

Lyme Bay Fisheries and Conservation Reserve Consultative Committee Meeting

Meeting held at the Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis on 5th December, 2017

Minutes of the meeting

Present:

Tim Glover, Blue Marine Foundation (Chair)
Neville Copperthwaite, Project Coordinator/Committee Secretary
Catherine Whitely, Blue Marine Foundation
Gerry Irwin, Marine Management Organisation
Vicki Gravestock, Southern IFCA
Sarah Clark, Devon and Severn IFCA
Laky Zervudachi, Direct Seafood
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust
Jon Shuker, Fisherman, Lyme Regis scallop diver
Sam Shuker, Lyme Regis static gear
Jim Newton, Fisherman, Beer, static gear
Dave Hancock, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Martin Attrill, Plymouth University
Emma Sheehan, Plymouth University
Adam Rees, Plymouth University
Luke Holmes, Plymouth University
Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
Kieran Perree, Lyme Regis diver and static gear
Gavin Ziemann, Axmouth Fisherman, static gear
John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver
Robert King, Lyme Regis, static gear
Dave Sales, West Bay static gear

1) Apologies:

Angus Walker, Fisherman, Axmouth, static gear
John Worswick, Fisherman, West Bay, scallop diver
Peter Tinsley, Dorset Wildlife Trust
Martin Sutcliff, FLAG
Narozanski, Andrzej, Natural England
Gus Caslake, Seafish
Tim Robbins, Devon and Severn IFCA
Jerry Percy, LIFE

Martin Foley, Fisherman, Weymouth, whelk gear
Mark Cornwell, Fisherman, West Bay towed gear
Jim Portus, SWIFA.

2) Agree minutes of the 34th Committee meeting:

Dave Sales did not agree with comments Charles Clover made in item 7 of the previous agenda. Tim Glover said this would be noted.

Before proceeding with the agenda, Tim said he wanted the meeting to reflect on what we had achieved together over the six years of the Lyme Bay reserve project, not least being that we still have the organisations and most of the people around the table now that we had at the beginning. Later in the meeting we will hear summary results from the Potting Study which we, BLUE, always said would give you the tools of research and evidence to enable effective management of the fishery and continued access to fishermen prepared to fish sustainably. As well as being a great forum for debate and discussion this management committee has installed best practice in managing fish and shellfish stocks and best practice in managing a conservation area, both creating long-term benefits for the fishery, for conservation and for communities. While there are still a few holes we have come a long way to achieving our aims. Tim said he didn't want to steal Martin's and Adam's thunder but the Potting Study results do show what we have always said. BLUE has spent a lot of time and money on this project and it is very important that it's bottom-up broad collaboration, where fishermen have a real voice and clout, is maintained and supported by you all to secure the Reserve's future.

3) Updates on implementation of the Management Plan

a) Marine Authorities and agencies

For Southern IFCA, Vicki Gravestock gave an update of the Stennis Ledges MPZ near Chesil Beach. Dave Hancock asked if potting would be involved with the update and Vicki said potting is not being considered.

Sarah Clark for Devon and Severn IFCA, reported that a number of consultations were underway. These included a mobile gear consultation which would begin in January and contain a Deeming Clause; a diving permitting bylaw consultation for the North Coast which has just started; a potting consultation due to start in January; formal wrasse management under a permitting bylaw consultation; spiny lobster protection within MPA's of the North Coast; and otter protection guards on Prawn pots for the North Coast. Whelk sizes will be increased from 45mm to 75 mm, starting with 65mm and then 2mm increments annually. Tim asked if there was a possibility that the IFCA's would agree to harmonisation of regulation within the Lyme Bay Reserve. Sarah said that the IFCA had been created to look after local fisheries and unfortunately the boundary between the two IFCA's comes midway through the Reserve – perhaps a voluntary code could be the answer. A lively debate

ensued and Gavin Ziemann said it was Defra that created the S.I. so perhaps we should be asking them.

Gerry Irwin said the landings obligation was still evolving. Rob King said he could not find anything about undulate ray obligations on the MMO website. Gerry informed the group that the landing sizes are 78cm to 97cm and he would enquire why this is not on the website and report back. John Shuker said he has been throwing large dead fish back in the sea and he thought this is crazy. Mike Spiller asked if there would be catch and release restrictions on the angling fraternity next year. Gerry said at the moment this is just rumour but is likely to be included in E.C. proposals.

b) Chiller stores

Neville reported that the replacement thermal insulated reefer container had been delivered to West Bay and cladding of the facility will start early in the New Year. The new ice machine in Lyme Regis had broken down and a temporary machine has been loaned by SPX. A new ice machine will be delivered within a month. In the meantime it has been agreed that the Lyme Regis management group will install CCTV. Blue will fund 50% of its cost. Thermal insulated boxes are due to be delivered and agreement forms will be distributed to fishermen prior to the boxes being distributed,

Dave Hancock handed out a leaflet informing Lyme Regis fishermen that ice will not be available to them from the Axmouth ice machine in the New Year now that they have their own facility.

c) IVMS

Sarah said she is involved with a Defra project looking at implementing a statutory instrument for all mobile vessels to carry VMS. Devon and Severn IFCA will be the rollout pathfinder agency. All vessels from 7 to 12 metres will be fitted with VMS. Airtime will cost £120 per year and any type approved VMS can be chosen. There will be a VMS workshop in December.

d) Schools outreach program

Rowena Tayler said 11 visits have been made since September (3 secondary schools, 8 primary schools) and 8 are scheduled for the New Year (2 secondary, 6 primary schools). The next marketing campaign is scheduled for the beginning of January to secure more bookings for the spring and summer terms. The Gastro Pub chain Cubitt House has had to reschedule their 2-day visit in the New Year. Cubitt contacted us wanting to send some of their Chefs to Lyme Bay to find out more about sustainable fishing and the Reserve Seafood brand. We'll be hosting the classroom session in Lyme Regis with visits to each of the ports to see the chiller stores. Adam Rees will visit Thomas Hardye School in March presenting to the whole of year 9 (400 students) with focus on Lyme Bay Reserve, the scientific potting study and the steps he has taken through the education system.

The Schools Outreach Team is investigating the feasibility of getting marine sustainability included in the science curriculum guidance for teachers. For example, there are elements of the science curriculum that could be linked to marine ecosystems but these are largely taught around terrestrial habitats instead – this could be linked to resources available for teachers to use and this could be where we step in to provide more information. This could be quite a broad remit and encompass not just sustainable fishing but other topics such as marine pollution and other impacts on marine ecosystems, which are becoming ever more relevant.

e) Recreational angling

Mike was given the replacement laminated angling voluntary code of conduct leaflets which he had requested for distribution to angling outlets. Mike said that he had been fielding criticism of the Lyme Bay Reserve on social media and asked for support in doing this. The criticism was that during an online conversation between Mike and those who commented centred around claims that fish are just as big and just as plentiful outside the Reserve as inside.

f) FLAG

Martin Sutcliff could not attend to give an update but Neville reported that the education outreach FLAG application had been successful and will help extend the program to the wider FLAG area.

g) Codes of Conduct review

A leaflet giving the background of Lobster Maximum Landing Sizes and Current Practice in the UK was distributed to the committee for deliberation before the next meeting. Sarah Clark said she had data regarding lobster sizes and weight which she will make available. Neville will liaise with Sarah on this. The review will conclude at the next meeting.

4) Lyme Bay Reserve Seafood pricing and logistics

Neville said a new pricing structure had been implemented which replaced the previous monthly system. Prices are now fixed weekly and are based on the Brixham weekly average prices plus 10%. There had been transport logistical problems with the new route to London via Brixham but this has been put on hold and the route directly to London has been resumed. Laky said that he has been working with the scheme for 18 months now and is now having a re-look at it in view of the recent problems. There was a debate about the shortfalls of recent pricing but time said that now the pricing structure is in place, time should be given for it to bed-in.

5) Potting Study: summary presentation and discussion

Adam Rees gave a PowerPoint presentation which he demonstrated the results from the 4 year potting study. The overall conclusion was that the current level of potting within the Reserve is at a sustainable level. Martin Attrill said that the results provide robust evidence the small boat 'way of life' is entirely viable and sustainable within a MPA. The study shows that low density of potting has minimal impact on the environment or target species. However, high potting densities significantly damages the seabed ecosystem and reduces quantity and quality of catch. From a management point of view, this demonstrates the importance of maintaining strict fishing gear level control but the study also provides a threshold (for the first time) to enable a way forward within the Reserve and is applicable elsewhere.

The results demonstrate that fewer pots in an area can equate to better economic return and the study can be used to add conservation credentials to the Lyme Bay Reserve Brand.

Sarah Clark noted that the results are based on the sixteen potting trial areas of 500m x 500m. She said if the pot numbers could be extrapolated into square kilometres this would be useful for management. Tim asked if the group could come up with a way of using the report in the Reserve. Vicky said that the findings would be really useful for the Southern IFCA Habitats regulation.

6) Communications

Rowena reported Social Media numbers on Facebook were 1,151 and on Twitter 1,935. Regarding website updates, several remote underwater videos supplied by Plymouth University Marine Institute were used on Facebook and Twitter and have generated large followers. Use of video will continue in to 2018.

7) A.O.B.

Terry Portman informed the group that a fishermen lifejacket scheme had been introduced in Plymouth in partnership with the City Authority through FLAG funding. She asked Neville if he could sound-out Reserve members with a view to introducing the scheme in Lyme Bay.

8) Date of next meeting

To be confirmed

Duration of meeting:

6pm – 9.30pm

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