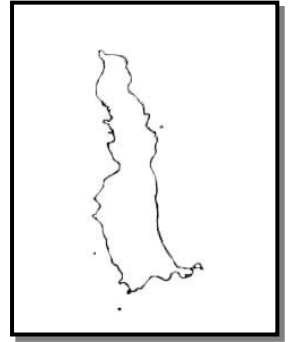


# LUNDY MARINE PROTECTED AREA ADVISORY GROUP

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



Please reply to the Hon. Secretary:

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## Minutes of the 20th 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 77<sup>th</sup> meeting)

held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024 at 7.00 pm.

at Ilfracombe & N. Devon SAC Clubhouse, Ropery Road, Ilfracombe EX34 9EF

### Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Keith Hiscock	KH	Marine Biological Association
Robert Irving	RI	Lundy Field Society
Lauren Parkhouse	LP	Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&SIFCA)
Derek Green	DG	Lundy General Manager
Joe Parker	JP	Warden, Lundy Conservation Team
Mark Lavington	ML	Appledore Sub-Aqua Club
Steve Ashton	SA	Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club
Maggs Ashton	MA	Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club
Shaun Galliver	SG	Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club
Amanda Gartshore	AG	Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club
Ben Bengey	BB	Lundy Diving
Leigh Hanks	LH	Lundy Diving
Stuart Carpenter	SC	Hampshire Rose charter boat
Chris Blackmore	CB	Sea Watch Foundation
Sharon Blackmore	SB	Sea Watch Foundation

### On-line:

Judith Tatem		Coastwise North Devon
Tara McEvoy-Wilding	TMW	Assistant Warden, Lundy Conservation Team
Andy Bell		N. Devon Biosphere Reserve

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

KH welcomed all to the 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Lundy MPA Advisory Group, both to those in the room and also those joining on-line via Teams. The meeting is 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.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from: John Balls (North Devon Fishermen's Association), Mike Deaton (Appledore Sub-Aqua Club), Chloe Nunn (Biosphere Reserve) & Christine Goodall (on behalf of Natural England).

## **3. Minutes of the last meeting (held at the Ilfracombe & N. Devon SAC Clubhouse, Ilfracombe) on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024.**

A copy of the minutes had been emailed out to members a few weeks after the last meeting and again when the agenda for this evening's meeting was sent out. A limited number of printed copies were made available to those present in the room. KH asked if anyone had any corrections and as nobody had, these were accepted. RI was thanked by KH for preparing the minutes.

## **4. Matters arising**

- 4.1 For matters not due to be covered under the agenda, KH asked JP if he could mention where things stand in light of the proposal to seek SPA (Special Protection Area) status (now that there had been a change of government in July); he also asked DG if he could say something about the RIB (Rigid Inflatable Boat); and if Tara could say something about underwater temperature loggers. Each agreed to do what was being asked of them.

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

- 5.1 The *Oldenburg's* last sailing of the current season will be on Friday of this week (25<sup>th</sup>). DG reported it had been a bit of an indifferent season, largely due to unexpectedly poor weather. Of over 100 sailings this year, 26 were affected either by the delay in the ship entering service in the spring or by adverse weather. The start of the season had been delayed by two weeks with problems associated with the ship's gearbox; that was followed by three uninterrupted months and then from mid-August until quite recently, it had been unpredictable as to whether sailings would happen due to the unseasonal weather. Ten sailings had to be cancelled completely due to the weather, meaning that the helicopter had to be used from Hartland to exchange staying visitors. About 25% of day tripper bookings had to be cancelled when sailings were just 'splash and dash', meaning they were just for exchanging staying visitors; and two short break periods had to be cancelled completely, when no sailing nor flying was possible.

All of that being said, passenger numbers for this year have been up on last year, due largely to the start of last year's season being lost to the ship being unexpectedly delayed in dry dock. Passenger numbers for 2024 (up to 25<sup>th</sup> November) are 14,949; for the same period last year, numbers were 13,106.

The *Oldenburg* will head up to the dry dock at Sharpness on 7<sup>th</sup> November for its annual maintenance check. The replacement of the steel aft deck will continue. The ship also carried out four river cruises and three Lundy charters over the summer,

including an RNLI fundraiser in the Torridge for the Appledore Lifeboat which celebrates its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year.

- 5.2 DG reported that the island's properties have been fully booked for much of the year. When Landmark opened its bookings for 2026 recently, 43% of them were for Lundy, (which DG was very pleased about), reflecting Lundy's continuing popularity as a place to stay. The occupancy rate (to date) for 2024 is 87.8%, which is good even for a bad year; for the same period last year, the rate was 89%.
- 5.3 There have been seven visits by cruise ships over the summer, including two visits from the *Waverley*, two from the *Seaborne Venture* and one from the *Ocean Nova*, *Hanseatic Inspiration* and the *Isle of Skye*. There were also two major events: the annual Trail Run (a half marathon for 250-odd participants); and a Fly In (a small aircraft rally) at the start of August.
- 5.4 On the island, the focus has been on infrastructure and the 'enabling works' for the new renewable power system. The cost of this major project is being met by the National Trust under the terms of the lease made with the Landmark Trust. The intention is to reduce considerably the amount of diesel (160,000l) which is being used to run the generators each year. Other projects include the water reservoir on the island undergoing a complete refurbishment with the installation of new holding tanks; and the windows of all of the properties are gradually being converted to double-gazed units. One of the island's tractors has recently been replaced (with thanks to the Appledore boatyard for getting it over to the island on a landing craft they happened to have in for a paint job), with another new tractor going over early next year. In addition, there are plans for the island's JCB to be replaced next year too.
- 5.5 There have been recent changes to staff on the island, with seven new members joining including a new engineer. DG wanted to thank all those who have now left the island for their service during their time.
- 5.6 DG summarised the on-going work which was being carried out on the island's RIB. Having thought the work required would be relatively minor, the boat has been re-tubed, re-hulled, with new engines (twin 60hp), new gearing and new electrics – so effectively a new boat! She'll be re-coded and then brought back over to the island in the spring.
- 5.7 Finally, DG explained the intention to sink two new visitor moorings in the Landing Bay over the winter, making use of two flywheels from the old stone crusher.

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

*[Note that JP's Conservation Team report is being sent out separately with these minutes. It should be read in relation to the additional comments set out below.]*

- 6.1 JP introduced himself and explained he'd been on the island for about 18 months now. He took over from Rosie Ellis as Warden about a year ago. His background is as an ornithologist but he has been delighted to get to know other aspects of the island including the MPA and its marine interests.
- 6.2 Seals. Disturbance issues – there have been two main incidents which have merited action being taken by the Conservation Team staff. The first concerned a small drone being flown from a charter boat close-in at Brazen Ward on 17<sup>th</sup> August. The drone crashed onto the shore, and when retrieved by a snorkeller caused a mass flush of seven seals off the rocks. The second is a reminder that snorkellers and/or divers in the water with seals should not be interacted with in any way apart from passive observation - a photograph of a seal being 'petted' and hugged under water by a snorkeller appeared on social media during the summer. JP reminded everyone that

these are wild animals and we don't want them becoming tame. A bite from a seal could cause a nasty bacterial-infected wound. He had now instigated an email group of charter skippers to inform them directly of issues from time to time. Through this group he had sent out Defra's Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code, the latest news on seals and a reminder of best practices when interacting with seals. He asked for feedback from skippers on this initiative.

- 6.3 Bird flu. Correctly termed Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), Lundy's seabird populations appear to have escaped the worst ravages of this virus. Some of the species which have been worst affected (such as terns, black-headed gulls or gannets) do not breed on Lundy. There have been no confirmed cases of the disease on Lundy during 2024. A virus of less virulence has affected some colonies on the English east coast this year (the Farne Islands in particular) but has not been detected in seabirds in the south-west.

- 6.4 Seabird monitoring. Following a census undertaken in 2023, Lundy's seabird population has now grown to over 42,000 individuals. With the population over 40,000, this means Lundy qualifies to become a Special Protection Area (SPA). JP explained that having SPA status would mean that Offshore Windfarm projects would be required to include Lundy's seabirds in their impact assessments. However, achieving this designation is quite a long, drawn-out process.

The number of puffins in 2002 was 5 birds; in 2024 it was 1,802 birds. Their numbers have increased dramatically since the rat eradication. JP continued that although puffins are the birds many visitors want to see, it's the Manx shearwaters which have now 'put the island on the seabird map'. 95% of England's Manx shearwaters breed on Lundy and these birds are known to range far and wide during daylight hours. An SPA would help to protect these birds when a long way away from their home base.

The plan (overseen by the RSPB) had been to invite some MPs over to the island who were likely to be supportive of the idea, but with the date chosen being around 4<sup>th</sup> July, the plan being scuppered when a General Election was announced for that date! The hope now is to invite the Minister for the Environment over to the island next summer, but it will be a long time (possibly 4-5 years) before any designation comes about.

- 6.5 Biosecurity. JP stressed the importance of ensuring that rats did not get back onto the island. If even just one pregnant individual arrived, the island would be overrun within a matter of months such is their fecundity. He wanted to remind charter boat skippers to make sure dive bags were kept zipped up when not on boats and that cargo items were checked before loading onto boats.

- 6.6 Use of drones. After JP had concluded, LH asked about the use of drones at Lundy as they were becoming popular with many of the clients he was bringing to the island. He asked if the island could provide an agreed 'drone policy' as at present their use was not controlled as far as he was aware. JP apologised if there was confusion about drone use. He explained that the policy was that drones were not allowed on the island and this 'no-fly zone' included a buffer zone of 100 m extending out from the coast as well. DG asked how close into the coast were drones being operated from boats and LH replied it was usually when boats were on the moorings during their rest time between dives. LH added that the advice given to him at the start of last year from the top of the island was: "It's fine as long as you don't go near the nesting seabirds". DG confirmed that there had always been a 'no drone' policy unless special permission has been sought (for legitimate film crews etc.). DG suggested that the no-fly zone should be extended to include the whole of the MPA, which would then cover any confusion which might arise with estimating the distance of 100 m from the coast. All present agreed this seemed sensible. DG said he'd raise

this at tomorrow's Management Forum meeting to gain approval for it from the other agencies helping to manage the island and its waters.

- 6.7 KH asked TMW if there had been any marine wildlife highlights which had come up this past summer. TMW explained most of her sightings have been from the jetty area. There have been sightings of long-spined sea scorpions *Taurulus bubalis* (also known as the long-spined bullhead); and quite an array of seaslugs including *Discodoris rosi* [recorded for the first time at Lundy during the Marine Bioblitz in 2022] seen close to the surface. Very few spider crabs *Maja squinado* have been seen, which has been a disappointment.

TMW confirmed that the temperature logger which had been attached to a piling at the distal end of the jetty could not be found, so was now officially missing. She suggested a replacement should be purchased and put in place. KH asked if it was known if the one on the *Robert* was still present, but nobody in the room was able to confirm this. KH explained there was such interest in sea water warming at the moment that Lundy really needed to be recording its sea water temperatures continuously.

JP added some more wildlife highlights. There was a probable leatherback turtle sighting on the 14<sup>th</sup> August made by Thomas Weston (vol. Bird Observatory Warden), which appeared to coincide with the reporting of two turtle sightings from the same day (thought to have been made by the Ilfracombe Sea Safari boat). TMW had sightings of a minke whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* during the course of a week off the west coast; and just last week, two independent sightings of probable Risso's dolphins *Grampus griseus*. KH confirmed these records could still be entered into the Lundy Field Society's Annual Report even though they were officially "unconfirmed". BB added that Risso's dolphins had been seen around Ilfracombe harbour recently. DG asked if any tuna had been seen and LH confirmed he'd seen one off the west side; DG thought he'd seen one off Clovelly recently too. JP added that one had been seen off the Landing Bay too. KH pointed out there were wildlife sightings logbooks in the Tavern for these sorts of records to be entered, but appreciated it was often not possible for divers to visit the Tavern. JP added that he now holds regular Wildlife Log sessions at 8:00 pm every evening in the Tavern, heavily biased towards bird sightings although all species, be it a plant or an animal, can be discussed and recorded.

## **7. Natural England update**

- 7.1 No report had been received from Natural England for this meeting and that there was no-one currently in the organisation who had responsibility for Lundy's MPA. RI had asked Christine Goodall (who is a senior manager for N. Devon but is a terrestrial ecologist and who had sent her apologies) if there was someone who could attend tonight's meeting, or for a report of some sort, but he was told that wouldn't be possible. RI was told though that the Conservation Advice Package for the Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ had now been published. LP added that she had been made aware of this and that it included a condition assessment for a lot of the features, which had all been evaluated as being in favourable condition.

## **8. DSIFCA update (Lauren Parkhouse, DSIFCA)**

- 8.1 LP explained she had checked with her IFCA compliance team colleagues as to whether there had been any compliance team issues reported which involved Lundy and was told there hadn't been.
- 8.2 At the last meeting, LP had reported that her colleagues had been working on the Habitats Regulation Assessments for the Bristol Channel Approaches SAC (which

includes Lundy). These are still being worked on – they are proving to be a bit more complicated than originally thought. The Devon & Severn IFCA are working in partnership with the MMO and the Cornwall IFCA on these assessments.

- 8.3 LP added that the film about the success of Lundy's No Take Zone (made in 2022, sponsored by the Blue Marine Foundation and entitled *Safeguarding Our Seas – Lessons from Lundy*) had been shown at a conference held in Húsavík, Iceland as an example of a positive action in the field of marine conservation. A group are trying to establish a new Marine Protected Area there and were using the film to indicate what could be achieved. The film can be seen on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ecsil2ChwA8&t=1s>).

## **9. Historic England update (Terry Newman)**

- 9.1 RI had not received a report from TN and thought he might have been present at this evening's meeting as RI had not been sent an apology for absence.

*[Note: TN did attend (virtually) the Management Forum meeting the following day (23<sup>rd</sup> November) where he gave a report. This is repeated below.]*

TN explained that the 12-month licences to dive on the two protected wrecks are due for renewal at the end of November. Licencees are expected to submit a report on the diving activity over the past year associated with either wreck, mentioning if there has been any significant damage to the site(s) by whatever cause.

The Nautical Archaeological Society held their Protected Wreck Days at Lundy in July. These special Days, when divers get the chance to be informed of the history and importance of the sites and then get to dive on them, were first introduced to Lundy during the Marine Festival in 2022.

2023 marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Protection of Wrecks Act and, to commemorate that, a film *Diving into History* was commissioned by Historic England, written, filmed and produced by Michael Pitts. The film has been entered into several film festivals where it has won various awards. The film can be viewed on Youtube: ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LRUziYK\\_\\_l&t=0s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LRUziYK__l&t=0s)).

Finally, TN pointed out Historic England were very pleased to have made a contribution (by means of a grant) to the new MPA website project.

## **10. North Devon Biosphere (Andy Bell)**

- 10.1 AB informed those present that Chloe Nunn, who has been acting as the Biosphere's Marine Projects Co-ordinator for this year, has now left the Biosphere team. A replacement for her [Hannah Nash] has just been appointed.
- 10.2 Before Chloe left, the team had finalised the Roadmap which sets out all of the actions from the Marine Natural Capital Plan and the Marine Nature Recovery Plan, and indicates which actions can be done with the help of communities and supporting organisations over the next 3-4 years. The Roadmap will provide us with a basis on which to make applications for funding to deliver a range of projects including marine conservation, water quality etc., and in interpreting the engagement of the public. LP had helped at one of the workshops which was held, so AB wanted to thank her for her participation.
- 10.3 AB explained they had been trying to put the accreditation scheme for N. Devon and Lundy onto a different learning platform from Google Scholar, which many participants have had difficulty using. Beccy MacDonald and Chloe had been working on trying to sort out an alternative platform and Beccy hopes she'll be able to complete this by the end of the year. Once sorted, the scheme will be up and running

again for people to renew their certificates as and when necessary. This should be able to be completed on-line. RSPB had kindly funded some of the in-person courses (covering advertising and venue costs) and AB hopes they may do the same for courses to be held next year.

- 10.4 Other work which AB has been busy with recently has been mostly to do with offshore wind farm developments. The Biosphere Reserve continues to object to the Whitecross development, the main problem being where the cable is proposed to come ashore at Saunton Sands and across Braunton Burrows and the marsh. In AB's view, the Method Statement which had been produced for this was not fit for purpose. It's a technical project which could be achieved without detriment to that part of the coast, a proper description of which had been sadly lacking from the Statement and the accompanying Environmental Impact Assessment. The viewpoint of the Biosphere was that if appropriate information acknowledging the importance of this area was not being included then the approval of the Biosphere could not be given. So an objection was lodged against this part of the development, and this is now with the District Council (alongside a couple of thousand other objections) before they make a recommendation to the County Council's Planning Committee.
- 10.5 Xlinks (the *Xlinks UK-Morocco Power Project*) is the cable coming from Morocco with electricity produced from a massive solar and wind farm there. The UK government has declared the project as being of national significance. This cable (actually four cables in one) comes ashore near Abbotsham (to the south of Westward Ho!), it's then being buried for 14 km on a route inland to a new substation and two new converter stations at Alverdiscott. The Biosphere has been working closely with the project and are not unduly worried by what is being proposed. However, there are possible concerns about the required Biodiversity Net Gain along the buried cable corridor and how the best outcomes for this might be achieved.
- 10.6 The Biosphere has also been working with the Crown Estate about floating offshore wind projects in general. There are not only the licensing schemes to consider but also the wider benefit compensation packages around these projects. This is on top of all of the mitigation which is required for named habitats and species (if an SAC is affected). So this is considering all of the wider social and environmental benefits that one would expect the developer to deliver over the lifetime of the project. The Crown Estate have prioritised coastal and riverine water quality at the moment, so the Biosphere have been compiling a list of what could be done in the marine and water quality environments. Working with partners, the draft list includes a number of activities, many of which are featured in the Marine Nature Recovery Plan. There is a mention of Lundy on the list, so it's hoped some of the benefits may come to Lundy. If this last action (amongst others) is approved, it'll be down to the developer to say what they are prepared to fund; the money is not coming via the Crown Estate, although the Crown Estate will be looking at the potentially approved projects in their licence determination.
- 10.7 The 10-year periodic Biosphere Review is continuing. AB hopes to meet with DG to discuss how Lundy might be incorporated into future plans. With regard to the reports of minke whales and other cetaceans at Lundy and the deployment of F-PODs throughout the waters of the south-west, the company which makes these devices, Chelonia, are seeking the help of citizen scientists to help analyse the data from these devices. There is free software available to download which enables the identification of various whale species using AI (Artificial Intelligence). AB put out a general call for anyone interested in doing this to contact him for further information ([andrew.bell@devon.gov.uk](mailto:andrew.bell@devon.gov.uk)).

RI asked whether if it was known if data from the F-POD which had been put in place on the *Robert* during the late summer of 2022 had been downloaded. It's thought this might have been collecting data for Jordan Williams (MSc study, Univ. of Plymouth).

LH described a device attached to the chain on the seabed leading from the *Robert* in the direction of the *Iona II*. JP presumed this could be an F-POD. KH mentioned that he thought the batteries within these units don't last much longer than 12 months, so wondered if its data would still be useable. LH volunteered to recover the device before the winter and to pass it on to JP. KH said the main person he knew dealing with F-PODs was Joe Dennett.

- 10.8 JP commented that he thought the Biosphere accreditation marine awareness scheme was very good. He would like the Lundy Conservation Team to be more involved with the scheme in any way, so suggested that TMW could offer help if needed. AB welcomed this offer.
- 10.9 KH asked AB if the Marine Nature Recovery Plan was the same as the Marine Local Nature Recovery Strategy? KH is involved with the latter. He explained that regarding the Strategy, Defra have determined that it only applies to within the local authority planning boundary and so only extends down to Mean Low Water. He pointed out, therefore, that this would not address subtidal species. AB thought KH was referring to a different Plan. He pointed out the Local Nature Recovery Strategy comes under the Environment Act (2021); the Local Nature Partnership, whose Plan KH is referring to, has a remit extending down to the local authority boundary – it doesn't cover marine matters. The Biosphere Reserve embarked on its Marine Natural Capital Plan and also its Marine Nature Recovery Plan before the Environment Act came into being. The Recovery Plan (produced two years ago) is not the one which was Devon County Council led and which has now been aborted. The afore-mentioned Biosphere plans can be viewed at:

<https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/marine-pioneer.html>

[https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/revised\\_north\\_devon\\_marine\\_natre\\_recovery\\_plan.pdf](https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/uploads/1/5/4/4/15448192/revised_north_devon_marine_natre_recovery_plan.pdf)

## 11. **Any Other Business**

- 11.1 Intertidal survey of Non-Native Species. KH went over to the island between 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June this year to look for non-native species together with a group of volunteers from the Lundy Field Society. The volunteers were not marine biologists and were given 'crib sheets' with photographs of the species being searched for. The search area was limited to Rat Island, Devil's Kitchen and further up the east coast at Quarry Bay. KH also took the opportunity to re-photograph an approximately 3 m long horizontal transect on a sloping wall of a small cave on the west side of Rat Island known as 'anemone cave'. He first photographed the transit in 1983. He also took viewpoint photographs of a rockpool transect in Devil's Kitchen (also first photographed in 1983) and similar viewpoint photographs on both sides of the jetty.

There were six non-native species which the team were asked to look out for. The encrusting red ripple bryozoan *Watersipora subatra* is definitely spreading. It was first found on Lundy in May 2021, and now covers extensive areas of overhanging and vertical shaded rock surfaces on the NW side of Rat Island. Wireweed *Sargassum muticum* was first recorded at Lundy in 1999 and in the Devil's Kitchen area would be rated as being 'frequent'. On either side of the jetty, KH counted about 100 plants in total, which would indicate their number has remained stable for the past few years. Harpoon weed *Asparagopsis armata*, which often occurs in rockpools and on the lower shore at Lundy has 'good and bad years'. Lundy was the first place it was recorded in the UK during the late 1940s. This year, it could not be found in the Devil's Kitchen but TMW confirmed there was a lot of it under the jetty.

Non-native seaweed species which have been found in previous years but couldn't be found this year included the pom-pom weed *Caulocanthus okumarae*. Just a single

individual Darwin's barnacle *Australminius modestus* was found at Quarry Bay. Devil's tongue seaweed *Grateloupia turuturu*, which has been photographed subtidally just off Surf Point in the past and is often in rockpools at Lundy, was also not seen at all. The group also searched for the kelp wakame *Undaria pinnatifida* but again didn't find any specimens on the jetty piles.

11.2 The new Lundy MPA website. RI read out the following report.

Progress on a website dedicated to the Marine Protected Area has been annoyingly slow. This has partly been my fault (busy doing other things) and partly in trying to secure funding for the design and construction of the site. I'm pleased to report however that funding has now been secured which will allow for the site to be built and the funding will also cover 2 years of on-going maintenance and licences etc.

Contributions have come in from the National Trust, Historic England, North Devon Biosphere, Lundy Field Society and Blue Marine Foundation. My sincere thanks to all of them. A web designer has been lined up to do the work, who is the same person who recently designed the Lundy Bird Observatory site.

We are hopeful that by the time of the Advisory Group's next meeting in the spring, the site should be up and running. I'd also like to take this opportunity to ask for any photos which could be considered for inclusion on the site. These could be of any activities associated with the MPA, coastal views, boats, underwater shots of rare and/or colourful species, meetings (such as this) – anything which you think might help to illustrate some aspect of the MPA. Please send any you think appropriate to me (robert@sea-scope.co.uk).

11.3 Updating the MPA's Marine Management Plan. It was uncertain whether the plan to update the Marine Management Plan would proceed over this coming winter period. Natural England have confirmed they would not be able to fund the work needed for this to happen.

11.4 Talks & presentations. RI read out the following report.

I was invited to give a presentation to accompany a screening of the film about the No Take Zone which was made during the Marine Festival, at the Appledore Book Festival a month ago. I felt a bit of a fraud not having a book to plug, but that didn't seem to matter. The Blue Marine Foundation are planning to submit the film for inclusion in a number of film festivals, one of which is the Edinburgh Film Festival which, I think, is being held in May next year.

I'm pleased to say that the film was well received in Appledore, with a lot of positive feedback from the audience. The organiser suggested afterwards that as part of next year's Festival, they could include a 'Lundy Day', which would feature talks and presentations throughout the day covering all aspects of the island. I expect the Lundy Field Society to play a major part in this should it happen.

I'm also showing the film at Braunton Countryside Centre tomorrow evening (alongside Gareth Alvarez and Ron Whitney, the film's directors) and again to the North Devon branch of the British Naturalists Association in Barnstaple in February.

11.4 Proposed No Anchoring Zone.

[Earlier in the meeting, KH had passed around a printed-out description of an eco-friendly mooring being used for a project in Plymouth Sound. He pointed out there have been various developments of these moorings over the years. Hopefully, he suggested, it might disperse fears of boats breaking free from such moorings. DG said it was in 2005 when the first eco-mooring ('Seaflex' – a Swedish make) was put

in at Lundy. He added that he thought insurance-wise, it was up to the boat owner to make sure the mooring in question was fit for purpose.]

*RI read out an introduction to a paper proposing a No Anchoring Zone off Lundy's east coast. Note that the paper is attached separately to these minutes.*

This proposal is being put forward by the Lundy's Conservation Team and is being led by Tara McEvoy-Wilding. My involvement has been commenting on a first draft. I hope you've all had an opportunity to read through the discussion paper, even though this was only circulated yesterday.

The current MPA Marine Management Plan, which was published back in 2017 (seven years ago) and is in need of updating, recommended a number of small areas along the east coast where anchoring would not be allowed (as a non-statutory measure). There are already No Anchoring Areas around the Knoll Pins and the two Protected Wrecks sites (the *Iona II* and the Gull Rock site). The Management Plan suggests further areas being set up at the Quarries, Brazen Ward and Gannets' Rock. However, no further work on this recommendation has taken place until now. In order to keep things as simple as possible, a No Anchoring Zone which would encompass all of these sites is now being proposed hugging the coast within the No Take Zone.

The main reason to restrict anchoring in these areas is to protect certain seabed habitats present in these areas and their associated fragile marine life, in particular pink sea fans, branching sponges and burrowing anemones. These are nationally important species and represent some of the most vulnerable species first put forward as requiring protection when the Marine Nature Reserve was first established. Pink sea fans in particular have diminished in number and size over the years at Lundy, with signs of recovery being unexpectedly slow. It is not yet known why this recovery should have been so slow and further research is required to determine what may be the cause.

As a means of mitigation for those who have been used to anchoring within this zone, it is proposed that (a) further mooring buoy/s is put in place at an agreed location. I realise this proposal has been introduced at the last minute before this meeting, so you may wish to ponder the proposal for longer. We're not expecting any decisions to be made this evening. This Advisory Group though exists to be able to come to an agreement (hopefully!) on such proposals and to recommend them to the statutory authorities. So in this case, that would be Natural England (as overall managers of the MPA) and the Marine Management Organisation (as managers of the seabed).

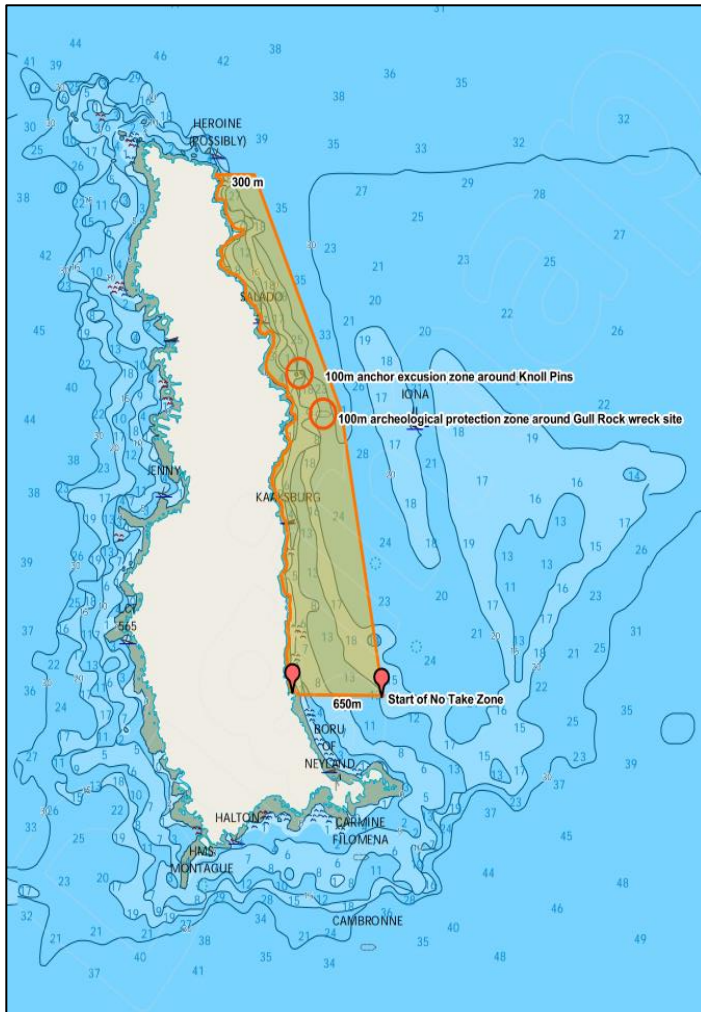
*TMW then explained there was a map included on the last page of the proposal [included below] which showed the proposed extent of a voluntary No Anchoring Zone. The area includes, off the east coast, where most pink sea fans are found; it includes two (out of the three) existing no anchoring zones around Lundy; the boundaries line up with notable coastal features; as the northern and southern boundaries to the No Take Zone, extending offshore at the southern end for 650 m and at the northern end for 300 m.*

11.5 A record of the ensuing discussion is attached with these minutes.

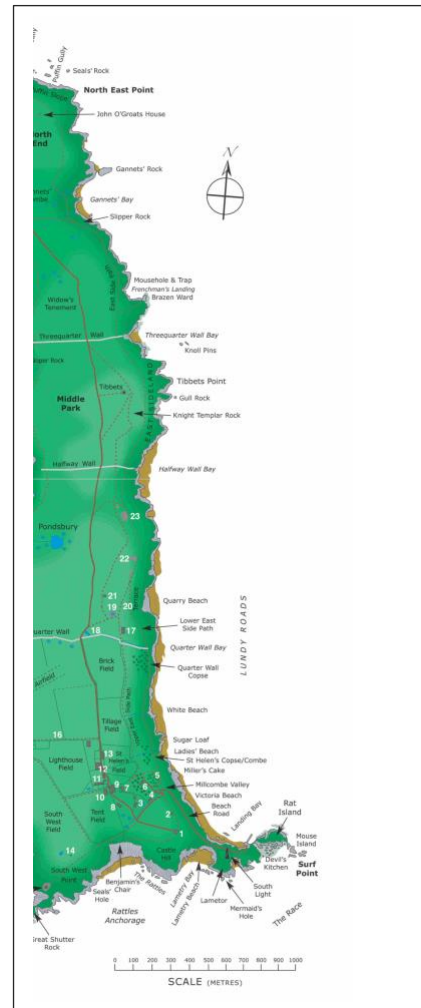
11.6 *The conclusions which could be drawn from the discussion are summarised below.*

- There was general agreement that the declaration of a No Anchoring Zone covering much of the east side of the island was a bit of an 'overkill' and would likely lead to frustration and non-compliance on occasion.
- Anchoring at some popular dive/snorkelling sites which were close to the coast would not be necessary if there were more mooring buoys installed at these sites.

- Possible locations for new mooring buoys would be:
  - Pete’s [Pinnacle]
  - Threequarter Wall Bay
  - Off Knight Templar Rock
  - Colin’s Caves
  - Jenny’s Cove (on the west side)



Proposed location of voluntary No Anchoring Zone.



Map showing locations of some of the sites mentioned during the discussion.

- The outcomes of the discussion (and a consequent revision of the proposal) should be put to both Natural England and to the Marine Management Organisation:
  - Natural England should be asked to consider funding a survey in order to determine where the greatest concentrations of pink sea fans are off the east coast. These locations could then become No Anchoring Zones (of varying diameter). [KH pointed out that the only survey work within the MPA which Natural England were obliged to do was to assess certain named features of the SAC, something that they needed to do once every six years. As their last assessment was at the end of 2022, then the next assessment wasn't due until the end of 2028.]

- The proposal of adding some more eco-moorings to the MPA should be put to Natural England (as official managers of the MPA) for their approval. This action would be in order to reduce the amount of anchoring being undertaken by boats bringing divers and snorkellers to the MPA.
  - The Marine Management Organisation should be asked for permission to install more eco-moorings within the nearshore waters of the MPA in order to minimise the potential damage being done to vulnerable benthic species (including pink sea fans, branching sponges and infaunal species) as a result of anchoring.
- 11.7 RI asked if anyone had any further thoughts about what has been discussed, then please send them in an email to TMW on the island who will collate them.
- 11.8 BB asked if it might be possible to put a mooring buoy close to the *Iona II* wreck site. He suggested this as quite a lot of dive time is lost in getting to the site via the *Robert* which lies about 30 m away and which is seasonally buoyed. DG thought this was unlikely due to its Protected Wreck status. Permission to set a permanent buoy would need to come from Historic England.
- 11.9 DG asked if the marks for the sites where any new mooring buoys might go could be made available to TMW as well, so she knew exactly where the buoys would need to go.

## 12 Suggestion of having both Advisory Group meetings in Ilfracombe

RI asked those attending if they were in agreement to have both of the Advisory Group meetings in Ilfracombe each year, rather than just one in Ilfracombe and one in Bideford. The reason to ask this is because of the difficulty he has had as Secretary to the Group in seeking out an appropriate venue in Bideford suitable for hosting on-line participation (i.e. a large TV, internet connectivity and furniture which can be arranged in such a way as to allow viewers to see who is speaking). MA said the Dive Club would be happy to host both meetings if others were happy. The consensus was that others were indeed happy, so RI announced the next meeting next spring will be held here. Those on-line indicated they could hear everyone in the room clearly and those in the room could see and hear those on-line.

The Chair, KH, thanked all for coming along and thanked MA and the Ilfracombe Dive Club for their hospitality. The meeting closed at 9:15 pm.

The date of the next meeting will be on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025** at 7:00 pm at the Clubhouse of the Ilfracombe Dive Club.