

**Notes of Boston Advisory Group Meeting  
held on Monday 05<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

Present:

R Heath, Lincs Wildlife Trust  
K Heath, Lincs Wildlife Trust  
R Wardle, FWAG  
H Van Smirren, Witham Sailing Club  
R Brocklebank, RAF Wainfleet  
P Rushmer, Project Manager  
K Wilson, Lincs Wildlife Trust  
J Badley, RSPB  
M Redford, Skegness Surf & Kite Academy  
C Redford, Skegness Surf & Kite Academy  
J Ryan, Skegness & Wainfleet Wildfowlers  
B Bowels, NFU & Witham 4<sup>th</sup>

Also in attendance, Helen Everard

B Bowles welcomed Christina and Martin Redford from Skegness Surf & Kite Academy. Christina gave a brief introduction to the background behind the Surf & Kite Academy and how they work closely with schools and youth clubs getting children out in the fresh air and giving them exercise at the same time. They always check the beach for safety prior to going out which

**1) Apologies**

S Pywell, R Walker, E Biott, N Lound, A Saul, J Dodsworth, T Samlley, T Bee, I Watts, P Beaton and D Piccaver

**2) Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters arising**

Page 1 – P Rushmer had an action to respond and support a consultation document on Autonomous marine vehicles, as this related to unmanned vehicles and this was not applicable to jet skies P Rushmer has not responded. Page 2 (item 7) – Some wording is missing and should read ‘The Fishermen appealed against the decision’. Page 2(item 6) – T Smalley suggested that a pro forma be designed to assist with the recording of Anecdotal Evidence of Change. P Rushmer has now produced a basic pro forma. H Everard to circulate to group members.

**3) Conservation Objectives**

P Rushmer informed the management group that the Management Board have urged Natural England to push ahead. Fundamentally what work we have done has not been wasted. Some conservation objectives are more complex than others so the process may take a while. R Wardle said what was over the sea bank years ago and what is there now is less, less sugar beet is grown now and there is less for the geese to feed on. One objective is to consider the need for a buffer zone. Natural England is encouraging stewardship schemes. This is not a new form of thinking. Lincolnshire always seems to be overlooked by those making important decisions. P

Rushmer suggested inviting someone to attend the next meeting. The hinterland needs to be considered as well as the bank outwards.

#### **4) Proposal for a Volunteer Wardening Process and Next Steps**

This is just purely an idea at the moment. From the incidents recording process and the incidents recorded, it is clear that some areas of the site are managed and others are not. There appears to be an increasing pressure on the site for recreational users. P Rushmer's idea is to have a group of volunteers who work closely with site managers. This idea is not unique, a similar scheme already exists at Thanet where the volunteer process has proved very successful which is why P Rushmer is suggesting we do something similar. A paper detailing a proposal was passed round the group. The proposal is that a network of volunteers with a corporate ID is established to act as ambassadors for the site and to work with and complement the full time site managers. They will act as eyes and ears and engage with third parties where there is a lack of awareness, offer best practice, record damage, record any new sightings etc. We need to look at whether such a role is viable and what, if any funding is available. R Rushmer to meet with site managers to discuss in more detail. P Rushmer would like to receive any comments which the group may have. T

#### **5) Review of Good Practice Guide and Next Steps**

The current edition is now 3 years old and it is felt that it is now appropriate to review all activities included within it. There is a budget available to do what is needed. P Rushmer asked members to look through the Guide and let him have any comments via H Everard. A workshop session to be arranged.

#### **6) Setting up a Bait Digging Survey and Next Steps**

P Rushmer would like to do a survey as he feels this activity is something that we know very little about so far as current levels are concerned. P Rushmer proposes to engage with Bait diggers. RAF Holbeach has not had any Bait Digger for the last 2 – 3 years. It would be an interesting comparison to see what historical digging went on compared to what happens now. It also needs defining as what is and what is not acceptable. If anyone suspects any additional commercial scale digging is taking place please report the vehicle registration details to N Lound. A letter can then be sent out to the individuals. It has been shown that most people respond to this. It was felt that monitoring needs to take place to see what is happening out on the site. P Rushmer would like to make contact with some local bait diggers who might be able to help with this. R Brocklebank to try and get some contact details for P Rushmer. The flags have been flying a lot more at RAF Wainfleet and this may be discouraging people from digging.

#### **7) Annual Report Update**

P Rushmer said he had reviewed progress with the Management Board in December. The Annual Report was published as at 31<sup>st</sup> December each year and he hoped it would be completed by end of January. The Action Plan updated with progress to date would also be available and both would go on the Website.

#### **8) Trip Out into the Wash**

R Bowles has offered to the group out into the Wash. This was briefly mentioned at the last meeting and the general feeling has been that people do want to go. P Rushmer may be able to fund some of the trip. J Badley informed the group that the RSPB arrange regular trips out on R Bowles's boat and that these are guided trips and cost approx £11 for members and £13 for non members. J Badley to let H Everard have a list of dates. It was agreed that September would be a good month to go.

**9) Any Other Business**

M and C Redford agreed to give a presentation on kiting at the next meeting. Suggested date for next meeting Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

**Notes of Boston Advisory Group Meeting  
held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

Present:

R & K Heath, Lincs Wildlife Trust  
B Bowles, NFU & Witham Fourth  
T Bee, Skegness & Wainfleet Wildfowlers  
P Rushmer, Project Manager  
J Ryan, Skegness & Wainfleet Wildfowlers  
I Watts, Black Sluice IDB  
R Walker, Port of Boston Ltd  
C & M Redford, Skegness Surf & Kite Academy

Also in attendance, Helen Everard

**1) Apologies**

Apologies received from R Brocklebank, K Wilson, P Beaton, H Van-Smirren, P Root, S Pywell, A Saul, T Smalley, T Amos, T Ashton and J Dodsworth

**2) Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters arising**

P Rushmer has not yet done anything further with regards to Bait diggers. R & K Heath has forwarded some contact details which he hopes to follow up. In time it is hoped to establish a bait diggers forum to try and regulate activity, to get bait diggers to work together. It is not a case that we want to ban the activity.

The final version of the Annual Report and action plan to date is available on the website. Where progress has been made this is clearly shown along with areas where progress has not been made.

**3) Conservation Objectives – Progress update and next steps**

Last time it was discussed why they are being revised. There is a lot of work still to do, Natural England have set a timetable of work over the next 6 months. This timetable was circulated and discussed. It is a consultative process which everyone is involved in, flexibility is required.

Item 6 was moved to become item 4

**4) Anecdotal Change**

This form was circulated with the Agenda and will be circulated ahead of future meetings. Where people notice changes for example more or less fish, this form is to be used to record these changes. Once the form has been completed please return to H Everard before the next meeting. Any comments received will then be forwarded on to Natural England. Peoples' experiences are valuable and compliments scientific evidence. T Bee spoke of the changes over a few years to the green marsh which seems to be common throughout the site. R Walker offered some comments on the navigation/sand banks, although no changes at Boston.

R Walker to provide P Rushmer with comments. It was noted that there are now more badgers, and monk jack deer on the marsh.

#### **5) Volunteer Wardening Process – Progress update and next steps**

This idea was tabled at the last meeting and has now been round all the advisory groups. The idea is that they would be come extra eyes and ears of the management group. P Rushmer will be arranging a meeting with all site managers to discuss in detail. North Norfolk is already covered well by full time management, although some site managers could do with more resources. It was generally agreed not to develop the scheme further. Along the wash coast it was felt that the scheme could be beneficial, areas have been identified. The MOD is happy to be involved in the process. P Rushmer also intends on contacting Parish Council when the process is further down the line. R Rushmer needs to work up roles and discuss these and how to move forward with the Site Managers. It will be a 3 year trial period. Job Description/Person Specs will come to this meeting before they go out.

#### **6) Good Practice Guide Review – feedback and next steps**

Only a small number of people have provided feed back and most of these are not suggesting any major changes. It was agreed to leave the printed document as is and only to amend the version on the website to version II. K Heath would like to see a bigger area on dog walking and advised that the Countryside Agency has produced a leaflet on Dogs.

#### **7) Incident Recording Results 2006 - Summary**

The process records incidents between April – September and focuses on recreation activities and the damaging impact which they have on the site. These incidents are recorded by site managers and volunteers and are then analysed, these then give a picture of what is happening and to see if any activity needs to be managed more. P Rushmer briefly went through the results. H Everard to circulate these results with the notes. It is interesting to see which sites have which issues. T Bee queried why the results were only between April and September, it is felt that this is when there is an increase in recreational activities, any incidents outside of this time period can also be recorded.

G Cantellow arrived. – P Rushmer introduced Graham Cantellow who he had met an Environment event at South Holland. G Cantellow indicated that he would be interested in joining the group and P Rushmer has invited him along. P Rushmer also invited M Bratley and her husband to attend, it was agreed to keep them on the mailing list.

#### **8) Trip Out into the Wash**

This started from the kind offer from R Bowles to take the group out into the Wash, after some discussion it was agreed to join one of the RSPB organised trips. At the last meeting it was suggested that September would be a good month to go. P Rushmer is able to find a small amount of money to reduce the cost. The trip has been opened up to family and friends of the group. The date is 08<sup>th</sup> September.

H Everard is collecting a list of interested people but so far there has been very little response. It was agreed that this should be kept on the agenda as more people may sign up to it nearer the time.

#### **9) Presentation by Kites – Chrissie and Martin Redford**

C Redford advised that they would be talking through what they do and had brought with them a couple of the kites to show to people. They would like to invite the group to go to Skegness one night and visit them. H Everard to arrange. C Redford passed round details of an event which they are organising and advised that they have applied to and received £19,000 of European funding. They are fully aware of why they have been invited to join the group. They showed a smaller kite and a larger one which are controlled on the land, although this is a recreational activity they stressed that they promote beach awareness and are very conscious of the environment in which they are in. They are based away from the central area and encourage users to stay within this area and away from Gibraltar Point. N Lound had passed their details onto P Rushmer as it was felt that it would be beneficial for them to part of this group.

R Bowles thanked Chrissie and Martin for the interesting talk and looked forward to taking them up on the visit to Skegness.

#### **10) Any Other Business**

##### **Centricas proposed cable route through the Wash and their associated Environment Appraisal.**

Centrica is seeking consent to develop three wind farms (Lincs, Docking Shoal and Race Bank) with underground cables between the turbines and the shore. An Environmental Impact Assessment has taken place. The Environmental Assessment will be submitted to Department of Trade and Industry who will be responsible for considering the applications and consult with interested parties. Natural England have responded to the Environmental Assessment with an objection, and Natural England are advisors to DTI so doubtful that they will get the go ahead. Centricas proposals are also a major concern for the management group. Land routes have been eliminated as too expensive. Some discussion took place regarding the proposals.

T Bee advised that the Annual Marsh Clean Up at Wainfleet will take place this coming weekend. T Smalley has previously arranged for the rubbish to be removed, however T Bee has not been able to make contact with T Smalley this year. P Rushmer asked T Bee to ring him in the office on Friday and he would see if he could arrange anything with East Lindsey District Council. The Clean up starts at Sea Lane End, Wainfleet and covers approx 4 miles.

P Rushmer advised that he is attending an EA workshop on water related sports and recreation strategy for East England. There are various headings on the agenda and he will report back to a future meeting.

T Smalley advised that this years wash week will take place between 4 – 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Date of next meeting **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 7.00pm, Committee Room**

Access to the Coats is out for consultation in October, it is hoped that C Donnelly will be able to attend the next meeting. Various local workshops have taken place.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

**Notes of Boston Advisory Group Meeting  
held on Monday 03<sup>rd</sup> September 2007**

Present:

R & K Heath, Lincs Wildlife Trust  
B Bowles, NFU & Witham Fourth  
T Bee, Skegness & Wainfleet Wildfowlers  
P Rushmer, Project Manager  
J Ryan, Skegness & Wainfleet Wildfowlers  
C Donnelly, Natural England  
P Beaton, Boston Borough Council  
N Lound, Lincs Police  
J Badley, RSPB  
A J Ashton, Holbeach & District Wildfowlers  
J T Amos, G.D.E.W.A  
G Cantellow  
D Piccaver, J E Piccaver & Co  
R Wardle, F.W.A.G

Also in attendance, Helen Everard

**1) Apologies**

Apologies received from R Brocklebank, S Pywell, E Biott, H Van-Smirren, R Walker, M & C Redford, J Dodsworth, K Wilson and T Smalley

**2) Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters arising**

P Rushmer is still to speak to the contact names which he has been given for bait diggers, he is wanting to find out from them if they have noticed any unusual activity such as commercial digging etc.

P Rushmer updated on the Volunteer Wardening Scheme. He is waiting for a meeting with Crown Estates as there is a possibility that some funding may be available.

The Good Practice Guide on the Website has been updated and is now shown as version 2. The hard copy is still version 1. Feedback on version 2 is welcome. Please let P Rushmer have any comments.

Incident Recording information for 2006 was circulated with the Agenda and Minutes, comments on this information are welcome. The 2007 Incident Recording process is coming to a close and the job of reviewing the information will soon start. As soon as the results are available these will be circulated to the group. N Lound advised that he receives information on a monthly basis of incidents that have taken place which covers damage to the site. N Lound to send these reports to H Everard for circulation within the group.

The trip out into the Wash will no longer be taking place on 08<sup>th</sup> September.  
P Rushmer is still keen for the group to go out and has spoken to Rodney Bowles

who has offered to take the group out on either a 4 hour or an 8 hour trip. It was agreed that the 4 hour trip would be preferable. P Rushmer to contact Rodney Bowles and get some available dates in September and October.

Due to a combination of low numbers and bad weather the visit to Skegness Kite Academy was cancelled. It was agreed that this is something that the group wish to do and this to be kept on the Agenda. This will now be arranged to take place in 2008.

B Bowles asked for an update on the Centrica proposal to run a cable through the Wash. C Donnelly was able to give the latest position with regards to Natural Englands comments. Centrica have addressed some but not all of Natural Englands concerns. A discussion took place and people expressed their own opinions/views on the proposals by Centrica, also Wind Farms and the Wash.

### **3) Conservation Objectives – Progress update and next steps**

C Donnelly led this item and started by giving a brief presentation on the background to the Conservation Objectives. Natural England are required to report on the status of species and habitats in the European Marine Site. The current consultation period ends at the end of September, all comments received will then be taken into account and a summary of comments paper will be produced. C Donnelly stressed that this is a consultative process and everyone will be given the opportunity to contribute. The process needs to be open and transparent. There are some pieces of work which need to be undertaken and a list of requirements has been produced, this is dependant on funding. Group Members gave Connor their views/opinions and possible sources of information.

T Beaton left the meeting at 8.30pm

The Wash SPA was discussed, more meetings may be needed to ensure that correct and accurate data is recorded. It was agreed that C Donnelly should attend a future meeting, a workshop type meeting may be more suitable to ensure that all comments/view/information is recorded. It was agreed that this meeting had proved to be useful. J Badley agreed to speak to his colleagues and any further comments would be sent to C Donnelly.

### **4) Any Other Business**

Coastguard Attendance, It was noted that since Sam Jessop left her post there has not been any representative from the Coastguard at this meeting. P Rushmer to invite Sam Jessops replacement to the next meeting.

The coastal access is an ongoing issue. Consultation had to be in by September 11<sup>th</sup>. The proposals want to give 100% access to the coastline. Lincolnshire already has reasonable access.

T Smalley advised that funding had been secured to undertake a Green Infrastructure Masterplan. A temporary post will be created to undertake this work.

The Wash Wide Conference will be held during November (likely to be 3<sup>rd</sup> week in November) Date and Location to be confirmed. This years theme will be 10 years of the project and looking forward to the next 10 years.

Date of next meeting **Tuesday 06<sup>th</sup> November, 7.00pm, Committee Room**

The meeting closed at 9.15pm.

***Please can any further comments on the Conservation Objectives or the SPA be forwarded to [Conor.Donnelly@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Conor.Donnelly@naturalengland.org.uk), with a copy to [helen.everard@boston.gov.uk](mailto:helen.everard@boston.gov.uk)***

**Notes of Boston Advisory Group Meeting  
held on 6th November 2007**

Present:

B Bowles, NFU/Witham 4<sup>th</sup>  
N Harding, Boston Borough Council  
R & K Heath, Lincs Trust  
H Van-Smiren, Witham Sailing Club  
G Cantellow  
T Bee, Skegness & Wainfleet Wildfowling Club  
S Franoux, Bat Conservation Trust  
A J Ashton, Holbeach & District W.A  
J Amos, G.D.E.W.A  
J Ryan, Skegness & Wainfleet W.C  
C Donnelly, Natural England  
J Badley, RSPB  
S Pywell, Welland & Deepings I D B  
R Brocklebank, RAF Wainfleet  
A L Roughton, NFU/Roughton Farms Ltd  
P Rushmer, EMS Project Manager

Also in attendance, Helen Everard

The chairman introduced Nick Harding who explained that he is Planning Services Manager at Boston Borough Council and that Tricia Beaton the usual rep for this group will be leaving the Council in December and that in the interim he will be attending the meetings and also Simon Franoux whose interest is Barn owls, Bats and also volunteer Wardening.

**1) Apologies**

Apologies received from R Walker, T Smalley, D Piccaver, H Donnelly and K Wilson.

**2) Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters arising**

The trip out into the Wash did not happen this year. This will now be arranged to take place in Spring 2008. H Everard and P Rushmer to speak to R Bowles and arrange a new date.

**3) Seal and Whale Stranding**

Graham Cantellow explained the background behind the organisation. A copy of the poster had been circulated with the Agenda and colour laminated copies were circulated at the meeting. Graham has attended the one day course which he paid for himself. He now has an ID card and also has Public Liability Insurance. Graham is the local contact for Skegness round to the Nene. His contact number can be found on the posters. Some discussion took place on whose responsibility it is whether it is the crown or the local authority. Lessons have been learnt from the recent stranded whales at Skegness. The Landowner/grazier is often not aware what to do. Graham advised that in the first instance people should phone the British Divers Association,

even if the animal is dead. Bryan Bowles advised that often when an animal has been washed up and it has had parts cut of it for testing it is not left in a very nice state and it is just left to rot. If it is not causing a nuisance the general practice appears to be that the animal is left to rot. Peter Rushmer will speak to Eastern Sea Fisheries and Natural History Museum for clarification on who is responsible for the animal. Nick Harding advised that he would speak to his colleagues in Environmental Health.

#### **4) Wardening Proposal**

It is hoped that this will encourage local people to take an interest in the site. Funding is required for a co-ordinator, P Rushmer advised that he has recently attended a meeting with the Crown Estates. A join bid has been submitted to the Crown Estates by Wash NNR and Green Quay, sponsored by Wash Estuary Strategy. No indication has yet been received as to whether the bid has been successful. It is hoped that a decision will be made in December. P Rushmer read out a paragraph from the bid. P Rushmer will advise the group once he is aware of the decision. K Heath was concerned that more people are being encouraged onto the site. P Rushmer felt the scheme was one of education and ensuring that people are aware of the importance of the site. Due to the Coastal Access Strategy more people are expected to visit the site. R Brocklebank advised of a recent incident involving quad bikes. H Van-Smirren also advised that there is more activity at the spot where she goes where as before it used to be quiet. Access to the Coast will cause problems but it is hoped that by educating people the amount of damage and distress caused to the site will be at a minimum. The Wardening scheme is a controlled process and seen as an education programme. Interpretation signs were discussed. It is thought that T Smalley has recently been involved in the reviewing of these signs.

#### **5) Anecdotal Change**

The pro forma was sent out with the agenda. This is a valuable exercise. P Rushmer reminded people to either bring their completed forms to these meetings or email them in advance to H Everard. All comments are relevant and it is also nice to note what other people's views are. R Heath has submitted 3 to P Rushmer prior to the meeting starting and these were read out and discussed. (A copy attached to the minutes). It is thought that the large gull population has been elevated by the Boston Landfill. It was understood that recently a repellent chemical had been used at the site but this had not been licensed by the EA. G Cantellow and N Harding offered to see what information they could find out about the site, the large gull population and any spraying of a repellent chemical.

#### **6) Draft Conservation Objectives**

This is a follow on from the discussion held at the last meeting. The Consultation period was due to finish at the end of September but has been extended to allow comments from the Fishing industry. The Conservation Objectives will be finalised by 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

The Environment Agency is undertaking a review of all consents/licences issued. C Donnelly to find out about the Boston Landfill Site.

All anecdotal change information is very useful as part of the process.

J Badley advised that Seals are now breeding at Freiston Shore. Tiny pups have been spotted on isolated parts of the old bank. There are approx 284 Seals at Cut end, with a few more at Wrangle and Friskney. There have been no sightings of grey seals around Boston. It was suggested that C Donnelly speak to J Motkins who has previously undertaken seal counts.

The lagoons at Snettisham are noted but not Moulton Marsh, this is because they are 100metres outside of the SCA and SSSI site. The site belongs to Lincs Wildlife Trust.

The Salt Marsh has increased and differences can be seen between 2003 and 2007.

Spartina (Cord Grass) was then discussed.

C Donnelly explained the Sabellaria Spinulosa (Ross worm). P Rushmer has some photographs which he will send to H Everard for circulation to the group.

C Donnelly reminded the group that all comments must be in by next week.

## **7) EA Initiative**

The EA's Significant Water Issues Consultation was presented to full management group. P Rushmer explained the area, the objectives and measures. This is a statutory plan and has to be signed off by the Secretary of State. The Consultation came out in July and is out until 24<sup>th</sup> January 08. It can be found on the EAs website. It is different to the Shoreline Management Plan. It is expected that sea levels will rise. B Bowles is concerned that land owners are being left to look after the defences on their land. N Harding advised that Boston Borough Council has recently undertaken a revision of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Draft Maps have been received showing 2007, 2055 and 2115. These show that changes are expected in the Wash.

P Rushmer advised that following the departure of S Jessop, he has been in contact with her replacement who is H Donnelly and he has confirmed that he is will attend future meetings and be a member of the group.

J Badley asked for clarification on the rumour that the Wash has been considered as a World Heritage Site. T Smalley would be the best person to provide an update. Finance rewards come with a World Heritage Site but the down side is the increase in tourism.

T Bee asked about Public right of way down the sea wall at Jubilee Bank. Some discussion took place as to whether there is public access. There is grazing taking place on the bank and it is known that dogs and cattle do not mix well. The onus is on the land owner to ensure that signs are in place. The good practice guide has been updated and has advice for walking dogs near cattle. The most up to date version is on the web site. A notice on the gate should be displayed. N Harding advised that his team have a set of definitive footpath maps and will bring them to the next meeting.

P Rushmer reminded the group to continue to submit the anecdotal change information, it is important.

Date of next meeting **Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February, 7.00pm, Committee Room**

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

*Post Meeting Note: At the meeting the date for the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February. Due to room availability the meeting will now be held on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February. The start time remains 7.00pm.*

**Minutes of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Advisory Group  
Held at the Conservancy Board, Harbour Office,  
Common Staith, King's Lynn  
February 1<sup>st</sup> 2007 at 7pm.**

**Present:**

Roger Ward  
Janet Blundell  
Tom Rowe  
Jim Scott  
Stephen Sellers

Chair  
Secretary

**Apologies:**

Barry Diggle  
Gary Hibberd  
Judith Stoutt  
Lew Purt

**Relevant Officers:**

Capt. John Lorking                      Harbour Master KLCB  
Peter Rushmer                          Project Manager

**1 Introduction:**

Roger Ward welcomed everyone.

**2 Apologies:**

These were recorded as above

**3 Previous Minutes:**

All relevant matters that were in the previous minutes were covered in the Agenda.

**Matters arising:**

**i. Eider Duck Predation** – (*PR presented on behalf of JS*)

Some useful preliminary results have been reported from modelling work examining the effects on eiders of applying different management techniques to the commercial mussel lays. The work is being carried out by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and funded by Natural England, and is intended to influence future management of the mussel lays. Stocks on the mussel lays are currently still being worked by both the fishermen and the eider duck!

A dredge mussel fishery on the Gat Sand and some other key mussel beds in the Wash have been given Natural England's approval. Agreement to open the important Gat mussel bed to a fishery has been reached through good liaison involving fishermen, Natural England and Eastern Sea Fisheries Committee.

Hand-working (hand-raking) of the cockles has produced a very good season, which is now coming to a close, although the quota for hand-raking the cockles has not yet been fully taken.

The fishermen are keen to continue working the hand-raked area because of the better quality product they can achieve.

**ii. Letter to BBC re: Filming in the Wash.**

PR said he had sent a robust letter to the BBC about the unacceptable low flying and disturbances by helicopter pilots during filming of programmes about the coast. Asked how they defended their position, PR replied that they had denied they were law breaking. He said he had replied 'robustly' to the Director General, sending copies of all correspondence to the Head of the Natural History Unit in Bristol. He had consulted with the Incident Recordings and NE, who would be responsible for taking forward enforcement action (if any), asking BBC to draw up guidelines for this practice. He added that the CCA would not take it up unless there was risk to buildings or people, or environmental damage.

**iii. Correspondence** – There was none.

**4i Progress to date – Conservation Objectives Workshop & Next Steps.**

The Management Scheme Review is still delayed – NE needs to complete the Review of Conservation Objectives although some new progress has been made. A preliminary first workshop was set up in January 2007 to look at conservation objectives, but the complexities of the issues meant only the Intertidal Flats conservation

Objective was discussed. Because of the complexities involved, this will take some time to achieve. The interest features identified were:

- intertidal flats
- subtidal sandbank
- saltmarsh
- reefs
- seals
- saline lagoons

The Workshop was set up to consider and discuss the draft targets set under each conservation objective. Those with expertise, knowledge and experience were invited to attend to look at the research and survey information currently available. NE is in process of revising the conservation objectives for The Wash & NNCSAC, the SPA and the SSSI.

*'Conservation objectives are key to nature conservation management of these sites. They are set for each interest feature (eg saltmarsh, intertidal flats, and bird assemblage) and define the quality of the interest feature required to maintain it in favourable condition. They are used in assessing the impact of plans or projects on the sites (eg fisheries proposals, offshore wind farms) and on-going activities (eg recreational activities, addressed through the Managements Scheme for the site.)'*

*The objectives are being revised in the light of CSM (Common Standards Monitoring) guidance, developed and agreed by the JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) and country conservation agencies. This ensures that there is a consistent approach to condition monitoring of designated sites across the UK.*

*Under this approach favourable condition is measured by the development of 'conservation objectives' for each interest feature. The objectives set targets for 'attributes' of each interest feature which take into account natural variation. The guidance distinguishes between mandatory attributes (define favourable condition, plus discretionary attributes (highlight local differences)'. (Extract from PR's Report to the Meeting)*

It was stressed that this cannot be a quick process: it was necessary to be thorough. There is no time-scale as yet.

The difficulties within NE of reorganisation (the merger of EN into NE) and staffing are a problem for the MS: it is having a knock-on effect.

#### **i. Condition Assessment –**

the JNCC will circulate a consultation draft of the document they intend sending to Europe. The Management Group can contest the Report if there is disagreement. There was some discussion about the source of information for the JNCC Report, bearing in mind our conservation objectives and condition assessment have not been concluded. Concern was expressed that if old information (derived from the NE database ENSIS) was used, it may not give an accurate report.

#### **ii. Proposal for a Volunteer Wardening Process -**

PR shared his concern that as a result of the *Incident Recording Programme* and the *Action Plan Review*, it was clear that there is more public use of the Site and that there were parts of the Site that were not covered by wardens. He was therefore proposing that a volunteer warden scheme should be introduced along the lines of the *Thanet MS* (Appendixed to these Minutes is a Discussion Draft of Volunteer Wardening/Ranger Proposal). He felt there was a need to do more as the trends indicate there is generally more disturbance to the site. This was corroborated by members of the AG present.

PR said he envisaged a network of volunteer Rangers/Wardens who had a 'corporate' identity, who could be given training, would work alongside full-time wardens/ranger and landowners to become 'Ambassadors' for the Site, raising awareness, able to offer good advice and discourage bad practices.

PR stated that if it went forward it should be a formal process, taking into account issues such as Health & Safety, what to do in emergencies, Insurance and external funding, as well as proper training of volunteers.

Initial response from the AG was mixed: emphasis mainly on the need to tread carefully and to disseminate information about the scheme to the general public, getting them to become more involved with 'their environment'. However, all agreed in principle.

PR welcomed feedback on this and said he would be consulting with the other AG's this month, as well as circulating the ideas to Managers of sites, with whom he hoped to have a separate meeting. It was important to complement, not prejudice their good work.

PR said his personal view was that the Project needed to evolve a change of direction for the Project after 2008, when the next term of the Project Memorandum of Agreement will be renewed. He stressed his belief that we should continue to make a difference. It was for the Management Board to decide this.

**iii. Review of Good Practice Guide** – PR suggested that it might now be appropriate to look at the GPG and review it to see if it needs changing/updating, etc. Members of the AG will be sent copies of the Guide together with a letter/form as a preliminary step to gauge members' reactions. If the replies indicate a need for revision, then a Workshop will be set up to enable members to have their say.

**iv. Bait Digging Survey** – PR said one area we have little understanding about is bait digging in the EMS. It is an acceptable tradition and longshore economy activity, though influxes of new diggers are a concern. Members of the AG suggested a **Bait Diggers' Forum** be set up to assess levels of activity in the Wash. PR will contact bait diggers via individual bait diggers, angling clubs and Tackle shops.

**v. Annual Report** – PR said it was nearly finished and intended it to be on the website by the end of February. The *Action Plan* is in a new format. B will circulate members when it is ready.

#### **5. a. Offshore Wind farms – update –**

John Lorking set out the 3 volumes of the *Consultation Document* prepared by *Centrica* for scrutiny by relevant authorities. He invited AG members to inspect it. The document shows the land route, sea route and views. He added that *Centrica* wanted to 'invest' in the local environment and suggested funding for some of the Marine Site initiatives might be sought from them. There is a DVD available and PR is going to ask for 10 copies for distribution among the members of the three AG's.

#### **b. Fisherfleet Development –**

The Phase1 part of the project is going to Consultation. Phase 2 is currently on 'the back burner', as a number of issues that have been raised by the Conservancy Board need to be addressed. These include: the timescale, the problem of scouring, berthing of boats, mooring arrangements and maintenance of the area with regard to waste – liquid and solid discharges.

#### **AOB:**

1. **Action:** PR asked AG members for contacts re the **Common rights on the Gedney Marsh**, which is referred to in the Annexes.
2. **Damage to RSPB Tracks** – Paul Esplin (SH District Councillor) had contacted PR with his concern at the increase in disturbance to tracks and the disturbance to birds at the RSPB site caused by increasing numbers of visitors. JS said it was 'not really an issue' as the increase in visitor numbers was probably temporary - a 'one-off' - caused by the appearance of the *black kite* – a rare bird. The recent heavy rains coupled with the unusual amount of visitors had made some of the pathways muddy, but nothing that wellies and stout shoes couldn't cope with.
3. **NE delays:** PR was able to reassure the Meeting that NE confirmed that the delayed work caused by the amalgamation of EN into NE would be resourced.

The Meeting closed at 9.10pm.

6. The date for the next Meeting: to be announced.

**Minutes of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Advisory Group  
Held at the Conservancy Board, Harbour Office,  
Common Staith, King's Lynn  
April 27<sup>th</sup> 2007 at 7pm.**

**Present:**

Roger Ward	Chair
Janet Blundell	Secretary
Judith Stoutt	
Tom Rowe	
Barry Diggle	
Joan Evans	

**Apologies:**

Jim Scott  
Tom Roberts (Post-Graduate Student)  
Paul Evans  
Stephen Sellars  
Keith Baggaley

**Relevant Officers:**

Capt. John Lorking	Harbour Master KLCB
Peter Rushmer	Project Manager

**1 Introduction:**

Roger Ward welcomed everyone, and in particular, new member, Joan Evans.

**2 Apologies:**

These were recorded as above

**3 Previous Minutes:**

All relevant matters that were in the previous minutes were covered in the Agenda.

**4. Progress to date – 1. Conservation Objectives - progress update and next steps.**

There is a continuing need to review the interest features and other Conservation Objectives, although some new progress has been made with the timetable for doing so. The interest features include:

- intertidal flats
- subtidal sandbank
- saltmarsh
- reefs
- seals
- saline lagoons
- SPA birds

the intertidal flats had been done at the workshop in January and workshop notes are now available (attached). Once all the conservation objectives are set, a condition assessment can be carried out if necessary, management measures should be then re-drafted to keep the Site in condition. NE had been considering the programme to complete this task and PR circulated at the Meeting their:

**Conservation Objectives & Condition Assessment timetable:**

- First draft conservation objectives for remaining features by **June 22**
- Internal consultation from **June 25 – July 20** – include NE
- Incorporate comments and finalise first drafts by **Aug 3**
- Consultation with external parties (including meetings with Advisory Groups (include FMG/B, fishing Groups, Scientific groups etc), with potentially a further scientific workshop (?) between **Aug 6 – Sept 30**
- Incorporate and comments and finalise conservation objectives by **Oct 12**
- Send final conservation objectives to Management Group on **Oct 15**
- Consider Site and Review condition assessments and make judgement for Site **by Nov 2**
- Send condition assessment to Management Group on **Nov 5**

Discussion followed concerning the role of the AG's in the discussions. PR said that the workshops on the intertidal flats had been useful and challenging – particularly in respect of some of NE's proposed targets the timetable showed when the draft conservation objectives would come out to the advisories for their consideration and input. Understanding the Conservation Objectives for the site and the activities within it, eg fishing and judging whether or not there is no impact is key to achieving sustainability.

The question imposing 'closed areas' was raised as a means of keeping sustainability, as in Cornwall and Scotland, to allow species to re-establish, but (JS –ESJFC, said) apart from the seasonal closures (eg cockling) no permanent consideration was planned, although some consideration was being given to protect sabellaria features. The Meeting was reminded that one of the original aims of the EMS was one of inclusion not exclusion.

PR added that checks on sustainability using traditional practices (as in the case of shellfish) proved the 'misconception' that fishing activities 'hoover everything up' was unfounded. In any case NE would not allow wholesale fishing – it had to be sustainable, and if so, was therefore allowed to continue. It was noted that privately controlled areas of the Site were not subject to ESJFC statutory controls.

The Conservation Objectives Review – a summary of the scientific study by NE, or outsourced by them, would be available for AG members via these meetings and most likely, the Web Site.

*(Item 4 – anecdotal change was taken next.)* The pro-forma circulated to AG members to encourage feedback on change noticed to site features had produced little response, indicating that little feedback was considered necessary at this stage. This was considered a good way of validating scientific assessments which often use data from a snapshot in time. PR suggested that the opportunity for any changes should be presented at each AG.

**2. Volunteer Wardening Process:** PR reaffirmed his belief that this was a good way of ensuring good monitoring of the Site, as well as involving individual lay members to the 'eyes and ears' as well as encouraging good practice. PR has already spoken with Site Managers in NN (incl RSPB) and the MOD. Discussion suggested that different emphases were required in different areas. For example, NN had extensive wardening and they would like to see a boost in incident recording, covering those areas not already sufficiently covered. The area to the West (Hunstanton to Gibraltar Point) was less well catered for and might benefit more from having Volunteer Wardens to fill the gaps.

PR will circulate AG members with next steps, including the resources needed – eg more permanent staff to train and manage the many volunteers! RW suggested possibly seeking Lottery funding for training purposes.

**3. Good Practice Guide Review:** Not much feedback from AG's (– suggesting that it is ok as it is and that the comments really amounted to 'fine-tuning'). PR said that after another year of Incident Recording and if possible, the completion of the second edition of the Scheme, it might be feasible to reconsider the layout etc. In the meantime, he would consider updating the digital version, until it is necessary for a change.

**5. Bait Digging:** No real progress has been made, but is ongoing. PR thanked TR for the contact details he had provided. SS had also done so. Some success in making on-the-ground contacts has been made, especially in the Boston area. However, generally it was felt that the problem was less than previously. It is important to ensure that as a 'traditional activity', monitoring does not appear to be imposing restrictions..

**6. Incident Recording summary:** A summary was distributed at the Meeting (Attached) showing that there were no clear trends, except perhaps with the incidents of jet-skis and civilian aircraft. The rise in 'steady-state training' by military using in particular Apache helicopters was also noted. It was noted that the military does not always 'consult' when increasing aircraft activity or using new aircraft. There are implications for the Site on increased aerial activity. Every user of the Site has a legal responsibility to conduct their activities involving consultation with the appropriate authorities in such circumstances/

**7. ESJFC (Extra item, to be included hereto forth):** JS said that appropriate assessments of the impact of fisheries on site features are routinely carried out (by ESJFC) and sent to NE for discussion; this sometimes leads to amendments to proposed management measures for the fisheries.

The *Dredging Mussel fishery* opened in January 07, and NE supporting it with a decent quota. Some parts were 'boxed-off' - notably part of the Gat Sand mussel bed, with the intention to ensure that the areas of mussel bed of most conservation value (i.e. the older ridges of mussel) were not damaged by fishing activities.

This was essentially micro-management of the mussel beds. ESFJC re-surveyed the Gat mussel beds after fishing had taken place and found that generally, the fishermen collaborated by staying within the 'fishing box'. There was a smaller hand-worked quota, but there had been no uptake of this. The season closed in April when the dredge fishery quota also finished.

The Cockle Fishery was opened in July 2006. Dredging was restricted to one cockle bed (Friskney Sand) and this fishery was opened only during July and October. Hand raking of cockles was permitted throughout the Wash from June 2006 and this fishery has remained open to the current date. The cockle fishery was very successful both for both price and quality.

However, some issues remain unsolved: eg the use of ATV's (All Terrain Vehicle) to access the beds: NE are not happy about their use because they potentially disturb birds and damage the grounds. [ESFJC warned the fishermen that NE did not approve of this activity, and NE sent a notice to all Wash Fishery Order entitlement holders to explain that use of ATVs was not consented within the Wash.] ESFJC is currently assessing cockle stocks in the Wash in order to set management measures for the 2007 cockle fishery.

**5. The Way Ahead:** Covered by previous items.

## **6. Updates:**

**1. Offshore Wind Farms:** JL said that the Lynn & Inner Dowsing sites are being constructed – 54 turbine bases are being installed and the upper sections will follow. The cables from them will go ashore at N. Skegness and then into the National Grid.

A daily fast launch from Grimsby takes workers to the site.

Round Two will be erected further of shore, wrapping round the site under construction, subject to permission being granted.

PR said there are a number of objections from the NE and ESJFC and possibly others re Round Two of the Wind Farm Scheme. JL said there were particular concerns about the appropriateness of the cable routes considering the number and the 3km width required on the Wash floor, and possibly snagging of cables by shipping in an emergency. Ship Masters have legal obligations regarding the safety of their crew and the public.

**2. Fisherfleet Development** – allowing for the extensions of the existing fish landing quay, but within the existing boundaries - A Harbour Revision Order has been reapplied for – funding still sought. Phase 2 – construction of a Jetty on the East Bank of the Ouse is 'on hold' because of concerns re:

siltation

Possible need to create a dredge pocket for larger vessels

maintenance issues

'rafting/surging' effect off larger vessels

**3. Nora Marina:** - The proposal put to the Council consists of a 250-berth Marina Basin behind the Boal Quay with a river lock. The inland navigation link remains an aspiration, and because of the significant cost, it has been dropped from the present proposal. Any traffic to or from the Marina must be via the Tidal River Great Ouse, which will be a hazard for many inland craft because of the tidal current and rise and fall.

The Marina Basin plan will have to be designed carefully to minimise the ingress of silt from the river and therefore will have an impact on the ongoing maintenance costs.

**AOB:** 1. The 'Earl of Pembroke' will be in Kings Lynn from June 21<sup>st</sup> for a few days. It may later travel up the Nene to Wisbech. It will be moored in Kings Lynn at a specially constructed pontoon at Boal Quay.

2. JE outlined a problem concerning swimmers in a jet-ski incident at Hunstanton. This raised questions about monitoring jet-skiers and issues of 3<sup>rd</sup>-party insurance indemnity.

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2007** Conor Donnelly from Natural England will be present.

**Meeting closed** at 8.45pm

**Minutes of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Advisory Group  
Held at the Conservancy Board, Harbour Office,  
Common Staith, King's Lynn  
September 4<sup>th</sup> 2007.**

**Present:**

Roger Ward  
Janet Blundell  
Tom Rowe  
Lew Purt  
Stephen Sellers  
Joan Evans  
Conor Donnelly (SAC Marine Sites Officer NE)  
Tom Roberts (Post Graduate Research Student (UCL) –Marine Sites Management (The Wash is one of his case Studies)

Chair  
Secretary

**Apologies:**

Barry Diggle  
Jim Scott  
Judith Stoutt

**Relevant Officers:**

Capt. John Lorking  
Peter Rushmer

Harbour Master KLCB  
Project Manager

**1 Introduction:**

Roger Ward welcomed everyone and introduced Tom Roberts who was invited to contribute.

**2 Apologies:**

These were recorded as above

**3 Previous Minutes:**

All relevant matters that were in the previous minutes were covered in the Agenda.

There were some responses to Conor's documents which had been circulated before the Meeting. In particular questions concerning the Windfarms and whether there had been any further information from Centrica regarding the cable route. CD said that although Centrica had provided more information there were still some concerns that had not been addressed. NE is not convinced that the Wash route is the best. NE's preferred route is via the N. Norfolk coast. However, this seems unlikely to be selected because there are no land cable links (sub-station) and possible 'cable losses'. The National Grid is unlikely to provide the infrastructure required. The capacity at the Skegness substation will not be sufficient.. Hence choosing the Terrington landfall and connection with Walpole.

**4 The Wash and North Norfolk Coast EMS draft Conservation Objectives Consultation:**

- SAC Marine Sites Officer (Natural England) – **Conor Donnelly**

Conor Donnelly distributed a summary table\* showing the Habitat types (interest features) and their Attributes (characteristics) with relevant conservation objectives and sub-features/or key biotypes. After explaining the background of the requirements of EC Law (Regulation 33):

- a) to monitor the status of species and habitat in Maine sites
- b) NE has a duty to advise on conservation objectives and operations which may adversely affect the species and the habitat.

Later in the Meeting, CD discussed the SPA document via a PowerPoint presentation

NE, in carrying out Condition Assessment, set 'site specific conservation objectives to measure impacts on marine life in order to answer the question: Is the 'feature' in a favourable/unfavourable condition?

CD said NE wants to do all this in spirit of Management Scheme i.e. consultative and bottom up. The timetable for the Consultation Document is as follows:

- Draft .....August 07
- Comments on draft by end of September 07

- Finalise the conservation objectives by 19<sup>th</sup> October 07
- Present document to the AG's and FMG by end of November to mid January 08
- Finalise by beginning of February 08

RW suggested that the AG now considered if the conservation objectives were adequate, any necessary changes should be fed in. CD went through the table answering any questions that arose.

### SAC Features

- The *razor* trial fishery: the trial had gone through various Appropriate Assessments and passed because lack of impact in areas proposed.
- Examples of conservation objectives were discussed. CD said there are issues about how to judge favourable and unfavourable. Extremes are easy, but in between is more difficult.
- *Large shallow inlets and bays* : Mapping is undertaken. The data is qualified by EA on water quality is. Other specialists involved as appropriate, so conservation objectives are set with expert input from third parties.
- *Ross worm reefs* – Originally a sub feature, now upgraded. Given own status in 2002 through moderation.
- *Reefs* are important as they enhance the ecosystem. Remote sensing surveys done by ESFJC. Conservation objectives are subject to natural change, which can be quite significant with this species

Plans and projects like Centrica's (windfarms) or the SMPs have to consider conservation objectives and impact on this kind of feature.

Condition baseline is 1996 at designation, or earlier if earlier surveys are the most relevant and up to date.

### Anecdotal changes noted:

eg why sand eels no longer appear at *Cley* (near the Harnser pub)

eg *Snettisham Lagoons* – There are concerns there that there is lack of vegetation that hosts invertebrates which is good for the birds .

NE looking at this with EA, KL&WNBC and RSPB. It is possible that the last survey was not done at right time. Another future survey may be better.

*Seals* - Reportedly plenty of pups this year. Suggested that some populations may be moving from west to east e.g. Blakeney.

CD said it is another example of a feature we know lots about through long term studies etc.

*Oyster catchers* are moving inland to feed on potatoes.

*Otter*. CD said it was put on list through moderation; there have been some seen at Babingley. The data is old and possibly unreliable and numbers are not high. It was suggested in discussion not therefore a good species to use; others might be more indicative. Meeting suggested it be removed or qualify to make it site/location specific, ie to lower the baseline.more.

### SPA Features

- Impact of Ouse Washes on some species e.g. attracting pintail away, or other species short stopping.
- Impact of predation from gulls and seals on shelduck
- increased freshwater flows pushing food further out to sea
- In some cases numbers possibly down because birds just haven't come to the Wash, or have gone elsewhere.

It was suggested that working on a couple of bird counts was too prescriptive; natural factors can play a big part. Often where numbers are down it makes data look deficient. CD said condition assessment will be based on available data. If deficient, measures will be set to get data for the future.

**AOB:**

**JL** asked whether the revised Condition Assessments would have any effect on current port activities – a full list had been emailed to Conor, eg the disposal of dredging, which is based on best available scientific knowledge, understanding and data. He said port activities are historic and there are disposal licence implications. He asked if a baseline document was needed or not.

**CD** said the document was too vague to make specific comment. The data used has been specified to help future assessments because some data is unsound, unspecified.

**JL** raised concerns that if insufficient or questionable data was being used, and with a precautionary approach, to condition assessment, this could lead to an interest feature being classed as unfavourable when this may not be the case. JL also asked Conor to email a response to the list of port activities on his return from holiday.

The vagueness of some SAC conservation objectives was discussed at this stage and the real worry is over the potential for activities to be affected by over zealous or precautionary decisions being made away from the site that could not be justified on site.

This is big chance to have a say on the draft conservation objectives and to feed in all these sorts of comments and any others.

Members are urged to do so over the next three weeks direct to Conor Donnelly at [conor.donnelly@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:conor.donnelly@naturalengland.org.uk) and copied to JB At

[janmar@metronet.co.uk](mailto:janmar@metronet.co.uk)

**Date of Next Meeting:** to be notified later.

The Meeting closed at 9.20pm

## North Norfolk Coast EMS Advisory Group

### Notes of Meeting February 8<sup>th</sup> 2007

**Present:** R. Coleman, T. Venes, G.Needham, C. Southerland, P. Connor, C. Yardley, B. Everitt, M. Randell, L. Jordan, P. Rushmer, G. Sayers, D. Wood, T. Pannell.

**Apologies:** P. Terrington,

#### Handing Over

G. Sayers started the meeting by saying that he had been chairman for 8 years, during this time he had never had a direct mandate for being part of the group but has now been appointed as a Wells Harbour commissioner, he now has a reason to be here!!

G. Sayers thanked the group for all their support over the years particularly in the early years.

G. Sayers confirmed that M.Randell has agreed to take over as Chairman and C. Southerland has stepped into the vacancy left by J. Howell – Vice Chair.

Mark and Godfrey changed seats around the table and M. Randell took his place as Chair.

M. Randell; Offered the Group's thanks to G. Sayers for his tireless work over the years and hoped he could continue the good work.

#### Actions from the last meeting

B. Robinson apologised for the title of the last minutes being incorrect and referring to the May meeting. She hoped this didn't confuse members.

1. P Rushmer was going to set up a meeting for incidence recording — this will be set up shortly (March) to review the results from 2006.

Action. B Everitt to send his record of incidence recording to P Rushmer.

2. Eider duck website was circulated with notes
3. Judith from ESF to write a paper on wind farms. P. Rushmer spoke to Judith and an update was circulated.
4. Hover craft training. P.Rushmer spoke to Mike Rooney regarding the matter. Detailed proposals were sent through to Robin Raffety and it was decided that the RNLI would put a proposal to Natural England for them to make a decision. Robin Rafferty was asked to write this proposal.
5. Stealing of protected orchids. Details of the wildlife liaison officer to be given to the group. Greg Hewitt was no longer the contact so P. Rushmer discussed with M Rooney and he suggested we contact Jon Hopes Tel. 01603 782062 Mob 07770323464 based at Hoveton but does cover our area.

G. Sayers said it might be a good idea to write to the police to say that changing staff wasn't very efficient – weren't going to get a knowledge of the area.

## **Conservation Objectives**

P. Rushmer – The progression of reviewing the management scheme was halted as we hadn't made as much progress as we had liked in setting the Conservation Objectives.

He explained that the Management Board were concerned about the situation at the end of last year and as a consequence had decided that Natural England should put forward a plan for putting together the Conservation Objectives as soon as possible.

On January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2007 a workshop took place. The workshop was made up of a panel of specialists from; CEFAS, CEH, NE, BTO, RSPB, EA, ESFJC. They started by looking at one of the outstanding Objectives concerning intertidal areas. The Advisory Group's work on this will not be wasted, it will be picked up with the remainder of the other work undertaken by NE and via the remainder of the workshops.

The process has been re-energised and will be taken forward. The Workshop notes will be circulated by Conor Donnelly – he will also circulate a plan for completing the rest of the work over 2007. The Advisory Group will have time to comment on the Objectives over the year.

P. Rushmer reminded the Group of the definitions of Conservation Objectives and Favourable Condition;

“Conservation objectives are key to nature conservation management. They are set for each interest feature (e.g. saltmarsh, intertidal flats, bird assemblage) and define the quality of the interest feature required to maintain it in favourable condition.”

“Favourable condition is measured by the development of conservation objectives for each interest feature. The objectives set targets for attributes of each interest feature which take into account natural variation. The CSM guidance distinguishes between mandatory attributes which must be used to define favourable condition, plus discretionary attributes which can highlight local distinctiveness.”

The Management Group felt that work could be stopped with good reason due to the need to qualify the results so far in order to re-validate the data.

M Rooney said that we need Workshops for the complicated 2 mandatory attributes for bird disturbance and habitat. We can develop and measure discretionary attributes but we can't use them to inform and validate our decisions for bird disturbance. For habitats however we can use discretionary attributes to inform condition judgement .

P. Rushmer explained that he hoped the work would be completed by the end of 2007 but the JNCC are doing a condition assessment on a national level and reporting to Europe. If the JNCC assessment is different to ours it may delay the process. They will produce a consultation draft so we are hoping to either have ours ready to compare and feed in or have a holding comment based on the JNCC assessment before it is submitted to Brussels. The concern is that JNCC will make their decisions based on the information available on the database which is out of date. The JNCC have however said their report will focus on the macro marine environment so may not pick out sites individually anyway.

M. Rooney commented that funds available as a result of this work will only be available for sites that are in unfavourable condition.

## **Proposals for a Volunteer Wardening process.**

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P. Rushmer explained an idea that came about as a result of the Action Plan review and incident recording. We are not making sufficient contact with third parties using the site and need to improve our whole view of the EMS and raise awareness and understanding of the site. Apart from the managed sites who deal with issues directly themselves there has been some success with dealing with people causing incidents. This happens for a short period of time and there is an improvement for a short time but because we have other things to do don't keep on top of it and it starts to happen again. E.g. Para Gliders – we had started to make progress but when we took the pressure off the incidents started again.

Once way to keep the message topped up would be to have additional wardening presence sponsored by the Marine Site Management Scheme. In Kent they have a volunteer wardening scheme, P. Rushmer discussed with Tim for the AONB and with Tammy from The Wash Estuary Strategy that it might be appropriate for us. P. Rushmer put a draft proposal together which is attached to these notes.

The idea that is proposed for discussion is to set up a group of volunteer wardens with an identity that associates them with the marine environment and to compliment and work with the wardens already in place. The idea of these roles would be to raise awareness of what is good practice and what isn't, record damage and disturbance and record unusual sightings. But do so in an organised manner. In Kent they have a project officer that co-ordinates the volunteers – conducts and organises workshops and training and provides them with kit and knows where the volunteers are at any one time. The volunteers are trained in Conservation Objectives, H&S, public liability etc.

P. Rushmer has run the idea past the site managers and proposes to have a meeting with Site Managers to discuss if there is potential and where the potential is. He proposes to discuss whether it should be a formal or informal arrangement but assumes that with public liability a formal arrangement would be probable.

In terms of recruitment the managing organisations already have organised volunteer schemes and it was suggested that we could approach parish councils, local advertisers etc.

L. Jordan said that the work done by the conservation organisations along the coast has been very successful and people are keen to support and help. He has found that this had worked well over last 10 years.

P. Rushmer doesn't see them as being policing roles, and thinks that if people were doing something illegal then the volunteer wouldn't get involved but would report along the chain.

G Sayers said the volunteers needed to have a good knowledge of the site.

D Wood said you would have to use local people who know the area

B Everitt said there is no law for wardening on Common Rights land – he said if there was a call for a volunteer wardening in this area then formal written permission needs to be asked, discussed and agreed with the Common Right Holders.

PR said it won't be needed in all areas and perhaps we could look at the specific areas where it is required. This area is quite well catered for – towards Kings Lynn and the other side of Lynn is an area where may need it. P. Rushmer has also raised this idea with the other advisory groups.

GS said at Blakeney they have safety wardens, this might be an opportunity for the safety wardens to get involved in this scheme as well and benefit from the training.

Action: P Rushmer would like the group to go away and have a think about this proposal and feedback thoughts to B. Robinson by the end of February – PR would then like to take this feedback to the site managers at their meeting in March.

R. Coleman said it would be good to get some feedback on the Kent Scheme.

PR They have 120 volunteers in the Thanet region. Running it for 2 years, it took 18 months to set up. PR visited the annual meeting to hear how successful the programme had been. He found that they have similar issues to us; jetskis, dog walking etc. but it was proving valuable.

### Review of Good Practice Guide

The advisory groups worked on a Good Practice Guide three years ago. There has been lots of good feedback, but PR thought it would be good to review it to see if it is still relevant, if it needs more focus on e.g. airborne and water sports activities.

Action: PR would like members to consider the document over next few weeks and feedback to B. Robinson by March 9th. We could perhaps run a workshop with other AG's to discuss and re-write the Guide if and where necessary.

C Yardley asked how distribution of the Good Practice Guide is run – PR said that he distributes to TIC's and education centres as well as other outlets.

### **Setting up a Bait Digging Survey**

P. Rushmer explained that something we don't know is how much bait digging is going on. There are no means to ensure it is safeguarded from people coming in from outside and digging on a commercial basis.

PR wanted the group to discuss how we might find out what is going on and gather a group of bait diggers together as a group to discuss. Kings Lynn group wanted to set up a bait diggers forum especially if it was underwriting the traditional nature of the activity and protect it for the future.

G.Sayers said we need to establish what levels of activity are acceptable using historic information. Acceptable numbers have never been established.

B Everitt is most concerned and wondered why this item was on the agenda as it is only referred to in the EMS Management Plan as very low level.

BE said we are not doing our job and we should have pollution (a high issue) on our agenda.

PR said all the high issues are being dealt with. BE asked why we were not dealing with e.g. twitchers, ringing birds. He said we were addressing the easy ones.

PR said that we want to find out the amount of activity going on so that bait diggers can protect their own areas and activities. In other areas of the EMS white vans are coming in and digging on a commercial scale.

M Rooney says this has been discussed at length at other meetings and agrees with B. Everitt, that for North Norfolk it isn't an issue. Levels are low, if we had an issue here of white vans arriving then we would soon be made aware that it was an issue. At present it isn't.

M Randell said that as we have it recorded on the Management Plan and the historical information is correct so we have the baseline to review if it changes.

M. Randell suggested that if members had any items they would like adding to the agenda to please let him know.

R. Rushmer emphasised that no-one must go away with the idea that we want to regulate the bait diggers, he just thought it would be useful to get an overview of activity for information only. Agreed to take this agenda item no further.

### 2006 Annual Report

P. Rushmer said the Annual Report is virtually complete and is almost ready to go on the website. It includes the revised action plan with all the progress made. The results paint a good picture – success against 83% of our actions.

Action: BR to circulate web link and report to members when available.

### AOB

G Needham went to the Wash Estuary Strategy Meeting. It was interesting but geared to Lincolnshire and Wisbech it didn't relate to the North Norfolk coast.

G. Needham - the Tornado Aircraft that went down in the Wash co-incided with the exact time of arrival of the birds that go down that side of the wash. He wanted to ask what sort of links the group had with Marham RAF Base as the crash was during the peak time of arrival of birds with the tide. P Rushmer said they do have management plans in place that detail bird activity and tide times which informs flying times and levels. P Rushmer says they have had input at Whitehall level so the communication is there.

P Rushmer wrote to BBC saying they had been referred for enforcement action for disturbance caused while filming along the coast. They wrote back and said they didn't think they had done anything wrong and that nothing was on the CAA maps. P Rushmer has forwarded their comments to the CAA. P Rushmer said that the CAA put a proposal to him about annotating charts about this part of the site. They might not go as far as we want them to but discussions are ongoing.

P Coleman asked if there was anything that could be done about repeat offenders of low flying aircraft. M Rooney said theoretically yes but realistically it may not be that simple. If in breeding season disturbance occurs to Schedule 1 birds recklessly then police can prosecute. Outside breeding season NE would take this on and it is very difficult to actually prove the disturbance. They would be reluctant to take a case to court unless they had e.g. video evidence as proof. M Rooney advised that photo evidence of low flying was vital and advised the group to follow this advice.

T. Venes said he had been talking to Rachel Penny who many of the group would know. She now works for NE with Suffolk Coasts AONB team and is trying to manage disturbance to beach nesting birds. She had asked T. Venes to ask the group what experiences and techniques we could share with Suffolk. Also discussed dog disturbance and was interested to hear thoughts that could be applied.

D. Wood said that dogs are still a massive disturbance – R Coleman said a lot of this disturbance goes unreported. Lots of people will report low flying planes but might not realise or report dogs off leads.

T. Venes said dogs off leads remains an ongoing outstanding problem. P Rushmer said this is where the volunteer wardens could help and T Venes agreed that more people on the ground would help.

M Randell had spoken to Geraldine Green of Blakeney Harbour Mussel Society – she said they have concerns over River Glaven re-alignment works. The concerns were around the slumping of the channel and where they ceased the old channel. The job was not completed properly and has led to a greater increase of silt movement into the harbour. This lays on the mussel lays in the harbour. G. Green wanted to make the group aware of the situation now and get the issue noted in case the group may need to become involved in the future.

Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm

## Wash and North Norfolk European Marine Site

### North Norfolk Coast Advisory

Notes of meeting held on April 24<sup>th</sup> 2007  
at

*The Raven Room, The Maltings, Wells*

#### Attendees:

Mark Randell – North Norfolk reed Cutters  
Laurence Jordan – Stiffkey PC  
Peter Connor – Burnham Overy & Norton Wildfowling Ass.  
Robert Coleman – RSPB  
Jonathan Webster – Blakeney Harbour Mussel Society  
Michael Rooney – Natural England  
Brian Everitt – Scolthead & District Common Rights Holders  
Tony Pannell – Wells Harbour Commissioners  
Geoff Needham – Holme-Next- The-Sea  
Dawn Reeve – stand-in Secretary  
Peter Rushmer – Wash & North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site Project Manager

#### Apologies:

D. Wood  
P. Wordingham  
T. Venes

Meeting opened at 1930hrs by Mark Randell (Chair).

#### Notes of meeting held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and matters arising:

M. Rooney asked to be added to those present at meeting.

Actions to amend: on page 2 incident recording, conservation objectives 2nd to last paragraph Michael did not think he would have said “do not need workshops” and also cross out “complicated”.

**ACTION** - Mark noted secretary to amend the above.

P. Rushmer updated the meeting on the Wildlife Crime Officer stand down -

PC Jon Hopes advised as follows: “... I am the co-ordinator for the Force’s Wildlife Crime section. Please pass my details as follows to your advisory groups as requested. I myself am based at Hoveton but also co-ordinate “operation Compass “ with the RSPB which co-ordinates all of the Nature reserves including the many along the North Norfolk coast. PC 1257 Jason Pegden at Cromer is a WCO officer Pc 642 John Bunnett at Sheringham and then Pc 9015 Peter Powter-Robinson at Dersingham. Unfortunately we haven’t really got anyone else between. If you need any further details let me know. ...

PC 756 Jon Hopes, Hoveton Police Station, 12 Stalham Road, Hoveton, Norwich ,Norfolk. NR128DG  
My work mobile is 07770323464”

## *Conservation Objectives:*

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P. Rushmer recapped - At the last meeting it was noted a workshop had been held to consider intertidal flats and there were other elements of conservation objectives to consider. C. Donnelly (NE) was working out a timetable for these and the condition assessment and a draft would follow. At the recent FMG meeting C. Donnelly tabled a timetable that showed draft objectives would be circulated for consultation in August and September (see further revised timetable attached). This whole process is lengthy and complex and will clearly take best part of this year, but it must be got right as it's fundamentally important. The condition assessment would be reviewed in October to see how successful we're being at managing

M. Randell suggested meeting August /September to review the draft. M. Rooney said that this group has seen the first draft of the SPA and offered to extract relevant details and bring to meeting in autumn, also summarise bird species and numbers. The meeting agreed.

**ACTION** – M. Rooney to extract relevant details and bring to meeting in autumn, also summarise bird species and numbers.

G. Needham asked if any feedback had come from NOA as there didn't seem to be comment from many organisations. M. Rooney said there were lots of figures for NN Coast. G. Needham suspected there was whole walls of graphs and species. Michael said that some were relevant, but EU constraints mean the SPA list is fixed. The bulk of data that comes in is the Wetland Bird Surveys (WeBS) counts every month and it is used. This is done by Norfolk Wildlife Trust for the Holme section of coast. G. Needham questioned the details. M. Rooney replied that most birds are waders. M. Randell asked if the meeting was happy with these details. All agreed.

P. Rushmer advised that the January Intertidal Flats workshop notes could be circulated (see attached). They featured cockle & mussel habitats. ESFJC were heavily involved. M. Rooney commented that this was Wash biased. P. Rushmer agreed, but said you can see the depth of discussion that went on between CEH, EA, ESFJC, Cefas, RSPB, BTO.

M. Rooney emphasised incorrect comment in previous minutes; SAC habitats do need workshops. C. Donnelly is keen to get this right. Peter advised this was accounted for in the timetable.

M. Randell emphasised the period from 6<sup>th</sup> August to end September is relevant for consultation and feedback on draft objectives proposed by NE.

## *Volunteer Wardening Process:*

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P. Rushmer recapped – at last meeting he proposed volunteer warden process around the coast to couple with full time wardens and develop with local people. He was due to set up meetings with site managers and to assess whether idea is feasible. Wash and Lincs meeting held and one for N Norfolk in March. North Norfolk site managers feel they do not need additional wardens and do not want to complicate things, but some need more permanent staff to make best use of volunteers they already have. A logical plan is therefore required to beef up the incident recording process in N Norfolk.

The situation is different when thinking of Hunstanton down to Snettisham and round into Lincs up to Skegness; there are obvious gaps around the site that are not managed, or have insufficient coverage. Jim Scott (Snettisham) represented RSPB at both N Norfolk and Lincs meetings. P. Rushmer has yet to get notes of meetings together and plan next steps, but in N Norfolk would try to make incident recording better. The group agreed that this is a very robust system.

**ACTION** - PR said he would report through the management group to Natural England that Holkham needs more permanent staff..

M. Rooney commented that people act as eyes and ears anyway, so local community works in this capacity. M. Randell summarised, saying to put it on the back burner for now.

## *Good Practice Guide (GPG) Review:*

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M. Randell asked about thoughts on amendments and next steps.

P. Rushmer said only two sets of comments were received from this group, from Dave Wood and Dick Foyster. There 2 comments from KL Advisory Group, one from Boston. He therefore felt there was no real demand for doing a wholesale review of the GPG.

He went through responses (see attached).

### **Dave Wood's comments:**

Large print version was relevant, but could be printed off website. It was agreed horse riding was an issue that still needed targeting and avoiding sand dunes was relevant. G. Needham was concerned about erosion; he knows a location where there used to be 60m of rolling dunes but no more.

M. Rooney suggested rephrasing e.g. keep to established footpaths and board walks, but only a small point and did not justify a reprint alone (Afternote: PR – this is wording currently used).

Point about shellfish farming is good one, but illegal blocking creeks not thought an issue.

R. Coleman felt educating visitors with information on the GPG back page was more important.

Peter agreed raising awareness was important and the overall intention.

Brian felt more information would put people off reading it.

P. Rushmer said livestock had originally been included because of the increase in grazing as a management tool and the potential for conflict with walkers and dogs. He gave a recent example of a dog going through cattle and the owner being trampled and dying in hospital. It was felt livestock issues cannot be overstated.

### **Dick Foyster's comments:**

P. Rushmer referred to spelling out acronyms like BASC and ESFJC, British Canoe Union training and more emphasis on uncontrolled dogs being as useful additions.

R. Coleman said this is becoming a bigger problem; producing leaflet for dog walkers would possibly be money better spent and on paragliders. He suggested a 2 fold leaflet targeting these issues. All agreed.

M. Rooney agreed people in different areas have different issues, so targeting respective issues is wise. P. Rushmer felt GPG was weak on airborne sports.

M. Randell asked if group generally happy with GPG and asked if money was available to do specific targeting. Peter said a small amount is in annually for publicity, but he expected to be able to persuade the management board for more if results will be achieved.

M. Randell asked if the group felt flyers are the answer. G. Needham felt for airborne sports, not the general public. P. Rushmer added we have lots of contacts for airborne activities and local airstrips have been given information to pass on. He has sent letters to offenders appearing on the Incident Records and other groups. G. Needham asked if this included locals. P. Rushmer gave an example of local paragliders. G. Needham asked, how about Knights Hill gliders? P. Rushmer said is difficult knowing where people come from and who they are. This is where R. Coleman's contact has been very useful for paragliders.

M. Rooney said with hindsight we should have had leaflet for low flyers from the start, but maybe after 3 years Peter's extensive contact list is paying off. The situation is better since P. Rushmer has been following up incidents.

P. Rushmer said an Air Information Circular was also being put together by the CAA to advise flyers on the impact they have on birds. This coupled with air navigation charts information that we are pressing for will make a huge difference and is welcomed. Most flyers will look at CAA website.

M. Randell summarised saying flyers are therefore well targeted. Any others, e.g. Jet skis?

G. Needham felt their impact is largely because of ignorance. Byelaws might be appropriate

P. Rushmer emphasised good practice is promoted by the Personal Watercraft Partnership

G. Needham said at Heacham/Hunstanton you do not launch without licences and insurance. M. Rooney pointed out at Brancaster harbour you cannot reach them

P. Rushmer advised that Blakeney Harbour Boatmans' Association is working with the National Trust and North Norfolk District Council to improve wardening and develop specific good practice guidance. This might be valuable for other parts of site. M. Randell concluded asking if all are generally happy with GPG – all agreed.

**ACTION - Peter to establish and advise Jet ski launch points where activity is managed.**

Geoff gave details of where he knew were managed. Michael cautioned that we must be clear on what is said about Jet Skis. Peter said they are appearing on Incident Records e.g. at Blakeney, seals have been affected.

It was debated if powerboat clubs knew about the group. Peter said he had previously had contact with some, but personnel changes had meant some had been lost.

Geoff said there was a Hunstanton Power Boat Club and thought at Heacham too and suggested a review. Peter was in contact with Hunstanton Water Sports Group.

**ACTION - PR to review with authorities what groups are in place.**

## Anecdotal Change:

P. Rushmer said B. Robinson had circulated forms summarising a list of marine site features, with space for comments on changes to those features to be added. The definition of anecdotal change is change that people have noticed happening over long or short periods of time, while out and about on site. The idea is to feedback this information via P. Rushmer to C. Donnelly at NE who is keen to receive this information. NE can then compare their conclusions about site feature condition based on scientific data, with what members of this group have experienced and then develop their conclusions from there. This will help ground the science. So, if you have noticed change, please note it on the sheets and send or give them to B. Robinson before, or at, each meeting.

M. Randell asked if there was a timescale. P. Rushmer said not specifically; it's an ongoing thing, but will be relevant to the conservation objectives and condition assessment exercise C. Donnelly is looking to presently and the consultations in August/September.

**P. Rushmer said some features on the list may not apply and there was discussion about squirrels and otters, etc.**

M. Randell said it needs to be worked on rather than discussed. There is very valuable information held by individuals that needs to be given to C. Donnelly.

**ACTION - Mark urged individuals to respond passing on their experience of change.**

## Incident Recording:

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P. Rushmer went through the 2006 summary with the group (see attached).

The number of results for Titchwell were very low by comparison with adjoining sites and R. Coleman said he was very aware that this is not a true reflection and that, although there are people out there a reasonable amount of hours, they cannot always be there at the right time. They are looking to use volunteers better in this context.

The issue of dog walkers was discussed as being an issue along the coast. P. Rushmer felt there needed to be a focus on dog walking. M. Rooney responded that this was a hot potato. G. Needham added that as people cannot walk their dogs on Hunstanton Beach, they are coming to Holme and gave an example of, if there are 40 dogs 25 owners will pick up after them and the rest will not. R. Coleman said that this is a different issue. P. Rushmer said that Gibraltar Point was plagued with dog muck, adding that it can be a recorded incident if the quantity is causing pollution or damage to a site; it could be listed as litter for example. G. Needham said that dog walkers needed to be educated rather than stopping dogs on the beach. P. Rushmer suggested using the Wildlife Crime Officer details and following up these incidents.

## Water Related Sports Workshop:

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M. Randell had received correspondence and an invitation from the EA to a workshop that was part of a process to develop a Defra Strategy for Water Related Sports, on 30<sup>th</sup> April. He asked if any members were willing to attend? P. Rushmer said he had also been invited and was attending on behalf of the project, but explained that he could not represent the advisory group.

M. Randell asked if the group wished to raise any points and said that a wide-ranging group of people was invited. P. Rushmer said it was an important forum. M. Randell asked if any interested party was willing to attend. J. Webster suggested G. Sayers and M. Randell said he would contact him.

M. Randell asked if there were any contentious issues. B. Everitt said the insurance side of things for example; if there were to be an accident on common land, whom would foot the bill, as people will sue. B. Everitt advised the group that as soon as you ask about insurance you become responsible.

So far as the Strategy was concerned P. Rushmer felt the object should be to encourage good and safe practice where it is appropriate, not necessarily to encourage and increase water sports across the board. P. Rushmer will ensure the workshop gets this message on the 30<sup>th</sup> and will bring in issues covered by the Good Practice Guide.

G. Needham said he may be interested in attending and will let P. Rushmer know. M. Rooney said the workshop seemed to be a trivial approach and needs more serious consultation. P. Rushmer said that at least they are consulting.

G. Needham raised the issue of a scheme being pursued by DEFRA bringing in rod licences by 2009 and that it is a "no! no!" P. Rushmer said that this could be raised with Matthew Mander of Eastern Sea Fisheries as he had been involved on recreational fisheries and that he would follow up. A discussion followed regarding rod licences. P. Rushmer asked if the group would like a statement from Matthew Mander and the group said that they would.

**ACTION** - PR to obtain an update from MM re recreational rod licensing proposals.

## AOB:

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Brian apologised to Peter regarding not having provided his incident book, but there were no entries.

Brian also added that the secretary's minutes were very good and factual and wanted to thank her.

**Date of next meeting:**

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A date for the next meeting was discussed and agreed for Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2007.

A vote of thanks was given to Dawn Reeve for stepping in to take the meeting notes

Meeting closed at 2117hrs.

## Wash and North Norfolk European Marine Site

### North Norfolk Coast Advisory

Notes of meeting held on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2007

at

*The Raven Room, The Maltings, Wells*

#### Attendees:

Mark Randell – North Norfolk reed Cutters  
Laurence Jordan – Stiffkey Parish Council  
Peter Connor – Burnham Overy & Norton Wildfowling Association  
Jonathan Webster – Blakeney Harbour Mussel Society  
Michael Rooney – Natural England  
Geoff Needham – Holme-Next- The-Sea  
Peter Rushmer – Wash & North Norfolk Coast European Marine Site Project Manager  
Tim Venes – AONB Manager  
Tony Faulkner – Blakeney Parish Council  
Tom Roberts – PHD Researcher University of London  
David Wood – National Trust

#### Apologies:

Chris Cannell  
Chris Yardley  
Rob Coleman  
Peter Terrington  
Tony Pannell

M. Randell introduced two new members Tony Faulkner of Blakeney Parish Council and Tom Roberts a PHD Student from the University of London observing the meeting.

#### Notes of meeting held on April 2007 and matters arising:

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P. Rushmer had an action to look into where the ESF Fishing Licensing proposals were at. A public consultation is due to be launched by Defra at any time and he will let the group know when it comes out.

P. Rushmer to look at how many Local Authority managed slipways there are in the Norfolk area – in the context of launching jet ski's.

There are 3 in the Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough. The Quay in the Kings Lynn where Jet Ski's are banned and in Hunstanton and Heacham where jet ski's must have a permit to launch.

A copy of the response from Brian Farrow, North Norfolk District Council is attached below in Appendix 1.

D. Wood said there was a meeting being organised in next few weeks relating to JS's National Trust/BHBA jetski working group.

P. Rushmer listed the number of user clubs in the region;

User Clubs

West Norfolk Sub Aqua Club  
Blakeney Sailing Club and School  
Heacham Boat Owners  
Hunstanton  
Blakeney Harbour Boatmans  
Burnham Overy Harbour Trust  
Wells Harbour  
Norfolk Power Boating  
Cley Boat Club  
Norfolk Gypsy Owners Club

North Norfolk Kitters group – voluntary group (Brancaster & Titchwell)

**Suppliers** – Surf 55, Downtide Marine, and possibly one at Sea Palling

MR said its not so much the sailing clubs but more the power boat groups that arise more on the incidence reporting records.

NNDC are making some inroads with contact they have been having with these groups and the National Trust have been working closely with Blakeney Harbour Boatmans on the issue.

### **The Wash and North Norfolk Coast EMS draft Conservation Objectives Consultation**

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M Rooney wanted group to discuss if there was any issues or concerns from group regarding the Draft Conservation Objectives.

Natural England need to review the conservation objectives against the EMS site.

What we are doing is looking at the current condition of all the Interest Features of the site – SAC features + seals otters plus SPA features which relate to birds. (3 SPA sites in the EMS)

Before looking at the features we have to finalise and define the conservation objectives but these are very generic. We need to develop the parameters for the SAC features for the region and to a lesser extent define the parameters for SPA features (only 2 can be applied here)

The bulk of what we have here is about applying the conservation objectives – assessing conditions will happen at a later date.

M. Rooney circulated a summary of the main points of all the documents that were sent out – attached.

We are currently in the consultation process with Conservation Objectives – and have until the September 28th to feed comments back to Conor Donnelly. so not long for group to get comments back.

**Action:** Any individuals that have comments should send them direct to Conor Donnelly by post or email by September 28<sup>th</sup> 2007;

[Conor.Donnelly@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:Conor.Donnelly@naturalengland.org.uk)

Conor Donnelly  
Marine Advisor  
Government & Communities Eastern Area Team  
East Midlands Region  
Natural England  
The Maltings  
Wharf Road  
Grantham  
Lincolnshire  
NG31 6BH

M. Rooney said it was important to make sure North Norfolk doesn't get caught up in areas that aren't appropriate to it. But at the same time we need to make sure that North Norfolk's important features don't get missed out. M Rooney – said he is the only representative for the area the other members are Wash based so could potential be biased. It is important to make sure North Norfolk is included.

G Needham said he was in the middle of this so need to look both ways.

M . Rooney asked if there was anything anyone wanted to raise?

T. Venes asked what does the Mandatory CSM Attribute heading on table mean – M Rooney said that these were interest features that must be measured.

T Venes asked if the wording in the objectives could change to 'No Decrease' as opposed to 'No Change' as we don't want a reduction in extent but an increase would be a positive thing.

T Venes said the immediate objective was just to monitor change looking at the impact or causal factor would be a subsidiary objective.

**The group reverted to a discussion on SPA Features relating to Birds** – G Needham asked where the data from bird counts came from at the last meeting. He asked why the data taken at the NOA Holme bird observatory was not used. He had spoken to Jed Andrews who takes a count daily. M. Rooney explained that there is a national system in place WeBS (Wetland Bird Survey) administered by BTO and that counts all 40km's of the North Norfolk coast each month. The system is robust as is as good as it can get. WeBS is a formal process that is regular and set up to monitor bird numbers. It is the tool used for monitoring SPA features.

If the NOA would like to speak to M Rooney then he would be happy to speak to them on the matter.

**Action:** G Needham to invite Jed Andrews NOA Warden to attend the group meeting.

T. Venes said there are two measures for SPA features Numbers and Extent of Habitats. Geese for example use other habitats outside EMS so are these monitored e.g. farmland?

M. Rooney confirmed that the EMS extends seawards from highest high water mark so areas above this that are in the SPA are not part of the EMS. But SPA areas include include fresh water grazing marsh etc. and these are included as part of condition monitoring.

T. Venes asked about wheat fields outside the SPA – M Rooney said these are not included but the fact that we are looking at the birds and the affects on them – the habitats that affect them are included in that respect.

## Back to SAC Features Summary Sheet

### Large Shallow Inlet Bay

For some areas we simply don't have the information to define them yet. E.g. water quality – going to have to sort out a sensible target for that but will be difficult as water quality varies so much. There are records but deciding where the levels should be set will be is the difficult thing and this has yet to be done.

### Sabellaria Reefs

A lot of effort has been put into Sabellaria Reefs; sonar surveys, where they are, how they work etc. as impact of fishing, wind farms, cables is having a detrimental effect on them. We have the largest area in the UK – very important. Previously in subtidal area ,now appearing in intertidal tidal areas too which is new.

T Venes said there are a lot of attributes that data doesn't exist for. It would be an expensive process to gather this. M. Rooney said that some will come from other Agencies such as ESF and CEFAS so Natural England won't have to do it all themselves.

Tony Faulkner said can't see the point of this process as the environment is changing so rapidly and we are unable to control a lot of the changes due to environmental change.

M Rooney said that the first line of every objective has a clause saying 'subject to Natural Change'. In a European context this is hugely important. The purpose is to ensure that any change is monitored so that things contributing to change are identified and can be acted upon if necessary.

M Randell said we all have different perspectives within the group – so its an opportunity for us to be party to decisions being made by Natural England and for us to raise issues to them.

T. Faulkner said it was meaningless working to a baseline when things are changing all the time but M Rooney said you had to monitor against something.

T. Venes explained that the system has been put in place to ensure we can report to the EU that the site is remaining in good condition We have to set a base line to measure against to be sure. It can get subjective in trying to maintain – you expect the general pattern of population levels to stay the same –its a dynamic equilibrium. Trying to measure deteriorations by humans. First you notice the change then need to understand what is causing it.

P. Rushmer said T Faulkner was not alone in his area of concern and it had been a theme running through other meetings.

M Rooney said we at Natural England are charged with doing it and we have to work out how to do it. Europe has decided the approach the UK government has signed up to it and it is embodied in UK law. Natural Eengland has to do the work and M. Rooney agrees it will not be easy.

M Rooney said natural change and natural fluctuation are very very difficult to define and discussions have been on-going for years and years.

M Rooney said that these points need to be made when the group makes their comments to Conor Donelley.

## Subtidal Sandbanks

Survey monitoring will need to be put in place – when data is sought then there will be room for comment

**Biotope** is a habitat classification defined by the species that occur there

## Intertidal Mudflats and Sandflats

Very applicable to North Norfolk and there are differences between North Norfolk and the Wash. We have sea grass they don't and also piddocks which live in the peat beds.

G Needham said that it would be advisable for the universities to work with the EMS to contribute results. P. Rushmer said a lot do contribute but some don't. M Rooney said if they approach us for permission then a condition of that is that we get the results. But academic institutions are not always very good at supplying information.

Plus a consistent uniform methodology needs to be applied along the coast so the work will be contracted out to ensure this happens.

The sea grass beds are nothing like what they were and M Rooney was not sure if anything can be done. He was not sure if these will be seen as favourable or unfavourable. Nobody knows what management measure needs to be implemented – it was hit by a disease and it has shifted the species balance. The one that is common now is the short one. There will be a lot of discussion about this as it is seen as an important biotope in a national context.

P. Rushmer emphasised again that if the group have any comments they need to get them in asap before Sept 28<sup>th</sup>.

Cockle and mussel biotopes will be dealt with separately between Wash and NN as the issues are far too different. The way they are cultivated is different, e.g. in Wash they want more natural mussel beds but in North Norfolk the ones that are there now are the ones that have always been there. Have not yet done anything on developing this for North Norfolk – but as and when they are developed then people will be consulted.

All this is a part of the process and all individuals with interests e.g. mussel fishermen need to get their comments in.

Pacific Oysters in Wadden Sea have caused concern as they are breeding so rapidly they are creating reefs. But the jury is still out on if this is a bad thing or not. It will almost certainly happen here at some stage if the water is warm enough.

J Webster said it would be good in that it would feed the birds but it would destroy the mussel industry – so conflict between interest groups would occur.

## Saltmarsh

Obvious concern about no decrease in extent. Thought is that at current rate the extent of saltmarsh is keeping up with rising sea levels.

There is a target for Spartina – there have been lots of studies to control it they have found some degree of control but this uses very invasive techniques. Needs to be decided here if it is big enough of a problem. Probably likely that it is only a major problem in Blakeney Harbour as others are too sandy. Glaven brings in mud which they like.

P Rushmer asked if weed wiping with Roundup (glyphosate) would be an appropriate way to get rid. D Wood said even if you did get rid of it its habitat would still remaining so it would probably just come back.

Has been lots of research on how to get rid. Probably have to learn to live with it. But T. Faulkner said it would destroy tourist industry for Blakeney if it did turn the harbour to saltmarsh.

L. Jordan said glyphosate had been used to control Spartina

**Lagoons** – not part of this exercise

Cley and Salthouse lagoons are being looked at separately together with the retreat of the shingle bank

## Common Seals

Targets are to maintain stable or achieve an increase

Some members of group thought there were too many seals – P Rushmer said they must report this.

D Wood said that people think Commons are declining but Greys are increasing.

D. Wood said it might be worth suggesting that grey seals are included as an interest feature. M. Rooney said this depended on what the threshold was for the population.

## Otters

Included because they occur on the Norfolk coast not the Wash. However we know too little about them to develop any objectives or features.

## SPA Condition Assessment (Birds)

M. Rooney said that the species included are all those on the original SPA citation. They were reviewed by JNCC and new species were added. M Rooney has also added species that have reached national importance – i.e. 1% of UK population.

There is a qualification for waterfowl of 20,000 or more so included 1% of this amount as well i.e. 2000 or more.

This has meant it has made a much more complete list than the one made about a year ago. Means there is much more strict criteria against which to assess.

M. Rooney said that in general the wildfowl and waders on the North Norfolk Coast SPA were doing well

Brent Geese are the biggest concern as numbers have been down for the last 3 winters mainly due to poor breeding success – effect is more marked in North Norfolk than in the rest of the country. Perhaps there is some sort of site specific issue.

These figures have knock on effects as people can apply for licences to shoot Brent – so it might be considered that they are endangered enough to stop them being shot.

Velvet Scoters have also decreased but probably because they are so erratic so this causes no concern at present.

Beach nesting birds Little Tern and Ringed Plover are most at risk and habitats are possibly not in favourable condition.

Reasons predation and disturbance, some habitat changes. Any attempt to reverse this needs to look at predator control and people control both of which can be extremely controversial.

The good news for North Norfolk is not the case for the wash – particularly knot, oyster catcher, shell duck – probably associated with numbers of cockles and mussels but not that simple.

## Round up

M Randell asked the group if there were any questions from the group. T Venes asked if the summary sheet was useable and was that sufficient to use to comment. M Rooney said it was. However the final version would be much bigger.

T Venes said a user friendly version would be needed if people were going to feed into it.

**Action:** All comments to go to Conor Donnelly by 28<sup>th</sup> copied into Secretary.

## AOB

### Wind farm at Langham

M. Randell explained the proposal by Bernard Matthews for Langham Airfield site for potential siting of 3 large wind turbines. Would appear that a Langham resident suggested it to Bernhard Matthews. Proposals have been put to parish council – very contentious issue for AONB and would have an impact on everything we are trying to preserve in North Norfolk.

J. Webster said do birds really get killed by turbines – M. Rooney said there was no hard and fast evidence.

D. Wood said it is where they are placed on the Migration Routes that causes the most problems.

D Wood said at mo it is just proposal to Parish Council and if not supported then won't go ahead.

T. Venes checked with NNDC planning – they had been approached and no encouragement had been given. Its in the AONB, lots of geese,

Incentive for parish is that a proportion of income to surrounding parishes would be given.

R Rushmer and M Rooney thought it unlikely it would go ahead

M Rooney said Natural England asked developers not to consider developments in areas of over wintering Pink Feet

**M Rooney's role is changing** – He will now be the Site Manager for Scolt and Holkam and will not have the same involvement in the group as he has done in terms of the conservation objectives etc. A new person will be coming to meetings.

P Rushmer emphasised that Natural England needed to ensure that the person who takes on these parts of M. Rooney's role is as committed and experienced as M Rooney. M. Rooney said he will make comments to his managers. MR was thanked for his valuable input taking the meeting through the draft conservation objectives.

### Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed to leave it flexible – probably early Nov. depending on how Natural England get on with revising the Conservation Objectives. Members will be informed nearer the time.

## Appendix 1.

Email from Brian Farrow, NNDC.

We (NNDC) do not and cannot legally separate PWC's (personal water craft = jet Skis) from other leisure craft. That gives us management problems. The only bylaws we have were specifically written to cover water skis and are very dated thus we have very little by way of powers to control PWC's on the foreshore. In fact the bylaws only refer to 'launch corridors' and basically state that providing you launch in a corridor you can do whatever speed you like. If you launch in any other place then you must restrict your speed to less than 8 knots in an area bounded by the low water mark and a point 200 metres beyond low water mark. That's it. Thus wherever you are once you are 200 metres beyond low water mark you can do what speed you like and in the defined launch corridors - you can do what speed you like. There is no bylaw which prohibits the launching of leisure craft and PWC's were never considered as 'shipping' in the terms of the shipping act so once again there was little by way of law to control their use. The Maritime Coastguard Agency tried to prosecute a PWC owner under the Shipping Act, but eventually I understand the case was lost.

As a general rule we are responsible for all of the accesses in North Norfolk between Sheringham & Cart Gap Happisburgh. Some may be historic 'cart gaps' but certainly the ones in the major towns were built by the original local authority (Erpingham, Smallborough, Cromer & Sheringham) and were ceded to NNDC when it came into being in 1974. These are managed by NNDC and public launching from these areas is actively discouraged. All of the vehicular accesses in Mundesley are in private hands and are restricted. Apart from Sea Palling where there are private contactors managing the operation of PWC's there are currently no accesses in North Norfolk where PWC's are actively encouraged as the council has no management provision in place to control their operation. That is not to say that PWC's do not regularly launch in many of the more rural accesses.

I was for my sins the officer leading/servicing the member group of the Councils Coastal Users Working Party (CUWP) looking at this issue for a number of years but frustratingly, members were unable to agree on a way forward. I believe there is more of a spirit of 'can do' in the new Council and we are to resurrect the CUWP and there is a genuine will to come to grips with this issue over the term of the Council so we can expect some management systems to be put in place in the not too distant future. I also understand that the Home Office may agree to amend the wording of the bylaw which will enable us to achieve more control measures.

You will note I have not answered your question entirely, but there are 20 accesses, at least half of which either totally unsuitable for leisure craft or are in private ownership and closed. Of the remainder, 6 are in direct control of NNDC and in major resorts where their use would seriously jeopardize traditional beach users and are therefore discouraged for leisure craft.

The other 4 are well used.