

Minutes of the Fleet Study Group meeting held on Friday 22 March at DWT, Brooklands, Forston, Dorset

Present: DR Seaward (chair), V Copley (minutes, English Nature), P Dyrinda (Swansea University), M. House (Southampton University), D.Moxom (Ilchester Estate), G. Poole, J. Whittaker (Natural History Museum).

The following new members or representatives were welcomed to the meeting: Dr. Lin Baldock, Prof Denys Brunsden (Dorset Coast Forum), Dr Robert Doe (West Dorset Coastal Research Group; University of Portsmouth), David Parham (Bournemouth University), Maria Pegaroro (Joint Dorset Marine Committee and Dorset Environmental Records Centre).

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Edward Green, David Wheeler, Jean Fitzpatrick, Paddy O'Sullivan, Gordon LePard, Derek Dorsett, Sue Eden, Ken Coombe

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting on 23/11/01 were accepted as a true record.

3. Matters arising

All matters arising were dealt with in the following items.

4. Reports from representatives

MP reported on progress with the marine database – now includes some 800 habitat records and more than 8000 species records. Of particular relevance to the FSG is that DERC are inputting data on coastal vegetated shingle as part of the National Biodiversity Network trial – so any records of this habitat are especially welcome (all members are encouraged to submit any biological records to DERC for entry).

Weymouth Fish Festival will be held on 30 June – aim to promote sustainable fishing and eating local, sustainably managed fish and shellfish. Funding from QinetiQ and EN for information/interpretation material.

Reminder for all to have a look at Dorset literature database at: www.dorsetcoast.com

DB reported on World Heritage Status, now conferred on Dorset and East Devon coast. Publication of the bid document is now underway and an official WHS logo is in preparation. Numbers of visitors to the coast have already been reported as on the increase.

DM reported that the Fleet Management Committee met in February with a good turnout of user groups and other organisations/ individuals. SAC management scheme was published last March. Hanson funding for work by staff and volunteers has come to an end and a new 'Fleet funding partnership' is now being formed with Ilchester Estate, EN, WPBC, WDDC and DCC – funding will be held by the Fleet and Swannery Trust.

5. 4th Symposium proceedings

JW, PD & DRS continue editing submitted papers and discussing them with Journal Editor.

6. Current and recently completed research

PD reported on recent records and observations in the Fleet including the alien Pacific bryozoan *Tricellaria inopinata*, Japanese seaweed *Sargassum muticum* which has

overwintered (now over 6ft long), also eelgrass *Zostera* which has not died back this winter. Ed Harland's temperature monitoring has continued over this period so it would be useful to review the available data in the light of the above observations.

Seismic, sidescan and borehole data for West Bay is now publicly available from WDDC Engineers.

EA water quality monitoring work is continuing.

The report commissioned by EN (Pooley & Bamber 2000) comparing aerial/remote sensing techniques with traditional diver survey techniques to map aquatic vegetation has been submitted to the FSG archive.

DB recommended approaching Alex Coe at Bath Spa University for a set of aerial photographs for the FSG archive. DB/RD agreed to follow this up.

7. Research proposals

WDDC have agreed to survey in the Alan Carr Memorial survey stations. DM and volunteers will fix the points after the tern breeding season. Need to discuss appropriate 'unveiling' at a future meeting.

DP – English Channel History Project/ Bournemouth University – investigating the submerged forests at Charmouth and seabed peat exposures off Abbotsbury to be mapped and dated in conjunction with marine biology students this summer. Some debate as to whether outcrops are actually visible – a local fisherman has provided FSG with a rough map locating exposures. DP would liaise with JW and Alistair Bruce and also LB over investigating the peat exposures she has discovered in the East Fleet.

Next Dorset Coast Forum project is broadscale seabed mapping out to 6 miles to inform management and planning.

West Dorset Geomorphological Research Group have agreed the need to co-ordinate research requirements and collaborate in funding applications. Need to ensure that all information is publicly available. Much discussion on sources of significant funding, who should co-ordinate and availability and dissemination of scientific information. DB and VC to liaise over how to get a research group together. RD to approach BGRG and liaise with PD (biology) and GL (archaeology) and draft a programme for a research meeting by next FSG meeting.

DRS reported on behalf of GL on archaeological investigations of Iron Age hearth used for salt production at Pirate's Cove. Originally built above high water springs 100BC – accurate levelling would give good indication of previous sea levels. DP to take this up with Bournemouth University.

8. Fleet Study Group pamphlet

Original leaflet produced by JFP is now in need of updating. DRS circulated a draft to some members but had no response so will proceed with a final draft for the July meeting.

9. Fleet Study Group website

PD has offered to launch a simple website giving information on the history of the FSG, past and present membership, research interests, links to other websites, topics of special/current interest, archive link to Dorset literature database, origins of Chesil and Fleet, natural resources, geomorphology. Members of the group to provide feedback when up and running. DRS, PD and DM will provide editorial role for website content so all material proposed for site to go through them in the first instance.

10. Future meetings

- 1) 19 July 2002, Abbotsbury. Peter Tinsley of DWT to give a presentation on seabed mapping;
- 2) 22 November 2002, Brooklands. Richard Acornley of EA to present an update on water quality monitoring in the Fleet;
- 3) 21 March 2003, speaker and venue to be confirmed.

11. Any Other Business

- 1) Last call for material to go into FSG archive – documents etc to DRS please.
- 2) PD raised issue of alien Manila clam *Tapes philipinarum*, now believed to have naturalised in Poole Harbour where it is a target species for a very valuable winter fishery. There is a risk that this species could find its way into the Fleet, legally or otherwise, with potentially important consequences for the ecology of the lagoon. Agreed that this issue should be raised at the Joint Dorset Marine Committee (DRS), Chesil and Fleet European marine site steering Group (VC), Poole Harbour Study Group (PD) and Portland Harbour Consultative Committee (VC/DM).

The meeting was followed by a presentation by Lin Baldock (see attached summary).