CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

Draft minutes of the Pen Ll_n a'r Sarnau cSAC Liaison Group meeting held on 5 June 2000 (starting 7pm) at Plas tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog

Present:

Carlos Abrahams	Severn Trent Water
Jim Andrews	North Western & North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee
Alf Bowen	
David Archer	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Michael Bowyer	
Adam Cole-King	Countryside Council for Wales
Huw Davies	Gwynedd Council
Iwan R H Edgar	
Cllr Owen Edwards	
Robbie Gorman	
Rod Gritten	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Jill Jackson	Gwynedd Council
Andy Jeffrey	
Lucy Kay	Countryside Council for Wales
Andy Hall	
Peter Lloyd	
Bill Miller-Jones	
G D Murray	
Mike Parry	
Cllr Tom Raw-Rees	
Caerwyn Roberts	(chairman)
Iain Roberts	
Owie Roberts	
Roland Sharp	
Mike Thrussell	
Gwynedd Watkin	
Jill Whipp	
Dylan Williams	Environment Agency

Apologies:

Liz Allan	Ceredigion County Council
Bill Bracewell	
Jenny Fell	
Elinor Gwynn	Countryside Council for Wales
Huw T Jones	
Ann Lewis	
Kelvin Graham	Environment Agency

Caerwyn Roberts began the meeting by noting and apologising that there appeared to have been a mix-up over the provision of simultaneous translation. Although the equipment was installed and ready, the translator had not arrived. He hoped that everyone would willing to continue with the meeting, and offered to translate if anyone wished to contribute in Welsh.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

1.1 These were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting

2. Matters arising

2.1 Item 8.2 of the minutes: In relation to recreation there was a query about what action was

being taken to address issues of noise pollution and water pollution associated with personal watercraft (PWCs), in particular at Black Rock Sands. David Archer explained that in relation to the Pen Ll_n a'r Sarnau cSAC draft management plan, human disturbance from noise would not be covered, but other environmental pollution issues would. The Environment Agency were identified as the relevant authority with responsibility for pollution issues in this case, and it was believed that Gwynedd Council would be the authority to approach about addressing issues of noise disturbance to other beach and sea users.

3. The management scheme

Feedback on work undertaken since the last meeting and process for completing the draft plan

3.1 There were still many gaps in the draft management plan document that needed to be completed. How to proceed with completing the draft within the tight timescale for producing the plan had been discussed at the last relevant authorities meeting and a way forward agreed. In relation to chapter 5 of the plan, the work of putting together the remaining sections would be undertaken by particular individual relevant authorities. Copies of a table showing which relevant authority officers would be preparing which sections were circulated.

3.2 Liaison Group representatives were asked to indicate which sections they would be interested in receiving and having an opportunity to comment on. The timescale for production of the remaining sections of chapter 5 is as follows:

Now - June 16th:	Relevant authority (RA) officers to draft sections of the plan and send by 16th June to CCW and appropriate Liaison Group representatives **ACTION: RA officers compiling draft sections of the plan**
June 16th – 3rd July	CCW and Liaison Group representatives to consider drafts and send comments on these to the section compilers by 3rd July. **ACTION: CCW and Liaison Group representatives**
3rd July – 14th July	Section compilers to revise the sections and send to CCW to compile the whole plan. **ACTION: RA officers compiling draft sections of the plan**

Although the timescale for completing this work was very tight, it was agreed to try to meet the deadlines.

3.3 CCW would continue to draft the other, earlier sections in the plan. It was considered that these provided background information to the management plan and that the key section in terms of looking at what management actions may be required was in chapter 5. There would be an opportunity for people to comment on the whole of the plan during the public consultation.

Discussion of the draft plan

3.4 Liaison Group representatives were asked for their comments (general and specific) on the copy of the draft plan they had received. Adam asked people to also send specific comments on individual sections of the plan to the relevant authority officer drafting the appropriate section. Most comments made during the meeting were not responded to in detail, but were noted by the relevant authorities to be considered for inclusion in the draft plan. The following comments were made:

Chapter 3 - Evaluation of the features:

A question was asked about what information would be used to undertake this evaluation. Lucy

explained that a fair amount of information on the features of the site had been assembled and that this process was ongoing, and would continue indefinitely. The immediate task (which had not yet been done) was to summarise this and write it into the draft plan. It was acknowledged that section 3.3 was important in relation to determining what, if any, management actions may be required, but that at this early stage it was appropriate to continue to draft section 5 of the plan.

Chapter 4 - Conservation Objectives and Monitoring:
A question was asked about section 4.3 as to how results could be reported when no monitoring had been undertaken. Adam explained that this section heading was included in the document to indicate that this information would need to be included in due course, but agreed that it was not currently applicable as we are at the start of the process.

Chapter 5 - Human activities, factors which influence or may influence the features, and management response required

Section 5.3.3: It was suggested that the influence of wind and prevailing wind patterns needed to be considered here.

Section 5.4: A comment was made that some of the statements in the research report about human activities in the cSAC were very presumptive. It was noted that the purpose of this report had been to provide an overview of the variety and level of use of the site for different activities, and an evaluation of information availability. Its purpose was not to offer definitive views about the implications of the activities covered for the conservation of the cSAC.

Section 5.4.1.1: A comment was made about the positive outcome of the marina development at Pwllheli in that there were now better conditions there as a result of the development and Pwllheli had been rated as a blue flag marina.

Section 5.4.1.2: This section implied that there is now a more holistic approach to sea defence. It was considered that this is not always the case; the examples of sea defence works undertaken by Railtrack and in the area around Towyn were cited.

Section 5.4.1.3: It was suggested that possible changes to the beach at Gimlet Rock, Pwllheli may be related to land reclamation works carried out in the vicinity of the harbour.

Section 5.4.2 In response to a query about whether the authorities responsible for regulating these activities were relevant authorities, it was noted that although not relevant authorities with responsibilities for preparing the management plan, they are under similar obligations to conserve the SAC features.

Section 5.4.2.5: Artificial reefs could also have beneficial implications - there has been a trend abroad to sink wrecks as recreational facilities, to reduce pressure from diving on reefs elsewhere.

Section 5.4.3.2: There was evidence from work carried out in other countries that noise vibrations generation by offshore windfarms are transmitted into the water and may be affecting fish aggregating behaviour and disturbing marine mammals. Any available references on this work would be passed on to Lucy.

Section 5.4.3.3: There is consideration about expanding the use of current powered energy generating devices. There is information to show that these may be affecting species such as fish.

Section 5.4.4.1: It was pointed out that the majority of litter in Cardigan Bay comes from land-based sources, and not from boats. A considerable amount of litter ending up in Cardigan Bay originates from far outside the area - the influence of the Gulf Stream means that a lot of litter from other Atlantic coastal states ends up on the western shores of Britain.

There have been voluntary litter picks carried out at Aberdyfi by the local community. Five tonnes of litter had been collected in four hours during one event.

Section 5.4.4.2: Pollution from road run-off is a potential problem; (the Mawddach estuary was highlighted as one of the areas where this is a problem). This is a difficult issue both to assess, and for the relevant authorities themselves to do much about, although further consideration is needed.

It was noted that the majority of new car parks over 50 car capacity should have oil separators fitted as standard now.

The issue of pollution from cars on beaches, such as at Black Rock Sands and Ynys Las should also be considered.

Pollution from agricultural use of land in and adjacent to the estuaries is a problem. The Dyfi was cited as an example.

It is important that both of these issues (pollution from traffic and agriculture) are dealt with sensitively, since both tourism and farming are important to the local economy.

Section 5.4.4.4: In response to a question as to whether the discharge from the gold mine near the Mawddach was being monitored, it was noted that the Environment Agency has a system in place for constant monitoring of this.

Section 5.4.5.1: Comments about the impacts of scallop dredging were made - this can be very damaging to the seabed and is an indescrimate fishing method. There can also be damage to the food source of other species.

Section 5.4.5.3: There has been a significant decline in the population of thorn-back ray and this is primarily due to the use of tangle netting. In this case, the statement in the draft plan that there is no evidence of tangle netting having an impact is not accurate.

Section 5.4.5.4: There is a problem with lost lobster post which continue to catch fish and crustacea. It would be possible to overcome this by the use of a sacrificial soft metal part in the pots that rusts away and opens up the pot. Jim Andrews said that the Sea Fisheries Committee were looking into the possibility of funding to carry out some work on this.

Section 5.4.5.6: Would it be possible for cockling in the Dyfi to be restricted to local people?

Section 5.4.5.7: Crab shelters are being used in the cSAC but currently on a small-scale for private use.

There was a discussion about the possible use of voluntary measures to manage bait collection. Management actions do not have to be statutory. The current system of self-policing of bait collection by local anglers is a form of management.

The problem was cited of anglers and bait diggers from outside the local area not having a sufficient "stake" in the long term health of the coastal habitats of the cSAC to ensure they treat it sensitively.

Section 5.4.5.8: A possible action to promote good practice for angling competitions would be to suggest that any national open or major competition held in the cSAC is held as a catch and release competition rather than heaviest bag. This would mean that all fish caught would be released rather than kept and killed. This may provide a basis for promoting this as a way forward for competitions in all cSACs.

Sections 5.4.6.1 - 5.4.6.4:

Sailing is a traditional activity, and a relatively "green" pastime. It is important that links to other plans and initiatives are recognised.

The impact of sailing and other boat-based recreational activity is likely to be very site-specific, and it seems unlikely that these are a large problem in terms for cSAC, but there is a critical lack of information on the extent, location and impact of, for example, launching, anchoring and mooring, which needs to be addressed.

Recreational use of the cSAC is an important economic benefit to the area, but it is also recognised that this use may cause problems for marine wildlife. The example of jet skis and the dolphins in Cardigan Bay were used as an examples. It is important to strike a balance between tourism and the environment.

There may be opportunities for improving launching facilities which would help minimise the impact caused by boat launching. It may be possible to consider the use of objective 1 funding for this.

High launch fees may mean that some people do not use official launch areas but launch their boat at other, possibly more environmentally sensitive, locations.

Most of the locally based shops selling personal water craft also provide environmental information to their customers. This is something that should be encouraged through the cSAC, along with information boards at suitable launching sites.

Section 5.4.6.6: Divers have a good record of adhering to Codes of Conduct. Education will be an important element of the cSAC management.

There is currently a trend towards the use of four-stroke outboard engines. These are more fuel efficient and release fewer pollutants into the marine environment than 2-stroke engines.

Section 5.4.7.3: The Habitats Directive has strong implications for the removal of material from the seabed.

Section 5.4.7.5: Some litter collecting activities, though worthy initiatives in themselves, are also removing all the organic material from beaches. This is an important issue for wildlife.

Section 5.4.7.7: Non-native species will not just be introduced through direct human activity. The impact of climate change may mean a re-distribution of species which may result in non-native species coming into the area.

Section 5.4.7.9: Migratory patterns of fish may change as a result of changes associated with climate change. It may therefore become necessary to reconsider fisheries management measures in order to protect fish stocks.

Section 5.4.4: Liaison Group representatives were asked to make their views known about what they considered the aspirations of local communities to be. **ACTION: Liaison Group representatives to send comments/views on this to Adam.**

The possibility of the use of the area as an Olympic venue for watersports was mentioned as one of the aspirations.

General: There was a query as to what constituted a plan or a project. These are referred to in the text. Adam explained that in general these terms refer to certain types of activities that require a consent or licence but it is not clear in all cases what is included. The relevant authorities are looking to government for further guidance on this.

3.5 Caerwyn reminded everyone to send in further comments and information about the site and activities to the relevant authorities to help them with drafting the management plan.
ACTION: Liaison Group representatives to continue to provide comments and information.

Production of a summary document for the consultation

3.6 At the last meeting it had been agreed that it would be useful to produce a summary document for use during the public consultation about the draft management plan. The aim of this document would be to highlight the key issues and provide a more accessible summary of the plan so that people could participate in the consultation without having to read through the whole plan.

3.7 Liaison Group representatives were asked to say if they would be interested in being involved in putting together this summary document. The following people said they would:

Jenny Fell
Greta Hughes
Andy Jeffrey
Ann Lewis
Peter Lloyd
Mike Parry
Roland Sharp
Mike Thrussell
Jill Whipp

3.8 This process would be largely dealt with through correspondence and e-mail. CCW would put together an initial draft layout inserting text as far as possible and circulate this for comment (with some of the plan still to be drafted, some sections would have to remain blank for the time being). CCW would aim to circulate a draft by the end of June. Those involved were asked to provide comments on the style and design of the summary document as well as the content.

ACTION: CCW to prepare initial draft of the summary document and circulate for comment

ACTION: Liaison Group representatives listed above to provide comment on the draft

Arrangements for consultation about the draft plan

3.9 The public consultation about the draft plan was due to start in August and continue until the end of October. It was intended that there would be public meetings held during the consultation period to give the public the opportunity to comment and provide feedback on the draft plan. It was proposed that there would be two meetings, one in Dolgellau and one in Pwllheli. The proposed dates for the meetings are Thursday 5th October and Tuesday 10th October (to be confirmed). Further details about the meetings are still to be decided. Based on their experiences from attending the previous public meetings, Liaison Group representatives were asked to provide any comments and suggestions they had on the format and content of these meetings to the relevant authorities to consider when organising the forthcoming public meetings.

ACTION: Liaison Group representatives to send comments and suggestions to Lucy Kay

4. Any other business

4.1 UK Marine SACs Project Conference:

Adam informed everyone that the will be a conference about the LIFE-funded UK Marine SACs Project in Edinburgh on 15-16 November 2000. This conference was aimed at those involved in the management of marine SACs (statutory bodies, user and other interest groups and industry). Copies of the leaflet advertising the conference were circulated. If people wished to attend this conference, contact details were given on the leaflet.

Stop press: Adam reported incorrectly that there would not be a fee for the conference - apologies. The fee has not been fixed yet, but is likely to be in the region of £80 for the two days.

4.2 Evaluation of services provided at Plas tan y Bwlch:

As part of the governments best value process, all users of the Plas were being asked to give their evaluation of the service provided. David Archer circulated evaluation forms and asked everyone to complete these.

5. Date of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Liaison Group will be on Monday 23rd October at Plas tan y Bwlch, Maentwrog (tbc), starting at 7pm. The aim of this meeting will be to consider the draft management plan and discussion arising at the public meetings.

Caerwyn Roberts thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting, apologising once again for the problem with the translation