

**CARDIGAN BAY SAC LIAISON GROUP:
NOTES OF MEETING HELD AT THE NEW QUAY YACHT CLUB,
28 SEPTEMBER 2006**

TOPIC OF THE EVENING:

“Environmental Assessment of Oil Exploration Projects in the Bay”
(Additional information in **Appendix 3**)

CHAIR:

Geraint Jenkins

PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Those in attendance listed in **Appendix 1**, Apologies listed in **Appendix 2**

PRESENTATIONS:

By Annalisa Bianchessi, SAC Officer: Brief update on the management of the Cardigan Bay SAC since the last Liaison Group meeting. A summary of the presentation can be found in **Appendix 4**.

By John Hartley, Director and Principal Consultant of Hartley Anderson Limited, a consultation body that was part of the group involved in the production of the 6th Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA6) Conservation report on the 24th round of offshore oil and gas licensing in the Irish Sea.

The presentation was very interesting and gave an overview of the stages involved in compiling the SEA6 report and the procedures involved in giving licenses for oil and gas exploration in the UK.

DISCUSSION PANEL:

From Hartley Anderson Limited:

- John Hartley, Director and Principal Consultant

From the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)

- Kevin O’Carroll, Environmental Officer, Aberdeen

From the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW):

- Mandy McMath, Senior Marine Vertebrate Ecologist, Bangor

- Jenny Higgins, Senior Conservation Officer, Aberystwyth

From the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS):

- Mick Green, Offshore Industry Consultant

(Apologies from Andy Hill, Marine Policy Officer at CCW (a.hill@ccw.gov.uk) and Zoë Crutchfield, Senior Offshore Advisor at JNCC (Zoe.Crutchfield@jncc.gov.uk)).

On behalf of the Liaison Group I would like to express our sincere thanks to John Hartley and Kevin O’Carroll for attending this meeting all the way from Aberdeen as well as to Mandy McMath, Jenny Higgins and Mick Green for participating in the discussion panel of the meeting. The topic generated a lot of interest and people were

keen for another meeting to be organised to follow up the issue within the next 6 months.

MINUTES OF LAST SAC LIAISON GROUP

Minutes of the meeting held on the 13th May 2004 have been placed on the SAC website (www.cardiganbaysac.org.uk the Publications section) and will be discussed at the next Liaison Group Meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

March 07? Location & date to be confirmed

APPENDIX 1 – Present

Name	Surname	Organisation
Liz	Allan	Ceredigion County Council (CCC)
Christian	Andrew	MOD - Qinetiq
Janet	Baxter	FoCB
Annalisa	Bianchessi	SAC officer
Angela	Blackemore	CeiDev, Director
L	Davey	
Jennifer	Davies	Town Councillor
Ian	Dutch	CCC
Llwyd	Edwards	LG
Hugh	Edwards	New Quay Society
Marilyn	Elson	CeiDev - SOS
John	Evans	NQ Yacht club
Roy	Evans	Dolphin Watch
CRD	Evans	LG group, former Atkins, geological society
Timothy	Foster	
Ben	Fothergill	Cardigan Bay Fisherman's Association
Mick	Green	WDCS
Andrew	Greenwood	Ceredigion Boat Charter
Mrs	Guy	wildlife.org (on behalf of pauline Bett)
Tim	Harrison	CeiDev
Corinna	Harrison	CeiDev
John	Hartley	Hartley Anderson (speaker)
Steve	Hartley	CBMWC
Jenny	Higgins	CCW
Lorraine	Hill	
Jane	Hodges	PCNP
Jill	Hoppley	Town Councillor
Phil	Hughes	FoCB
Gethin	James	Chllr Aberporth
Geraint	Jenkins	Chair, LG group
Elin	Jones	Welsh Assembly
Eirwyn	Jones	translator
Leila	Kirsch	green party
Lindon	Lomax	Sea Trust
Delyth	Lucas	
Mandy	McMath	CCW
Bert	Moore	Dolphin watch - Wildlife.org
Beryl	Moore	Dolphin watch - Wildlife.org
Peter	Norrington-Davies	Harbourmaster
Paul	Oakley	Cardigan Outboard motors
Kevin	O'Caroll	DTI
Mark	Pengilley	MOD - Qinetiq
Rod	Penrose	Environmental Monitoring
Sarah	Perry	CBMWC
Giovanna	Pesante	Sea Watch Foundation
Paul	Rowley	MOD - Qinetiq
Adam	Royle	Liberal Democrats, researcher to Mark Williams
Chris	Shipton	MOD - Qinetiq

Graham	Thomas	
Lizzie	Wilberforce	Wildlife Trust
Mark	Williams	Liberal Democrats, Ceredigion MP
Alan	Wilson	Chllr Cardigan
Trevor	Theobald	Pembrokeshire County Council

(I apologise if some names are missing, as the attendance list was not circulated throughout the whole room).

APPENDIX 2 – Apologies

Name	Surname	Organisation
Rosi	Beech	Dolphin Watch
Geoff	Bowles	Marine Consents, FEPA
Phil	Coates	NW&NWSFC
Kate	Collins	Environment Agency
Zoë	Crutchfield	Senior Offshore Advisor, JNCC
Mike	Davies	Port Authority
Alison	Hargrave	Pen Llyn ar Sarnau SAC Officer
Keith	Harrison	Dolphin Watch
Andrew	Hill	CCW
Graham	Jones	FoE
Albert	Moeller	RNLI
Jeff	Morgan	Welsh Water
Anthony	Porter	Trinity House
Lindsay	Sheen	Menter Aberteifi
Emily	Smith	WWF
Davies	Thompson	LG
Wendy	Twell	GSI, gov, marine policy, environment and Conservation management

APPENDIX 3

Application for oil exploration license is being assessed

Over the last year and a half the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has been working on opening the 24th round of offshore oil and gas licensing in the Irish Sea. The area that has been considered (SEA6) is shown in Map1 below.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment procedures (SEA), as outlined in the Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC (commonly referred to as the SEA Directive), have meant that the DTI has been consulting on the matter with a range of stakeholders involved in nature conservation, such as the statutory nature conservation agencies Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and English Nature (EN) and interested non-government organisations. A 3 months public consultation has also taken place as part of this process.

The results of these consultations have been published earlier this year in the SEA6 environmental report which can be downloaded from the DTI website. The report considers the potential effects of the 24th licensing round in terms of likely oil or gas exploration / development applications and their impacts on wildlife amongst other considerations. The report concluded that, "subject to regulatory controls, there are no areas within SEA 6 scope which should be excluded from licensing, and no general timing constraints which can be justified." This conclusion was reached taking into consideration the fact that projects will have to undergo further assessments prior to being approved, such as the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) outlined in the EIA Directive (97/11/EC) and the Appropriate Assessment procedures outlined in the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The results of the consultation mean that oil companies are now able to apply for licenses to explore oil and gas resources within the SEA6 area. Two companies, which presently remain unnamed, have put in a joint application for a license in blocks 107/21, 107/22 and 106/30. As can be seen from Map1, block 107/21 and 107/22 are partly within the Cardigan Bay SAC whilst block 106/30 is located South West of the SAC. The DTI will be assessing the application and holding further consultations before deciding whether to grant the license. A decision is expected in early Autumn 2006.

Applications routinely contain proposed work programmes, typically including drilling and survey activity, and DTI has confirmed that this particular application does not include a seismic survey, nor a firm drilling commitment. Any licensee proposing to carry out a seismic survey, or any drilling, on these blocks would require a further consent from the Government, and this consent would be subject to EIA and other environmental regulations.

In Cardigan Bay any project (both within and without the SAC), which could have a negative impact on the features protected by the Cardigan Bay SAC has to undergo the "Plans and Projects Procedures" as outlined in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and Regulations 48 and 49 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) 1994 Regulations. This means the impacts of the project will have to be assessed by the Competent Authority (in this case the DTI) in consultation with CCW (if the project is within the 12nm) and with JNCC (if the project is within the 12-200nm). Before permission for a project is granted DTI, based on advice from JNCC and, or CCW

will have to ensure that, where necessary, adequate mitigation measures are put in place and that the project constitutes no threat to the favourable conservation status of the features.

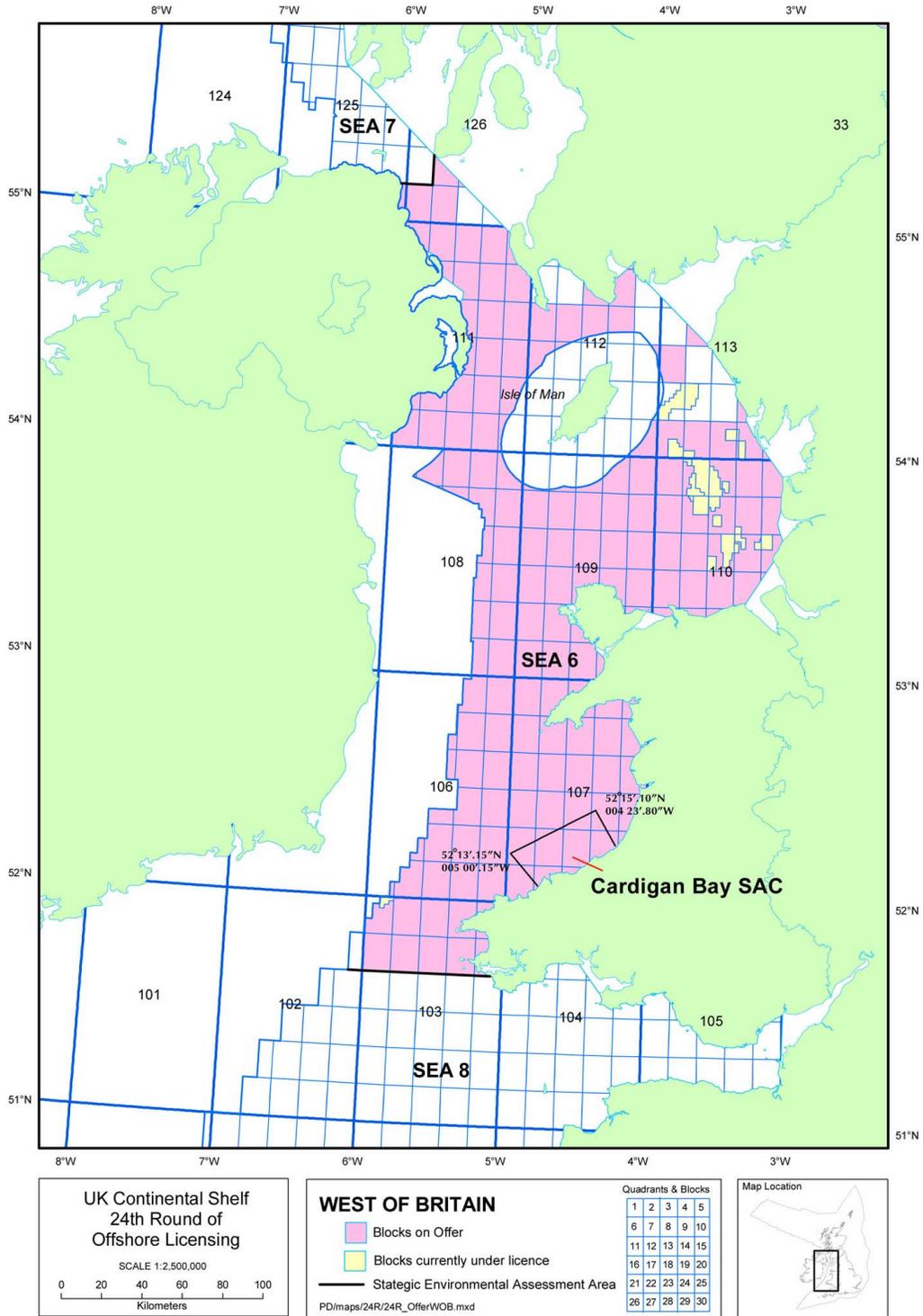
Further information is available on the DTI website
www.offshore-sea.org.uk

The following reports can be downloaded from the Internet:

- SEA6 environmental report
http://www.offshore-sea.org.uk/site/scripts/book_info.php?consultationID=6&bookID=7
- SEA6 post consultation report:
http://www.offshore-sea.org.uk/site/scripts/consultation_download_info.php?downloadID=177
- JNCC's "Guidelines on minimizing acoustic disturbance to marine mammals from acoustic surveys":
<http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1534>

To view a map showing past wells and seismic surveys in Cardigan Bay:
<http://www.ukdeal.co.uk/gis/DEAL/viewer.htm?Title=DEAL%20Maps>

Map1 provided by the DTI:



APPENDIX 4

Summary of presentation by SAC Officer, Annalisa Bianchessi

Management Plan

The review of the **management scheme** has been quite a big task as it involved the addition of **6 new features** to the site as well as the preparation by CCW of the **Regulation 33** advice document on **conservation objectives potentially damaging operations to the features**. The Reg. 33 draft document was published spring 2005 and can be downloaded from the SAC website as well as from CCW's website (or at CCW's Plas Gogerddan Office near Aberystwyth). The draft management scheme has been **completed** and sent out to the RA on the 14th of this month. The scheme has also been **restructured** to make it more readable and usable as with the addition of the new features it had become a very large document. In order not to lose any information many of the descriptive or additional information has been put into the appendixes. The document and the listed actions will now be discussed and agreed with each individual Relevant and Competent Authority. We are hoping to have the document ready for a public consultation by March 08. We are envisaging having a **2-month consultation period** with a LG meeting to discuss the document at about half way these two months. We will also be publishing a special edition of Tir a Mor to summarise the document and give you some guidance of what the main changes to the plan are and in addition to the LG meeting may call for some further meetings to discuss specific issues.

Ongoing projects

Whilst the management plan was being reviewed the relevant authorities have continued to work on achieving their objectives for the management of the site. In addition there has been much good work taking place from other non-government organisations and conservation groups in the area. I will briefly list some of the work that the Relevant Authorities have been carrying out.

Welsh Water Dwr Cymru

Improvements have been made at several Sewage Treatment Works along the coast:

- At Llanina secondary treatment has been added to existing primary works (from April 2005)
- (Llansaintffraid/Llanrhystud: Llansaintffraid decommissioned with flows now treated at Llanrhystud, but discharged down Llansaintffraid outfall)
- Aberarth: STW have been replaced by a pumping station and flows go to Aberaeron (secondary)
- At Gwbert crude discharge is now pumped to Cardigan (secondary+ membrane filtration)

EA

Review of consents

The Environment Agency has been carrying out a **review of consents** (such as water abstraction and discharge consents) to bring them in line with the Habitats Directive. **Stage 3** of this review has now been completed and **232 licenses have undergone appropriate assessment** procedures and have now been sent to CCW. The public document **summarizing** the review is scheduled to be ready by **March 2008**.

Metal mining strategy

Also a metal mining strategy is being prepared in compliance with the **Water Framework Directive**. The EA have identified **30 rivers** in Wales which may

potentially fail the water quality objective set out in the **Directive for 2015** due to metal mines contamination. Within the Cardigan Bay these include the rivers Rheidol, Ystwyth, Mawdach, Dyfi, Clarach, and the upper part of the Teifi River. A strategy is now being prepared to improve water quality in these rivers (feasibility studies, prioritisation)

Fisheries Committees

The SWSFC and the NW&NWSFC are committed to managing the inshore fisheries in a sustainable manner.

Scalloping

A new bylaw has been introduced to **reduce fishing vessel size to 12m** within the **6nm**. The bylaw will **not apply to fisherman with historic rights (sunset clause)** to fish in the area but is aimed at **reducing** the amount of **scallop dredging** taking place in the area **in the long run** and **avoid any new scallop dredging** taking place. In addition to this the Welsh Assembly has also issued the **Welsh scalloping order 2005** which restricts the amount of gear used for scallop dredging.

Salmon net regulations

Further regulations have been introduced to regulate the **setting of fixed nets** for salmon fishing. They can be found on the NW&NWSFC website (<http://www.nwnwsfc.org/page/home.htm>) and are **bylaws 24 and 25**.

Potting regulations

A new bylaw has also been introduced to prevent fishing using pots in Cardigan Bay without a Marine Fisheries or a NWNWSFC permit.

Lobster Conservation Programme

Further a **lobster tagging** study funded by the EC is now ending completion and should enable the NW&NWSFC to gain a better understanding of **the migratory routes** and **biology** of lobsters and will aim in better management of this resource. Results are expected to be published some time next spring.

CCW

CCW continues to work closely with partners and NGOs regarding the **Management** of the **Cardigan Bay SAC** and has been carrying out research work on the features of the Cardigan Bay SAC. **Research** is being carried out to develop **performance indicators** on the **condition of the species** and fill in the current knowledge gaps. A **Monitoring Officer** has been appointed to carry out **line transect surveys** within the SAC and **photo-id work** on marine mammals in the Bay. Further work includes **acoustic** (T-pods) **monitoring** of cetaceans to study the seasonal and daily distribution of bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises in the Area and comparison of the **photo-ID catalogue** with that of **other areas in the UK** to determine range and distribution pattern of the bottlenose dolphin population. CCW is also developing a **licensing protocol** to minimise impacts on marine mammals whilst carrying out research and wildlife photography. Further CCW continue to ensure that relevant **legislation** is adhered to through the **provision of informed advice** to relevant authorities, partners and the general public.

Education and Interpretation Strategy

The 2005 Education and interpretation Strategy has entailed numerous projects (on the SAC website). In 2004 the **SAC Roadshow** participated to **13 events** along the

Ceredigion coast. In both 2004 and 2005 **Biodiversity Partnership** events were organized. Both years' events were a great success and a summary can be found on the SAC website.

To raise awareness about Cardigan Bay's SAC and its marine wildlife a display has been created for the **Cardigan Market Hall** in conjunction with "Menter Aberteifi", "Awards for All" and "Sigma Exhibitions". The display consists of a life size **willow sculpture** representing a **bottlenose dolphin and calf**, two big **hanging panels** with images of Cardigan Bay's wildlife in 4 different habitats (open sea, underwater, estuary and cliff tops).

The Coast and Countryside Section of the Council has opened a small **information Centre on New Quay Pier** to raise awareness about the Recreational Boat User's Code of Conduct. **This summer the Centre has been open 4 days a week and has had 4750 visitors so far.** The Boat Place is part of the first phase of the **Recreational Boating Scheme**. The second phase foresees the development of a boating scheme as well as the appointment of a water ranger for the SAC. An initial pilot study is being discussed at the moment with the project officer of the Teifside boating management scheme. We are hoping to extend the remit of the water ranger for the Teifi to include the coastal area from the estuary to Aberporth headland.

A **teachers' pack** has been prepared with materials created for the Cardigan Bay Boat place and a **Marine Wildlife Careers day** was organized for local teachers in conjunction with Careers Wales. The pack includes the Code of Conduct game that can be played on a computer. A second careers day was organised by the **CBMWC**, which included some of these materials and we will be looking to produce a teachers pack with exercises that will fit into the schools curriculum.

Final point

One of my tasks as the SAC officer is to provide information on the SAC and act as a point of contact between the community and the Authorities that manage the area. There have been a number of ways in which I have been doing this such as through the SAC website, the Tir a Môr Newsletter, by giving talks to local groups, through the SAC road show , and this year also through the Cardigan Bay Boat Place here on the Pier in New Quay.

But, beyond this I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to get in touch with me and make use of the fact that I am in post to raise any issues that may be of concern to you. This meeting is certainly a good venue to do so and we hope that now that the Management Scheme review is well underway we will be meeting more often. But there is no need to wait for a LG meeting to raise an issue. In fact any issue that you may raise could be a reason to call for a Liaison Group meeting. So my message to you is: please feel free to get in touch as I am really here to put forward your views as well as to keep you informed.