

Note on a Meeting held at the Nature Conservancy Council's South West Regional Office on Monday, 18 February 1985.

SUBJECT : LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE

Present D Cockbill (BSAC)
 G Clutterbuck (RYA)
 P Cole (LFS)
 T Crocker (SWEFED)
 R Earll (MCS)
 R Gomm (NCC)
 K Hiscock (LFS)
 R Irving (NCC)
 J Lamerton (NCC)
 D Wybrow (local divers),

Apologies: L Hobbs, R Mitchell, J & W Puddy, J & S Shaw, J Welfare.

Declined: Devon Sea Fisheries Committee.

Introduction. Mr Gomm welcomed all present. He gave a brief report on the NCC's meeting of 28 September 1984 with fishermen and representatives of Devon and Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committees and MAFF where firm opposition to a statutory MNR at Lundy had been expressed. Following a previous meeting of interested parties there had been considerable support for the formation of a committee of some form to advise on the management of the voluntary marine reserve. The purpose of this meeting was to update the interested parties on various developments before discussing future possibilities. Any future committee or advisory group would not necessarily be run by NCC who would, however, offer full co-operation and such assistance as might be necessary.

Wildlife and Countryside Act Amendment Bill. Mr Gomm reviewed the present Act's requirement for full consultation and approval by other authorities prior to the establishment of a statutory marine nature reserve. NCC's byelaw requirements were seen by many as restrictive to fishing interests, although at Lundy this only affected anchoring and pot fishing within 100m of the Knoll Pins, and dredging within a boundary which only includes a small area of sediment seabed. The proposed amending Bill currently before Parliament suggests alternative procedures for establishing MNRs. Dr Earll explained that this is not an NCC Bill, but one introduced by Mr David Clark MP originally to cover SSSI notification but now to include MNR provisions as well. The amendments proposed that NCC should inform the Secretary of State for the Environment of all sites thought to qualify as potential MNRs. Within 2 years, NCC should submit drafts of byelaws appropriate to both its own role and those of other authorities. The designation would then be determined by the Secretary of State in consultation with those bodies. Until designation, consultation would be required on the sites more or less as though they were sites of special scientific interest.

The Bill had had its second reading and was to go to committee at the end of March. Neither NCC nor non-government organisations had put in any amendments although opposition was expected from the Ministry of Agriculture and Sea Fisheries Committees. The Marine Conservation Society have been lobbying for the proposals to be accepted.

Mr Gomm reported that NCC, DoE, MAFF, DAFS and the Welsh office, had recently met to discuss the problems encountered in setting up statutory marine nature reserves.

Landmark Trust. Mr Gomm read Mr Welfare's letter of 14 February 1985 which referred to the possibility of appointing a Warden for Lundy. When the Job Description is completed, the Landmark Trust will seek NCC grant aid. Mr Cole said that the Lundy Field Society would be prepared to make a nominal contribution and he had been sent a copy of the Job Description for comment.

Mr Gomm reported Mr Welfare's advice that it might be premature to establish a formal advisory committee for the Lundy Reserve, but he (Mr Gomm) felt sure that the Landmark Trust would accept the desirability of co-ordinating scientific survey projects and discussing ideas. Dr Hiscock pointed out that a talking-shop could have helped to prevent misunderstandings, even in the last 10 years when relatively little had happened. Now that events were moving more rapidly it would be more important than ever for the interested parties to get together and talk over ideas. He cited Skomer, where an advisory committee had existed for some time, as an example of a situation where trust and confidence between the various interests had built up over the years.

Dr Hiscock enquired about progress on SSSI renotification, and was informed that there has not been a great deal beyond the initial explanation of new procedures and implications of renotification under the 1981 Act. NCC hopes to work towards an overall management agreement incorporating SSSI protection requirements and to progress this further in the near future.

Dr Earll endorsed the idea of a Lundy Warden. Mr Irving and others thought it might be hard to find someone experienced in the full range of the required skills.

Scientific (and other) Work. NCC has no proposals for any major survey work at Lundy in 1985, but existing monitoring projects will continue and hopefully improve, (e.g., refining of photographic techniques).

Dr Hiscock reported on work carried out in 1984. Mapping had gone well, but not enough is known about stability or otherwise, of communities, all of which is

information needed for realistic management. Two reports, on intertidal and subtidal studies had been prepared and were circulated around the table.

There was a general discussion about the need for work other than the strictly scientific, e.g., mapping favourite dive sites and relating diving pressure to vulnerability with a view to guiding people accordingly. Comparisons were drawn with Sarah Welton's work in the Purbeck Voluntary Marine Nature Reserve. Aquaserve's care and co-operation in this respect was recognised and it was pointed out that the same principles apply on land as well. The meeting felt strongly that a Warden for the whole Island, land and marine, should certainly be a qualified diver with enough biological training to be able to familiarise himself/herself with the terrestrial aspects of the job. The view was expressed that there would probably be no shortage of candidates. Everyone agreed that the ability to work well with people in an Island situation was a most important attribute to be sought. Mr Gomm confirmed that if the NCC were to provide grant-aid then they would expect to be involved in the selection of candidates.

The need was stressed for leaflets, display etc., to be prepared before the season begins, and for literature to be distributed for visitors from the mainland (e.g., Clive Pearson's boat trips) as well as on the Island. Examples of leaflets to be used were to be circulated with an account of the meeting, and it was reported that the Lundy Field Society have more literature in preparation.

Formation of a Committee. There was general agreement around the table that the formation of some form of a 'committee' to bring people together, was a desirable aim and there was much discussion on the role and title of such a group. The absence of fishing interests was much regretted and it was hoped to persuade a representative of the fishing industry to attend future meetings. The Devon Sea Fisheries Committee would be kept fully informed and their invitation kept open. They had offered to send a representative if they felt the position ever altered sufficiently to warrant attendance.

Dr Earll made a firm proposal to set up such a body, which the meeting felt should be independent of NCC, Mr Cole undertook to take on the Secretarial functions, with the help of NCC (for example, clerical services), and will consider drafting a letter-head which could include a list of organisations represented. Those user groups represented at this meeting would form a nucleus, others would be invited to join in, for example those listed under apologies above. (N.B. The Devon Trust for Nature Conservation has since expressed an interest in attending).

"Lundy Marine Consultation Group" was accepted as a title and the aims were agreed as follows:-

- 1) To provide a nucleus of expertise on the marine habitats and waters surrounding Lundy.
- 2) To provide a forum for exchanging views on present and proposed activities around Lundy.
- 3) To safeguard the interests of all those who use the waters around Lundy and its natural resources.

Any Other Business. Mr Clutterbuck enquired whether local yacht clubs race near Lundy and if they had expressed any interest or concern. It was reported that groups of boats do occasionally sail to Lundy and back but it was not felt that the MNR would affect their sport.

Future meetings: 25 April and a day in October were agreed. Mr Cole will produce an agenda for the next meeting, which should be held in Bideford, probably at the Royal Mail Hotel.

S W Region

NCC

11 March 1985