



Consultative Committee Meeting

Tuesday 5 February 2019 at 6pm at The Royal Lion Hotel
Lyme Regis

Minutes of the meeting

Present

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation (Chair)
Morven Robertson, Blue Marine Foundation
Catherine Whitley, Blue Marine Foundation (Minutes)
Adam Rees, Plymouth University
Luke Holmes, Plymouth University
Martin Sutcliffe, FLAG
Gerry Irwin, MMO
Richard Caslake, Seafish
Dave Sales, Bridport
Bob Carless, Fisherman, Axmouth
Oscar Fearnley-Derome, Fisherman, Axmouth
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axmouth
Nigel March, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
Gavin Ziemann, Fisherman, Axmouth
Brett Newton, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
Nigel Hill, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
John Shuker, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay
Aubrey Banfield, Fisherman, West Bay
Jamie Smith, Fisherman, West Bay
Kieran Perree, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
Nigel Birt, Fisherman, Axmouth
Saml Birt, Fisherman, Axmouth

1. Apologies

Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation
Mandelai Wolfe, Project Coordinator/Committee Secretary
Rowena Taylor, Blue Marine Foundation
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA
Robert Clark, Southern IFCA
Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
Martin Attrill, Plymouth University
Emma Sheehan, Plymouth University
Sian Rees, Plymouth University

Peter Tinsley, Dorset Wildlife Trust
Andrzej Narozanski, Natural England
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust
Mark Dack, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
John Wallington, Fisherman, Axmouth
Matt Toms, Fisherman, West Bay
Phil Abrahams, Fisherman, Axmouth
Robert King, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
Virgil Turner, Fisherman, Lyme Regis
James Newton, Fisherman, Beer
Paul Godfrey, Fisherman, Beer
Allen Dowse, Fisherman, Axmouth
Barry Trevitt, Fisherman, Lyme Regis

2. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes and actions of the last meeting held on Tuesday 2nd October were reviewed and approved.

3. Updates

a) Marine Authorities and Agencies

Gerry Irwin from the MMO updated the group on the delay on the revised rules for bass fishing. Capped licences are being dealt with at a higher level which is out of his remit and no decision has been made. Gerry also apologised on behalf of the MMO for allocating a zero cod catch for the under 10m boats. A few fishermen commented it had been amended after a few days and therefore quickly resolved. Adam Rees asked if Gerry knew anything about extending the IFCA's remit out to 12 nautical miles which was mentioned at the recent Coastal Futures conference. Gerry replied he didn't.

Gus Caslake from Seafish briefed the group on his work providing training to fishermen on fish quality. Gus understood some of the fishermen were having problems with leakages from the chiller units and described similar case studies in Cornwall. Gus noted the last time he facilitated a training session was in 2013 and explained he would be willing to come again to share techniques used in Cornwall to improve fish quality and increase the back end of pricing. Tim Glover thanked Gus and announced BLUE would be happy to fund Gus to run a couple of two-hour training sessions in each port.

Gus updated the group on RFS. GFA have recently taken over from Seafish and the current RFS scheme is being reviewed with a greater emphasis on human labour. In the Southwest, the primary focus is fish quality compared to in Scotland, where crew vessels employ people without the correct visa or paperwork. The Southwest is in a unique position in terms of the quantity and diversity of fish caught which is illustrated by Oceanfish and Fallfish who can strongly compete with other suppliers because they have access to these waters. Gus said he would kindly keep the group updated on future progress.

The group discussed how Seafish had previously funded auditors as part of the scheme. Moving forward, this cost will now be covered by a third party. The scheme currently costs £150 for under 10m and £350 for over 10m. Gus remarked the scheme was primarily driven by processors or buyers. Therefore, if they wanted a fisherman to be part of the scheme,

they should be assisting them to pay for the certification. Dave Hancock remarked how fishermen will divide the cost of an employed auditor in Scotland. Aubrey Banfield thought this would be delivering more than expected of the under 10m fleet. Tim Glover reminded the group they had decided not to sign up two years ago and confirmed this had been the right decision.

b) Plymouth University research

Luke Holmes updated the group on last year's annual monitoring which is currently being analysed. Luke reported there was a high quantity of algae on the seafloor suggesting high light penetration due to the good weather. Luke also mentioned some changes in the quality of the scallops. Luke stated there is currently no funding for this year's monitoring which the team will start to work on, as well as submitting a paper to be published at the end of the year. Bob Carless asked how much the monitoring would cost and Luke estimated it would be £60,000 per year. The group discussed applying to the FLAG and Martin Sutcliffe informed the group that the Plymouth University would be eligible for a 75% intervention rate, while BLUE would receive a 50% rate. Tim Glover offered to match fund the FLAG funding.

Adam Rees updated the group on the Potting Study which is being sent back and forth to Defra. Adam hoped the process was near the end as the final comments have been reviewed.

c) Skates and rays research

Catherine Whitley provided a quick update on her ray research. Since the last meeting, Catherine has been out fishing on several vessels to collect important biological data and assess the capture methods used to target rays. This research will help demonstrate the sustainability of the local fishery and, if there are positive findings, contribute to a possible downgrading of the MCS rating which will open more sales market opportunities. Catherine urged the fishermen to keep her informed when they go out ray netting and to send her any information on the species, sex or measurements of captured rays. Morven Robertson added a gentle reminder to the fishermen not to put Reserve Seafood tallies on boxed rays. Fishermen may put their own tallies on them, but they cannot be sold under Reserve Seafood because they are a red listed species, and this would undermine the current research being carried out.

The group discussed the current MCS Good fish Guide and many fishermen expressed their concern as more fish are being listed as "fish to avoid". Nigel Birt reported John Dory is now red listed and restaurants are refusing to buy these species. Morven explained that the MCS receive their data from Cefas surveys which is data deficient for many species targeted by static gear. Therefore, MCS apply a precautionary approach and use trawler survey data for the whole area. Tim Glover asked if the fishermen would like more research carried out to support ratings in the area and create a Lyme Bay system to demonstrate local fishing is sustainable. The fishermen agreed it's hard to convince a supplier who uses a national rating system and a separate list would be useful.

Additionally, Tim Glover announced BLUE had applied to the Fisheries Science Partnership to embark on a new netting study, similar to the potting study, to demonstrate the sustainability of the fishery. This should also contribute to collecting information for data limited stocks and will put the group in a strong position to underpin a reassessment of MSC ratings. Tim announced if fishermen would like to participate, they should speak to Terri Portmann or Mandy Wolfe and they would be able to add their names to the application.

Morven Robertson explained the fishermen would only be required to host a CEFAS scientist on board their vessels and would otherwise follow their usual fishing patterns. Morven added fishermen may gain extra quota. Aubrey commented that by being involved, fishermen could help shape the project and advise Cefas on how they can achieve robust datasets. Aubrey emphasised it was important to interact with Cefas and Defra to inform them what and where the fish are and how we fish for them, instead of them generating a system based on fiction. Aubrey noted you can also pull out of the project anytime.

d) Recreational angling

In Mike Spiller's absence, Morven Robertson provided a quick update on the recreational sector. Anglers are using the Epicollect5 app to log ray catches to support the project. Information on the app can now be found on the Lyme Bay website.

e) Local Coordination

Tim Glover informed the committee that Mandy Wolfe, who joined BLUE on a 12-month contract, will be finishing at the end of March to pursue other opportunities. Several fishermen commented on her valuable contribution to the project and expressed concern at losing her services. Tim announced that BLUE would be advertising for a new coordinator and asked the group to put forward any names for the role.

f) AST App

Morven Robertson delivered a quick update on the AST app which is currently tracking all fishing boats. Catherine is working on the online portal and is the main point of contact if any fishermen have any issues with their phone or app functioning. Morven reminded the fishermen their phone needs to be on and the app should be "running" when out fishing or they would be chased by Catherine to have it on next time.

g) Reserve Seafood

Tim Glover informed the group there would be a planning meeting on **Tuesday 26th February** to discuss Reserve Seafood and its associated costs. This needs to be a ruthless process to assess the current returns from the "Man in the Van" scheme and the different approaches which could be applicable moving forward. Tim added BLUE is willing to gift the van to the project, but the running cost and driver fee need to be considered. Dave Sales commented that London restaurants had been serving fish labelled as Reserve Seafood, but these species are not found in this area. Tim replied there would probably still be some overlap from the Direct Seafoods' arrangement and their customers.

Tim Glover asked the group if PTA was working in terms of prices and issuing payment. The fishermen agreed it worked well and Gavin Ziemann noted the van would sometimes go down to Brixham separately, depending where fishermen wanted to sell their shellfish. Some of the fishermen didn't realise this and Morven pointed out they needed to liaise with Mandy to sort it out.

h) Schools outreach programme

Morven Robertson praised Gavin Ziemann for doing a great job at all the school visits. Gavin informed the group it's good to have a voice in these schools because it seemed fishermen are still blamed for everything. Dave Sales remarked the education programme was the most important part of BLUE's work in Lyme Bay. Morven asked the group if anyone else would like to become a fishermen ambassador. Bob Carless volunteered saying he would go along to one of Gavin's lessons. Angus Walker enquired if the programme would be extended to Universities. Morven replied BLUE doesn't have the resources yet but if

Plymouth becomes a Marine Park, they would design a higher marine educational scheme and incorporate it into the curriculum.

i) FLAG

Martin Sutcliffe updated the group on the FLAG's progress to be fully committed before the 29th March deadline. The FLAG has £210,000 in remaining funds and Martin urged the group to keep an eye out for marketing campaigns as the time frame to spend the money is very tight. This money can only fund one year projects as all claims must be finished by December 2019. Ideally, these projects should be ready to go as anything that requires planning permission is a none starter. Additionally, the FLAG would prefer to spend the money in larger sums, rather than split into smaller amounts. Dave Sales encouraged the group to apply as there may not be as much money available in the future. Martin reassured the group the board would continue to meet every three months and if the FLAG continues post-Brexit, it would be good to continue funding the education programme.

Martin briefly mentioned the £37 million promised to the fishing industry in December 2018 which will become available as of 1st April 2019. The MMO Grants team are setting up a system to allocate these funds and will deliver it in the next nine months.

j) Berwickshire Marine Reserve

Tim Glover introduced Sarah Russell and Joe Richards from the Berwickshire Marine Reserve (BMR) to the meeting. Tim explained the BMR was not dissimilar to the Lyme Bay Reserve in terms of issues and BLUE would be working to extend the current boundaries and engage with local fishermen to implement voluntary codes of conduct. Sarah thanked Tim for inviting them down and delivered a brief description of the project background and challenges such as cross border regulations, illegal fishing and lack of management. Increasing potting pressure is also a major concern for local fishermen as some boats will shoot 3000 pots in order to compete with neighbouring fishermen and maintain their patch of ground. The fishermen are very concerned about the sustainability of their fishery and the lack of enforcement and communication with Marine Scotland does not help. BLUE has provided an opportunity to rebrand the BMR and engage with local stakeholders to identify problems and design working solutions to improve the quantity and quality of catch. Sarah thanked Angus Walker for taking the time to show them the chiller unit in Axmouth and concluded how encouraging it was to see so many fishermen sitting around a table engaging with the management of the Reserve.

Aubrey Banfield asked what the concerns were in the BMR. Sarah replied the area was saturated with pots deployed by local fishermen. Sarah explained that if a fisherman has a licence, there is no pot limit and this generates huge conflict over productive ground. This has resulted in territorial behaviour and therefore the ground is overworked and cannot recover. Dave Hancock suggested that putting 3000 pots down was incredibly greedy and they should reduce their fishing pressure for their own self-interest. Sarah explained the fishery was market driven, as the majority of shellfish goes to China via Edinburgh, and fishermen are so heavily invested in their boats and gear they have to overwork the ground to generate a financial return.

Sarah went on to describe the difference in fisheries management between NIFCA and Marine Scotland which is also contentious as there are differences in MLS, pot limits and berried lobsters can be landed in Scotland. Morven added there was only one enforcement officer working between Berwickshire and the Firth of Forth resulting in high infringements of mobile gear use in the static zone. Aubrey commented that if he saw a trawler in the

Reserve, he would immediately phone the SIFCA, but there is little they can do unless their patrol boats are in the water. Sarah replied that Marine Scotland has a “suspicious events” phone line, but it only gets checked every two weeks.

k) Future Management Sub-Committee

Tim Glover updated the group on the first Sub-Committee meeting which took place on Tuesday 8 January. Tim summarised it had been a very constructive meeting advocating the value of the Reserve and need to maintain it with adequate research to evidence what we are trying to achieve and also support species MCS reclassification, where appropriate. The next meeting will be scheduled for the beginning of next month.

Since this meeting, Tim and Morven met with Rob Clark from SIFCA to discuss their new initiative looking at MPA management across the Dorset coast and how the group’s active management of the Reserve can contribute and complement their work. BLUE will stay in close contact with SIFCA in order to minimise the risk of duplication. However, the timeframes are different as SIFCA hope to deliver a draft management plan by September, whereas BLUE will push forward to present a planning framework at the next meeting. Tim reminded all the port reps to continue feeding back to their port associations to keep everyone informed.

Gavin requested to have the next meeting agenda before the last Wednesday of every month to allow each port to discuss and raise any issues or questions at their association meetings. Tim agreed this was a good idea and emphasised that this was a transparent process and that he would be willing to answer any questions about the steering group.

Action: BLUE to send out the meeting agenda to every port representative before every sub-committee meeting.

l) Overseas Fishers Exchange visit

Tim Glover informed the group of an upcoming fisheries exchange event taking place in Lyme Bay on **Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th February**. The event was proposed by Rory Moore, responsible for the Mediterranean projects at BLUE, who suggested an exchange trip to coincide with a fisheries symposium happening in London the week before. Rory had received interest from fishermen in the Aeolians, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus and Spain to visit Lyme Bay and learn about the Reserve. Tim explained there would be workshops on the Saturday afternoon at the Marine Theatre to discuss current challenges and exchange experiences about the CoCs etc, as well as a session at Axmouth harbour to show them the chiller unit. In the evening, a dinner was organised for all the fishermen and on Sunday morning, boats will go out from Beer harbour to take out some of the fishermen to see the Reserve. This will be followed by a pub lunch at the Dolphin and all fishermen are welcome to join in any aspect of the event. Tim emphasised the itinerary was still in draft form and urged fishermen to get in contact with Catherine or Morven if they had any ideas or would like to take part.

m) Communications

Morven updated the group on all social media platforms which are currently going well. Morven encouraged the fishermen to keep sending in photos as these posts receive very good responses. Morven informed the group BLUE will be at the Dorset Seafood Festival this summer and the Reserve Seafood van will be wrapped very shortly with the new logo.

n) Media & PR

Tim Glover announced that BLUE wanted to create a short film for Lyme Bay and Charles Clover will be in touch if anyone has any anecdotes. Tim updated the group on BLUE's role in Parliament to influence government about inshore fisheries management and how it should be structured after Brexit. BLUE hopes to get a better deal for inshore, sustainable fishing.

o) A. O. B. and date of next meeting

Adam Rees mentioned he gave a presentation about the Reserve at the Angling Trust Wyvern Region Presentation evening. Adam reported the audience's comments were very positive such as an increase in the number and diversity of catches and that the anglers all enjoyed coming to the bay.

Date of next meeting TBA.