

Marine Ecosystem Group Meeting 5 – Meeting Notes

Marine Hotel, Aberystwyth

27th March 2012, 10.30 - 1530

Present: Blaise Bullimore (chair / Carmarthen Bay & Estuaries EMS), Mick Green (Independent), Tracey Lovering (WBP support team), Martyn Evans (Monmouthshire CC), Jan Hiddink (Bangor university), Gill Bell (MCS) Paul Brazier (CCW), Judith Oakley (Swansea LBAP / Swansea Met.), Gareth Cunningham (RSPB), Beth Henshall (Wildlife Trusts), Aethne Cooke (CCW),

Apologies: Mary Lewis (CCW), Julia Williams (WG), Diana Reynolds (WG)

Key Messages:

- BB announced that he is stepping down as chair of the group. A long-term replacement chair was not decided upon, but BB, PB and GB are to represent the Marine Ecosystem Group at the next Ecosystem Group Chairs meeting in April which will be chaired by Matthew Quinn, WG Director Environment & Sustainable Futures. Marine Ecosystem Group chairing will be revisited after that meeting. Welsh Government are also expected to announce a restructuring of marine groups relevant to the Living Wales programme; this will likely inform future chairing of the Group as well as its structure and remit.
- AC is leaving CCW, and her role on the group as technical secretary is to be taken by Paul Brazier, CCW.
- It was agreed that the group could benefit from a 'work programme' approach to keep momentum moving forward, to spread the workload and also to communicate biodiversity-related work of the group and its individual members.
- A paper summarising member's views on the future of the Marine Ecosystem Group was endorsed (attached). In addition to the views contained in this paper, the following points are also to be stressed at the Group Chairs meeting in April:

For the Marine Ecosystem Group to be effective, it is essential to have support and active participation from all relevant Welsh Government departments.

It is essential to have the marine environment represented within the Wales Biodiversity Partnership biodiversity framework, working within the same operational structures (e.g. WBP steering group) as the other Ecosystem Groups.

Representation from Welsh Government's Scientific, Evidence & Assessment Division (SEED) on the group could facilitate better communication between the group and Welsh Government, including communication of relevant information between Welsh Government departments.

It is important that any future guise for the Marine Ecosystem Group enables the continued participation from NGOs, academics, European Marine Site officers and other members of the existing group. There remains considerable good will amongst the membership for contributing to an effective Marine Ecosystem Group; however this is at risk should a positive way forward not be determined promptly.

It is important that the Marine Ecosystem Group completes its work to date on target setting for Section 42 priorities so that this advice can be disaggregated to the local level in Wales, where appropriate, and also inform regulation of activities in the marine environment.

- TL is going to present a collation of regulatory and legislative issues identified by all the Ecosystem Groups to the Living Wales project group concerned with regulatory reform and improvement.
- It was agreed to forward a copy of the agreed Future of the Marine Ecosystem Group paper and the above key points to Matthew Quinn in advance of the Ecosystem Group Chairs meeting

	Action Points	Who	Progress
1	Circulate Living Wales Programme structure and staff for information	TL (attached)	Complete
2	Circulate most recent version of marine policy and legislative issues for members to update. Members to send any comments to Gareth Cunningham by 4/5/12 . This will be used to update TL's collation of regulatory and legislative issues to be brought to the Living Wales Regulatory Reform and Improvement group (see above).	PB (attached) & All	
3	Circulate Lowland Grassland & Heath Ecosystem Group draft work programme for information.	TL (attached)	Complete
4	Circulate proposed approach for setting marine targets for comment. Send comments to Paul Brazier on both the general approach and content of information fields. Aethne to finalise prior to action.	PB	To follow
5	Circulate management actions on halting biodiversity loss to members for input. Actions will be sent out to external consultation post collation. Aethne to finalise prior to action.	PB	To follow