

# Lyme Bay Working Group

## Inaugural Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis, on 25th October 2011

### Minutes of the meeting

#### **Present:**

Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation.  
Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation. (Chair)  
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator.  
Andy Woolmer, Fishery Adviser.  
Bill Lawrence, Devon and Severn IFCA.  
John Warswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver.  
Chris Wason, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, mobile gear.  
Paul Wason, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.  
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axemouth, static gear.  
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axemouth, static gear.  
Jim Newton, Fisherman, Beer, static gear.  
Bret Newton, Fisherman, Beer, static gear.

#### **Apologies:**

Ian Carrier, Southern IFCA. (Ian Carrier requested that it be made known at the meeting that it is the IFCA's hope that this Lyme Bay Initiative is successful).  
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA.  
Neil Wellum, Marine Management Organisation.

#### **Minutes**

##### **1) Introductions:**

The Chairman introduced the Working Group (WG) members to each other.

##### **2) Principles and Objectives:**

Charles Clover set out the principles and objectives under the heading:

#### **Founding Principles for the Blue Marine Lyme Bay Working Group.**

"Last time in the cafe in West Bay we agreed informally to form a working group to see if we could devise a blueprint for the best fisheries management regime within a marine protected area in Europe.

This is that group, with some new additions. We hope we now have the representation to do that.

I think I explained that in order to fit within Blue's remit and those of its funders, any project we may devise must be a "win, win, win" – that is represent:

- i) best practice in protecting biodiversity within a European special area for conservation,
- ii) best practice in managing fish and shellfish stocks and
- iii) creating the maximum long-term benefits for coastal communities of adopting the best practice.

How we do this will be up to you around this table. We hope to put some of the tools in your own hands to create something of value and, by establishing what sustainable fishing is, in this area, to give you the tools to protect it for the future.

We have six months to achieve this then our funders will decide whether what we have achieved is sufficiently ambitious, robust and workable for them to put in the money to make it happen.

Another important requirement of our funders is that the learning process we go through should be written up in a report – so it can benefit others and that the blueprint we write should be "scaleable" - ie of use nationally in marine protected areas in inshore waters.

Lyme Bay is already ahead of the rest of the country in having a 60 sq mile closed area. We hope we can help you make it the first in the country to have a bottom-up management scheme in which fishermen can become masters of their own destiny and take responsibility for managing the stocks and the habitat within the protected area for themselves and for the general good.

That is what we hope we can achieve, but we haven't got long, we would like to announce it within the Olympic year, and before the Olympics, and that means by April. So we are going to have to get on with it".

In response to this, Angus Walker said that he did not consider the current law [fisheries] was fit for purpose in order to facilitate the objectives of the WG. He also suggested that there should be uniform regulation across both Southern and Devon' IFCA's.

Andy Woolmer suggested a review of existing regulation should be undertaken.

### **3) Current Status of Ecosystem and Fisheries:**

The Chairman asked the WG members for their individual assessments of the current state of the fishery within Lyme Bay.

Dave Hancock reported an influx of static gear from nomadic fishermen since the implementation of the Lyme Bay closed area, leading to a 50% catch reduction in the whelk fishery for local fishermen. Paul Wason explained that he himself had been displaced from using mobile gear and now potted for whelks. Angus walker reported an increase in species

outside of the SAC and Paul Wason said he thought that this was due to species migration from within the SAC because the seabed was no longer 'farmed' by being trawled. There was some agreement with this from other members of the WG. John Warswick reported an increase in the crab catch within the eastern end of the SAC. Most of the WG members agreed to the general increase of static gear including netting and potting within the SAC area due to displacement and gear safety.

#### 4) **Best Practice**

Andy Woolmer gave examples of best practice from around the world such as gear limitation in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man and lobster fishery management in Canada. Andy suggested that where best and proven ideas and practices could be adapted to suit the Lyme Bay area then these should be considered by the WG.

Angus Walker's view was that boat numbers should be controlled through mooring number restriction, although Chris Wason believed that this would in effect create a 'private' fishery. John Warswick agreed with Chris and thought a more workable solution would be a permit system with conditions attached. Andy Woolmer said that none of the IFCA's had yet brought permits into play despite empowerment through the Marine Act.

#### 5) **Mechanisms for Improvement**

Andy Woolmer suggested that an 'Appropriate Assessment' be produced for the IFCA's prior to the production of a wider 'Fishery Assessment' in order to establish a scientific base on which to plan best fishery practice within the Lyme Bay area. This precedent would have the potential to be rolled-out nationwide.

A regulated shellfish system could be considered much as the Shetland Isles has adopted and which has achieved MCS accreditation. Bill Lawrence said he would talk to the IFCA's about a regulated system and report back to the WG.

#### 6) **Resources**

Charles Clover started a discussion about what 'currency' could be used to help achieve the facilitation for the establishment of the Lyme Bay Initiative. Leading on from the previous suggestion that 'assessments' be produced, Charles Clover said that if the WG commissioned its own science, then this would be considered a useful currency. The provision of Quota was explored as well as supplying VMS equipment. Views were sought on the idea of help with marketing and branding and hence, price premiums for fish/shellfish caught within the Lyme Bay area but this received a sceptical response from many within the group. Dave Hancock thought that consumer fish prices were already too high and left no room for premiums and Angus Walker could not see how a premium at the consumer end of the chain would benefit landing prices.

## 7) **Next Steps**

- Dave Newton was concerned that the WG management of the Lyme Bay area could be 'hijacked' at a later date and wanted to know what guarantees could be put in place to avoid this. Andy Woolmer said he would investigate ways of formalising the WG and would report his recommendations at the next WG meeting. He also suggested entering into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with all stakeholders.
- Tim Glover suggested that relaxation of restrictions as well as restriction implementation should be looked at by revisiting closed scallop grounds after evidence collation within the proposed scientific assessments.
- The Chairman asked Andy Woolmer to undertake port-visits to gather further information from fishermen. Neville Copperthwaite said he would provide Andy with his previous port-visit survey as a starting point. Dave Newton suggested that Andy send a questionnaire to the fishermen in order to save time and expense.
- Bill Lawrence said he will take a look at the South Devon Potters Agreement and report to the next WG meeting.
- Charles Clover suggested that the WG would benefit from other people to sit-in on the WG from time to time as expert advisors or as observers or those with a vested interest, such as funders.

## 8) **AOB**

Chris Wason helpfully suggested that there is a meeting room with facilities located on the Cobb in Lyme Regis that would be available for £40 for the evening.

**Duration of meeting:** 6pm – 9pm

## 9) **Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011, 6pm at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis.

## **Agenda Attached**

### **Contact:**

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# **Lyme Bay Working Group Meeting**

## **Next Steps**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis, Dorset

## **Agenda**

- 1) Agree Minutes
  
- 2) Over-arching principles
  
- 3) Objectives by March 31
  
- 4) Development of a Project Plan from now until April
  
- 5) Examples of best practice
  
- 6) Possible MOU
  
- 7) Any other business
  
- 8) Date of next meeting