

Lyme Bay Working Group

12th Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis, on 15th January 2013

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation. (Chair)
Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation.
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator.
Andy Woolmer, Fishery Adviser.
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA.
Sam Dell, Southern IFCA
Dave Sales, Fisherman, West Bay, static gear.
Ian Cornwall, West Bay static gear.
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear.
Alex Jones, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axemouth, static gear.
Nigel Hill, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.
Jim Newton, Beer Fisherman.
Jim Portus, SWIFA.
Pam Ruiters, Environmental Defence Fund.
Adam Rees, Plymouth University.
Rowena Taylor, Graphic Designer.
Dom Boothroyd, National Lobster Hatchery
Bryony Pearce, Guardline.
Liam McAleese, Guardline.
Terri Portman, Scott Trawlers.
Christine Singfield, NE.
Sarah Gall.
Nigel Horsman, Bass Anglers Sportfishing Society.
Laura Partridge, Princes Trust ISU.
Charles Miller, SIFT.

1) Apologies:

Rachel Irish, Marine Management Organisation.

Joana Smith, Natural England.

Professor Martin Attrill, Plymouth University.

Ian Carrier, Southern IFCA.

Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA.

Neil Wellum, Marine Management Organisation.

Paul Wason, Fisherman, Lyme Regis, static gear.

Nick Wright, Marine Management Organisation.

Bridget Betts, Dorset Coast Forum.

John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver.

Minutes

2) Agree minutes of the 10th Working Group meeting:

The minutes were agreed.

3) Update on Implementation of the Management Plan

Adam Rees reported that the potting study coordinates had been submitted and therefore the study could begin as soon as the pots and gear were delivered. Tim Glover said the three quotes had been submitted and the pot manufacturer Mustang had been chosen and would be commissioned immediately. Andy Woolmer had been discussing a iVMS project with Succorfish that would provide equipment but would also enable studies on the data usage and how it can be used to better manage the fisheries and improve profitability of landings. He asked the group for their consent to progress an EFF funding bid on their behalf, this was agreed. He also reported on a Seafish video survey project that had taken place the preceding week. This project aims to demonstrate how fishermen can undertake and participate in seabed habitat mapping surveys and collaborative research to inform site management. Fishermen from Lyme Regis (Alex Jones and Nigel Marsh) worked with Andy and with students from Plymouth Marine Institute (our own Adam Rees and Sarah Gall) to gather video footage of the seabed in the SAC. This video data will be used by Dorset IFCA to inform their fishery management particularly in the current iVMS trial areas. Terri Portman highlighted that over 12m vessels already used the AST system and recommended that this system should be trialed too., Andy said that Succorfish did the same job and that future legislation would most likely define “type” rather than a particular system. This is the case in Wales where scallop fisheries are now managed using VMS systems. Tim asked if we could take advice on this. Tim Robbins said that the Succorfish system uses 3G and is cheaper to run.

Liam McAleese of Guardline gave a short presentation to explain how he intended to bring all the groups scientific evidence into one place. "The Lyme Bay Working Group has commissioned this project to ensure that the working group has its own evidence and science to use to safeguard fishing activities in Lyme Bay against external pressures and to plan for the future. Previous scientific studies in Lyme Bay have on occasion led to mistrust between scientists, fishermen and government agencies such as Natural England.

Fishermen have not always been involved in the process and their first hand expertise has not been utilised. This has led to restrictions on activities or closures.

This project will bring together science that is independent. It is not owned or dictated by the Government or its agencies but is owned and used by the members of the working group both to argue the case for current fishing practices to continue and also to plan for the future of the fishery in Lyme Bay. This project will use the results other work commissioned by the working group such as the Lyme Bay potting trials (University of Plymouth) and the traceability work (tagging scheme) but will also incorporate research undertaken elsewhere in the UK."

Charles Clover said that he wanted to be sure that there was no duplication here and that we are sure that we are doing it to a level that meets DEFRA standards. He said he did not want to be paying for this twice. Tim Robbins said that the standards are all laid down and will be done with both the IFCA and Natural England. Jim Portus asked if the area was just the SAC boundary. Bryony Pearce replied that the area was not yet defined. Jim asked if this was not similar to Project Inshore but Bryony said it was of a different scale. Jim asked if scallop fishing would be looked at and the answer was yes. Charles commented that this could possibly help with the problem of displacement. He asked if there was anything else we could do for SWIFA. Jim said there is the issue of the small number of scallopers that were displaced from Lyme Bay and that we might like to engage them. Tim said it would be helpful if we could have continuous representation from SWIFA in order for them to have a voice. Terri Portman said that she hoped the scientific work would result in ground being opened-up for scalloping.

Angus Walker said that he did not understand Liam's presentation. Liam said that in a nutshell, he was looking at the science and applying it to management. Andy highlighted that we are working in an evidence led system and this is our own evidence that cannot easily be dismissed. It was agreed that Liam and Bryony would be given a more appropriate opportunity to speak to the fishermen in a more user-friendly way.

Tim alerted the group to the presence of Dom Boothroyd from the National Lobster Hatchery and reported that discussions had taken place regarding lobster restocking and that these discussions were continuing. Tim also reported that he had looked at potential interpretation centres both in Lyme Regis and West Bay. He reminded the group that he had been given permission to tweak the new logo design and Rowena Taylor showed the finished article to the group. Tim spoke of the recent incursions into the reserve area by mobile gear vessels and he warned that this could be a threat to the integrity of the forthcoming potting study. Tim Robbins said that it was some boats from Exmouth that were the culprits and

that one had been prosecuted and another case was pending. He said that the Navy had been called and the police helicopter as well as information from within the industry. This was how we are holding the line until we implement a permitting bylaw which the MMO has approved. Charles said that in the past SWIFA had penalised poachers. Jim Portus said he would take this idea back to his association for discussion. He said that SWIFA could deal with miscreants very effectively through the market.

4) New initiatives.

Pam Ruitter explained the forthcoming fish tagging workshop which is planned for the 19th February. Pam said that EDF Officer Tim Fitzgerald would fly in from America to run the meeting but in the first instance she wanted to get some feed-back of views from the group. The criteria that would underpin the tagging scheme was discussed, such as the code of conduct, quality of catch and proof of sustainability. It was suggested that the iVMS project aims at developing a means of communicating catch information between vessels and buyers and that this could be usefully integrated into the scheme utilising a smart phone app.

Pam and Neville would organise the meeting.

Jim Newton said that he needed help in filling-out application forms in order to source funding for improvements and equipment such as ice machines, ice boxes and electrical repairs to his associations fishing sheds. Tim said that perhaps this could come under the umbrella of a coop but there was little appetite for this from the fishermen. Jim said he thought the way to go would be for each association to manage its own port. Tim said that we should start with a shopping list. Neville was tasked with collecting the lists and it was agreed to look into FLAG funding to finance them.

5) MMO/IFCAs update.

Tim Robbins reported that the European Marine Sites had been designated and the new bylaws will be started in January.

6) Funding update

Tim was pleased to report that we had been successful in the DEFRA bid for £300,000 for science monitoring. He also reported that we had been successful with the ICAP grant of £170,000.

7) Media and PR

Hugh Fearnley Whittingstall had interviewed some fishermen from the working group to talk about the management of Lyme Bay which will be shown on TV later this year.

8) Guest's presentations and discussion

Charles Millar of SIFT said that his group had an economic and social brief and was involved in trying to establish an inshore fishery within the Firth of Clyde using a regulating order. Andy asked if the order included fin-fish and Charles explained that the fishery had been closed to trawling since 1985 but they may include fin-fish at a later date.

Dom Boothroyd then gave a presentation about the National Lobster Hatchery and the various lobster restocking initiatives he was involved in around the West Country and said he was keen to see the network of restocking sites extend further along the South Coast. He said the Lyme Bay inclusion would contribute to a more meaningful restocking program and along with an existing purpose built restocking reef further east, this would be the beginnings of a national network.

Nigel Horseman represented the bass anglers and sparked a lively debate by stating that he wanted more and bigger bass. He said that his association was pressing on a national level to get the minimum landing size raised from 36 cm to 46 cm. He said that bass do not have chance to breed at 36 cm.

The Chairman thanked Charles, Dom and Nigel for their presentations.

9) A.O.B.

None.

Date of next meeting.

12th March, 2013, 6pm at the Royal Lion, Lyme Regis.

Duration of meeting: 6pm – 9:30pm.

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