

Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve Consultative Committee Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis on 29th October 2013

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation. (Chair)
Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation.
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator/Committee Secretary.
Harriet Yates-Smith, Blue Marine Foundation
Fiona Wheatley, Marks and Spencer.
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA.
Sam Dell, Southern IFCA
Nick Wright, MMO.
Christine Singfield, Natural England.
Jim Newton, Beer Fisherman.
Dave Sales, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear.
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear.
Alex Jones, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear.
John Worswick –West Bay, scallop diver.
Aubrey Banfield, West Bay, static gear.
Nigel Hill, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Clive Samways - Samways.
Mark Machin – Samways
Liam McAleese, Marine Planning Consultants.
Rowena Taylor, Graphic Designer.
Gus Caslake, Seafish.
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust.
Clare Kavanagh, MMO Planning
Charles S. McVeigh, Guest.

1) Apologies:

Andy Woolmer, Fishery Adviser.
Joana Smith, Natural England.
Jerry Percy, NUTFA

Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum.
Paul Wason, Lyme Regis, towed gear.
Adam Rees, Plymouth University.
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA.
Michael Coyle, Marine Management Organisation.
Mike Green, Beer Representative.
Mark Cornwell, West Bay towed gear.
Jim Portus, SWIFA.

Minutes

2) Agree minutes of the 17th Working Group meeting:

The minutes were agreed.

The Chairman welcomed guests, Charles McVeigh, Clare Kavanagh and Klara Wilkins

3) Update on Implementation of Management Plan

a) Potting Study

Adam Rees was unable to attend but he had sent an email to say that the potting project has continued as normal since last update, just a little more troublesome thanks to the recent terrible weather. He also reported that he was at the IMPAC3 conference on marine protected areas in France all last week presenting to people from all around the world and informing them about the project and that he received some very good feedback. Tim Glover explained the Potting Study for the benefit of the guests. He reported that he had attended a DEFRA steering group meeting along with Professor Martin Attrill to report on the study progress. Gus Caslake asked if the study included impact assessment and Tim confirmed that it did.

b) Ports infrastructure, grant applications and association agreements.

Nick Wright said the MMO were still awaiting further information regarding the Ports Improvement applications. Neville said that he had sent off further information back in September and had asked for acknowledgement on receipt and also to be informed by return of post if further information was required. He had received neither. Nick said he would chase the MMO grants team.

c) Fully Documented Fisheries project and grant application.

Nick Wright reiterated what he said at the last meeting which was that the MMO wants to ensure that there are no conflicts with the iVMS Type Approval project before granting the funding application. He added that if we go ahead without approval then the iVMS equipment will not stand up in a court of law and therefore we will not be able to prosecute. Tim pointed out that inshore under ten fishermen will not have a regulatory requirement to carry VMS in any event so type approval should not be part of the grant criteria. Sam Dell said that iVMS type approval will now be delayed until March 2014 due to the European Standards Directive. We just have to get everything prepared in the next 3 months so when March 2014 comes along we will be ready to start. He explained that the delay was because Defra opposed the equipment spec very late in the game. Charles Clover asked if he should speak to the CEO of the MMO? Nick said he would get someone down from MMO to speak about this in detail at the next meeting.

d) Code of Conduct review conclusions

The fishermen had previously discussed at their respective Associations the draft review of the code of conduct and were asked whether they would now ratify it. Dave Hancock said he was uncomfortable with the way the cuttlefish eggs section was worded; he thought that it sounds like we are cluttering the seabed. After some debate it was agreed that the wording 'Pots and traps that become encrusted with cuttlefish eggs will be left in the sea by extending the season until the cuttlefish eggs have hatched', will replace the wording, 'Pots and traps that become encrusted with cuttlefish eggs will be left in the sea, where practically possible, until the eggs hatch'.

Nick questioned this wording as anything left of the seabed needs to have a reason to be there. Nick needs to check the wording of the policy.

All agreed that the proposed wording is fine unless it is challenged by the MMO policy.

Gus Caslake pointed out that the correct terminology for individual net lengths is 'fleets of nets'. All agreed to this and the wording will be amended.

The new Code of Conduct ratification was approved with the above changes. Copies of the revised Code will be laminated and distributed.

e) Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme update.

Gus gave a quick update to the meeting newcomers on the Responsible Fishing Scheme. He said recruitment is going well but it has slowed because of the weather. He is looking to get 40 vessels on board into the pre-assessment stage and then they will be independently audited when they are ready. He hopes to have this completed this winter.

f) Marine Planning (Guardline) study.

Liam Mcleese reported on the progress of the study and said that a desk review has been sent out to some working group members for technical and scientific review. He explained that this will enable us to see whether there are gaps in data and information before we undertake further work. The draft desk review contains no fishing information, as the project

team are still collecting this. We need signed forms from all fishermen as soon as possible as this is delaying the project. Once the data has been collected it will be shared with the group.

g) Economic analysis – rights bases management and other options.

Charles Clover explained that it is wise to take a look at Rights Based Management as it may give fishermen rights to the resource in the face of outside completion. Also, if the Lyme Bay Reserve becomes successful, we need to think about how to limit the potential influx of fishermen. Advice had been sought from Professor Trond Bjordal and it was agreed that he would be invited to the next meeting.

h) Insulated fish tubs.

In addition to the large (220 litre) fish tubs intended for purchase under the EFF grant applications, Neville visited each port and found out what size of insulated tubs the fishermen wanted onboard their boats as an immediate step to keep their fish iced. These include two tubs – one for slushed ice to reduce core temp quickly and the other filled with ice to keep the fish cool. 78 fish tubs have been ordered – to be paid for with existing Lyme Bay funding. The tubs will be arriving in 4 weeks. It was suggested that when the ice boxes are given out that Gus has a workshop so all fishermen carry out the correct procedure and ice their fish correctly after catching.

Tim said that we need to discuss ice machines for ports and asked Clive Samways to comment.

Clive said that slushed-ice is crucial to reduce the core temperature of fish as soon as they are caught. This will increase their shelf life and therefore their marketability. As soon as the fish hit 15 degrees the damage is done. Mark Machin said it takes 90 minutes to get their fish down to 0-2 degrees and reduce the core temperature. In the colder Atlantic water the bacteria are more resilient than in warmer waters and the un-iced fish deteriorate faster. This is because the enzymes are more active in colder waters. Alex Jones pointed out that if you compare the gills of a fish that has been iced after catching and one that has not the difference is amazing. Some of the fishermen from West Bay questioned how much will it cost to run the ice machine, where will it be sited. Neville said that the site is still the same as was discussed previously, on the fishermen's quay, and he would bring along running costings to the next meeting. Neville reminded the group that the Weymouth Bass group had previously attended and explained how they managed their ice equipment. They have a cooperative and fishermen are so eager to get on to it they have a waiting list of people to sign up and pay. Aubrey shares the concern that the ice machine will hardly be used. If the West Bay fishermen want ice they can go and get it or have it delivered. However, Alex Jones said that if this happens the ice is sometimes contaminated. Clive Samways said that he

thought West Bay should have an independent ice supply. Charlie McVeigh wanted to know if you could put it on the code of conduct that it is mandatory to ice fish. Charles Clover said that he thought all the ports should have the same ice facilities in order to qualify for the branding scheme. Tim asked the West Bay fishermen if they would be prepared to sit down and discuss this. They said they would, prior to the next meeting but they want to see how much the ice equipment will cost to upkeep and how much maintenance it will need and then they will make a decision. Fiona asked Mark Machin if he could draw-up a guidance note for icing the fish. Gus Caslake said that this already exists in the Seafish Responsible Fishing scheme. Nevertheless, Mark could write a standard for the fish they require.

The consensus at the meeting was that there are a lot of fishermen that want the ice equipment but a few holding back.

4) Communications

a) Feedback on Conference – September 18th.

Tim said it was great to see the diversity of people interested in the project and not just green people, you had industry as well. Sam said that Blue had found a niche in the market for this type of conference. IFCA agree to hold a joint conference next year. Fiona Wheatly thought the conference had great balance, with healthy and constructive discussions. Tim said he was still tallying but it looks like the conference cost was in the region of £10,000 and income from the delegate rate was £7,000.

Charles Clover thanked all for coming and taking part. Dave Sales called for a round of applause for Bridget Betts in her absence for organising the conference.

b) Website and Social Media.

Rowena Taylor said that current social media numbers were, Twitter: 650 and Facebook: 310. Video footage taken by Plymouth University Marine Institute of the reefs of Lyme Bay was used as a Facebook post which in turn created 12 new followers on Facebook in 24 hours. There are six more videos to use over the coming months.

Regarding the Interpretation Boards, she and Neville are in the process of arranging a meeting with the Coastal Ranger in West Dorset to discuss the proposed locations for them in West Dorset. A meeting with the AONB is also being arranged before planning applications are submitted. We are still waiting for a response from the Estates Surveyor in East Devon with regards to permission for the proposed locations of the interpretation boards in East Devon. Once granted full planning applications will be submitted.

West Bay Chapel

Feedback on the latest proposal on the concept for the West Bay Chapel Interpretation Centre has been given and the interpretation specialists are writing up the final brief. The current concept is favourable towards “sustainable fishing in Lyme Bay.”

Events

On 23rd September, the Chefs Forum was held in West Bay. Neville and Rowena attended the event organised by Samways, which saw Neville provide insight about the Reserve to the audience, which included trainee chefs, local people and other related organisations.

On 8th October Rowena attended the blessing and launch of the new Southern IFCA inshore vessel. Photos and write-up were used on social media.

On 14th October, BBC2's Escape to the Country production team was in the area. Neville was invited to film a piece for the show about the Reserve. The producers have agreed to send a copy of the film to Blue once it has been screened.

18th October - Adam Rees and the Plymouth University Marine Institute attended the 3rd International Marine Protected Areas Congress in Marseille, France presenting a poster on the Lyme Bay Experimental Potting Project and co-chairing a talk about 'Using local knowledge in MPA management' where he presented the project as an example of scientists and fishermen working together to achieve a positive outcome.

c) **Lyme Bay Brand**

Tim reported that he is in discussions with a Professor of marketing at Bournemouth University about pro-bono help with the branding scheme. In addition he is discussing the creation of a brand “standard” with Fiona Wheatley and Clive Samways to ensure that seafood marketed as high quality, traceable and sustainable Lyme Bay produce meets all criteria necessary for it to be marketed at premium prices to retailers, restaurants etc.

5) **MMO/IFCA update**

Nick reported that the Common Fisheries Policy Reform will come into effect in January 2015 and he would give a presentation to the committee when the time is right. Charles said that he had spoken to the new fisheries minister George Eustace and he had informed him that Oliver Letwin had spoken highly of the project. He had been invited down to a meeting. Charles suggested to the Minister that the tax on plastic bags should go towards the sea as most of them end up in the ocean anyway!

Clare Kavanagh, the new MMO planning officer for the South gave an appraisal of the South Marine Plan, (Dover to Dartmoor). She explained that the plan was about looking at the best use of sustainable development and that the South Plans Analytical Report closes for comment on the 1st November and encouraged everyone to go on and review and make any necessary comments. There may be gaps in evidence that the group could help with.

Simon Pengelly reported that the Southern IFCA had bumped up their community engagement. He said a byelaw to prohibit the use of bottom towed fishing gear in SACs would be introduced in the New Year and the byelaw follows extensive consultation and is

accompanied by an Impact Assessment. The proposed closed areas have a sum area of approximately 660.6km², 24.38% of the total Southern IFCA District area (2710km²). Maps of the closed areas may be found in Annex 5 of the Impact Assessment.

The intention is also to create a Southern IFCA byelaw to permanently close sensitive reef and sea grass areas from demersal towed fishing activities

Formal Advertisement will run until the 1st of November 2013. Any person wishing to object to the confirmation of the above byelaws must send a statement of objection in writing to the IFCA.

Simon said that they will be looking for funds to supply fishermen with pot escape gaps.

This would not be included within any bylaw and Lyme Bay would be the first to voluntarily use them.

Sam Dell reported that their new patrol boat Protector has now been commissioned and is based in Zone 1 at Portland.

6) Funding update

Tim reported that he had submitted three more funding applications as we still need £350,000 over the life of the project.

7) Media and PR

Charles reported that there had been great coverage around the conference which had featured in The Sun, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, The Times, Dorset Echo and on ITV. Charles also pointed out that at the conference we had put out the problem of dwindling Bass stocks which has sparked a debate.

8) A.O.B.

Sam Dell showed the group a device that attached to fishing nets and scared dolphins away. Tim informed the group that the Devon Wildlife Trust has been supportive of the project and had given free data to Liam of Guardline to assist in the study. Simon Cripps of Dorset Wildlife Trust has also been very helpful to the project in his support of the West Bay Chapel Exhibition Plans. Emma Rance who heads-up the Great Dorset Seafood Campaign wants to come and do a presentation on Sustainability and supporting static gear fishing methods. She wants access to fishermen. The group were asked if we were happy for her to come and present.

There was some dissension but it was agreed to see what she has to say on the proviso that she doesn't stay for whole meeting. She can present and then leave. Tim reassured the group that she won't be on the consultative committee; she can just have her say.

Tim read a letter from Dorset County Council regarding the allocation of moorings within Lyme Regis. It clearly stated that to be considered for a mooring, one must be resident in

Lyme Regis. This alleviated fears that there could be a flood of new fishermen coming to the area.

Alex Jones brought up the issue of increased bass landing sizes. It is his view that this will lead to more discards. Referring to the angling fraternity, he said that in France, if you are not licensed, you have to cut-off the top fin of the bass to make it unsaleable and in addition there is a bag limit of 4 fish. Mike Spiller said that he was not averse to discussing these conservation methods or indeed, floating the idea of a voluntary code of conduct for Anglers within the Lyme Bay Reserve. He said he would discuss this with David Mitchel of the Angling Trust and report back at the next meeting. Mike said he would like to promote commercial angling in Lyme which would help the local economy. It was suggested that he could work with Rowena to produce a hand-out saying why you should come to Lyme Bay to fish and dive.

Date of next meeting.

3rd December, to be held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis at 6pm.

Duration of meeting:

7pm – 9:30pm.

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Project Coordinator/ Committee Secretary.

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