

Minutes of the 105th Fleet Study Group Meeting

20th July 2012

Present: Ed Harland, Don Moxon, Rachel Waldock, John Dadds, Lynn Baldock, Alan Holiday, Jonathan Cox , Kevin Donnelly, John Bass, Angela Scott

Apologies: Richard Edmonds, Sandie Wilson , Christine Singfield (NE) , Sue Eden

Minutes of 104th Meeting – Accepted. These were the fastest ever to be produced for the FSG!

Matters arising

- Role of Olympics EEC - RW to update the meeting later
- Fleet Archive - EH to update meeting later
- LB commented that there were problems with accessing the proceedings of the 100th FSG meeting from the website. EH said that some of the files had been corrupted and lost – to be sorted

Reports from Groups

1. DCF - There had been no meeting since the last FSG meeting and nobody had gone to the conference in Poole on June 14th 2012
2. PHCC - the last meeting was on 12th June 2012.
 - EH reported that that there was a useful pamphlet to buy containing all the information about the timing of races, moorings etc, related to the Olympics
 - The Olympic Rings had been erected in the harbour, just off the slipway. It was not known if they had had an environmental impact, but they were outside the SAC area
 - The bad weather had caused a few problems recently with vessels coming off their moorings – unsurprising considering conditions
 - Manor Marine have applied for planning permission for a new slipway as they had been awarded a big new contract
 - The Waste Management Plan had gone to MSA for approval
3. Wild about Weymouth and Portland – EH reported that the new walking trail constructed as part of the Olympics had full planning permission. It links Lorton Meadows to Portland

Research Reports

There were no reports from any meetings

1. **Flooding** - Don reported that as well as devastation to property, there was evidence that the recent floods were the cause of landslips on the Fleet. Between Abbotsbury and East Bexington, where there are drainage ditches, the torrents of water have caused gullies, 50m wide x 50m long x 2m deep, in several places
2. **Water levels** – Alan reported that following the heavy rains, the meres behind Chesil Beach had been very full of water, so it was likely that there had been considerable damage to wild life
3. **Water temperatures** – Ed reported that the average water temperature at the black hut had been lower than at any time in the last 5 years. This was also true of the data from the Bowleaze Cove buoy

Field Day

- The FSG Field Day was held on the 1st June 2012, near Charlestown. It was mobilised from Chickerell Hive Point
- The weather was good but it was less well attended than before as several people had other commitments - 10 people attended

The following reports were received:

Fleet Shore Survey – AH

Alan reported that he had carried out a geological survey over a number of days in June as he had been unable to attend the Field Day. The area surveyed was all Jurassic and so approx. 155 million years old

- **Cornbrash** – rubbly limestone within the JC – shows good honeycomb weathering with occasional fossils. A fossilised sponge was found
- **Kellaways formation** – next stage in succession - very little was found
- **Oxford Clay** – next stage in succession – it varied from soft clay to fossil shale. Well preserved fossils were found in the shale; a number of septarian nodules were found in the clay
- **Shore** – quite a few fossils were found on the shore, including lots of belemnites, along with gypsum crystals and debris left by humans! A number of ammonites were found in Tidmor Cove

Plankton Trapping at Chickerell Hive – JB

John reported that that the traps had been put out the day before the Field Day and left out for 8 – 10 hours. Very little was found compared to last year but it was possible that the torch had turned off when the trap was put in

Search for Folins lagoon snail – LB

Lynn reported that the walk had been carried out on the Chesil beach side of the Fleet. There was no evidence of the springs which are a suitable habitat for the snails.

Centipedes and *Amphipods* were present but *Lasaea rubra* and *Caecum armoricum* were absent

There were signs of damage from bikes and lots of dead *sedum* – possibly due to cold winters

Small mammal trapping and vegetation survey – JC

Jonathan Cox reported the following observations:

- 4 traps were set - 3 *mice* and 1 *shrew* were caught
- Feeding remains were found between beach debris – it was unsure where the hazelnuts in the centre of the remains had come from
- Evidence of rabbit burrows were found
- In the vegetation opposite the Moonfleet Hotel, there was lots of *sea kale*, *beet* and *poppies*
- JC suggested that the dieback in the *sedum* might be due to *moth* damage rather than cold as he had seen the same thing in Norfolk. However, no conclusions could be drawn as the plants might have different resistance to cold in different areas

Underwater camera studies – EH

Ed reported that he had put the underwater camera in the same channel as the plankton trap. There was little to report due to poor underwater visibility apart from the presence of lots of bubble around the camera later in the morning - possibly due to photosynthesis.

Chesil Beach Website

Ed emphasised the need to get the reports from 2011 and 2012 on the website. There was then a discussion on what the FSG wants from the website in the future. It was decided that the dates of various activities for the public would be transferred to the DWT site which would have a link for the Fleet on their site.

Don thought that it was important that the Reserve/Chesil Beach maintains its own website and that the FSG should concentrate on their research on their site, with DWT to have all

the activities on their site. Don also thought that it would be a good idea to dissociate the FSG site from the Reserve/Chesil Beach site. Ed agreed but said it would cost money for the FSG to buy their own domain webpage. At the moment, it is a link on the Reserve/Chesil Beach site.

Rachel suggested seeking advice from other people on the best way forward. Ed asked all members of the FSG to look at the website and report back to him with suggestions for the way forwards

Ed said that the FSG is archived by the British Library, so it is an important research link for people working on the Fleet. The geology section is light, so any contributions to that area would be welcomed.

The following points summarise the discussion on the website

- There is a need to remove most of the Visitors Centre section (activities etc) and refer users to the DWT website
- There is a need to differentiate the Reserve from DWT-run Visitors Centre so visitors know who they should contact
- We have a golden opportunity to revamp the website, so ideas are welcomed

Fleet Archive

There has been no progress since the last meeting

AOB

- John Dadds reported that despite the dreadful weather, 9 little terns had fledged and there were 21 pairs, double what there was 3 years ago
- RW reported that the rules and regulations around visiting craft and changes in the area for the Olympics have ensured that water quality has been maintained with minimum impact on the environment
- RW also reported that all the information from NE on the Marine Conservation Zone had gone to DEFRA
- Don expressed serious concerns about the impact of the Coastal Access Policy on the Chesil Beach and the Fleet. He said that occasional walkers would not create a problem, but large groups, such as people training on shingle, would be disastrous for the area. The views of the FSG had already been submitted to the committee on Open Access. Rachel said she would try and get Neil Constable (NE) – lead on Open Access, to come and address the FSG in November – suggested date November 23rd

2012. She would check his availability and the date of the next meeting could be adjusted according to when he could come

The Meeting closed at 16.35

Date of next meeting: November 23rd 2012 (provisional)

Angela Scott

20th July 2012