



MINUTES OF MEETING

WEDNESDAY 9 DECEMBER 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)
Ged Davies (GD)	EAW
Deb Hill (DH)	City & County of Swansea
Simeon Jones (SJ)	Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC)
Lyndsey Rendle (LR)	CCC
Vicky Swales (VS)	Welsh Assembly Government Fisheries Unit
Trevor Theobald (TT)	Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC)
Dusi Thomas (DT)	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water (DCWW)
Stuart Thomas (ST)	EAW
Rebecca Wright (RW)	CCW

1 Welcome, apologies & new members

Apologies:

Lewis Keil (LK)	DCWW
Ziggy Otto (ZO)	CCW

New members and additional representatives were welcomed and introduced.

2 Minutes of meeting 30 September 2009

Minutes received and agreed subject to minute 13: members encouraged to respond to WAG MPA consultation, rather than RAG to respond.

3 Matters arising from minutes of 30 September 2009 & not on the agenda

Noted:

Minute 4: Scoter monitoring winter 2008-09. Only ground counts had been undertaken. Aerial surveys were undertaken as a separate exercise in March – April as part of a DEFRA funded initiative to further develop techniques. Action to write to CCW querying plans for future surveillance is incomplete; carried forward. **Action: JH / AB (done)**

Minute 13: Posting minutes to website agreed as low priority.

4 Budget & resources

A revised budget update dated 26 November 2009 was tabled.

Noted:

In the absence of commitments for next FY from all except DCWW and PCNPA, worst case and 'fairly optimistic' scenarios were presented for the two forthcoming FYs. The latter assumes no contributions from other local authorities, the same (reduced) contribution as 2009-10 from EA and a 20% reduced contribution from CCW.

Current income is insufficient to meet officer costs alone, disregarding all other RAG costs. With current work programme timelines and projected spends, reserves will be exhausted either at end of next FY (worst case scenario) or the following FY (fairly optimistic scenario). Work programme slippage will relieve the pressure.

CCW: bid for next FY is in the current bidding round; anticipate outcome in January. Subsequent FY contributions dependant on internal review of resourcing RAGs.

EAW: MoA for current year's contribution still stuck in legal department. Bid submitted for next FY; bid to be informed by GEMS exercise matching generic list of RAG / EMSO tasks to EAW targets and outcomes.

WAG (Fish): VS has raised resource issue with team leader for project absorbing SFC functions into WAG Fish.

PC: £1500 budget for contributions to the three RAGs in the SWSFC district identified as required.

Local authority (excl PCNPA) members asked to again pursue resources. E-mail from Diana Reynolds, Head of Nature Conservation, WAG, to Gwynedd County Council urging LA contributions again noted; BB to recirculate. **Action: BB (done)**

Invoices for all contributors except EAW for time being to be raised immediately. **Action: DH**

5 EMS Officer contract renewal

Noted:

BB contract has been renewed until 31 March 2010.

Agreed:

Assuming the reasonably optimistic contribution scenario and the predicted spend, further renew contract to 31 March 2011 **Action: DH**

Whilst continuation of contract is accepted as being subject to available resources, CCoS HR to clarify legal position regarding permanence since BB been in post for three years. **Action: DH**

6 Management Scheme development

Noted:

Work is continuing on populating the activity and operations assessment technical annex (TA6).

Despite previously agreeing to proceed with the information available, the shortage of information for many issues is still requiring diversions to locate and add sufficient information to make any reasonable assessment.

The deadline of end of calendar year to complete TA6 will not be met, largely because of the above, but work can continue in parallel with RA action planning during first quarter 2010. However, the current version of TA6 will be circulated in the new year regardless of how incomplete it still is.

Action: BB

VS advised that fisheries action planning should be continued with SWSFC for the time being as the rollover to new regime is intended to be as much business as usual as possible. Legal status of WAG (Fish) fulfilling function of an RA is being addressed.

Agreed: BB to make arrangements before Christmas for meetings with individual RA members in the new year to develop action identification & planning. Where possible, combine local authority meetings with meeting relevant colleagues to address resource contributions (completed for CCoS).

Action: BB / ALL

Noted:

There is no 'right' size for the action plan. Attractively concise plans tend to be vague, aspirational and lack definite actions; detailed, 'belt-and-braces' plans are thorough and more robust but tend to be user-unfriendly. No decision taken at this time although, citing experience of other sites, discussion tended toward favouring detail and robustness over brevity for its own sake.

The requirement to integrate with other plans, notably:

- CCW's Special Sites Project;
- SMP2;
- Fisheries Implementation Plan.

Risk of cyclical outcomes of integration: taking account of other plans modifies the EMS plan and *vice versa*, requiring further iteration of planning and integration.

Agreed:

RAG agreement to appearance of action plan to be developed over time.

RAG members must be proactive, not waiting to be reminded by BB, regarding the above, and in supporting integration with other plans.

7 Marine and Coastal Access Act / WAG MPA consultation

Noted:

Closing date of consultation 16 December.

A diagram demonstrating the structure and relationships of the various UK and Wales MCZ projects was tabled for information.

BB invited to represent GEMS (and RAGs) on WAG's MCZ 'Stakeholder & Public Engagement Group', first meeting 10 December.

Task is peripheral to main focus of management scheme production and concern was expressed about amount of time that would be required. BB to circulate Group's ToR on its receipt. Members to keep participation under review.

Action: BB

8 EMS Officer report

Noted:

Judith Oakley had completed revising the contacts spreadsheet prior to end of contract. However, because of technical difficulties, letters and e-mails to addressees had not been circulated until mid November (whilst working p/t for CCoS on marine BAP). Responses have begun to arrive.

BB had recommenced 4 days/week working at beginning of November.

Many additional tasks and distractions from TA6 work had cropped up in recent weeks, several specifically related to resources and resource contributions:

- GEMS: resources mtg & follow-up actions;
- CCW: liaison with Maggie Hatton-Ellis (RAG reviewer);
- EAW: mtgs and liaison with Mark Potter, South Wales Biodiversity Team Leader, (and KC); plus integration with GEMS;
- CCoS: preparation and mtg with Director Environment and Head of Planning.

Liaison mtg Ged Davies, Stuart Thomas and KC regarding Burry Inlet water quality issues.

Assistance provided to JO with maps and text for contacts information flyer. BB to circulate final version of flyer on receipt from DH. **Action: DH / BB**

Attended:

- Pembrokeshire Marine SAC technical seminar
- SMP2 consultative forum – feedback provided to initial proposed options
- WBP Marine Ecosystem Group mtg
- WBP Policy Group mtg; to present MEG requested policy actions on RAG resourcing and engagement. BB to circulate policy actions paper. **Action: BB**

The EMS laptop has begun having intermittent screen display problems; impossible to diagnose issue to date because so intermittent. Replacement laptop in budget for next FY.

Booked into Coastal Futures 2010 in January.

Agreed:

The number of tasks additional to the core task of management scheme development was of concern, though it was noted that there had been an unusual glut recently.

BB to maintain list of meetings attended and outcomes.

Action: BB

9 Relevant authority updates

a) research & monitoring reports

Noted:

A 2006 CCW salt-marsh monitoring report had been drawn to BB's attention by West Region Monitoring Ecologist (Saltmarsh Monitoring in Carmarthen Bay and Estuaries, Glannau Môn, Pembrokeshire Marine and Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SACs 2006: Atlantic Salt meadow and *Salicornia* and other annuals colonising mud features. CCW Environmental Monitoring Report Series Report number: 37). BB had drawn AB's attention to the absence of EMS officers or RAG members on the distribution list. AB had taken action to ensure that EMSOs are included in future and they can be circulated to RAG members. BB to provide list of all EMSOs to AB. **Action: BB (done)**

BB to circulate report.

Action: BB (done)

Comments and suggestions for future salt-marsh monitoring were requested by CCW **Action: ALL**

(BW) CCW report on geomorphological modeling of the Burry Inlet completed. BB to secure copy from Rod Jones, CCW, and circulate.

Action: BB (RJ contacted)

(AB) CCW cetacean atlas of Wales recently published. BB to circulate.

Action: BB (done)

b) consents & information exchange

See confidential Annex.

10 Any other business

None raised.

11 Date(s) of next meeting(s)

10.00 10 March 2010. Penclacwydd (subsequently amended to 12 March)

Meeting closed at 14.00