

Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve Consultative Committee Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis on 1st March, 2016

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation (Chair)
Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator/Committee Secretary
Lauren Nelson, Blue Marine Foundation
Tom Rossiter, Succorfish
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust
Rowena Taylor, Lyme Bay Reserve
Nicky Mitchard, Lyme Bay Reserve
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA
Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum
Ken Buchan, Dorset County Council
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Gavin Ziemann, Axmouth Fisherman, static gear
Adam Rees, Plymouth University
Sarah Gall, Plymouth University
Gavin Ziemann, Axmouth Fisherman, static gear
Dave Sales, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Nigel Hill, Lyme Regis, static gear
John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver
Aubrey Banfield, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Jon Shuker, Fisherman, Lyme Regis scallop diver
Robert King, Lyme Regis diver
Nigel March, Lyme Regis static gear
Matt Styles, Lyme Regis static gear
Nick Williams, Lyme Regis static gear

1) Apologies:

Joana Smith, Natural England
Gus Caslake, Seafish
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA
Emma Sheehan, Plymouth University

Mark Machin, Samways Fish Merchants
Gerry Irwin, Marine Management Organisation
Martin Attrill, Plymouth University
Jim Newton, Fisherman, Beer, static gear
Robert Clark, Southern IFCA
Jerry Percy, NUTFA
Martin Foley, Fisherman, Weymouth, whelk gear
Paul Wason, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, towed gear
Mark Cornwell, Fisherman, West Bay towed gear
Jim Portus, SWIFA.

2) Agree minutes of the 28th Working Group meeting:

Dave Sales said he wanted his comments removed from item 5 in the minutes. This was agreed. Simon Pengelly asked if the minutes could be circulated in draft form prior to posting on the Lyme Bay Reserve website. This was agreed.

3) Updates on implementation of the Management Plan

a) Potting Study

Adam Rees reported that to date, 7 experimental potting samples have been completed. The first spillover assessment survey (Objective IV) is imminently starting. Due to the nature and the timescales attributed to effective marine conservation the project is considered to very much still be in its infancy and is due for completion in June 2017. As part of the projects commitments an annual report is supplied to DEFRA with the next publication due for the start of June 2016 where the latest data will be synthesised. The project has already demonstrated great success through the collaboration demonstrated between the scientific and fishing communities. Adam pointed out that marine science of this kind has previously been completed by scientists in isolation of the fishing community; however, this new approach was applied to the project by heavily involving the local inshore fishing community in the conception, design, initiation and maintenance of this project. Adam thanked the fishermen who are involved in collecting high quality data that feeds into the project. This involvement helps build relationships and encourage compliance, a novel concept for science of this kind. Simon asked if the no-potting areas had been potted before. Adam said they had. Aubrey Banfield said it is impressive that the fishermen were willing to hand over the no-potting areas.

b) Ports Infrastructure.

Tim Glover reported that since the last meeting, time had run out for the EFF funding needed to install the ice facilities in Lyme Regis and West Bay However, all permissions from West Dorset District Council are now in place for both ports and the Chief Executive of the Council has given an undertaking that these permissions will be honoured until further funding is in place. Neville reported that a West Bay Fishermens Chiller Group and a Lyme

Regis Fishermens Chiller Group are in the process of forming in order to manage the ice facilities and therefore, he is now starting on the new EMFF application forms. Nigel Hill asked if a security camera and a davit crane could be included within the Lyme Regis application. Tim Glover said that the Lyme Regis group should in the first instance talk to the Harbour Master about this and let us know the outcome.

c) Fully Documented Fisheries

Tim reported that a Steering Group meeting has met to discuss the possibility of a consortium which would fund the ongoing Lyme Bay iVMS costs in return for data access. The Steering Group comprised of Martin Attrill, Plymouth University; Robert Clark, Southern IFCA; Rachel Irish, MMO; Gus Caslake, SeaFish; Gavin Ziemann, Dave Hancock, Dave Sales, John Worswick, Angus Walker Aubrey Banfield, Jim Newton, Lyme Bay Fishermen and Tim and Neville. Aubrey said that at the meeting Robert Clark had pointed out how valuable the iVMS data is. Simon Pengelly said that IFCA has a responsibility to assess areas of seabed which includes the completion of static gear assessments. We should not underestimate the value of this data as it gives a great snapshot of this year. Aubrey said that as members of the group, Southern IFCA should have access to historic data within 3 months. Tim said that at a recent DEFRA iVMS steering group meeting the possibility of overlaying the iVMS data with the potting study was discussed. In light of this, Martin Attrill has said that Plymouth University will fund the next year's fishermen's airtime. Neville was charged with obtaining a definitive list of current operational vessels with iVMS. **Action Point:** Neville to obtain a definitive list of current operational vessels with iVMS within the Lyme Bay Reserve scheme.

d) Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS)

Tim reported that a lively meeting was held to discuss the merits of the new RFS scheme. At that meeting it was decided that the scheme was not fit for purpose for small inshore boats. The meeting finished with a proposal to create a 'RFS Light' accreditation. Tim will work with Helen Dugan of SeaFish towards this end. In the interim, all is on hold regarding RFS fees. Dave Hancock said that the Axmouth fishermen want an accreditation specific to Lyme Bay. Charles Clover cautioned that reinventing the wheel costs, as there has to be some form of external accreditation or the retailers won't buy into it. Tim said he would be happy to get Laky of Direct Seafoods down to discuss this idea.

It was questioned whether belonging to the RFS scheme had made anyone any more money. John Worswick said the Reserve Seafood Scheme had made all the participants more money. Aubrey pointed out the original RFS scheme only had a 20% take-up so was a flop. To sell this new scheme, Seafish are saying that it is the retailers that are driving it, and yet they have to canvas retailers to buy into it. This makes their claim disingenuous.

Action Point: Tim to invite Laky to Lyme.

e) Schools outreach programme.

Nicky Mitchard said that Dave Sales had visited Sidmouth College on Friday 26th Feb to meet a 12/13 year old class. They were very engaged and very good feedback was received so we will target the School for future visits. Two school visits are scheduled to Beer Primary School and Burton Bradstock Primary School in March/April. Other schools interested include Kingston Maurward College in Dorchester and Shute Primary, in Shute. Preparation of school education materials (e.g. a storyboard) for school visits will be ready in time for Beer Primary visit. A funding application has been completed for Seachangers and we will find out sometime in April whether we have been successful. This small pot of funding would go towards the cost of preparing and printing educational material.

f) Ecosystem services study

Tim reported that the Lyme Bay Ecosystem Services study was progressing and the report will be circulated once completed.

4) MMO and IFCA updates

Simon Pengelly reported that Southern IFCA are continuing to review the impacts of commercial fishing activities within the District's European Marine Sites. To date this process has led to the introduction of additional management for bottom towed fishing gear activities over reef areas within Lyme Bay, together with additional management for shellfish fisheries in Poole Harbour and hand gathering activities in sea grass areas and it is anticipated that additional management will be required for the Solent's dredge fisheries. As part of this process, over the next couple of months, Southern IFCA will assess the impacts of static fishing gear activities within Lyme Bay and fishing activity mapping data gathered by the group for the Fully Documented Fisheries Project will add confidence to these assessments.

In order to improve the management of fishing activities within MPAs the Authority is developing a new Marine Protected Area Regulatory Notice byelaw. Under this byelaw the Authority will have the ability to introduce regulatory notices for the management of fishing activities within or adjacent to Marine Protected Areas, for the purposes of furthering conservation objectives and for the coherent management of sites. Regulatory notices may be issued or amended following a procedure defined in the byelaw, allowing the Authority to flexibly manage fishing activities and refine measures as the evidence base improves.

The Authority has recently published its research and evidence plan for the 2016-17 financial year. The plan includes the development of new fisheries management plans for key fisheries within the District; initially fisheries management plans will be developed for crab, lobster, whelk, clam and oyster fisheries. Fisheries management plans will draw together all available evidence to provide a long-term overview of how these fisheries will

be managed. The Authority will seek to consult the local community during the development of these fisheries management plans.

4b) Dorset/Devon FLAG

Bridget Betts informed the group that the Dorset Coast Forum is applying for Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) funding under the new EMFF. The first stage in the process is called an expression of interest which is in the process of being written and has to be submitted by 4th March. If this is successful, the 2nd stage application has to be developed by June including the selection of a member's board and if successful, funds will be released in September. The member's board must consist of at least 49% from the fishing industry. The Geographic FLAG area is from Swanage to Beer which encompasses as many ports as possible within the FLAG maximum population criteria of 150,000 people. The FLAG objectives include port improvements, adding value to catches, helping with diversification and accreditation. Promoting aquaculture is also high on the list. The fund will likely be in the region of £800,000 and no more than 25% of this can be spent on administration. There will only be 6 FLAGs in the country so the application will be competitive. It is known that there will be 16 applications including 10 existing Flags and 1 from Poole. Fingers crossed.

5) Lyme Bay Reserve Seafood

Tim said the new refrigerated van is now operational and based at Beer. Neville reported that catches and deliveries to London had been slow since before Christmas but now that the winter gales were easing, deliveries were picking up.

Tim Glover informed the group that Direct Seafood can't take live crab in bulk. However, in order to address this they are talking to existing processors with a view to contracting-out the crab meat process. Watch this space.

Simon asked if a co-op could run a local processing plant. Tim said this was an interesting idea.

6) Planning for the future

Tim reminded the group that Blue will be exiting the project at some point but that it would be a slow process. Lauren Nelson will be writing-up the key elements of what we have collectively achieved and she will be contacting you all at some point to get your ideas about how the group should proceed in the future.

7) Communications, exhibitions, festivals

Rowena Taylor reported that Twitter numbers have reached 1504 (up 78 from January) and Facebook numbers reached 735 (up 72 from January)

Regarding the Seaton Jurassic Centre, Tim and Rowena visited the Centre on the 24th February to see how developments were coming along. The Centre is to feature heavily the work of the Lyme Bay Reserve both inside the Centre and outside on a harbour setting.

Work on the outside has been delayed due to weather; however the Centre inside is due to open its doors to the public on Saturday 26th March, with the outside areas following shortly after once weather improves. Tim and Rowena have both been invited to the Funders open day on Thursday 24th March, a few days before the official opening to the public.

Duncan Sleightholme, Environment Correspondent for ITV Westcountry News came to Axmouth Harbour on the 26th January to film the launch of the Reserve Seafood Scheme. The news item was aired on Thursday 28th January at 6pm. Thanks go to Angus Walker, Gavin Ziemann, Marc Newton and John Wallington for braving the elements and helping film the news item.

Local interest in the launch of the Reserve Seafood Scheme was seen by the Dorset Echo, Bridport News, Lyme Regis News, Midweek Herald and the View From Axminster, who all picked up the story and published it in the weeks that followed. Dorset Life Magazine has also written an article about the Reserve Seafood Scheme, which is due out in the April edition. BBC Spotlight reporter Simon Clemison has been in contact and is keen to film a piece about the Reserve in the Spring when the weather improves.

A review of the 2015 festival and exhibition activity in will be conducted in the coming weeks and in light of this outcome plans will be made for this year's activities.

8) Funding update

Tim said that funding for the Seaton Centre is still needed. Charles said that funding might be possible from Heritage lottery as the Lyme Bay Reserve could be seen as natural heritage.

9) A. O. B.

Rob King said a major issue is currently affecting under 10m fishing boats. Licence capping has been introduced to address the issue of latent capacity. Those boats without an adequate historic catch record are penalised. The effect of the capping on these under 10m boats is that going forward they could lose shellfish entitlement (crab and lobster) or lose entitlement to catch more than 350kg of quota stock fish, plaice, sole ray, pollack, cod but not bass. The impacts on the Lyme Bay Reserve could be that most small boats use a variety of gear and methods dependent on season etc. If they are capped or lose shellfish entitlement then they will be forced to focus on one method only or increase use of one method which may mean they feel the need to go above previously agreed voluntary codes of conduct to keep viable. For example a fisherman who did some potting and some netting who has his fish entitlement capped more increase the number of pots he works. Similarly, a fisherman who did netting but now has his licenced capped may be forced into whelk potting. This cannot be good for the Reserve. Simon suggested that there was an opportunity for fishermen to appeal the decision and that the change in management in the area over the past 5 years and the effects on fishers should be explained at the point of appeal. You can appeal up to 18th April. Charles agreed that the group could fight this and

the Voluntary Code of Conduct is our best defence. If somebody could write a letter it could be sent to a minister, so please send in your arguments against the licence capping.

Action Point: Fishermen to send arguments and views to Neville.

10) Date of next meeting

Tuesday 14th of June, to be held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis at **7pm**

Duration of meeting:

6pm – 9:45pm

Contact: Neville Copperthwaite

Project Coordinator/ Committee Secretary

Tele: 07789961292

Email: n.copperthwaite@btinternet.com