCW monitoring reports have been provided to the EMSO by Mike Camplin and can be forwarded to members on request

McCormack, D., McGovern, S., Rowell, H. & Banks, A.N. 2012. Aerial Survey of Carmarthen Bay SPA 2010/11. CCW Marine Monitoring Report No: 91a, 13pp.

McCormack, D. & Banks, A.N. 2011. Ground monitoring of common scoters in Carmarthen Bay SPA 2010/11. CCW Marine Monitoring Report No: 91, 14pp.

Moore, J. 2012. Survey of potential oystercatcher prey, Pembrey, 2011. CCW Marine Monitoring Report No: 94, 13pp + ii

Moore, J. 2012. Surveys of cockle and mussel stocks in the Burry Inlet, 2011. CCW Marine Monitoring Report No: 93, 25pp + iv.

(BB) CCW plan to carry out macrobenthic sampling in the Three Rivers estuaries over the summer; BB plans to join field work for a day.

### **13 Other business**

WG Highly Protected MCZ first stage consultation open until end July.

WCMP Conference 5 July 2012.

### **14 Date(s) and agenda items for next meeting(s)**

Firm date not set as so few members present. Availability to be canvassed for first two weeks of September. *Later confirmed as Thursday 13 September.*

*Key agenda items:*

RSPB Futurescapes presentation

Budget & resources

Future RAG & EMSO work programme

Meeting closed at 13.45