

# LUNDY MARINE PROTECTED AREA 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 Forum for the island.

Established: 1985



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## Minutes of the 18th meeting of the Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group

(formerly known as the Lundy Marine Conservation Zone Advisory Group, the Lundy Marine Nature Reserve Advisory Group, and originally the Lundy Marine Consultation Group, of which this was the 75<sup>th</sup> meeting)

held on **Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023** at 7.00 pm.

on board MS *Oldenburg* alongside Bideford Quay, EX39 2EY

### **Present:**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Keith Hiscock	KH	Marine Biological Association (Chair)
Robert Irving	RI	Lundy Field Society (Secretary)
Stan Coats	SC	North Devon Coastwise
Lauren Parkhouse	LP	Devon & Severn IFCA
Sophie Hare	SH	Natural England
Mark Lavington	ML	Appledore Sub-Aqua Club
Derek Green	DG	Lundy General Manager
Alice Ogilvie	AO	Landmark Trust (Environment & Sustainability Programme Manager)
Joe Parker	JoP	Acting Warden, Lundy Conservation Team

### **1. Welcome (KH)**

KH welcomed all to the 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Lundy MPA Advisory Group, particularly Stan Coats from N. Devon Coastwise and Alice Ogilvie who is the manager of the Landmark Trust's Environment and Sustainability programme and was an observer to the proceedings.

KH took the opportunity to express his concern over the low turn-out for the last few of these meetings. It's important that users of the MPA contribute to its management and share any relevant information that has come to their notice. He drew attention to the importance of 'user groups' (such as this Advisory Group) in the hierarchy of marine protected area management. Recent reduced aspirations or collapses in proposals for Highly Protected Marine Areas in England and in Scotland have emphasised what happens if users of proposed areas are not 'on board' and have not had the opportunity to contribute to proposals at an early stage. Most relevant to Lundy, suggestions and concerns from users can be progressed to a management group and to statutory advisors and regulators for action.

KH observed that in his lectures to Masters' students at the Marine Biological Association, he used the example of Lundy and this Advisory Group as part of how management should be done. He used the Lundy MPA Management Plan as the only example(!) that he could find of a structured management plan with goals, objectives and tasks in England – and invited participants to tell him if wrong. Lundy certainly ranked highly in setting a good example in this field.

KH observed that this meeting was an opportunity for those present to be brought up to date with matters concerning the MPA, to make mention of any wildlife observations and to raise any concerns about activities happening around Lundy. Last year was an exceptional year for marine biological observations because of the Marine Festival. This year, those observations (which help to interpret the condition of features and of change) are likely to be rather sparse. *So please dig deep into your memory (and photographs) and let KH know what you have seen during 2023.*

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from: Chris & Sharron Blackmore (Sea Watch Foundation), Ben Bengy (charter boat skipper & local fisherman), Mike Deaton (Appledore SAC), John Balls (North Devon Fishermen's Association) and Shaun Galliver (Ilfracombe SAC).

## **3. Minutes of the last meeting (held at the Ilfracombe & N. Devon SAC Clubhouse, Ilfracombe) on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023.**

A pdf document of the minutes had been circulated via email. A few printed copies of the minutes were also available to those present. KH asked if anyone had any corrections they'd like to see made to the minutes. None were forthcoming, so the minutes were accepted.

## **4. Matters arising**

- 4.1 KH asked whether RI had got anywhere with trying to get hold of additional copies of the Porcupine Marine Natural History Society's last Bulletin which featured various articles about last year's Marine Bioblitz. RI confirmed that he had contacted the Editor, Iain Dixon, who had explained that unfortunately there were no extra copies printed. However, he later discovered that it was possible for members to obtain a pdf version of the whole Bulletin. KH suggested asking if one such pdf could be made available for members of this Advisory Group. RI agreed to request such a pdf.

## **5. Island happenings during the past six months (DG)**

- 5.1 DG explained that it had been "a bit of a mixed bag" for Lundy this season. The *Oldenburg* had a delayed start to the season due to the flooding incident last November, with her returning to service at the beginning of June. For much of this time, her cargo carrying services were undertaken by the local shipping company Severn Seas, which worked out well. The helicopter service was extended until the end of May for staying passenger transfers. A consequence of this though (together with poor weather during July and August) was that there has been a decrease of about 4,000 in overall visitor numbers to the island so far this year. Many businesses that rely on tourism have noticed a downturn this year, so DG has not been surprised by the dip in day visitors.
- 5.2 Fortunately, the occupancy level of staying visitors on the island has remained high. Last year (2022) the occupancy level was 92%, which was the highest it has ever been; this year (after 9 months), the level was 86%. Bookings for 2025 for all Landmark properties (over 200) have just opened and already Lundy accounts for 42% of these; and of the top 10 properties in the portfolio, 8 are on Lundy, so it's clearly a popular place.

- 5.3 DG went on to explain that an on-line booking system for day trips was launched about a month ago, which replaces the need to make bookings by phone or in person at the shore offices. The value of this new system became apparent when a rare bird (a yellow-breasted bunting) was spotted on the island, and 30 bookings were made almost instantly its presence was announced. It was hoped this system will be extended to staying visitors in 2024.
- 5.4 Regarding power on the island, the new system (comprising four new generators) is working well and provides a high level of stability, which is reassuring. The water reservoir capacity had also increased with the addition of two new tanks providing an extra 300,000 litre capacity (equivalent to about 20 days' worth). DG wanted to acknowledge the financial input from the National Trust for both of these infrastructure projects.
- 5.5 Progress on introducing renewables to the island continued with DG making a visit to Fair Isle (between Orkney and Shetland) to inspect the system they have installed there. He envisaged Lundy adopting a similar mix of wind and solar. Currently, efforts are being spent on designing a control system for the power on the island, working out how the present generators might contribute when there's insufficient wind or sunshine. Storage batteries are also part of the design.
- 5.6 Staff-wise, Stuart Cossey (Assistant Warden) left early on in the year with his post being filled by Joe Parker, who is now officially the Bird Observatory Warden. More recently, Rosie Ellis (Warden) has moved on from the island to West Sussex, so DG explained there is a gap between Wardens at the moment. Joe is currently filling the position of acting-Warden. The position should be filled within the next month, following interviews. [On 14<sup>th</sup> November it was announced that Joe Parker is now Lundy's Head Warden. Congratulations, Joe!]
- 5.7 The Bird Observatory has gone from strength to strength, DG was happy to report. It now has a physical presence on the island (in the form of a large shed), which has been kitted out with various items of equipment. There was also good news with the publication of a report by RSPB on the current status of Lundy's seabirds (see JoP's report below). This has made national news outlets (*Daily Telegraph*, *Guardian* and BBC website), which was particularly pleasing.
- 5.8 There were 10 days left of the *Oldenburg's* sailing season before she goes for her dry-dock check-up on 6<sup>th</sup> November and again in February to have her two gearboxes replaced with new ones (which have been built in Germany).
- 5.9 Following DG's contribution, KH asked if there was ever going to be a working RIB on the island, for undertaking survey work on the water? DG explained that one of the issues over the past couple of years has been that there hasn't been any particular need to do any surveys as the remit has been taken away and it has become the responsibility of others. That said, DG agreed that the island needs a boat, so the *Islander* is due to come off this winter and be coded, so that she'll be ready for use next season. However, any cox of the craft would need to hold an RYA Level 2 Powerboat qualification to drive it (for insurance purposes). Both Dean and Rosie were trained up to cox the RIB but, as DG pointed out, there needs to be an appetite for that to happen. Frustratingly, there's a lot of effort required to just get the boat in the water.

The hope would be for it not only to be used for surveys but also for possible recreational trips around the island. It might also be available to hire out to *bona fide* organisations for monitoring purposes or the like. RI wondered if the boat would be kept in the Beach Building when back on the island. DG said that would be over-winter but that during the season it would ideally be on a mooring in the Landing Bay. RI also wondered whether it could be launched off the steep ramp onto the Divers'

Beach behind the old jetty wall, but DG said it was far easier to launch it off the end of the jetty at high tide.

- 5.10 RI then asked what the present situation was regarding the collapsed scaffolding at Brazen Ward. This had been a conundrum for over five years now since some scaffolding steps were ripped from their location close to the seaward-facing wall of the platform by the 'Beast from the East' storm (22<sup>nd</sup> February 2018) and ended up under water amongst the deep gullies there. DG replied that he was now of the opinion that the removal of the scaffolding would not only be very expensive to do but was also likely to cause more damage than if it was left alone. Others at the meeting agreed this was probably the best solution.

## **6. Conservation Team report     Joe Parker (Acting Lundy Warden)**

- 6.1 Following Rosie Ellis's recent departure from the island to pastures new, JP was acting Warden until a replacement for the position was decided upon. He presented the Conservation Team's report which Rosie had started and he has now completed. A pdf of their report is distributed with these minutes.
- 6.2 JoP wanted to start by thanking all of the volunteers who had been part of the Conservation Team over the summer – they had been phenomenal. For the first time there has been a volunteer assistant marine warden, Nao Szulc, from 13<sup>th</sup> July to 27<sup>th</sup> August, undertaking snorkel safaris, rockpool rambles and filling diving cylinders; and a volunteer seal warden, Nicola Dunkin, was on the island from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 7<sup>th</sup> October. DG added that the volunteer assistants this summer had all fitted in well and that their work was appreciated. The plan will be to advertise these posts again for next year.
- 6.3 Following JoP's presentation his report, SC asked if there had been any instances of avian flu apparent amongst the island's seabird population. JoP replied saying that fortunately, very few dead birds have been encountered, there being just two positive tests from dead herring gulls. One was a chick in a breeding colony and the other was an adult found on the shore by the jetty. There have been no auks washed up dead. In late summer, there was a large number of auks washed up on the north Devon coast although it was later determined these had probably come from colonies in southern Ireland.
- 6.4 **Grey seals** update: To date, the maximum count of adults has been 234 individuals – almost matching the highest number ever recorded of 244 individuals in 2021. There have also been 54 pups born, with a mortality rate of 7%, which compares well with that recorded from 2022 of 18%. [Please note these figures are an update on those which appear in the Conservation Team report.]
- 6.5 KH pointed out that entries into the Tavern marine sightings logbook had been pretty sparse and encouraged Joe to persuade others to enter their sightings into the logbooks. JoP did say that there was now a marine sightings logbook on board the *Oldenburg*, for any seabird, cetacean or other marine-related sightings seen during crossings. DG added that there was also a daily meeting of the 'Bird Club' on Lundy at 8:00 pm, when any bird enthusiast was welcome to report their sightings during the day.
- 6.6 JoP added that a new weather station was set up on the island in July and, as of today (17<sup>th</sup> October), its recordings are now on-line and 'live' via the Lundy website. By being linked to 'the cloud', and with a broadband connection now present on the island, it was also possible to access historic weather data. The station had been funded by the LFS.
- 6.7 RI had a question for DG, asking when he expects an announcement to be made about who is to be appointed the new Warden. DG explained the first round of

interviews had already taken place and the second round (for shortlisted candidates) will take place in about three weeks' time. An appointment should be made by the end of November.

*[20Nov23: Besides Joe Parker being appointed the island's new Head Warden, Tara McEvoy-Wilding has been appointed as the Assistant Warden. Tara was one of the two volunteer Marine Festival Wardens during the summer of 2022. She is due to complete her MSc from Exeter University this winter having returned to the island this past summer to undertake a fieldwork project (see also 10.1). Congratulations Tara!]*

## **7. Natural England update (SH)**

- 7.1 SH explained that last time the Forum met, she agreed to look into updating the Lundy Marine Management Plan (MMP). This is going to depend upon Natural England's end-of-year underspend, and she hopes to hear about this fairly soon. She said she'd be in touch with DG when she does hear.
- 7.2 SH had heard from NE's national team recently that they are putting together a document relating to methods used for the condition assessment of species' features, in particular grey seals. The plan is to have a standard method agreed by next year, which will be used at Lundy.

KH asked SH whether the way the reef feature of the SAC is being monitored is likely to change at all, specifically which features are being evaluated. SH didn't think the way Natural England monitor the reef features will change, although it may be possible for the attributes to be amended for the sub-features of the reefs. These are in the form of 'ecological identifiers' and each of these are measured against three separate targets. KH wondered who was in charge of marine monitoring at Natural England at the moment. SH recommended that Ian Saunders and perhaps James Highfield would be the people to talk to and that she offered to provide Keith with introductions. KH's 'gripe' is that he feels the wrong things are being monitored at Lundy and that certain signs of change are being missed. What he'd like to see is a re-evaluation of the designated features at Lundy, an exercise which he thinks would be beneficial. His concerns are broader than just those associated with Lundy, so KH would welcome an opportunity to talk with both of these individuals and to share his views with them.

- 7.3 NE had received the planning application consultation for the White Cross test and demonstration offshore wind site in the Celtic Sea. SH explained that NE now had a national team of specialists who were involved with assessing all of these offshore wind applications. DG added that White Cross would be discussed at tomorrow's Management Forum meeting but felt that this particular development was unlikely to impact on Lundy at all. The greatest impact was likely to be where the cables from it came ashore, which was at Saunton Sands beach with the route continuing through Braunton Burrows (covered by multiple conservation designations) and on to Yelland.
- 7.4 NE were not planning on supervising any university student projects for 2024, due to their limited in-house team capacity only being able to oversee one student project/year. For next year, this one project is likely to be in the Plymouth or Falmouth area. SH thought that projects similar to the non-native seaweeds project or the grey seal disturbance project would be suitable. SH suggests students first contact the LFS for possible assistance with funding.
- 7.5 DG had indicated to SH he would be happy to have other students undertaking marine-related project work on the island over the summer months as they seem to fit in well with the island community, so SH had been pleased to hear this. She would bear it in mind for projects for 2025.
- 7.6 KH pointed out that he wanted to pursue the occurrence and possible spread of non-native species at Lundy. He had suggested to Trevor Dobie (LFS's conservation

breaks' organiser) that the searching in the intertidal for such species might be a task which volunteer LFS working parties could tackle in future (by taking photographs), having received appropriate training. KH has indicated he would be willing to do such training over a spring tide weekend. SC added that Coastwise volunteers had been doing a similar thing on various shores along the north Devon coastline.

- 7.7 Regarding access to the shore at Lametry, KH asked DG if the 'dodgy' rope on the west side of the South Light which aids access and escape from the shore had been replaced. DG explained they had had a length of rope which was intended for this purpose but it ended up being used at Benson's Cave. However, it would be a straightforward job to replace the existing one at the South Light.

## **8 DSIFCA update (LP)**

- 8.1 LP shared an update from the IFCA's enforcement team regarding a Belgian trawler which had been reported being present within the No Take Zone with its gear in the water over the stern of the vessel. It was determined that, although it was streaming its gear rather than actively fishing, gear-streaming is still an offence. The enforcement team explained that they were unable to obtain sufficient evidence to enable prosecution proceedings to begin. They had been sent photographs and videos taken at the time, but they had been unable to contact the Warden (which must have happened at the time Rosie was leaving/had left) for a statement to confirm associated evidence (e.g. date, time, location etc.). This was required to meet a threshold which would enable such evidence to then be used in any prosecution.

- 8.2 JoP explained he has further photos to support the evidence as well as information on the date, time and location, and could provide that if it would be of value now. LP said this would still be within the timeframe (the incident happened in July) within which a prosecution could be initiated. DG wondered if it was worth pursuing now as 'streaming' is a relatively minor offence and no harm was done. However, LP pointed out this was the second time this same vessel had been reported for a suspected offence. In this instance, she explained that the byelaw states that all gear should be lashed down or stowed when the vessel is within a Marine Protected Area.

LP also pointed out that the vessel in question was too big to be granted a licence to fish within the D&S IFCA's waters and would require a licence from the MMO. It was thought to have been at Lundy to shelter from rough weather.

Whatever was decided in this case, the message was that in cases where it was suspected that illegal activities were taking place within the NTZ (or the wider MPA), any evidence recording the activity (e.g. photographs or video) needed to be accompanied by a statement of evidence (i.e. accompanying circumstantial data).

- 8.3 RI wondered if deployment of fishing gear might have been how Pacific oysters had ended up at Lundy a few years ago, with spat being washed off nets close to the island. KH thought this was pretty unlikely. The larvae of this species can last up to two months in the plankton, which would be long enough for them to have come from a source on the mainland. Out of interest, KH added that Nao had found one attached to the old jetty wall this summer and that KH had instructed it should be killed by bashing with a solid object.

## **9 Historic England update (TN)**

- 9.1 RI had not been sent a report from Terry Newman in his absence, so no update was forthcoming at the meeting. However, TN presented a report (remotely, on-line) at the meeting of the Management Forum the following day (18<sup>th</sup> October), which is included in these minutes as an Appendix.

## 10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 RI wanted to mention two studies which had been taking place over the past few months, for which he had recently received brief updates. Tara McEvoy-Wilding has been doing a Masters project within the MPA this summer. She has been sampling benthic epifauna and infauna with the aim of creating a less invasive and low-cost method when compared to traditional methods using grabs and trawls which are damaging to the benthos when used. Her new method involved using loofas (more typically found in bathrooms), a natural item made of fibres with many small spaces for small animals to colonise. Her two-page interim report of this study is being distributed with these minutes.

JoP wanted to add that during Tara's study, he had numerous members of the public approach him concerned that they could see buoys marking lobster pots off the east coast where they shouldn't be. He was able to reassure them that these were marking experimental traps to catch very small animals, and that all necessary permissions had been obtained. He was pleased that this concern was apparent as it showed an indication of responsibility by the public for the No Take Zone.

- 10.2 RI went on to describe the second project which had not required fieldwork on the island. This was another Masters project looking into the governance of the Lundy Island MPA by Theodora (Theo) Stephens-Manassieva from University College London. The aims of her research are (1) to investigate the degree to which current governance of the Lundy MPA is effective and equitable in meeting its conservation objectives; (2) the key conflicts, the driving forces behind them and the management measures that are being taken to mitigate the associated impacts; and (3) the future prospects for effective and equitable conservation of the Lundy MPA and the options for improving them. She plans to tackle this using three approaches: a background literature search; the application of the MPA's governance framework (ref. UNEP, 2019); and interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders who all use the MPA for different things. The research will draw out the strengths and weaknesses of current governance structures, the findings of which may be useful in future decision-making of the Lundy MPA. Again, a summary of this study is being distributed with these minutes.

Several of those at the meeting said they had been interviewed by Theo and were looking forward to seeing what she had made of the responses she'd received. DG thought her findings may be quite an eye-opener for everyone.

- 10.3 RI then mentioned that he had seen in the news recently more information about the latest (Round 5) offshore floating windfarm leasing round for the Celtic Sea area and where these windfarms would be sited in relation to Lundy. DG pointed out that he had no concerns with the siting of the windfarms as even the closest one (White Cross) was sufficiently distant from Lundy as to be over the horizon. Of greater concern (for others) would be the point where the cables come ashore (Saunton Beach) and their onward route through Braunton to a substation at Yelland. SC explained the main concern for Braunton residents was two years' worth of heavy lorries passing through the town.
- 10.4 On another matter, RI announced that an article he had written about the present status of the sunset cup coral at Lundy had now been published in the Bulletin of the Porcupine Marine Natural History Society. A pdf of the article will be distributed with these minutes. RI mentioned that he was hopeful there may be an increase in the numbers of individual corals at Lundy as the waters around the island gradually warm. DG wondered if the temperature loggers were still in place and recording as they should be. JoP said he thought there was one in place at the end of the jetty. KH asked if the one on the wreck of the *Robert* was still there. No-one present was sure.

JoP agreed to look into what he could find out. Both KH and RI pointed out that recording water temperatures was imperative.

- 10.5 On yet another matter, RI announced that the film which had been made during the Marine Festival last year about the effectiveness of the MPA's No Take Zone will get a preview screening in Ilfracombe on 28<sup>th</sup> November at 7:00 pm. The 30 min. long documentary film was funded by Blue Marine Foundation and shot by North Devon Moving Image. All MPA Advisory Group members will shortly be receiving an invite to attend.
- 10.6 Finally, about three weeks ago RI was contacted by Lara Ellis, Corporate Partnerships Manager with the Marine Conservation Society. Following an article he had written for the Society's magazine last year about the Lundy MPA, she told him MCS had been approached by a cosmetics company called Elemis (a UK-based brand but with offices/labs./sales worldwide) and as a consequence, Elemis were now one of MCS's corporate supporters, with particular interest in the promotion of Marine Protected Areas in the UK. A week or so ago, RI participated in a Teams call with Elemis and MCS representatives, as Elemis are very keen to use planktonic diatom samples which have been collected from an MPA to produce a product which can be used in a new skincare lotion. MCS have recommended Lundy as a possible MPA as it's the country's oldest MPA.

Unbeknownst to RI at the time of this Teams call, it turned out that Elemis had already collected some plankton samples from Lundy, had grown the diatoms on under laboratory conditions and found the species they'd collected to be suitable for multiplying up. They are now seeking permission to shoot a promotional film at Lundy, highlighting the island's MPA and its conservation message, and explaining how their new product has come into being. They wanted to know who they should speak to about obtaining permission to film and when would be the best time to film in order to see the island and its wildlife at its best. RI explained to the Elemis representative that he would be willing to put this proposal to both the MPA's Advisory Group (at this meeting) and to the Management Forum (at tomorrow's meeting) to see what the reaction would be. Elemis then provided RI with a pdf of a couple of PowerPoint slides summarising the project proposal which could be printed out and passed around to all present. Following the Teams meeting, RI then discussed this proposal with DG.

DG then explained the situation a little further. Apparently, this was the fourth time a cosmetics company had made contact with the island this year about some new product or other. It also turned out that a film crew had already been contracted by Elemis to film at Lundy but, during a phone call they'd had with DG, they said they had been given permission to film on the island. DG corrected them and said they hadn't as granting such permission would have had to have come through him. These points were not mentioned during the Teams meeting.

All of these enquiries had been turned down. DG went on to say that over the years, Lundy had worked hard on its own reputation. DG had since spoken with the Director of the Landmark Trust and she had agreed that it was not a suitable thing for Lundy to put its name to.

RI added that he thought a distinction should be made between the Lundy MPA and the island of Lundy (as run by the Lundy Company/Landmark Trust). The intention of the cosmetics company was to work with the Lundy MPA. However, it turns out that the two entities are so intertwined that they can't easily be separated.

DG described it as a branding issue and one that doesn't sit comfortably with him at all. He thought it was an indication of 'green-washing' by the company in trying to enhance its green credentials. He didn't think there would be any benefit to the island

from an association with this company, although he conceded that MCS were likely to benefit from their 'partnership'.

After some further discussion amongst those present, it was agreed by all present to decline the request to give permission for the name of the Lundy MPA to be associated with any product made by Elemis. RI agreed to respond to his contact at Elemis to indicate this.

- 10.8 SC made mention of a dead tuna which had been washed up at Saunton beach and KH added that he had been made aware of another tuna which had been found dead on the surface of the sea. He didn't know what had caused the deaths.

*[KH has since informed RI that on the same day as the meeting, a dead tuna had been photographed in the sea off The Ugly on Lundy's east coast.]*

**Date of the next meeting:** proposed as being Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> **May 2024** or Wednesday, 8<sup>th</sup> **May 2024**. A venue which can provide on-line Teams facilities is being sought, so that those who may have to travel some distance to attend meetings in person, can now attend from the comfort of their own homes.

Please note an Appendix follows on the next page

APPENDIX - **Historic England update** (as presented by TN at the Lundy Management Forum meeting, 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023)

- 9.2 TN wanted to start by passing on his best wishes to Rosie Ellis and to wish her well. He wanted to thank her for all the work she'd done, particularly in overseeing the protected wreck licences for Lundy.
- 9.3 TN pointed out that the licensing period for this year was coming to an end (at the end of November), and this year there had been six licences issued covering the protected wrecks at Lundy. Four of these licences had licences for both the *Iona II* and the Gull Rock site. The last dives undertaken utilising these licences were in the middle of August.
- 9.4 TN was pleased to note that the Nautical Archaeology Society's Protected Wreck Days, held on 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> June, had proved popular and were in fact over-subscribed. Easterly winds on the first day meant that a planned dive on the *Iona II* had to be replaced with one on HMS *Montagu* off the south-west of the island, although the dive on the *Iona II* took place on the second day in surprisingly good visibility. The intention is for the NAS to continue these Protected Wreck Days at Lundy on an annual basis.
- 9.5 TN reported there are now some really good 360° videos of the *Iona II* protected wreck on-line. One shot during the Marine Festival last year by Jon Slayer can be seen here:

<https://youtu.be/XhHavtBGpcw>

There has also been an article published recently in SCUBA magazine about diving on the *Iona II*. [*'A paddle into the past'* by Yo-Han Cha, first published in SCUBA magazine, Issue 138 September 2023.]

- 9.6 TN mentioned that Historic England have just announced a plan to add forensic marking to valuable underwater artefacts associated with the country's 57 Protected Wrecks. The project has been 7-8 years in the making, most of that time being spent creating a suitable substance ('gunk') that will work under water. What has been created is similar to 'smart water' used to deter thieves from stealing items above water. The new product is invisible under water but will show up under ultra-violet light. It remains stuck to anything that touches it. Its chemical signature also makes the product site-specific, meaning it can tie the theft of an object (or even just of someone's presence at a site if they get the gunk on themselves) to that particular site.
- A number of sites have been piloted for its use, and last week it was rolled-out in the media. It has created a lot of interest internationally too. TN explained it has been developed with HE funding through a marine archaeology company called MSDS (part run by Alison James, who used to represent HE on Lundy's MPA Advisory Group). He went on to say that Gull Rock at Lundy could well be suitable for the use of this product, as several artefacts from that site have already gone missing since it was first discovered in 1968. HE are currently developing a training programme for licencees in respect of this new product. Clearly, they would be in the best position to "do the work" (i.e. to apply the 'gunk'). RI asked how long the 'gunk' might persist on a diver's hands or dive suit should they come into contact with it. TN didn't know. AR suggested sites which had it applied should be publicised as a disincentive to would-be thieves. However, TN pointed out it would actually would be best not to do this, so that such persons were not aware of which wreck had been treated and which hadn't.
- 9.7 OASIS is a platform for grey literature covering archaeological investigations. TN explained there was now a plan to upload licencees' reports to OASIS, so that these then became available to all who had access to OASIS. TN went on to say an email would be sent out in the near future asking for the permission of licencees to do this.

- 9.8 Cifa (The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) are running a live-streamed seminar on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, which is part of the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protection of Wrecks Act, and how it might be improved. Details can be found here:

<https://www.archaeologists.net/news/protecting-wrecks-next-50-years-survey-and-seminar-announcement-1686819698>

The Nautical Archaeology Society are holding their annual conference on 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> November, which is on-line too. See:

<https://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/annual-conference>

- 9.9 English Heritage passes (to historic monuments the organisation looks after) will be available for Protected Wreck licencees to purchase for the forthcoming year.
- 9.10 Finally, TN wanted to say that he would welcome 'hybrid' on-line meetings in future (for both meetings of the Forum and of the MPA Advisory Group), as he has to travel some way to attend meetings in person, and HE staff as a whole have been asked to reduce their carbon footprint, and on-line meetings would be one way of doing so.
- 9.11 DG wondered how long it might take before the 'artefact marking programme' was rolled out and when, if thought appropriate, artefacts from say the Gull Rock wreck site could be marked. TN thought it might be as early as next year's diving season but as he's said, a training programme needs to be put in place first.
- 9.12 DG informed all that the island has recently received a small grant for updating its interpretation material (incorporating a new branding throughout) and part of that has been earmarked for a new *Iona II* interpretation board. DG would be happy to send TN a draft of what's planned which is just about complete. TN said Historic England might be able to help with specific funding for the panel, but DG explained a small legacy had covered its cost.
- 9.13 TN added that, following an internal meeting back in February, there was a move for Scheduled Monuments to be supported by volunteer 'Site Champions'. TN thought this would suit Lundy well, with the *Montagu Steps* and the *Montagu* wreck site. He'll keep the Forum posted on developments on this front. DG thought the local dive clubs would be interested in this and get them involved in regular monitoring.