



NOTES OF MEETING HELD AT 10.00HRS ON FRIDAY 15 MAY 2009
WILDFOWL & WETLANDS TRUST, PENCLACWYDD, LLANELLI

Present

Jane Hodges (JH) Chair	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)
Blaise Bullimore (BB)	EMS Officer
Anne Bunker (AB)	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Phil Coates (PC)	South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (SWSFC)
Kate Collins (KC)	Environment Agency Wales (EAW)
Deb Hill	City and County of Swansea (CCoS)
Simeon Jones (SJ)	Carmarthen County Council (CCC)
Judith Oakley (JO)	EMS Officer
Rebecca Wright (RW)	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

1 Welcome, apologies & personnel matters

Apologies:

Julian Atkins	City & County of Swansea
Ziggy Otto	CCW
Trevor Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council
Dusi Thomas	Dŵr Cymru-Welsh Water

2. SMP 2 BRIEFING

Phil Williams and Howard Blackwell from the Shoreline Management Partnership gave a presentation on “Swansea/Carmarthen Bay Coastal Group Member Meeting” regarding the Shoreline Management Plan.

SMP2 requires more links with planning and more consideration of effects on the environment and longer term coastal policies than did the first SMP. There is potential to accommodate change over time and short, medium and long term policies will be included in the SMP2. It will be reviewed at 5 year intervals so that policies can be changed if needed; eg in the last 5 years there have been increased estimates of sea level rise and increased flooding. Carmarthen Bay and Swansea beach profile monitoring summary 1998-2006 shows accretion and erosion depending on location. SMP2 is being done under guidance with DEFRA, raising issues on potential conflicts and pressure on the shoreline. Threats include loss of infrastructure, setting back of defences, abandonment of existing coastal defences, effective ‘blighting’ of coastal land areas.

Stakeholder consultation – transparent with clear explanation of terminology

Stage 1 – Scoping study.

Website www.southwalescoast.org set up with a questionnaire/consultation on there. Halcrow won tender and started in February. Strategic environmental assessment spanning 9 months.

Stage 2/3 – Define policy under 4 options – hold the line, managed retreat etc

Stage 4 –seminar/presentations at nine locations to get as much engagement as possible

Stage 5 – incorporate and assess responses and build into final plan

Stage 6 – disseminate plan as widely as possible. It is a non-statutory document.

Objectives: Framework, Technical, Environmental, Social and Economic.

Approx until end of 2010 to complete SMP document and finalise.

SMP sets strategic policy in small sections of the coastline. If set ‘hold the line’ for eg a dunes SAC, CCW would have been consulted and relevant authorities before policy drafted, after discussions with stakeholder groups, especially client steering group.

At RAG, there are representatives who are also on the Client Steering Group. Dealing with local, regional and European policies, and need to decide on solutions for short, mid and long term. HB happy to set up meetings and liaise with RAG members.

SWSFC raised issue of Fishtail groynes – ecological consequences of migration of cockles – should be raised in Water Framework Directive – “good ecological status”.

CCoS commented that links to LDPs regarding moving whole populations elsewhere due to sea level rise and increased wave heights etc so need planning ahead for the movement of infrastructures eg rail/road also.

WAG involved – keen on building resilience.

Sand dredging issue – long history in Bristol Channel.

RAG thanked HB & PW for attending meeting and giving presentation and also asked for email to be sent to Phil and Howard to thank them again. **ACTION: JO**

3 MINUTES OF MEETING 26 MARCH 2009

Minutes received and agreed they are accurate and correct subject to amendments made by Julian Atkins **ACTION: BB**

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF 26 MARCH 2009

All agreed that consents and information exchange should be in confidence. Any other confidential items should be agreed in advance and the decision recorded. .

In response to suggestion that minutes could be far briefer, the point was made that full minuting of discussions and decisions ensures transparency

Discussion re: production of minutes to anonymise the person asking questions and making comments so that there is no constraint on us all speaking freely and making points.

Letter not re-sent yet. Meeting to be set up with WAG Fisheries. **ACTION: BB**

ZO not at meeting so could not comment on Revised CCW Regulation 33 advice.

Info not received yet regarding Pendine. **ACTION: ZO/BB**

PWC management – carried forward. **ACTION: SJ**

Item 5 - Burry Inlet Water Quality – Meeting on 2 April- still need response and update **ACTION: DH/JA**

Item 9 - BB actioned on behalf of JA

5 REPORT ON JO APPOINTMENT AND INTRODUCTION

JO introduced to the group and has been in post for 2 weeks. Working 3 days per week for 6 months, based at Swansea Civic Centre.

Currently working on CBEEMS contact list to find out who still wants to be on it and how best to contact them.

6 RAG RESOURCES

Liaison meeting 2 weeks previously between CCoS and CCW; DH and JA met with Dave Worrall. Discrepancy resolved as CCoS injected cash to balance books.

Concern raised from whole RAG on amount of time spent on finances trying to reconcile the expenses and accounts. This time would be much better spent on the Management Scheme.

CCoS paid for advertising of JO's post. RAG thanked CCoS for this contribution.

CCoS reported that meeting with CCW highlighted concern on progress with outputs for management scheme. CCW concerned about the level of resources and getting less back due to BB going to 2 days/week and proposed that contribution should be decreased as outputs not met. However, pointed out that is a partnership contribution in the same spirit as the other partnership members of the RAG so contribution remains unchanged this financial year. The likelihood is that from 2010-11 the continued contribution of £15k per annum cannot be maintained. The meeting was constructive but the need to deliver the Management Scheme in a timely manner was noted.

RAG Chair reminded members that there had been a lot of catching up to do which BB has done for the first couple of years. Noted that other EMS around Wales have taken years to produce management schemes. Progress for Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries is relatively fast.

Members pleased that resource contributions to a partnership now recognised as such and not as grant aid, subject to outputs, to CCoS. Site funding is an issue for all SACs in Wales and will be raised at next GEMS meeting on 20 May.

Noted that timelines are likely to slip. Progress in drafting the management scheme is the sum of the parts and depends on the slowest contributor. All RA members are involved; not just the officer who creates the scheme.

RAG Chair stressed that CCoS cannot be held responsible for the joint outputs of the RAG; they are only the host authority/organisation. Members were referred to the RAG MoU for confirmation.

BB circulated summary of budget and accounts to end March 2009.

Otter project and backfill post money rolls forward to April 09. Figures subject to final agreement with CCoS Finance. Awaiting answers to questions on small amounts of money.

ACTION: BB

There is a projected deficit of spend over income this financial year of £24,000, assuming completion of consultation draft MS and translation and printing costs are incurred, reducing the reserve carried forward from 2009/10 to 2010 /11 to £21,243. Unless RAG contributions from all members are secured from 2010 / 2011, the future resource base for the RAG to complete and then implement the Management Scheme will quickly become untenable. Members were urged to

secure their organisations commitments to budgeting for and resourcing the continued work of the RAG.

Noted that two of the local authorities are not making any contributions and one of them is the main player for the Bay (Carmarthenshire), and also Pembrokeshire.

Noted that without an EMS Officer in place, experience from other sites is that the Management Scheme will be poorly or incompletely implemented with respect to actions assigned to multiple authorities or the RAG, engagement with stakeholders and action and scheme monitoring and review. Long-term resourcing is essential

The RAG noted the cash flow projections with concern and agreed the need to secure further funding.

CCC suggested cross reference with UDPs/LDPs, WFD, SMPs for possible funding.

Discussion followed regarding WAG and BAPs : Outcome 21 of Wales Environment Strategy is substantially dependent on meeting SAC / SPA objectives. BAPs are linked to EMS outputs and WAG consider local authorities have a key role in their delivery.

RAG agreed that more secure funding is needed for core functions and that all RA representatives have to maintain pressure within their own authorities and to stress the value of the Management Scheme.

7. REVISED REGULATION 33 ADVICE

Discussion regarding fisheries took place: Regarding measure of fisheries, MSY is widely discredited. Safe biological limits is adopted by ICES. SBL is a higher threshold than the maximum sustainable yield. May not be useful in informing management plans. Unknown as to how useful this is for CCW purposes and relevant competent authorities to apply to Regulation 48.

Appendix 3 has to be read with Features Guidance. Conservation Objectives have legal implication. Needed to be produced with end user in mind.

CCW advice is drawing on the best available advice at the time. Using bird monitoring figures as targets is not applicable.

RAG agreed that CCW be informed of the RAG's comments at this and previous meetings. They will be provided in writing to Dr David Parker and copied to Dr David Worrall and local RAG members.

ACTION: ALL RAG MEMBERS

8. MANAGEMENT SCHEME

BB referred to main body text of draft Management Scheme and Technical Annex 6 circulated by email prior to meeting, for information. Section 5, Action Plan, has only been populated with some of the most obvious Management Objectives, but no actions yet since these are subject to discussion and agreement by member authorities.

RAG members commented document was very thorough very comprehensive and a massive document. Agreed that the vision and aim on page 5 need to stand out more and should be highlighted. Vision and aim to be outlined in a box, and also repeated in introduction. **ACTION: BB**

Noted that jellyfish in Carmarthen Bay are typical species of the Bay habitat feature. The boundary line runs from Caldey Island to Worm's Head; if a species is characteristic of the Bay or a regular component of the Bay's wildlife it is considered to be a "typical species" of the Bay habitat.

Chair thanked BB for the draft scheme on behalf of the RAG.

RAG needs to decide on actions based on the objectives in the management plan.

Noted that amendments to Table 4.2 (page 50) may be required subject to completion of Technical Annex 6.

CCW questioned meaning of ‘confidence’ in Table 2.1 (page 32). Agreed to expand to read ‘confidence whether present or not’. **ACTION: BB**

CCoS questioned list of priority actions in Summary (page viii). BB replied that the list was a draft discussion and finalisation, as noted in the text. Agreed to add climate change. **ACTION: BB**

All agreed to send in amendments on hard copies or by email to BB before next RAG meeting.

ACTION: ALL

Immediate future action is to continue work on the Annexes to get them into a more complete state.

ACTION: BB

Action Plan will be populated when Technical Annex 6 (assessment of activities) is finished.

All agreed to help fill in gaps and comments for Actions section. **ACTION: ALL**

BB: CCW Special Sites Project is potentially an additional complication. Whilst the SSP will identify the actions CCW deem necessary, the RAG needs to reach agreement on RAG Action Plan.

ACTION: BW to liaise with CCW regarding actions identified by SSP.

CBEEMS Officer to make first draft of management actions in section 5.3 (page 68).

ACTION: BB

RAG agreed to submit comments in line with agreed timetable.

RAG agreed the direction of the scheme document is in line with expectation and thanked BB.

9. EAW RBMP CONSULTATION

Draft River Basin Management Plans are out for consultation and available on the EA website.

Members invited to Pembrokeshire Marine SAC RBMP briefing on 10 June meeting at EA Haverfordwest.

ACTION: ALL to let KC know if attending.

CBEEMS Officer reported that there is little mention of transitional/coastal waters and no mention about new consents; there are significant mismatches with the Regulation 33 advice; timelines for hitting targets do not match with *Natura 2000* objectives.

Although the River Basin District including this site extends from the Ogmere to the Conwy rivers, there is only one action identified for estuaries (reduction of TBT at Pembroke Dock)

Reported that CCW have had done a lot of work to respond back to the RBMP consultation.

10. RELEVANT AUTHORITY UPDATES

SWSFC commented that presence of biotoxins have closed estuary until today. Diuretic shellfish poison (DSP) may cause cockle mortality. Some limited mortality on south side with high mortality on north side. Started when biotoxin first recorded. Cockle monitoring on a weekly basis and checking water column and plankton. Bangor University and Swansea University are involved with analysis. Two sites on Burry Inlet with Dee inlet as control site. EA are co-ordinating investigation.

CBEEMS Officer reported recently published Welsh Water Business Plan 2010 – 2015 identifies development of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in Llanelli. Welsh Water will come to give talk at RAG meeting or provide a presentation.

ACTION: DT – to arrange for meeting after next.

CCW report *Identifying biodiversity opportunities to inform SMP2*.

ACTION: CCW/RW to arrange circulation

Wales Environment Link/*MarLIN* report on effectiveness of current legislation in protecting marine features to be forwarded. **ACTION: BB** to circulate ¹

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Defra consultation for MPAs available on website – worth reading for background information though applies to England only

JO and BB attended Plaid Cymru conference at National Botanic Gardens on 25 April with EMS stand and information.

Otter project interview on Radio Wales 7.30 Sunday 31 May should mention EMS.²

Launch of Wales Biodiversity Week and BBC outside broadcast on 5 June in Swansea. Possible for EMS to be represented there.

Noted that 8 June is the premiere of the film ‘End of the line’ and is showing in Haverfordwest and Cardiff.

12. DATE(S) OF NEXT MEETING(S)

Tuesday 21 July 2009, 10am WWT Llanelli

Wed 30 September, 10am WWT Llanelli – Welsh Water to be invited to give SUDS presentation.

Meeting closed at 14.45

¹ Also available online from at: http://www.waleslink.org/documents-for-downloading/wel-publications/Protecting%20Nationally%20Important%20Marine%20Biodiversity%20in%20Wales_Full%20report_corrected.pdf

² It did – briefly but usefully.