

**Minutes of the 120<sup>th</sup> Fleet Study Group Meeting  
14<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at Abbotsbury**

**Present:** E. Harland, K. Donnelley, I. Jones, S. Feist, N. Owen, L. Baldock, J. Cox, C. Wheeler

**Apologies:** J. Bass, C. Bolton, M. Chavner, R. Carpenter, J. Dadds, M. Doggett, A. Holiday, A. Menzies, D. Moxom, J. Mead, R. Waldock.

**Minutes of the 119<sup>th</sup> meeting:** approved.

**Matters arising:** none

**Reports from representatives**

- **PHCC:** Portland Harbour Oyster Farm Several Order again discussed at some length. Engagement with stake holders seems to have been cursory and meetings cryptically advertised. Safety issues raised regarding other users of the proposed several order area. Project is being pursued by Giles Lawson. Proposal is for mussels, caged oysters, and scallops – last to be harvested by SCUBA divers. Concern expressed regarding reproduction of non-native Pacific oysters. Claimed water temperature does not exceed 20°C. Spat obtained from Dorset and Norway. Natural England amended the proposed several order area to avoid dense populations of the WCA listed Lagoon Worm (*Armandia cirrhosa*). CEFAS has a bio-security involvement.
- **Underwater Curiosity Park** is to go ahead. In association with Portland Port and Harbour Authority 5,000square metres of seabed in Balaclava Bay with permission to sink 25 artefacts to create an exciting, interesting underwater world for divers to explore.
- **Outer Coaling Pier** to be dredged to increase depth. Sediment samples sent for analysis as may contain high levels of heavy metals, hydrocarbons etc.
- **Dorset Coast Forum** – no date for the Oct/Nov meeting. Have launched a film about safety on the Dorset coast “CoastWise” in June. <http://www.safewise.org/thewises/coastwise/>
- **Dorset Coastal Connections** team up and running. Project details are outlined here <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/dorset-coast-forum/coastal-community-team>
- **Channel Coastal Observatory** autumn meeting to be held in Teignmouth. FSG members invited to attend.
- **Natural England** – Maxine Chavner reported on the success of the Little Tern breeding. No business reported for the Technical Advisory Group. Jonathan Cox attended the Fleet Bioblitz based at the Chesil Beach Centre. A list of the flora was compiled and the data sent to Dorset Wildlife Trust (this to be requested for FSG). Some interesting species were noted including Wild Clary.
- **Coastal Access** – no further developments.
- **SIFCA** – Simon Pengelly provided a list of fish species for the last small fish survey. Brill was recorded at Ferrybridge. Bi-annual sampling planned at Langton Herring where Gilt head bream, thin lipped grey mullet, 3-spined stickle back and common goby were reported. No sand smelt were recorded. Assisted by two students from Exeter University.

**Research Reports**

- **Sarah Bagwell, Bournemouth University** – PhD study of metals and PAHs in intertidal sediment at 10 locations in the Fleet. Particular interest is bio-accumulation of these in Ragworm and further up the food chain (eels).
- **Alex Green, University College London, Kings College** London PhD study of carbon stored in sediments beneath seagrass beds at 15 locations including the Fleet. Carbon levels in the Fleet were some of the highest. The reason for this is unclear. Deeper cores (up to 1m) are planned.

- **CEFAS David Bass** – study of the haplosporidean parasites of polychaete worms. E-DNA analysis for these pathogens revealed a huge previously unappreciated diversity.
- **Iwan Jones** Queen Mary College University of London in the process of putting together a grant application for European funding for a four year project. Invited to provide a full project costing having completed phase 1. **Title: Management of rural diffuse pollution in transitional waters.** Seven catchments included in the project, the Fleet among them. Criticism of initial outline application was that the project was too research focussed, with a need to include more end users of the project deliverables. FSG invited to contribute to the project. Funds potentially available: 69% intervention rate, +10% overheads including volunteers at 79% of minimum wage. Arrangement for site access to the Fleet seen to be important as well as possible assistance with sample collection. Application deadline: autumn 2017/winter 2018.
- **Lin Baldock** reported on the installation of temperature loggers in shingle springs at Langton Hive to run alongside the water depth and salinity loggers maintained by CSI. The discovery of new species to the UK in the Fleet: a mite by Steve Trehwella (*Zygoribatula excavata*) for which most records are from the Mediterranean, and a marine red alga by Professor Chris Maggs (*Lophosiphonia obscura*) which occurs in abundance at Wyke Regis at the end of Camp Road and in Portland Harbour. Other rare taxa included a spring tail *Axelsonia littoralis* and a pseudo scorpion (Steve Trehwella) and two more red algae *Lophosiphonia reptabunda* and *Vertebrata furcellata* (Prof Chris Maggs).

**David Seaward Archive** – Lin Baldock collected some boxes from Paul Seaward containing miscellaneous information and photographs from the Fleet. The photographs of the building of the new Ferrybridge in the early 1980s may be of particular interest and these will be scanned over the winter and made available to the archive.

**Wadeway Survey** – proposed date is 15 Sept 2017. Ed Harland and Don Moxom had produced a beach profile using laser theodolites and targets. Results showed that more data points are required for a detailed profile. Propose to use this instrumentation during the survey.

Outline plan: bathymetric survey, geological/archaeological/biological survey of adjacent shorelines, drone aerial photography. Establish current beach profile at the site mapping strandline and vegetation location and type.

**Litter Survey** – what effect did the over wash from the storm on 2/3 Feb 2017 have? Possible visit early August.

#### **AOB**

- **S. Feist** suggested it would be useful to have at least metadata for all known Fleet data sets.
- **An electric cable** supplying Portland was repaired in March 2017. This involved driving heavy diggers over a large area of the beach. There is a proposal to install a new cable and remove the old one. FSG members felt removal would be highly disruptive and suggested that another alternative should be found. Route for the new cable is yet to be finalised (NE – Ruth Carpenter involved).
- **Jonathan Cox** drew attention to the article recently published in British Wildlife: *Classic Wildlife Sites Chesil Beach and the Fleet*. Cox, J, Moxom, D, Baldock, L. & Bass, J. (2017) **28** (4) 256-2665.

#### **Future Meetings & Venues**

24<sup>th</sup> November 2017 – Chesil Beach Centre

16<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – venue tbc

The meeting closed at 16:00