

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the 12th Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC Liaison Group meeting held on the 23rd October 2006 (starting 7pm) at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog.

Present:

Alf Bowen	Aberdyfi Partnership
Rowland Sharp	Personal Interest
Alison Hargrave	SAC Officer
Tony Andrews	Welsh Water (WW)
Barry Davies	Gwynedd Council (GC)
Cllr Caerwyn Roberts	Snowdonia National Park Authority (chairman)
Ceri Morris	Living Coasts-Living Seas Project Co-ordinator
Qllr Ray Quant	Councillor
Bill Miller-Jones	Diver and boat owner
Iwan Edgar	Personal Interest
Mike Parry	Llyn Fisherman's Association
Greta Hughes	Community Council and North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee (NW&NWSFC)
Rod Davies	Gwynedd Council (GC)

Introduction

Caerwyn Roberts welcomed everyone to the meeting. As there were a number of new faces everyone introduced themselves.

1. Apologies:

Andy Hall	Arthog Outdoors Centre
Andy Jeffery	Outward Bound Wales
Bill Bracewell	Aberdyfi Partnership
Mike Bowyer	Archaeology
Lucy Kay	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Rod Gritten	Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)
Liz Allen	Ceredigion County Council (CCC)
David Archer	Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)
Jilly Whipp	
Rhys Jones	Gwynedd Council (GC)
Huw Davies	Gwynedd Council (GC)
Liz Jones	Environment Agency (EA)

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

- 3.1 Item 3.1 (Alison to keep the group updated on various subgroups that have formed to tackle certain issues): Alison explained that information had gone out with the minutes of the last meeting and that Mike Parry would be giving an update on the biodegradable clips during the meeting.

Action completed

- 3.2 Item 3.3 (Alison to keep the group updated on the progress with the Interreg IIIA raising awareness project): This item was on the agenda.
ACTION: Alison to keep the group updated on the Interreg IIIA raising awareness project
- 3.3 Item 3.4 (Liaison Group to write a letter to the EA regarding funding for the SAC Officer post): Alison explained that funding for the post had been secured. She explained that Gwynedd Council would not be contributing to the post but would still provide desk and overheads. The post is now secure until March 2009.
Action no longer required
- 3.4 Item 4.1 (Members of the Liaison Group that would like to be on the steering group for the Living Coasts Living Seas project top contact Alison): Alison included this request in the cover letter that was sent out with the minutes of the last meeting.
Action completed
- 3.5 Item 5.3 (Alison to send out a list of actions i.e. the Action Plan, to the Liaison Group members): Alison sent these out with the minutes of the last meeting.
Action completed
- 3.6 Item 5.3 (Liaison Group to decide whether or not they agree with the results of the RA meeting regarding what goes into the timetable for implementing the action plan this year): Alison asked any member of the Liaison Group who did not agree to send comments in by May 19th 2006. No comments were received.
Action completed
- 4 Awareness raising:**
- 4.1 Alison gave a short presentation on the raising awareness work that had been done during 2006 and on the Interreg IIIA raising awareness project – ‘Living Coasts Living Seas’. Everyone agreed that a lot of work had gone into raising awareness. Cllr Roberts said that he had heard the Radio Cymru programme on Sarn Badrig.

TEN MINUTE BREAK

Members were asked to note items of concern or interest on a flip chart for discussion in item 6 on the agenda.

5 Review and expansion of the Liaison Group terms of reference (refer to briefing note circulated)

Alison had sent out a copy of a briefing paper and terms of reference with the revised agenda. Liaison Group members were given the opportunity to look over the documents.

Cllr Roberts acknowledged the need to update the terms of reference.

Alison then distributed a list of questions that needed answering by the group in order to update the terms of reference. Alison pointed out that she had included some options under each question but by no means did the group have to stick to these.

5.1 The Purpose of the Liaison group

Alison asked whether people wanted to be a part of writing the management plan. She explained that every management plan should have a 5-6 year cycle to coincide with when CCW have to report to JNCC on the conservation state of the features. The Management Plan is being reviewed at the moment. Mike Parry asked whether it is considered a living document. Is it reviewed? Alison said that it is.

Cllr Quant asked whose management plan is it. Alison explained that it is for PLAS SAC and that the RAG group are responsible for managing the site by duty. Cllr Quant suggested that the Liaison Group meetings could be used as consultee meetings.

Barry Davies pointed out that we must be careful with this. The Liaison Group has no responsibilities over the management of the SAC. The RAG group is responsible for this. It may be unfair to ask for the input of the Liaison Group since they aren't responsible for it. He was uncomfortable with using the word 'advisory' in terms of the Liaison Group's involvement.

Mike Parry suggested that what Alison meant was that there may be specialist knowledge within the Liaison Group which may be unique to the group. Cllr Roberts agreed with this. He cited the example of problems with agricultural plans where local people are experiencing the problems but the authorities are not yet aware of them.

Tony Andrews pointed out that the word 'advisory' appears in the terms and conditions of the group, so he is not so uncomfortable with using the word.

Cllr Quant commented that it would be nice to have the opportunity to comment on the management plan. Alison said that the RAG had agreed to this. Everyone agreed that this point would be included in the terms of reference.

Alison suggested that people could add to it later if they think of anything else they would like to include.

What was agreed for – 'The purpose of the Liaison Group'

- **A lobbying group**
- **An advisory group**
- **To share and request information**
- **To help implement the management plan**
- **To act as a consultee when the RAG revise / update the Management Plan**

5.2 How should new members be elected?

The issue of "If members do not attend or send apologies to at least one meeting per year it will be assumed that they are no longer a member" was discussed.

Alison explained that on the register of attendees there are a few members who have never attended, and don't have any contact at all so their interest groups are not represented at the Liaison Group meetings.

Cllr Roberts and Cllr Quant agreed that this is a fair point. Cllr Quant pointed out that each member has the opportunity to apologise for not attending, and Alison said that she is happy with that as long as she has contact with members.

Cllr Quant suggested that if someone doesn't attend Alison could write to the organisation to ask whether they still represent them. Alison agreed that she would not just cut a member off without trying to contact them. All agreed that this was fair.

What was agreed for – ‘How should new members be elected’

The member standing down should nominate a replacement, if they are unable to do so the SAC Officer should find a suitable replacement. The final decision would then be made at the next Liaison Group meeting. If members do not attend or send apologies to at least one meeting per year it will be assumed that they are no longer a member

5.3 How should the chair be elected?

First the question of how long the chair should serve was raised. Greta Hughes suggested 2 years. Alison suggested the group re-elects the chair every 2 years, or when a chair stands down, during a Liaison group meeting.

Roland Sharp asked if the chair was classed as a member of the RAG as well as the Liaison Group. Cllr Roberts said that he represents Snowdonia National Park as a councillor. Alison asked would everyone be happy to have any Liaison Group member as chair. Alf Bowen felt that it is important that the chair was neutral and said that Cllr Roberts has been excellent in this. Alf Bowen asked if the RAG could be approached to submit a name.

Mike Parry suggested that it would be good to have a deputy chair in case the chair cannot attend a meeting. Alison asked should the deputy be a member of the Liaison Group or a member of the RAG. Cllr Roberts suggested that the deputy should be a member of the RAG. Everyone agreed that this would be the best way forward.

Cllr Quant suggested that it would be an idea to stipulate that the deputy chair should be a member of the RAG that frequently attends Liaison Group meetings, because they would need to be switched on the how the Liaison group operates should they need to come in at short notice. Roland Sharp agreed that this was a good point.

All agreed that the group should have a deputy who is in the RAG group but who is also up to date with the Liaison Group. Alison asked whether they still wanted to confirm the chair every 2 years. All agreed that they did.

What was agreed for – ‘How should the chair be elected?’

A chair will be elected at a Liaison Group meeting for a term of two years after which the person will have to stand for re election. The chair will be a member of the Relevant Authorities that has frequently attended the Liaison Group meetings. A deputy chair will be elected by the same method.

5.4 Meetings

5.4.1 Can non-members attend meetings?

Everyone agreed that non-members could attend meetings. Cllr Quant suggested that it was courteous to ask the chair and Alison whether they could attend.

What was agreed for – ‘Can non-members attend meetings?’

Any Liaison Group member can request that a non-member attend a meeting in consultation with the Chair and the SAC Officer.

5.4.2 By what means would non-members attend meetings?

Everyone agreed that the Liaison Group did not need a consensus on who can attend. If the chair and Alison think that they are relevant to the group, then that would be acceptable.

Mike Parry asked if the Liaison Group meetings are open public meetings. Alison said that no, they weren't. The Liaison Group was formed so that each interest group was represented and that by having the same people at meetings the group could move forward. This also ensures that we have a balanced representation of views on the group. Cllr Roberts pointed out that the meetings are publicly reported, so they are in a sense public.

Iwan Edgar asked if people don't take part in the meeting, would it be ok for them to sit in and observe. Cllr Quant suggested that it be at the discretion of the chair and Alison. If the Chair or Alison refuse a request to observe a meeting they will have to give a reason for their refusal.

Alison summarise that any Liaison Group member could request that a non-member attends a meeting but must request the permission of the Chair and the SAC Officer. All agreed with this. Cllr Quant pointed out that the Chair and Alison would know in what capacity any non-member would be attending.

What was agreed for – ‘By what means would non-members attend meetings?’

Any Liaison Group member can request that a non-member attend a meeting in consultation with the Chair and the SAC Officer.

5.4.3 In what capacity would non-members attend meetings?

Cllr Roberts suggested that they would be there to comment on a specific item on the agenda, and would therefore only comment on that. Mike Parry pointed out that any non-member brought in would be to provide information, not for policy making.

Cllr Quant pointed out that the normal procedure was for a person to give a presentation, which is then discussed and cleared off the agenda. Therefore the person would have nothing more to do with the meeting. All agreed that visiting non-members were to participate only on a specific item on the agenda.

What was agreed for – ‘In what capacity would non-members attend meetings?’

The non-member will participate only on the specific agenda item for which they were invited.

5.4.4 Can non-members attend meetings to observe only?

Roland Sharp asked what would happen if people attended unannounced. It was pointed out that interest groups should have representatives within the Liaison Group who should be feeding the information back to them, so they shouldn't need to do this.

The Terms of Reference states that the group has a maximum of 24 members, but it does not mention 'observers'.

Roland Sharp suggested that it would be best not to have people allowed to turn up at meetings unannounced. Cllr Quant said that if someone was to give a presentation, they could remain in the room to observe the rest of the meeting.

Alison asked how the group felt if a newspaper reporter wanted to observe a meeting. Everyone agreed that this was acceptable.

Roland Sharp pointed out that there was a danger, should the meeting be discussing a contentious issue, for lots of people from a particular interest group to attend unannounced. They should be properly represented. Cllr Roberts suggested that we could overcome this by allowing representatives from other interest groups to attend meetings to listen and observe. But we must be specific with this.

Tony Andrews said that we must be careful that lots of people don't turn up at a meeting. To prevent this, we could state that we need to limit the numbers of attendees, to ensure appropriate facilities are provided such as translation equipment, room size, health and safety etc.

Barry Davies pointed out that if there was a great deal of public interest in the meetings, it would have happened by now. Cllr Roberts agreed but said that we should have something in the terms of reference to address the issue in case it should arise. Alison agreed saying that since the terms of reference are being updated, it is important to include something in it to cover the group should such a problem arise.

Roland Sharp suggested that we need to be able to restrict uninvited attendees in some way without saying no to people. Cllr Roberts suggested using the words "can attend in consultation with the Chair and the SAC Officer". Mike Parry asked whether this would apply only if the numbers attending are likely to be excessive, or is any non-member attending at the discretion of the chair.

What was agreed for – ‘Can non-members attend meetings to observe only?’

Non-members can attend meeting as observers after consulting with the Chair and SAC Officer. The Chair and SAC Officer reserve the right to limit the number of observers due to health and safety issues.

5.4.5 Can a non-member attend in the place of a member unable to attend a meeting?

Cllr Quant suggested that any member of the same interest group as the member unable to attend the meeting could attend in the members place, effectively deputising for the member for that meeting alone.

Barry Davies brought to the group's attention to Item 3 in the terms of reference – 'membership is open to any individual'. He asked what that meant. Alison replied a member does not necessarily have to belong to any agency or group. Iwan Edgar pointed out that he is a member representing his own interest, not as part of an agency or group.

Cllr Quant suggested that we should ask the question "can a member deputise should he/she be unable to attend?" Cllr Roberts replied saying "so if someone representing themselves on the liaison group can't attend, they could nominate someone else."

What was agreed for – 'Can a non-member attend in the place of a member unable to attend a meeting?'

A member can ask a non-member to attend a meeting in their stead if they are unable to attend. The non-member must be represent the same interest group as the member unable to attend.

5.4.6 Can any member of the Liaison group request any item to be included on the agenda?

All agreed that yes, as long as it is relevant to the SAC, and after consulting with the Chair and SAC officer.

What was agreed for – 'Can any member of the Liaison group request any item to be included on the agenda?'

Any member of the Liaison Group or the Relevant Authorities Group, in consultation with the Chair and SAC Officer, may request any item to be included on a proposed agenda as long as it is relevant to the SAC.

5.4.7 Should members be allowed to exclude items from the agenda?

All agreed that no they should not

What was agreed for – 'Should members be allowed to exclude items from the agenda?'

No member of the Liaison Group or Relevant Authorities Group may request that an item is excluded from a proposed agenda.

5.5 Openness and Transparency

5.5.1 Should Liaison Group members be able to request agenda items anonymously?

All agreed that no they should not.

What was agreed for – ‘Should Liaison Group members be able to request agenda items anonymously?’

Liaison Group members and Relevant Authority Group members will not be able to request agenda items anonymously

5.5.2 Should minutes of the Liaison group meetings be made available to everyone?

All agreed that yes they should.

What was agreed for – ‘Should minutes of the Liaison group meetings be made available to everyone?’

The minutes of the Liaison Group meetings should be made available to anyone who wishes to see them

5.5.3 If the SAC Officer receives any papers or documents from the Liaison Group that are to be distributed to the group, should the identity of the Liaison Group member be disclosed?

Alf Bowen suggested that if anyone had something to say, they should be able to stand up and be counted.

Alison explained that she was referring to written documents that was to be distributed to the Liaison Group not to conversations or information that is not to be distributed around the Liaison Group. Mike Parry suggested that if written information given to the group, it should have an author. All agreed with this.

What was agreed for – ‘If the SAC Officer receives any papers or documents from the Liaison Group that are to be distributed to the group, should the identity of the Liaison Group member be disclosed?’

Any documents or papers submitted to the Liaison Group should include an author

5.6 Cllr Roberts explained that a draft of these terms of reference will be produced and distributed to the group. If anyone has any comments, they should contact Alison.

6 Any issues of concern or interest – an opportunity to bring issues relating to the SAC to the attention of the group or for further discussion

6.1 The Implication for the SAC if the Sea Fisheries Committee (SFC) falls and is taken in by the Assembly

Greta Hughes informed the group that there had recently been a press release from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) informing that they intend to take the SFC under their wing and reorganise it. If this happens then NW&NWSFC will cease to exist.

Greta Hughes went on to explain that the WAG are unlikely to follow England lead and will therefore have no mechanism for transferring the current NW&NWSFC bylaws over to the WAG. This would leave the SAC unprotected as the bylaws fall. Greta gave examples such as netting and restriction on larger vessels coming inshore.

Cllr Roberts asked whether this could be a cause for lobbying from the group, referring to earlier discussions about the purpose of the Liaison Group. Iwan Edgar suggested that the group should be asking what are the effects of these changes. Greta Hughes said that there had been a marked lack of consultation, and they have been lobbying ministers.

Barry Davies said that GC contributes to the SFC. Greta Hughes said that the SFC are consulting with GC. Barry asked whether GC have been informed of this problem. Greta Hughes said that they will be and that the SFC are working with MPs to raise awareness of the problem.

Cllr Roberts asked who the group could raise this issue with. Greta Hughes said that Carwyn Jones would be someone to talk to. She added that she doesn't think that people have realised the importance of what is happening.

Alison said that she is involved with setting up a Welsh group for all the SAC Officers in Wales. She mentioned that they could use this group to get all the SACs in Wales to lobby together to show a united front as this is an issue that will affect all SACs in Wales.

Everyone agreed that it would be a good idea to lobby as a Liaison Group but also from an all Wales SAC perspective.

ACTION: Alison to discuss lobbying the Assembly regarding SFC at the Wales SAC Officers meeting.

6.2 Coastal Defences

Cllr Quant raised the need to keep the Liaison Group informed on coastal protection issues. There is a meeting to be held with an Assembly member for Gwynedd on the 10th November. His group will be lobbying at that meeting.

The Borth scheme is due to have a meeting on the 8th of November in Ceredigion to talk about the scheme. He would like to give a progress report on the scheme at the next Liaison Group meeting.

6.3 Scallop Dredging

Iwan Edgar asked whether Greta Hughes was going to give a talk about Scallop dredging. Alison suggested that they could invite others to talk about the issue as well. Iwan Edgar said that he would like to know more about the issue. Greta Hughes said that she would like to put it on the agenda to talk about it.

Bill Miller-Jones said that he was the person who had requested it to be on the agenda for this present meeting. He had seen scallop dredgers working and wanted to know more about them – how they are regulated, how much they can take, what are the impacts of dredging etc. He is concerned about the effects, and would welcome a presentation from Greta Hughes and from the scallop fishermen themselves.

Cllr Roberts asked whether everyone agreed that we invite representatives to talk about both sides of the issue of scallop dredging. He suggested that we put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

Iwan Edgar told the group about a television programme with Iolo Williams called ‘Natur Anghyfreithlon’ which focussed on the issue of Scallop dredging in one episode. He suggested that he bring a copy of the programme to show to the Liaison group as a matter of interest and relevance. He noted that he has been asked to help check the language of the programme.

Cllr Roberts asked whether the group would like to discuss this at a meeting earlier than the usual 6 month scheduled meetings. Iwan Edgar pointed out that discussion of this issue could take some time and could be part of a meeting held specifically to discuss it. Cllr Roberts suggested that a meeting be arranged early in the New Year to discuss scallop dredging. All agreed.

ACTION: Alison to organise a meeting to discuss the issue of scallop dredging in the SAC for January 2007.
Iwan Edgar to send a copy of Natur Anghyfreithlon (the episode featuring scallop dredging) to Alison.

6.4 Environmental Impacts Assessments (EIAs)

Mike Parry wanted to acknowledge that EIAs cost a lot of money. For example the wavebreak in Porth Meudwy – the EIA may cost more than the wavebreak itself. The money could be spent on ensuring the safety of the fishermen. This is only one of the projects where the costs are very high which is unfortunate.

Cllr Roberts agreed that the costs of EIAs do frighten people from going ahead with projects.

Alf Bowen mentioned that the Scoping Document in the first instance is £6,500. He agrees that unless there is a big commercial output from the project, there will be a hard fight to get it done. But the reason the cost is so expensive is because of the relevant authorities.

6.5 Lobsters – increasing landing size

Mike Parry informed the group that it has been suggested that lobster fishermen increase the carapace size of lobsters that can be landed. They hope to see this change take place next year.

6.6 Tope

Greta Hughes said that there is a consultation on the Tope fishery. Catches for this species is high and catch and release fishing of Tope is popular. She welcomes moving forward with this.

6.7 Biodegradable Clips

Mike Parry said that biodegradable hooks are were trialled in South Wales and it was found that they were degrading too quickly, so they are trying to perfect a new design to prevent ghost fishing.

6.8 Aberdyfi Scheme

The Aberdyfi scheme is an Interreg project, with partners in Courtown, Ireland. Bangor University have carried out a siltation transport study with very interesting results. He would be happy to share this information should anyone want it.

6.9 New member

Alison explained that Richard Twining, who was representing recreation as a member of the Welsh Yachting Association, has stepped down from the group. He has requested that Bob Lowe from the Welsh Yachting Association be a member in his place.

Cllr Roberts asked whether everyone is in agreement with Bob Lowe joining the group – all agreed.

7 Time and date of next meeting

There will be a meeting in January (date and time to be arranged) to discuss scallop dredging. A second meeting will be held in April (date and time to be arranged). Both meetings will be full Liaison Group meetings.