

FLEET STUDY GROUP

Minutes of the 95th meeting of the Fleet Study Group, held at the Dorset Wildlife Trust, Brooklands Farm, Dorchester on 20th March 2009.

Present: G. Poole, D. Moxom, S. Eden, E. Harland, R. Waldock, L. Baldock, G. LePard, D. Seaward, P. Tinsley, K. Donnelly, S. Feist, J. Leverick, B. Edwards, J. Cox, K. Coombe, S. Hales.

Apologies for Absence: J. Fitzpatrick, R. Edmonds, P O'Sullivan, J. Bass.

Notes of Last Meeting: Accepted as a true record.

Matters Arising: GPR paper presented yet? – unknown.
The elephant tusk was sold at auction for £300

Reports from Representatives:

Dorset Coast Forum. C-Scope bid has been successful. A coast forum meeting was held in December 2008 – the papers from the meeting are on the DCF website - <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/index.jsp?articleid=390846> . A news letter is e-mailed to all DCF members on a regular basis – this could be forwarded to FSG members – recent news can be found at <http://www.dorsetforyou.com/index.jsp?articleid=361264> .

A litter summit has been organised for 24th April at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy.

Joint Dorset Marine Committee. A meeting was held on the 12th January – the future of the committee was discussed and has yet to be decided. There is the possibility of a scientific group being set up in its place.

Channel Coast Observatory SW. No report.

Jurassic Coast Team. No report

Portland Port Consultative Committee. There is now a new Environmental Manager in post – Sandie Wilson – to be asked to give a presentation on Portland Ports role at a future meeting.

Research reports. Helen Marshal, a researcher from Aberystwyth University working on the genetics of the sea slug *Akera bullata*, has visited the site a couple of times – to be asked to give a presentation in due course.

PhD student is looking at shrimps/prawns in the Fleet.

Dr Tim Gardener (Essex) – would like to work on Chesil Beach looking at the impact of trampling effects on invertebrates in shingle and the possible

implications of the Marine Bill and increased coastal access – could contact Buglife especially re the Scaly Cricket.

Ed Harland showed results of comparisons of temperature in the Fleet (Black Hut area)/Weymouth Bay/West Bay. Five data loggers are now in place along the length of the Fleet. Also would like to do profiles across the Fleet and at the seepage areas. Need to tie up data from inside and outside the Fleet. Salinity monitors would be a good next step.

Dorset C-SCOPE. Details of the C-Scope project can be found at <http://www.cscope.eu/en/>

The Fleet Management Plan. Final draft out for comment – will be on the website soon.

The Fleet shoreline study. DM gave a talk on the current project.

Recent storms on Chesil Beach. Photos were shown of the effects of recent storms (9th Feb) – Don Moxom will put together a document with the photos and a brief narrative with GPs help.

Future of the FSG. Attendance recently has been declining and the questions of how to change this and give a sense of purpose to the group was discussed. Much of the research previously conducted on the Fleet has stopped due to a lack of funds. As a group we cannot fund work but can facilitate areas of research. There is no academic institution associated with the Fleet. KC noted that the cores previously taken were still at Oxford University as a resource. KC to see if there is any interest at the university to look at further.

Ideas for PhD and MSc projects – need to come up with projects of sufficient quality to interest a funding body.

100th meeting - Production of a 'State of the Fleet' report along the lines of the Ecology of Poole Harbour was suggested. Other ideas included an Open Day at Melbury House/Exhibition at Dorchester Museum/Seminar with papers going into the Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archeological Society.

Any other business.

SH – Ringed Plover Walk. 15th year of CES at Abbotsbury.

BE – asparagus on Hamm Beach – 20 plants still alive at the end of last summer – will be rechecked in May. Lichens on Chesil will be looked at in April – at Ferrybridge and Abbotsbury end and at Moonfleet – could present findings at the November meeting.

JL- the EA will be undertaking a water quality review again this year.

Note from JB – still awaiting Eel data from the EA contract.

Future meetings and venues. 17th July 2009 at Slepe Farm.
20th November at Abbotsbury.