



## North Norfolk Advisory Group

The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership

1900-2100 Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017  
Sack House, Staithe Street, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, NR23 1AU

- Welcomes/introductions

- Apologies

- Previous minutes/matters arising

1. **NNAG Secretary:** position open

2. **WNNMP updates**

- Protecting nature
- Protecting culture
- Communication and outreach
- Recreational disturbance: dog walking workshop
- Research and education: the broader values of Marine Protected Areas

3. **Managing Fisheries in Marine Protected Areas**

- Development of fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas
  - The Wash & North Norfolk coast
  - Cromer Shoal MCZ
- Community Voice Method project update
- Eastern IFCA Marine Protection update

4. **Marine Management Organisation:** introduction to the NNAG

5. **Natural England**

- Conservation Advice Package
- English Coastal Path
- Offshore windfarms
- Wildfowling consents

6. **Mussel bed siltation**

7. **Marine Conservation Society “Agents of Change”:** working with the Cromer Marine Conservation Zone

8. **Coastal Site Manager’s updates**

9. **Date of the next meeting(s)**

10. **AOB**

## Minutes from the Autumn meeting: 2017

**Date & Time:** 19:00 to 21:30 on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Location:** Sack House, Staithe Street, Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, NR23 1AU

Attendees	Apologies
Kevin Thatcher – NNAG Chair	Rosemary Thew – North Norfolk DC
Sam Lew – WNNMP Project Manager	Angie Fitch-Tillet - DC
John Hall – Bait digger	Marie Strong – Norfolk CC
Henry Randell – Mussel fisherman	Cyril Southerland – Fisherman and Common rights holder
Jonathan Webster – Mussel fisherman	Steven B – Common rights holder
Willie Weston – Fisherman	Sarah Henderson – Holkham Estate
Peter Bickle – Tourism and ex-fisherman	
Chris Cotton – Common rights holder	
Kerys Witton – North Norfolk DC	
Richard Brazier – Fisherman	
George Baldock – Norfolk Wildlife Trust	
Victoria Egan – National Trust	
Nicky King – Fisherman	
Guy Warren – Wells Councillor	
Peter Terrington – Local resident and sailor	
Julian Gregory – E-IFCA	
Nicole Chapman – Marine Management Organisation	
Tom Bridges – E-IFCA	
Fiona Tibbitt – Natural England	
Hilary Cox – Agents of Change	
Alice Tebb – Agents of Change	

### Actions

Action for MMO – link provided for management maps in minutes

Action for MMO – find out if all moorings are permitted in the harbour

Action SL – once the report has been received can all relevant people agree to meet to confirm report and decide on what the NNAG would like NE and other relevant authority to take forward - agree

### AOB items for the meeting

WW – would like to discuss cockle size in The Wash

### Previous minutes

PT - did not state “villages were built on oyster shells” – corrected to NK

SL – actions for toilets location and disabled access on coastal sent to NNAG in previous email

SL – would it be useful for previous minutes to be sent with the agenda – All agreed

## **WNNMP updates**

### **Protecting Nature – Relevant authority Support**

The Annual Management Plan is currently being reviewed and will state duties and responsibilities for all RAs. Currently collating a contacts database for relevant officers within each RA.

### **Protecting Culture – AG updates**

Boston AG – Boston Barrier is with secretary of state and should be confirmed or otherwise shortly. Wrangle Sea banks project led by Witham 4<sup>th</sup> IDB is to begin in late November. Sig dog walking issue on coast. King's Lynn AG – major involvement in OWF. Cable works through the marsh have damaged it and a region at Terrington Marsh has been reduced to unfavourable condition.

### **Communications and Outreach**

Summary of new website given to group. Open to comment and recommendations.

Wash Week 2017 was a success with roughly 50 events. Wash Week 2018 will be refined into key themes: Food and Gastronomy, Recreation, Litter, Coastal Values, Photography and Art and Local people/SME interests.

### **Tourism and Recreation**

Sustainable dog walking workshop undertaken with 30 RA and conservation NGO members. It was a huge success and we successfully identified key problem areas associated with dog walking. Next stage is to develop a campaign plan and seek funding for a dedicated officer.

### **Research and Education**

A new research project with the WNNMP and University of Hull has started that will map (using satellite tech) and identify cultural and economic values of saltmarsh. There will be workshops in the new year with saltmarsh users invited to contribute knowledge to the project. Like CVM project but without cameras and with an open invitation.

## **Managing Fisheries in Marine Protected Areas**

### **Development of fisheries management in Marine Protected Areas**

#### The Wash and North Norfolk Coast

Eastern IFCA is progressing its assessment of the brown shrimp fishery in the Wash and remains in the process of developing management measures for this fishery. This work has presented considerable difficulties, primarily because of the low level of evidence available to inform the assessment, however remains a high priority for the marine science team. Eastern IFCA officers are continuing to maintain close dialogue with Natural England as the assessment is progressed; further engagement with stakeholders will be undertaken in the development of revised management measures.

JG – new management measures for brown shrimp should be in place by the new year

JG – delay due to lack of evidence hindering progress for the HRA and getting agreement from Natural England

JG – once agreement is made with NE E-IFCA need to decide on management measures. Permitting and closed areas

PB – why do E-IFCA need to close areas or request permits?

JG – closures ensures protection for certain areas within the site. Permits help to manage the fishing effort. Permits also balance access for young fishermen with securing existing investment in the fishery. Permits are capped instead of effort. Wash Fishery Order is not perfect and will change with time. Review in a couple of years.

WW – Dutch boats previously came in 25 years ago and local fishermen suggested restricting beam size to limit catch. Nothing was done

PB – why can't the beam size be capped?

JG – 25 years ago was before my time and cannot comment. Permit scheme would try and save the environment for future. We're trying to balance two things, industry and environment. However, until we complete the HRA we cannot say exactly what management will look like.

### Cromer Shoal Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ)

A first assessment has been drafted for potting on all sub-features of the Cromer Shoal MCZ. It is ready to be sent to Natural England, pending internal review. If any management will be required, all stakeholders will be included in consultation.

TB – making good progress on the MCZ management assessment. We are drawing together impacts of potting on features. Expected in January 2018.

TB – question remains over oyster shells and whether should be designated. Need advice from NE

PT – and thoughts on why oysters/shells are there?

TB – potentially a historic feature, shells only. Need to sample the site to confirm

TB – we also need to assess the five fishing pressures on the MCZ at Cromer

WW – what are the five features?

TB – potting, long-lining, gill netting, trawling, angling

WW – the only pressure is potting and there is no damage

TB – law requires us to assess whether there is any damage or not

WW – we have done this before. Once the assessment is done I think we will lose potting

TB – we need to do the assessment first. We cannot say until it is complete

JG – current evidence suggests that crab and potting is above sustainable yield

KT – let us assess the evidence and more forward from there

### **Titchwell Seed Mussel Fishery**

- In August, Eastern IFCA received new advice from Natural England following a review of the consistency of their advice to regulators operating in Marine Protected Areas;
- This resulted in a change in the advice that Eastern IFCA follow, including a different approach to considering whether an appropriate assessment is required;
- This led to some delays in authorising the Titchwell seed mussel fishery due to Natural England concern over the potential disturbance of protected bird species;

- Natural England agreed with Eastern IFCA's conclusion that the fishery will not have an adverse effect overall. The authorisations have now been granted, with conditions on the method and duration of the fishery

NK – once an assessment is complete, who will make the decision NE or E-IFCA

JG – NE is advisory and any disagreements will go to the Authority

NK – E-IFCA are fisheries authority and should know more than NE about fishing, yet they have more power than you

JG – NE are hired by the government to legislate and advise organisations like E-IFCA. Law requires for nature conservation but it the goal of E-IFCA to also maintain a viable industry

KT – is that an answer for you? NK – yes and no

### **Community Voice Method (CVM) Project Update**

The Marine Conservation Society have produced the final CVM report. This is due to be published on the Eastern IFCA website shortly. The next stage in the process will be producing an Action Plan, which will communicate how we will address the 253 actions and issues highlighted in the CVM process and will detail how Eastern IFCA intend to embed the lessons learnt into everyday work

Student Eleanor Kowalska O'Neil is still working on her project on what young sea users think of Marine Protected Areas, if anyone is interested in participating at the last minute (it would still be great to hear from young fishers, recreational anglers, RNLI, NGOs, people involved in tourism, etc.) please contact Sandra Cowper from Eastern IFCA at [sandracowper@eastern-ifca.gov.uk](mailto:sandracowper@eastern-ifca.gov.uk) or by telephone at 01553 775321.

SL – I have worked with Eleanor and we have met young wildfowlers. Next we will meet young fisherman

WW – we haven' got any fishermen left

### **Eastern IFCA Marine Protection Update**

#### Wash Fishery Order Licence Fees

Eastern IFCA commits a significant resource to undertake research, management and enforcement to enable a cockle fishery within The Wash, one of the most heavily designated sites in the UK. Eastern IFCA currently recoups circa 7% of the cost to the public purse in licence fees. As a consequence of austerity and as a reflection of the use of public money to effectively subsidise this fishery, Eastern IFCA is increasing licence fees to achieve 50% cost recovery by 2020. To achieve this, the increase would be from £330 (current licence fee) to £1375. Impacts on the industry are considered in an Impact Assessment and indicate that impacts on the industry will be small in the context of average earnings from the annual cockle fishery. Eastern IFCA undertook a formal consultation regarding the increase in licence fees, which closed on the 18th October 2017 and the results will be used to refine the associated impact assessment.

The current impact assessment and rationale for the increase are available on the Eastern IFCA website (<http://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/website-info.pdf> and <http://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Impact-Assessment.pdf>).

#### Wash Fishery Order Review – Regulations, fisheries management plan and policies

Eastern IFCA is reviewing the current regulations, management plan and policies associated with the WFO. The intention is to update these to reflect contemporary practices and provide more clarity to

fishers. Further dialogue with the industry will be undertaken to inform this work but consultation is pending further dialogue with Natural England regarding the associated Habitat Regulations Assessment.

#### Crab and Lobster Measures

Eastern IFCA has been assessing the crab and lobster fisheries within the district for several years. These assessments have indicated that both fisheries are operating at or above maximum sustainable yield. In addition, the industry has raised concerns regarding the level of effort, the small size of crabs and the need for escape gaps in pots. The Authority has agreed that management is required to protect stock sustainability in the long-term and Eastern IFCA will be informally seeking the views of the industry to inform what measures will be most effective. This will also include discussions regarding the outcomes of the Cromer Shoal MCZ assessment which is currently underway.

#### Permitting schemes (response to concerns raised regarding enabling young fishers to enter fisheries)

The management of fisheries often require an ability to manage the levels of effort and permit schemes (and licences) are an effective means of doing this. However, where the number of permits are limited this can often make it difficult for new fishers to enter a fishery, particularly when considering track record.

Eastern IFCA seeks to balance the needs of all within the fishery and looks to support different business models. One particularly difficult aspect of this is balancing the protection of current businesses against the ability for new/young fishers to join. This has been a key consideration with regards to whelk and shrimp management. Whelk permits are not currently limited but could be if needed. Similarly, initial proposals for shrimp management included an unlimited permit system where effort was controlled through closures during the year in accordance with a 'threshold model'. We also understand that there are parts of the industry in favour of limiting the number of permits and that this is based on track record. All views will be considered when developing future management measures.

#### **Marine Management Organisation – NC**

MMO is a government body for England only. Key work areas include: planning, licensing, fishing management, marine conservation and fishing support

To manage activities MMO uses a mapping system that visual describes the uses of the sea. Used to understand other pressures in an area so an informed decision can be made for new license

SL – can the public use these maps? NC – yes Action – include link to maps in minutes

JW – who is responsible for moorings at Blakeney Harbour? It seems like there is a huge influx of moorings that are potentially unlicensed. Who owns the harbour and who is responsible? Many moorings are beginning to infringe on historic fishing areas

VE – NT currently in discussion with Blakeney Harbour Association and Crown Estate about responsibility

JW – if mussels ever come back will aquaculture be outcompeted by moorings and associated landgrab?

Action for MMO – find out if all moorings are permitted in the harbour

## Natural England - FT

### Conservation Advice Package

- W&NNC package is now finalised and published in Sept for its marine features only and is on Designated Sites System website.
- There are Conservation Advice videos on You Tube if people need advice on how to use the system. Enter 'Marine Conservation Advice Natural England' into You Tube and they will come up.
- Cromer MCZ- Looking to get the draft out for comments in March 2018.

### English Coastal Path

- Weybourne to Hunstanton stretch still at development stage and expecting publication date sometime in the new year. The North Norfolk Coastal stretch is currently waiting for senior QA sign off.
- Disabled Access- policy of replacing styles with kissing gates and gaps where it was appropriate.
- Hunstanton to Sutton Bridge- Route proposed for 80% of the length.
- The remaining is still under discussion with landowners and the preferential route and impact on protected areas.
- Publication date unknown
- Specific questions to Diana Curtis or Jonathan Clarke.

PT raised the concerns re: circular routes from the main routes and are there continuing landowner and access issues?

- Natural England has a duty to prepare proposals for the route of the England Coast Path. We work in partnership with Norfolk County Council in developing proposals who then take on the responsibility for establishment and maintenance of the trail. At establishment stage waymarkers are installed to help walkers with their onwards journey along the trail. Promotion of any circular walks leading from the England Coast Path are undertaken at the discretion of the highways authority and/or the landowners involved depending upon the status of any associated access rights in place.
- The establishment and maintenance of the England Coast path is the responsibility of the Trails Team within Norfolk County Council who also manage a number of other long-distance walks and their associated circular walks in the county. If there are local landowner and access issues associated to any of the long-distance walks or associated circular walks we'd encourage those people affected to contact the trails team via their website at <https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/peddars-way-and-norfolk-coast-path>

KT - What is the current situation on access to saltmarsh seaward side and is there spreading room in these sensitive areas?

- The methodology for our approach to alignment of the coast path and associated areas of spreading room is explained within the Approved Coastal Access Scheme <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5327964912746496> .
- At section 7.15 it explains our approach to salt marsh and clarifies our powers under section 25A of CROW enabling us to exclude the coastal access rights from applying to them on the grounds that they are unsuitable for public access subject to the nature of the land.

- The salt marsh has been assessed under the Habs Regs assessment as a result of the European Designations in the area which has involved a rigorous access and sensitive features assessment. Along the Weybourne to Hunstanton stretch there are some sections of salt marsh seaward of the trail where we will be proposing exclusions and/or restrictions as a result of the processes described above. The details and maps of specific areas excluded, and/or restricted, will be published within our report alongside the access and sensitive features assessment.

SL - is there a legal requirement for the quantity of toilets, e.g. so many per 10km

- No. Natural England would encourage communications with the local authority regarding such facilities.

### Offshore windfarms

Hornsea 3

- We have just provided our comments on the Hornsea 3 Prelim Env Information Report (Draft application)
- We have fundamental concerns with the documents as they stand as limited survey data was included to provide detailed advice on any conclusions. We have therefore advised Orsted on what they need to do
- We have ongoing meeting planned with them through DAS and evidence plan process up to Spring next year
- On our part we are finalising the Conservation advice packages for the MCZ for Spring next year which the developers already have (management measures already in place)
- Likewise, we are developing reefiness criteria for Chalk across the whole MPA network
- We are working with EIFCA to discuss fisheries management measures but nothing finalised as yet for the MCZ so we can be consistent
- We encourage all interested parties to register with PINS (Planning Inspectorate) as an interested party when the applications are submitted in Spring/Summer next year to have their **own independent** say and influence the process

NK - windfarms and what they can do to be involved in the process.

Response from Lou Burton of NE – renewable energy

Firstly, it is important to understand that the offshore windfarms are considered through the planning process as individual independent projects and are therefore not managed as an 'industry' unlike fisheries. And equally they do not undertake strategic level monitoring or adopt industry best practice to address concerns like that of the aggregates industry. It has been identified that this puts the windfarm developers at a disadvantage as then the onus is on them to address all of the concerns at a project level and this is labour intensive, expensive and puts more risk on the projects not going forwards

In terms of cable through the MCZ NE are in the process of providing pre-application advice to Orsted (previously DONG) and they have recently gone out on a further public consultation on a proposed alternative route that takes the cable route outside of the MCZ. Only a small part would go through the nearshore area away from fishing activities. This is based on stakeholder feedback on the last public consultation providing negative feedback. Orsted need to still do an MCZ assessment and HRA assessment for their project to inform their application next May.

As NE have advised yourself and the Advisory Groups that fishermen, either individual, or as a collective, or through the advisory groups need to register as interested parties to have their say on the application when submitted. They will also have options to attend hearings to also have their say if they have registered. It is not a done deal for these projects even after they are consented and one would argue the tests/requirements the developers need to meet for the Offshore Wind Farms are much greater as options for pragmatism are much less for them, than the fishermen due to legislation for individual plan/projects.

As an aside Natural England did not object to the cables going through the Wash, but we have flagged with the regulators concerns about the feasibility of the installation methods delivering what has been predicted; siting reasonable scientific doubt. Should further cables be proposed to go through the Wash lessons learnt have identified that this would have the potential to cause an adverse effect on integrity.

### **Wildfowling consents**

- NE have set up a meeting for a representative sample of wildfowling groups to meet and discuss various issues on the 1<sup>st</sup> Dec
- The meeting will have an open agenda, and any matters which concern clubs or individuals can be raised
- One topic which has arisen recently is NEs consultation on proposed changes to wildfowling assessment on protected sites. The consultation includes things like, duration of consent, a greater frequency of meetings with clubs, positives of wildfowling management, how appropriate assessments are made, the relevance of bag/visit data etc. The PDF below gives more detail.
- We recognize that there is no 'one size fits all' methodology for liaison or assessment, and so NE will continue to work in a bespoke manner on the north Norfolk coast – what works for some will not work for others and vice versa.
- NE also recognises that wildfowling, when practiced sustainably, is very much part of the cultural fabric of the coast and is often far less disturbing than other recreational activities (which we plan to tackle through Scott's project)
- Hopefully the planned meeting will reassure shooters that NE is not attempting to adopt a more controlling methodology and will set a tone for positive liaison in the future.

### **Mussel Bed siltation**

#### **PT - introduction**

**February 2017 NNAG meeting. Question:** (Jonathan Webster, Blakeney Mussel Fisherman)

“Does Sheringham Shoal post construction monitoring look at sediment movement? Morston harbour has filled considerable more with sand and is it being monitored as it's devoid of life and may affect the condition of site as a bird feeding area? Is it being looked into 4 years on?”

**July 2017 NNAG meeting. Response:** (Lou Burton/ Claire Ludgate, Natural England)

Post construction monitoring has not covered Morston harbour. (Summary)

November 2017: Time now appropriate to revisit the issue of accretion of fine sand on Morston mussel beds.

2007: Extract from the Geological Conservation review (1980 – 2007) Volume 28, NN Coast, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). Sand moves onshore from offshore banks and is then moved eastwards, crossing the major tidal inlets from time to time (Pethick).

2009: Environmental statement and Hydrodynamic Modelling Study by H R Wallingford, related to the capital dredging programme with scant mention of the maintenance dredge programme. It also concentrated on the impact of the sediment plume in the Wells Harbour and little attention was given to sediment movement beyond Bob Hall Sands.

October 2009: Dredging at Wells Harbour commences.

October 2012 Environment Agency, Coastal Trends Report RP028/L/201 reports large advance in low water tide line and accumulation of sand, west of Blakeney channel.

November 2012: Increased erosion observed, west of Wells Channel.

November 2012: Email to MMO from Blakeney Harbour Mussel Association expressing concern at accretion of sand over the previous two years.

November 2012: Royal Haskoning report identifies that material, removed as a result of maintenance dredging, is likely to be finer than that dredged during the capital programme. Concludes that material from the Wells Training Term could not be transported to Blakeney.

March 2013: The Fishermens' Local action group (FLAG) allocated funding for sand samples to be taken, analysed by Cefas and Lidar information obtained for the Blakeney area,

April 2013; sand samples taken at Wells berm by the MMO and Stiffkey Flats and Blakeney mussel beds by the Blakeney mussel fishermen. Material collected at Stiffkey and Blakeney consisted of mainly medium to fine sand. Cefas concluded that there was no likely link between the material sampled at Wells and the other locations. Unfortunately there was no funding to carry out tracker surveys and the trail went cold.

December 2013: North Sea tidal Surge had a profound effect on the coastal landscape, masking the normal trend of sediment movement.

November 2017: Four years on the impact of the Tidal Surge is less apparent and the processes of erosion, transport and deposition can be considered to have returned to pre-surge conditions. It is now appropriate to review all the data and conclusions from before 2013 and look at new data that has become available. It would be useful to look at the EA Coastal Trends report for the period 2013 – 2017, the EA annual Coastal Monitoring Topographic surveys from 2013 – 2017 and the Lidar and data and aerial photographs for the same period.

Finally, a small group needs to be formed, consisting of representatives of the MMO, EA, NE, Cefas and the Blakeney Mussel Fishermen to take the wider view and coordinate the task of analysing all the available data.

JW, PT, MR – all provided a history of previous investigation into the siltation of mussel beds. None came to a satisfactory conclusion.

SL – can a timeline with detail be written on mussel bed siltation

FT – NE have a report that we can give you

Action: SL – once the report has been received can all relevant people agree to meet to confirm report and decide on what the NNAG would like NE and other relevant authority to take forward - agree

### **Marine Conservation Society “Agents of Change” @ Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ**

The Agents of Change is a project that is looking to improve local support for well managed Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). This pilot is new and experimental and as such will be focusing on three MCZs, each at different stages of the designation and governance process'. These include Kingmere MCZ (designated and managed), Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ (designated and unmanaged) and Beachy Head East recommended MCZ (undesigned). Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ is an important MCZ for this initiative. The Common Ground project learned that in Norfolk, there is a real desire amongst locals for improved communication, engagement and information sharing. The Agents of Change project seeks to

enhance inclusion of local stakeholders in discussions surrounding MCZs. This will mean that all community values regarding the ocean, both financial and non-monetary, can be better recorded, communicated and used to help inform management. By working with local people in this way, concerns about Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ and the relative merits and future benefits of the site can be more widely considered. This will enhance local ownership of the MCZ.

Alice and Hilary are here to help. We want to talk to you about what Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ means to you. If you are interested and would like to know more, please come and say hello to us at the NNAG November meeting. Alternatively, you can contact Alice on 07422 965027 or email [alice.tebb@mcsuk.org](mailto:alice.tebb@mcsuk.org)

## **Coastal site manager updates**

### **RSPB given by VE**

Liz Appleton has left

### **National Trust**

VE – seals are pupping at 722

VE – Blakeney Point has a Gull inundation. Permits have been given to prick eggs

JW – what has caused mortality?

VE – evidence points towards predation by Grey Seals

### **Norfolk Wildlife Trust**

GB – restoration works on scrapes and marsh

GB – concern over North Sea inundation

GB – minimal reed cutting on the coast this year

Meeting dates: 3<sup>rd</sup> week of March, July and November

### **AOB**

WW showed samples of very small cockles being processed at KL

WW - why are small cockles being landed? What is the minimum size for cockles? This will ruin the industry for future generations. If my grandad had seen this he would have thrown me and the cockles back into the sea

JG – there is no minimum landing size and this is why areas are restricted to allow cockles within areas to mature. There is a recommended but not enforced size of 14 mm.

JG – there is also an international market for small 'pizza' cockles in Spain and many are exported. This is difficult for E-IFCA to manage.

WW – many of his customers complained about the small size

JG – this is a processor responsibility who are happy to sell them at any size

WW – this was very useful, I'm glad I asked the question

KT – it has been very useful to have a senior member of staff at the meeting to clarify issues such as this