

Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Liaison Group

Draft minutes of the 25th Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Liaison Group meeting held on the 23rd November 2017 (starting 7pm) at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog.

Present

Owain Wyn (OW) (chairman)	Local Authority – Snowdonia National Park Authority
Alison Hargrave (AH)	PLAS SAC Officer
Dafydd Roberts (RO)	RA - Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)
Bill Miller-Jones (BMJ)	Other - Diver and boat owner
Rowland Sharp (RS)	RA – Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Rhys Jones (RJ)	RA – Gwynedd Council
Freya Bentham (FB)	Local Authority – Snowdonia National Park Authority

(PLAS – Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau)
(RA – Relevant Authority)

Introduction

OW welcomed everyone to the meeting.

OW and the group expressed their thanks to Mr Caerwyn Roberts for his many years of dedication as the Liaison Group chair. The group agreed to send a letter on behalf of the group to Mr Caerwyn Roberts to express their thanks. OW explained that he had taken over as chair of the Liaison Group from Mr Caerwyn Roberts. He also welcomed Cllr Freya Bentham to the group. FB represents Snowdonia National Park Authority in place of Cllr David Roberts.

Action 1: *AH to send a letter of thanks to Cllr Caerwyn Roberts on behalf of the group.*

1. Apologies

Catrin Glyn (CG)	Llŷn Marine Ecosystems Project Officer
Cllr Ray Quant (RQ)	Local Authority – Ceredigion
Molly Lovett (ML)	RA – Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Bob Lowe	Recreation
Mel Heath	RA – Ceredigion Council
Elin Hughes	RA – Gwynedd Council

2. Draft note of the 24th meeting

It was noted that the surname of Aeron Williams on page 2 was incorrect. With the amend of the surname the notes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

Action 2: *AH to amend the surname of Aeron Williams on page 2 and re post on the PLAS website.*

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Item 2 (AH to update the LG membership list and re send to the group). Item on agenda. **Action complete.**
- 3.2 Item 2 (ALL to look at the list and send AH suggestions for new members where needed). Item on agenda. **Action complete.**
- 3.3 Item 3 (AH to re send the harbour porpoise cSAC maps). **Action complete.**
- 3.4 Item 4a (AH to send all Llŷn Marine Ecosystems Project Reports). **Action complete.**
- 3.5 Item 4a (RS to send AH information about the Angel Shark sightings). Item on the agenda. **Action complete.**
- 3.6 Item 4a (RS to prepare a short article about the Angel Shark sightings for the magazine and send it to AH). In progress. **Action complete.**
- 3.7 Item 4a (AH to send the NRW talk on PCPs in cetaceans). **Action complete.**
- 3.8 Item 4b (RS to send AH an update after the meeting). Item on the agenda. **Action complete.**
- 3.9 Item 4d (All to send funding ideas to AH). Item on the agenda. **Action complete.**
- 3.10 Item 5 (AH to circulate the presentation). **Action complete.**
- 3.11 Item 6 (AH to check re docking fee for large vessels). In progress. **Action complete.**
- 3.12 Item 7 (AH to arrange the next LG meeting). **Action complete.**

4. Site management

AH gave a presentation to outline the work undertaken April 2016 – present and the work programme from present – March 2018.

The work programme from April 2016 – December 2017 includes:

- Porthdinllaen seagrass project
- Morfa Gwyllt lagoon project
- Dolphin Watch
- Magazine
- Llŷn marine Ecosystems Project
 - o Marine Code
 - o Criccieth Litter project

The work programme from January 2018 – March 2018 includes:

- Securing funding
- Working up new projects
- Finalising the management scheme
- Reviewing the Liaison Group

AH explained that raising awareness and stakeholder engagement was an essential component to all aspects of the work. Further detail on the individual projects below.

4.1 Porthdinllaen Seagrass Project

AH explained that the Porthdinllaen Seagrass Project is focused on three main elements:

- Impact of moorings in the inner harbour

- Impact of moorings in the outer harbour
- Impact of vehicles on the seagrass

Work completed:

- Many studies and surveys have been conducted
- A number of reports have been produced
- Ideas on how to adapt the moorings have been discussed
- AH has started to discuss a monitoring programme with NRW and the National Trust
- An international conference was held in Nant Gwrtheryn attended by 200 scientists from all over the world
- A study on the effects of vehicles on the seagrass
- Helix anchors ordered
- National Trust are working on legal aspects
- Excess moorings have been taken out of the inner harbour
- Trott moorings have been replaced with concrete blocks
- Links have been made at other locations with similar issues

Work underway to be completed by the end of December:

- Preparation of a replacement mooring plan for the inner harbour
- Preparation of a report that explores adaptations for the outer harbour
- Trial a helical anchor
- Confirm who is responsible for managing the outer harbour

4.2 Morfa Gwyllt Lagoon Project

AH explained that the project was set up to assess and address the following issues:

- Dog fouling
- Litter
- Trampling
- Broken fences and gates
- Lack of monitoring data

Work completed:

- Site visit to ensure the information is correct
- Meeting with the GC staff
- Meeting with NRW staff
- A report has been produced that introduces the lagoon and outlines the issues and possible solutions

AH explained that many of the issues have been solved due to the installation of a gate. GC are still concerned that the gate will be damaged for access. The group discussed the issue and agreed that the best way forward would be:

- Not to advertise the site
- Keep an eye on the situation with regards to damage to the gate with view to address this as a single issue if it occurs
- Not to produce leaflets and panels for the site

Work underway to be completed by the end of December:

- Production of a report that outlines the work completed and the chosen management options

4.3 Dolphin Watch

AH explained that the purpose of Dolphin Watch was to:

- Engage with the local community
- Monitor compliance with the new Gwynedd Marine Code
- Help inform site management with regard to marine mammals

Work completed:

- Abersoch has been agreed as a location
- An initial report has been produced
- A risk assessment has been produced
- A training session was held for volunteers in 2016 and in 2017
- Dolphin Watch has been run over the summer in 2016 and 2017
- Surveys from 2016 and 2017 have been returned

Work underway to be completed by the end of December:

- Analysis of results
- Production of final report

4.4 PLAS magazine

AH explained that the purpose of the magazine was:

- To promote the SAC
- Provide an update on all the projects that are being undertaken
- To raise awareness and get people interested in the marine environment

Work completed:

- A designer has been commissioned that will provide a template that will allow us to produce further magazines
- Initial designs have been worked up
- Articles have been completed, edited and submitted
- Images have been submitted

Work underway to be completed by the end of December:

- Run a competition to name the magazine
- Comment on designer drafts
- Translation
- Distribution (2018)

4.5 Llŷn Marine Ecosystems Project

AH explained that the project is:

- A joint project between the SAC, the Welsh Fishermen's Association and others
- Working with the local fishing industry to develop a co management model for managing the marine environment around Llŷn
- Implementing some projects to demonstrate the model

AH also explained that a number of reports have been produced and are available on the PLAS website.

4.6 Criccieth Litter Project

AH explained that the project was focused on three main areas:

- Beach cleans
- Monitoring
- Reducing litter from source

Work completed:

- A number of beach cleans undertaken
- A monitoring station has been set up on the beach
- A number of monitoring sessions have been completed with the local community
- Launch of the last straw campaign (to reduce the amount of plastic straws used). More than 10 businesses have signed up to either stop using straws altogether or to switch to biodegradable.
- Launch of the first #2minbeachclean board in north Wales. The project translated the board and Dylan's restaurant on the beach have adopted the board. They put it out every day and ensure it is stocked with bags and litter picks. The idea is that people spend 2 minutes picking up litter then tweet about it.
- Other biodegradable products discussed and explored.

Work underway to be completed by the end of December:

- Production of a toolkit that will summarise the work done so that other villages / businesses can take part.

Group discussion:

- DR mentioned that there is a lot of plastic farming litter in the estuaries.
- OW suggested raising awareness about this issue within the National Park.

4.7 Marine Code

AH explained that the purpose of the marine code is to address the issues of marine mammal disturbance by recreational vessels.

Work completed:

- Code produced for Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy
- Each local authority has adopted the code
- Codes distributed via each local authority
- Codes have been promoted

Work underway to be completed by the end of December:

- Final report to summarise the work done

Group discussion:

- The group suggested that posters could go up in marinas
- BMJ mentioned that divers have their own code and magazine. Opportunity to promote the site and the marine code.

4.8 Raising awareness and stakeholder engagement

AH explained that a lot of work had gone into both these element and included:

- School visits
- SAC display at shows
- Website and social media
- Presentations
- Publicity (press, articles, radio)
- Marine education roadshow with SNPA
- Joint working
- Publicity on the beaches

5. General update

AH provided a general update on matters relating to the SAC:

5.1 MPA management steering group

- AH sits on this group and provides the link to site level management and issues
- There hasn't been much progress this year
- The next meeting is on the 30th November
- The group plan to produce an MPA delivery plan

5.2 Marine Planning

- AH site on this group to provide a link between MPA management and marine planning
- Marine plan consultation will be for 16 weeks
- There will be a public event in January 2018
- It should be implemented mid 2018 but might be postponed to the end of 2018 if an independent investigation is deemed necessary

5.3 Welsh Government litter task and finish group

- AH explained that she sits on this group at the request of stakeholders
- Wales level project
- The group heard about the Criccieth project and are keen to roll it out across Wales
- PLAS and the litter project was included in a Visit Wales presentation that has been given across Wales

5.4 National Assembly – inquiry into Welsh Governments approach to MPA management

- Recommendations have gone to Welsh Government
- Welsh Government have responded
- National Assembly have requested more detail

5.5 AH attended an MPA workshop in Exeter. She gave a presentation on PLAS. It was an excellent opportunity to share ideas with other officers. AH made good links with other areas with similar issues.

5.6 The National Trust organised a UK moorings conference to help promote the Porthdinllaen Seagrass project. AH gave a presentation and made excellent

links with other projects. The event was a great way to raise the profile of the project at a UK level.

- 5.7 Welsh Government asked AH to take Welsh Government staff and AM Lesley Griffiths on a site visit to Porthdinllaen to learn about the SAC and the Porthdinllaen Seagrass Project. AH gave a talk and guided walk.
- 5.8 NRW are leading on an access and recreation project that will help promote existing marine codes and information by providing an online platform.
- 5.9 It is year of the sea in 2018.
- 5.10 The Porthdinllaen Seagrass Project featured on Countryfile.
- 5.11 AH attended a workshop for the Marine Ecosystems Research Programme (MERP). AH expressed concern that the project appeared to be replicating the site management scheme and the recently completed N2K project.

6. Funding and future projects

AH explained that funding has been secured until end March 2018.

AH explained that she has been investigating a number of funding avenues to fund the work from April 2018 onwards. AH added that a number of bids have been submitted and she was waiting to hear back.

AH explained the projects being considered for 2018.

- Investigating the nutrient conditions needed to maintain the estuary features
- Investigating the fish assemblages in the Estuaries
- Restoration of cray fish
- Otter project
- Reducing agricultural run off

Group discussion:

The group discussed the possibility of funding through Visit Wales as it is year of the sea in 2018.

7. Management scheme

AH explained that she would work to finish the revision of the management scheme early in 2018. She explained that the draft was nearly complete and she would sent it round for comment once it is ready.

8. Liaison Group

AH explained that there had been a bit of change in the membership of the Liaison Group and that there are some vacant seats. AH explained that she would review the group membership early 2018.

Group discussion:

- OW suggested that the terms of reference and list of members are sent to the group.

- BMJ suggested that more NGOs should be on the group. AH noted that the group had to be balanced with all interests. This will be looked at when the group is reviewed in 2018.

Action 3: *AH to send terms of reference and list of members to the group.*

9. Angel Shark project

RS gave a presentation on the NRW Angel Shark Project. He also explained that a HLF bid had been submitted and had made it to the next round. MH mentioned that she could help distribute in Cardigan Bay SAC.

Action 4: *RS to send AH a copy of the angel shark presentation and poster*

Action 5: *AH to circulate the angel shark presentation and poster*

Action 6: *RS to send any relevant angel shark information to AH and MH*

Action 7: *AH and MH to circulate and post any relevant angel shark information on social media.*

Group discussion:

- The group discussed that the map showed the angel sharks to be near Harlech. RS confirmed and said yes especially around Shell Island.
- RS added that it would be good if people could submit images when possible.
- RS added that the angel shark will be added to existing reporting apps.
- BMJ noted that awareness is important giving the example of the leopard spotted gobi that was thought to be extinct until scuba became available and divers found them everywhere.
- RS noted that there is confusion with the name monkfish.

10. NRW site level report

RS gave an update on the progress of the NRW site level reports.

Draft indicative condition assessments have been prepared for all 69 marine SAC features in Wales. They have been through a quality assurance stage with JNCC. This has meant a delay in their publication. The indicative assessments will be published in the site level reports. A single reports had been produced for the indicative condition assessments for marine SPAs in Wales. Final sign off of these reports is scheduled for December after which they will be send to WG, the CCERA Committee and stakeholders (including the PLAS RAG, although a precise date for this dissemination can't be confirmed it is hoped that it will be before Christmas.

Action 8: *AH to send the PLAS site level report to the group once it is available.*

11. NRW monitoring update

RS summarised the NRW monitoring work from 2017.

Intertidal monitoring:

Feature/attribute	Method	Sites
<i>Sabellaria</i> reef condition	Repeat survey of extent and species composition of <i>Sabellaria</i> reefs to evaluate reef condition	Llandanwg, W. Afon Dwyfor
<i>Pectenogammarus</i> distribution and density	Record from a reduced number of previously studied stations. To check the extent of LGS.Pec biotope	Pwllheli
Rocky Shore quadrats	Repeat sampling of 12 shore quadrats	Porth Oer
Estuarine intertidal infaunal species composition	Repeat sampling across the main estuaries, involving recording of conspicuous species, environmental parameters and core sampling (x 5 replicates)	Glaslyn/ Dwyryd (x9 infaunal core stations)
Open coast intertidal infaunal species composition	Repeat sampling at 3 locations, involving recording of conspicuous species, environmental parameters and core sampling (x 5 replicates)	Morfa Harlech, Morfa Dyffryn, Black Rock Sands and East Criccieth
Extent and condition of <i>Zostera noltii</i> and <i>Z. marina</i> beds	Boundary and density measure using grid of quadrat samples	Pen y Chain

Subtidal monitoring:

- **Bottlenose dolphin (BND) monitoring:** NRW have not contracted any BND monitoring in 2017 however they have facilitated some BND surveys from Pedryn in PLAS with the Sea Watch Foundation.
- **Seals:** NRW have commissioned a seal pup census this year across North wales including PLAS.
- **Holden's reef** (the Methane Derived Authogenic Carbonate Reef): NRW have conducted an extent survey of this using Side Scan Sonar.
- **Modiolus Reef:** NRW have conducted an extent survey of this using Side Scan Sonar.
- **Morfa Gwyllt:** Annual infaunal monitoring, plus salinity & temperature logging.
- **Subtidal sediment;** 4 stations were sampled 5 times with a day grab in order to assess benthic community structure and biodiversity and sediment composition over time (these stations are sampled annually) in Tremadog bay.
- **Reefs:** NRW has not conducted any dive monitoring of the reefs in PLAS this year.

RS also mentioned that the invasive non-native *Gracilaria vermiculophylla* had been found on the cob in the Glaslyn Dwyryd.

Group discussion:

- RS explained that the non-native is from Japan.
- RS added it was difficult to eliminate.
- BMJ noted that capturing our coast raise awareness about non-natives.

12. Any issue of concern or interest

Bill Miller-Jones

BMJ explained that there had been several instances of people trying to help seal pups in the water, not realising that the pups are not in trouble. Seal pups can die from this. He added that this was well intentioned behaviour due to lack of awareness. BMJ suggested that signs would be useful and that he could help with this. AH mentioned that Cardigan Bay SAC had done some work on this and PLAS could potentially use the same information. The group noted that similar work has been done in Pembrokeshire.

Action 9: *AH to explore the issue of seal pup disturbance.*

Dafydd Roberts

DR explained that the National Grid Visual Improvement Plan had put aside £500 million to visually improve AONBs and National Parks. DR explained that area between Minffordd and Llandecwyn has been chosen as one of the locations. The project will involve removing pylons and possibly tunnelling the cables. Planning application is due in 2018. There will be an element of this work in PLAS.

13. Date of next meeting

7pm, 22nd March 2018, Plas Tan y Bwlch.

Action 10: *AH to arrange the next Liaison Group meeting.*

Table of actions

Action Number	Action	Owner
1	AH to send a letter of thanks to Cllr Caerwyn Roberts on behalf of the group.	Alison Hargrave
2	AH to amend the surname of Aeron Williams on page 2 and re post on the PLAS website.	Alison Hargrave
3	AH to send terms of reference and list of members to the group.	Alison Hargrave
4	RS to send AH a copy of the angel shark presentation and poster	Rowland Sharpe
5	AH to circulate the angel shark presentation and poster	Alison Hargrave
6	RS to send any relevant angel shark information to AH and MH	Rowland Sharpe
7	AH and MH to circulate and post any relevant angle shark information on social media.	Alison Hargrave and Melanie Heath
8	AH to send the PLAS site level report to the group once it is available.	Alison Hargrave
9	AH to explore the issue of seal pup disturbance.	Alison Hargrave
10	AH to arrange the next Liaison Group meeting.	Alison Hargrave