

CYNGOR GWYNEDD

GWYNEDD COUNCIL

Draft minutes of the 11th Pen Llŷn a'r Sarnau SAC Liaison Group meeting held on the 30th January 2006 (starting 7pm) at Plas Tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog.

Present:

Ian Roberts	Farming and Fishing
Andy Hall	Arthog Outdoors Centre
Andy Jeffery	Outward Bound Wales
Alf Bowen	Aberdyfi Partnership
Bill Bracewell	Aberdyfi Partnership
Mike Thrussell	Recreational Fishing
Gruff Jones	Keep Wales Tidy
Mike Bowyer	Archaeology
Rowland Sharp	Personal Interest
Ingrid Iredale	North Western & North Wales Sea Fisheries Authority (NW&NWSFA)
Alison Hargrave	SAC Officer
Lucy Kay	Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)
Rod Gritten	Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)
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

Introduction

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

1. Apologies:

Greta Hughes	Community Council
Gwynedd Watkin	Farming
Qllr Ray Quant	Councillor
Liz Allen	Ceredigion County Council (CCC)
David Archer	Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)

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 (Alison to keep the group updated on various sub groups that have formed to tackle certain issues): Alison explained that two sub groups had formed to tackle both climate change and ghost fishing by lost lobster pots.

Lobster pots and ghost fishing:

Alison explained that research was being undertaken on the practicality and use of biodegradable clips. Posters displaying the approximate location of lobster pots around the Llŷn have been put up in local marinas. These posters have been sent out to all powerboat owners that register with Gwynedd Council.

Climate Change:

Alison explained that research is been undertaken at the Proudman Oceanographic Labs in Liverpool on climate change and that the tidal gauge at Holyhead is being used in this research. The sub group are also looking into council policy on climate change and also looking into what other people are doing with regard to climate change. Lucy added that the Marine Conservation Society have put the presentations from the recent seminar on climate change onto CD. A member of the group asked if the list of climate change actions could be sent out to the whole group.

ACTION: Alison to keep the group updated on various sub groups that have formed to tackle certain issues and to send out a list of climate change actions out to the whole group.

- 3.2 Item 3.5 (Alison to see if a presentation during a future Liaison Group meeting would be feasible and well received. Alison to send out copies of the presentation summary when it has been completed): Rod Gritten gave a presentation at the meeting. Notes about the presentation are not yet available.

Action completed.

- 3.3 Item 4.2 (Alison to keep the group updated on the progress with the Interreg IIIA raising awareness project): This was on the agenda.

ACTION: Alison to keep the group updated on the progress with the Interreg IIIA raising awareness project.

- 3.4 Item 4.3 (Liaison Group to write a letter to the EA regarding funding for the SAC Officer post): This item was not discussed at the meeting.

ACTION: Liaison Group to write a letter to the EA regarding funding for the SAC Officer post.

4. Update on the Interreg project – ‘Living Coasts Living Seas’

Alison provided an update on the project.

- 4.1 GC have secured Interreg IIIA funding and match funding from GC for the raising awareness project entitled Living Coasts Living Seas. The project has been set up to raise awareness about PLAS SAC and will run until June 2008. The project includes ten sub projects as follows:

- Audience survey
- Theatre project
- Arts project with children / youth groups
- Mobile roadshow
- Video / AV presentation
- Interpretation panels
- Posters
- Leaflets
- Evaluation
- End of project seminar

Alison introduced Ceri Morris who has been employed as project co-ordinator.

- 4.2 Alison then asked if any member of the Liaison Group would like to be on the steering group for this project to let her know.

ACTION: Members of the Liaison Group that would like to be on the steering group for the Living Coasts Living Seas project to contact Alison.

5. Brief introduction and review of the implementation of the November 2004 – March 2006 timetable

5.1 Background Information

Alison provided a brief history of the management of the SAC. She explained that the relevant authorities (RA) group was formed so that all those responsible for the management of the site could meet and discuss management options. It was decided that a management plan would be the best way to manage the site. The Habitat Regulations states that public involvement is essential so the RA group decided to call public meetings about the site and its management. The Liaison Group was the result of this. The Liaison Group consists of representatives of many interest groups around the site. Together the RA group and the Liaison Group wrote the management plan for the site. From this came a list of actions that should be undertaken in order to help conserve the site. These were put into a separate document so that it would be easier to use. We ended up with 114 actions, so it would be impossible to undertake them all at once. It was decided that a work programme was needed, so the actions were prioritised and the most urgent put into the work programme. The current work programme runs from November 2004 to March 2006. Updates are provided every six months on the implementation of the work programme.

5.2 Review / update

Alison briefly went through the last update sent out on the implementation of the work programme (sent out in October 2005). She explained that the actions had been split into three categories:

- 1) Actions with an end point (i.e. actions that could be completed),
- 2) Non-statutory ongoing actions (i.e. actions that are ongoing but the authority do not do them as part of their day to day duties)
- 3) Statutory ongoing actions (i.e. actions that are ongoing but the authority do them anyway)

Each action has been broken down into detailed targets to make implementing the actions easier. 71% of the targets from the actions with an end point have been completed. The ongoing actions are being undertaken but it is difficult to measure as they need are ongoing in nature. For further detail on any of these actions / targets please refer to the October 2005 update.

5.3 Results of the Relevant Authorities meeting – do you agree?

Alison explained what had been discussed at the last RA meeting held on January 23rd 2006 and asked the Liaison Group if they agreed with this decision. The current work programme comes to an end in March 2006. To produce this work programme the RAs and Liaison Group members prioritised the outstanding actions in the Action Plan and the actions with the highest priority went into the work programme. The RAs agreed at the last RA meeting that the action with the highest priority for March 2006 – 2008 is updating the management plan i.e. adding the new conservation features and updating the rest. It was agreed that any uncompleted actions from this current work programme would also be included in the next work programme.

The group discussed the above and agreed that they needed to see a list of the actions again before deciding.

ACTION: Alison to send out a list of actions i.e. the Action Plan, to the group.

ACTION: Liaison Group to decide whether or not they agree with the results of the RA meeting.

5.4 Future of the Liaison Group with regard to this

Alison explained that she had been speaking to a few members of the group and that they had expressed concerns over the future of the group and its purpose. The aim of this item on the agenda was to discover the view of the group with regard to this issue and to see how they would like the group to function. The Liaison Group was asked to discuss this in groups of three. On discussion the following comments were made:

- That the two meetings per year should be maintained. These are important in order to get an over view of what is happening across the site. It was also mentioned that the Liaison group meetings should match the number of RA meetings.
- To create more sub groups for specific issues of concern.
- To replace lost members using the agreed method i.e. that the member that is stepping down should nominate a successor, if this is not possible then the Liaison Group, the RAs or the SAC Officer should find a replacement.
- The ownership of the group should be with the group so any decision should be with the group.
- Some suggested that an annual meeting would suffice and then communication via email or mail talk would be more effective to discuss specific topics. It was noted here that not all members have access to the internet so it would not be a fair method of communication as it would discriminate.
- It was suggested that the meetings could be held at different locations. This is a difficult issue as the site is so extensive.
- The issue of how to engage the public was also discussed. It was suggested that the following are explored; website, schools, display boards. It was agreed that this was an important issue. It was also suggested that we made use of existing websites. Alison agreed and added that much of this has been covered but could always be expanded and that the Living Coasts Living Seas project will also cover much of this.
- It was suggested that we could give presentations to the harbour committees.
- It was also suggested that we have more presentations about local issues.

TEN MINUTE BREAK

Members were asked to note items of concern or interest on a flop chart for discussion in item 7 on the agenda.

6. Presentation on climate change by Rod Gritten

Questions:

Q: Mike Thrussell noted that scientists don't agree with each other so it is difficult for the general public to make up its mind.

- A: Rod Gritten said that the general trend is that temperature is increasing and that no one is contradicting this. It is also apparent that it is increasing more and at a faster rate than ever before in history. Present levels of CO₂ are huge, they are higher than the predicted levels all ready.
- Q: Mike Thrussell mentioned that fish stocks change very quickly e.g. over a two year period. However, cold water fish are now coming back. He is getting confused.
- A: Rod Gritten said that it is an inexact science. You have to go on general trends rather than looking too much at the finer detail i.e. you have to look at the bigger picture. Temperature does vary from month to month and year to year. You may get a period where the temperature does decrease and nature will adapt accordingly. However the general trend when you look at data for hundreds of years is that it is increasing. Glaciers are melting. It is the rate at which this is happening that is frightening.
- Q: Mike Bowyer mentioned that Rod Gritten had shown a sea level rise of 1m in his presentation. He then explained that it is not only the rise in sea level that is a problem but the combination of sea level rise and storm events. A 1m rise in combination with sever weather would be enough to wash sand dunes away.

It was also noted that the trees planted around the estuaries do absorb water and prevent many floods from entering the estuary. However, this means that the sediment that would normally be washed out by the power of the water entering the estuary remains in the estuary changing the dynamics of the estuaries.

7. Any issues of concern or interest

7.1 Natur Gwynedd Implementation Project – Alison Hargrave

Alison briefly explained that Gwynedd Council had obtained funding to implement some of their actions within their local biodiversity action plan called Natur Gwynedd. Grants can be given to groups or individuals that wish to undertake work that would help any habitat or species listed in their plan. This includes raising awareness projects. Alison handed out a leaflet that explained the project and also a list of the habitats and species listed in Natur Gwynedd. She asked that if anyone had any project in mind that could link in with this that they should contact Haydn Hughes, contact details on the leaflet.

7.2 Scalping in Tremadog Bay – Ian Roberts

Ian Roberts ask what the situation was with regard to this and said that scalloping had a huge impact on the features.

Lucy Kay explained that NW&NWSFC had to ask CCW for advice. CCW suggested that a series of closed areas were put in place. CCW advised NW&NWSFC kept the areas closed between 1 January and the end of May i.e. the fishing season.

Scallop fishermen have put pressure on NW&NWSEC to open an area in Tremadog Bay to scalloping. CCW are in the process of preparing a response.

Lucy added that Tremadog Bay had undisturbed sediment and was very species rich and that CCW had to look at the impact of scalloping on this feature.

Ingrid Iredale added that as a RA they take the advice from CCW although they are not legally obliged adhere to this advice.

7.3 Jet skis – Andy Hall

Andy Hall asked what was being done or could be done about jet skis.

Barry Davies explained that they are in the process of consulting with all interest groups on the Mawddach. Lots of people have asked if powerboats could be banned from the Mawddach. Barry added that he doesn't think that they have the power to ban powerboats, only to restrict speed. The local community councils are coming together to discuss this. This issue has been in the press quite frequently lately.

Barry added that in 2005 1,280 jet skis registered and it is increasing each year. Some don't comply with the rules. Registration numbers have been made bigger and put on both sides of the vessel so that they can be spotted better. Regulation is a problem but it is better now than a few years ago. Without legislation it is difficult to do anything.

Lucy Kay explained that the issue of jet skies would be addressed when the management plan is updated. The major problem is noise so the SAC isn't as useful as the biggest problem with jet skies is how it affects enjoyment not how they affect the features of the SAC.

Barry Davies said that he would like to see a local agreement that a voluntary ban is put in place between the railway bridge and the toll bridge. He said that even if they had the authority to ban boats then it would be difficult to police as the estuary is so big. He added that the speed restriction has worked in Aberdyfi.

Mike Thrussell stated that he was worried about the health and safety aspect. People that use jet skies generally know very little about the sea and they don't understand it's processes and therefore they put themselves in danger.

Mike Bowyer agreed that they are very dangerous.

7.4 Links with Ireland – Bill Bracewell

Bill Bracewell outlined the Interreg grant that the Aberdyfi Partnership had been awarded. They are working with Courttown as an Irish partner. The grant will be used to conduct a feasibility study to improve the marina facilities. They will be looking into all the problems. They will report back to the group in the summer when they should have a lot of useful information.

8. Time and date of next meeting

It was decided that the next meeting should be held towards the end of September. Date and time to be announced.