

WBP Coastal Ecosystem Group 9th Meeting 30th July 2013, Pembrokeshire Coast NPA Offices, Llanion Park

Present: Peter Rhind Chair (NRW); Sean McHugh (WBP); Jane Hodges (Pembrokeshire Coast NPA); Alan Kearsley-Evans (National Trust); Angus Garbutt (Centre for Ecology & Hydrology); Emmer Litt (NRW); Leanne Bird (Ceredigion CC); Simeon Jones (Carmarthenshire CC); Nick Edwards (NRW); Gill Bell (MCS/WEL); Duncan Ludlow (NRW); Kate Collins (NRW); Julie Garlick (Pembrokeshire Coast NPA - present for field visit)

Apologies: Mike Howe (NRW); John Clark (WEL/RSPB Cymru); Matty Murphy (NRW); Mark Winder (Swansea CBC); Quentin Grimley (NRW); Chris Wynne (Wildlife Trusts Wales); Ant Rogers (Pembrokeshire CC).

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the November 2012 meeting were accepted as a true record.

2. Resilient Ecosystem Fund.

Update on successful 2012 projects:

- a) Emmer Litt gave a presentation and updated the group on progress around the sand dune rejuvenation sites: - Phase 2 of Kenfig (8.5ha); Merthyr Mawr Warren (1.5ha); Newborough Warren (3 plots=3ha); Brownslade Burrows (1ha). In addition, there for on-going geomorphological, biological, and monitoring surveys at the listed sites. The work undertaken was influenced by a study commissioned by CCW and awarded to Ken Pye- a leading coastal geomorphologist and from lessons learnt at Kenfig (phase 1). Further details attached (Sand dune Rejuvenation presentation) and available on the Coastal Ecosystem Group web pages: <http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/Coastal>
- b) Ll n Peninsula coastal connectivity study. The project involved a desktop exercise based on 24 management units. Using SWOT methodology, 4 categories were used to identify management strategies. The next phase is implementation and this would require funding to take forward.
- c) Management of Overton Mere, Gower. Phase 1 study has been completed and shared with NRW prior to works taking place. Grazing infrastructure has been put in place and a grazier identified for the site. Gorse control also featured in the project.

2013 Projects. The coastal funding subgroup met in July to go through coastal applications submitted for the current financial year. The all-Wales panel will meet in September to adjudicate on all projects relating to the various ecosystem groups and working groups including the coastal group.

There was comment that the application forms could be improved to identify specific priority sites and projects and focus on action-based projects. The CEG is a useful point of reference and advice to potential projects prior to application.

3. Sand Dune rejuvenation (item covered in 2a) The presentation is attached with the actions.

4. National Habitat Creation Programme. Peter updated the group. Previously, the programme focused on saltmarsh but now includes all coastal habitats. NRW will be submitting a directive paper identifying potential areas for managed realignment and Environment Agency has carried out case studies to assess feasibility. Based on a traffic light system- green (no major issues identified); amber (feasible pending further studies) red (not feasible). The next stage will involve identifying potential sites which have no landowner/operational constraints. Sites on Anglesey have good potential and in the 3-Rivers RSPB Futurescape project of west Wales.
5. Sea Cliff Symposium. Tuesday 17th and Wednesday 18th September 2013, Llandudno, North Wales

The symposium is titled 'Conservation, management and restoration of coastal cliffs and lake bluffs' with presentations from Pat Doody and Paul Rooney and other leading coastal experts. Peter Rhind will present a talk titled 'the conservation and management of coastal slope woodland with particular reference to the Llyn Peninsula'. The coastal slope woodland on the Llyn Peninsula is an interesting mix of sessile oak and hazel woodland with a rich lichen and fungus assemblage. The habitat has close affinity with Atlantic Hazel Woodlands.

Sea Cliffs symposium link: <http://www.hope.ac.uk/cliffs/>

6. Priority Mapping Vegetated Shingle. Peter indicated that he will be working on this in the near future and hoped to have made progress by the end of August.
7. LBAP update-coastal work in Carmarthenshire. Simeon Jones from Carms CC updated the group. Funding for gorse removal and sea buckthorn removal was received by Carmarthenshire County Council from Cwm Environmental and work carried out at Pembrey Burrows and 20ha have been opened up for grazing. Carms CC is also working with MOD at Pendine and RAF Twyn Burrows on coastal habitat works and sea buckthorn removal. Carms CC is also a member of the Carmarthen Bay SAC regional action group and is working with volunteers around management of activities in the bay.

Leanne Bird (Ceredigion CC) mentioned potential small-scale rights of way improvement projects benefiting biodiversity in Ceredigion by combining coast path and rights of way projects.

8. WBP Evidence Gaps project. The project is engaging the research community in Wales and beyond; addressing evidence gaps in biodiversity and the ecosystem approach. Looking for new approaches and integrating with existing mechanisms, to ensure good provision of evidence and advice to Government, the environment sector and others. Details of evidence gaps and project proposals are on the WBP website and the group was asked to review the information, identify gaps and put forward potential projects. Link: <http://biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/WBP-Evidence-Gaps-Project>

Angus Garbutt is the academic representative of the coastal group and noted the merit of working with university research departments. The group noted that not all gaps are amenable to research and monitoring and surveillance towards outcomes were important. Linking evidence gaps with practical works was also noted as important.

9. Field Visit to coastal vegetated cliff site Manorbier

Jane Hodges updated the group on the coastal work undertaken by PCNPA working with farmers and landowners to secure habitat management. Historically, there has been a retreat of grazing leading to

gorse and scrub encroachment on the seaward side of land holdings. Over the years, PCNPA have been winning hearts and minds, fielding enquiries from landowners and generating support for coastal management internally within PCNPA externally. PCNPA have developed the initiative into 'Conservation the Coastal Slopes' pack offering advice to farmers and landowners and encouraging grazing initiatives. Cough have benefited from this approach as well as many invertebrates and flora. In some areas however, the coastal slope is too steep for grazing and will probably in time revert to woodland.

10. AOB

Sean mentioned bookings for the WBP Conference are open (18th -19th September, Bangor). The conference is themed around ecological networks and has ministerial support and high profile speakers. For further information and booking: <http://biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/Wales-Biodiversity-Partnership-Conference>

CEG Actions spread sheet/work plan needs reviewing and will be an agenda item at the next meeting

Peter Rhind mentioned he may not be in post for the next meeting in Spring 2014. As an interim measure and in the event Peter is unavailable, Mike Howe and Emmer Litt will co-chair the CEG until a permanent chair is appointed.

Field Visit

A number of the group then made the trip to Hill Farm Manorbier to view the management of the coastal slope. The walk was led by Jane Hodges and Julie Garlick from PCNPA. PCNPA have worked with the farmer over many years to build lasting relationship that is benefiting coastal slope habitats and species. PCNPA pay the farmer a small fee and arrange and move grazing stock. Areas of grazed slope were observed some with small-scale burning activities to clear bracken and gorse. On the visit, a family group of chough displayed and chough feeding was observed. Good numbers of graylings were also spotted. The area also has resident Dartford Warbler, none were seen on this occasion but the mosaic habitat supports breeding populations.

Many thanks to Jane, Julie and the PCNPA team for a thoroughly informative and enjoyable site visit.

Actions

No.	Actions	Who	By	Comments
1	Coastal Action Framework/work plan	ALL	Agenda item at the next CEG meeting to update	Sean will circulate current plan with the minutes. A lot of actions are on Peter, need to distribute actions across members
2	Dŵr Cymru Funding	Sean McHugh	Circulate with the minutes	Dŵr Cymru will be announcing a new funding round to help achieve water framework objectives. The fund is open to third sector (charities & not-for-profit) organisations who want to do something to improve failing water bodies in Wales. There has to be some linkage to Dŵr Cymru Assets. Application form from wfd@dwrwymru.com . Early discussion

				with Dŵr Cymru is recommended, to assist the development of a proposal
3	Baglan Burrows	Peter Rhind/Mike Howe/Emmer Litt	Agenda item at the next CEG meeting to update on progress	Development is occurring adjacent the site. Potential for SSSI notification/input into management plans and LDP.
4	Sea Cliff Symposium	ALL SM	Conference booking open Agenda item at the next CEG meeting to update group on conference proceedings	17th and 18th September 2013, Llandudno, North Wales Further information & booking: http://www.hope.ac.uk/cliffs
5	WBP Evidence Gaps project	ALL	Review the information, identify gaps and put forward potential projects	Details of evidence gaps and project proposals are on the WBP website. Link: http://biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/WBP-Evidence-Gaps-Project
6	WBP conference	ALL	Conference bookings open	WBP Conference 'Ecological connectivity' 18 th & 19 th September, Bangor. Further information and booking forms are available: http://biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/Wales-Biodiversity-Partnership-Conference
Previous Actions update				
	Coastal access update	Peter Rhind	Complete	Peter has spoken to Quentin Grimley re: funds for coastal habitat work from the coastal path fund. Unfortunately funds are not available for habitat works & the fund (£2.3m) will focus on communities and marketing.
	Baglan Burrows potential	Peter Rhind/Mike	Ongoing	Invertebrate survey complete & has been distributed to group. The site is

development. CEG Chair needs to discuss with local CCW staff & organise surveys/comment on LDP Deposit. Also needs to be raised at a high level in CCW, potentially to Council	Howe		small but is a good mosaic of habitats with pioneer dune slacks. Potential for it to be notified as part of Crymlyn Burrows SSSI. Agenda item for next CEG meeting
Ecology of beach nourishment report	Emmer Litt	Completed	Report is attached to the actions and also available from http://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/en-GB/Coastal
Coastal vegetated shingle priority areas	Peter Rhind	Ongoing	Peter is working this up and hopes to complete by Aug 2014. Peter will inform the group of interim progress
Sand dune Workshop Proceedings to be made available	Peter Rhind	Ongoing	Peter is still waiting for a final presentation before he can release the proceedings