

## Moray Firth SAC Management Group Meeting

**Great Glen House, Inverness**  
**Wednesday 14th September 2017, 13.30 – 16.30**

### Minutes & Action Note

<b>Attendees</b>	Doreen Bell Ben Leyshon Nicola Abrams Shona Turnbull PC Dan Sutherland PC Doug Darling Ken Maclean Michael Macleod  Vicky Junik Caroline Vawdrey	Scottish Water (Chair) Scottish Natural Heritage OPRED Highland Council Police Scotland Police Scotland Port of Inverness Marine Scotland (by TC)  Moray Firth Partnership (Secretariat) (minutes)
<b>Apologies</b>	Keith Beaton Gordon Mackenzie Ian Walker	SEPA Port of Inverness Marine Scotland
<b>Acronyms</b>	EIA - Environmental Impact Assessment JNCC - Joint Nature Conservation Committee MFP - Moray Firth Partnership OPRED - Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning SEPA - Scottish Environment Protection Agency SPA - Special Protection Area (European designation)	

Item	Action	Owner/Status
<b>1, 2</b>	<b>Welcome/introductions/apologies</b>	
	Doreen Bell, the meeting chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were noted.  It was noted that the Moray Firth Partnership is present at the meeting as secretariat to the management group, but is not a member.	
<b>3</b>	<b>Minute of last SAC MG meeting held December 2016</b>	
	The minute of the last meeting was approved as a true record.	
	<b>Actions arising from the meeting, and not covered by the agenda:</b> a. SNH to write to Marine Scotland to clarify its concerns in relation to meeting the conservation objectives for the SAC and the need for regulation. (See item 5, licensing - for current detail).	Complete
	b. Local fishermen to be invited to identify areas where anchor damage is of concern. SNH and other SAC members to identify areas for investigation / new data.  Current status - there is an anticipation that marine planning will take this forward. (See item 5 for Marine planning update)	Ongoing
	c. <b>D08:</b> Update was requested from Marine Scotland on fishing activity in the SAC	Complete
	d. <b>D11:</b> Oil industry and related activities (oil spills): Update the "Proposed Guidelines for Dealing with Cetaceans in the Event of an Oil Spill in the Moray Firth, Scotland"	Ongoing



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	<p>Responses to the Marine Scotland consultation were very detailed, and are currently being analysed SNH and JNCC. Marine Scotland expects to receive advice in early 2018. Scottish government decision is expected towards the close of 2018.</p>	Ongoing
<b>7</b>	<p><b>a) Role of SAC Management Group</b> <b>b) Confirmation of spend</b></p>	
	<p>a) Role of SAC Management Group <b>It was agreed to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the SAC management scheme, identifying which actions are complete and where members could add value by working together.</li> <li>• Draw up a revised, streamlined, readable scheme based on the review.</li> <li>• Consider the future work of the SAC management group in the light of the review.</li> </ul> <p>Areas of future collaborative work could include commissioning scientific investigation in order to inform management of the SAC</p> <p>It was noted that the SAC management group would sit well as a sub-group of the future Marine Planning Partnership - this does not currently have a timescale.</p> <p>The potential for the SAC management group to be part of the pre-application process for major developments affecting the SAC was discussed. The idea was thought to have potential - with the proviso that it is crucial to have such discussions early in the planning process.</p> <p>Shona noted that the matrix tool devised for a workshop on the Caithness cliffs (run jointly by MFP and Aberdeen University) could also be useful in planning for the SAC and SPA.</p>	ALL
	<p>b) confirmation of spend</p> <p>There is £6100 left in the SAC account.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> to discuss spending needs at the next meeting, when decisions will be made on the SAC management scheme review and the future role of the group.</p>	ALL
<b>8</b>	<b>Member Updates</b>	
	<p><b>Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment and Decommissioning (OPRED) - Nicola Abrams</b></p> <p>The 30th round of oil and gas licences in the North Sea has been issued, and is open until 21st November. It includes blocks that lie much closer to the SAC. Nicola to send link to licensing round to group members.</p> <p>New EIA regulations for offshore oil and gas work were issued in May 2107. Nicola to circulate link to group members.</p> <p>It was noted that the licensing block close to the Caithness shore around Lybster is being dealt with by SEPA. Vicky to ask SEPA for a written update.</p>	<p>OPRED</p> <p>OPRED</p> <p>MFP</p>

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	<p><b>Port of Inverness</b> - Ken Maclean Proposed new SPA: The Port of Inverness continues to be involved in discussions, including about where the boundary will be.</p> <p>Michael Maclean (Marine Scotland) noted that they had received very detailed responses to consultation on the SPA, and that they will ensure that all issues raised are clarified before responding with formal feedback.</p> <p>Dredging: It will be five years before the next major dredge is required. A smaller dredge by the Longman Quay is anticipated in c.18 months time</p> <p>Windfarms: Turbine traffic through the harbour is expected to continue through 2018.</p> <p>Oil Spill Plan: This was signed off in Dec 2016, and will run for 5 years.</p>	
	<p><b>Police Scotland</b> - PC Dan Sutherland and PC Doug Darling</p> <p>Police Scotland have dealt with a number of marine mammal related incidents over the summer - with 8 reported in Highland, of which 2 are currently listed as crime investigations.</p> <p>It was noted that getting proof of disturbance can be difficult, and that advice from experts is used in building a case.</p> <p>Discussion of the valuable role of education followed, and included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- that posters/signage at harbours and slipways could be a useful tool</li> <li>- to provide information on/with harbour users tickets</li> <li>- to ensure all relevant websites (eg harbours) have information on appropriate behaviour</li> <li>- to co-ordinate media releases when cetaceans visit the Moray Firth</li> <li>- to promote the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code more widely</li> <li>- to ensure that tour boats have a summary of how to report marine mammal disturbance</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Highland Council</b> - Shona Turnbull Update covered under item 7</p>	
	<p><b>Scottish Natural Heritage</b> - Ben Leyshon Ben noted that two locally based schemes (WISE and the Scottish Marine Animals Stranding Scheme) have been put forward to the marine category of the the RSPB Nature of Scotland awards. Ben to circulate members with details of the Scottish Marine Animals Stranding Scheme</p> <p>The recent meeting of the <u>Highland Environment Forum</u> had a number of items on marine litter - as a result of which a marine litter working group will be established (this is likely to have a west coast emphasis).</p> <p>The Scottish Government have announced a £500.000 for communities to tackle marine litter over the next year, with an emphasis on areas that are particularly bad litter 'sinks' - Arrochar is one such example.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> to add an action to the SAC management scheme on marine litter</p> <p>Ben noted that a number of offshore windfarms would be developed in the Maray Firth, with the potential of increased marine traffic and underwater noise.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> to add an action to the SAC management scheme on offshore windfarms</p>	<p>SNH</p> <p>MFP</p> <p>MFP</p>

Item	Action	Owner/Status
	<p><b>Scottish Water</b> - Doreen Bell The Ardersier wastewater treatment plant is under construction, but final completion may be delayed if new permissions are required for extending the outfall pipe.</p> <p>To date there have been 21 incidents of bathing water quality falling below acceptable levels during the 2017 bathing season. Nonetheless, this is still best season for bathing water compliance.</p> <p>Scottish Water is running several campaigns, including what not to flush down the loo - with a focus on bathroom waste.</p> <p>Scottish Water have hosted visits looking at microplastics in waste at Nigg (Aberdeen) and Methven (Fife).</p> <p>The National Sludge Strategy is being updated - which will include looking at the habitat appraisal + strategic EIA processes.</p> <p>Doreen mentioned that Scottish Water employees get 2 days per annum for volunteering work, and that details of Moray Firth beach cleans could be posted on their website.</p>	MFP
<b>9</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p>Vicky Junik noted that the SAC had been approached by a lawyer representing 'Cromarty Rising' with a freedom of information request to see the SAC minutes. These had been provided.</p> <p>It was noted that the SAC Management Group does not have statutory powers to respond to marine applications in the SAC area, but that individual members of the group represent agencies who will have provided responses as statutory consultees.</p> <p>It was agreed that the JNCC website should be checked to ensure that this information is clear.</p>	MFP
<b>10</b>	<b>Next meeting &amp; Chair</b>	
	<p><b>It was agreed</b> that the same person would chair the management group for at least two management group meetings in order to provide continuity. Doreen Bell agreed to chair the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Date of Meeting</b> : 1st March 2018, Time TBC <b>Venue</b>: SNH HQ, Great Glen House, Inverness</p>	Doreen to liaise with Vicky