

Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve Consultative Committee Meeting

Meeting held at the Training Room, Cobb Quay, Lyme Regis on 8th
November, 2016

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation (Chair)
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator/Committee Secretary
Morven Robertson, Blue Marine Foundation
Gerry Irwin, Marine Management Organisation
Jess Bissett, Marine Management Organisation
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA
Ruth Porter, Natural England
Andrzej Narozanski, Natural England
Peter Tinsley, Dorset Wildlife Trust
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Adam Rees, Plymouth University
Sian Rees, Plymouth University
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Nigel Hill, Lyme Regis, static gear
John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver
Robert King, Lyme Regis, static gear
Mari Walker, Blue Marine Foundation
Horatio Morpurgo, Bridport Environment Group
Charles Mitchell
Laky Zervudachi
Dave Sales

1) Apologies:

Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation
Martin Attrill, Plymouth University
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust
Gus Caslake, Seafish
Jim Newton, Fisherman, Beer, static gear
Gavin Ziemann, Axmouth Fisherman, static gear
Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA

Jon Shuker, Fisherman, Lyme Regis scallop diver
Aubrey Banfield, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear
Mark Machin, Samways Fish Merchants
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 31st Committee meeting:

The minutes were agreed.

3) Updates on implementation of the Management Plan

a) Potting Study

Adam Rees reported that the summer monitoring including towed video within study areas had been completed. The results will be circulated and then put out to social media. Recovery after storms work had also been ongoing. Adam will now sit in a darkened room for the winter and analyse the data with a particular focus on video material. The Defra report has now been finalised and these have been circulated. Next September is the date for the final report. Adam had presented at a conservation congress in Newfoundland, Canada and reported good feedback regarding the Lyme Bay Reserve project, noting that we are still ahead of the world in what we are doing here in Lyme.

b) Ports Infrastructure.

Tim Glover reported that the EMFF chiller funding applications for West Bay and Lyme Regis have been successful and the leases will be in place soon. Once this is done, the installations can commence.

c) IVMS Data

Adam reported that he had been allowed access to some of the data for his purposes and Plymouth University will fund airtime for a further year. He added that useful data would be available for anyone who would want to use it. Simon Pengelly asked how many units were still working. Adam said 17. Tim said he was aware that units were breaking and Adam said he had sent a list of faulty units to Tom Rossiter of Succorfish. The list will be passed to Morven Robertson so that we can get them fixed. Neville will keep a close eye on the use of iVMS units and ensure all vessels are able to transmit data.

d) Seafish Responsible Fishing Scheme (RFS)

Dave Hancock said that the fishermen in Axmouth are not interested in re-joining the RFS. If RFS remains a condition of belonging to the Reserve Seafood scheme, fishermen will stop selling into the scheme. He said discussions had been held with both Brixham and Plymouth

markets about sending a van to collect fish from Axmouth now that there is a pick-up point. Dave Sales said West Bay is of the same mind. As well as the increased costs, fishermen were particularly opposed to being in the same RFS as industrial trawlers who they see as fishing unsustainably. Simon Pengelly asked if we could have our own accreditation scheme. Tim reported that he had had a number of meetings and conversations with both Seafish and the managing director of the auditors, Acoura and that Seafish had delayed closure of the “old” RFS scheme while these discussions on costs and logistics were ongoing. He asked everyone to bear with him for a while negotiations with both SeaFish and the auditors Acoura are ongoing. However, all options will be considered and the suggestion of a dedicated accreditation scheme could not be discounted. Laky emphasised the value of RFS and its importance for Reserve Seafood but agreed that a separate scheme could be a route to be explored.

e) Schools outreach programme.

Neville reported that to date, 900 students had been taught in various schools throughout Devon and Dorset and had they have been left with work packages for further learning. Feedback from teachers has been positive and encouraging. Visits planned for 2017 include secondary and sixth form schools and Plymouth University in addition to primary schools.

f) Lyme Bay Reserve Seafood

Laky Zervudachi said that Direct Seafoods are still growing awareness of Reserve Seafood through the chefs in London and he is very excited and wants to keep the initiative going. Large unexpected volumes are still catching him out, particularly rays, but this is being worked on from the London end. Tim said there are some issues about pricing and a meeting in London with Direct is being planned to tackle this. Tim has also approached MCS regarding the reclassification of rays within the Reserve and Laky said a successful outcome could lead to a ‘relaunch’ of rays.

4) Latent capacity – licence capping update

Tim reported that Charles Clover had written a letter to Fisheries Minister George Eustace appealing the licence capping of Dave Hancock on the grounds that he was being penalised for adhering to sustainable fishing methods. This sparked a lively debate about the other 14 licence caps which had been either overturned or put on 2 years’ probation. It was clear that the fishermen do not believe this issue is resolved. Tim said Blue would support all appeal cases of capping within the Reserve and would investigate lobbying Defra for more constructive regulations for low-impact, responsible inshore fishermen.

5) Ecosystem services study – report findings summary

Sian Rees gave a very informative PowerPoint presentation summarizing the Ecosystem Services study. Sian said that we now have ten years of evidence to work with; nowhere else in the UK has this. She added that one of the things the study highlights is that wellbeing is better for people involved in the Reserve. An issue arose from one of the charts on display which is that Defra is considering lifting the SI designation on approximately four and a half square miles within the Reserve. Simon pointed out that an impact assessment would have to be carried out by Southern IFCA prior to any change. Tim asked Ruth Porter if Natural England could please inform the group as soon as they have issued guidance and Defra make a decision. Recent improvement of marine life was discussed and when asked if there was anything significantly different, scallop diver John Worswick said that a few years ago he could have lived on the seabed and still not caught as many scallops as he does now with a single cylinder of air.

6) MMO and IFCA updates

MMO: Gerry Irwin reported that the Succorfish IVMS units had now obtained type approval. Jess Bissett said the Southern Marine Plan had just gone out for consultation. Angus Walker questioned Jess as to why a large area of the Reserve had been marked as suitable for aquaculture. Jess was unsure of the reason. Morven Robertson will read the Southern Marine Plan in advance of the next meeting.

SIFCA: Simon said that the Southern IFCA Technical Committee will be discussing Wrasse fishing. He said that a minimum size could be introduced. Regarding the leisure bass fraternity, the Angling Trust has asked to be able to raise the landing limit to 10 bass per month. Gerry said that policing bass landings is not going too well.

7) Planning for the future of the Reserve – Steering Group meeting

Tim explained that a Lyme Bay Reserve Steering Group had been set-up and had met on 9th of August. The members were drawn from those that volunteered at the previous consultative meeting. The group's aim is to decide how to transition from Blue managing the Reserve to a self-sustaining fishermen-led local management group. It was recognised that continued data gathering will help protect fishermen and inform management so is valuable. A current example is the proposed ray reclassification within the Reserve. The Schools outreach is not just about conservation but also about sustainable fishing and the benefits this brings to local communities. Adam Reese is keen to continue in some way which is a good thing. Regarding Reserve Seafood, branded scallop meat and crab meat have huge potential for the future and Laky is developing markets as we speak.

Funding is the critical thing in moving forward. The Blue Board has allocated funding to fuel some initiatives and has agreed that BLUE needs to stay involved in the Reserve but the group will now need to become self-sustaining under a new chairman and develop a long term strategy for managing the Reserve. Tim reminded the committee of the achievements of the Reserve management and the importance of continuing this good work. The story of the Lyme Bay Reserve is now being written-up and will be circulated to the committee in draft form in about one month. Jess asked what the motivation for fishermen to come to meetings is. John Worswick said it is because fishermen's views might be taken into account. Dave Hancock said that Blue is the first to come and give us anything. Kieran Perree said that he gets a multitude of information and education from the meetings. Tim informed the group that there would be another steering group meeting in the New Year.

8) Seaton Jurassic Centre and education programme

Tim introduced Mari Walker as the new education officer for the schools outreach programme. Mari explained that she is working on seven work packages to be rolled out in the New Year, one of which, Food Miles and Nutrition, she has just completed. Simon asked if the group could have an input. Tim said yes. It was agreed that Mari will present the seven work packages to the group.

Mari had a baptism of fire when she first started by helping the team present to around 200 children from six schools at the Wildlife Champions Conference at the Seaton Centre in September. The day was a great success with very good feedback from teachers who took away extended learning packs designed by Rowena with input from Mari.

9) Communications

Rowena Taylor was unable to attend the meeting but sent an email which was read out informing the group that three events had been attended since the last meeting. These were the Dorset Seafood Fair in July, the Mark Hix Food Rocks Festival in August and the Wildlife Champions Conference at the Seaton Centre in September.

A meeting is planned with the Dorset Seafood Festival organisers for a more integrated approach to next year's festival.

Social media: Twitter: 1665 (up 67 from July) Facebook: 810 (up 12 since July)

10) A. O. B.

Horatio Morpurgo read out a letter he had sent to Blue on behalf of the Bridport Environment Group acknowledging the conservation advances made in the Reserve and urging Blue's continuance, particularly in light of the uncertain future due to Brexit. Angus Walker said that fishermen should take the Brexit opportunity to regain a UK territorial limit of 12 miles. He added that fishermen need conservation groups to back them to get rid of the Common Fisheries Policy. Data and information from the Reserve could be used to support this. Tim said that BLUE would certainly support, and campaign for, a better deal for low-impact inshore fishermen and had been working on a UK strategy. Angus commented that protection for inshore fishermen should be taken all around the coast. Jerry Irwin said that Defra had not yet given MMO any advice on Brexit as yet. But they have said it will be business as usual. Tim thanked Horatio for his letter

11) Date of next meeting

TBA

Duration of meeting:

6pm – 9pm

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