

FLEET STUDY GROUP

Minutes of the 89th meeting of the Fleet Study Group, held at Weymouth College, Cranford Avenue, Weymouth, on June 8th 2007.

Present: John Whittaker (Chairman), Rachel Waldock (Minutes), Jon Bass, Malcolm Bray, Lin Baldock, David Bucke, Gordon Le Pard, Dennis Seaward, Don Moxom, Geoff Poole, Ed Harland, Kevin Donnelly, Patrick O'Sullivan and Ken Coombe.

Bryan Edwards (DCC) and Steve Feist (CEFAS) were also welcomed to the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence: Jeanne FitzPatrick, Richard Edmonds, Sue Eden and Ben Jones.

2. Notes of Last Meeting: Accepted as a true record.

3. Matters Arising:

West Bexington car park – details of the proposed works to the car park were discussed. Borehole data is to be asked for. Quinetic have cabling placed beneath the existing car park. *redundant*

4. Reports from Representatives:

Dorset Coast Forum. The morning session updated members on current activities effecting the coast and marine environment. This focused on "A Seas Cange"; The Marine Bill White Paper and consultation of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site Management Plan Review. The afternoon session focused on the recent Napoli Incident and a panel of experts was available to discuss with members any lessons learnt. Gorden LePard wished it to be known that he is no longer with the DCF.

Joint Dorset Marine Committee. There was a presentation on Marine Spatial Planning given by Sian Rees of Devon Wildlife Trust, followed by discussion on the Marine Bill White Paper. The Dorset Biodiversity Strategy needs reviewing 5 years on.

5. Unfettered Coastal Access.

Don Moxom outlined the Ilchester Estate's concerns about Natural England's advice to Government on improving access to the English Coast. DEFRA have opened a consultation on this and the Estate will be responding. Closing date for responses is the 11th September. Don was asked to highlight a number of issues for others to add to. The FSG would then consider whether increased access would cause damage to the conservation and scientific interest of the Fleet and perhaps make a formal response. To be discussed further at the next FSG meeting.

6. SMP 2.

The Fleet Study Group has been registered as a stakeholder of the Shoreline Management Plan (by Teignbridge Borough Council). An accompanying letter of information has also been sent by John Whittaker on behalf of the FSG. Don Moxom has also been contacted with regard to registration by the Ilchester Estate.

7. Portland Gas Storage.

Rachel Waldock outlined the project. Ken Coombe has commented on work undertaken on the landslips on Portland and forwarded a reprint of a paper he had co-authored on this topic.

8. FSG Website.

An excellent website on Chesil and the Fleet has been put together by Ed Harland. The FSG has one page at present. WWW.chesilbeach.org – is the site and it is currently hosted by fasthost at a cost of £18 pa. Ed has the software for getting information onto the site. Any docs/info/links to Ed, please. The original information on Peter Dyrinda's website needs to be located if possible. It was hoped a demonstration of the site could be made at the next FSG meeting.

9. Research reports – present and future:

Carr Survey Points – these are not being used by school/college parties, as we had hoped. We need to advertise the fact to colleges and universities that they are there in order to aid their research. Initial requests to use them still need to go via Don Moxom.

Monkswall, Abbotsbury – John Whittaker is looking to take forward research into the origins of the wall by assessing the provenance of the stone (by colleagues at The Natural History Museum). Two random pieces of stone have recently been removed – a course grained stone is probably Forest Marble, a finer-grained one is Portland Stone. Further samples could be looked at from various levels of the wall in a more organised fashion, when archaeological work began in earnest. There would be a report in due course.

Patrick O'Sullivan reported that a paper by Geraint Weber, himself and Paul Brassey entitled "Hindcasting of nutrient loadings from its catchment on a highly valuable coastal lagoon: the example of the Fleet, Dorset, UK, 1866–2004" had recently been published in *Saline Systems* (Volume 2, 29th December 2006); he also kindly distributed reprints. *Saline Systems* is an open-access, on-line journal. A link to it could be added to the website.

Don Moxom reported that a Ringed Plover survey is to be undertaken this summer, and that research at the Swannery on how adult male swans delay moulting to ensure at least one adult can defend offspring is being currently undertaken by Chris Perrins (Oxford).

Bryan Edwards is looking at lichens on Chesil Beach – which have not been looked at since the 1920's. There was a possibility that certain features on the beach (e.g. storm events) could be "aged" using lichenometry (by reference to dated lichens on gravestones). Main area of his survey was opposite Moonfleet Manor.

Hamm Beach – prostrate asparagus population was destroyed when the torpedo factory was built, with only one female plant remaining. Following hand pollination with Cornish pollen, 88 offspring have been created. Twenty are to be reintroduced on Hamm Beach and some on Portland.

Gorden LePard told us of a project to record ships anchors. Heritage White Paper consultation has just ended – intertidal structures will be protected in the future.

10. AOB.

None

11. Presentations: Steve Feist gave a presentation on CEFAS research in Portland Harbour and the Fleet.

This was followed by a visit to the Fleet Study Group Archive in the Weymouth College Library. Dennis Seaward and Geoff Poole outlined the origins of the Archive, its content, and the close relationship with the College Library over the years. Liz Hayman (the Librarian) was thanked for her cooperation and her welcome.

Next meeting and venue:

2.30 p.m., 3rd August 2007, at Slepe Farm, Arne.