

Minutes of the 104th Fleet Study Group Meeting

27th April 2012

Present: Ed Harland, John Dadds, Alan Holiday, Jonathan Cox , Emma Rance, Kevin Donnelly, John Bass, Angela Scott

Apologies: Denis Brunsdon, Steve Feist, Don Moxon, Richard Edmonds, Emily Browne, Nick Owen, Steve Hales, Sue Eden and Rachel Waldock

Minutes of 103rd Meeting – Angela Scott said that she had sent her apologies to the 103rd meeting

Matters arising

- Role of Olympics EEC – it is still unclear as to what is happening
- Fleet Archive - to be discussed later
- Fleet Field Day – to be discussed later

Reports from Groups

1. DCF - there have been no meetings since the last FSG meeting. There is no meeting in May but there is a conference on the C-SCOPE project planned in Poole on June 14th 2012
2. PHCC - the last meeting was on 6th March 2012. SW was not present at the FSG meeting to report back. Ed Harland expressed concern about the amount of underwater noise that may come from all the accompanying boats in the harbour during the Olympics. He reported a *Navigational Incident* in Portland Harbour when a fishing boat and a frigate had nearly collided in the harbour entrance. He also reported that there were a few *Tidal Works* applications and that the *Waste and Environmental Plan* was not yet complete. The next meeting is 13th June 2012.
3. Dorset Marine and Coastal Biodiversity Group – Emma Rance said that attendance at the meetings had dropped and they were now looking to a system of only holding a meeting when there was something specific to discuss.
4. Wild about Weymouth and Portland – Ed reported that there is a new walking trail as part of the Olympics. It links Lorton Meadows to Portland. Anyone with a smart phone, will be able to get interpretation information by scanning a QR code..

There were no further reports

Jurassic Coast Annual Seminar

Ed Harland reported that he had attended this seminar which was held in December 2011. The speakers were Tim Badman (IUCN), Doug Hillier (NE) and Tim Smit (Eden Project, MEMO

Project). He said that it was an interesting seminar and that Tim Smit was an outstanding speaker

Research Reports

Jonathan Cox gave a report on the small mammals on Chesil Beach. He reported that of 10 traps set on the Bio Blitz Day last year, 9 contained wood mice. In addition, on a walk around the beach out from Abbotsbury in March, he had found a nest with numerous seeds of several varieties which appeared to be feeding remains (there were >500 sea campion seeds). It was unclear as to where some hazel nut shells in the nest had come from. Other seeds from plants such as curled dock and sloes were found under debris on the beach. Ed Harland suggested that live traps be put down in the Black Hut as there was evidence of damage being done to wires and other equipment.

There were no further research reports but the following points were raised:

- John Dadds said that there was a group of micropalaeontologists from Birmingham University meeting on Chesil Beach at Moonfleet the next day, to look for microfossils
- Malcolm Story was wanting to do a species survey on the Fleet but he was limited by the fact that he had no licence to collect rare animals
- Jonathan Cox said that he would be working with Don Moxon to collate all the records of small mammals on Chesil Beach
- John Bass reported that after the BioBlitz, the Fleet had become murky with an algal bloom which continued in the Upper Fleet into the autumn. It was not known what effect this bloom had had on fish and shellfish populations, though it had been noted that no mergansers had been seen through the winter on the Fleet. There was still some remnants of the bloom left in the spring

Field Day

Ed Harland reminded the meeting of the area that had been studied last year and showed the proposed area for study this year – a square around Butterstreet Cove.

- Due to the problems with the firing range (it is not possible to get advance info about whether the range will be open or closed), the area at Chickerell Hythe, to the left of the range, was thought to be more suitable for the base for the day
- Negotiations with the landowners are already underway
- There is no fixed shelter there, so a gazebo or tent will need to be erected for the day
- Up to 4 boats may be available
- The need or not for a MMO protected species licence was discussed but the situation was not clearly understood – EH said he would approach Christine Singfield at NE. (Post meeting note: RW has agreed to do this)

- The date of the field day was discussed and left at 1st June as no agreement could be reached on a more suitable date
- EH requested that any individuals/groups taking part should provide him with a work plan to include a list of tasks
- EH said DM would sort out access arrangements but as the area is more public than last year's, more care will be needed with equipment on the day

Fleet Archive

Ed Harland gave a report on the progress, so far, and what still needs doing. The aim of the project is to make as much of the material as possible available on the FSG website.

Progress so far:

- An excel spreadsheet has now been transcribed into Endnote format
- 50 + additional reports have been included in the database
- A full listing is available but there are many vague entries

What needs doing?

- vague entries – these need to be looked at and expanded where appropriate
- site visits need to be made to assess the relevance of material, before being scanned in – specialists in various fields would need to do this – Alan Holiday agreed to start his area soon
- a decision needs to be made on what to include – any ref to Chesil Beach and/or the Fleet or only work that is based on these areas?
- a decision needs to be made on the need for both a hard copy archive as well as an electronic version

Next steps?

- Any material not already scanned into an electronic form should be done as a priority, in case it is lost
- Copyright on docs will need to be individually checked before they are put on the website
- As many docs as possible should be made available on the website – there was much discussion on the format that should be used but no decision was reached. More innovative ideas are needed from experts in the area
- At John Dadds request, Ed Harland agreed to look for funding to help with the scanning of material

AOB

1. Emma Rance told the meeting about a website that DWT is building – Great Dorset Seafood. It will be looking at different species and ways of improving the environment for fisheries
2. John Bass reported that LB had been looking for a copy of the Falconer Report on algal blooms. Falconer had agreed to provide her with a copy himself which could then be included in the Archive
3. Ed Harland suggested that the group elected a Deputy Chairman who could stand in for him when he was absent – to be decided at the next meeting
4. Date for the next meeting was set for 20th July 2012. Ed Harland said he would ask if it could be held at the new Chesil Beach Centre

Meeting finished at 15.40

Angela Scott

30th April 2012