

Lyme Bay Working Group

9th Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis, on 14th August 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.
Nick Wright, Marine Management Organisation.
Bill Lawrence, Devon and Severn IFCA.
Joana Smith, Natural England.
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.
Matilda Bark, Dorset Coast Forum.

1) Apologies:

Neil Wellum, Marine Management Organisation.
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA.
Ian Carrier, Southern IFCA.
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA.
Sam Dell, Southern IFCA
Jim Newton, Beer Fisherman.
Paul Wason, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Nigel Hill, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.

Note: A press article in the Dorset Echo sparked interest in the Lyme Bay Reserve project from some Weymouth fishermen. Andy Alcock, Secretary of the Weymouth and Portland Fishermen and Boatmen's Association and Colin Horne of Weyfish were invited to attend the meeting to see first-hand the management structure of the project but they did not show

Minutes

2) Agree minutes of the 8th Working Group meeting:

The minutes were agreed.

Charles Clover thought that Jim Portus of SWIFA had been invited to the meeting but as this was not the case, he suggested that Jim should be invited to the next meeting. The WG concurred.

3) Launch event feedback, Actions and Developments:

Press coverage for the London Launch of the Lyme Bay Fishery and Conservation Reserve had been mainly regional but on the whole very positive.

Dave Sales had talked to Oliver Letwin MP and he had subsequently used his column in the Bridport News to write an informative piece about the Lyme Bay Reserve. Dave said that he had also been talking to the Devon Fishermen's Association due to their ignorance of the Lyme Bay project and he offered to go and talk to them. He said asked if a Power-point presentation could be made available for the project. Angus Walker said that fishermen generally had received the news well and he did not know of any dissenters. Alex Jones revealed that due to his name being mentioned in the press launch, he had received a number of abusive calls and emails from fishermen around the country who were in the main, ignorant of the Lyme Bay aims and achievements. He said that he had also been kicked-off six internet forums. Charles Clover told Alex not to suffer this alone but to always bring this sort of problem to the Working Group. Andy Woolmer suggested that the grief that Alex was receiving is almost certainly due to ignorance and that one way to overcome this would be to put the story out to the Fishing News.

It was reported that the Weymouth Seafood Festival, to held on the 7th and 8th was a great success despite one day the festival being cancelled due to rain. The Lyme Bay Reserve was promoted on a shared stand with the Blue Marine Foundation and with Fish to Fork and information literature, location charts and inshore fishing gear (Kindly supplied by Dave Sales) was exhibited. There was tremendous interest in the stand, particularly from local (Weymouth) young fishermen.

4) Funding Developments:

The Chairman Reported that M&S had committed up to £100,000 annually for three years to the project. In addition to this, the ICAP Charity Day 2012 which is London's largest charity event, will take place on Wednesday 5th December and Blue is now a named recipient which means there is potential funding for the Lyme Bay project. Also, following talks with Martin Attrill and Bob Watson, DEFRA may fund the project's science.

Charles asked Joana Smith if she could arrange a meeting as soon as possible with James Marsden of Natural England to discuss monitoring costs.

Joana informed the group that Natural England has provided funding for the Lyme Bay Reefs Recovery Study this year (2011/2012) which is being carried out by Plymouth University. This study is the continuation of the Defra funded recovery study which was initiated when the Lyme Bay closed area was introduced through a Statutory Instrument in 2008. The aim of the study is to assess the recovery of the reefs since the area was closed to benthic mobile gear. The survey work for this year has already been conducted, so unfortunately it would not be possible to try to align Natural England's survey with Blue's potting intensity survey this year and thereby reduce the costs. We do not yet know if the Lyme Bay Reefs Recovery study will continue to receive Natural England funding next year. If it is, then we can look at possible efficiencies between the Natural England study and Blue's potting intensity study. Joana will keep the group informed of developments.

Charles said it was crucial to get a PhD student going this autumn and that the science would take three years so has to be commenced straight away. Angus asked if there were any funding restriction conditions attached to the M&S funding and Tim explained that there was but that the funds were being juggled to make sure all aspects of the project are covered. He added that funds have to be allocated in the right areas.

5) Management Plan Implementation:

The voluntary Code of Conduct has been implemented and Charles asked if it was being adhered to. The consensus from the fishermen present was that it was being adhered to. Charles said that part of the Code was for vessels to carry iVMS and that a process needed to be created to supply fishermen with the equipment. Dave Hancock asked if Succorfish will be the chosen iVMS system and Nick Wright replied that this is not known at the moment although he expected trials to be finalised within two months, and thereafter, a decision will be made. The chairman reported that a survey had been done to see if the Lyme Regis Aquarium was suitable to house a lobster hatchery. The aim of the Hatchery is twofold, to enhance tourism and for lobster restocking. A plan is being devised to ensure the hatchery will be self-sustaining after three years.

6) Tagging/Barcoding trip to the USA:

The fact-finding trip will take place on August 26th to August 31st and will look at a fishery bar-coding scheme in Galveston, Texas and also fishery management at Moon Bay near San Francisco. Three WG members will be going, Neville, John and Alex and a professional cameraman will be accompanying them. They will come back with a comprehensive report from which, hopefully, some new fishery management best practice lessons can be learnt. A documentary type film of the trip will also be made which may be screened on 'Country File' and regional TV. It is hoped to be able to preview the film at the next WG meeting in September.

The trip is being funded by EDF, apart from the cameraman, who is being funded by Blue.

7) Identification and listing of Lyme ports fishing vessels and owners:

The Chairman explained that a data-base of member's names and boats are needed. Also the names are needed of those fishermen who have not signed-up to the WG in order for them to be contacted and persuaded to have iVMS on their boats.

Angus said he would organise this with the ports of Axemouth, Seaton and Beer; Alex will deal with Lyme Regis; Dave Sales will deal with West Bay.

8) Re-formation of WG into a management committee – structure/representation/logo/website:

The chairman proposed that the WG should become a Management Group and the structure of the group should be based on the Portland Port Authority Consultative Committee as this template seemed to address similar requirements to what will be needed for Lyme. Tim will put together a draft for discussion.

It was agreed that a website was needed not least to put out the progress that the WG has already achieved. Matilda Bark suggested that it should be linked to the Dorset Coast Forum website. All agreed this to be a good idea and Tim suggested that the WG website could also be linked to Blue's website.

9) Proposed Blue trustees visit to Lyme:

The Chairman informed the WG that three Blue Trustees would be attending the next meeting in September. These are Callum Roberts, Tom Appleby and George Duffield. Diving and fishing excursions were also being arranged for them with some WG members.

10) Any Other Business

The recent incursion of trawlers into the Lyme Bay cSAC was brought to the attention of the WG. Several members had lost gear because of this incursion including Dave Hancock who lost 18 pots at £60 per pot. Dave Sales asked what the MMO's view was on the incursions and Nick Wright said that if they had any evidence they would prosecute. Nick Wright pointed out the difficulties of obtaining evidence and said that unsuccessful efforts to catch the recent culprits included the Dorset Police force, the Devon and also Southern IFCA's enforcement Officers, the Royal Navy and even chartered aircraft. The Chairman asked if there was anything we could do as a group to push iVMS forward in order to add another layer of enforcement to the situation. Nick said it was difficult to answer that but Joana Smith said that perhaps we could push the procedural time-scale of a permitting bylaw. The Chairman asked if someone could up-date the group regularly on this point. Bill Lawrence said he would take that on. Bill also said that an option might be to invoke an emergency bylaw to ban mobile gear within the 6 mile limit but the Chairman asked if this might alienate SWIFA and could also be unfair. Dave Sales said that he finds himself defending SWIFA as they have condemned the incursion by rogue elements of the mobile gear boys. Charles asked if the group if it thought that it would be worthwhile publicising the incursions

and the group were in agreement with this. Matilda Bark thought it would be beneficial if it was made known that everyone is watching the situation closely.

The Chairman asked Andy Woolmer to give the group an update on the recent MCZ Consultation progress in Wales. Andy described the recent MCZ consultation process in Wales where all proposed MCZs were “Highly Protected”, that is no-take, no-disturbance and no-deposition. This had caused a great deal of opposition from local communities who had traditionally used the proposed areas for recreational and commercial fishing and were important for the tourist industry. As a result the Welsh Fishermen’s Association and Seafish had employed Andy to assist them in the development of an alternative approach. The resulting framework described in their report “Striking the Balance” has many parallels with our own approach in Lyme Bay and has built upon our experiences here; an adaptive ecosystem-based approach that acknowledges the importance of socio-economics in management considerations. The Welsh fishermen recently presented their report to the Welsh Senedd (parliament) where it gained wide support from Assembly Members and also from wildlife NGOs including the RSPB.

Charles said that if this group gets a legacy like this it will be a huge feather in Lyme’s cap; he also said he had heard that there are similar moves afoot to manage the whole of the Irish Sea.

The Chairman asked if there was a way to brand the Blue model in Wales. Andy said that Blue should go to Wales and talk to the Welsh Fishermen’s Association. Charles moved that the Welsh fishermen should also be asked to attend the next WG meeting in September.

9) Date of Next Meeting

25th September, 2012.

Duration of meeting: 6pm – 10:00pm.

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