

## DUDDON ESTUARY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the Duddon Estuary Consultative Committee meeting held at Kirksanton Village Hall, Kirksanton, Nr Millom on 10 March 2010 at 2:00pm.**

Richard Scott, Walking to Health (Chair)  
Bob Mandale, RSPB  
Brian Crawford, Millom Town Council (Vice Chair)  
Brian Wright, Millom without PC  
Maggie Cumming, Kirksanton Action Group  
Rob Eccles, NW Sea Fisheries  
David Southward, CCC  
Joss Curwen, SLDC  
Ian Dixon, Environment Agency  
Paul Pearson, CCC (notes)

Jenny Wain, DEP Secretariat  
Wendy Battersby, Millom without PC  
George Cubiss, Ramblers Association  
Derek Lyon, Friends of the Lake District  
Cam Ross, Cumbria Sea Fisheries  
Ian Cameron, SCWFA  
Phil Clague, LDNPA  
Jack Park, CBC and Millom Town Council

### **1. Introductions and Apologies.**

The Chairman welcomed Members and guests to the meeting. Apologies were received from Graham Ford-Keyte, Pauline Preston, Toni Magaen and Jim Ratcliffe and an introduction came from Wendy Battersby who is the new Millom without Parish Councillor sitting on the committee in place of Val Garnett who passed away earlier this year.

### **2. Minutes of Meeting 11 November 2009.**

Agreed and signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Matters arising**

It was confirmed by Jenny that the Shoreline Management Plan was discussed at the last meeting but the consultation period has now closed. Amend attendee list to show that Brian Wright was not the Vice Chair as stated on the minutes.

### **4. Presentation – Rob Whiteley – Marine Conservations Issues** **[robert.whiteley@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:robert.whiteley@naturalengland.org.uk)**

Rob provided an overview of the work Natural England was doing in the marine environment in the North West and around Cumbria. Natural England has recently proposed extensions to the marine protected areas around Liverpool Bay and the Lune Deep. The proposals include Special Protection Areas (SPA for birds) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC for habitat). The Red throated Diver and Common Scoter, found in these two sites, will now be listed on the protected species register. An area of sandbank and reef around the Lune Deep is also proposed for protection as an SAC. NE is monitoring the condition of the shoreline SSSIs, the European marine sites and is carrying out work to map the sea bed and habitats in the North West. NE are also involved in carrying out a number of studies relating to shellfish, Eider and the Menai Strait mussel bed. NE are also inputting into the Irish Sea Conservation Zone project.

### **Presentation – Holly Dreary – Irish Sea Conservation Zones**

**[H.Deary@irishseaconservation.org.uk](mailto:H.Deary@irishseaconservation.org.uk)**      **[www.irishseaconservation.org.uk](http://www.irishseaconservation.org.uk)**

New in post, Holly is the Liaison Officer for Cumbria and Scotland based at Whitehaven. The Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) project is responding to the Government's vision of developing a coherent ecological network of marine biodiversity by 2012 around Britain's coastline. To achieve this the Government plans to build on existing marine protected areas which include the SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites. MCZ will be an additional marine protected area and provide the opportunity to protect habitats and species of national importance that can't be covered by a SSSI and aren't recognised as being internationally important. The project has been set up by Defra, Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

Initial work is bringing together information and stakeholders to help determine where any new MCZ's should be. A regional stakeholder group for the Irish Sea region will make their recommendation to Government in 2011. This body consists of 41 organisations across the region. Government will be the approval body for any MCZs. They will need to meet challenging ecological criteria, whilst seeking to maximise the socio-economic benefits.

Holly stressed to the committee that there was a need for strong engagement with as many

individuals and organisations with a stake in the areas. Although it looks as though neither CCC nor DEP will have representation on the regional stakeholder group, they would be able to be actively involved with the local forums that will be set-up in specific parts of the Irish Sea area where MCZs might come forward.

A lively Q and A session followed the presentations, with both parties participating; the partnership raised several points on the level of protection the MCZ would give an area; impact of low level fishing, bird activity; coming ever inland to forage and breed, the size of fishing nets to the needs of the fishermen's livelihood when discussing the socio-economic benefits with the introduction of the Marine Conservation Zones.

## **5. Standing items**

### **Budget**

There is still a healthy reserve in the funds of £5381. No funding has been received in the last twelve months and the only expenditure to date is for venue hire and website hosting. The Chair asked for suggestions from the committee on any schemes on which the money could be spent. None were forthcoming at the meeting.

### **Nature Conservation – Millom Ironworks Nature Reserve**

The Friends Group have been relatively active over the winter months with new litter and dog bins, and benches, made for recycled plastic, being positioned around the reserve. The wildlife group has been assisted by local schools in producing surveys on the reserve of the flora and fauna which is hoped to be made into a booklet to promote the special qualities of the reserve more widely. Work will take place in Spring to improve footpaths and public access points around the Reserve.

### **Marine and Coastal Issues**

Applications are being sought to the board of the new North West Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Agency that will replace the existing NW and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee, and the Cumbria Sea Fishery Committee in 2011. The Marine Management Organisation has been set up to make such appointments. Applications are specifically being sought from recreational and commercial sea anglers. Brian Crawford has applied for board nomination as a recreational sea angler representative. He currently holds this post for the Sea Fisheries Committee. Applications must be submitted by 12 April.

### **Unauthorised Commercial Activities**

Rob Eccles informed the committee that it's the 'closed' season for cockles but with stocks remaining low they might not re-open in September. The mussel beds were depleted by the November storms. The crab industry is in the doldrums as the market crashed due to the poor quality of meat around the country. Stocks around Walney are very low with the fleet now landing less tonnage than in the past 6 years. The fleet in Barrow is down to one boat, the others are being utilised elsewhere for the gas and the wind turbine industry or are for sale.

Concerns were raised that monofilament netting is extensive in the Duddon. These concerns have been looked into by officers at Environment Agency and the Sea Fisheries. Both confirmed to the meeting that the netting in the Duddon is licensed and that in fact, many of the buoys people can see are linked to lobster pots rather than nets. Rob Eccles pointed out that the byelaws are different in Duddon to anywhere else in Cumbria, and that all investigations into netting proved to be legal and licensed last year. The main offence is likely to be linked to the taking of migratory fish.

Ian Dixon from the Environment Agency is interested to hear about any concerns linked to netting north of Askam. Rob Eccles would deal with concerns south of Askam.

### **Rail Liaison**

Nothing to report. Joss still hasn't heard from Network Rail on the upgrading of Kirby Station and the replacement litter bill hasn't been put *in situ*.

### **Low Carbon and Renewable Energy**

#### **National Policy Statements**

The Partnership held two workshops in December and early February and responded to the Government's National Policy Statements for Nuclear Power Generation with regard to the site at Kirksanton and the effects on the Duddon Estuary nature conservation interests. Copeland BC

supports Sellafield but object to the others; CCC support Sellafield and discount the others. RWE have withdrawn its application for grid connection at Kirksanton and Braystones.

### **Duddon Tidal Energy Study**

Jenny Wain and Brian Crawford both attended a workshop on this study on Monday, 8 March. JW stressed first and foremost that the study is looking at renewable energy potential in the Duddon and any infrastructure improvements that could be supported through this, such as road improvements. The study has been commissioned by Britain's Energy Coast with funding from the NW Development Agency. It is reviewing a feasibility study that was commissioned by the then Department for Trade and Industry in 1994 on the renewable energy potential in the Duddon. This identified three options for a tidal barrage in different parts of the Duddon. So far the study has considered technology linked to a barrage, tidal fence and tidal lagoons. Initial conclusions suggest a barrage is probably still the only technology that is appropriate for the Duddon. Work is ongoing on looking at the effects that could arise on the nature conservation interests within and around the Duddon.

More work is to be carried out on the study and a broad workshop for interested parties will be held in April. It is important for individual organisations to attend this.

Jack Park introduced a press statement from Copeland BC that supported the principle of incorporating road infrastructure.

### **6. AOB**

Ian Cameron queried why the meetings were now being held in the afternoon. This can cause difficulties for people attending who work during the day. The change was agreed by those attending the AGM in November 2009. It was decided that the majority of the committee's representatives were either retired or were attending as part of their job and that a move to the afternoon would be appropriate. However it was recognised that this might prevent people from attending. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held in the afternoon and that the AGM would be held in the evening.

### **7. Date of next meeting:**

14 July 2010 – 2pm Chetwynde Hotel, Abbey Road, Barrow in Furness