

DUDDON ESTUARY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Duddon Estuary Consultative Committee meeting held at Askam Community Centre, Duke Street, Askam in Furness on 15 March 2011 at 2:00pm.

Richard Scott, Walking to Health (Chair)
Brian Crawford, NWIFCA
Jenny Wain, CCC / DEP Secretariat
Bob Mandale, RSPB member
Derek Lyon, FOLD
Jack Park, Copeland BC/Millom LNR
Michael Jackson, Kirkby Ireleth PC
Cameron Ross, CCC
Neil Forbes, National Trust
Steve Robinson, SJR Strategic Consulting Ltd
Pauline Preston, Kirkstanton Residents /Friends of Millom Station
Paul Pearson, CCC (notes)

L Cragg, Kirkby Ireleth PC
Colin Britton, NWSFC
Angela Atkinson, MMO
Jane Lister, MMO
Liz Bailey, Natural England
Mark Holroyd, S Copeland TIC
Bill Shaw, ARC Trust
Sharon Crawford, Broughton HUB
Charlie Webber, National Grid
Robert Powell, National Grid

1. Introductions and Apologies.

Members attending the meeting introduced themselves and the Chairman gave a warm welcome to the new delegates at the meeting. Apologies were received from David Southward, Toni Magean, Mary Jardine, Alasdair Lindop, Caroline Salthouse, Joss Curwen, Bob Morris, Janette Jenkinson, Ian Cameron, Wendy Battersby and Brain Wright.

2. Presentation by Charlie Webber & Robert Powell – National Grid

A presentation was made on behalf of National Grid to give an update on the current review of the Grid around Cumbria. Robert Powell (RP) talked to a series of slides outlining the Strategic Options for extending the existing National Grid network to the proposed Nuclear New Build site adjacent to Sellafield. He said the project involved 3 main phases: 1. Strategic Option(s) for the direction the connections take; 2. Route Corridors – or the ribbons connections may be sited within and 3. the Alignment or the final siting of any line. In response to suggestions from Stakeholders National Grid was studying the possibility of achieving connections through High Voltage Direct Current links offshore, perhaps with onshore single circuit connections.

Charlie Webber (CW) outlined the current plans for consulting stakeholders and communities throughout the project, the main milestones currently being:

1. Strategic Choice re Direction – Summer 2011
2. Preferred Route Corridor – Spring 2012
3. Completed Environmental Impact Assessments and Alignment – Summer 2014
4. Application to the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)

Clarifications and questions were then taken from the floor.

- Re timescales for the Duddon Estuary Partnership CW said the NWCC project had multiple stages with scope for involvement in each, as appropriate. Currently views were being sought via 'Gateway' organisations such as the Duddon Estuary Partnership on overall strategic direction with full-scale consultation across Cumbria and beyond at the end of 2011. There would be local consultations on alignments.
- A Statement of Community Involvement will be published on the Grid's website in the summer and those interested, individuals and organisations, can register their details now. The timescale for the build will be approximately 7 years.
- CW said that Parishes would be involved in areas affected. The challenge at the moment is involving organisations who then find they are not affected because of the strategic direction chosen, risking people thinking their time has been wasted and causing 'consultation fatigue' especially in light of other big involvement projects like MRWS (which now may be focussing on South Copeland) or worrying them unnecessarily. Both RP & CW welcomed the DEP proposal to set up a Working Group to feed back comments to National Grid on Strategic Options as this chimed with current plans to work through 'Gateway Groups' where possible.
- RP confirmed that the proposed connections could pick up power from smaller projects both on and offshore in the region and that HVDC offshore connections would be considered for any new large plants.
- RP said that National Grid currently only reacts to developers asking for connections for proposed project but that that future needs could be taken into account to some extent in large routing decisions.

- Discussion on the floor established that some onshore wind connections currently feed into local supplies.

As the project progresses ways to mitigate effects will be considered. It was generally agreed that the Partnership could set up a working group to look at the Options when they are published in summer and provide a written response to the Grid.

To be kept informed of progress and be included in future consultations please register your details at: www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Electricity/MajorProjects/NorthWestCoastConnections/

3. Minutes of last meeting held 11 November 2010.

Agreed as a true record and signed off by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising

I. Haverigg Sea Wall

The wall acts as a tidal flood defence and is maintained and managed by Copeland BC. The Partnership has been informed that an inspection of the wall will be undertaken this year by Copeland BC under its maintenance programme. The wall is constructed to permit movement of the outer boulders however the inner core is made up of a solid steel sheet which shouldn't be breached or be affected by coastal erosion.

II. Millom Waste Water & UU Upgrades

JW had sent a letter setting out the Partnerships concerns but has received no response to date. However, UU are undertaking major improvement work to the waste water plant in King Street. This involves installing a new larger pipe, and members thought that this could help alleviate the problems of flooding and sewage seepage in Millom.

III. Northern Rail

JW emailed Northern Rail regarding the litter problem and litter bin at Kirkby Station in December. Discussions with Northern Rail indicated that a response had been addressed directly to the Clerk of Kirkby and Ireleth Parish Council. Those representing the Parish Council at the meeting were unaware but would ask at the next council meeting. Not sure if the Partnership should do more on this particular issue. Many of the members at the meeting viewed it as a local amenity issue.

IV. Cumbria Coast Flora and Fauna Survey

Copies of this publication have been requested from Cumbria Sea Fisheries. Once received this will be circulated to the Partnership electronically.

5. Standing items

a. Budget

Since November we have only spent £18 on room hire. In the next financial year we anticipate and further spend of £300 on web hosting fees and £250 to provide the Friends of Millom Station with the interpretational panels we agreed on last year. This will still leave a healthy surplus in the bank of just over £4,000 for other projects and hospitality that may be required in the future.

b. Energy Infrastructure

Due to a reduction in NWDA funding to Britain's Energy Coast, there has been no real progress on the tidal feasibility study for the Duddon. There is currently no date for the final report to be published or an indication if any workshops will be held. The most recent Britain's Energy Coast newsletter gives an update on renewable energy options for the Solway and the possible use of Venturi fence technology. The designers believe this would have less environmental impact on fisheries. This technology is currently being tested in a river in Cumbria. There have been three scoping opinions submitted to Copeland Borough Council for windfarms but none, to date, have progressed to formal planning applications.

c. Marine & Coastal Issues

I. Guidance on Coastal Access

To assist the public, guidance on the process for determination of new rights of way access on the coastline has been published. It explains the procedure Natural England has to take in submitting a Coastal Access Report to the Secretary of State to approve or reject an application. The decision will be taken after taking into account all

representation and objections. The first part of the Cumbria route will be established between Maryport and Allonby.

II. NWIFCA

The Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee devolved all powers to NWIFCA at its meeting on 24 February 2011. The new organisation comes into force on 1 April 2011. The NWIFCA encompasses involvement by 10 local authorities and monitors coastline from the Solway to the Dee. BC has been appointed to serve on the organisation as a Recreational Sea Anglers representative. With such a vast area to cover the organisation has ordered a new £2m boat to patrol the waters funded by partners and contributions from the local authorities.

This was Cameron Ross's last meeting as the CCC representative for Cumbria Sea Fisheries and the Partnership wish to thank him for his input and support.

III. Irish Sea Conservation Zones Update

The Duddon Estuary is already designated internationally and the preliminary mapping work has not identified any new features that could be included in a Marine Conservation Zone. It has mapped areas around Ravenglass and Maryport as showing some potential. The final report on locations is due out later in the year.

d. Nature Conservation

I. Millom Nature Reserve

Work on the reserve is near complete. Improvements include new access points and paths giving better access for people with pushchairs and mobility disabilities. The main vehicular access is now gated and locked. Keys have been provided to boat owners and anglers who currently use the site. Other authorised users can loan a key if vehicular access is required via Millom Town Council. New gates have been added to allow mobility scooters onto the site. Although these are a big improvement, they are very heavy and easy access could require the support of a second person as you need to dismount your scooter to use the gates.

Planning permission has been granted for 2 new scrapes for Natterjack Toads and it is hoped that UU will assist in digging the ponds when they are laying the new sewage pipe across the reserve. This will increase and improve the habitat of this endangered species.

The reserve will have an official opening weekend 7/8 May with a major kite festival featuring professional kite display teams from across the North West and Europe taking part.

II. Invasive Shrimp Alert

Natural England has issued an alert on a possible invasion in our waters of a non-native shrimp which originated in western Europe. It is an aggressive predator which will cause harm to our freshwater ecosystems. There have been sightings in Wales and Cambridgeshire. Any sightings should be reported immediately to the environment agency. Find out more at <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/alerts/index.cfm?id=3> or contact Mark Diamond at the Environment Agency at mark.diamond@environment-agency.gov.uk

e. Unauthorised Activities

Nothing to report. It was Colin Britton's first visit, in his capacity, as the sea fisheries representative and the Chair was able to inform him on issues the Partnership would be interested to hear about at future meetings, such as the stability of cockle and mussel beds and any illegal netting and any fishing enforcement action going on in the bay and estuary.

RSPB site – there has been an increase in fly tipping on the reserve with cost of removal being charged to RSPB.

f. Rail Liaison

New high speed link from/to London via west coast line is commercially viable but the carriers will decide at which stations the trains will stop and Millom seems to be losing out,

however, at present the plans themselves have stalled.

Millom Folk Museum has been appointed as a ticket office for railway and people can purchase rail tickets in advance and get very competitive rates.

6. AOB

Tree removal at Arneby Moss

Liz Bailey's confirmed the following in response to a question raised by Ian Cameron:

"... The trees are being cleared in a project funded by HLS for the restoration of raised bogs. It is necessary in order to regain favourable conditions...."

Jackie Ogden, Natural England, is the case officer dealing with the tree work.

Kite Surfing

This sport is increasing in popularity and is very popular at Silecroft and Walney. However, there are some concerns that the activity could be disturbing nesting and wading birds. Natural England has started a study to see if there is an issue. NE will report back to the Partnership with their findings in due course.

Jet Skis

This was a big problem last year at Sandscale Haws causing major disturbance to roosting birds. However, activity is being monitored and it has only happened on a couple of occasions so far this year.

Mealsgate Road, Millom

Land had been purchased by Urban Splash and a planning application had been submitted for redevelopment. However, it would now appear the site was now back on the market and the application was not going forward.

Events

Mark Holroyd informed the group of some of the events organised by South Copeland Tourism CIC to promote the area:

Kite Fest – Display teams from across the north of England and Europe will be a Haverigg for two fun-filled days over the 7 and 8 May 2011.

Black Combe Walking Festival - 28th May - 5th June 2011. Nine day of walks and talks around the peninsular. The walks range from a gentle ramble to more robust walks along the Duddon Valley and ridges.

Eider's

Natural England are looking at why there is a decreasing population of female eiders and if the reason for they demise is associated with the reduction of mussel beds in and around Foulney Island.

7. Next Meeting and Venue

13 July 2011 at 7:00pm in the Millom Town Council Chambers, Salthouse Road, Millom.