

Lyme Bay Working Group

11th Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis, on 27th November 2012

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation.
Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation. (Chair)
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator.
Andy Woolmer, Fishery Adviser.
Rachel Irish. Marine Management Organisation.
Joana Smith, Natural England.
Ian Carrier, Southern IFCA.
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA.
Sam Dell, Southern IFCA
Dave Sales, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear.
John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver.
Alex Jones, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axemouth, static gear.
Nigel Hill, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Britt Groosman, Environmental Defence Fund.
Pam Ruitter, Environmental Defence Fund.
Professor Martine Attrill, Plymouth University.
Adam Reese, Plymouth University.
Rowena Taylor, Graphic Designer.

1) Apologies:

Neil Wellum, Marine Management Organisation.
Paul Wason, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Nick Wright, Marine Management Organisation.
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA.
Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum.
Jim Newton, Beer Fisherman.
Jim Portus, SWIFA.

Minutes

2) Agree minutes of the 9th Working Group meeting:

The minutes were agreed.

3) Update on Implementation of the Management Plan

Tim Glover reported that there is a structural survey of the Lyme Aquarium being carried out for the possible installation of a lobster hatchery. Neville and Tim would also be visiting the National Lobster Hatchery in Padstow the following day. Tim also reported that a potting study meeting had been held on the 13th November and attended by the WG fishermen and Martin Attrill and Adam Reese. Adam is the New PhD student who will be heading up the study for the next three years. Martin explained that there is a need to look at the effects of change due to different potting levels and went on to describe how the study would achieve this by using sixteen areas of seabed, four being highly fished, four being moderately fished, four being lowly fished and four not fished at all. Charles Clover asked Martin if he was sure the potting densities were high enough. Martin explained that he had thrashed this out at the previous potting study meeting and was confident that the potting levels had been established at a suitably high level. The question of whether the pots should have escape hatches or not was raised and Martin said that they should have escape hatches that could be closed during trials. It was pointed out that this was contrary to what was said at the potting study meeting and it was agreed that the minutes of that meeting would be changed. Dave Hancock wanted to know if it was legal to close the escape hatches and Ian Carrier said that his colleagues in Devon would give a dispensation. Martin added that he would arrange for all boats involved to carry a laminated copy of the dispensation in their wheelhouse.

Tim expressed concern that the coordinates for the study areas had not been supplied by all the ports and asked if this could be rectified. Alex said that he would supply the Lyme Regis Coordinates this week. Neville said he would chase for the others.

Nigel Hill expressed concern that the results of the potting study would backfire on the group. Andy Woolmer said that should it be shown there are negative effects on some species, we would manage the problem. He also highlighted that even if there were some impacts that they were not necessary going to be significant in the context of fisheries or conservation management. Martin pointed out that the study is the property of the WG and is confidential. Charles added that the WG will be privy to the results prior to publication. Nigel said he now felt more comfortable about the project.

Simon Pengelly asked if the study has been publicised to other fishermen outside of the group, as this could potentially cause problems through ignorance of the study areas. Tim said that we would identify these fishermen and arrange to speak with them once the potting areas are established. Andy confirmed that other elements of the "science" in the Plan were planned and ready to go, including the fishermen's training programme, the S.E.A.

and the Cefas study. Andy described to the group some additional work funded by Seafish that he was undertaking the following week. Andy has organised a comparative study between an area of the Lyme Bay SAC open under the previous iVMS trial and one which remained closed. The study trains fishermen to use the video equipment and work with scientists (in this case students from Plymouth Marine Institute) to carry out seabed surveys. The study is collaboration between Seafish, IFCA's, NE, scientists and fishermen which will provide seabed information for areas where none exists, this could help fishermen retain access to open areas.

4) Logo/ website proposals

Tim introduced Rowena Taylor who had been commissioned to design a logo for the Lyme Bay project. Rowena produced three designs for the WG meeting to choose from. A lively, sometimes animated debate ensued and the group opinion was eventually split between two designs and further discussion identified a winning logo subject to a few minor changes. Tim asked if the group would trust him to tweak the chosen logo to their satisfaction. All agreed.

5) MMO/IFCA's update - iVMS, HRAs etc.

Ian Carrier reported that the Minister is looking at reviewing the management of marine sites in England. Related to this, Simon has been busy working-up a matrix chart of risks in Lyme Bay, the main risk being towed gear. The marine management deadline is September 2013 and the IFCA's are the government's preferred managers. Ian has also been looking at bylaws restricting towed gear as the MMO have an aversion to controlling fishing through licence restrictions. The MMO has organised a meeting with the IFCA's regarding iVMS and Ian said he wants to sure that the right system is approved before committing. Rachel Irish said that she had visited Succorfish two weeks ago and she was confident that it would be a good regulatory tool but that it may not necessarily be Succorfish who are chosen. Neil Wellum is pressing DEFRA to finalise. Both Dorset and Devon IFCA's are looking at bringing in a bylaw to ensure all fishermen use iVMS. Simon said that there is currently a bylaw working group working on permitting bylaws. Andy Woolmer said he was in early discussions with Succorfish on developing a comprehensive iVMS study in Lyme Bay which would include equipment trials and work to develop novel ways to analyse and use the data. He also reminded the group that the Habitat Risk Assessments carried out as part of our S.E.A. would be the key to developing the spatial plans that the iVMS would enforce. This work is to be commenced after Christmas and would feed into the IFCA's own statutory assessments.

Funding Update:

Tim reported that DEFRA will make a decision imminently regarding £300,000 for science monitoring. In addition, the ICAP charity event will be held on 5th December and it will hopefully grant £170,000 to the project. Small requests in the region of £20,000 each have also been made to various charitable trusts.

6) Media & PR

Sam Dell engineered a sterling article on the project in the Fishing News, 4 pages in all. It showed the Lyme Bay project in a good light, the ideas were all in there and the fishermen expounded them admirably. This will go some way in countered some local fishermen's grumbles that not much has been going on. At a previous meeting, John Worswick had suggested contacting the BBC programme "Inside-out". Neville said he would follow-up and Martin provided him with the programme producer's contact details.

A plethora of PR/publicity ideas came forth: Andy suggested that we should produce a newsletter. Charles reminded us that Bridget Betts thinks we should go out and meet local community groups. Rachel thought we should link with tourism offices. Britt Groosman likes the idea of stickers in shop windows with our new logo on them. Nigel thought that fishermen should fly flags with the logo on, from their boats. Sam said we need a website and Tim reminded the Group that once a logo has been approved a website would be immediately developed.

7) Displacement

This agenda item was postponed because Jim Portus could not attend the meeting and without whom, the debate would not be comprehensive.

9) Discussion on tagging, bar-coding and cooperatives

Pam Ruiter of EDF had kindly agreed to talk the WG through the Gulf Wild fish tagging scheme and tease-out any ideas or adaptations to the scheme which might be relevant to the Lyme Bay fishery. Pam said she would be interested in what the guys thought of the scheme and if there was anything they wished to know. Various ideas were discussed and it was suggested that a fisherman's cooperative could be the way to go. Tim said a central point of sale may be the answer. Dave Hancock was unconvinced that the tagging (and associated costs/time) would result in any increased value of their landings as he felt their fish was already a premium product and Dave Sales said that although he thought the branding of Lyme Bay fish is a good idea, the tagging of individual fish is unnecessary and the same objectives could be achieved by other means. Britt suggested that a workshop would iron-out what facilities would be needed. Charles thought that we should move fast on this and Britt said that EDF would be prepared to invite Tim Fitzgerald over from America to run the workshop as he was the Lead in the Gulf Wild scheme. It was agreed to aim for the date of 19th February, 2013 at 4pm.

Britt asked if we could invite the fish merchants and others involved in the fish-sales chain. Angus suggested Samways and Davy's Locker.

Rachel asked what would you do if there was an enforcement problem. Pam said that you could kick them out of the scheme and exclude them from the technology.

Andy highlighted that we have to be clear in the aims of the tagging scheme as there are quite clear criteria for eco-labelling or quality-labelling. He warned that we should be careful not to make too many claims beyond a local provenance label in the first instance but as the WG develop best practice and we can demonstrate our environmental credentials then we can build that aspect into the branding.

10) A.O.B.

Andy said that he had a student researching fisheries and conservation co-management who he would like to bring along to the next meeting to observe. Tim said that would be fine. Angus reported that he had had a meeting with the local MEP and Greenpeace and had asked about the European view of the future of the 6 mile limit. He has yet to receive a reply. Charles said he would ring Mark Lloyd of the Angling Trust and invite him along to the next meeting. Ian suggested Dave Mitchel of the Angling Trust if Mark is unavailable and Tim mentioned that he had met Nigel Horsman of the Bass Anglers' Sport-fishing Society at the DCF conference.

Date of next meeting.

15th January, 2013, 6pm at the Royal Lion, Lyme Regis.

Duration of meeting: 6pm – 9:00pm.

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