

Minutes of the 127th Fleet study Group meeting held on 7th November 2019 at the Ilchester Estates Office, Abbotsbury.

Present: E. Harland (chair), D. Moxom, J. Bass, M. Chavner, R. De Leij, R. Waldock, A. Thomas, J. Cox, C. Bolton, L. Baldock, F. Cox, A. Powell, A. Holiday, A. Hughes, M. Ditanji-Rapkova, M. Doggett.

Apologies, J. Dadds, S. Hales, S. Pengelly, C. Wheeler, M. Kativa-Smith. E. Rance, N. Owen.

Minutes of the 126th meeting: Approved.

Matters arising: none

Meetings attended:

PHCC:- The meeting due to be held on 5/9/19/was cancelled. Details of Portland Port's Environment and Compliance can be found at <https://www.portlandport.co.uk/environment+and+compliance>

DCF: – The Annual meeting is to be held on 21st November 2019. Details can be found at <https://www.dorsetcoast.com/posts/dorset-coast-forum-annualmeeting-2019/> - Steph Ashman (NE) will be attending.

Research on Chesil Beach and the Fleet: None reported.

FSG website and discussion group: The old FSG website is being used to host the last Field Day results. The new FSG website is still being worked on but may be delayed until completion of the re-write of the Chesil website. We are still looking for a long-term solution for a web-based data repository for the FSG archive. If anyone can offer a solution then please contact the chairman.

The Discussion Group has been implemented at fleetstudygroup@groups.io 21 people have moved to the discussion group – anyone can post and a small file repository (10mb) is available.

Chesil website: A complete rewrite is being undertaken. The A-Z pages have been updated. A new style for pages is needed. The old site was written in Dreamweaver – now very expensive. Word Press and WIX being looked at.

FSG Field Day 2019:

The aim this year was to re-visit as many of the surveyed points along the Fleet and Chesil Beach as possible. These sites were surveyed by Portsmouth University in 2005. After 14 years and several major storms it is useful to check on their condition. A protocol to follow when visiting the sites was devised and tested on CB14

(Moonfleet) and CB27 (Black Hut). CB00 to CB12 in the Upper Fleet were visited in September by three groups of FSG members, each visiting four points. A report has now been written for each point and these are available from the FSG website: www.chesilbeach.org/FSG/refpnts/

In addition, CB27, 28 and 29 at Ferrybridge have also been visited and reports are available for these points. A summary report is in preparation and will appear on the website on completion. Over the coming months it is hoped to visit more points in the lower and mid Fleet and also the FL and AS points. Some will have to wait until next year.

Ideas for the 2020 field day were requested. The default will be to revisit more reference points and the litter site. Planning needs to be done now.

Reserve update: Charlie Wheeler was unable to attend the meeting but passed the message that there were no immediate major issues.

Storm November 2019 – Ed Harland: Ed gave a brief presentation on a storm that hit Chesil Beach on 2nd November 2019. The slides can be found at the end of these minutes.

Alan Holiday gave a brief presentation on the monitoring of Chesil Cove since the last major storm in 2014.

Lagoon sandworm, *Armandia cirrhosa*, survey – Rebecca De Leij: *Armandia cirrhosa* has been found at the original sites in Portland Harbour surveyed twenty years ago and also at a new site in Pirates Cove. *A. cirrhosa* is a lagoon sandworm a few mm in length. eDNA sampling is being looked at for future work. Some animals may be re-located from Portland to their other known site in Hampshire. A link to the report was requested and a copy for the FSG archive.

Holywell Spring – Don Moxom: Don Moxom gave a presentation on two cottages bordering the West Fleet at Cloud's Hill and the adjacent Holywell Spring. It was surmised that the reason for their construction by the Ilchester Estates in this location was primarily to house estate keepers whose job was to prevent the Swannery and duck decoy being impacted by trespassers and poachers approaching from the East Fleet in boats. The ponding of the spring almost certainly predated the cottages and may well have been so in monastic times. Data from censuses established the link between the workers living in the cottages and those at the Swannery. At some time, the swan rearing pens were erected below the spring, the flow of freshwater providing the birds with their feeding and drinking needs. It was suggested that the cottages were built in the early 19th century when swan numbers on the Fleet were at their lowest and in need of increased protection. The cottages were damaged in WW11 and gradually deteriorated. Though the situation for the inhabitants was idyllic in many ways, families latterly felt socially isolated and

vulnerable. The cottages were demolished in 1980's, but have since been replaced by a hut that acts as a wardening and research base.

Monitoring the Fleet in the Langton Hive area – John Bass: Water temperature logging is ongoing with the work linked to the distribution of *Caecum amoricum*. Jon's slides are enclosed at the end of these minutes.

Drone monitoring – Mat Doggett: monitoring of the area where seagrass dieback was noticed in 2016 has continued. Matt presented two slides from a recent survey and commented that there has been an improvement has been seen since 2016.

AOB: Ruth Carpenter is leaving Natural England.

DM gave an update on the Geoff Poole Archive. Three charity trustees are undertaking the work to establish an archive of his material and for it to be made available for public benefit. These trustees are Stephen Grady, Corinna Viliou and Em Parkinson. They have now established a legal trust called "The Geoffrey Poole Archive", which is set up for educational and public benefit.

They have been working this year on undertaking essential maintenance of the location of the archive to ensure this is safe and secure and establishing an initial 5 year plan of activities to bring the archive to the attention of the interested users and the wider public. The vision is to make this a 'working archive' and to allow access to it by request. They are currently looking at the most appropriate way to deal with the Chesil papers and photographs.

Once they are up and running more in 2020, they will look at how to work with colleagues/friends in the Fleet Study Group, the Dorset History Centre and others who Geoffrey knew and respected. They will look to bring in 'trust associates' to help with particular areas of work, based on the need and their expertise (and enthusiasm!). At present it is planned to be an independent archive, but linked to and integrated with other local archives, as and when it is appropriate.

The trustees would be very pleased to maintain regular contact with the Fleet Study Group as they get Geoffrey's work catalogued, ordered and made available in many forms. They would also be happy to discuss any urgent priorities from FSG members where the trust may be able to help. They are not quite at the stage to allow access to materials yet, whilst they secure and order the archive. There will be an associated website to help communicate the aims of the trust and start building the vision externally.

Dennis Brunsten will be giving a talk on Chesil Beach at Eype on November 14th.

AH – DIGS have been given permission to undertake work at Crook Hill Brick Pit SSSI to re-expose the rock face – hoped to make more accessible for study.

MD-J - Cefas is willing to flag any funded areas suitable for co-working. The Fleet and Swannery Trust could act as a location for FSG funding.

MD – The DWT website pages on marine protected areas needs photos of the Fleet Lagoon protected species. The site is not live yet.

Future meetings and venues:

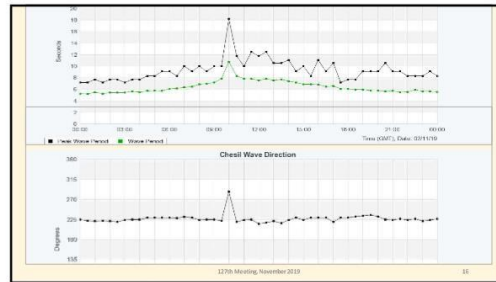
19 March 2020 – Portland Port

16 July 2020 – Abbotsbury?

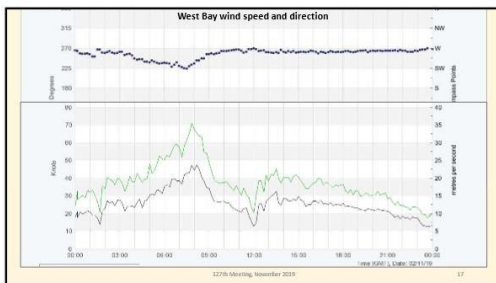
Storm on Chesil Beach, 2nd November 2019. Ed Harland



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Storm 2nd November 2019

- Wind at Portland Bill peaked at 77 mph
- No over-topping at Ferrybridge
- No cann activity at Ferrybridge
- Major re-structuring of the seaward slope

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