

LUNDY MARINE  
CONSULTATION GROUP

'Friendship', Guineaford, Barnstaple, Devon.  
Weekday tel: 07372 45031

Note of the initial meeting of the Consultation Group which was held at the Royal Mail Inn, Bideford on 25th April 1985.

Present J. Atkinson (WWF)  
K. Bower (DSFDC)  
P. Cole (LFS) Acting Hon. Sec.  
T. Crocker (SWEFED)  
R. Earll (MCS)  
C. George (MAFF)  
R. Gomm (NCC)  
L. Hobbs (INDSAC)  
K. Hiscock (FSC)  
R. Kimberley (DFTA)  
C. Knight (Fisherman)  
J. Lamerton (NCC)  
D. Lane (Fisherman)  
R. Lane (Fisherman)  
J. Puddy (LT/LC)  
J. Shaw (ADL)  
H. Warden (DSFDC)

It was agreed that Dr. Hiscock should chair the meeting and he briefly introduced all those who were present.

1. Apologies: C. Clutterbuck, J. Welfare, D. Wybrow, P. Broomhead.

2. Notes of the informal meeting held on 18th Feb. 1985 were agreed as a true record of the meeting. As some of those present had not been at the meeting nor received a copy of the notes the Chairman reviewed the proceedings in some detail:

a) The Devon and Cornwall Sea Fisheries Committees were opposed to the setting up of statutory marine nature reserve (SMNR) at Lundy.

b) The Wildlife & Countryside Act Amendment Bill had had its second reading and had gone to committee. If passed in its present form it would cover SSSI notification and also require the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) to give notification of all sites thought to qualify as SMNRs.

c) The Landmark Trust (LT) who lease Lundy from the National Trust (NT) were exploring the possibility of appointing a Warden for Lundy and were seeking grant-aid for this purpose. The proposal had received the full support of the meeting, an ideal person would be a qualified diver with sufficient biological background to cover the terrestrial requirements of the post. Leaflets covering all aspects of Lundy's ecology were to be prepared by the NCC and the Lundy Field Society (LFS).

d) The view of the LT that it would be premature to establish a formal advisory committee for the Lundy reserve was accepted

although it was thought that an informal talking-shop for the regular exchange of views between all interested parties was desirable. It had been agreed to set up the 'Lundy Marine Consultation Group' with the following aims:

- 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.

All interested parties would be invited to attend the meetings of the group. Mr. Cole, Hon. Sec. LFS, undertook to carry out the secretarial work.

3. Matters arising from the above notes.

- a) &
- b) To be discussed under item 4. Current status of Lundy Marine Nature Reserve.
- c) To be discussed under item 5. Lundy, appointment of warden - progress.
- d) It was agreed that regular meetings of the Lundy Marine Consultation Group (LMCG) should take place and that in future Torridge District Council should be invited to attend.

4. Current status of Lundy Marine Nature Reserve.

There was at present a voluntary marine nature reserve (VMNR) round Lundy and there were a number of others like it round the coast of Britain. The Wildlife & Countryside Act together with its proposed amendments envisaged the setting up of a number of SMNR and Lundy had been put forward by the NCC as being highly suitable. It could not, however, become a SMNR until agreement had been reached with all interested parties on the nature of such a reserve.

The current VMNR at Lundy had evolved from a meeting which took place in County Hall in 1973 when it had been agreed that there would be a voluntary conservation area in a triangle bounded by a line drawn from the Knoll Pins to Rat Island. In 1978 agreement had been reached that there would be no dredging or bottom trawling in this area. From this had developed the present concept of a VMNR with a boundary '1km seaward from high water around Lundy Island'.

Mr D. Lane questioned whether the concept of the VMNR was accepted by local fishermen, was the price of conservation too high? If a SMNR was established round Lundy would it spread to other areas and other islands? Was trawling going on around Lundy and if the reserve was established would those doing it be asked to stop?

The extension of a reserve or the establishment of a new one could only take place after the full consultation procedures

had been gone through again. It was generally agreed that the only forms of fishing being carried out within the area of the reserve was a small amount of lining and some potting. The former mostly for bait for the latter, a form of fishing which was not destructive of habitat and the only restriction on it was a gentleman's agreement that no pots would be placed within a 100yds of the Knoll Pins to protect the cup corals. Within the area of the reserve there were few areas that were suitable for trawling.

If this were so why was there a need for a SMNR round Lundy?

Mr Lamerton agreed that the VMNR worked but in a low key way, mainly because marine activities about the island were currently low key. The fishing was non destructive of the habitat, the bulk of the divers were under responsible supervision and voluntary control was exercised on the amount of shellfish taken by them. If, however, an individual or a group of individuals started high powered exploitation of the seas around Lundy then the force of law, as provided by a SMNR, might be required to control them.

There was some debate on the bye-law making powers of statutory bodies, but it was agreed that within a SMNR there would need to be those from the DSFC concerning fisheries and those from the NCC concerning habitats and non commercial species.

Mr Puddy confirmed that whilst the LT's interests were mainly terrestrial they supported the VMNR but required more information on the full implications of a SMNR.

Mr Hobbs supported the present VMNR and advocated a cautious but positive approach to statutory status.

MR Cole confirmed that the LFS firmly supported the creation of a SMNR round Lundy and had prepared a draft conservation plan for the island and its surrounds a number of years ago.

MR Crocker stressed that the objective of a reserve was conservation rather than preservation, viable food chains were most important, they would yield long term benefits to fishermen.

Mr Gomm confirmed that current legislation required the NCC to work towards the creation of SMNRs.

Mr Warden would continue to support the VMNR but were the islanders polluting their own environment by discharging sewage and refuse into the sea? Pollution from the island was said to be minimal.

Mr Earll stated that whilst the MCS continued to support the VMNR they intended to act as a pressure group working towards the setting up of a number of SMNR, Lundy being one of them. There was a need for a national conservation plan and for suitable bye-laws to ensure that the plan could be progressed. How could one ensure that bye-laws were respected, perhaps Hon. Sea Fisheries Officers might play a useful roll?

Mr. George confirmed that MAFF had consulted with the fisheries interests at the various sites where SMNRs were proposed. Consultations were to take place in London between the Ministry and representatives of the Sea Fisheries Committees involved in order to seek a common and if possible a positive approach to the problems involved. With the large amount of research that it was claimed was taking place in order to facilitate the establishment of reserves could there be a flow of positive information that would assist fishermen in their livelihood? Were there scallops in the Channel? Some research had been done on the use of free-floating gill nets at Plymouth Poly. could these be used round Lundy?

In conclusion Dr Hiscock stressed that whilst the SMNR was in limbo the continued recognition and success of the VMNR was of great importance. It underlined the need for continuing consultative meetings so that all interested parties could gain a better understanding of each others problems and views.

#### 5. Lundy, appointment of warden - progress.

Mr Puddy reported that the IT had produced a job description (copy to be circulated with minutes) but pointed out that the appointment was dependent on the receipt of sufficient grant-aid. If made, it was intended that the appointment would be for a full time person covering the whole year, initially for twentyfour months. During this time one of the duties would be the preparation of a comprehensive plan for conservation management.

The meeting warmly supported these proposals but were advised that not too much should be expected from a warden.

#### 6. Activities in 1985.

The NCC were not carrying out any major survey work in 1985 but existing monitoring projects would continue. The intertidal and subtidal studies on animal and plant communities carried out in 1984 would be followed up in 1985. More information was required about the turbidity and temperature of the waters around Lundy.

Between June and September 1985 some 200 divers would be visiting the island under the guidance of Aquaserve Ltd.

#### 7. Any other urgent business.

As a number of people had to travel considerable distances to attend these meetings it was agreed that an earlier start should be made with the intention of achieving an earlier finish.

Travelling expenses to meetings. The Acting Sec. undertook to examine how funds could be obtained to cover these in cases of hardship.

8. Next meeting: Thursday 31st.Oct.1985 Royal Mail Inn, Bridge St, Bideford, Devon. 7.00pm.

P.B.F.Cole.

Acting Sec. Sept 1985.