



LUNDY MARINE CONSULTATION GROUP

c/o The Honorary Secretary
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Notes of the 12th Meeting of the Consultation Group

held on Thursday, 23rd May 1991 in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Bridge Street, Bideford at 7.00 pm.

Present:

R. Kimberley	(Devon Sea Fisheries Committee)	Chair
K. Bower	(Devon Sea Fisheries Committee)	
L. Hawke	(MAFF, Plymouth)	
C. Heeps	(Marine Conservation Society)	
A. Gibson	(Lundy Warden, LT/LC)	
S. Warman	(English Nature)	
R. Tait	(Devon Wildlife Trust)	
C. Mandry	(British Sub-Aqua Club & Ilfracome S-AC)	
R. Irving	(Lundy Field Society, Hon. Sec.)	

1. Apologies for absence:

R. Gomm	(English Nature)
J. Edwards	(Devon Wildlife Trust)
P. Broomhead	(National Trust)
S. Pullen	(Worldwide Fund for Nature)
N. Downes	(Devon Sea Fisheries Committee)
J. Puddy	(LT/LC, Lundy Agent)
R. Evans	(Landmark Trust)

2. Notes on the last meeting, held on Thursday, 22nd November 1990, were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, having been proposed by Keith Bower and seconded by Stephen Warman. It was noted that MAFF should be included within the list of organisations represented by the Group, and the Chairman welcomed Len Hawke to the meeting for the first time, together with Carolyn Heeps. Attention was drawn to the name change of the Nature Conservancy Council to English Nature, and of the Devon Trust for Nature Conservation to the Devon Wildlife Trust.

3. Matters arising: The Secretary had written to Tony Speller, M.P. and Emma Nicholson, M.P. expressing the Group's concern over the practice of dumping sewage sludge in Bideford Bay, in light of reports from divers that a slime had been found covering attached forms of marine life around the island last summer. Tony Speller had sent the Secretary a copy of a speech he made in the House last December on this issue, as well as a reply from David Curry, the Minister at MAFF, which gave assurances to the effect that all available evidence showed the dumping would not affect the island's

waters. Mention was also made that Wessex Water intend to stop the practice by the end of 1993. The Marine Conservation Society has recently appointed a Pollution Officer and the Secreatry was asked to notify him of this matter. Keith Bower reported that DSFC were now taking samples of mussels from all estuaries in Devon (including the Taw/Torridge) which were being analysed for pollutants. Chris Mandry pointed out that he had taken samples of silt from the seabed close to the island, and these were currently being analysed by staff at the North Devon Museum.

Neil Downes (DSFC) had spoken to MAFF representatives regarding the apparent diminishing of stocks of crab and lobster within the MNR, and the possibility of a "no fishing" zone off the east coast. DSFC had yet to receive an official reply to this proposal.

No notices had been posted in Diving magazines regarding the fact that the wreck of the "Robert", popular with divers, lies outside the exclusion zone around the protected wreck "Iona II", as had been requested at the last meeting. This was because responsibility for wrecks was changing from the Dept. of Transport to the Dept. of the Environment, and the Secreatry had yet to establish contact with the new authority.

The Code of Conduct for the Reserve had yet to be altered to include the request that all divers use surface marker buoys, especially in areas where unmarked divers may prove a navigational hazard. Andrew Gibson pointed out that all divers landing on the island were made known of this request.

English Nature, in agreement with the Warden, were asked to investigate the possibility of providing a fixed mooring point on the inner pin of the Knoll Pins, so that dive boats would not be tempted to drop anchors in this "restricted area".

4. Proposed alteration to the fishing exclusion zone: Keith Bower presented the proposal for a "no fishing area" off the east side of the island, which the DSFC had come up with after concern was voiced at the last meeting. As an alternative to introducing a new byelaw (which may take up to two years), it was suggested (and agreed by all parties present) that some form of gentleman's agreement with fishermen should be sought. During the discussion which followed, it emerged that pot fishermen would be willing to accept this proposal if a 75 m wide band adjacent to the coast was excluded from the "no fishing area". However, this was the very location where crabs may be caught, and it was argued that if this was accepted, the exclusion zone would not be helping to conserve crab stocks, though it would no doubt be of benefit for clearer navigation routes. In addition, other nature conservation interests in the area (such as the delicate sea fans found close inshore) would then be outwith the exclusion area. After the airing of various views, it was suggested that a meeting be arranged by DFSC to discuss the proposal with fishermen who might be affected by the "no fishing area". Representatives from English Nature and the Marine Conservation Society asked if they could be invited to attend the meeting.

5. Report from the Reserve: Andrew Gibson brought the Group up to date on various matters. The diving season had started 3 weeks ago when the first group had stayed on the island. The water visibility was better than at this time last year, but that was largely because there had been less wind from the NE to stir up the water. A request was made for more information about a new wreck which had gone down in Jenny's Cove and which was proving a popular dive site already. A rare Ancient Murrelet had appeared at this location again (last year it created quite a stir amongst "twitchers"), and some conflict between the activities of the divers and the birdwatchers in Jenny's Cove was reported. No further work had been undertaken on the beach road since last October, and little spoil had been taken off by winter storms. Financial constraints on the Landmark Trust have meant that plans for an extension to the jetty have been shelved.

New ways were still being investigated by which the underwater delights of the Reserve could be shown to more people. So far about £300 (of the target £1000) has been raised to go towards purchasing snorkelling equipment and wet suits for use by visitors. Carolyn Heeps offered any help MCS might give to improve interpretive facilities for the MNR.

Divers were asked to note that during the seabird cliff-nesting season, the Code of Conduct requests boats to go no faster than 8 knots close to cliffs, to avoid driving through rafts of auks on the water, and to keep noise levels down. In September and October, divers are asked to stay clear of all caves around the island.

Stephen Warman pointed out that the sublittoral monitoring was not due to take place this year, and that the whole programme of marine monitoring by English Nature was under review.

6. Activities 1991: Nothing to report as such.

7. Any other business: The Secretary presented some options for headed notepaper for the Group which he had had designed. A design including a boxed drawing of the island top left (indicating the extent of the Reserve) was chosen for future use in correspondence. It was agreed to approach the Field Studies Council to ask whether they wished to continue being associated with the Group.

8. Date of the next meeting: Thursday, 5th September 1991.

R. B. Timbersby 5th September 1991.