

## FLEET STUDY GROUP

Minutes of the 90th meeting of the Fleet Study Group, held at Natural England, Slepe Farm, Arne on August 3rd 2007.

**Present:** John Whittaker (Chairman), Jon Bass, Gordon Le Pard, Don Moxom, Geoff Poole, Ed Harland, Kevin Donnelly, Richard Edmonds, Lorraine Smith (Minutes)

**1. Apologies for Absence:** Rachel Waldock, Malcolm Bray, Lin Baldock, David Buck, Jeanne FitzPatrick, Sue Eden, Patrick O'Sullivan and Dennis Seaward.

**2. Notes of Last Meeting:** In section 3. correct spelling of Qinetiq, and sentence corrected to read, 'QinetiQ have *redundant* cabling.....' Apart from that they were accepted as a true record.

**3. Matters Arising:**

Portland Gas Storage: Richard Edmonds reported that planning application is in and is hoped to be determined in the next few months.

**4. Reports from Representatives:**

**Dorset Coast Forum.** Proposing a seminar: Improved access to Dorset Coast. Dates suggested end August/September. FSG should consider contributing to the seminar.

**5. Unfettered Coastal Access.**

Concerns were raised regarding Defras consultation on proposals to improve coastal access to the English coast. Comments suggested that some restricted access must continue, and that wording such as *open* access or *unfettered* access needs to be clearly defined. John Whittaker suggested a group response. Questionnaire on the Defra website to be completed, including all aspects, and returned to JW at [j.whittaker@nhm.ac.uk](mailto:j.whittaker@nhm.ac.uk) within 2 weeks, who will then send a group response. A letter should be included in addition to the questionnaire.

Don Moxom referred to a presentation on South West Coast Access. Commented that coast path by the sea is not always possible due to safety. DM also commented on the need for sound scientific guidance as to how to control access to Chesil foreshore.

Jon Bass raised concerns over whether Defra are duty-bound to take into account questionnaires/comments.

Richard Edmonds raised concerns regarding mudflats/saltmarshes.

**6. Research reports – present and future:**

Malcolm Bray had the following to report:

- Chesil surveys – MB reported that he is in the process of writing up his Chesil surveys and research from last Autumn/Winter and that he will make the report available when completed, perhaps as a PDF file that can be added to the FSG website.
- Has a few items to forward to Ed Harland to add to the website.
- (near) real time wave data for Chesil, Weymouth Bay and West Beach are now available on the Channel Coastal Observatory website at: [http://www.channelcoast.org/data\\_management/real\\_time\\_data/?link=waves.html](http://www.channelcoast.org/data_management/real_time_data/?link=waves.html) There does not yet appear to be any of the raw data available to download (other than the automatically generated daily, weekly and monthly charts and tables). Appears that aerial photos and LIDAR have been flown and some beach surveys may have been completed. Intention of the South West Regional to place that material on the [www.channelcoast.org](http://www.channelcoast.org) website. There is an informative January 2007 progress update available at the following link: <http://www.sdadcag.org/coastalmonitoring.html>

Richard Edmonds informed the group of an open day at Plymouth University. (West Bay buoys)

Kevin Donnelly – Abbotsbury: core straight down through middle of wall to ascertain whether it is a natural outcrop. John Whittaker to speak to Martin Bates of University of Wales to discuss the feasibility and costing of drilling.

The paper reported by Patrick O’Sullivan at the last meeting, 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” published in *Saline Systems* (Volume 2, 29th December 2006), has now been added to the website.

Survey by Bryan Edwards using lichenometry to age certain features on the beach, as discussed last meeting, is to go ahead.

## 7. AOB.

Don Moxom reported that Michael Ackland from Bridport studies one particular family of flies and is interested to study some of the turf on Chesil.

Don Moxom also wanted it noted that with the help of a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund the Chesil beach centre and reserve will be hosting a number of activities on Portland linking in with Marine Week.

Kevin Donnelly: Abbotsbury – current project finished 31<sup>st</sup> July and are currently applying for new funding in the hope to continue to do more coring.

Richard Edmonds – WHS have not been able to get involved in research although the WH team have some funds to look at/explore what their role can be in research. One suggestion to create a list of possible research projects for MSc students. Can look at management and specific questions that they would like answered.

**8. Presentation:**

Presentation by Ed Harland on the Chesil Beach Website [www.chesilbeach.org](http://www.chesilbeach.org), which is proving to be successful with approximately 180-190 hits per day. A tour around the website demonstrated the range of information available including the FSG page. EH welcomed any suggestions to expand FSG section – can email at [ejharland@chesilbeach.org](mailto:ejharland@chesilbeach.org). If there are any publications people would like included then links to papers or references can be added. Information suggested to be added included: members of FSG, contact details for the group, list of presentations from previous meetings, list of active research projects on the fleet.

Presentation for next meeting: Richard Edmonds suggested a talk by Jeremy Pile from Bournemouth University on the Groundbased LIDAR Scanner.

**Next meeting and venue:**

23rd November 2007 – Abbotsbury.  
March – Weymouth College