



MINUTES OF MEETING

FRIDAY 25 JUNE 2010

WILDFOWL & WETLANDS TRUST, PENCLACWYDD, LLANELLI

Present

Jane Hodges (JHs) Chair	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA)
Blaise Bullimore (BB)	EMS Officer
Anne Bunker (AB)	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Alex Harding (AH)	CCW
Deb Hill (DH)	City & County of Swansea
John Hogg (JHg)	Environment Agency Wales (EAW)
Lewis Keil (LK)	Dwr Cymru-Welsh Water (DCWW)
Lindsey Rendle (LR)	Carmarthenshire County Council (CCC)
Huw Williams (HW)	CCW

1 Welcome & apologies

Apologies:

Dusi Thomas	DCWW
Simeon Jones	CCC
Ziggy Otto	CCW
Graham Rees	Welsh Assembly Government Fisheries Unit
Trevor Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council
Julia Williams	Welsh Assembly Government Marine Branch
Rebecca Wright	CCW

New members and additional representatives were welcomed and introduced.

AH will be CCW's officer with responsibility for coordination of CCW's input "across the estuary" on behalf of both Carmarthen and Swansea district teams. RW and HW will no longer attend RAG meetings. ZO will also no longer routinely attend RAG meetings, but will do so if necessary, leaving Anne Bunker as CCW's main technical representative.

JHg, Environment Manager Carmarthen, Ceredigion & Pembrokeshire, will represent EAW for the time being at least. Kate Collins' role has changed and she will no longer be attending RAG meetings.

Following the dissolution of SWSFC and the absorption of all inshore fisheries management by WAG, Phil Coates will no longer attend RAG meetings. Representation of WAG Fisheries addressed under agenda item 4.

2 Minutes of meeting 12 March 2010

Agreed without amendment.

3 Matters arising from minutes of 12 March 2010 & not on the agenda

Noted:

Item 3 (scoter monitoring): concern expressed over the potential for misinterpretation of media reports of high numbers of scoter in the Bay in winter 2009-10. The data was derived from a single count in late winter at the end of a prolonged period of exceptionally cold weather which, as the BTO (the surveying contractor) stressed, had displaced many birds westwards from the most cold regions. Concern expressed that the report must be considered in this context and should neither be taken to indicate that the steady downward trend in numbers over recent winters has suddenly been reversed, nor as any justification to reduce or discontinue routine monitoring of scoter numbers, nor of its habitat condition (prey abundance).

Item 6, cockle management: JHg to forward EAW press release re byelaw modification etc. **Action: JHg**

Item 6, MoU: to be reviewed within coming few weeks; JHg to provide briefing on working of MoU and EAW's view of relationship between MoU and RAG to next RAG meeting. Proposed workshop did not come to fruition.

4 EMS relationship with WAG Fisheries & Marine Branches

Notes of meeting between BB, Sue Burton (Pembrokeshire Marine SAC), Ben Sampson (Cardigan Bay SAC), Graham Rees (Head, WAG Fisheries Unit) and Julia Williams (Head WAG Marine Branch Nature Conservation & Policy) circulated with agenda (and attached as Annex; note: now signed off by JW, response from GR still awaited).

Noted:

WAG Fish (or Marine Branch) presence at RAG meetings is highly unlikely.

One to one meetings with the two branches to address the management scheme are yet to be organised.

WAG's apparent exclusive focus on the CCW Special Sites Database as the sole source of identifying actions.

WAG almost certain not to make a direct financial contribution to support RAGs; any business case for funding RAGs would have to come from EMS officers / RAGs, not be generated internally within WAG. WAG Marine Branch (JW) to pursue continuation and restoration of resourcing by CCW and EAW.

Agreed:

Concern about the effectiveness of the MS if the CCW SSD is the only driver for WAG (fisheries especially).

WAG needs to be better informed of RAG working and EMS MS; all RAs to use whatever influence they have to secure engagement at as high a level as possible, Head Nature, Access & Marine Unit, or higher.

Action: ALL

BB to draft briefing note to support above action.

Action: BB

Imperative need for maximum integration between the MS and the CCW SSD.

Revisit issue depending on outcome of further efforts to secure engagement.

5 Budget & resources

Noted (substantial background detail provided for benefit of new members):

Income and expenditure for 2009-2010; background to current reasonably healthy reserve; assumptions for contributions for 2010-11 and 2011-12.

EAW will strive to make same contribution in 2010-11 as last FY but unable to provide any assurance of contribution in 2011-12. JHg to pursue securing contribution for current FY.

Action JHg

WWT have advised that, after more than six years of providing a meeting venue FOC, they now need to charge for room hire, effective following this meeting.

As background to discussion on cost of production of Management Scheme, reminder of function of MS as, *inter alia*: a process for identifying and agreeing relevant and competent authority actions; a mechanism for ensuring and making clear how R&CA functions and actions apply to and meet the requirements of the site's conservation objectives; a working and bidding document for R&CAs, and not a document primarily for public consumption.

Need for bidirectional integration with other relevant plans and strategies.

Focus of MS implementation on cross-authority actions, particularly stakeholder ('hearts and minds') engagement, added value actions, compliance self-monitoring, assessment of and reporting on management.

Consultation version of the whole of the main management scheme document needs to be bilingual to conform with Welsh language policies and legal obligations. Although the technical material will be in English only technical annexes, translation of the considerable amount of text in the main document has been estimated to cost about £4k each for the draft and final documents at commercial rates (previous enquiries within RAs did not result in any offers of translation FOC as a contribution in kind).

Agreed:

Reduce costs by cutting production of print versions of the consultation and final document and 'glossy' summary of final MS. Distribute within R&CAs electronically only. Provide consultation document via website wherever possible and only print paper copies on demand. (Saving approx £6500)

Continue to use WWT Penclacwydd for most meetings but investigate low/nil cost alternatives for some meetings and work programme sub-group meetings (EAW meeting room in Cross Hands can be made available).

All to pursue and seek confirmation of existing or possible restored funding contributions from their authorities.

Action: ALL

6 Website

Noted:

Existing website already out of date despite rebuild from scratch in 2007. Currently used, cheap and cheerful, software is limiting, cumbersome to update website routinely, maintaining site up to date constrained by bilingual requirements (costs and time).

Recommendation made to migrate to a more technically advanced Content Management System platform providing faster and easier management and updating, basic functions such as contact forms and news feeds that are currently not available, and automatic Welsh translation facility for time limited items (or items pending formal translation and checking).

Initial cost c.£400 including site hosting, thereafter running costs about half current cost.

Agreed:

Since website agreed as main mechanism for providing site information and for promulgation of MS, migrate to new platform once draft MS submitted for internal RA scrutiny and approval prior to public consultation.

HW left meeting

7 Management Scheme development: action identification workshop session

BB provided a refresh / background detail for new members, of MS structure and role of Technical Annex 6 as the record of assessment of activities and rationale for summary / condensed actions in main MS document. Structure and purpose of substantially revised introductory sections also explained.

Noted & agreed:

Purpose of session was to consider and agree actions in TA6 proposed by BB as 'cock-shies', adding, amending or deleting actions as appropriate. To consider all actions, including fisheries, although not all sectoral authorities present.

Members addressed actions systematically, completing the initial fishing actions, grazing, exploitation of non-living resources, coastal protection; waste water. Amendments were made to the master document in real time and notes made when additional work was required.

No actions were deleted; some actions were noted for amendment to improve consistency; a number of additional actions were identified; BB to revise to incorporate. **Action: BB**

Noted:

Study by David Kay, Aberystwyth University on bacteriological inputs from stock; DH to forward contact details. **Action: DH**

A number of queries for RAs were identified in the current draft; members to determine answers and provide responses as soon as possible. **Action: ALL**

JHg and LK left the meeting following waste water actions

Agreed:

The value of jointly and collaboratively scrutinising and discussing proposed actions as a RAG; aim to complete the process at the next meeting.

In meantime, BB to arrange one to one meetings with all RAs to complete agreement of actions prior to abstraction of actions from TA6 and condensing / summarising for the MS Action Plan.

Recirculate main MS document for benefit of new members, also as refresh for long standing members, noting that comments from initial internal RAG consultation have been added, but that it has not been reedited since that time. **Action BB**

8 Other business

None raised.

9 Date(s) and agenda items for next meeting(s)

10.00 hrs Weds 29 September OR Fri 1 October 2010, tbc, WWT Penclacwydd

Agenda items:

annual (re)appointment of Chair;

annual review of RAG MoA and ToR;

completion of action identification.

Meeting closed at 15.00

Annex 1 EMS Officer report

Mtgs

WAG MCZ Workshop of Tech Advisory Group 13-14 April (leave taken)

Tegryn Jones (new CX) PCNPA (with Sue Burton) 29 April

John Hogg EA 6 May

BAP seminar Swansea 13 May

UK MPA centre (VC) 17 May

GEMS (VC) 19 May

WAG Fish & Marine Branch 25 May

Carms BAP marine event Burry Port Marina Sat 12 June

WBP MEG 16 June

WAG MCZ SCEG 23 June

Future plans

Pembs Fish Week Tenby Sun 27 June