

**SKOMER MARINE NATURE RESERVE**  
**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**MINUTES OF 23rd MEETING, THURSDAY 10th May 2012**  
**HELD AT MARLOES VILLAGE HALL**

**PRESENT**

<i>Mr J Aldred</i>	<i>Local fisherman pm only</i>
Ms G Bell	Marine Conservation Society
Mr B Bullimore	Independent
Mrs A Bunker	Countryside Council for Wales
Mr M Burton	Countryside Council for Wales
Mrs S Burton	Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation
Ms K Collins	Environment Agency
Dr R Crump	CHAIRMAN
Mr N Davies	South & West Wales Fishing Communities Ltd
Dr W Dodds	World Wildlife Fund Cymru
Mrs Y Evans	Marloes & St. Brides Community Council
Ms Tonia Forsyth	Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum
Ms Beth Henshall	Wildlife Trusts Wales
Miss J Hodges MBE	Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
<i>Mr M Hunt</i>	<i>Welsh Yachting Association guest</i>
Mr B Jones	British Sub-Aqua Club
Mrs J Jones	Countryside Council for Wales
Ms M Lewis	Countryside Council for Wales
Ms K Lock	Countryside Council for Wales
Mr T Luddington	Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum
Mr D McDonough	Welsh Yachting Association
Mrs C Millican	Pembrokeshire Field Study Council centres
Mr D Miller MBE	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Mr P Newman	Countryside Council for Wales
Mr J O'Connor	Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers
Miss L Pauls	Countryside Council for Wales
Ms K Ramsay	Countryside Council for Wales
<i>Mr M Regulous</i>	<i>Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority pm only</i>
Mr J Reynolds	Dale Sailing Company
<i>Mr G Rudder</i>	<i>Local fisherman pm only</i>
<i>Mr S Rudder</i>	<i>Local fisherman</i>
Mr P Smithies	Marloes & St Brides Community Council
Mr C Taylor	Wildlife Trust South & West Wales
<i>Mr A Truelove</i>	<i>Broadside Boat Charters pm only</i>
Mrs M Warlow	South & West Wales Fishing Communities Ltd
Miss L Wilberforce	Wildlife Trust South & West Wales
<i>Miss J Williams</i>	<i>Head of Marine Branch Welsh Government pm only</i>
Mrs A Winterton	Countryside Council for Wales

Apologies were received from: Mr J Archer-Thomson (Independent), Mr I Ball (World Wide Fund for Nature), Mr L Bateman (Dive Pembrokeshire UK), Mr F Bunker (Marine Conservation Society), Mr M Camplin (Countryside Council for Wales), Mr P Coates (Welsh Government Fisheries), Ms L George (Welsh Government), Ms M Hatton-Ellis (Countryside Council for Wales), Mr D Kennard (Welsh Association of Sub-Aqua Clubs), Mr D Love (Royal National Lifeboat Institution), Ms S Kessel (Wildlife Trust South & West Wales), Ms N Lough (Countryside Council for Wales), Mr P Marshall (Welsh Government Fisheries), Mr N O'Sullivan (Inshore Fisheries Group), Dr D Parker (Countryside Council for Wales), Dr R Perkins (Cardiff University), Mr R Thomas (Countryside Council for Wales), Mr G Thompson (Crown Estate), Dr J Turner (School of Ocean Sciences), Mr P Varallo (Environment Agency), Dr D Worrall (Countryside Council for Wales).

Absent were: Mr T Allen (Welsh Government Fisheries), Mr D Bell (British Sub-Aqua Club), Cllr M Davies (Pembrokeshire County Council), Mr R Ellis (National Trust), Mr N Jacobson (Crown Estate), Mr I Johnson (Old Mill Diving Services), Dr M Kaiser (School of Ocean Sciences), Ms M Rees (Environment Agency), Mr P Wensley (Welsh Government Fisheries).

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

A minutes silence was observed to remember Mr David Bray and Dr Sue Shackley, both former members of the Committee who passed away in the last year.

Dr Chris Wooldridge (Marine Biosciences at Cardiff University) has retired and has been replaced on the advisory committee by Dr Rupert Perkins.

## **2. MINUTES FROM THE 2011 MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

Mr B Bullimore pointed out that in Section 4 of the minutes MHESG should read MHWSG (Milford Haven Waterway Surveillance Group), and PSCO should read PISCO (Partnership for Interdisciplinary Studies of Coastal Oceans). In Section 6 it should state that Blaise Bullimore is also a member of SCEG (Stakeholder and Citizens Engagement Group). The minutes were agreed by all present as a true and accurate account subject to the above amendments.

Mr B Bullimore informed the committee that Ross Bullimore had won a prize from Plymouth University for his undergraduate project and again thanked MNR staff for their support in 2010.

### **ACTIONS**

Highly Protected Marine Conservation Zones - Mr P Newman to circulate the consultation document to committee members once it was published on the Welsh Government website and to convene a special meeting of the Advisory committee. Both were done and the HPMCZ meeting is taking place following the annual committee meeting today.

## **3. STAFFING**

Ms Jen Jones has been appointed as the seasonal assistant for 2012.

## **4. ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011/2012**

Mr P Newman gave an illustrated summary of the main events of the 2011/12 season.

Mr D Miller asked if lower numbers of divers may be related to weather. Mr P Newman pointed out that despite bad weather in August there were higher numbers, but that numbers were just generally down. This view was supported by Mr B Jones.

## **5. MONITORING REPORT 2011**

M Burton gave a presentation on the monitoring of features of the Reserve.

Ms T Forsyth asked if surveying took place in other areas to compare with the SMNR work. Mr B Bullimore said similar work has been undertaken in the past at Lundy and the Isles of Scilly but not consistently.

Mr T Luddington asked if a simple summary of the project status report could be issued with bullet points in addition to the full report for easy reference. Mr P Newman drew his attention to the summary included in the annual report, but agreed that perhaps a very short "executive" summary could be included in future.

## **6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Mrs Y Evans enquired about the progress of the proposed Single Environment Body (now Single Body, SB). Mrs A Winterton replied that the "Natural Resources Wales" consultation had now finished and there would be a meeting of the Assembly on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May. Work is progressing towards the SB coming into force in April 2013, but something should be known about the management by this autumn. Also still current was the "Sustaining a Living Wales" consultation, which was leading to the implementation of an environment bill for Wales in 2013/14.

Mr B Bullimore pointed out that it is difficult for CCW staff at this time with two consultations taking place simultaneously. Mrs A Winterton agreed that it is an ever evolving situation.

Mrs Y Evans requested that it be recorded in the minutes that there was still concern about the SB and how the SMNR team will fit into this. Mrs Y Evans suggested that the committee should make some sort of representation to ensure that the need for the Reserve and the team to manage it is supported and continues. Mrs A Winterton said that the current management will most probably continue for the next couple of years until new legislation takes over.

Mr M Burton said that SMNR would at least become a Marine Conservation Zone and that its conservation objectives would have to be rewritten to fit the new legislation. As part of the SB it could be that the Skomer team end up covering a larger area as the Environment Agency does not have a dedicated Welsh survey vessel.

## **7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at 2.00 pm at Marloes Village Hall.

## **BREAK FOR LUNCH**

### **SKOMER HIGHLY PROTECTED MARINE CONSERVATION ZONE DISCUSSION**

## **8. INTRODUCTION**

Dr R Crump introduced Julia Williams, head of Marine Branch Welsh Government, who thanked the Committee for the invitation to attend the meeting. She in turn introduced Kirsten Ramsay and Mary Lewis from CCW, who have been involved in the provision of advice on the HPMCZ site selection process to WG. Miss Williams then gave a brief summary of the HPMCZ consultation programme.

In 2009 the Marine and Coastal Access Act gave Welsh Ministers powers to designate Marine Conservation Zones. Taking advice from CCW, the Welsh Government decided to develop a policy to use this power to designate a small number of Marine Conservation Zones with a high level of protection in order to promote ecosystem recovery and resilience. These Highly Protected Marine Conservation Zones (HPMCZs) would be set up mainly within existing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). The Welsh Government set up a Steering Group and, to advise on a scientific approach to site selection, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). She told the meeting that in England the process was different. England had not adopted an exclusively highly protected approach but a mainly multi-use approach which had resulted in 147 sites initially being selected by regional stakeholder groups.

The decision was made from early on to have only 3 or 4 HPMCZs in Wales. Twenty four “focus” sites were chosen initially, and these were then refined to 10 “potential” sites after consideration by TAG and in line with the site selection guidance. The sites were filtered out by considering their relative ecological merits, physical, legal, and strategic policy constraints. Some sites that may have been good ecologically were deemed unsuitable, for example Ramsey Island was filtered out due to the Welsh Government’s Renewable Energy policy because it is the site of a pilot project for tidal energy. Some were withdrawn due to a mixture of legal and policy constraints, for example parts of Milford Haven.

As a result of this process, ten potential site options feature in the first stage consultation..

Welsh Government powers extend out to 12 nautical miles or less offshore, with responsibility for areas further offshore lying with DEFRA.

Miss J Williams stressed that this consultation was only the first stage of a three stage iterative process and that the next consultation would be refined to take into account the feedback received during this consultation. She explained that the boundaries were illustrative and the expectation is that information submitted in response to the consultation may change them and/or the size of the area. Final designation of the 3 or 4 HPMCZs was planned to take place in 2014.

Dr R Crump emphasised that only the Skomer potential HPMCZ site was to be discussed at this meeting. The aim was not to make decisions as a committee, but to invite comments and questions to ascertain what a HPMCZ at the Skomer site will mean to the bodies represented on the committee. The committee members were encouraged to submit their own responses to the consultation.

## **9. SKOMER MCZ BOUNDARY**

Mr P Newman showed the proposed boundary for the Skomer HPMCZ, which would take in Marloes Sands, but not fully extend to the existing MNR boundary, especially to the north of Skomer MNR. Dr R Crump pointed out that the existing

MNR boundary lines are straight, well known, and shown on charts and felt that there could be confusion if it was changed to those suggested for the HPMCZ.

Mr D McDonough said that the main concern for yachts are possible restrictions on the mooring and anchoring areas in North and South Haven and that otherwise the position of the main boundary is not an issue to yachts.

Ms J Williams said that having a smaller boundary could be more attractive to users and might prove a smaller area to enforce. She invited feedback on the boundary and added that the more pragmatic issues relating to boundary shape will be considered for the next consultation.

Mr B Bullimore asked why, when drawing the boundary, had some areas been added that did not seem to be very diverse, and some existing areas excluded even though there has been unparalleled monitoring in these areas for over 20 years. He also took issue with the apparent disregard for practicality and good practice that had been used for the existing boundary with its straight lines of sight and easily defined distances from shore.

Dr R Crump asked why Marloes Sands had been included.

Ms K Ramsay explained that when the potential sites were being drawn up, CCW had to find a method to suit all ten sites. Boundaries were drawn up to include as many different habitats as possible and to follow certain protocols. Marloes was included in the Skomer boundary as inter-tidal sand was not present elsewhere in the site. Some areas within the existing boundary of the Reserve were excluded as the habitat was found elsewhere within the HPMCZ boundary.

Mrs Y Evans was concerned that including Marloes sands would have an effect on tourism in the area, and the Community Council would be meeting to discuss this. Mr P Smithies asked if people would be stopped from going onto the beach and building sandcastles. Ms J Williams answered that only activities seen to be potentially damaging or disturbing would be controlled, and that the list of Frequently Asked Questions on the consultation website was being revised to include this. She invited feedback from the Council by 31<sup>st</sup> July to be taken into account for the next consultation stage.

Mr A Truelove stated that the boundaries were not an issue to most users of the proposed site, but the highly protected status would make a difference. However, it would be easier for water users if the existing boundary was used.

Ms M Lewis clarified the fact that if Skomer became simply an MCZ the existing boundary would remain. If it became a HPMCZ with the new proposed boundary implemented, the area between boundaries would remain an MCZ. Therefore some areas would be more highly protected than others.

## **10. ACTIVITIES**

Mr R Crump went through Table 9 of the consultation document and invited comments.

1. Archaeology and Wrecks. Not currently an issue in the MNR boundary area.
2. Cables. Mr P Smithies asked what had become of the Wave Dragon project which did propose to bring a cable onshore at Marloes Sands. Ms J Williams replied that Wave Dragon did not have any proposals in with WG at that time. Ms T Forsyth added an update on Wave Dragon – PCF is in contact with them but current they did not have any funding to develop the project.
3. Dredge spoil disposal. The old disposal site off Milford Haven is closed. All dredge spoil disposal has to take place at the offshore disposal site, which was located specifically to minimise any impacts at Skomer MNR.
4. Aggregate Dredging. Not an aggregate site.
5. Energy. No plans in the area
6. Renewable energy. Ramsey Island was identified as the site of a tidal energy pilot project.
7. Commercial fishing. The HPMCZ proposal would prohibit all extraction of living resources so all fishing would have to stop.

Mr N Davies (local fisherman) stated that the fishing industry was supportive of the current MNR with the current restrictions on dredging and trawling. Potting was not considered by the industry to be a damaging activity and marine conservation efforts should be concentrated on protecting the site from damaging activities whilst allowing non-damaging

activities to continue. Closing the area to pot fishing would result in people losing their livelihood, which was unacceptable.

Mr S Rudder (local fish buyer) added that some level of protection around Skomer Island was a good thing and that the ban on dredging and trawling was supported by fishermen. The ground around Skomer was very important for the local fishing industry and supplied a lot of the shellfish that is landed. Closing the area would have a big impact on people's livelihoods and in the current economic climate that was not acceptable.

Mrs Y Evans noted that Marloes had a strong historic link with fishing and that although there was only one fisherman in the village at present, there used to be dozens.

Dr R Crump asked if compensation would be an option.

Mr N Davies replied that everyone had a price, but to compensate for the area in question would be unaffordable. Only damaging activities should be restricted. It should be considered illegal to remove a person's livelihood.

Mr A Truelove stated that the effect of closing the area would be to displace the current fishing effort to other local areas not currently exploited, increasing the density of gear elsewhere.

Mr G Rudder (local fisherman) said that he fished a small amount of gear in the current MNR but had a lot of gear in the surrounding area. The displacement of fishing gear from the Skomer area would have a big effect on his livelihood and put a lot of pressure on other areas. He also noted that he did not think compensation would be an option and that compensation would not cover people like him who were affected by displacement. He would prefer to be allowed to continue fishing in a sustainable manner.

Mr P Smithies asked whether a smaller area would be acceptable to the fishing industry. What areas were important to the fishery? Were there less important areas? If SMNR became a breeding ground would that be acceptable? He added that the prohibition on shore angling would be more of a concern to the local community.

Miss J Williams also asked whether a change to the boundary would make it more acceptable to the fishing industry.

Mr S Rudder pointed out that there would be some loss of income with any total ban and questioned how that income could be replaced.

Dr R Crump noted that there was international evidence to show that small HPMCZs benefited commercial fish stocks and that in New Zealand the nursery effect of no take zones has resulted in the fishing industry supporting the areas and fishing along the edge with increased catches.

Mr S Rudder replied that New Zealand could not be compared to Britain, which had a very different population and a more intensive fishing industry.

Dr R Crump questioned this. In his experience there was a high level of commercial fishing in New Zealand.

Mr B Bullimore noted that the evidence level required by WG from CCW to justify the areas chosen in the selection of sites was very high. Would the same level of evidence be required to substantiate the claims made on the socio-economic front? Where was the evidence for potting being non-damaging and where was the evidence of the fishing industry being sustainable?

Miss J Williams replied that it would depend upon what we were trying to achieve. WG needed information on what the socio-economic effect would be.

Mr B Bullimore again asked if the socio-economic argument would require the same level of evidence if it was claimed that a particular activity was benign to that required of the ecological evidence when the sites were proposed.

Miss J Williams replied that socio-economic data would be taken into account for the next consultation stage but she was not sure at this stage how they would be analysed.

Mr P Smithies stated that there would be socio-economic harm done to fishermen, who would be unable to use the area in the future.

Miss J Williams stated that the basis for the type of highly protected area proposed in the consultation was for the

ecosystem to function as naturally as possible.

8. Recreational fishing. The HPMCZ proposal would ban all extraction commercial or recreational so recreation fishing would be stopped.

Mr J O Connor (Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers) made three main points:

(a) The boundary included a huge amount of mainland, a lot of which is very popular for shore angling (for example the north Marloes peninsula). The island of Skomer is not so important for angling.

(b) Policing. It would be all but impossible to police shore angling. A lot took place at night and most was done by individuals with no connection to any club/organisation. Even engaging with these people will be very difficult let alone policing them.

(c) Effect on tourism. There are many seasonal visitors who enjoy angling as part of their holiday in the area. By restricting angling it would reduce the attractiveness of the area for these people to visit.

Mrs Y Evans reiterated that many anglers using the mainland sites do so at all times of day and night and so a ban would not be easy to police.

Mr P Smithies asked if WG had figures on the number of anglers or other visitors using the area, given that tourism was so critical to the local economy. Miss J Williams said that WG did have some figures from the Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum recreational audit, but that more information was needed.

Mr P Smithies said that he thought these proposals would have an effect on visitor numbers and that visiting anglers were important to the local economy. Mr B Jones questioned how important these anglers could be if they mainly visited at night. Mr P Smithies replied that many were also around in the day time.

Mrs Y Evans voiced concern that there was potential for tourists to think they were not welcome at Marloes. Mr B Bullimore agreed that tourism was a major contributor to the local economy, but that the potential benefits of HPMCZs to increase the “attractiveness” of the area and enhance the tourist experience should not be underestimated. He cited the example of the Leigh Marine Reserve in New Zealand.

Ms T Forsyth noted that the consultation concentrated only on the negative aspects of HPMCZs. At previous “No Take” debates there were a lot of positive aspects discussed, but these appeared to have been forgotten this time around. Lessons from other international marine protected areas’ experiences needed to be drawn on.

Miss J Williams agreed that the PISCO “The Science of Marine Reserves (Europe)” report is very positive about the environmental benefits of HPMCZs, but there were not so many positive effects on the socio-economic side.

Ms G Bell summarised the findings of the PISCO report which looked at a 150 marine reserves all around the world: Biomass increased on average by over 400%, diversity increased by 21% and it was found that the commercial fleet would fish the boundary to exploit the “edge effect” of “overspill” of species. The density of fish, the size of catch and the diversity all increased and economic benefits of reserves were identified. She concluded by saying that Skomer MNR was the ideal place to have a HPMCZ.

Mr A Truelove commented that because of the seabed types around Skomer there was not much reef at the boundary to exploit the “edge effect”.

Mr S Rudder noted that from a commercial point of view the value of shellfish drops if they increase in size too much. Ms G Bell replied that with an increase in size there is an increase in fecundity in shellfish species.

Mrs Y Evans stated that WG should be aware that the MNR had been collecting data on recreational use of the area for many years. She again voiced concern about the impact on tourism in the area if holidaymakers were prevented from fishing for mackerel. Mr B Bullimore said he suspected that many visitors had no intention of going fishing.

Mr A Truelove commented that as a charter boat operator he felt the amount of fish taken from the Reserve by recreational anglers was very low and angling only targeted mobile species. Other than the lost gear on the seabed angling had very little effect on the wildlife.

Mr N Davies noted that if the positive impacts (such as increased stocks at the edge of a HPMCZ) were seen straight away then he would be happier, but these effects took years to develop. He said that there was still no evidence of commercial benefits from the Lundy “No Take Zone”. HPMCZs would alienate a lot of people and cause bad feeling, and if you

concentrated on better management of damaging activities there would be no need for them. He felt that fishery management measures such as minimum sizes for certain species accomplished more for marine conservation than banning fishing.

9. Military activity. Not relevant to the area.

10. Ports, boats & shipping. Dr R Crump summarised that anchoring was identified as a depositional and damaging activity and would be banned. The passage of vessels and general navigation was not identified as a problem. There were existing speed limits around the MNR, therefore no likely change in management in the event of HPMCZ status.

Mr A Truelove noted that South and North Haven were both important anchorages and that not being able to anchor in South Haven between dives would have some impact on charter operators.

Mrs Y Evans asked about how larger vessels would be stopped from anchoring. Large tankers have been seen anchoring very close to the north Marloes peninsula. Mr D Miller (MCA) said that such vessels were putting themselves at risk by anchoring too close to shore and that the MCA would not recommend it.

Mr D McDonough said that the anchorage in South Haven and the mooring in North Haven were very important for sailors in the area, providing safe havens in rough weather or when waiting for a safe passage through Jack Sound.

Dr R Crump asked if providing visitor mooring at South Haven, such as those currently at North Haven would be a viable alternative. He presumed that these would have to be installed before the HPMCZ came in force. Mr D McDonough replied that he thought that would be a good idea.

Mr B Bullimore said that the technology for eco-friendly moorings did exist and could be used.

Mr A Truelove noted that he needed to anchor from time to time over the reefs on the south side of Skomer for his angling charters especially in strong winds.

Mr T Luddington commented that kayaking would not be affected by the HPMCZ proposals.

Mr B Bullimore made a general point that the consultation document was quite negative and could be read to mean that a family holiday maker would not be allowed to make sandcastles on the beach. There needed to be changes made to the "Frequently Asked Questions" document to dispel such an idea. Ms G Bell added that in a recent media interview she had been asked the question "will sandcastles be banned?" illustrating the common misconception that these proposals would result in a total access ban.

Mr P Smithies noted that recently on Marloes Sands a film crew had needed to use mechanical diggers as part of the film making process and wondered whether this would have been permitted if the beach had been part of a HPMCZ. He added that this use of the shore had brought tens of thousands of pounds into the local economy, if not more. Mrs A Winterton replied that refusal of permission would not necessarily be the case as the film crew had had to apply for consent to use the beach in any case as it was a SSSI and that consent was granted by CCW as the activity was deemed non-damaging.

Mr M Burton asked whether anchoring could be allowed in specific areas of a HPMCZ. Miss J Williams said that anchoring was considered to be a depositional activity. However Ms M Lewis added that because the proposed boundary was only indicative at this stage it could possibly be re-drawn after the first consultation to allow for areas where anchoring would be permitted.

Mrs S Burton asked for any responses to the consultation to be constructive. She reasoned that it would be far more useful to WG if people would mention how the proposals could be changed so that they could be supported rather than just a flat rejection. For example: 'I am in support of the HPMCZ as long as we can have an area for anchoring or mooring set aside'. This will sound much more positive and avoid losing the parts of the proposal that are acceptable or welcome.

Mr T Luddington added that a clear statement was required setting out which activities would be permitted in an HPMCZ and which would not.

11. Scuba diving. Table 9 appeared to suggest that scuba diving would not be permitted within HPMCZs, whereas in other parts of the consultation document it is mentioned only as a potentially damaging activity to some especially sensitive habitats, or if involving large numbers of divers, or novice divers with low skill levels.

Miss J Williams said that the "Frequently Asked Questions" document would be revised. There was no intention of a total

ban on diving, and any restrictions on the activity would depend on the sensitivities of each site. Ms Mary Lewis added that CCW's advice to WG on activities was that SCUBA diving had the potential under very specific circumstances to be damaging, but there were ways of managing the activity to reduce or avoid damage. Miss J Williams said the damaging activity referred to in Table 9 was related to anchoring of dive boats not diving itself.

12. Research and data collection. Dr R Crump stated that it was important that the area continued to be used for research and monitoring and that this might involve the issue of permits when the removal of specimens was required. He added that in order for the MNR's long-term monitoring data to be maintained it would require adequate resources.

Miss J Williams confirmed that the MNR's monitoring work should be able to continue without affecting the site's ecological objectives. She recognised that Skomer had a tried and tested system, but that other sites were very different.

Mr B Bullimore said that Skomer was unique in having so much monitoring data, and that it was essential that this monitoring should be continued. He added that it was unfortunate that the data collected by the MNR was not acknowledged in Table 9 of the consultation document, especially for commercial and recreational use. Ms M Lewis said that current biological monitoring work at Skomer adheres to the objectives of HPMCZs, one of which roles being to provide study areas and to provide monitoring data for reporting on the site's status every six years. The MNR's current policy of permitting sampling only where no other method is suitable or available also fits the HPMCZ model.

Ms T Forsyth added that it was important that future monitoring continued to include the socio-economic (i.e. commercial and recreational use) and not just the environmental factors.

Ms K Ramsey (CCW) pointed out that it was intended that site-specific detail on such issues as how activities might be managed would be included in the next consultation. She emphasized that the current consultation would not be the last opportunity to comment. Miss J Williams said that further refinement would be needed for the next consultation stage.

Mr P Newman asked whether the list of sites would be reduced for the next consultation stage. Miss J Williams said that it probably would, but that much depended on the responses from the first consultation and that it was possible that some of the original 24 "focus" sites came back into the process.

## **11. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES**

Mr P Newman began by giving a recap on the existing byelaws and voluntary measures in place in the Marine Nature Reserve as follows:

### **LEGAL**

- No take of scallops (either species)
- No dredging/beam trawling
- Speed limit of 5 knots within 100 metres
- No take of any living resource (not including commercial species)

### **VOLUNTARY**

- No take of commercial species (including spearfishing)
- No netting within 50m and certain inlets
- No anchoring except in designated areas
- No angling/competitions/bottom fishing
- No take of nearshore/territorial fish
- Seasonal exclusion zones to protect breeding seals and nesting seabirds

Table C Annex 4 of the consultation document summarised the proposed management measures for all "potentially damaging" activities, and these were compared with existing MNR management measures:

1. Scientific research. MNR requires permits to be applied for in order to remove samples for research.
2. Navigation/transit of vessels. Speed limit byelaw was introduced on designation in 1990 together with codes of conduct setting out seasonal access restrictions for boats to prevent disturbance to breeding seals and seabirds. Fuelling on shore is already subject to anti pollution legislation.
3. Moorings/buoys. CCW currently holds the MNR seabed lease and is therefore the licensing authority for moorings etc. Visitor moorings and eelgrass markers are in place as management tools to protect and reduce damage to the eelgrass bed in North Haven.

4. Vehicular access. Vehicle access is limited to above high water at Martins Haven due to the nature of the beach and this in very low numbers.
5. Scuba diving/snorkelling. Diver numbers at Skomer MNR were at a historic low in 2011 and thought unlikely to increase to a high enough number to warrant restrictions. Novice divers tended to be limited to Martins Haven as diving around Skomer, where more sensitive species and habitats are found, was in challenging areas subject to tidal currents and extreme depth.
6. Swimming. The chance of damage to marine life from swimmers was minimal, and numbers had always been very low.
7. Walking/hiking etc. Codes of conduct for activities on the shore have been drawn up by the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter. Because of the nature of the coast around the MNR these activities have tended to be limited to Martins Haven and Albion Sands, where the shore habitat was not fragile.
8. Horse riding. See walking/hiking.

Mr P Newman then invited discussion on Part 4 of the consultation document dealing with the Conservation objectives and management measures for HPMCZs.

Mr B Bullimore expressed concern about the proposed text in Box 1A: Conservation Vision: “The purpose of the highly protected site is to contribute to ecosystem recovery and resilience ...” He questioned how much the small areas of conservation proposed would actually contribute. Postage stamp areas were not enough. Miss J Williams said it meant that the sites would be contributing to the wider network of existing MPAs. Ms M Lewis agreed that the text should be taken in a wider context and the bit about “contributing” would not go into the conservation objectives.

Mr P Smithies said it would be difficult to sell the proposals to the community. There seems to be little attempt by WG to stop non-sustainable fishing on a wider scale, but they are willing to impose controls on small areas such as Marloes, which is a drop in the ocean. Miss J Williams commented that small sites would still “contribute” to ecosystems.

Mr B Bullimore repeated his concern about the wording of the text, namely the misunderstanding of the word ‘contribute’. He questioned whether WG could deliver the promises that were being stated.

Mr J O’Connor commented that anglers did not see the point in prohibiting angling in just a small area as there would be no fish to catch in a few years anyway because of the failures of the European Common Fisheries Policy.

Ms G Bell commented that good practice stated that a minimum of 25% of UK waters should be protected. The total of the 3-4 proposed HPMCZs would be less than 1% of Welsh waters, and would therefore have a tiny contribution. Existing networks are failing to meet conservation objectives and although the new areas have been chosen for a variety of different habitats they are all still only tiny bits of habitats.

Ms K Ramsay stated that the sites were selected using the guidance described in the consultation document and the separate HPMCZ site selection guidance document using a range of criteria, not just habitat diversity, and that the size of habitat patches were considered viable by the Technical Advisory Group.

Mrs A Bunker pointed out that even small areas will contribute something, but the larger the areas the greater the contribution.

Dr R Crump said that in New Zealand it was hoped that by 2020 10% of the coastline would be marine reserves. Would there be the commitment in Wales to even manage the 3-4 sites we are getting in terms of resources?

Miss J Williams stressed that resources would be looked at as part of the iterative consultation process.

Dr R Crump pointed out that the conservation objective was to set aside a small area of seabed and allow it to be left to return to its natural state.

Mrs Y Evans commented that if the conservation objectives for the Skomer site could be achieved by just leaving the area to develop naturally the temptation might be to invest very little resources into the area in terms of staff and funding. Mr M Burton said that the sites would be left alone but would still need to be monitored, to comply with reporting requirements and also to compare controlled areas with non-protected areas.

Mr P Smithies stated that to convince the local community on the need for HPMCZs it would require investment of resources. These would include; staff, interpretation to explain and sell the area to visitors, education material and an obvious commitment to continue to fund these.

Dr R Crump asked what would happen if the SMNR became only an MCZ, would there still be resources available to put into it? Miss J Williams replied that impact assessments in terms of costs of monitoring for all sites would need to be looked at in the 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation. Ms M Lewis added that available resources would also be considered in the next consultation. Miss J Williams stated that if the SMNR did not become a highly protected MCZ, it would not necessarily mean a change in resources.

Ms G Bell commented that the 'Living Wales' consultation had revealed that WG Marine Branch is not being given full resources and that this needed to be highlighted and put into responses to that consultation. WG Marine Branch was already operating on a very small budget.

## **12. MANAGEMENT IN THE FUTURE**

Mr P Newman began by saying that much of the management work currently carried out at Skomer was relevant to the management of a HPMCZ according to what has been identified in the consultation document already. The document identified the possibility of small teams working across one or more sites to deliver all aspects of HPMCZ management, not just biological monitoring, but water quality monitoring, compliance monitoring, awareness-raising, and enforcement in the form of deterrence, just as the MNR team do at present. He added that he was confident that a cost benefit analysis of the current management regime would show value for money. Mrs Y Evans asked if there would be the need for a larger building if enforcement was also to be site-based. Mrs J Williams replied that the consultation process was not at that stage yet.

Mr T Luddington suggested that when people submitted a response to the first consultation, they should include clear suggestions about boundaries and policing.

Mr B Bullimore stated that according to the consultation the proposed management would follow the SAC model. However, this has proved ineffective up to now. He added that enforcement would presumably be the role of WG Fisheries, but that fisheries enforcement had not always been sympathetic to ecological objectives in the past. The reference to day to day management was welcomed and this was a role where the current MNR management had been shown to work and should continue.

Mr T Luddington mentioned that he was constantly struggling to get funding for the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter and Pembrokeshire Marine Code groups, but feels that they were vitally important in terms of protecting the wildlife and educating sea users. The first marine code for kayakers was created because there were a number of complaints about disturbance around Ramsey Island. The code compliance rate was now around 95%, but there was still no core funding and it would be nice to see adequate resources put in to raising awareness and maintaining the momentum of these initiatives.

Ms T Forsyth pointed out that Pembrokeshire Marine Code is a voluntary code of practice and there are still 5% who don't comply, which means it is very difficult to enforce without legal backup. Structure is needed to make it work, resources are needed for compliance monitoring and enforcement with legal backup is also needed. A dedicated team like the existing one at the SMNR makes a difference, and there must be such a team for enforcement and policing in the HPMCZs.

Ms T Forsyth informed the room that Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum on behalf of WAG would be running 2 engagement events: in Pembrokeshire on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and north Wales on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2012. Details would be posted on the WG website.

Dr R Crump invited any other comments.

Mr N Davies commented that if the fishing industry was on-side there would be no need to police the zones. Otherwise, fishing would become a night-time, "underground" activity and it would be difficult to police.

## **CONSULTATION QUESTIONS**

Miss J Williams reminded the meeting that one of the key responses was where to put the boundary.

Dr R Crump stated that in order to take this forward it would mean making compromises.

Mr P Newman explained that the outcome of this meeting would be a collation of all the comments from the day. These will then be circulated to the attendees and then sent to WG as a form of response to the HPMCZ consultation.

Ms G Bell asked how the positive impacts on tourism could be represented in this consultation.

Miss J Williams said that those positive comments could be considered in the 1<sup>st</sup> stage but would be looked at in more detail in the 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation.

Mrs Y Evans commented that the consultation questions would put a lot of people off. Were these the only responses that WG would be looking at?

Miss J Williams replied that the questions were only a guide and that people need not be constrained in their responses.

Mr B Bullimore made some final comments. He had worked for 30 years on the MNR and Dr R Crump had contributed for 40 years into the MNR and marine conservation. The MNR had been successful despite its limitations and he now felt there was a real risk that all of that could be lost. The consultation process, in his view, was designed to fail. It was very frightening to most people, concentrating on the “costs” of designating sites and not on a positive way forward.

Miss J Williams replied that, although first stage, this was a formal public consultation and the risks of scaring people had to be balanced with the need for transparency about the possible outcomes; otherwise there would be legitimate criticism of WG. She asked whether he, or anyone else, thought that the English model, designed to select mainly multi-use MCZs, would have been more appropriate. The general response was that it would not have been.

Mr P Smithies asked what would happen if there was no HPMCZ at Skomer? Would this mean the loss of local jobs (currently 2 families in the village supported by SMNR employment) and investment and would a HPMCZ bring with it a promise of resources for its management.

Mrs Y Evans supported his concerns about the future of the MNR team because of the uncertainty caused by developments such as HPMCZ and the Single Body.

Miss J Williams replied that the development of the Single Body that would take over from CCW did add uncertainty to the staffing issue. However the Single Body would be there to deliver WG policy and this included the implementation of HPMCZs.

Dr R Crump added that it would be a tragedy if, after 21 years of running the Reserve, the SMNR team was lost as a result of upheavals caused by HPMCZ and Single Body.

Dr R Crump then thanked Miss J Williams for attending the meeting and hoped everyone had found it useful.

Miss J Williams added that the Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership conference concentrating on MPAs would be held in Cardiff on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July and encouraged people to attend.

Ms J Hodges (PCNPA) offered a vote of thanks to the Dale and Marloes WI for providing the excellent food and refreshments.