

EXE ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP**MANAGEMENT GROUP MINUTES****Committee Suite, County Hall, Exeter****2pm Thursday 01 December 2016****Present:**

Chair: Councillor Bernard Hughes OBE, DCC	Cllr Pat A Graham, ETC
Cllr Michael Howe, EDDC	Cllr Andrew Cadbury, SPC
Cllr Martin Wrigley, DTC	Lynn Trout, Forum Vice Chair
Neil Downes, Forum Chair	Alan Wood, RYA
Peter Chamberlain, DCC	Andrew Stanger, Natural England
Graeme Smith, TDC	Katherine Stephenson, D&SIFCA
Gavin Bloomfield, RSPB	Steph Davies, D&SIFCA
Neil Harris, Delivery Officer	Tim Faulkner, Powderham Estate
Stephanie Clark, EEMP	Matt Boydell, Devon Wildlife Trust
Justin Hart, Habitat Mitigation Officer	Clare Kavanagh, MMO
Sama Euridge, Habitat Mitigation officer	Nicole Yeomans, MMO
Julie Owen, Dog Project Officer	Rowena Garne, DCC

1. Welcome, introductions and apologies for absence:

- BH welcomed those present. RG took the minutes.
- Apologies were noted from: Cllr Ted Hockin (TDC); Cllr Humphrey Clemens (TDC); Cllr Margaret Baldwin (ECC); Cllr Graham Murrin (WPC); Councillor Terry Lowther (DTC); Lord Courtenay (Powderham Estate); Colin Acton (ECC); Lisa Bowman (ETC); Mandy Westlake (WPC); Hugh Davey (Environment Agency); James Chubb (EDDC); Ann Tipper (DTC); Suzanna Hughes (SPC)

2. Minutes and Action Log of Previous Meeting – SC

- Minutes from previous MG meeting were agreed as an accurate record.
- Actions from previous meeting discussed (see Action Log).

3. Budget update 2016/17 and Preparation of Budget for 2017/18 – PC

- 2016/17 planned underspend of £5,344 confirmed as shown on Nov-16 budget report.
- Further income has been secured however currently don't have paperwork and is yet to come in.
- Funding from Habitats Regulation Mitigation Strategy work, Natural England further income from LiCCo project (approximately £2,000) providing a carry-forward of approx. £13,000.

- As stated in MoA, 2017/18 draft budget sent out by 30th Nov.
- Expenditure forecast salary alone £38,853, however income only at £25,000 to be balanced by the 2016/17 planned underspend and extra funding.
- Without extra funding only employment would be secured not project funding.
- SC will work hard to bring in additional project income.

- 2018/19 core income does not cover core costs, will need to secure additional income.

BH: Parish Councils are coming into close scrutiny in the future. We would like to extend thanks to PCs for continuing to support the Partnership.

PC: Also extend thanks to District Councils for continuing contributions.

BH: Agreed.

GB: Is there anything further that we can do to encourage and increase in DC contributions?

BH: Representatives around the table can take this away.

MH: Continue as the second highest contributor.

GS: Not contributing at the same level as historically, but still on board.

PC: Partners to help delivery of Funding Strategy when in place. Work in partnership to sustain budget.

4. Progress Report

a) Exe Estuary Officer progress against Action Plan – SC

Priority: Management Plan

Extra Funding: £500 to support Friends of Exe Estuary group (volunteers) from Sea Changers funding.

South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership work: Review of zonation and codes of conduct. Receiving £17,000, with approximately £10,000 offsetting costs of the EEMP.

Winter Exe Press: to be published at the end of the week (w/c 28/11/16)

Dawlish Warren Meeting, 22 Nov: with Natural England, regarding work on the implementation of the England Coast Path and coastal access. Aim to ensure no inconsistency with the coastal access and the proposals of the South East Devon European Site Mitigation Strategy.

Spirit of the Exe Festival: Saturday 5th August 2017 at Powderham Castle to link with coffee festival due to historic link to coffee trade. SC and Lord Courtenay in discussion. Financial input required on possible charges – suggestion to charge car parking but keep entry free due to the fact that it will not be as centralised as previous events. Counter point being that the prestige of Powderham Castle will encourage people to make a day of it and therefore the lack of access by walking will not affect visitor numbers. Promote as a destination for cyclists.

b) Partner progress against Management Plan – Updates from Partners

(i) D&SIFCA mussel and crab tile survey - KS

-Presentation by KS detailing the reason for performing these surveys and assessing the balance of socio economic benefits and conservation factors via evidence based management

-Perform annual stock assessments of mussels (during springtime) using a transect across the mussel beds. All 3 beds show a loss of live mussel stocks from 2013-14 (significant drop between 2013 and 2016). Possible reasons cited as natural erosion, birds feeding, bad weather and increased human interaction, which could have led to spat not settling. This has been proven as not unique to the Exe Estuary and has been seen country wide. More large mussels than medium, probably accounts for the increase in tonnage 2016-17.

-Cockle stock assessments also carried out (results yet to be analysed) – larger number of small cockle which is promising for future stocks, but not as much large cockles. This cockle fishery is not so important nationally (commercially) since mass decrease several years ago (reason: possible virus).

-Crab Tile Survey – usually on foot, performed this year on Exe by drone (new technology) which took photographs up and down shoreline which are geo-located making it easier to count and locate all tiles by linking with Google Earth, however is expensive so was only performed on the

Exe Estuary. Benefits and disadvantages listed. Benefits of drone means less of a health and safety issue as it can be carried out from bank, less officer time used and greater accuracy. Disadvantages – dependence on good weather. High cost and tiles hard to spot on images due to certain angle.

-Tiles are counted to monitor effort, in case of detrimental effects on the Exe. The number peaked at 26,000 and dropped to 20,000.

-Suggestion from GS regarding possible use of Lidar or fix point laser.

-Legal status was raised: have a natural right to forage, but no established rights.

-Discussion regarding licencing of crab tiling with argument of grandfather rights primarily as well as the right to forage. Hard to asses if commercial tiling is being performed (crabs go for 50p each). Crab tiles are licenced at Lympstone. Consideration of licensing across estuary.

-LEMA had similar situation for charges for moorings, taken to court over grandfather rights, gave licences in the end but didn't charge. Powderham moorings (1992) – commercial moorings didn't charge for, but those making a living charged for a few.

- Lympstone have paid licenses for crab tilers.

-IFCA review of byelaws, with hand gathering being possibly reviewed next year, possibly bringing in bag limits.

-Debate as to whether crab tiling causes bird disturbance (displacement of feeding water birds) RSPB bird count will assess this.

- IFCA Habitat Regulations Assessments: crab tiling and bait digging yet to be looked at. KS suggested possibility of increase in food availability for birds due to crab tiling (TBD) and hard substrate for settling.

(ii) Introduction to the work of the Habitat Mitigation Officers (HMOs) and Dog Project Officer –NH -Exeter, East Devon and Teignbridge Councils cover South East Devon Mitigation Strategy which handles the conservation of species and habitat conservation.

-Two types of strategy:

– Offsite measures, Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANGS).

– Onsite measures which are site specific to Dawlish, Exe Estuary and Pebble Bed

Heaths which works on a 10km sphere of influence regarding the financial contribution.

-Primary job role is people engagement – by talking to people who use the sites and how this affects wildlife and educate on stewardship protection causing a spreads of knowledge.

Implementation of positive public involvement so far the reception has been positive.

-However, continued lack of conduct could cause the enforcement of byelaws. Query brought up regarding the publication of habitat byelaws and what they are. JH mentioned availability on back of signs.

-Dog Project - 2nd week. Julie's role is to develop and facilitate dog project to cause a behaviour change of owners and dogs, raising more awareness of sites. Similar to Dorset Dog Project.

Establishing free membership based group of dog walkers and create a regular onsite presence. Annual Dog festival summer 2017.

5. Management Plan 2016-2021: approval of plan by Management Group – PC

SC gave update of consultation and progress, detailed amendments. Changes made by SC – Larger Introduction, Key legislation table now A-Z and split into four key sections, amended structure program, water and air quality now one section, titles amended e.g. water recreation rather than recreation.

Management Plan approved by group.

MG agreed that any further minor, necessary changes will be taken in discussion between the EEO and the Head of the Environment Group. Final version can be sent to BH / to MG.

Final Plan launched at Winter Forum on 7th February.

6. Draft Delivery Plan 2017-18 – SC

-The Management Plan will be delivered through the annual Delivery Plan, which indicates how the Management Plan will be implemented and identifies who is responsible for a given action. For the whole partnership, not just the EEO.

-The Policy numbers correspond to those in the Management Plan, as do the sections.

7. Draft South Marine Plan Consultation – CK

-South Marine Plan area just started consulting – ensures that the right activities are performed in the right place at the right time to ensure sustainable development. Reaches from Folkestone in Kent to the River Dart in Devon. South Inshore area from tidal limit out to 12 nautical miles, Sough Offshore area from 12 nautical miles to territorial boundary.

-Deadline of consultation – 27th January

-Final Draft aimed at February 2017

-Plan adoption aimed at spring 2017

-CK recommended viewing the Marine Information Systems (MIS) (updated every 24 hours)

-SC asked if Marine Plan can mention local plans, such as the Exe Estuary Management Plan.

CK stated that the Marine Plan can signpost to local management plans but won't reference.

ACTION: MG to respond to online consultation, or send comments to SC to respond on behalf of the EEMP.

8. Any other business

ACTION: GS to give presentation on Dawlish Warren Beach Management Scheme at next MG meeting.

BH: The meeting on 1st March will be his last as Chair, as not standing in next elections.

9. Dates of next Management Group Meetings:

Dates already agreed:

- 2pm on Wednesday 1 March 2017 – Committee Suite, County Hall

Proposed dates agreed at meeting:

- 2pm on Thursday 22 June 2017

- 2pm on Thursday 14 September 2017