

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 17th 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 74th meeting)

held on **Thursday 3rd May 2023** at 7.00 pm.

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

[Note that normally the spring meeting would be held on board the MS *Oldenburg* alongside Bideford Quay, but an extended overwinter re-fit this year meant she was not yet back in service.]

Present:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Keith Hiscock	KH	Marine Biological Association
Robert Irving	RI	Lundy Field Society
Judith Tatem	JT	North Devon Coastwise
Lauren Parkhouse	LP	Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&SIFCA)
Mike Deaton	MD	Appledore Sub-Aqua Club
Steve Ashton	SA	Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club
Maggs Ashton	MA	Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club (Chair)
Ben Benguey	BB	Lundy Diving
Derek Green	DG	Lundy General Manager
Rosie Ellis	RE	Warden, Lundy Conservation Team

1. Welcome (KH)

KH welcomed all to the 17th meeting of the Lundy MPA Advisory Group. 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: Chris & Sharron Blackmore (Sea Watch Foundation), Andy Bell (Biosphere Reserve), Amanda Gartshore (Ilfracombe SAC), Sophie Hare (Natural England), Stuart Carpenter (Charter boat *Hampshire Rose*), Leigh Hanks (*Obsession* charters), 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 3rd October 2022.

Printed copies of the minutes were made available to those present. KH asked if anyone had any corrections they'd like to see made to the minutes. RE pointed out that she was surprised to find she had been demoted from Warden to Assistant Warden in the list of attendees, for which RI apologized. Other than this, the minutes were accepted.

4. Matters arising

4.1 There were no matters arising.

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

- 5.1 DG began by confirming that last year (2022) had been a particularly successful one for the island, with passenger numbers on the *Oldenburg* at high levels (at 18,200 in total: 11,000 day trippers & 5,560 stayers) as well as high occupancy levels of the 24 properties for staying visitors (at 91.5%). And the helicopter service (which comes into action when the *Oldenburg* is in dry dock over winter) had had a bumper year as well.
- 5.2 Regarding infrastructure projects, 'power' has been the main focus of attention over the winter. A new emergency generator (220kVA) was brought across to the island (in bits!) last year, in place as a back-up. As it happened, generator #2 'died' in a spectacular fashion in the first week in January, so the emergency one was put to work straight away. Since then, two of the other three main service generators have been replaced, so there are now three (out of four) units that are working, with the fourth just awaiting a new alternator, which should happen in June. The investment for these units has come from the National Trust, as part of the new lease agreement with the Landmark Trust.
- 5.3 DG went on to explain that the replacement generators were only part of the new power scheme for the island, with the renewable energy side of things also developing. The scheme agreed by the Landmark Trust's Trustees has now gone back to the National Trust for their approval before applications for planning permission are submitted. With delays imposed by Covid, it will be at least another two years before the scheme is up and running.
- 5.4 The 'bells and whistles' option is for the generators to remain on stand-by, as for most of the time power will be generated by solar and wind options feeding into a large battery on the island. The small solar array will be located in High Street field and the sole wind turbine (~ 100kW) would be positioned close to where the old one used to be, to the east of Stoneycroft Cottage. The battery (~ 1.2 mW) would be located to the north of the Lambing Shed in High Street field. There have been numerous assessments carried out regarding the impacts of both of these installations on wildlife, aesthetics, aircraft hazards etc.
- 5.5 DG explained that the system is based on one used on Fair Isle (between Orkney and Shetland) and the same consulting engineers used to design their system (albeit with three wind turbines) are being used at Lundy [the Fair Isle scheme can be viewed on-line: search 'Fair Isle renewable energy scheme' for various articles]. The benefits of the scheme would be the island running on 'clean' energy for 85% of the time, a reduction in noise, a reduction in the use of diesel from 150k litres to 20k litres per annum (and savings on the current cost to import it to the island) and a reduction in the pollution risk associated with that fuel.
- 5.6 Another infrastructure project currently underway, DG continued, is to increase the capacity of the water storage facility on the island. Last year, with the long dry spell

during the summer, the reserve capacity dropped to about 30% (the equivalent of two weeks' worth of water), which was dangerously low. A 300,000 l water tank will be installed, the concrete footings and steel support work being put in place currently. The tank itself will be fitted in June.

- 5.7 Finally, DG brought those present up to date with the situation regarding the *Oldenburg*. Whilst in dry dock at Sharpness (on the upper Severn Estuary), an unfortunate incident had occurred which led to the engine room being flooded with sea water. This happened when much of the internal workings of the engines were exposed (prior to an inspection), which led to a considerable amount of damage taking place. Consequently, everything had had to come out of the engine room and be replaced. This has included both engines, both generators, service pumps, fire pump, sewerage system, hot water and heating systems, all freshwater pumps, alternators, inverters, and all cabling & switch gear. Several replacement items have had to come from China.
- 5.8 The sailing season was due to start on 28th March but the ship still remains at Sharpness. Trials of the refitted engines are due to take place today (11th May). A renewal of the Class certificate is also now due. Meanwhile, DG had been investigating whether it was possible to commandeer another ship/ferry to cover for the *Oldenburg* from elsewhere in the UK and from northern Europe, but all to no avail. Instead, the Severn Seas Shipping Co. with their tug *Goliath* (now re-named *Scimitar*), which recently refurbished the jetty at Lundy, had been helping out bringing supplies to the island.
- 5.9 In the meantime, helicopter flights from Hartland had been taking stayers over to the island, flying three days a week (Tues., Thurs. & Sat) instead of just on a Saturday.
- 5.10 [The latest news on the *Oldenburg*, as of 23rd May, is that it is hoped she will begin operating again out of Bideford/Ilfracombe with passengers to/from Lundy on Saturday, 3rd June onwards].
- 5.11 DG just wanted to add that he was delighted the island had acquired Bird Observatory status again and congratulations and thanks should go to Rosie Ellis, Dean Jones, Stuart Cossey and various LFS 'birders' for all their hard work in making this happen.

Finally, DG was pleased to announce that for the first time in a long time, there was now a full compliment of staff on the island (see 6.3 below).

6. Conservation Team report Rosie Ellis (Lundy Warden)

- 6.1 RE had issued a pdf of her Conservation Team report on the afternoon of the meeting, which is being circulated with these minutes. She accompanied her report with a short Powerpoint presentation.
- 6.2 Further to her report given at the last meeting, a report on **grey seal numbers** for 2022 has now been completed (and is included in the Conservation Team report for 2022 which is being circulated with these minutes). Numbers are slightly down from the previous year (2021), which had been a record-breaking year. The highest count was of 206 individuals and of 54 pups. The first pup was sighted on 14th August and the last white-coat pup on 25th October. Pup mortalities were up to ~18% (from ~10% in 2021), although this figure is very approximate. There were three documented entanglement issues. Although there were fewer documented reports of disturbance compared to 2021, research commissioned by Natural England (by means of a Masters project conducted by Meaghan Kendall) revealed many instances of disturbance in the Gannets' Bay area in particular.
- 6.3 **Changes of staff.** Stuart Cossey, the island's Assistant Warden/Bird Warden, is leaving and returning to N. Ireland. He is being replaced by Joe Parker, who has just

taken up the post and will overlap with Stuart for 10 days or so. Joe is a qualified bird ringer and was attracted to the post due to the island's new Bird Observatory status.

There are also a number of volunteers helping out: Luke Marinner has already started as a volunteer Bird Observatory Warden; Meaghan Kendall is staying on from last summer and will be a volunteer Seabird Warden (until early summer - there will be more seabird surveys undertaken this year as a means of monitoring for avian influenza); and Matt White will be a volunteer Assistant Ranger (who will be assisting Matt Stritch, who remains the island's Ranger). There will also be two volunteer Marine Wardens who will be on the island during July and August (following on from the success of having two last summer during the Marine Festival).

At this point, KH asked if the RHIB would be in use this year and RE explained that there continued to be problems with insuring the boat (as is happening with other agencies around the country trying to insure RHIBs at the moment, as DG added). It also requires upgrading and re-coding. The plan is for it to leave the island soon for this upgrading to take place.

- 6.4 Volunteer work parties. RE explained that there were a number of work parties booked in at the start and end of the year. Three of the groups were being organised by the Lundy Field Society (13-20 May; 23-30 September; and 7-14 October) and one by the National Trust (16-23 September).

There had also been a first 'Young Naturalists weekend' which was an *ad hoc* trial to see what the take-up would be. There was a bit of rockpooling, dry stone walling, birdwatching and witnessing bird ringing, amongst other activities. RE was pleased to report it went really well with what turned out to be a lovely bunch of people, with university students/young professionals (aged 18-30) being targeted. The intention is to run it again, possibly later this year but certainly next spring. RI asked how this event had been advertised and RE explained it was just through Twitter, with all places being taken within a couple of weeks of its announcement.

- 6.5 **Research.** Tara McEvoy-Wilding, who will be familiar to many as being one of the two Marine Festival Wardens last summer, will be returning this summer for a month or so to undertake a Masters project (*Investigating the effectiveness of a new sampling method for surveying benthic infauna*). Also Lara Winsloe will be undertaking a project (*Parental care of the Herring gull*), which will link with the avian influenza monitoring work.
- 6.6 **Survey work.** The RSPB seabird breeding census has started. There were 130 puffin counted on the Jenny's Cove slope today, with many now departing the island. Counts of guillemot, razorbill and fulmar will be starting this week.

Natural England are also planning a survey, with full island counts of every species of seabird, as part of the avian influenza monitoring. This would normally never be undertaken so soon after a previous survey (that being currently undertaken by the RSPB), as there is usually an interval of at least 3-4 years between such surveys.

Following a four-year interval, another Manx shearwater survey is due to be undertaken from 3rd-10th June. The last one gave a population estimate of 5,500 birds. It is hoped this number may have increased substantially. This species is less likely to have been influenced by avian influenza as they nest in individual burrows. Also, a storm petrel survey will be taking place from 8th-15th July. The last RSPB survey indicated there were no resident storm petrels on Lundy, but RE confirmed there were and have been now for a few years (estimated by Dean Jones to be about 50 breeding pairs), so it'll be interesting to see what size their population now stands at.

- 6.7 Bird ringing. The Heligoland trap, situated at the southern end of the Quarries platform, has now been fully repaired by LFS volunteers and is back in action. A blackcap and a cuckoo have already been caught in it, ringed and released.
- 6.8 **Grey seals.** Quarterly surveys are now being undertaken and these are being carried out in synchrony with when Cornwall Seal Group carry out their counts. Hopefully, this will give a more accurate assessment of overall numbers throughout the South-west. The first weekend when this was done this year coincided with poor weather and a heavy swell, so just 90 seals were counted (compared to last year's 144).
- 6.9 **Biosecurity.** The RSPB have put up some new signs at Ilfracombe Harbour and on Bideford Quay regarding Lundy being rat-free, although RE has yet to see them herself. Regular monthly monitoring for signs of rat activity continue. Regarding instances of avian influenza, last summer, RE reported that one dead herring gull had been found which, subsequent analysis had found, had the virus. Since then there has been another herring gull found dead on the roof of Millcombe just a few weeks ago, though RE has yet to hear if it was also carrying the virus. There has also been one sighting of "an ill-looking kittiwake", but there have been no dramatic numbers of dead birds to report.
- 6.10 "Amphibian gossip". The croak of a common toad has been heard on the island by Quarry Pond (really unusual as no amphibians have ever been recorded from Lundy), but no actual sighting of said beast as yet. This was not thought to be a practical joke, so a bit of a mystery...
- 6.11 The farm's sheep on the island have learned how to clamber over stone walls and have been causing a lot of trouble escaping from fields and damaging the walls. Over the winter there has been a team of contractors over securing the tops of the walls with mortar. Now that the ewes have lambs to look after, there have been fewer escape attempts.
- 6.12 RE pointed out she has been missing the visits of the **Lundy Ambassadors** who would normally be coming over on the *Oldenburg* to help out with guided walks. The walks are still taking place however, as are the regular talks given to staying visitors. The snorkel safaris are also booking up, with a mention being made recently on the BBC about being in the water with seals.
- 6.13 **Protected Wrecks.** RE has prepared a spreadsheet which she has sent around local dive clubs and charter skippers, covering the procedures which must be followed for those intending to undertake dives on the island's two protected wreck sites under the Lundy Company's licence. This has been done in agreement with Terry Newman at Historic England, following some misunderstandings last year about when Historic England should be notified of dives on the wrecks.
- Peta Knott of the Nautical Archaeology Society (who led the Protected Wreck Days during the Marine Festival) is running another PWD in June, using Ben Benguey as skipper. The hope is this will become an annual event. It is also hoped that the photogrammetry survey of the *Iona II* undertaken last summer will be completed too.
- 6.14 The ***Splash In!* photographic competition** will be run again this year over the duration of the diving season, with prize-giving taking place on 16th September. Photos taken at Lundy throughout the diving season can be submitted. Further details will follow, together with the prizes on offer.
- 6.15 The **charter boat accreditation scheme** took place in person on 9th March, with Beccy MacDonald-Lofts presenting to an audience of about 30 attendees. Unfortunately RE was unable to attend because of Coastguard training. It was good to see so many taking part, as it shows that the scheme is taken seriously.

Regarding safety and rescue situations, RE mentioned there was now a fully team of First Responders on the island (as well as the Coastguard team). The First Responders were trained to administer oxygen and Entonox. For most marine incidents, RE asked that contact was made in the first instance with the Coastguard (via 999 or on Channel 16). It's only for incidents on top of the island/in the Village that a 999 call for an Ambulance would be made, when it will be possible for the island team to be put in contact with a paramedic/doctor directly.

- 6.16 **Publicity.** The BBC series *Wild Isles* shown this spring includes a programme only being shown on iPlayer about conservation success stories, one of which was about the Lundy NTZ. This additional programme was funded by WWF and RSPB and was produced by Silverback Films, with narration by Sir David Attenborough. The results of last summer's project looking at the effectiveness of the No Take Zone are featured.

RE added that two articles are due to be coming out in *Coast* magazine in the near future, including a full feature, on-island special.

7. Natural England update (report submitted by Sophie Hare and read out by RI in her absence)

- 7.1 A Natural England dive team had planned to carry out the monitoring studies of subtidal reefs within the SAC over five days in early September but a strong easterly wind meant they only managed one day's diving at Lundy (with the other days spent visiting sites off the mainland).
- 7.2 Few conclusions can be drawn from the limited time spent at Lundy. The draft report acts more as a field report and is awaiting sign-off internally within Natural England before being more widely distributed. Species data will be uploaded to Marine Recorder in due course.
- 7.3 Some superficial observations from the data collected were:
- (i) Assessing species components of circalittoral rock communities – there appeared to be slightly higher number of species at the two Lundy sites (Knoll Pins and Brazen Ward) when compared to the Bideford to Foreland Point MCZ sites (Combe Martin and Wilde Pear).
 - (ii) A large number of nationally scarce trumpet anemones *Aiptasia couchii* were encountered at Brazen Ward.
 - (iii) Of the top five 'targeted' species recorded from each site, the dominant sponges at both the Lundy and BFP sites were *Raspailia ramosa*, *Stelligera stuposa* and *Homaxinella subdola*.
 - (iv) Of the small number (just four) of pink sea fans recorded from the BFP sites, their overall condition seemed to be 'fairly good'.

A comment from MA added that, in her opinion, the pink sea fans off the east coast at Lundy were in poor condition, particularly off Quarry Bay, but as one went further north, their overall condition seemed to improve. KH added that, from his observations last summer during the Marine Bioblitz, his overall feeling was that many anthozoans (soft corals, sea fans, anemones, corals) were in a poor state compared to the early to mid 1980s. It is hoped they would recover to their 'former glory' soon. His observations will be included in the forthcoming LFS Annual report, due out in some time in July/August. KH also added that the condition of pink sea fans at Skomer had appeared to have declined too.

- 7.4 Sophie Hare's report continued: no monitoring projects are planned at Lundy for this summer due to resource constraints. However, I am looking out for funding

opportunities through this year (for both monitoring projects and field equipment), so please contact me if there are any ideas.

- 7.5 Our team have recently completed Lundy SAC's first formal Natural England condition assessment though note this is only for the habitat features of the SAC and does not include Grey seals. **Each feature and sub-feature has been determined to be in favourable condition, with varying degrees of confidence levels.** Details of the condition assessment can be found via the Designated Sites View website.

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/Marine/MarineFeatureConditionDirect.aspx?SiteCode=UK0013114&SiteName=Lundy&SiteNameDisplay=Lundy%20SAC&countyCode=&responsiblePerson=&SeaArea=&IFCAArea=&NumMarineSeasonality=1>

Newer evidence (including that collected during the Marine Festival last summer) will be accounted for in subsequent condition assessments and help indicate any change in site and feature condition.

RI added a comment here to say that he would query this conclusion ("that each feature and sub-feature had been determined to be in favourable condition"), as the results from last summer's monitoring of the sunset cup corals showed the number of adults at the Knoll Pins continues to decline; and, as indicated above, the condition of pink sea fans is not good either. KH added that he was also aware that the numbers of some other species of coral appeared to be in decline.

RI thought what might have led to this conclusion is that the results from both sunset cup coral studies and pink sea fan condition assessments had come too late to be included within NE's assessment period, which ran until 30th December 2022. One wonders if we will have to wait for a further 5-6 years before the next SAC features assessment is due before these results are taken into account. [Post-meeting, SH added: "You are correct that new evidence does trigger the need for a new condition assessment and NE would aim to complete this before 5-6 years certainly. Unfortunately, it is not possible to state a time frame for when this is completed by as we have targets to complete condition assessments for all our regional MPAs (50+) and this will be balanced between team resource and sites assessments still outstanding."]

SA suggested that it would be interesting for the Group to hear more about what the diving monitoring SAC condition assessment studies entailed and suggested inviting them to give a presentation to the Group. He had met with some of their divers at Lundy last September and was disappointed that they hadn't sought the opinions of local divers as to the state of things at Lundy before embarking on their project.

KH added that NE could consider hiring BB's boat this summer to undertake some of the diving monitoring studies (such as monitoring the condition of pink sea fans) which were missed out on last September. DG added that it should be possible to propose a number of possible projects which could be undertaken if NE were able to have funding available later in the summer.

- 7.6 **HPMAs.** There was no further news from NE on HPMAs beyond Defra's update on the 28th February 2023, see: [http://Highly Protected Marine Areas pilot sites – gov.uk \(www.gov.uk\)](http://Highly Protected Marine Areas pilot sites – gov.uk (www.gov.uk)).

"After considering all the responses, and further evidence, received government intends to designate a modified version of Allonby Bay, North East of Farnes Deep and a modified version of Dolphin Head as set out in the consultation, and not to designate Lindisfarne or Inner Silver Pit South. Work will now progress on designating the three sites. The intention is to designate these three HPMAs before 6 July 2023, within a year of the consultation's launch, in line with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Additional sites will now be explored and any future options will also be subject to consultation.

Any queries, please contact the HPMa mailbox: hpma@defra.gov.uk".

- 7.7 RI thought this an appropriate moment to mention the on-going development of the film which was shot last summer about Lundy's No Take Zone, funded by the Blue Marine Foundation. This is being produced by North Devon Moving Image. RI was shown the first edit of the film last week and was impressed with how it's looking. Quite a few of those present this evening had been interviewed on camera and were included in the film. Some shots though remained outstanding and once obtained, a second edit will be done leading to a final cut being produced in a few months' time. It is hoped an early viewing of the finished film will be shown in North Devon sometime in the autumn. DG suggested that the small cinema within Bideford College might be an appropriate venue for an initial screening.

8. DSIFCA update (Lauren Parkhouse, DSIFCA)

- 8.1 LP explained that every year she undertakes a review of the area open to trawling at Lundy on an area of subtidal sand in the NE corner of the MPA. (She also undertakes this exercise for all other MCZs where trawling is permitted within the IFCA's region). For the 2022 review, there were a total of two vessels fishing in that area completing two trawls each, between 23rd June and 23rd August. The longest trawl was for 29 mins. This was below the baseline levels set in 2019, so no check was required under the Habitats Regulations assessment. Should the frequency of trawls increase during the current year, then a Habitats Regulations assessment would be required.
- 8.2 The condition assessment for subtidal coarse sediment undertaken by Natural England concluded that that is in favourable condition. However, that assessment arrived too late for it to be included within the 2022 IFCA assessment, so it will be included in the IFCA's assessment next year.
- 8.3 There are two projects which may or may not involve Lundy, depending on the vessels used. Both are crustacea projects. The first is looking at the seasonality of berried lobster, to ensure the present enforcement measures are effective, particularly with regard to the 'scrubbing' of eggs from individual lobsters so that that particular individual can then be landed as a legal part of the catch. It would be useful to find out the time when natural shedding of eggs occurs, so that IFCA officers (nationally) can be more alert to checking catches around this time. It is believed that shedding can take place any time between May and September.
- 8.4 The second project is one looking at crabs and for making sure that soft-shelled crabs are not landed. Some crabs are being landed before the carapace has properly hardened. This project is being managed by Seafish, the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, Bangor University and the D&SIFCA. Funding for this is coming from the Fisheries Industry Science Partnership. Research off both north and south Devon will contribute to the project, with a couple of potting boats off N. Devon being involved. The project will investigate the effectiveness of 'durometers' (small gadgets used to measure the hardness of a crab's carapace). Again, this is a nationwide project (it will contribute to the national Crab & Lobster Management Plan).
- 8.5 KH asked LP if the IFCA had any projects associated with spiny lobsters currently underway. LP said not specifically although the IFCA was always pleased to hear where spiny lobsters had been seen (by divers) and caught and returned by fishers. A database of such sightings is still being kept, but it's not something the IFCA are actively pursuing. KH pointed out he was trying to find out the same information to include mention of the current status of spiny lobsters in the annual SW Marine Ecosystems report he helps to edit. The presence of young lobsters and whether older ones are bearing eggs is particularly useful information.

- 8.6 LP added that she has submitted D&SIFCA spiny lobster data to the FISH INTEL project, which is monitoring the movement of various species of tagged fish around the SW peninsula using an array of acoustic beacons attached to the seabed. As part of the project, spiny lobsters have been tagged in northern France and in the Isles of Scilly with their movements being tracked as well. KH added that there is a crawfish/spiny lobster workshop being held at the Penryn Campus of Exeter University on the 28th September this year, in case anyone was interested.

9. Historic England update (Terry Newman)

- 9.1 Terry had been unable to make the meeting (as he was on leave) but sent on the following after the meeting.
- 9.2 There has been an increase in individuals wishing to be licencees on Lundy's protected wrecks.
- 9.3 *Gull Rock*
Lundy Island Company and Mike Deaton have renewed their Visit licencees; Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club have a new dive officer with Paul Armstrong taking over from Margaret Ashton - a new Visit licence has been issued reflecting this change. Sam Wilder-Hills is bringing a group to Lundy to dive the protected sites and a new visit licence has been issued.
- 9.4 *Iona II*
Lundy Island Company, Mike Deaton and Fiona Hampton-Matthews have renewed their Visit licencees.
There are three new licencees that have been issued with Visit licencees: Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club as set out above; Sam Wilder-Hills; & Steve Dover.
- 9.5 The Nautical Archaeology Society (c/o Peta Knott) are bringing a group to Lundy in early June (aboard *Barbara B*) and will be accessing the *Iona II* protected site under the authority of Lundy Island's licence.
- 9.6 MD added that he had heard that HE had purchased a GoPro camera which they were willing to lend out to anyone wishing to undertake filming studies on any of their protected wrecks. However, when it had been taken on the *Iona II* wreck at Lundy, the camera had flooded, so not such a happy tale there.

10. Any Other Business

- 10.1 KH pointed out that the latest bulletin of the Porcupine Marine Natural History Society contained detailed reports of the outcomes of the Marine Bioblitz held on and around the island last summer as part of the Marine Festival. A copy had been passed around during this evening's meeting. KH went through some of their findings: 478 taxa were found in total (307 from shorelines, 214 from dives, 60 from both) from 1239 records and many hundreds of photographs were also taken. Of the species recorded, polychaetes (studied by Teresa Darbyshire from the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff and one of the country's leading experts on polychaete worms) were well recorded, with 24 taxa added to Lundy's species list, one of which *Boccardia proboscidea* is a non-native species. There were also three new non-native algal species (Harvey's siphon weed *Melanothamnus harveyi*, siphoned Japan weed *Dasysiphonia japonica* and a sub-species of the green fingers *Codium fragile* subsp. *fragile*). No Pacific oysters (*Magallana gigas*) were found, following their surprise appearance a few years ago, although the red-ripple bryozoan *Watersipora subatra* has increased in extent and abundance in an area on the north side of Rat Island. A final record to mention was that of an attractive sea slug *Discodoris rosi* for which Lundy is now the furthest north it has reached. Overall, the specialists looking at sea squirts commented that they were disappointed by the small number of species

- present at Lundy compared to other sites in SW England and to numbers recorded at Lundy in the 1970s and 1980s.
- 10.2 Overall, the Bioblitz had been a success and KH added he was delighted that so many species had been recorded, with the data adding considerably to what has been recorded at Lundy over the years. DG added that it was really good to see the reports which are now being produced as a result of the Festival, justifying the amount of work and effort that went into it. He wanted to thank everyone who had been involved in organising it and felt it had put Lundy back on the 'marine map' again.
- 10.3 DG asked if there might be a possibility of acquiring some copies of the Porcupine Marine Natural History Society's *Bulletin* featuring reports on various aspects of the Marine Bioblitz which took place at the start of last summer's Marine Festival. Both KH and RI are members of the Porcupine MNHS and RI agreed to make enquiries. DG explained it would be really useful to have some copies in order to show others what the outcomes of the Marine Bioblitz had been. [Post-meeting: RI enquired of the Editor of the PMNHS's *Bulletin* for further copies but was told that none were available].
- 10.4 KH wanted to point out that, in his role as editor of the marine life sections of the SW Marine Ecosystems report for 2022 (entitled *The state of SW seas*), he concludes that "Overall, Lundy's shore and seabed marine life is in poor condition". So that contradicts Natural England's most recent overall assessment for the condition of the SAC at Lundy. MD asked what would be the outcome of this for the SAC's status. KH said he thought it indicated a reduction in the number of species and in their abundance. He also commented that it was much harder to measure the condition of shore and seabed marine life compared to say single species cetaceans or to grey seals, where it was simply a matter of counting numbers. He pointed out that there simply weren't the resources available to obtain an assessment of the status of marine life (i.e. invertebrate and seaweed species) in general. DG added that the funding which the island's Conservation Team used to receive from Natural England dried up several years ago; and KH pointed out in addition there just wasn't the expertise available anymore. DG also felt it was in part due to the 'dilution effect' of many other MCZs being designated around the country. MD wanted to add that there also appeared to be more emphasis being placed on terrestrial nature conservation incentives at present (such as Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Partnerships). KH pointed out that there were certain new marine concepts being funded (such as Marine Nature Recovery and Blue Carbon), but that this was at the expense of other work. DG commented that whilst seabird numbers at Lundy had flourished since the rat eradication programme had taken place 20 years ago, these numbers could only be maintained if there were sufficient numbers of fish in the sea around Lundy. RE added that an imminent visit of a small number of MPs to Lundy, who were there linked with the island's new status as a Bird Observatory, had on their agenda to look into local sandeel abundance and distributions.
- 10.5 KH mentioned that, building on the success of the SW Marine Ecosystems work, Defra had offered the team behind this work the sum of £50k to look into how the concept of assessing the state of regional seas could be expanded nationwide. He reiterated his earlier point that it was difficult to come up with measurable, quantitative data for many seabed species in order to back-up any assessment of the overall state of the marine environment for any particular area.
- 10.6 Natural England would no doubt be aware of this Defra project and if this Group representing Lundy's interests were keen to keep informed of such items, then an approach should be made to Natural England. DG added that Andy Bell at the Biosphere Reserve was also doing sterling work in getting various regional projects underway. He seemed to have a way of coping with the layers of bureaucracy often

associated with such projects yet come away with some funding in the end. RI added that Andy Bell had told him they were about to appoint a marine project co-ordinator within the Biosphere team, one of whose tasks would be to attend these meetings.

- 10.7 RI wanted to raise another matter which he had raised at the last Lundy Management Forum meeting back in October. This was to assess the future management of the MPA and the lack of funding which effectively prevents scientific research being undertaken within the MPA. As everyone is aware, there are various stakeholders who all have some responsibility for what happens within the MPA (Natural England, D&SIFCA, Historic England, Lundy Company, MMO, Defra etc.) and there is no one pot of money which would allow for such projects to take place. It would link in with having 'progressive and active' management for the MPA, rather than it being entirely 'reactive'. He suggested a novel approach would be to establish a central pot of money to which the various stakeholder agencies would contribute (as well as other bodies) on a regular, long-term basis, which would provide funding for projects and equipment associated with the MPA. Both DG and KH agreed that the concept could form the basis for discussion with all of the relevant agencies and that RI should raise it at the next Lundy Management Forum meeting (to be held on 6th June). DG added that the Lundy Company has no remit for having a boat on the water at Lundy at all. This is what RI couldn't understand – why does the MPA not have its own boat? Clearly there are difficulties with having a boat at Lundy but surely these are not wholly insurmountable? KH pointed out that whilst it may be feasible to cope with undertaking above water projects, any studies under the water involving diving would be very much more expensive with an added layer of responsibilities. RE added that it may be possible to tap into any agencies' unspent budgets at the end of the financial year, when there is often a need to spend money fast.
- 10.8 As a last point, KH wanted to ask if there had been any sightings of unusual happenings observed during 2022, such as spider crab aggregations. This was greeted by silence! KH had not heard of any being seen in south Devon either. RE did confirm there had been smaller groups of 10-20 crabs being seen, but nothing that amounted to seeing hundreds of crabs. The last such aggregations at Lundy were seen in 2019 and in 2020. Finally, KH asked BB specifically as to whether he was finding slipper limpets attached to any of the whelks he was catching. BB replied no. LP said that they were found attached to scallops off the south coast, but that they didn't seem to have got around Land's End yet. JT added that she had come across some washed in at Westward Ho! and thought she probably had photos to confirm this.

Date of the next meeting: proposed as being **Tuesday 17th October 2023**, with Ilfracombe Sub-Aqua Club being the proposed venue. [Note this has now been changed to being on board the MS *Oldenburg* alongside Bideford Quay].