

WASH MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Wash Management Sub-Committee meeting held on **Wednesday 4th July 2007**, at 1030 hours.

PRESENT

Councillor A Turner	Chairman - Lincolnshire County Council
Councillor S Bakewell	Lincolnshire County Council
Councillor D Rye	Norfolk County Council
Councillor R Ward	Suffolk County Council
Councillor S Williams	Lincolnshire County Council

R Brewster)	
R Garnett)	
N A Lake)	
C Southerland)	DEFRA Appointees
S Williamson)	
M Yates)	

M R Mander Clerk & Chief Fishery Officer

D Vaughan	Deputy Clerk & Fishery Officer)	
R W Jessop	Research Officer)	
A J Clarke	Fishery Officer)	Present by
J C Byrne	Fishery Officer)	Invitation
D J Williamson	Fishery Officer)	
J C Stoutt	Marine Environment Officer)	

APOLOGIES

No apologies for absence were received.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Messrs Brewster, Garnett, Southerland and Williamson declared an interest in items on the agenda as they were all Wash fishermen.

WM07/03 MINUTES OF THE WASH MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31st May 2007

As there were no matters arising, it was agreed to approve the minutes.

Proposed: Mr Southerland Seconded: Councillor Ward
All Agreed

WM07/04 CLERK'S REPORT ON REVIEWING THE COCKLE BEDS OPEN TO THE 2007 SUCTION DREDGE FISHERY

The Clerk advised that the meeting had been called to review the beds to be opened to dredge fishing during the forthcoming cockle fishery. It had become apparent that mixed views were held amongst industry members regarding the opening of Daseley's Sand to dredge fishing. Consequently the Clerk had instigated a consultation among all entitlement holders on whether or not they would like to see the sand open to dredge fishing. As a

result of further representation to the Clerk, he and the Senior Research Officer had also walked on the Inner Westmark Knock Sand to assess the level of juvenile stock.

As a result of the consultation the responses had produced almost a 50 /50 split with regard to opening the bed and consequently it would be necessary for the members to consider the views of the industry representatives and vote on whether or not to open the bed.

Walking on IMWK had provided the Officers with the knowledge that the juvenile stock had grown by 1 or 2 mm (width) and the densities remain consistent with those found during the Spring surveys.

As a result of the concerns being voice the Clerk and Senior Research Officer had attended Industry meetings in King's Lynn and Boston. At both meetings there had been a general feeling that Daseleys sand should be opened and IWMK should remain closed to Dredging. This left the question to be answered as to whether Holbeach should be opened. The Clerk was aware there was a large number of juvenile cockles within the stock on this bed but due to the density of cockle it was inevitable that cockles would be lost due to natural mortality, therefore if the bed was fished whilst there would be mortality through discards it was likely to be no greater number than would be lost through natural processes. It was also intended that the Research team carry out experiments on discard rates from the dredge head to ascertain what level of waste was created through dredging. It was therefore the Clerk's view that Daseleys and Holbeach should both be opened to dredging and IWMK should remain closed. The Clerk also recommended that the fishery should not open until 1st August which would allow a slightly longer growing period for the juvenile cockles. In light of the size of the juvenile stock the Clerk recommended that a 14mm riddle should be used to allow the juvenile cockle to be discarded.

Councillor Williams questioned whether experiments would be carried out on the effect of different size riddles. The Senior Research Officer advised that each year the breakage rates were monitored and it would be possible to compare the difference between the 12mm and 14mm riddles.

There was concern expressed that dredging on Daseleys would damage the fishery for the future, however, the Clerk felt that with the fishery being monitored if there was evidence of damage being caused then it would be possible to convene a meeting and close the fishery at short notice.

Mr Garnett expressed his view that he felt using a 14mm riddle would be a backward step, having introduced a 12mm riddle the previous season. The Senior Research Officer did not think this was the case as the cockles would be larger in size and it was more beneficial to use a riddle suited to the size of the stock.

There followed general discussion on the riddle size and the proposed opening dates. Whilst the Clerk had recommended August 1st Mr Lake felt that as the fishery would be based on a 4 day week, Monday to Thursday, the fishery should open on a Monday and not half way through the week. However, there was the option of using the Monday and Tuesday to carry out gear trials, these options were also considered.

Having listened to and discussed the views of the industry members and the Officers the Members considered the proposals put before them and voted on each option.

BEDS TO BE OPENED: It was Resolved to accept the Officers' proposals to open Holbeach Sand.

**Proposed: Councillor Ward.
5 votes in favour**

Seconded: Councillor Williams.

0 against.

It was Resolved to accept the Officers' proposals to open Daseley's Sand.

**Proposed: Councillor Rye. Seconded: Councillor Ward.
5 in favour
0 against.**

OPENING DATE: The Officers recommendation to open the dredge fishery on 1st August was put forward.

**Proposed: Councillor Ward Seconded: There was no seconder
No vote took place**

It was proposed that the fishery be opened on 16th July 2007.

**Proposed; Councillor Rye Seconded: There was no seconder
No vote took place**

It was proposed that the fishery be opened on Monday 30th July 2007.

**Proposed: Councillor Williams Seconded: Mr Yates
3 votes in favour
2 votes against**

It was therefore Resolved the dredge fishery would open on 30th July 2007.

RIDDLE & DREDGE HEAD SPACING: It was Resolved to accept the Officers' proposals to apply a maximum bar spacing of 14mm on both the riddle and the dredge head.

**Proposed: Councillor Rye. Seconded: Councillor Williams.
5 votes in favour
0 against**

The Clerk advised that opening of the dredge fishery would be subject to a position response from Natural England.

WM07/05 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

VOTING ON CONSULTATIONS WITH ENTITLEMENT HOLDERS:

Councillor Rye expressed his wish to discuss the voting in the Committee's consultation regarding the opening of Daseley's to the dredge fishery. Councillor Rye confirmed that he had examined the returned votes with the Clerk after the industry meeting on 28th June 2007, and that the Clerk had reported the result correctly. Councillor Rye offered to count the votes with the Clerk on future occasions if necessary. Councillor Rye also suggested that entitlement holders who did not vote should be named, and announced at the Wash Management Sub-Committee. The Clerk stated that votes are held confidentially, and confidentiality should be upheld to encourage the Wash fishermen to express their true opinions. It was his opinion that the written consultation provides the Committee with a better flavour of what the fishermen actually feel; the recent example reflected the split opinion that had been identified at the industry meeting.

The Chair thanked Councillor Rye for counting the vote, and stated that he was appalled that the Clerk had been accused of manipulating the consultation results. It was his opinion that should such accusations arise in future, the Clerk would be entitled to take it up with

the legal department. The Chair also stated that he considered that the Clerk had done a very good job since he had taken over. Councillor Williams agreed. On the issue of voting, he suggested that if people did not want to vote, that was their own choice. Councillor Ward reminded the Committee the importance of having a free vote, stating that people should not be coerced. The Clerk suggested that he could record the number of people not responding to consultations; this could help gauge the strength of feeling or the importance of the issue. Mr Southerland reminded the Committee that not all entitlement holders (consultees) are involved in the cockle fishery, and stated that in his opinion, the current setup works, whereby industry representatives attend the industry meetings. He added that this year the decision had been very difficult, and added that by leaving the dredge fishery until August / September, the yield should be good.

It was Proposed that in addition to the “Agree” and “Disagree” options on the consultation response form, there should be a third option to “Abstain”.

Proposed: Councillor Rye.

Seconded: M. Yates.

4 votes in favour

5 against.

Motion NOT carried

It was Resolved to add an extra phrase to future consultations, stating that *“It will be taken that if you do not respond to this consultation, you are abstaining from this vote.”*

Proposed: Councillor Williams.

Seconded: Councillor Ward.

7 votes in favour

0 against.

CONSULTATION BY SEA ANGLERS:

Councilor Rye questioned whether other members had received email correspondence from sea anglers enquiring how they had voted on certain agenda items. He felt it likely that asking a Councillor about his business could be construed as illegal. Councillor Williams was also averse to receiving correspondence of this nature and felt the matter should be included on the next Statutory Meeting agenda. He felt the sea anglers should be admonished for their actions.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1140 hours.