

Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve Consultative Committee Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis on 24th February, 2015

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation (Chair)
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator/Committee Secretary
Andy Woolmer, Fishery Adviser
Clare Brook, Blue Marine Foundation
Rowena Taylor, Lyme Bay Reserve
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA
Gus Caslake, Seafish
Adam Rees, Plymouth University
Emma Sheehan, Plymouth University
Joana Smith, Natural England
Mark Machin, – Samways
Tom Rossiter, Succorfish
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust.
Dave Sales, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Donald Johnson, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver
Aubrey Banfield, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Jon Shuker, Fisherman, Lyme Regis scallop diver
Jim Newton, Fisherman, Beer, static gear
Lewis Hodder, Fisherman, Lyme Regis static gear
Nigel March, Fisherman, Lyme Regis static gear
James Smith, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Matt Styles, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear
Lewis Hodder, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear
Robert King, Blue Turtle Dive Charters
Martin Foley, Fisherman, Weymouth, whelk gear
Matthew Warr, Fisherman, Weymouth, whelk gear
Jamie Rollin, Fisherman, Weymouth, whelk gear

1) Apologies:

Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA
Rachel Irish, Marine Management Organisation
Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation
Nick Wright, MMO
Robert Clark, Southern IFCA
Jerry Percy, NUTFA
Erin Priddle, EDF
Kieran Perree, Fisherman, Lyme Bay, scallop diver
Mike Green, Beer representative.
Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum
Paul Wason, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, towed gear
Michael Coyle, Marine Management Organisation
Mark Cornwell, Fisherman, West Bay towed gear
Jim Portus, SWIFA.

2) Agree minutes of the 25th Working Group meeting:

The minutes were agreed.

3) Updates on implementation of the Management Plan

a) Potting Study

Adam Rees informed the Committee that the potting study is 'between seasons' and will restart in March. Last year's video footage has now been analysed and the results will be presented at the next meeting. Pots that were lost due to being towed away by a trawler in a recent illegal intrusion into the Reserve area have to be replaced and an order for replacements has been placed with Mustang. In the meantime, Steve Rogers of Axmouth has kindly loaned his pots for the project. A note was made for the Committee to thank Steve.

b) Ports Infrastructure.

Neville reported that the West Dorset District Council (WDDC) had granted Listed Building Consent for the use of a fisherman's shed on the Cobb to be used as an ice facility. However, the WDDC Surveyor had objected to the transfer of the shed lease. The grounds of this objection were not totally clear. Neville had attended a meeting that day with the Surveyor Vicky Joynes and the Harbour Master Graham Forshaw to resolve the problem but both remained intransigent to the idea of ice facilities situated on the Cobb. The Lyme Regis fishermen present at the meeting were asked by Tim if they still supported the siting of a chiller store on the Cobb and they confirmed that they did and that the proposed site next to the Aquarium was the only appropriate location. Tim confirmed that he, Neville and the planning consultant, Andrew Wilkinson, would continue to press the council for a resolution.

The planning application in West Bay is progressing and had received the support of the Town Council.

Angus Walker asked when he could expect the chiller room and ice machine to be installed in Axmouth and Neville informed him that the suppliers, SPX, had been commissioned to supply and install the equipment and delivery would be five weeks hence.

c) Fully Documented Fisheries

Tom Rossiter reported that all iVMS systems had now been allocated and the App systems were now being distributed to the ports. Donald Johnson asked, what are you doing with the data? Individual fishermen's data is commercially sensitive and the Working Group and Blue are adamant that it remained confidential. The data collected by the FDF study remains the property of the individual fishermen, but the data agreement agreed at the beginning of the project enables the Working Group's contractors to undertake analysis of this data to explore how it can both inform management and be used to secure better management of the fisheries and marine environment. Andy stressed that all data remains anonymised and any outputs in reports and the like would be presented in a manner that individual's fishing activity could not be determined. Also, we expected gear tags but never received them? Tom said that the tags would be distributed to a point of contact for distribution in each port in two weeks' time. Each tag is allocated to the boat and will have a unique number. Due to security reasons and considering not all fishermen have email facilities, Neville will receive the unique numbers by email and he should be contacted by individual fishermen to obtain their numbers.

d) Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS)

Gus Caslake said that 38 boats had now been audited under the Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS). He reported that the RFS is in the process of being upgraded and would now cost £175 + VAT to join. However, latecomer to the Committee, John Hughes of Branscombe is being considered as a candidate in a pilot for the new scheme.

e) Schools outreach programme.

Dave Sales said that that Harriet had organised another six school visits and that Marshwood Vale School had requested a repeat visit from him, such was his popular appeal. Tim Glover said it was a very worthwhile thing that Dave was doing and we would extend the scheme into secondary schools and eventually higher education institutions. Clare Brook asked Dave if he thought he would like someone else to assist him. Dave responded that he was happy with the current arrangement.

f) Whelks

Tim reminded the Committee that at the last meeting concerns were raised that whelk are being over fished by non-members of the Lyme Bay Reserve. It was agreed that he, Neville and either Rob Clark or Simon Pengelly would approach whelk fishermen and merchants to discuss. This was taken onboard and in order to assess the current whelk fishing situation, Tim, Neville and Simon Pengelly arranged a meeting with whelk buyer Nick Prust at his Waterdance Company premises and also a meeting with Weymouth based whelk fishermen Martin Foley and Matthew War who were also representing whelk fishermen Gary Copp and Rob Simmonds. Martin and Matthew agreed to attend the Committee meeting. Martin said that through his longstanding experience as a whelk fisherman, a closed season should be considered between the months of August and December to allow stocks to recover. He said that in practice this is what he does at the moment, but unfortunately this does not stop nomadic boats coming into the area and fishing it. Matt said that in addition, an increase in the minimum landing size would be good for sustainability. Simon cautioned that the whelk fishery supports a lot of fishermen who have nothing else to fish for during the proposed closed season. Therefore this should be thought through carefully. Martin said that although he worked many more pots than the Lyme Bay Voluntary Code of Conduct permits within the reserve, he was probably already adhering to the Code, apart from length of pot strings. Most of his pots are set outside the Reserve area. Zoning within the outer margins of the Reserve was discussed. Tim said that the way forward is to encompass zoning within the Code of Conduct but that such a move would need to be based on scientific evidence. Matt said that standardisation of whelk riddle sizes would lead to fairer enforcement and less undersize whelk mortality. Simon agreed with this. It was agreed that Andy Woolmer and Simon would work with Martin and his crew to undertake sampling and determine optimum riddle sizes and report back.

4. MMO and IFCA updates

Simon said that Southern IFCA is summarising the feedback from its recent public review of management measures. He added that whelks feature highly in this. Bass nursery area management will also be reviewed. Gus Caslake predicted that a minimum bass landing size of 42cm is likely to be introduced. Simon said that it is the IFCA's view that this size increase should be brought in over a 1 – 2 year period to allow fishermen time to upgrade their gear. Representatives of the MMO were not present but Angus said he was concerned about the MMO consultation on latent capacity concerning fishing licences. He pointed-out that fishermen had not received consultation letters. Tim said that an action point should be for the Committee to respond to the consultation on behalf of the fishermen.

5. Presentation by Marine Life – Cetations in Lyme Bay

This presentation was cancelled owing to non-attendance of MarineLife representative.

6. Presentation by Emma Sheehan of PUMI – Storm damage in Lyme Bay

Emma gave a fascinating presentation on the effects of storm damage within Lyme Bay resulting from the previous winter. Her conclusions are that the situation is bleak compared with the improvement of benthic flora and fauna that had taken place in the five year period since the banning of trawling in 2008 until 2013. Much of the damage was caused by the mechanical action of sand scour. The view is that the MPA has not been protected long enough to withstand storms; otherwise the area would have been more resilient.

7. Lyme Bay provenance assured seafood

Tim reported that a meeting had taken place with Laky Zervudaki of Direct Seafoods and fishermen representatives from each of the ports. Qualification for the scheme was discussed as were the logistics of fish/shellfish pick-up points from each port and the importance of icing the fish and storing in refrigerated chiller rooms. Fish and shellfish prices will be supplied by Direct Seafoods during March for review by the fishermen with the aim of making trial deliveries in late March or early April. Rowena Taylor was also present at the meeting and has been asked to create some logo/branding concepts. Laky emphasised the importance of clear and persuasive branding through the supply chain with something that chefs will be able to promote to their customers.

8. Communications

Rowena Taylor reported that regarding social media, the Lyme Bay Reserve Twitter account is 1,221 (up 80). And the Facebook account is 579 (up 29)

Interpretation Boards

Landowner agreement has been achieved for the West Dorset locations. Full planning applications will now be submitted.

Lyme Bay Seafood Brand

Development of the Lyme Bay Seafood Brand, in partnership with Direct Seafoods is underway with a planned launch at the beginning of April.

Seaton Jurassic Centre

Neville and Rowena have a meeting arranged with the Seaton Jurassic Centre to discuss further Lyme Bay Reserve involvement with the Centre.

Marks and Spencer (M&S)

Lyme Bay is to feature in the Marks and Spencer Bi-monthly Magazine. London based PR Company Seven, working for M&S visited the fishing ports of Beer and Axmouth to interview local Lyme Bay fishermen Jim Newton and Angus Walker for the M&S bi-monthly magazine which is distributed to their staff in stores throughout the UK.

9. Funding update

Tim reported that fundraising for remaining Lyme requirements was an ongoing process and that he, Clare and others at BLUE were constantly submitting funding proposals.

10. Media and PR

Tim said that Greenpeace will be visiting Lyme Regis on March 11th in their new yellow swanky shiny boat to show support for inshore fishermen fishing sustainably. This is a joint initiative with NUTFA. Blue has been invited to attend.

11. AOB

There was no other business.

12. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 2nd June, to be held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis at **7pm**

Duration of meeting:

6pm – 9pm

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