



Berwickshire & Northumberland
Marine Nature Partnership

Steering Group Meeting 10.30am 23rd March 2021 Virtual meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions

Attendees:

Alex Aitken	AA	Northumberland IFCA
Andy Tharme	AT	Scottish Borders Council
Nick Brodin	NB	Berwickshire and Northumberland MNP
David Feige (Chair)	DF	Northumberland County Council
Gwen Potter	GP	National Trust
Hannah Westoby	HW	Environment Agency
Catherine Scott	CS	Natural England

Apologies:

Anne Brown	AB	NatureScot
Malcolm Fraser	MF	NatureScot

2. Minutes of last meeting

The actions from the last Steering Group in July 2020 were reviewed. Progress with action points is summarised in the table below.

Action	Who	Status
Let NB know of any potential sites which it would be useful to include within the CoastSnap project	All	Ongoing – NB has followed up directly with people
Any additional volunteers to form part of the sound board group for the proposed communications document contact NB	All	Ongoing – no additional volunteers

[AA, BH, Cs and GP expressed an interest during the meeting]		
Let NB know of any topics or issues that you would like to see made the subject of a presentation on at the Annual Meeting	All	Complete
DF to discuss inclusion of marine within Local Nature Recovery Pilot with NB	DF	Complete

3. Partnership Officer Update

A written update was provided with the papers for the meeting.

NB has started to look at an update of the Wildlife Watching Boating Code of Conduct. A number of issues came out in the discussion about this and it was decided to hold a separate meeting with key partners (NT, NE, AONB) to talk these through in more detail and agree an approach. NB will set up **ACTION NB**

4. Progress with Updating the Management Scheme

The consultation on the revised Management Scheme and the accompanying Delivery Plan has closed. Seven responses were received, most of which suggested simple amendments or corrections to the text. No significant concerns or objections were raised. A summary of responses was circulated with the papers for the meeting.

No response was received from Marine Scotland, as their representative on the partnership is currently on long-term leave. NB will forward the documents to another member of staff. AT reported that he has still to receive some internal comments from colleagues within Scottish Borders Council.

The Steering Group signed off on the revised Management Scheme subject to any comments from Marine Scotland and Scottish Borders Council being incorporated. NB will progress the final document. **ACTION NB**

5. Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Northumberland

Under the provisions of the Environment Bill, currently progressing through Parliament, Local Authorities in England will be required to produce Local Nature Recovery Strategies

(LNRs) for their areas. These will consist of a map showing nature recovery priorities and an accompanying plan for how these will be delivered.

Defra are currently piloting the production of LNRs with 5 local authorities, including Northumberland County Council. The pilots will inform the production of the guidance on LNR production which Defra will publish once the Environment Bill comes into law. The Steering Group for the Northumberland pilot has agreed to include marine areas within their work. NB is helping with the production of the LNR document. The Marine Nature Partnership is being reimbursed for his time. DF explained that the pilot will run until the end of May 2021, although work will continue after this period.

6. Partner Updates

NIFCA: A new byelaw restricting use of mobile gear (otter trawls) in the Coquet to St Mary's MCZ is currently with the MMO for sign-off. Discussions about the use of mobile gear in the rest of the NIFCA district will be held at the next quarterly meeting.

Periwinkle surveys and mussels surveys have been carried out. An investigation into the impacts of scallop-dredging in the district is underway and the results are due soon.

Environment Agency: EA are involved in a mussel project with NIFCA, Natural England and Newcastle University. An MSc student will be examining water contamination data and seeing if this explains local declines in mussel beds. The student will concentrate on the Blyth, Holy Island and the Tees.

Walk over surveys of coastal streams near Lindisfarne have been carried out. No 'smoking guns' have been found and it appears any nutrient problems are a result of diffuse pollution. Septic tanks in the area may be a problem and a leaflet will be produced for home owners.

Natural England: CS reported that Natural England are involved in a project with NIFCA and the Environment Agency looking at mussel populations and investigating reasons for local declines. An Eider Duck Evidence project will start later in the year to collate data on the distribution and current status of eider along the coast. The project will link to the MNP's Eider Aware project and recording app.

The National Trust: GP reported that the Management Plan for the Farne Islands NNR is being finalised. There are currently restricted landings on the Farnes due to COVID restrictions. A new system of booking is proposed and discussion about this are ongoing with boat operators.

Northumberland County Council: DF reported that Space for Shorebirds, the Coastal Mitigation Service for Northumberland, is now operational and undertaking regular bird disturbance surveys and engagement with the public.

Iain Robson has been appointed as the new manager of the Northumberland Coast AONB.

Scottish Borders Council: The Borderlands deal has been signed-off and includes a Natural Capital Initiative. It is possible that this might include natural capital projects in the coastal and marine environment. The local authority is part of a Regional Land Use Pilot Project, which will produce a land-use strategy framework.

8. AOB

None

9. Table of actions from meeting

Action	Who	Status
NB to organise a meeting to discuss best approach to updating the Wildlife Watching Boating Code of Conduct	NB	Complete
NB to contact Marine Scotland for comments about the revised Management Scheme and progress publication of the document	NB	Ongoing