

CYNGOR GWYNEDD GWYNEDD COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the 21st Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Liaison Group meeting held on the 5th October 2011 (starting 7pm) at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog.

Present:

Cllr Caerwyn Roberts (CR)	Local Authority – Snowdonia National Park Authority (chairman)
Alison Hargrave (AH)	PLAS SAC Officer
Dafydd Roberts (DR)	RA - Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)
Mike Parry (MP)	Tourism
Bill Miller-Jones (BMJ)	Other - Diver and boat owner
Alan Gayden (AG)	Community Council – Dyffryn Ardudwy & Tal y Bont
Rowland Sharp (RS)	Other
Rhys Jones (RJ)	RA – Gwynedd Council
Glynne Roberts (GR)	Commercial Fishing - Llŷn Inshore Fishermen's Association
David Roberts (DavR)	Local Authority – Snowdonia National Park Authority
Cllr Ray Quant (RQ)	Local Authority – Ceredigion
Ian Roberts (IR)	Farming

(PLAS – Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau)

(RA – Relevant Authority)

Introduction

CR welcomed everyone to the meeting. He regretfully announced that Alf Bowen had passed away. Alf was a former harbour master, a member of the Aberdyfi Partnership and of the PLAS Liaison Group. The group expresses condolences to the family and held a minutes silence to commemorate Alf.

1. Apologies:

Lucy Kay (LK)	RA – CCW
Bob Lowe (BL)	Recreation
Mike Bowyer (MB)	Other – Archaeology
Bill Bracewell (BB)	Recreation - Aberdyfi Partnership

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 3.4 (AH to circulate dates of SMP public meetings as soon as they become available): AH sent out an email with this information on the 17th May 2011. **Action completed.**
- 3.2 Item 4.1 (AH to send a copy of the Porth Dinllaen seagrass report when it becomes available): AH sent the report out via email on the 18th April 2011. **Action completed.**

- 3.3 Item 5 (AH to write a letter to the MCZ stakeholder group to request that the Liaison Group is involved in the process): AH explained that a steering group has been established with a number of groups set up to provide advice on various aspects and to aid their decision making.

The three groups that have been set up are:

- Technical advisory group
- Social and economic group
- Stakeholder and citizen engagement group

A number of sites have been identified and the steering group are now in the process of refining the list of potential sites by considering social, economic and practical issues. This should be completed by December 2011.

Once this process is complete the WG will undertake a 12 week consultation period seeking stakeholder views on the list of potential sites, this should take place between January and April 2012.

The technical advisory group and the steering group will then refine the next iteration of sites and go out to a second 12 week public consultation between September and December 2012.

Between January and May 2013 the steering group will be recommending the proposed sites to Welsh ministers this will be followed by a final formal public consultation on the final sites in the summer of 2013. It is expected that the sites will be designated by the end of 2013.

A copy of the WG newsletter outlining the above was sent out via email and paper copies were available at the meeting.

- 3.4 Item 6 (AH to send the Topic Action Plans to the Liaison Group via email and members to send comments to AH before the next Liaison Group meeting): Email was sent on the 17th May 2011, no comments have been received. **Action completed.**

- 3.5 Item 8 (AH to look into the situation wrt radiation from Trawsfynydd): AH explained that she had been in contact with Magnox, the company that is responsible for the Trawsfynydd decommissioning site. These are the points that were answered:

- Monitoring of the lake water is in two locations, North East of the lake near to the old visitor centre and North West of lake near to the main dam. We also take samples from the River Prysor, upstream of the site. Any activity found here would be from off-site events such as Chernobyl, Fukushima etc. and is not generated from the site. A downstream sample is taken from the Gwylan Stream.
- Monitoring results from the lake are supplied to the Environment Agency (EA) on monthly basis as part of our statutory returns under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, soon to be the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010. A copy of the July Laboratory results are attached, however, the actual returns are available through the EA and an annual report on discharges from the site is also available.
- Stored waste materials on site are generally in a solid, encapsulated state and are unlikely to be mobile enough to cause an issue. Material is stored in banded

buildings and any liquids would be dealt with through the site's active drainage system.

- The Fish Farm at Trawsfynydd is operated independently of the site. The hatchery is outside of the lake and uses spring water upstream of the site. Once the fish are large enough they are transferred to suspended cages in Llyn Trawsfynydd for a short period before being sold. Low levels of site activity are found in fish which have been in the lake for a significant time. The amount of activity found depends on the residence time in the lake as well as the species of fish, which have different feeding habits. All results are well within safety limits and are presented annually by ourselves at the Site Stakeholder Group meetings and published by the EA/FSA in their RIFE reports.

Action completed.

Action: AH to send BMJ a copy of the email received from Magnox

3.6 Item 8 (AH to look into the situation wrt public litter bin collection in Barmouth): AH explained that she has discussed the matter with Gwynedd Council and has replied directly to RS. Over the winter the street bins are emptied three times per week. Over the summer they are emptied twice a day (once in the morning and once in the afternoon) seven days a week. The summer programme begins at Easter. Easter holidays in the Midlands began earlier than usual this year resulting in Barmouth being busier than usual. However the bins were only emptied three times a week as the summer programme had not yet begun. Once the Council were aware of the issue the summer programme began. Gwynedd Council also noted that they had received a letter from Barmouth Community Council regarding this issue and this letter has been answered. ***Action completed.***

3.7 Item 8 (AH to look into the issue if flooding in Dyffryn Ardudwy and provide AG a point of contact in the EA): AH spoke with the EA and has replied directly to AG. There are a number of factors that contribute to the problem including the Ysgethin River, surface waters and ditches. AH noted that she had provided AG with the contact details of Dafydd Vaughn Roberts from the EA (01248 484018) for more information e.g. what maintenance work is taking place and what the risks of flooding are etc. ***Action completed.***

4. Update from the SAC Officer

4.1 Update on work undertaken March 2011 – October 2011

AH outlined the work that had been accomplished since the last meeting:

- Presentation – Sustainable Abersoch
- 6 school visits (in addition to the Cool Seas visits)
- A number of show – Sioe Nefyn, Sioe Caernarfon, Botanical beats and the Sea Food Festival
- Summer events – guided walk, beach fun days and a wildlife art workshop
- TV interview for Wedi 7
- A number of press releases have been sent out which have resulted in a number of articles about the SAC in local newspapers
- The website has been updated
- A number of beach cleans have been undertaken
- AH's priority over the last few months has been the management plan
- Issue 9 of the newsletter has been drafted and will be circulated shortly

AH has also worked on several projects to help implement the SAC management plan:

Turning Tide project:

- The project has officially come to an end
- The final report is available
- The poster and stickers produced via competition are now ready
- A number of press releases were sent out resulting in a number of articles in local newspapers
- Even though the project has officially come to an end, the project itself has continued. A number of beach cleans have taken place using our equipment and AH has publicised them.

Management of the seagrass bed at Porth Dinllaen

- AH commissioned a report to investigate the use of alternative mooring systems in Porth Dinllaen (this has been sent round via email).
- The report showed that there is approximately a 10m scour around each mooring surveyed within the seagrass. This means that each mooring equates to an approximate loss of 314m² of seagrass. There are approximately 90 moorings at Porth Dinllaen, this equates to an approximate loss of 10% of the seagrass. This does not include loss as a result of anchoring. It is true that there have been moorings at Porth Dinllaen for a long time and the seagrass is still there but it is not as healthy as it was and there is less of it. These patches also cause the bed to be fragmented which could cause a problem if we have a number of severe storms as the bed isn't as stable as it should be.
- The aim of this project is to look into possible management options. As previously mentioned we do not want to stop people using the area. Possible management options include a voluntary no anchor and no mooring zone. If this was to go ahead we would like to see the users of the area deciding where this zone would go. Another possibility is trialling seagrass friendly moorings.
- The next step is to begin speaking to people that use the area to see what they think and how they think the area should be managed. AH has spoken briefly to Glynne Roberts about speaking to the local fishermen that use the area. This will be set up soon. AH will be doing the same for other user groups that use the area. If you have any ideas of who should be involved please let the SAC Officer know.

Action: Liaison Group members to inform AH of any groups or individuals that should be involved in the seagrass project

Chinese Mitten Crab Project

Invasive non natives are one of the biggest threats to marine biodiversity. One of these invasive marine species is the Chinese mitten crab. It has already been found in the Dee and one crab has been found in the Conwy river. A new project has begun to monitor the Chinese mitten crab to determine the environmental conditions it needs to effectively colonise a river. This could help us identify those rivers that are at risk. The Mawddach has been included in this project. We might also extend the project to include other rivers within the PLAS SAC. The Chinese mitten crab can have a devastating effect, the biggest worry is that they are capable of causing structural problems because they burrow into riverbanks riddling them with holes until they collapse. They are also capable of crossing dry land so can spread to nearby rivers with relative ease. If anyone has an interest in this project or would like to help please contact the SAC Officer.

RS – added that there is another mitten crab project underway – a recording project. He handed out a leaflet with information on how to identify the mitten crab and how to report a sighting. For more information please visit www.mittencrabs.org.uk.

MP – noted that BASC are trapping mink.

Action: *Liaison Group members to inform SAC Officer if they know anyone or they themselves would like to be involved with the project*

Wales Activity mapping

Pembrokeshire marine SAC have produced an online mapping system that maps a number of things including recreational activities, conservation designations, developments etc. At the moment Pembrokeshire is the only area that has inputted data. We may start inputting data for PLAS. This could be extremely useful when deal with planning applications etc and looking at in combination effects. It would also inform the management plan and help determine management actions. This website is publicly available - <http://rawg.no-ip.org/>.

RS – noted that care needs to be taken when mapping activities. AH replied that this is the time for the group to have a look at the website and note any concerns they may have. The project has not yet begun.

Action: *Liaison Group members to look at the Wales Activity Mapping website and note any concerns or ideas and send them to AH*

SAC Funding

Funding has been secured until March 2012.

MP – Mentioned that in recent months it has been impossible to get in touch with Gwynedd Council.

MP – Added that the PLAS stand has become an integral part of the Sea and Land Food Festival.

IR – Noted that people in Aberdaron periodically pick up rubbish off the beach and leave the bin bags near the bins in both sides of the beach. Historically Gwynedd Council have cleared the bin bags however recently this has not been done. CR suggested that AH contact Stephen Jones or Medwyn Griffiths.

Action: *AH to contact Gwynedd Council re litter collection on Aberdaron beach*

5 CCWs review of the management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

AH presented a summary provided by Maggie Hatton-Ellis, CCW.

The Welsh Government asked CCW to undertake a Comprehensive Review of MPA Management in Wales.

To undertake this work CCW conducted both an internal and external assessment.

The external assessments were a series of questions that were sent around both the Relevant Authorities Groups and Liaison Groups (where they existed).

The report was then written using the information provided by the internal and external assessments. This report has been sent round for comment and comments were submitted by the 15th September.

The assessment team would like to thank the liaison group for taking part in the assessment and further comments received on the recommendations coming out of the assessment.

The review recommendations will be presented to the internal CCW project board on the 19th of October and the advice to WG will go to CCWs internal Directors Team on the 21st of November and if agreed to WG as soon as possible afterwards.

The recommendations in the review will focus on improving overall management of all MPAs and a framework for a consistent approach to management across all designations and types of MPA in Wales. The approach suggested will not change the roles and responsibilities of any RA's or Competent Authorities involved in management of MPAs.

MP – noted that he was worried that he would not get a chance to see the final version before it is sent as recommendations to WG.

6 Presentation and discussion on the Borth coastal defence scheme

RQ gave a presentation regarding the Borth coastal defence scheme. The final scheme includes two breakwaters, two groynes and an offshore reef. The offshore reef provides coastal defence and has the added amenity of providing surf. The presentation is available as well as a news article on the scheme.

The reef should be complete by the 6th December 2011.

RS – asked when the sand will settle on the beach. RQ answered that the settlement will be monitored.

MP – noted that he had a similar experience with the marina in Pwllheli wrt the scale modelling. MP has been told that companies now tend to use computer modelling rather than practical modelling.

BMJ – noted that a school in Wrexham use Borth beach to study long shore drift. He also noted that the new material that has been put on the beach in Borth (quarry material) will find its way through long shore drift up north to Ynys Las.

BMJ – also noted that he was concerned that the material imported from Norway would also be transported up the coast through long shore drift. RQ noted that the material from Norway were large boulders that make up the reef. He added that it is estimated that the reef should still be intact in 100 years.

A number of members asked for copies of the presentation, AG asked for a hard copy.

Action: AH to send the presentation to Liaison Group members via email and a hard copy to AG

7 PLAS management plan

AH referred to the topic action plans that had been discussed at a previous meeting. They had been sent out via email after the last meeting for comment. No comments were received. AH explained that members could still submit comments. A number of members asked if the topic action plans could be re sent.

AH summarised the actions noted for each topic action plan as follows:

There are no notable actions under the section of non living resources, this heading covers:

- Aggregates dredging - no actions
- Oil and gas exploration -
- Mineral and ore extraction
- Water abstraction
- Marine renewables

The few actions related to the above topic actions plans primarily relate to awareness raising, monitoring and reporting.

There are three plans under ports, harbours, marinas and shipping

Capital and maintenance dredging – no actions

Port and harbours – actions relating to non-natives

Anchoring and mooring – actions relating to the seagrass bed at Porth Dinllaen

Action: AH to re send the topic action plans

8 Any issue of concern or interest

AG – Jim Maxwell, the chair of the Harlech community committee, wants to know if CCW have any maps of where the coastal path will go around the Harlech and Dyffryn Ardudwy area. He would also like to know what will be the effect of the coastal path. Jim Maxwell has written to CCW regarding this. AH asked if she could have a copy of the letter and she would chase it up.

Action – AG to send AH a copy of Jim Maxwell's letter

Action – AH to look into the situation wrt the coastal path in Harlech and Dyffryn Ardudwy

DR – SNPA have received the planning application for Pont Briwet. CCW and EA are in the process of reviewing the model.

CR – an application to build 8 affordable houses in Talsarnau has been declined due to TAN 15 (technical advice note).

9 Time and date of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for late May, 7 – 9pm in Plas Tan y Bwlch. Date to be confirmed.