



Berwickshire & Northumberland  
Marine Nature Partnership

## Steering Group Meeting 10.30am 13th October 2023 Virtual meeting

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

#### Attendees:

Nick Brodin	NB	Berwickshire and Northumberland MNP
David Feige (Chair)	DF	Northumberland County Council
Kate Owen	KO	NIFCA
Catherine Scott	CS	Natural England
Natalie Wallace	NW	Environment Agency

#### Apologies:

Alex Aitken	AA	NIFCA
Anne Brown	AB	NatureScot
Raffaella Diesel	RD	Scottish Borders Council
Anna Griffin	AG	SEPA

### 2. Minutes of last meeting

The actions from the last Steering Group in June 2023 were reviewed. Progress with action points is summarised in the attached table.

Action	Who	Status
DF to set up call with AG on Nutrient Neutrality	DF	Complete
CS to forward details of the INNS Local Action Group fund to NB	CS	Complete
AC to put NB in touch with the Environment Agency's new Citizen Science lead	AC	Complete

Due to a change of role within SEPA, Anna Griffin will no longer be able to attend Steering Group meetings. Anna has been an active member of the partnership for many years and the Steering Group recorded their thanks for all her work.

### 3. Partnership Officer Update

A full written update was provided with the papers for the meeting. A brief summary of some of the main points is given below:

The Environment Agency's Championing Coastal Coordination (3Cs) programme opened again for Expressions of Interest this summer. Funding to continue work on the creation of a coastal restoration plan for the North East has been included as part national application from the Coastal Partnership's Network (CPN). The Marine Nature Partnership and the Durham Heritage Coast Partnership will lead jointly on this. The CPN confirmed on the 4th October that the bid had been successful. The two partnerships are proposing two separate geographically based workshops, one for North of Tyne and one for South of Tyne during November, followed by a region-wide workshop in February 2024.

Cutts and Hemingway Estuarine Ecology and Management have been appointed to produce a study looking at opportunities for the ecological enhancement of hard coastal infrastructure, as part of our Coastal Infrastructure Project. They have previously carried out similar surveys on the Coquet and Blyth estuaries. Initial contacts have been made with representatives from coastal defence teams within local authorities. Funding for the work comes through the Environment Agency's WEIF programme. The Marine Nature Partnership is also putting in some funding to allow the work to be extended into Berwickshire.

Eider Duck surveys continued throughout the summer and the results have fed into a Natural England project looking into the distribution of Eiders within the Berwick to St Mary's Marine Conservation Zone. The Marine Nature Partnership is also continuing to work with Natural England on a Citizen Science approach to rocky shore monitoring. Using additional funding from NE we will be continuing to liaise with volunteer groups and running additional training sessions.

### 4. Marine INNS Strategy and Biosecurity Plan

The Steering Group signed-off the Marine INNS Strategy. NB will post it on the MNP website and circulate to members. **ACTION NB**

AA reported an increase in anecdotal reports of Pacific lobster. NIFCA will be undertaking a publicity push about the species.

## 5. Partner Updates

Environment Agency: NW reported that TRAC fish surveys were recommencing on the Tweed estuary and other locations. Saltmarsh surveys have taken place on the Wansbeck and are planned for the Blyth. A beach wash-up citizen science project is in development. A reporting app will be developed for this that can be shared once it goes live **ACTION NW**

Natural England: CS reported on funding for the Marine Nature Partnership, including funding for rocky shore monitoring. Work on the LIFE WADER project is continuing, particularly around evidence gathering and around shorebird protection.

Northumberland County Council: Royal Hosking have been commissioned to look at a strategic solution to nutrient neutrality at Lindisfarne. The report is due soon. Funding from DLUHC (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) will be available to deliver the preferred solutions.

NIFCA: KO introduced herself as a new officer who will be dealing with MPA assessments. Vicky Rae has returned to NIFCA and will be dealing with marine licencing and Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs).

Defra have produced drafts of the six front-runner FMPs, including one for crab and lobster. A consultation on these closed in October.

NIFCA are updating their fixed-gear/netting byelaw and will be consulting with fishers on this. One option is to turn this into a permit byelaw.

A low-impact gear trawl trial is proposed with funding from Natural England.

## 6. Outreach and Engagement

NB has attended an increasing number of public events this year and is aware that the Marine Nature Partnership has limited materials available for public engagement. He is looking at the possibility of commissioning some additional resources and/or display materials and of other ways of outreach such as the use of artists in residence. NB also referred back to the project proposal for building capacity for marine interpretation and outreach which was discussed in the July 2020 Steering Group meeting.

The Steering Group agreed that NB could progress this, making links to other projects where possible.

## 7. Annual Partnership meeting in December

The date of the Annual Partnership meeting has been set for the 14<sup>th</sup> December as an online event

NB will table an annual progress report at the meeting. This is still being written but NB will forward it round the Steering Group for sign-off prior to the 14<sup>th</sup>. **ACTION NB**

## 8. AOB

DF raised whether we still had sufficient Scottish representation on the Steering Group now that we no longer had representation from SEPA. Agreed that this is something that should be discussed in more detail at a future meeting.

## 9. Table of actions from meeting

Action	Who	Status
Post Marine INNS Strategy on MNP website and circulate among members	NB	Complete
Share EA Beach Wash-Up App once it goes live	NW	
Forward text of Annual Report to the Steering Group for sign-off prior to the annual partnership meeting on the 14 <sup>th</sup> December.	NB	Complete