

## **Zonation and Code of Conduct Review Exe Power Boat & Ski Meeting**



### **Minutes**

**10:00-12:00 Monday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

**Location: Exe Power Boat & Ski Club, 5 Shelly Court, Pierhead,  
Exmouth, Devon, EX8 1ER**

**Including Minutes taken by Exe Power Boat & Ski Club**

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### **Attendees**

Paul Scott (EPBSC Commodore as chair)

Iain Grant (Secretary EPBSC)

Mark Sansom (Powerboat Secretary EPBSC)

Pete Hardy (Classic Ski Secretary EPBSC)

Alan Wood (RYA), Dave Curno (RYA)

Stephanie Clark, Exe Estuary Management Partnership (EEMP)

SC gave an outline of her work with the EEMP and the work of the South East Devon Habitat Regulations Partnership (SEDHRP). An outline of the proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zones (VEZs) was given, as suggested by the SEDHRP, accompanied by maps and an explanation why the areas were important. The VEZ in Exmouth which overlaps with the existing statutory powerboating zone is already accepted as a VEZ by kite surfers. SC stated that bower boat and water ski use would continue within the designated statutory activity areas (in place through byelaws).

### **Powerboat Area:**

MS explained about the current use of the powerboating area which had been designated by public inquiry back in 1973 and had been in use ever since.

All powerboating activity by the club took place on restricted dates because it could only take place on tides of 3.8m or more.

Currently paddleboarders and kite surfers used the area once the tide began to rise and continued to use the area until powerboaters arrived to start their event. They would then vacate the area having had around 2 hours of use.

He maintained that if all users were restricted to only two hours either side of high tide it would mean all users would be in the same area at the same time and would lead to conflict and a danger.

SC stated that initial proposals would exclude users at all tidal states and wouldn't restrict users to two hours either side of high tide.

The powerboat course was used about 18 or 20 times per year and then only for one and a half to two hours. The club had one of the biggest fleets of powerboats of this kind in the country with people coming from as far as Barnstaple to take part.

MS said he was very strongly against the area being included in the VEZ and suggested the zone start at the top of the current powerboat area running north towards Lympstone. He said he could see the area from his boatyard at the end of the Estuary Car Park and believed it was used by very few birds.

SC said she could not see how she could argue for the removal of an area which was already operating as a VEZ for kite surfers. She suggested that if voluntary measures were not taken on by local users and if human use had an adverse effect, statutory measures and statutory exclusion zones could potentially be introduced instead.

**Waterski Area:**

PH said there were fewer skiers than powerboaters locally but that in the summer it became a very popular and busy place in the designated area over the cockle sand immediately to the north of the powerboat area and to the east of the channel.

He said that in the summer the area was heavily used and at low tide there was a limited area to use alongside the channel. However, the area suggested for the VEZ was one sought after at high tide both in summer and winter because of its smooth water characteristics, which is ideal for slalom skiing. He suggested a compromise which would mean the loss of the use of the flat water to the eastern side of the ski area – suggested as a VEZ – and its replacement with an extended area stretching from around 21 buoy up the estuary towards Starcross ending before any moorings and to the east of the channel. (Check extent with regards to existing buoys, could be buoy 18). This was normally free of users and moorings and should not present any problems in terms of wildlife.

The RYA reps said they wished to consult with Starcross Yacht Club which sometimes used that area for sailing events.

PH said that if sailing events were taking place power would have to give way to sail. There was mention that Exe Sailing Club uses the top of Dawlish Warren VEZ.

The meeting then discussed Dawlish Warren and the proposed VEZs and made comment on the restrictions placed on the Warren for public access. There were no objections to the suggested zoning of the area for birds. SC said the crab tilers had now been accommodated in the zoning plans.

**Codes of Conduct:**

SC asked the group to look at current documentation concerning codes of conduct and information leaflets to ensure they were up to date. Some updates were suggested.

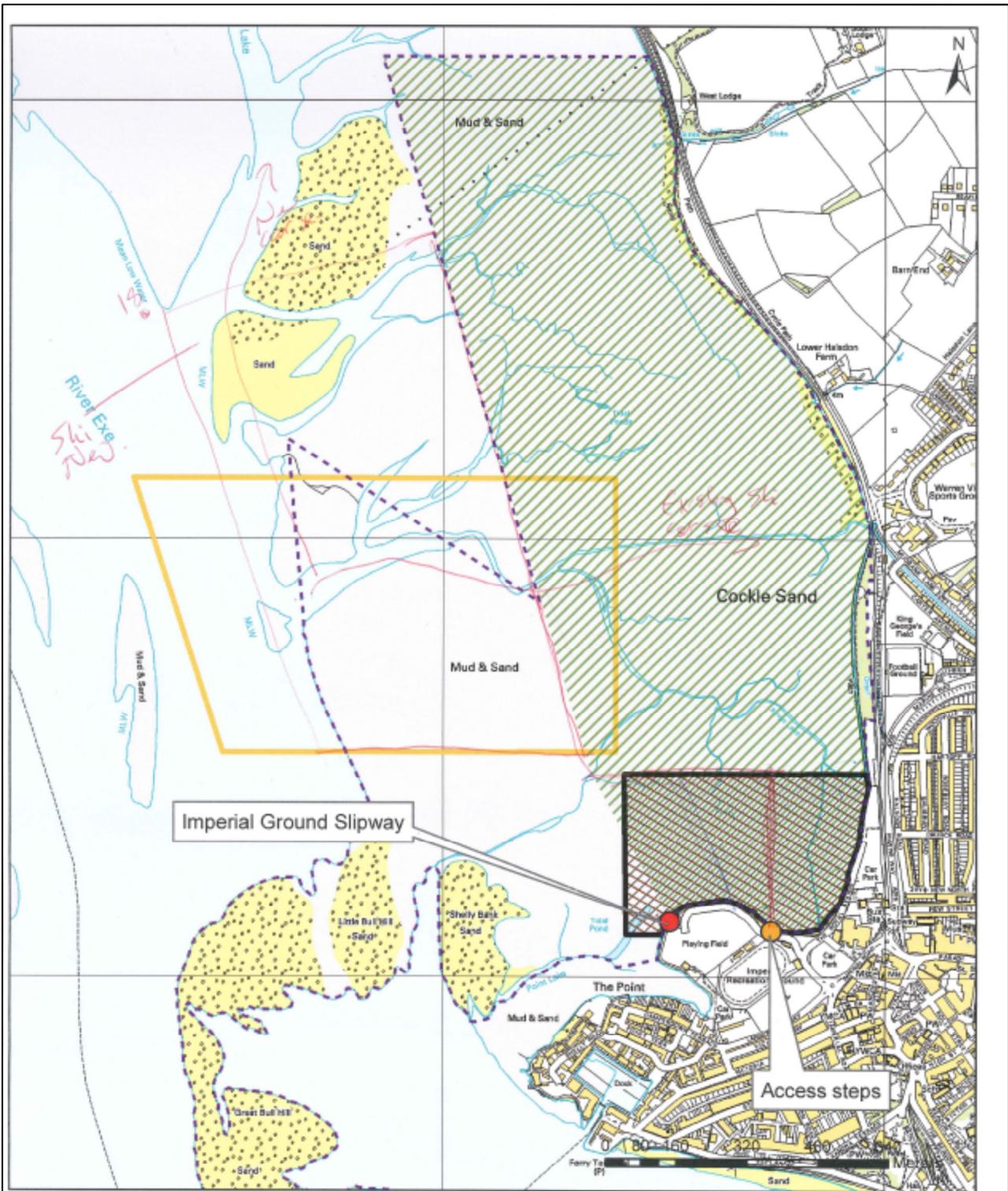
**ACTION:** AW suggested that Blue-Green may be able to help with funding of codes and will look into this.

SC will send draft codes via email to group to check, when available.

PS then asked SC how the consultation process would progress. She said the consultation ended at the end of March and she would be creating a report which she planned to share for comment before it was released officially.

She said there would still be time to meet and discuss the results of the consultation and if necessary to meet the members of the SEDHRP before any final decisions were reached.

The meeting closed at 12.20pm.



Map 2: Proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone on the Exe Estuary

- Key
- Exmouth Local Nature Reserve - Statutory
  - Water Ski Area - Statutory
  - Power Boat Area - Statutory
  - Proposed Voluntary Exclusion Zone (1 Sep - 31 Mar)

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## **Summary of Proposed Suggestions from EPBSC Meeting**

- SC to explore with Harbour Authority whether the waterski area (1097m by 622m) can be extended north some 700m by 700m, stretching from around 21 buoy up the estuary towards Starcross (ending before any moorings and to the east of the channel) and that the VEZ should take up some of the current statutory ski area to the east up to the high water mark in return for that extension.  
RYA will consult with Starcross Yacht Club which sometimes used that area for sailing events, although power would give way to sail.
- It was proposed by the club that during the September to December exclusion time the powerboat area should only be allowed for use by water-based activities. The zone would preclude anyone using the area for non-water-based recreational purposes such as dog walking, etc.