

Minutes of the 108th Fleet Study Group Meeting

19th July 2013

Present: Ed Harland, Don Moxon, Rachel Waldox, John Dadds, Steve Feist, Jonathan Cox, Alan Holiday, Geoff Poole, Angela Scott, Lowrie Evans (IFCA), Debbie Turner (Portland Port), Ruth Carpenter (NE)

Apologies: John Bass, Lynn Baldock, Sue Eden, Richard Edmonds, Charlotte Bolton, Nick Owen, Stephanie Ashman

Minutes of the 107th Meeting – accepted

Matters arising: will be covered in the meeting

Reports from groups:

- **DCF:** a seminar on Navitus Bay Wind park was held on 6th June 2013. A full environmental statement is due in September. Early information suggests that parts of the EIA may be flawed, particularly with regard to the underwater noise aspects. Ed had attended the meeting and said that it was hard to get questions in – most answered questions were from councillors. The next DCF meeting is being held jointly with the Blue Marine Foundation and has got some good invited speakers. The meeting topic is 'Managing Marine Protected Areas' - £75/ticket. It will be held on the 18th September at WPNSA.
- **PHCC:** Held on 4th June 2013. Ed Harland was unable to attend but has a copy of the minutes. He noted that CCTV has been installed at Ferrybridge to allow remote monitoring of activities in the area. There is also a problem with unauthorised landings on the breakwater and CCTV coverage may be extended to allow monitoring. The next meeting will be 3rd September 2013.

Research Reports:

- **Malcolm Storey** has produced a list of the invertebrates in the Fleet
- **Bug Life International** have given Don some information on Oil Beetles on the Fleet
- **British Geological Survey** have been carrying out work looking at a stream coming into the Fleet – no results yet
- **Plymouth National Aquarium** are working with the Sea Life Centre in Weymouth looking at eel grass/sea horses. They might be asking for permission to look at the Fleet. They will be asked to liaise with NE and IFCA

Presentations

1. **Lowrie Evans (IFCA)** said that a new byelaw affecting the Fleet was being prepared. Following the main consultation deadline (19th June 2013), the byelaw will come into force in September. The first part of the byelaw covers towed fishing gear and the second part covers hand gathering activities. Lowrie said that there were no exclusions for research projects in the proposed byelaw. SIFCA can give a permit but NE will need to give permission too. (A copy of the byelaw is attached to these minutes)
2. **Don Moxon** showed pictures of some Green Hairweed (*Chaetomorpha*). It is a natural species in the Fleet but impacts on Zostera and everything else in the Fleet. The weed seems to tumble around and pull up Zostera. Transects have been done at Cloud Hill
3. **John Dadd – Little Terns nesting at Ferrybridge** – The fencing has been improved and there has been no problem with foxes. Last year there was a problem with eggs laid on the pebbles as there was a chilling effect due to air circulating through the pebbles. This year, permission was obtained to lay 20 patches of sand. Some were laid on coconut matting to allow easy removal at the end of the nesting season. The patches were utilised quite quickly. ½ the birds chose to nest on the sand. Of the other ½ that nested on pebbles, ½ were left and the other ½ were moved and sand put underneath. 23% eggs laid on pebbles hatched against 88% on sand. So far, all nests on sand have hatched at least some of their eggs. The total number of pairs that nested this year is 25 (up on last year) and as of 19/07/2013, 32 chicks had been raised (up on last year). This year there was fewer 3 egg clutches than last year. NE had given special permission for the sand to be put on Chesil beach and discussions would be needed as to whether the sand could stay in situ over the winter and as to whether it could be used again next year.
The kestrel diversion feeding program has worked well this year.
4. **Steve Feist** (Cefas) outlined a continuing collaboration between the Natural History Museum (NHM) and Cefas Weymouth Laboratory and provided a presentation on the analysis of environmental DNA (eDNA) for the detection of diverse parasite groups in the marine environment. The technique has been applied to samples from diverse locations, including the Fleet at Ferrybridge. Results have demonstrated an unexpected diversity of parasitic organisms including several previously unidentified groups (a scientific publication has been accepted for publication). The current work strives to link these environmental signals to actual infections in a number of invertebrates and this work is on-going. It is planned that the lead scientists from NHM will provide an update on the research at the November meeting of the FSG.

Coastal Access: John Dadds said that the FSG comments on coastal access had been submitted to Neil Constable. He is walking the coast at the moment. More consultation will take place but nothing much is expected to happen before September.

FSG archive: there has been no progress since the last meeting but Rachel and Angela are going to look into it later in the year.

Field Day 2013: It was a very successful day. 23 people took part – mainly from FSG and NE. The boat was unable to get as far as the Moonfleet Hotel due to the low water level. Two teams did a litter survey and the third did a shoreline survey for escaped oysters.

Lynn is analysing the data. The aim of the litter survey was to assess the quantity and types of litter on 4 different areas of Chesil Beach, as well as assessing the potential impact of a litter pick. A report will be produced for FSG to use for further dissemination. Additional transects could be done by a sub group visiting the more remote areas.

AOB

- Geoff Poole – commented on the photo on the last meeting minutes – how the structure seen in the photo was created – by gravity during prolonged periods of easterly wind and very calm conditions with an absence of very destructive waves. He would like to have a 20 minute slot at the next meeting to talk about the formation of the beach.
- Ruth Carpenter – stakeholder consultation on the Fleet diffuse water pollution plan are due to begin. Ruth will provide a link to the website for the plan details.
- Ed Harland – needs Richard Acornley's email address

Next meeting

22nd November Chesil Beach Centre

Angela Scott 03/08/2013