

## 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 15th 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 72<sup>nd</sup> meeting)

held on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022** at 7.00 pm.

**NOTE: THIS MEETING WAS HELD VIRTUALLY USING ZOOM SHARING**

### *Present:*

Keith Hiscock	(KH)	Marine Biological Association (Chair)
Robert Irving	(RI)	Lundy Field Society (Hon. Sec.)
Derek Green	(DG)	Lundy General Manager
Rosie Ellis	(RE)	Lundy Warden
Mike Deaton	(MD)	Appledore SAC
John Balls	(JB)	N. Devon Fishermen's Association
Sophie Hare	(SH)	Natural England
Terry Newman	(TN)	Historic England
Lauren Parkhouse	(LP)	Devon & Severn IFCA
Andrew Benguey	(AB)	Lundy Diving
Mike Deaton	(MD)	Appledore SAC
David Jenkins	(DJ)	Mortehoe

### **1. Welcome**

The Chairman (KH) welcomed all to the meeting from the comfort of their homes. The whole meeting was to be recorded (for the purposes of compiling accurate minutes of the meeting) and participants were asked to give their consent to allow this to happen.

KH explained that, as always, the purpose of the meeting was to allow users of the MPA to have their say, but also to find out what had been happening around the island regarding management activities and observations which have been made since the last meeting.

Special thanks to Derek Green, Lundy General Manager, for hosting this Zoom meeting.

### **2. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Shaun Galliver (Ilfracombe & N. Devon SAC) and from Rick Morris (MARINELife).

**3. Agreement of the minutes from the last meeting of the MPA Advisory Group, held on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (via Zoom) and matters arising**

- 3.1 No amendments to these minutes were raised by those present, so they were agreed by all present as being an accurate record of the meeting.
- 3.2 There were no matters arising from the meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

**4. Island happenings during the past 12 months      Derek Green**

- 4.1 DG gave a short Powerpoint presentation (shared with all) on the main highlights which have affected the island since last October.
- 4.2 DG started with some sad news. Kevin Welch had been the island's farmer for the past 20 years until he retired last October. He and his wife Julie went to live on the mainland, but in January came the news that Kevin had passed away unexpectedly. Additionally, at the end of last year, Diana Keast passed away. With her two siblings, Diana was the last private owner of Lundy up until 1969 when it was sold to the National Trust. However, Diana remained closely involved with the island, the Lundy Field Society and the Lundy Collectors Club. There is to be a memorial service for her on the island this summer.
- 4.3 While the *Oldenburg* went up to Sharpness in November for her annual dry dock inspection, a major upgrading project has been completed on the jetty with many of the wooden fenders being replaced and all of the fixtures and fittings (including three emergency ladders) being replaced too. A dive team was required to complete certain aspects of the work. DG said the overall cost of this project was in the region of £100k.
- 4.4 The *Oldenburg's* dry dock inspection led to a new propellor being fitted as well as one of the generators being replaced. Some small steel works were required for sections of the hull. An inspection of the aft deck revealed an unexpected surprise. While re-wiring the aft saloon, the condition of the steel plates beneath the wooden deck was found to be in a poor way, the outcome being that the whole of the deck required replacing. As this hadn't been an expected cost (about £220k), it was agreed that this could be done in stages, with 25% of the deck being tackled this time round.  

The extra time required to do this work meant that the *Oldenburg's* return to north Devon was delayed, so DG thanked Andrew & Ben Benghey for helping to run supplies over to the island during the ship's absence.
- 4.5 On the mainland, a re-branding exercise has been taking place, with the exhibition trailer being upgraded.
- 4.6 DG explained that several people (in fact, almost half the team) had left the island over the winter with some some new faces taking their places. Tom has taken over the running of the farm. Rosie Ellis has become the new Warden and Stuart Cossey has been appointed the Assistant Warden. One of his responsibilities will be furthering the application of the island to become a Bird Observatory. The island opened again to day-trip visitors on the ship last week (29<sup>th</sup> March).
- 4.7 Some major projects were due to have taken place last year and have been pushed into this year. These include the replacement (and enlargement) of the water tanks on the top of the island (to 140,000 l capacity); and the replacement of the island's diesel generators with new ones to act as back-up for a wind turbine and an array of solar panels. It is expected these will provide between 80-85% of the island's power. Both of these infrastructure projects have been funded in part by the National Trust.
- 4.8 A new diving compressor is due to be installed this summer in the Boat Building, which should be in place by 14<sup>th</sup> June.
- 4.9 Following the conclusion of DG's talk, KH said he had been asked lots of

questions by people coming over to stay on the island at the start of the Marine Festival regarding Lundy-specific logistics and he wondered if the Lundy website explained all of these things. DG said he hoped that it did but suggested that RI could keep a note of any particular questions he was asked regarding this and might then provide feedback to DG when it was over. RE added that all staying visitors should receive written information about their forthcoming stay on the island about two weeks before they are due to arrive.

## **5. Conservation Team Report Rosie Ellis (Warden)**

- 5.1 Rosie started by saying there had been a survey of grey seal numbers yesterday (3<sup>rd</sup> April) in line with other surveys happening along the N. Devon & N. Cornwall coastline. A total of 186 individual seals were counted, which is a very good number for this time of year. Last year proved to be a record-breaking year for seal numbers, which at their peak reached 244 adults and 62 pups.
- 5.2 She also reported that the most recent survey of the low shore cup corals at the Devil's Kitchen monitoring site had shown significant increases in the numbers of scarlet and gold star cup corals *Balanophyllia regia* and of the Devonshire cup corals *Caryophyllia smithii*.
- 5.3 Sightings so far this year have included a barrel jellyfish *Rhizostoma pulmo* just yesterday. Sightings are usually added to the foot of the blog <http://lundybirds.blogspot.com> or on the Lundy Marine Sightings Facebook page.
- 5.4 The first MARINElife survey took place from the *Oldenburg* last Saturday (2<sup>nd</sup> April). A small group of dolphins was spotted during the crossing.
- 5.4 A daily bird census is being carried out by Stuart (Cossey, Assistant Warden) who has reported the reappearance of various seabirds including good numbers (mid-100s) of puffins together with razorbills and guillemots. An estimate of over 100 fulmars are thought to have over-wintered on the island, which is pleasing.
- 5.5 This year the island will have quite a few volunteers helping the Conservation Team, the first of whom came over on the boat today. The roles include Volunteer Assistant Ranger, Volunteer Assistant Warden (seabirds), Volunteer Bird Observatory Assistant Wardens (x2), Volunteer Assistant Warden (grey seals) and Volunteer Marine Festival Warden (x2). These last two posts will see two Exeter University marine biology students over on Lundy for the duration of the Marine Festival, helping out wherever necessary. Both are divers and one has experience in leading Rockpool Rambles.
- 5.6 A sea temperature logger has now been re-installed at the end of the jetty. It is capable of continuous recording for up to five years but it will be downloaded more frequently than that.
- 5.7 The accreditation scheme for vessels (Marine Wildlife Aware Accreditation Scheme) run by the North Devon Biosphere went live on the internet on 4th March. This course, which has been classroom-based in the past, has been designed and run by former Lundy Warden Beccy MacDonald-Lofts. It is based on the WiSe accreditation scheme ([www.wisescheme.org](http://www.wisescheme.org)). Moving it on-line means participants can watch the course at a time to suit them. Participants to the Scheme will receive annual training, be promoted as Wildlife Aware businesses through the relevant websites and the new North Devon Explorer App, be able to promote their businesses using the Scheme logo, have a transferable skill and have the opportunity for further support through regular webinars and updates through a members-only Facebook group. [See also <https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/news/march-04th-2022>].
- 5.8 Following Rosie's report, KH pointed out that he was pleased to hear that the numbers of the monitored cup coral populations in the Devil's Kitchen were increasing. Their numbers were first recorded at the site in 1983.

- 5.9 SH asked RE how the blog was updated with the latest information and was that down to her to do? RE explained it was usually completed by Stuart on a weekly basis and was mostly detailing bird sightings which had been noted during the previous week. She mentioned that a new Twitter account had just been set up specifically for sightings of rarities.
- 5.10 KH mentioned that as one of the presentations made by various experts to the recent on-line South-West Marine Ecosystems group, Paul St Pierre of RSPB had given an excellent talk on the remarkable recovery of Lundy's seabirds following the island's eradication of rats back in 2004. His presentation is available as a Youtube video on the SW Marine Ecosystems website if anyone wishes to see it. RE added that Paul is due to come over to the island tomorrow and again in May for a gull census.
- 5.11 RI asked whether there was now a temperature logger on the *Robert* (as well as at the end of the Jetty) and if not, is it known when one might get put on the *Robert*? RE confirmed that there was not one yet on the *Robert* but that she had a logger in her possession ready to go, so she was looking for a dive group to affix it. KH added that this was indeed very relevant as climate change was now at the forefront of people's minds, with the movement of marine species northwards likely to be connected to warming waters. However, it would appear that the most notable beneficiaries so far appear to be non-native species. He then asked RE if she'd come across any Pacific oysters this year and she replied that she hadn't.

## **6. Observations of marine life and activities since October 2021**

- 6.1 No one had anything to report on this. RE emphasised that if possible, sightings of note should be recorded in the Marine Life logbook in the Tavern. However, as KH pointed out, divers were far less likely to get to the Tavern when visiting the island, so records could also be added to the Lundy Marine Life Facebook page, preferably with photographs to help verify them. KH made the point that most divers are happier using social media than filling in forms, so he urged all charter skipper to encourage their divers to post photos onto the site.
- 6.2 RI asked RE if her marine sightings could be duplicated onto the Marine Facebook page as well as on the bird blog, which she was happy to do. RI then said that this existing Facebook page could then be linked with the proposed new Marine Festival Facebook page.

## **7. Natural England update**

- 7.1 KH introduced Sophie Hare to the Group who had taken over from Mel Parker as Natural England's marine contact for Lundy (amongst her other roles).
- 7.2 Sophie explained she'd only been in post for a couple of months but that time had passed really quickly. She welcomed the opportunity of getting to know some of the people who are involved with the MPA at Lundy. She will also be attending the Management Forum meeting tomorrow and, temporarily, representing Natural England on terrestrial issues associated with the island.
- 7.3 Following a new incentive from Natural England to help sponsor MSc projects in the South-West, there are, at the moment, four student projects which are planned to take place this summer at Lundy. Three of these are with the University of Exeter (non-native species, marine litter and disturbance to grey seal populations) and one with the University of Plymouth (on common dolphins). SH is trying to coordinate a day trip for these students to the island, so that they can get to know the 'lie of the land' before embarking on their fieldwork stays.
- 7.4 A further two projects had been planned (on red band fish and angling practices) but for various reasons these had been dropped from the programme. The plan is

to re-propose these for next year in the hope of getting some more students to undertake them.

- 7.5 The Natural England Dive Team will be visiting from 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> September to undertake a reassessment of the subtidal reefs, as part of the monitoring programme of the SAC. They plan to redo studies last undertaken in 2014/15, following the methodology of a team from PML in Plymouth.
- 7.6 The outcome of this fieldwork will result in a condition assessment of the habitat features of the SAC, seeing if the targets set for these set out within the Conservation Advice packages are being met. The allocation of a 'favourable' or 'unfavourable' conservation status will be given for each habitat feature. The reporting of this will not be published until next year.
- 7.7 KH asked if SH had any news on the new Highly Protected Marine Areas being proposed by Defra, and whether Lundy might be affected or not. SH explained that having raised this with colleagues, she didn't have much to add to what was already generally known. Thirty sites had been submitted to Defra last year which Natural England and JNCC had commented on for suitability, based on a number of ecological criteria. They were now waiting on Defra to get back to them with a shortlist of sites, due to happen in "spring 2022" – which is now! – which would then be open for wider consultation.

JB pointed out that Jen Ashworth (Defra) had said that nothing would be decided on HPMA's until this coming summer, and that it would then be a further 18 months before these came into play. JB was disappointed Andy Bell (N. Devon Biosphere) was not present at this meeting, as he had been present at a number of fisheries meetings over recent months when this issue was discussed.

- 7.8 KH also asked SH if there was a chance he and RI could discuss the fieldwork being proposed by the Natural England dive team, as both of them had been involved with this work historically. SH thought this should be possible, although she wasn't sure who this was. KH was concerned that there were aspects of the listed feature monitoring that were missed out in the last study in 2014/15 and he'd like to see them included this time around. He agreed to discuss this further with SH.
- 7.9 KH added that he hoped this summer's volunteer divers (as part of the Marine Festival) should be able to find out if the red band fish were still at Lundy. SH welcomed this and it may well be that any data generated could be looked at by an MSc student next year.
- 7.10 RI queried SH's mention of a study by Hoskin *et al.* from 2008 in relation to the SAC monitoring, because this report was to do with the monitoring of the No Take Zone rather than of the features of the SAC. He wondered if additional diving studies linked to the No Take Zone were being planned. KH clarified that the reference may be associated with the 'species of conservation concern' which Hoskin *et al.* had monitored (such as sea fans and branching sponges), rather than any shellfish species.
- 7.11 RI put a second question to SH regarding an update to the Marine Management Plan. Its present iteration is now 5 years old and RI wondered if there was an intention to update it in light of various matters which had happened during that time, such as the listing of HMS *Montagu* as a scheduled monument. SH explained she didn't have this as a priority at the moment, but that she would note it needed doing. RE added that she'd like to see any update be able to take into account the outcomes of the Marine Festival projects.
- 7.12 RE also asked SH as to whether there was now an intention of Natural England to encourage MSc research projects to take place every year. SH thought probably not, it was just that this year has had a particularly high take-up of projects. However, it may make sense to suggest a small number of projects could become

long term ones, with new students repeating data acquisition on the same subject in successive years. RE said she'd welcome further projects, particularly on rocky shore studies, if there's scope to do so. DG also added that he'd like to discuss ways in which Lundy could help students to undertake projects and suggested talking further with SH at tomorrow's Management Forum meeting.

- 7.13 JB raised the matter of various developments (particularly floating windfarms and the Google undersea cable) to the south and west of Lundy which would require closing certain areas to fisheries. He likened these to Highly Protected Marine Areas due to the exclusion of fishing. He had also discussed with Andy Bell a suggestion of increasing the No Take Zone at Lundy by a further half mile, on the basis that the prospect of more exclusion areas elsewhere may increase fishing pressure closer to Lundy.

KH added that he had suggested in his submission to the Benyon HPMAs consultation that Lundy's NTZ be extended, but that this had not been a recommendation as such. He was disappointed the whole process seemed to be incredibly slow! JB agreed that things needed to get a move on.

## **8. D&SIFCA update**

- 8.1 LP started by saying she had no further information to add to what SH had said about the HMPAs situation.

- 8.2 The only other update news is that there is a formal consultation open at the moment (and closing on the 18<sup>th</sup> April) relating to commercial diving permits for collecting scallops. Up until now there has been a closed season prohibiting commercial divers from collecting scallops during July, August and September. The proposal is to allow for the collection of scallops during these three months from all areas *including Marine Protected Areas*. The proposal also includes a move to increase the minimum landing size to 110 mm and vessels would require to have IVMS (Inshore Vessel Monitoring System) for location monitoring purposes. There would be a catch limit of 2,400 scallops/vessel/calendar day. The final restriction would be that they could only operate within one Fisheries District in any one day.

LP wanted to stress that this would not allow scallop collecting by diving from the No Take Zone at Lundy.

- 8.3 A MSc student from the University of Plymouth is due to carry out some research into the spawning of scallops within the District, particularly within the Lyme Bay area. This study would begin in the next couple of months and continue through until the autumn, with the results being fed back into management measures.

- 8.4 KH asked if LP was aware of any commercial divers diving for scallops within the vicinity of Lundy. LP said not at the moment and DG added that he was not aware of any either. There had been issues with a few scallop dredgers over the years but not with commercial divers. AB also said he was also not aware of any. LP did say there were some operators in the Torbay/Lymbe Bay area.

- 8.5 The daily take of 2,400 scallops per vessel per day seemed pretty high. MD said he'd be pleased if he found 12 during a dive! LP confirmed that the recreational maximum allowed is 25 scallops. RI asked if the commercial number of 2,400 was based on the quantity a scallop dredger might expect to haul in a day in order to keep the allowance comparable, but LP said she did not know how this figure had been arrived at. MD also just wanted to check that this would still not allow any scallops to be taken from the No Take Zone and LP confirmed this. RI continued by saying he was alarmed by what appeared to be a huge quantity, knowing that that number could legally be caught from within a Marine Protected Area.

- 8.6 DG asked if LP knew how many scallops a dredging boat might catch, but LP didn't know. JB added that it would depend on how many dredges were being

deployed by the vessel; how rich the ground was they were working; and how long the dredges were being pulled over the seabed. JB also questioned the type of licence a scallop diving vessel would require – one from the IFCA or one from the MMO? LP confirmed they would certainly need a Level 1 IFCA licence.

For comparative purposes, LP also mentioned the Salcombe scallop fishery, where operators could only use hand-drawn dredges, two maximum, and they can only fish from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm. They may bring up about 600 scallops in a day.

- 8.7 RE asked LP if she had any news about the on-going IFCA scallop dredger prosecution case of the vessel suspected of scallop dredging within the NTZ at Lundy back in early 2021. LP said she hadn't heard anything further about this case. AB said that his understanding was that the skipper of the vessel was fined. This was news he'd heard about two months ago! LP apologised for the lack of communication which sometimes happened within her organisation.

## **9. Historic England (marine archaeological) update**

- 9.1 TN went through the current licences for the Gull Rock site and the *Iona II* protected wreck sites. The Lundy Company have renewed theirs. For the *Iona II*, he has two renewals, and for the Gull Rock site he has an additional application. So five licences in total for the two protected wrecks sites. TN apologized to MD (Appledore Dive Club) for the time it has taken him to issue his licence, but this had now been done. MD expressed his gratitude to TN for doing this so quickly.

TD confirmed that there were a couple of visits by MD to both the Gull Rock site and to the *Iona II* at the end of last season. MD had confirmed there was still ordnance on the seabed at the Gull Rock site; and that at the *Iona II* site there was a line on the seabed, but that he was unsure who had laid it or what it was for.

- 9.2 TN was pleased to confirm that Historic England has been able to provide funding to the Lundy Marine Festival following a grant application by RI. The work will involve running four guided Protected Wreck Days for divers; the republishing of interpretive material for the *Iona II* wreck; and assistance with producing some 3D digital models of the *Iona II* and Gull Rock wreck sites using photogrammetry.
- 9.3 TN wanted to make sure that the dive boats being used for dives on the two protected wreck sites during the Festival were covered by an HE licence.
- 9.4 Finally, TN wanted to find out if there were still any of the *Iona II* dive trail leaflets in stock somewhere, as Peta Knott from the Nautical Archaeology Society (who will be leading the Protected Wreck Dives) wanted to find out about reprinting them. DG thought there might be some stock on the island and suggested if TN was coming over for the Management Forum meeting tomorrow, he and DG could find out.

## **10. The Lundy Marine Festival - plans for 2022**

- 10.1 After a bit of difficulty loading up his Powerpoint presentation, RI managed to talk through plan for the Marine Festival, thanks to some remote slide changing by DG. His presentation is attached as a separate pdf file to these minutes. [LMPAAG\_LMF22 presentation\_with notes\_RI\_04Apr22.pdf]

## **11. Any Other Business**

- 11.1 While RI's Powerpoint presentation was being sorted out, the Group moved on to Any Other Business.

- 11.2 MD shared a glimpse of some plans he had received about the proposed White Cross floating offshore wind farm. It is to be sited 52 miles WNW of Hartland Point. Cables are due to come ashore at Saunton.
- 11.3 KH wondered if anyone might like to offer their thoughts on what the South-West seas might look like in 2050. He had been asked to give a presentation in mid-May to the Devonshire Association and their theme is 'Devon in 2050'. The topics he's thinking of covering include: Management – more fish in the sea? Climate change; non-native species, etc. He would welcome any input from others should you have any thoughts. JB suggested KH might think of mentioning wind farms because by then there may be wind turbines all over the place!
- 11.4 Following RI's presentation about the forthcoming Marine Festival, JB asked RI why the potting project was being carried out during July and August, as this was the time when the lobsters would be shedding their shells, with mating taking place and the females in particular likely to be hidden away. RI explained that the timing of the study was dictated by the timing of the Festival. The identical study by the University of Plymouth would be happening in May-June time, so it was hoped that would provide an interesting comparison of catch numbers.
- 11.5 KH added that he thought the Festival would be a 'big event' for the island over the summer and he hoped it would gain substantial interest with its education side and research side from dive groups, marine biologists and members of the public alike.

Finally, KH wanted to say a special thank-you to Derek Green for hosting this Zoom meeting.

The date of the next meeting will be decided after tomorrow's Management Forum meeting, though it was likely to be in early October 2022, possibly on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> or Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>.