

# LUNDY MARINE NATURE RESERVE ADVISORY GROUP

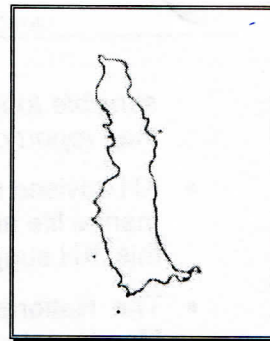
The Aims of the Group are: 1) to provide a nucleus of expertise on the marine habitats and waters surrounding Lundy; 2) to provide a forum for exchanging views on present and proposed activities around Lundy; 3) to safeguard the interests of all those who use the waters around Lundy and its natural resources; and 4) to advise the Management Group for the Reserve / Special Area of Conservation.

Established: 1985

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## Notes of the 24th meeting of the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 42nd meeting)

held on **Thursday, 19th October 2006** in the Committee Room,  
Riverbank House, Chanters Road, Bideford at 7.00 p.m.

### Present:

Chris Davis	(CD)	Natural England (Devon Office)	Chair
John Butterwith *	(JB)	Chief Executive, North Devon Fishermen's Association	
Clive Pearson	(CP)	Charter Skipper <i>Jessica Hettie</i>	
Nicola Saunders	(NS)	Lundy Warden	
Andy Bell	(ABI)	North Devon Coast & Countryside Service / UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (Braunton Burrows)	
Mike Deaton	(MD)	Appledore Sub-Aqua Club	
Caroline Roberts	(CR)	Devon Wildlife Trust	
Royston Johns	(RJ)	Torrige District Council	
Chris Mandry	(CM)	British Sub-Aqua Club/Ilfracombe S-AC	
Derek Green	(DG)	Lundy General Manager	
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society & Marine Conservation Society	Secretary

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting, especially those (\*) for whom this was their first meeting.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Apologies had been received from: Keith Hiscock (Marine Biological Association); Keith Bower (Devon Sea Fisheries Committee); Lawrence Wraybone (Ilfracombe Aquarium); Keith Denby (Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club).
- 2. Notes on the last meeting, held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2006:** These were accepted as being a true record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman CD.
- 3. Matters arising:** It was considered that there were no matters arising from the last meeting which were not due to be covered by the agenda for this meeting.
- 4. Matters arising from the Lundy Management Group meeting (held on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2006):** [Note – this meeting took place in Exeter on the morning after the Advisory Group meeting and was attended by RI and KH on behalf of the Advisory Group. It seems

The following organisations sit on the Advisory Group: British Sub-Aqua Club \* Devon Sea Fisheries Committee \* Devon Wildlife Trust \* English Heritage \* Environment Agency \* Landmark Trust \* local dive charter interests \* local diving clubs \* local sea fishing interests \* The Lundy Company Ltd. \* Lundy Field Society \* Marine Archaeological Interests \* Marine Biological Association of the U.K. \* Marine Conservation Society \* Natural England \* North Devon Coast and Countryside Service \* North Devon Fishermen's Association \* South-West Federation of Sea Anglers \* Torrige District Council \* Worldwide Fund for Nature (UK)

*sensible to include the main points of discussion relevant to the MNR/SAC here, rather than report on them in six months' time].*

- KH advised that contaminants be looked at as a possible cause of decline in some of the marine life around Lundy. CD and NS proposed to find out how to go about investigating this. KH suggested asking Bill Langston at PML/MBA.
  - The National Trust were not happy with the proposed Terms of Reference for the Management Group. It was pointed out that, as some of the organisations represented on the Group were not statutory bodies, the Group as a whole does not have executive powers to make decisions regarding the SSSI and the SAC and is more of a forum group. It was agreed that this matter would be looked into further.
  - Although English Heritage were not present at the meeting, an e-mail from their representative Mark Dunkley explained that the protected wreck site of the *Iona II* was re-designated on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2006, with the exclusion zone now centred on the wreck. Accordingly, the area within a distance of 50metre of 51° 11.0861 N 04° 38.8594 W, shall be a restricted area for the purpose of the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. More info is available from... [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/uksi\\_20061340\\_en.pdf](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/uksi_20061340_en.pdf) .
  - The date of the next Management Group meeting will be on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2007.
5. **Report from the Reserve:** the following report was presented by Nicola Saunders, Lundy Warden.

#### **Warden's Report (April 2006 - October 2006)**

##### **5.1 Staff**

- 5.1.1 There have been no new changes in staff since the last meeting in April. Sophie Wheatley joined us as the Assistant Warden on the 22<sup>nd</sup> April, she has proved to be an excellent addition to the team on Lundy and her enthusiasm and hard work throughout the summer has been appreciated by staff and visitors. I am delighted to say that funding has been secured for her to remain on Lundy over winter which will enable us to continue to offer walks and talks to everyone visiting, as well as focusing on other projects that I will cover later.
- 5.1.2 The new National Trust careership trainee, Richard Hardwick; began work at Hartland in September and will be coming over to Lundy for his first placement with us on 26 October. He will be working primarily with Chris on his first few visits, assisting with the Rangers duties and helping with the volunteer groups we have, and will spend roughly 4 months of the year on Lundy for the next three years.

##### **5.2 Human Activity**

- 5.2.1 **Fishing and potting activity:** There has been no evidence or reports of trawling or dredging within the restricted zones.

Between 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May a number of pots were recorded within the NTZ; Two were discovered on 10<sup>th</sup> May at Pete Pinnacle; and a further 2 just North of Gannets Rock on 15<sup>th</sup> May. DSFC were advised and liased with CSFC and on 16<sup>th</sup> May a Fisheries RIB came over to the island to investigate. They discovered buoys North of Gannets and confiscated 15 pots. There was no sign of the other pots that had been sighted, suggesting that they had been removed.

- 5.2.2 **Angling:** There have been reports of angling activity within the NTZ, although only a handful of incidents. The majority have been visiting vessels that were unaware that they were in a NTZ, and were genuinely apologetic once they were informed of their infringement. However, there was concern when Colin Eastman reported a vessel angling off Brazen Ward and Gull Rock. Colin advised them they were in a NTZ and they

were defiant and rude and continued fishing. I attempted to reach them on VHF several times to no avail. Despite not having made contact with them they were made aware of the rules and they did eventually move out of the NTZ. Unfortunately the RIB was not in the water and we were unable to launch it due to the tide restriction, needless to say we will be keeping an eye out for this particular vessel in the future.

Angling from the jetty has been popular over the summer months, but by no means intensive. It would seem that the majority of the catch is consumed by the anglers or offered to the Tavern; although I did have to have words with one individual who I found throwing dead mackerel back into the sea!

5.2.3 **Dividing activity:** The dive season was busy this year with 32 dive groups and over 230 divers between April and October. These figures do not include visiting day boats, such as Appledore SAA and Ilfracombe BSAC, and other day charters. Bad weather resulted in 5 cancellations of group bookings throughout the season.

5.2.4 **Litter and marine pollution:** Small amounts of litter have been washed ashore especially after Easterlies, regular beach cleans have been done as and when required. No oiled birds or other marine life have been washed ashore since the Guillemot reported in the last meeting. There was a small petrol spill around the divers beach which appeared to be from a group of divers visiting with their own RIB's, the group claimed not to be responsible for the incident, and were advised to act with extreme caution when refuelling in the Marine Nature Reserve.

### 5.3 Wildlife

5.3.1 **Grey Seals:** I had hoped to conduct a full survey of the seal population around Lundy this season, the intention was to investigate the pupping caves and do a number of seal counts. Unfortunately, the weather was against us on the spring tides and we were unable to use the RIB, to investigate the caves in September and October springs. We did manage to conduct a seal count of the east side of the island in August and counted a total of 120 seals between the landing beach and the NE point. As a partial single count no results or estimation of populations can be made, but with a bit of luck next years attempts will be more successful!?

A young seal pup was found dead in Devils Kitchen on 6<sup>th</sup> October with an injury to its left flipper, the sea conditions of the preceding days had been particular harsh, which may have accounted for its demise.

Netting injuries: There is one resident seal with a large amount of netting around her neck, and am told she has been in this condition for a number of years. Records are being kept of all sightings and Gweek, BDMLR and RSPCA are all aware of the individual and I will advise them if her condition deteriorates further. On 27<sup>th</sup> September a second netted seal was reported at Gannets Rock, but no further sightings have been reported.

5.3.2 **Cetaceans:** Sightings have been regular since April, with over 60 porpoises reported since April (predominantly on the East and SE of the island). Over 500 dolphins have been recorded, both common and bottlenose.

5.3.3 **Basking Sharks:** Just 14 recorded sightings this season between June and late August, I believe this is a relatively poor number compared to previous years. Sophie and I were lucky enough to have a close encounter with 2 sharks on the RIB (the last 2 sighted this year), we were both extremely excited, and relieved, as despite all our efforts this was our first (and last) sighting of the year!

5.3.4 **Seabirds:** Lundy has fantastic seabird cliffs and breeding populations of a number of species; one of the frustrations as warden is the ability to conduct thorough surveys of all the different species. Unfortunately there is a high work schedule throughout the breeding season and other work commitments limit the amount of time we can dedicate to these important surveys.

- 5.3.4.1 **Puffins:** A number of puffin surveys we done this season, various locations around the island, where historical nesting sites were recorded were checked. No nesting puffins were discovered at new nest sites. The only location where active burrows were recorded was at St. Phillips Stone. This site was checked regularly and puffin numbers and activity was recorded in order to determine the number of burrows that were occupied. The surveys suggest that there were 7 active burrows at St. Phillips Stone i.e. 7 breeding pairs. Last years survey showed that there we 5 pairs at this site so it would appear there has been an increase of 2 pairs. Having said that, it is too early to attribute this increase to the rat eradication, as natural population fluctuation will occur and juveniles will not return to breed for 5-6 years after fledging. Unfortunately no chicks were observed this season so we cannot report on the productivity of the puffin population.
- 5.3.4.2 **Guillemots:** Grant Sherman conducted a Guillemot diet and provisioning Survey, which is a national survey that we hope to continue.
- 5.3.4.3 **Manx Shearwaters:** Helen Booker visited Lundy to conduct surveys of the shearwaters, monitoring burrow occupancy in June and returning in September to check for chicks.
- 5.3.4.4 **Kittiwakes:** We were unable to conduct a full survey on the productivity of the Kittiwake colony this year, but did manage to check sites and make general observations. Some nest sites were still occupied into August so some of the cliffs remained closed to climbers until the second week of August.

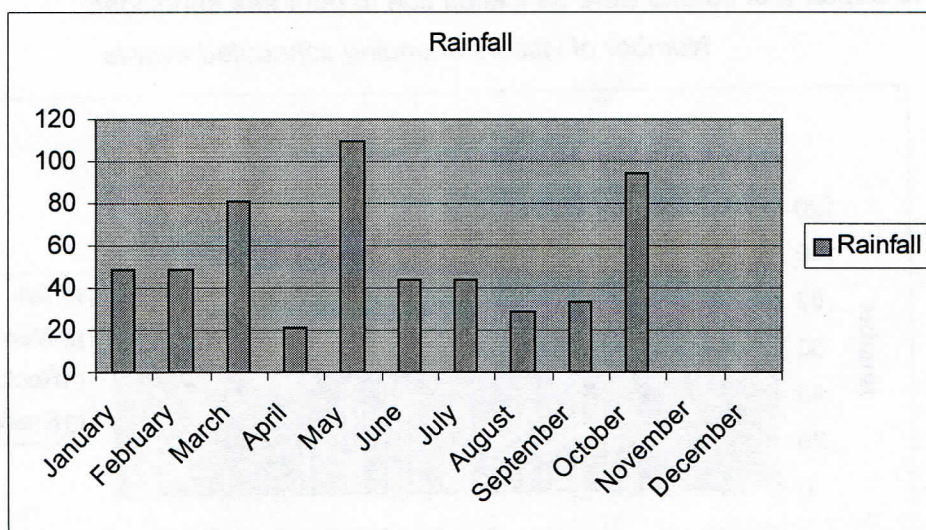
There is huge potential for the expansion of these surveys and I have had discussions with English Nature, RSPB and the Landmark Trust regarding the possibility of recruiting a volunteer bird warden to conduct full surveys. Although early days, hopefully this may be an option we can develop in the future, which would enable far more extensive surveys to take place on Lundy.

## 5.4 Monitoring

- 5.4.1 **Temperature loggers:** As reported previously ILFSAC placed the logger on the Robert in May 2005 but could not locate the old logger. The jetty logger was recovered in early February, but had been damaged and is no longer operational and the data it had collected could not be retrieved. The logger on the Robert has since been recovered and the data was downloaded, unfortunately it appears that it was not reset correctly as the data it stored did not relate to the dates it had been insitu. At the present time the island has 3 loggers, all of different makes and requiring different computer applications. Two of these are no logger operational and I am looking into purchasing replacements so we have consistency across the board.
- 5.4.2 **Weather Station:** Trinity House have confirmed that they will donate the South Light weather station to the island on the condition that we relocate it, we have been advised that the handover will take place in the week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> November during one of their scheduled maintenance visit.

### 5.4.3 Rainfall Data:

Annual Rainfall Figures (mm) as at 19<sup>th</sup> October 2006



5.4.4 **Sargassum:** Various methods were tried for the *Sargassum* removal this season. In the spring, Keith Hiscock and I did a check at low tide and discovered only a few plants that were removed. On two occasions volunteers attempted *Sargassum* removal while snorkelling; however both groups reported this to be awkward; On 21<sup>st</sup> July we attempted some *Sargassum* collection whilst on a dive, using collection bags. Unfortunately although a feasible method it proved time consuming and problematic. The main issues being the storage of the plants once they had been removed, as it was difficult to get them into the collection bags and when doing so many of the reproductive spores were lost. The final clearance took place on 26<sup>th</sup> July and was very successful. We did a 40-minute dive removing *Sargassum* and releasing it, to float to the surface. We had a rower on the surface in the dingy, collecting all the plants. Although we didn't do a count of the number collected we filled the dingy to the top, lost far less spores and we managed to clear the area between the Jetty and Rat island. Unfortunately we did not manage to arrange a second dive to clear the area between the jetty and the landing beach, but I am now confident that we have found the most effective method of removal.

5.4.5 **Rats:** A fortnightly check of the long-term stations has continued. On 24<sup>th</sup> July suspect droppings were discovered in two locations on the west coast near three quarter wall. It was thought that these maybe rat droppings, and the emergency contingency plan was put into effect. The droppings were sent off the island for analysis and a 250m<sup>2</sup> bait station grid was set up. The bait stations were checked daily for 6 days and no evidence of rats was discovered, the 'poo analysis' also confirmed that it was not rat. Although a false alarm, this proved to be a useful exercise for any future contingency efforts and a lot was learnt during the implementation of the plan.

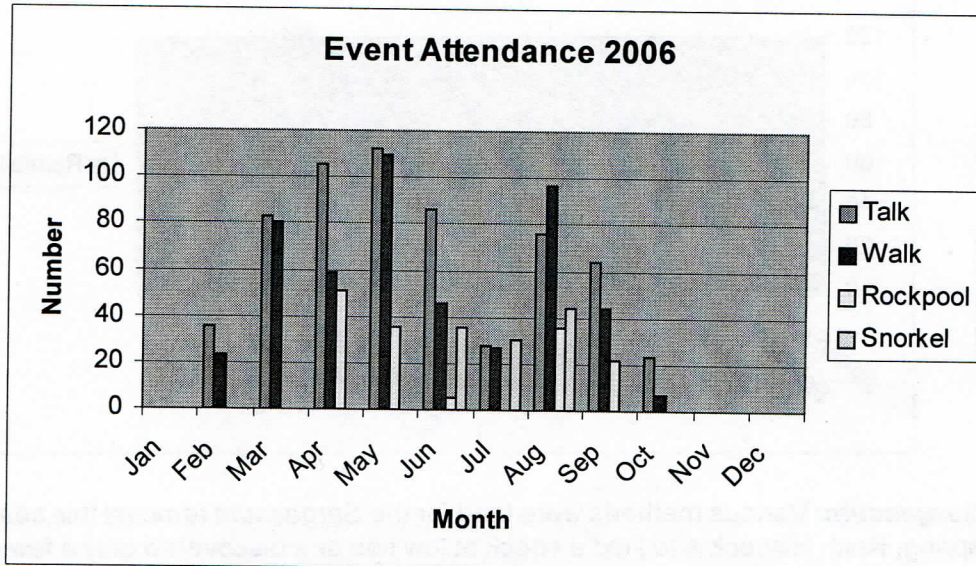
## 5.5 Raising Awareness

5.5.1 **Review of Interpretation:** An interpretation plan has been developed and the initial document it is in its final stages. Specific projects have been highlighted for development and some costing have been put together. Chris and I will be looking to complete this document within the next two weeks. With Sophie's extending contract over winter we hope to make considerable headway with the interpretation over the next few months and look at the funding opportunities that are available with a view to putting the interpretation plan into effect.

5.5.2 **Events on the Island:** The usual programme of talks, and walks continued throughout

summer, I began keeping records of attendance in February and since then we have had almost 1400 visitors participating in the events; rockpool rambles ran from April through to the end of September, and snorkel safaris, were scheduled from May to the end of September, although weather meant that the first safari did not take place until June and all the September safaris were cancelled due to poor sea conditions.

*Number of visitors attending scheduled events*



- 5.5.3 **Letter From Lundy:** In April I began a monthly newsletter entitled 'Letter From Lundy' that is published in the Gazette at the beginning of each month looking back on the wildlife events of the previous month. The article has proved to be a success with the Gazette and is something I am keen to continue.
- 5.5.4 **Media Interest:** The media interest this season has, I'm told has been unprecedented and we have had 5 film crews and I have had 2 Radio Interviews. TV programs have included, SeaWatch, The One Show, Turning the Tide, BBC Special News Report and Natures Calendar.
- 5.5.5 **Interpretation:** The new interpretation board from Miles Hoskins funded from The Esmee Fairburn Foundation has arrived on Lundy; with the beach road works due to commence no decision has been made as to where this will be positioned, but it will be included in the interpretation plan for consideration.
- 5.5.6 **School Visits:** I have scheduled 5 days of school visits from 7<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November. I will be visiting 8 schools and talking to the Key Stage 1 and 2 Classes, about Lundy, how to get there, the animals can be seen on the island and the Marine Nature Reserve. I'll be spending between 1 and 2 hours with each class and will give a presentation as an introduction to Lundy, then there will be a video quiz for the children to complete while they are watching 'Lundy – an Island to Treasure' and finally an educational game about the environment and Lundy. We had a huge response when we wrote offering school visits and had to turn some schools away as we were fully booked. With Sophie staying on over the winter months we will now have the staff cover to offer a second week of visits and we will get in touch with the schools we missed and hopefully schedule a week of visits for Sophie to run in early 2007.

Nicola Saunders, Lundy Warden

The following discussion points were raised at the end of the Warden's Report:

JB – The North Devon Fishermen's Association totally dissociates themselves from the illegal

activity of potting within the NTZ. Some 15 pots had been set within the NTZ at one time during the summer. Three boats had been working outside the Reserve, ~~each having~~ 1200 pots. We (NDFAs members) do not fish inside the Reserve. *utilising*

Landings of crab & lobster last year within the NDFAs area were estimated to be worth £1/2m. Defra has put out to consultation a proposal to increase the mean landing size for lobsters to 90mm from 87mm. The Sea Fisheries Committees, who control out to 6 miles, already have 90mm in place.

RJ was keen to ensure that Clovelly schools were included in the Warden's 'roadshow'. NS replied that there was still a chance for them to participate during a second visit to schools a little later.

CM reported that he had found 6 'lost' pots on the seabed close in to the Battery. These had been lifted and returned to the fishing boat to which they belonged.

RI stressed how important it was to re-instate the temperature loggers, especially in light of signs of climate change becoming apparent. CD agreed that NS should arrange for the spare logger to be put in place on the *Robert*, and that further loggers should be purchased. JB asked if the temperature data was more widely available? He knew of reports stating that the numbers of commercial species were altering, with an influx of juvenile bass in particular.

## 6. **Monitoring Studies:**

**6a. SAC Reef monitoring:** CD informed the Group that a report was due to be submitted to JNCC (& thence to Brussels) by the end of December 2006 regarding the status of the reefs within the Lundy SAC. He explained that it was difficult to assess the exact condition of the reefs, as the survey that had been undertaken in 2003/4 was the first of its kind and formed a 'baseline' to which future monitoring studies would be compared.

**6b Update of NTZ monitoring:** Continuation of funding had now been confirmed for the continuation of the project until the end of 2007. The initial monitoring results had recently been presented to a conference. In summary, no change had been found in the composition of the epifauna (i.e. animal species attached to the rocky substratum), but there had been difficulty comparing the NTZ sites to the reference sites outside the NTZ. This was because of the different conditions affecting these other sites.

Regarding commercial species, CD reported that there had been an increase in the number of lobsters within the NTZ, as well as an increase in their size (average carapace length of 93/94mm inside the NTZ as opposed to 83/84mm outside). There had also been a twofold increase in the number of berried lobsters caught within the NTZ (lobsters mature at about 7 years old). CD explained that the most likely explanation of this was that larger lobsters were coming into the NTZ area and staying there. JB pointed out that the NDFAs was asking their members to not take very large lobsters, as their retail value was not proportionate to their weight and that females provided a valuable source of eggs.

CD informed the Group that there would be a gap after 2007 in order to write up the results (there could possibly be 6 scientific papers to prepare), with further monitoring being undertaken again after 1-2 years.

The number of crawfish seen by regular divers within the MNR as a whole appeared to be down on recent years. Just 3 had been seen by CM during the summer, 1 by DG and 1 collected (& returned!) during the NTZ monitoring work.

## 7. **Other Natural England projects:**

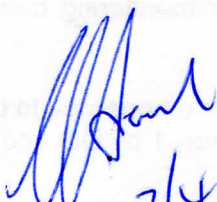
**7a Review of the MNR/SAC Management Plan:** CD reported that this had begun but that it had not been progressed as swiftly as he would have liked. It is hoped that a draft Plan would be ready for consultation early next year. An assessment was to be made regarding the effectiveness of the MNR management using IUCN guidelines.

**7b Interpretation Review:** NS brought the Group up to date with progress on this. The Review is now in its final stages. External funding was being sought to be able to implement some (if not all) of the recommendations, though they came with a considerable price tag! AB pointed out that there could be possible funding opportunities through the work he was doing on a North Devon interpretive review.

**8. Any other business:** The following points were raised:-

- DG explained what the position was with regard to repairs to the Beach Road. There had been further slippage during September. The National Trust had released some funding which would allow one third of the necessary repair work to be undertaken this winter. It was estimated that over 1000 tonnes of aggregate would be required plus additional machinery. It was hoped the job would be completed by early July, with the road being kept open for access during this time. An environmental impact study had been completed by Peter Henderson of Pisces Environmental Consultants.
- JB brought to the Group's attention a booklet published by the NDFA regarding a voluntary closed area (for bottom trawling for rays in particular over the winter months) to the north of Lundy. This area was being observed by fishermen from both N. Devon and S. Wales.
- AB informed the Group that the Shoreline Management Plan for the N. Devon coast (including Lundy) was due to be revised and re-issued early in 2007.
- CD reported that the Seaflex mooring in Gannets' Bay had been well used this summer and that Andrew Bengy (of Obsession charters) has asked if any others could be installed within the MNR/SAC. It was thought that four buoys could be deployed, with an additional one in Gannets' Bay and possibly one in Jenny's Cove on the west side, and one in the Landing Bay. CM pointed out that not everyone recognised the ownership of the existing buoys in the Landing Bay – the fishing boat *Kerryolay* had actually rammed the Ilfracombe boat *Frolica* after *Frolica* had left its (*Frolica's*) mooring in the Landing Bay.
- CD highlighted the progress of the Marine Bill through parliament. If this is given approval, Lundy will no longer be a Marine Nature Reserve but a Marine Protected Area, alongside several others. Thus the unique status of being England's only Marine Nature Reserve. There may also be alterations to the powers of the relevant authorities controlling activities within the MPA. It was proposed that the next revision of the Zoning Scheme would incorporate any such changes.

**9. Date of next meeting:** Monday, 23rd April 2007 to be held at 7.00 pm in Torridge District Council's Committee Room, Riverbank House, Chanters Lane, Bideford.

  
23/4/07