



Berwickshire & Northumberland
Marine Nature Partnership

Steering Group Meeting
1pm 10th October 2017
Berwick Harbour Office, Tweed Dock, Berwick upon Tweed

1. Welcome and Introductions

Attendees:

David Feige (Chair)	DF	Northumberland County Council
Nick Brodin	NB	Berwickshire and Northumberland MNP
Neil Robinson	NR	Marine Management Organisation
Aurelie Bohan	AB	Northumberland Wildlife Trust
Catherine Scott	CS	Natural England
Vicky Rae	VR	Northumberland IFCA
Anne Brown	ABr	Scottish Natural Heritage
Gwen Potter	GP	National Trust
Hannah Westoby	HW	Environment Agency

Apologies:

Eamon Murphy	EM	Marine Scotland
Andy Tharme	ATh	Scottish Borders Council
Liz Hall	LH	Scottish Borders Council

DF welcomed everyone and thanked Berwick Harbour Commission for the use of the meeting room and lunch.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The actions from the last Steering Group (August 2016) were reviewed. Over a year has passed since the last meeting and there have been changes in Steering Group membership since then. It was agreed that none of the action points were in urgent need of resolution.

3. Officer Update

NB introduced himself to the group and the new Project Officer for the partnership and gave an update on activity since coming into post on 20th March. He has tried to meet as many of the partners as possible although meetings with some organisations are still outstanding.

A written update was included with the papers for the meeting and NB discussed the highlights of this. A bid to HLF's Resilient Heritage programme has now been written and submitted by NIFCA on

behalf of the partnership. NB thanked NIFCA for agreeing to front the application. Resilient Heritage is HLF's capacity building fund and only pays for internally focused activities within organisations or partnerships (i.e. it does not pay for externally focussed awareness raising work with the public). The bid is for the creation of an online toolkit and for associated training for partnership members. The grant has an eight-week window for decisions and we should know the result by early December. NB believes that even if the HLF application is unsuccessful, the Marine Nature Partnership should progress the creation of the new toolkit.

Due to NB only coming into post at the end of March there was insufficient time to organise a full summer public events programme for this year. A joint event around marine invasive species was held with Capturing Our Coast in early September but attracted only two attendees. A larger events programme will be held next year. NB proposes to focus on events that will facilitate involvement with existing citizen science projects and will be working to develop a beach litter survey project to complement work which will be done by the Northumberland Coast AONB/Coast Care Project. As a minimum the aspiration is to do additional litter surveys in Berwickshire (to ensure that the whole of the BNN EMS is surveyed) but NB also hopes to include sections of beach south of the AONB. Natural England has indicated that funding is available to support this work.

A quarterly news update aimed at partnership members has been initiated. The first edition went out in July and the next is due this month. The update is designed to let partners know of any news, events or publications that they need to be aware of. If anyone has news of any development that they feel would be worth sharing then please let NB know. **Action All to let NB know of any items that they feel should be included in future e-bulletins.**

Traditionally the partnership has had an externally focused e-newsletter call 'Cross-Border Currents' which the public are able to sign up to on the partnership website. The last edition of this newsletter appears to have gone out in May 2016. NB said that his inclination is to discontinue this newsletter as putting it together represented a lot of work for uncertain gain and that any public-facing news stories from the partnership were probably better spread using social media. The view of the Steering Group was sought. There was general agreement about discontinuing the newsletter. CS suggested that one final addition be produced to alert subscribers that we would now be using the partnership's website and Facebook/Twitter accounts for news items. DF asked how many subscribers the existing e-bulletin. [*Note added after meeting:* There are 207 subscribers to Cross-Border Currents. A significant proportion of email addresses are for organisations which are members of the Marine Nature Partnership.]

NB is considering commissioning new pop-banners for the Marine Nature Partnership as he has had a few requests from partners for materials to use at events. The current pop-up banners all have the old EMS branding on them. AB said that pop-up banners tended not to be suitable for outdoor events (or for open foyers) as they blow over easily. NWT has branded flags that they use for outdoor events but did not know off-hand what the cost of these was. **Action AB to let NB have indication of costs for production of flags for use at outdoor events.**

4. Future work programme and priorities

NB explained that he has been reviewing activity during his first six months in post and has identified a number of actions and priorities. NB identified his two highest priorities as:

- a) Development of the online toolkit, including collating or source any content; and

- b) Continued engagement with partnership members to ensure they have the support and the information that they need.

In the longer term, NB also hopes to spend more time on:

- c) Reviewing the data and monitoring needs of the partnership, including any gaps in data availability and how these can be filled
- d) Work with partners on biosecurity and marine INNS.

The Steering Group expressed agreement with the priority outlined.

GP drew attention to a national bid to EU LIFE by the RSPB and National Trust looking at biosecurity on islands. The bid has been submitted but has not yet been determined. The bid includes some awareness raising work with the public and stakeholders.

CS and HW are currently seeking funding from within Natural England and Environment Agency to undertake monitoring for marine invasive.

5. Annual Management Group Meeting

The Annual Management Group meeting will be held on Tuesday 5th December at Berwick WorkSpace. NB expressed the hope that the venue would be accessible by members from both England and Scotland, while also being close to public transport links.

The December meeting will be Tom Cadwallender's last as Partnership Chair. The Steering Group expressed their thanks to Tom for all of his work on behalf of the Marine Nature Partnership. NB will email the partnership members in the next week to invite nominations for a new Chair. A few names have been suggested for the role and NB will sound these out to see if they would be prepared to have their names put forward. Any additional suggestions for suitable candidates should be sent to NB **Action All to think about suitable candidates to approach about nomination as Partnership Chair and let NB know of any names.**

NB invited thoughts from the Steering Group about the format of the meeting and what they would find most useful. DF mentioned that at previous meetings there had been a good response to presentations from partners describing their work in more detail and saying how the protected sites on the coast influenced their work. HW suggested that the proposed development of the online toolkit might be a useful development to give a presentation on. **Action All to provide any feedback to NB with any views about what they think would work well at the annual Management Group meeting.**

6. Updates from Partners

Natural England: CS reported that she had secured money from Natural England's SSSI improvement budget for the partnership. This will be used to contribute towards the costs of the new online toolkit and the development of a beach litter survey project. CS asked NB to provide Gant Charts for the delivery of these. **Action: NB to provide CS with Gant Charts showing propose delivery of the online toolkit and beach litter survey project.**

Natural England has also been carrying out condition assessments of the Tweed Estuary and has been working with NIFCA on their Article 6 reporting. A bid for a Marine Strategy Indicators Project has been developed with Newcastle University and will be submitted for EMFF funding in January.

NIFCA: Annual cycle of fish surveys of the Aln Estuary MCZ are now complete and the report on this will be available by the end of the year. The report from the annual survey of the mussel beds on Fenham Flats is now available on the NIFCA website.

Habs. Regs. Assessments have now been agreed with Natural England. The assessments for the new Northumberland Marine SPA will start next year. Assessments of the impacts of bait digging on the Coquet to St Mary's MCZ will commence soon.

An Emergency Bylaw has been put in place for berried lobsters

<http://www.nifca.gov.uk/emergency-byelaw/>

MMO: NR reported that understanding the implications of Brexit is high on MMO priorities at present.

NR also brought the group's attention to the Government's Blue Belt Project which aims to improve management of waters in British Overseas Territories.

New measures on berried lobster may cause enforcement issues as the local MMO currently do not have access to any vessels which can carry out checks outside of the 6 mile limit.

Measure brought in to protect the prawn fisheries of the Farnes Deeps MCZ in 2016 are being extended into this year.

A new Marine Planner for the North East has been appointed and will start work in January.

Northumberland Wildlife Trust: AB reported that her activity at present was focused on producing funding bids to pay for future work and on developing a strategic view on what marine activities the Wildlife Trust will be involved with.

Environment Agency: The Budle Bay nutrient project is ongoing. This is trying to understand the sources of the nutrients affecting the mud and sand flats at Budle Bay and Holy Island and to gather evidence that can be used to make management changes. Modelling will be used to identify the relative contribution of the different water courses to nutrient load. There is also a proposal to use a drone to accurately map the extents of eelgrass and mat algae at Budle Bay. DF asked if HW would liaise with him over the work as the findings are likely to be useful to the County Council when producing the local plan. **Action: Environment Agency to liaise with DF over the Budle Bay nutrient study.**

HW reported that Phil Wilson is now on secondment to the Forestry Commission so any correspondence on marine matters should be sent to her. Zahra Ravenscroft will return from maternity leave soon and Laura Corrigan will return next year.

Scottish Natural Heritage: ABr reported that Richard Kehoe is currently on secondment to another role in SNH. This will last at least 6-months. ABr is currently getting up to speed with marine work within Berwickshire and meeting with the various partners.

NB mentioned that The Scottish Government are currently consulting on a review to their National Marine Plan, which the closing dates for comments on is 20th October, and that the Scottish Borders Local Biodiversity Action Plan is currently being updated. Details of the National Marine Plan Review can be found at <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/marine-scotland/0e467ba0>

National Trust: GP reported that the National Trust is currently processing bird breeding data from Farnes for this year. Initial results look very positive. The Trust carries out annual monitoring of seals on the Farnes. The methodology involves surveyors entering into the colony, which is both potentially disturbing to the seals and potentially dangerous for the surveyors. This year the National

Trust will be trialling the use of drones to monitor seals in parallel with the traditional method. A Newcastle University student will be studying the response of the seals to the two different methods.

The RSPB have been running a Citizen Science project in which the public were invited to submit photographs of puffins carrying fish so that more data could be collected on food provisioning by the species. GP reported that a high proportion of photos submitted had come from visitors to the Farne Islands.

A Vegetation Management Plan is being produced. As part of this GP is looking for evidence about how herbicides break down in the coastal environment. DF said that the AONB had part-funded a recent study by Newcastle University on the breakdown of glyphosate on the sand dunes at Holy Island which he can forward. **Action: DF to forward report from Lindisfarne glyphosate study to GP.**

Experiments have been carried out on Coquet Island on the use of laser hazing to deter large gulls from predated tern species. The use of laser hazing will be tried at Long Nanny next year.

Northumberland County Council: DF is currently considering the most effective way of carrying out the Review of Consents required for the newly designated Northumberland Marine SPA as this is potentially a big job.

The Coast Care Project (a partnership between the Northumberland Coast AONB, NWT, and Seahouses Development Trust) has been successful in obtaining funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The project aims to develop a culture of volunteering on the Northumberland coast. It employs three members of staff and has funding for three and a half years. 126 people signed up as volunteers within the first 6-weeks of the project.

7. MoU

NB reported that 14 of members have now signed the MoU, leaving 13 remaining. No concerns or objections have been received from those who have not signed. NB will continue to chase up signing of the MoU. **Action NB to continue to chase up signing of the partnership MoU.**

8. Funding

NB provided a brief update on funding. All but one of the funding partners have now been invoiced for their contributions or have had invoices raised. Income for this financial year is sufficient to cover the costs of the Project Officer.

9. AOB

GP mentioned that there were actions for the National Trust in the EMS Management Scheme relating monitoring the impacts of boat landings but that there are questions about the capacity needed to do this. In particular, she is interested in any information about the interaction between cetaceans and boats. CS offered to talk to GP about this outside of the meeting.

GP asked if there was any further information available about a pollution incident on the Long Nanny Burn that was reported to have taken place last week. HW said that her team had not been asked by colleagues to investigate the incident so assumed that the impacts were limited.

GP also asked about fish survey information for the Northumberland coast and how this can be accessed. VR said that all NIFCA survey information is available in the report section of their website <http://www.nifca.gov.uk/downloads/>

HW reported that TraC [Transitional and Coastal waters] fish counts on the Tweed had completed two weeks ago. This monitoring is done in Spring and Autumn with data available on the EA website.

NB asked for any feedback from the Steering Group about how the meeting had gone and whether there are any improvements or changes to format that could be made. **Action all to let NB have any thoughts about changes or improvements they would like to see made to future Steering Group meetings.**

Traditionally Steering Group meetings have been held in February, May and August, with a full Management Group meeting in December. NB will try to hold future Steering Group meetings to this cycle and will send round a Doodle poll to canvass for dates for a February 2018 meeting. **Action NB to canvass for dates for a Steering Group meeting in February 2018.**

Table of actions

Action	Who	Status
Let NB know of any items that they feel should be included in future e-bulletins.	All	
Let NB have indication of costs for production of flags for use at outdoor events	AB	Complete
Think about suitable candidates to approach about nomination as Partnership Chair and let NB know of any names	All	Complete
Provide any feedback to NB with any views about what they think would work well at the annual Management Group meeting.	All	Complete
Provide CS with Gant Charts showing propose delivery of the online toolkit and beach litter survey project.	NB	Complete
Environment Agency to liaise with DF over the Budle Bay nutrient study.	HW	
Forward report from Lindisfarne glyphosate study to GP	DF	
Continue to chase up signing of the partnership MoU	NB	Ongoing
Let NB have any thoughts about changes or improvements they would like to see made to future Steering Group meetings	All	
Canvass for dates for a Steering Group meeting in February 2018	NB	Complete