

Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve Consultative Committee Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis on 1st July, 2014

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation (Chair)
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator/Committee Secretary
Kate West, Blue Marine Foundation
Andy Woolmer, Fishery Adviser
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA
Matt Mander, Devon and Severn IFCA
Caroline Chambers, Marine Planning Consultants
Professor Martin Attrill, Plymouth University
Adam Rees, Plymouth University
Mark Machin – Samways
Rowena Taylor, Graphic Designer
John Worswick –West Bay, scallop diver
Dave Sales, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Aubrey Banfield, West Bay, static gear
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust.
Robert King, Lyme Regis Fisherman
J Shuker, Lyme Regis scallop diver
Sara-Jane Skinner, Blue Marine Foundation
John Holmyard, Offshore Shellfish
George Holmyard, Offshore Shellfish

1) Apologies:

Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA
Jerry Percy, NUTFA
Nick Wright, MMO
Fiona Wheatley, Marks & Spencer

Gus Caslake, Seafish
Tom Rossiter, Succorfish
Lizy Gardner, Natural England
Jim Newton, Beer Fisherman
Mike Green, Beer representative.
Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum
Paul Wason, Lyme Regis, towed gear
Michael Coyle, Marine Management Organisation.
Mark Cornwell, West Bay towed gear.
Jim Portus, SWIFA.

2) Agree minutes of the 22nd Working Group meeting:

The minutes were agreed.

3) Updates on implementation of the Management Plan

a) Potting Study

Adam Rees reported that 50 replacement pots (following storm losses) had arrived. This is still 20 pots short but fishermen had agreed to use some of their own pots within the high density potting areas in order that the study could resume. Also, the annual video recording is due to start. Tim Glover said that he and Martin Attrill had been negotiating with Defra to extend the potting study funding for another year. Martin gave an update on the winter storm damage; sand had been scoured and sand blasted the reefs resulting in Ross Corals and branching sponges being hit hard. Plymouth University is planning to put in for a big NERC grant for the July round to follow up the storm damage urgency one to look at subsequent recovery patterns across Lyme Bay and whether there is any evidence that protected areas recover faster and/or provide the refuge for adults to produce recruits back onto the reefs, i.e. they speed up recovery in those areas too. In order to do this, as well as the usual suite of video-based methods including baited video for fish and mobile invertebrates, they will be including a molecular ecology component focussing on sea fans run by Jamie Stevens at Exeter University, plus deployment of spat collectors to look at relative settlement in regions of different biodiversity – do richer surviving protected areas encourage settlement compared with bare or more impacted areas? The grant would cover the monitoring of the Lyme reefs for 3 years from 2015. Neville has provided a letter of support as Secretary of LBF&CR and Tim Glover will provide one from BLUE. Adam reported an interesting observation that the water temperature in the Bay in June was 16.1c which is a full 0.9c above the previous record for the month. Basking Sharks are reported to have migrated North to the coast of Scotland far earlier than in previous years.

b) Ports Infrastructure.

Neville reported that the Axmouth planning application has now been accepted by the East Devon District Council and is being decided this very day. The Lyme Regis application is still at the pre planning stage but it is stalling because of the limited site opportunities on the Cobb. The West Dorset District Council (WDDC) has intimated that their preferred site is behind the Harbourmaster's office. This site was discounted early on by the Lyme Regis fishermen as being unsuitable. Neville and the architect will revisit this possibility by talking with the Lyme Regis Fishermen's Association. Siting is also an issue at West Bay and negotiations are continuing with WDDC to find a resolution.

c) Fully Documented Fisheries

Tim reported that 30 vessels had now been fitted with iVMS equipment and there are 15 to go. Aubrey Banfield asked who would be storing and holding the data. . For the purposes of the FDF study, Succorfish will hold the data on behalf of the project and Simon Pengelly said that for the future IFCA regulated IVMS data collection, this is not known at the moment but that a type approval specification is out and a provider will be chosen soon.

d) Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS)

Gus Caslake had sent an email summarising progress of the RFS. "We have engaged with all the commercial vessels (40 in total by my list) 26 of which are fully audited and members of the RFS, 13 have been coached and require auditing (due to be done over the coming months".

e) Marine Planning Consultants (MPC/Gardline) study.

Caroline Chambers said that the three assessments which will comprise the completed study had been sent out for a review to MMO, Natural England, the IFCA', Plymouth University and Blue. Aubrey was concerned that the fishermen were not involved but Caroline assured the group that this was purely a technical review and that this would be completed by the next meeting and could then be discussed by all. Tim said that that we can now see the coming together of all the research and data collection studies and they will inform the future management of the Reserve. This is a really important milestone.

f) Schools outreach program (Dave Sales)

Dave said that "we have come to an end of term but 10 schools had been done. I am rearing to go again in September because it has given me such joy to see the interest shown from the children". Tim said that the program will be rolled out to children in a higher age range.

g) Voluntary codes

Mike Spiller reported that the angling code has been printed and is ready to go out. Tim suggested that a display box incorporating all three codes (once recreational diving code is agreed) might be considered. Rowena said she would look at designs.

4. Lyme Bay mussel farm – John Holmyard, principal, Offshore Shellfish Ltd

John explained that he had permission for three mussel farming sites within Lyme Bay. Two are operational but the third is conditional on the positive outcome of environmental monitoring of the first two sites which are larger and at the western extremities off Budleigh Salterton and Sidmouth. The third site, located adjacent to the Reserve boundary off Beer Head is the only one which may potentially impact on the LBF&CR area. The sites in total will cover a total area of 15.4 square km and produce up to 10,000 tonnes per year. Plymouth University and Natural England are involved with the monitoring. He further explained that this is the first deep-water rope grown mussel farm and the idea is that the water is deep enough and the tide strong enough to avoid the build-up of waste beneath the mussels, a problem prevalent in shallower, more sheltered waters. John gave a short PowerPoint presentation about the methodology and practicalities of his operation and then took questions from the floor. The concern was raised that the close proximity of the farm to the Lyme Bay reefs would result in mussel spat settlement and smothering. John said that proximity of mussel beds was not a factor in spat settlement; rather it was suitability of the substrate. He asserted that if the reefs were suitable, they would have already been colonised with spat from the Teign Estuary for example.

Dave Hancock expressed concern that if successful, John Holmyard would apply for consent for more sites which would then remove valuable fishing grounds from access by local fishermen. John responded that while not impossible, he did not believe this was likely and anyway the mussel farms he has designed allow potting and angling in and around them with evidence that the presence of the mussels attracts fish and shellfish from a wider area.

5. Communications

Rowena reported that Social Media numbers were up again: Twitter 1018 (up 54). Facebook 468 (up 20).

A stand at this year's Dorset Seafood Festival has been booked following the huge interest from last year's stand. She said that the fishermen that helped out on the stand last year helped generate this success asked for volunteer fishermen to contact her for this year's event.

The Voluntary Code of Conduct for the Responsible Sea Angler has been given the green light to go to print and for distribution around the Lyme Bay area initially.

Planning applications for the interpretation boards in East Devon are with East Devon District Council and awaiting approval.

Photographer Saeed Rashid has been out with John Worswick. Visibility was poor to do underwater photos. A date has been made for the next trip out.

Posters for each of the schools Dave Sales has visited will be printed and posted out so the children have something to remind them of Dave's visit.

6. MMO and IFCA updates

Matt Mander informed the group that the Devon and Severn IFCA potting bylaw was experiencing a technical holdup but that they were pressing on with the netting bylaw. A voluntary agreement is being developed in favour of angling. Potting and netting will be banned on three beaches in Somerset and also the Emstrom wreck off south Devon. The same is being considered for the Skerries Banks.

Simon Pengelly said that Southern IFCA will also have a stand at the Weymouth Seafood Festival. The Chesil and Stennis MCZ which was designated earlier this year and consultation is now taking place to recover two areas of seafans. This will be one of the first management measures for tranche one. Vicky Greystock, University of Southampton graduate on a Southern IFCA internship is establishing the optimum size of escape gaps for pots. Funding has been secured to supply 1,000 escape gaps for testing. SIFCA would like to see escape gaps taken up as a voluntary measure across the whole IFCA region.

7. Funding update

Kate West secured Gap2 funding. GAP2's purpose is to demonstrate the role and value of stakeholder driven science within the context of fisheries' governance. The fund is completely in line with the aims of the Lyme Bay project by bringing scientists, fishermen and policy makers together. Gap2 does this by funding exchange trips between research and management organisations. On the west coast of America at Morrow Bay the fishermen are using an automated reporting system called eCatch which might be useful if applied to our fully documented fisheries project. There is funding available to send three of our group to Morrow Bay to learn and bring back information and present it to the group. Applications to be included in this trip have been oversubscribed and it has been difficult to choose because of the quality of the applicants. However, it has been decided that Andy Woolmer, Simon Pengelly and John Shuker will go, sometime in mid-September.

Sarah Jane Skinner said that for the first time BLUE had embarked on crowd funding. This is for the fully documented fisheries project and the target is £200,000.

8. Media and PR

Rowena said that the Bridport News and Lyme Regis News continue to publish articles about the Lyme Bay Reserve. Latest features include the Natura2000 Awards and the GAP2 initiative.

9. AOB

Sarah Jane said that she had found the meeting fascinating and it was good to finally be able to connect names to faces. She explained that her role in BLUE's London office as event organiser and fundraiser.

John Holmyard said that it might be useful for fishermen to know that the Scottish Salmon industry desperately needs a supply of Ballan Wrasse. The wrasse is used as a cleaner fish to rid the Salmon of sea-lice. It could be a new source of income.

Angus said that one of his association members, also a NUTFA representative, Stephen Rogers, has been charged with demonstrating providence assurance by LIFE. He has asked if the names and contact details of the group fishermen could be passed on to him. It was suggested that Stephen be invited to the next meeting.

Kate announced that she would be leaving BLUE to pursue her career overseas. Dave Sales said that we should thank Kate for all her efforts particularly for what she did regarding the Natura 2000 awards.

10. Date of next meeting

23rd September, to be held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis at **6pm**

Duration of meeting:

7pm – 9:45pm

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