



Berwickshire & Northumberland
Marine Nature Partnership

Steering Group Meeting 10.30am 30th July 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
Malcolm Fraser	MF	NatureScot
Anna Griffin	AG	SEPA
Hannah Westoby	HW	Environment Agency

Apologies:

Anne Brown	AB	NatureScot
Stephanie Ingram	SI	Marine Management Organisation
Gwen Potter	GP	National Trust
Catherine Scott	CS	Natural England

2. Minutes of last meeting

The actions from the last Steering Group in March 2021 were reviewed. Progress with action points is summarised in the table below.

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

NB reported that a meeting to discuss updating the Boating Code of Conduct was held. The proposed update is likely to be a bigger job than originally anticipated and require more stakeholder discussion. The timescale for the work will be extended.

Marine Scotland has been contacted about the revised Management Scheme. MF will talk to NB about potential contacts at Marine Scotland **ACTION MF/NB**

[Following the meeting, Stuart Bell from Marine Scotland has been in touch and will be seeking any comments on the Scheme from colleagues]

3. Partnership Officer Update

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

The draft revised Management Scheme and the draft Delivery Plan have been amended to incorporate the comments received during the consultation and will be put on the website once any remaining comments are received. AG reported that SEPA may not have received the original consultation documents due to a ransomware attack. NB will circulate the latest versions **ACTION NB**. Any additional comments can be passed to NB **ACTION ALL**. The Toolkit on the Partnership website as also be amended so that it aligns better with the revised Scheme. MF passed on positive feedback he has received about the website from colleagues.

Work has commenced to produce of good practice guidelines for recreational activities on the coast. NB is proposing to use the same format as the Wild Recreation Guide produced by the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership (who have offered the use of the template for this to other partnerships). The text and the list of activities included in this will need to be adapted for use in Berwickshire and Northumberland. NB will contact those members of the Steering Group who volunteered to join a sounding board group for the guidelines to discuss this in more detail.

NB is in the early stages of producing a Biosecurity Plan/Marine INNS Strategy for the partnership area. The Strategy will identify potential pathways for the introduction of marine INNS, identify current and likely future marine INNS of concern, and identify specific actions to address the threat from marine INNS. Discussions will be needed with key partners as part of the production of the document, although the form this takes will depend on how the current COVID situation develops.

AG requested that Janet Kahn from SEPA be kept in the loop over the development of the Strategy **ACTION NB**

HW mentioned that EA and NE have previously had a MSc student from Newcastle looking at potential threats from marine INNS, which may be relevant to the Strategy. She will send NB a copy of the dissertation **ACTION HW**

AA mentioned the monitoring work planned through the Tyne & Wear Wild Oyster Project, which might offer a quick win in terms of monitoring for INNS. NB will contact the project to discuss **ACTION NB**

Progress with the CoastSnap project has been slower than anticipated due to issues with COVID and with procuring materials. However, the first recording stations should be in place later this year. NB will circulate a list of CoastSnap locations **ACTION NB**. Any additional comments or suggestions welcome.

4. Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) Update

DF provided an update on the LNRS Pilot which has been running in 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 (LNRSs) for their areas. These will consist of a map showing nature recovery priorities and an accompanying plan for how these will be delivered.

Defra have piloted the production of LNRSs with 5 local authorities, including Northumberland County Council. The Northumberland pilot included production of a marine map. The pilots will inform the production of the statutory guidance on LNRS production. The Bill is likely to be enacted in the Autumn, although it is not clear if the guidance will be published at the same time.

AT asked if the outputs from the Northumberland LNRS pilot were in the public domain. DF replied that there was not a draft LNRS as such but he would look into what could be shared with the Steering Group **ACTION DF**

5. Issues arising out of the progress report on delivering a well-managed network of MPAs

This agenda item came out of a request at the meeting of the MNP Management Group in December 2020 for the Steering Group to discuss the assessment of progress towards delivering a well-managed network of MPAs contained in the Partnership's annual report.

Generally progress is good however there are still issues around access to up-to-date assessments of site condition. NB will organise a separate call with NatureScot and Natural England to discuss this in more detail **ACTION NB**

6. Finance

DF provided an update on partnership finance.

NB arrange for contribution request letters for 2021/22 to be sent out to members **ACTION NB**

7. Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs)

The Government have announced that they will be piloting the creation of Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) in English waters by the end of 2022. Selection criteria for these have been published by jncc.gov.uk/our-work/highly-protected-marine-areas/

As part of the process of identifying sites, third-parties are being invited to submit proposals for areas which they believe meet the ecological criteria. The closing date for submissions is the 31st August.

The MNP will not be putting any sites forward as a number of our members have a formal role in working with Defra on site identification. However it was agreed that NB can assist any of our individual member organisations who may be considering proposing locations.

8. 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 Secretary of State and is expected to be agreed in the next few months.

Periwinkle surveys and mussels surveys have been carried out. The mussel surveys have shown declines in the size of beds and in larger age classes. Periwinkle surveys have not detected any impacts from hand gathering on periwinkle size or abundance, nor on wider community composition. Monitoring is continuing.

An investigation into the effectiveness of current prohibitions on scallop-dredging in the district is being undertaken by a MSc student from Newcastle University.

Environment Agency: Seagrass surveys at Lindisfarne and Budle Bay will commence next month. The surveys will also look at opportunistic macro-algae.

Fish surveys are planned for the Tweed estuary in September/October if COVID restrictions allow.

Groundwork has been successful in an estuaries bid to the Green Recovery Fund. This will include work on the Wansbeck and Blyth estuaries.

Scottish Borders Council: AT reported on the Borderlands Natural Capital Initiative, which includes a marine project on the Solway. AT will forward details of this to HW and NB

ACTION AT

NatureScot: The Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund (SMEEF) continues to develop and will be launched later this year, with significant amounts of grant money available. Current details can be found at www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/scottish-marine-environmental-enhancement-fund-smeeef

The latest ScotWind leasing round has completed with Crown Estates Scotland leasing 15 areas for windfarm development. This will cover a significant area of seabed – likely three times in size compared to existing windfarm developments.

9. AOB

Agreed that we would hold the next MNP Steering Group as a virtual meeting.

10. Table of actions from meeting

Action	Who	Status
MF will talk to NB about potential contacts at Marine Scotland	MF/NB	
NB to circulate the latest versions of the Management Scheme to the Steering Group	NB	Complete
Any additional comments on the Management Scheme or Delivery Plan to be passed to NB	ALL	
Keep Janet Kahn from SEPA be in the loop over the development of the Marine INNS Strategy	NB	
HW to forward a copy of MSc dissertation on Marines INNS to NB	HW	Complete
NB to contact Wild Oyster Project about potential links to INNS monitoring	NB	
NB to circulate list of proposed CoastSnap locations	NB	
DF to look into what could be outputs from the LNRS pilot can be shared with the Steering Group	DF	
NB to organise a separate call with NatureScot and Natural England to discuss site condition monitoring	NB	
NB to arrange for contribution letters for 2021/22 to be sent out to members	NB	
AT will forward details of Borderlands marine natural capital project to HW and NB	AT	Complete

