

Queen's Harbour Master's Office  
 Longroom  
 RM Barracks  
 Stonehouse

QHM 532/3

26 March 2007

**NOTES OF THE TAMAR ESTUARIES CONSULTATIVE FORUM MEETING  
 HELD AT 1015 ON THURSDAY 15 MARCH 2007 IN HM NAVAL BASE  
 DEVONPORT CONFERENCE ROOM**

<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Representing</u></b>
Commander I Hugo Royal Navy	Chairman and Queen's Harbour Master (QHM)
Lt Cdr N Trathen	Deputy Queen's Harbour Master (DQHM), Secretary
Cllr A Hosking	Devon County Council (DCC)
Mr P Ford Mr B Vincent Cllr G Wheeler	Plymouth City Council (PCC)
Ms C Lewis	Environment Agency (EA)
Mr C James	Caradon District Council (CDC)
Mr R Swinfen	Wembury Conservation Group (WCG)
Mr D Atkin	Associated British Ports (ABP)
Captain T Charlesworth	Cattewater Harbour Commissioners (CHC)
Ms M Nightingale	Coastal Officer (CO)
Miss J Perry Cllr R Pike	West Devon Borough Council (WDBC)
Mr C Davis Miss L Heape	Natural England (NE)
Ms R Teverson	Tamar Valley AONB (TVAONB)
Mr R Toogood Mr G Fielden	South Hams District Council (SHDC)
Mr K Bower	Devon Sea Fisheries Committee (DSFC)
Mr P Whitby	Marine Fisheries Agency (MFA)
Mrs S Last	Minute Secretary

<b><u>Item</u></b>	<b><u>Discussion and Decisions</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>
1. Intro- duction.	1. Cdr Hugo welcomed those present to the meeting. He invited members to introduce themselves and identify their respective organisations.	

2. Apologies for Absence.	1. Apologies for absence had been received from Messrs Preston (CDC) and Winder (DCC).	
3. Notes of Previous Meeting.	1. The notes of the previous meeting held on 9 November 2006 were accepted.	
4. Matters Arising.	<p>1. <u>Co-ordination and Information.</u></p> <p>a.. <u>Management Plan and Annual Work Programme.</u> The draft Plan was accepted. The Coastal Officer (CO) gave details of the work strands which were already underway. She explained that the Plymouth City Council (PCC) Core Strategy had been drafted and she passed round copies of the relevant chapter – Plymouth Sound and Estuaries. As well as recognising TECF as a key stakeholder in the management of the Estuaries the publication provides a strong policy lead and looks to drive establishing linkages with other authorities as their plans evolved. The CO would arrange a separate meeting to discuss the way forward on interfacing with other local authorities.</p> <p>2. Mr Ford (PCC) pointed out that the Core Strategy supported the drafting of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that would be the vehicle for linking authorities with the eventual outcome of a joint SPD within the catchment. He offered to co-ordinate ongoing work.</p> <p>b. <u>Financial Statement and Funding.</u> CO was delighted to announce that this year’s funding was in place. She thanked all representatives for their efforts in ensuring that the target had been accomplished. She passed around the projection of annual rises (3%) and expressed a wish that, as the importance of TECF within the overall Marine Strategy was acknowledged, authorities would be able to give greater assurance of long-term funding.</p> <p>c. <u>Memorandum of Agreement.</u> The updated draft had been circulated since the previous meeting. Several members had concerns that once the spring elections had taken place new councillors would not have the detailed background to form a positive commitment to future funding. It may be necessary to repeat previous presentations to new councillors; in the meantime CO would prepare a TECF brief which would assist representatives when lobbying their areas. It was hoped that members would be in a position to sign the MOA at the next meeting</p> <p>2. The Environment Agency (EA) advised that following a policy review funding of Estuarine partnerships was being withdrawn. QHM stated that the decision to withdraw was regrettable and disappointing: General discussion saw it as a poor message that the leaders in law</p>	<p>CO</p> <p>CO/Mr Ford</p> <p>CO/All</p>

	<p>making and subsequently, the enforcers of those laws, felt unable to underpin the policies they proposed and promote. The mood was one of cynicism and following the line adopted at previous meetings with other non players, a lack of contribution would see a lack of a seat at the table. All felt this was messy. The discussion concluded that QHM would write to both DEFRA and EA seeking a clarification of their position.</p> <p>d. <u>Marine and Coastal Policy Developments.</u></p> <p>i. <u>Marine Bill.</u> The launch of the White Paper was taking place that day in Westminster. Much of the work was already progressing locally particularly with regard to the strategy for marine planning. Other areas such as marine licences, conservation and fishery issues were evolving. The establishment of a Marine Management Organisation would be of particular relevance to TECF where vigilance must be sustained to ensure continuing influence. The document could be viewed on line at:  <a href="http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/policy/marine-bill/index.htm">www.defra.gov.uk/environment/water/marine/uk/policy/marine-bill/index.htm</a></p> <p>ii. <u>EU Green Paper.</u> Still at the consultation stage. Subject to passing due process and standfast any unexpected additions or changes the Marine Bill is expected to have addressed most of the issues highlighted in the Green Paper.</p> <p>iii. <u>Marine Works (EIA) Regs.</u> With the consultation period coming to a close at the end of the week the bill would seek to clarify the requirements for EIAs for all Marine Works. Minimal affect was foreseen within the Tamar Estuaries as the requirement within the SAC was already mandated in the FEPA 1985.</p> <p><u>2. Waterfront and Marine Development.</u></p> <p>a.. <u>Millbay Inner Basin/Millbay Development Plan.</u> Mr Atkin (ABP) updated the project. He had held meetings with Princess Yachts to address minor issues. Mr Ford (PCC) confirmed the hearing at the end of March with expected adoption shortly after.</p> <p>b. <u>Sutton Channel pontoons/ Barbican Landing Stage.</u> Captain Charlesworth (CHM) said the proposed change of use for some waterside buildings was meeting opposition from several areas. Mr Ford (PCC) thought that the Sutton Harbour Plan should be submitted during July 07.</p>	QHM/CO
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	<p><u>3. Nature Conservation.</u></p> <p>a. <u>SAC Matters.</u> Mr Davis (NE) explained that, as a consequence of reorganisation within Natural England, he would be withdrawing from the Forum. He was handing over to Ms Heape but would still be available for consultancy should he be required. Ms Heape (NE) gave an update of applications and submissions (copy attached).</p> <p><u>Invasive Flora.</u> Ms Teverson (TVAONB) had been alarmed by Environment Agency (EA) decision to curtail funding. Any pause in the clearing schedule would be extremely serious and she urged EA to reconsider their decision to cease support. Ms Lewis (EA) explained that serious financial and organisational cuts within the Agency had forced this outcome. Mr Davis (NE) recognised the importance of continuity and undertook to investigate the possibility of Natural England assisting.</p> <p>b. <u>Marine Protected Areas Project.</u> CO outlined the Annual Work Programme and said that the intention was to identify specific areas of interest for study. The Wembury site had been selected as the lead project for a medium term programme. Some cautionary comment was offered by Mr Toogood (SHDC) and Mr Davis (NE) who both stressed the necessity not only to demonstrate a distinct rationale for this work but also to clearly identify risks and benefits in order to satisfy the stakeholders.</p> <p><u>4. Navigation and Waterborne Public Transport.</u></p> <p>a. <u>Revision of Dockyard Port of Plymouth Order.</u> Minor changes had been approved by the MOD Legal Department. The next stage would be formal consultation.</p> <p>b. <u>Dredging Protocols for the Tamar Estuary.</u> CO had received approval for the project proposal and funding was now being sought. The work would provide an opportunity to assemble a baseline and guidance for all estuary dredging.</p> <p><u>5. Public Access, Recreation and Moorings.</u></p> <p>a. <u>Weir Quay Development Plan.</u> Ms Teverson (TVAONB) said that funding had been secured and the difficult task of scoping was currently underway. With so many differing interests and agendas to consider a fuller consultation process had been agreed. Cllr Hosking (DCC) was Chairman of the Working group; he stressed the importance of finding a balance between the requirements of those living in the area and the many and diverse users.</p>	<p>Mr Davis</p> <p>CO</p>
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5. Matters Brought Forward from PPMLC.	1. <u>Archaeological Representative</u> . PPMLC wished TECF to consider creating a seat on the Forum for an English Heritage Archaeological Expert. After some discussion it was agreed that, providing appropriate funding could be assured, TECF would welcome a new member. QHM would write to EH Head Office in Bristol.	QHM								
6. Significant Future Events.	1. DQHM provided an update on events for 2007:  28 May Gypsy Moth returns 6-8 July UIM Class 1 World Offshore Championship – British Grand Prix (tbc) 22-27 July National Schools Sailing Assoc. Dinghy Regatta Port of Plymouth Regatta 27-31 July Plymouth Classic Boat Rally 15 – 19 August Finish of Fastnet Race 23 – 25 August National J’s Cup									
7. Any Other Business.	1. <u>Tamar Valley Management Plan</u> . Ms Teverson (TVAONB) would welcome TECF input to the forthcoming Road Show displays.  2. <u>Morwelham Quay</u> . Devon County Council and West Devon Borough Council had agreed a funding package to re-market and raise the profile of Morwelham Quay. Cllr Hosking would be grateful for any input.	CO/TVAONB  All								
9. Future Meeting Dates.	1. Dates for future TECF and PPMLC meetings as follows:  <table border="0" data-bbox="411 1238 1305 1370"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>PPMLC</u></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>TECF</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 June 07</td> <td>12 July 07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11 October 07</td> <td>15 November 07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 February 2008</td> <td>13 March 2008</td> </tr> </table>	<u>PPMLC</u>	<u>TECF</u>	14 June 07	12 July 07	11 October 07	15 November 07	14 February 2008	13 March 2008	
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On completion of the meeting Dr Piers Larcombe, CEFAS presented his findings of samples and investigations into the Dredge Disposal Site at Rame Head.

## **Natural England Briefing for TECF 9<sup>th</sup> July - November 2006**

### **Special Area of Conservation (SAC) matters**

#### **1) Monitoring – Seagrass monitoring pilot**

The main aim of this project was to trial aerial photography as an approach to monitoring the extent and distribution of seagrass beds in Plymouth SAC. Aerial photography was acquired in mid June after waiting around for the right weather conditions to coincide with the low tide needed to see the seagrass. The information shown about the beds from the images was groundtruthed during the summer using drop down video. Drakes island and Cellar Cove (Yealm) could be seen very clearly and Cawsand, some of the Jennycliff beds and Firestone bay to a lesser extent. A report will be available in March 2007.

#### **2) Casework**

Millbay area:

Mixed development at Millbay outer basin – planning application includes houses, yacht and boat moorings, cruise liner mooring berth and visitors terminal, business use. No likely significant effect on the SAC.

Pre- consultation proposal to amend previous plans to redevelop Millbay Marina. No likely significant effect on the SAC.

Devonport area:

MOD have consulted Natural England on building a slipway for landing craft just outside Weston Mill Lake and dredging out intertidal mudflat. Although this appears to fall just outside the SAC NE have advised that this could potentially affect the SAC due to contamination issues and the cumulative impact of intertidal/subtidal habitat removal.

Consultation from Westminster Dredging Co Ltd over the dredging campaign for next year which covers the docks, Western Mill lake and areas in the main channel. No AA was advised for these works with the view that a maintenance dredging protocol will be developed in due course to help inform judgements on AA. NE and EA have advised that works near the channel are undertaken during the winter months only to minimise impacts on marine habitats and species and migrating salmonids. EA have requested that the sediment is tested for contaminants.

NE have just received the Area Action Plans for Devonport, Millbay and Stonehouse Areas, part of the Plymouth Local Development Framework (LDF).

Other areas:

Royal William Yard – NE consulted over a small amount of water injection dredging within the dockyard. This falls outside any FEPA license. NE and EA have advised that this should be carried out over the winter months.

Mayflower marina – planning application for extension of the hard standing. To be built out over the intertidal mudflat and to be used for part car parking part boat maintenance/storage. Not likely to have any impact on the SAC but NE views this as a shortfall in the planning system to allow extension over the estuary when a location directly on the waterfront doesn't appear to be essential.

Construction of 20 buildings at Millbrook -No objection with EA conditions on drainage in place.

Proposed new dwelling, Cargreen - We are awaiting details of a proposal that is either adjacent to or partially falls within the SSSI/SAC.

Pineapple Farm, Kingsmill -We have been consulted by a landscape architect who is working with the engineers on the design of the new retaining wall for this property.

Cremyll oil depot site - We were originally consulted on this application in 2004 when and it was advised that an appropriate assessment would be required. We have now had contact from the agent for the developers who wish to consult with us over the points we raised.

HMS Raleigh - Construction of personnel blocks. No objections. Potential species issues raised.

Cotehele managed realignment. - Planning application regarding engineering works to breach bank and create new defences to allow flooding of agricultural land to create wetlands. We are awaiting a date for this to go to Public Inquiry. It is unlikely to be before the new year.

### **3) Invasive management**

The last major area of rhododendron was cut and treated in Sheviok Wood on the Lynher during winter 2005/6. A follow spray of the small amount of regrowth has taken place this summer and the result is excellent with very little regrowth anticipated next year.

Tamar Valley Invasives group continue their work programme with giant hogweed treatment from the A30 down to Calstock complete for this year.

### **Other**

There are indications that crab tiling activity has recently extended further up the Tamar on the Cornwall side with activity now upstream of Cargreen. This is being monitored.

Discussions are to be held to develop a code of conduct for scientific and educational use of the Wembury area.

### **3) Beginning of Natural England**

Natural England has been formed by bringing together English Nature (EN), the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency (CA) and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service (RDS). The new organisation started business on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October.

The SW region has been restructured into three areas, this has resulted in a new Cornwall, Devon and Isles of Scilly Area. The area has been split into seven teams (2 Government, 1 Communities and 4 Land and Sea Management). Responsibilities and job descriptions have not yet been organised until this has happened contacts will remain the same -

Laura Heape and Chris Davis – Devon and the marine site. [chris.davis / laura.heape@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:chris.davis@naturalengland.org.uk) / 01392 889770.

Sangetta Taylor and Carol Williams – Cornwall down to Low Water Mark. [sangetta.taylor / carol.williams@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:sangetta.taylor@naturalengland.org.uk) / 01872 262550.