

Orkney Area Advisory Group

Wednesday 14 November 2012, 10:00 until 12:30
St Magnus Centre, Palace Road Kirkwall, KW15 1PA

Minutes

Present:	
Eileen Summers (ES)	Orkney Islands Council
Paul Griffiths (PG)	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Chris Matthews (Chair)	SEPA
Eilidh Johnston (EJ)	SEPA
Alan Younie (AY)	Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Division (SGRPID)
Kate Thompson (KT)	Scottish Natural Heritage
Hugh Halcro-Johnston (HHJ)	Scottish Land & Estates
Sarah Sankey (SS)	RSPB
Jenni Kakkonen (JK)	Orkney Islands Council
Fiona Matheson (FM)	Orkney Fisheries Association
Victor Muir (VM)	National Farmers Union of Scotland
Malcolm Thomson (MT)	Orkney Trout Fishing Association
Stuart Topp (ST)	Orkney Trout Fishing Association
Apologies:	
Dave Marwick (DM)	Scottish Water

1 Welcome, introductions and apologies

CM welcomed everyone to the meeting, and EJ gave apologies as listed above. She noted that Dave Marwick will be replacing Stephan Walker as Scottish Water representative, and that a pre-meeting had been held as he was unable to attend today. CM welcomed Stuart Topp (Secretary, OTFA) to his first meeting.

The previous minutes were agreed as accurate, except under point 1, where ES's department should be recorded as Development and Marine Planning. This will be amended, and the minutes published on the AAG website.

On the action points from the previous meeting, the following progress was noted:

	Action	By	When	Progress
1	Update the AAG on electrofishing results upstream of previous barrier on Suso Burn, once this is carried out.	MT	May 2012 – Carry forward	MT updated that he is due to electrofish this stretch at the end of the week. Previous electrofishing data (c.2007) is on www.orkneytroutfishing.co.uk/ New action: MT to provide update on electrofishing upstream of barrier when data ready.
4	Provide links to national materials on diffuse pollution. All to consider how to use these in Orkney	EJ / all	Feb 2012	Links provided with draft minutes. Further discussion re awareness raising under item 7.
6	Check the Small Water	SW	Feb 2012,	Stephan Walker was working on

	Body priority sites for Scottish Water assets		carried forward	this, and EJ has discussed with Dave Marwick, who will complete this task. New action: CM/DM to give update on Scottish Water programme for investment, and note links to small water bodies.
7	Circulate a list of environmentally valuable but unthreatened small waterbodies	EJ (KT, SS)	When available	Carry forward. KT and SS have made some progress. Will liaise with Eric Meek and will circulate list when finalised.
8	Add update item on ad-hoc ecological monitoring delivered by SEPA to next meeting agenda	PG / EJ	November 2012	Complete. PG gave brief update. SEPA ecologist is on a sampling visit at present, and will revisit all top priority burns. New actions Circulate ecology results when available. It was recommended that SEPA should consider sampling Whaness Burn on Hoy in future.
9	Provide information from monitoring by Pete Kirby for Scapa Landscape Partnership	MT	May 2012, carried forward	MT reported that an entomology report is now complete. Carry forward until report circulated.
10	Meet with JK and SS regarding the AAG.	EJ	By November 2012	Complete.
11	Consider how to improve landowner involvement, and seek NFU membership actively.	EJ, HHJ	By October 2012	Complete. NFU now represented at the meeting following correction of email contact details. Further discussion under Item 7 on agenda.
12	Ensure that SEPA ecologist liaises with SS, KT, MT when visiting – potential for training, citizen science and possible contribution to Science Festival in September.	PG, CM	Depends on visit time, update by Nov 2012	Ongoing. Discussed under Item 7.
13	Clarify which diatoms sampled in rapid assessment methodology	PG	By October 2012	Complete. PG confirmed that diatoms cannot be sampled in the field, but that it may be possible to carry out lab analysis where information on nutrient status is needed.
14	Organise restoration visit, and provide more information on restoration funding to land managers	EJ	By November 2012	Ongoing. Restoration support agreed for this visit, discussed further under Item 7.

	15	Consider opportunities to build links with sectors, support this process with information, materials and presentations as requested.	All, EJ	During summer 2012	KT took restoration poster and materials to County Show, August 2012. New action: EJ to provide briefing sheet to ES for use with Council elected members.
	16	Enquire with SEPA Marine Science re data relevant to velvet crab fisheries over last 2 years	PG	By October 2012	Complete. PG gave verbal update: The latest published information in relation to Velvet Swimming Crab catch statistics (for 2010) is at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/05/9899/22 . It contains the statement that in 2010, the majority of landings came from Orkney, South Minch, Shetland, East Coast, Hebrides and Clyde. The information suggests that the stock assessment for velvet crab in Scottish waters will be updated in 2012 but that information appears not to have been published yet.
	17	Discuss sample sites and technique details. Investigate possibility for JK to meet SEPA Marine Science on their next monitoring visit.	PG, JK	By September 2012	Carry forward. Initial contact made by SEPA Marine Science, but need to establish timing of monitoring visit and ensure liaison with JK.
	18	Get an update / agenda item from Marine Science for next AAG, or subgroup meeting.	EJ, PG	By September 2012	Carry forward.
	19	Add small water bodies to the online area management plan.	EJ	By August 2012	Complete.
	20	Circulate draft information sheets as these are developed, and other group members to comment on these as needed.	KT, all	As required.	Complete. See agenda item 5.
2	RBMP information EJ referred to Paper 2, highlighting the ongoing consultation on 'Getting involved in the second RBMP' and the forthcoming consultation on improving the physical condition of Scotland's water environment. Action: EJ to circulate information on the forthcoming consultation to the group.				
3	Round table updates CM asked the group for updates on their work relating to the water environment. The following issues were raised:				

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST and MT updated on the awareness raising project 'Trout in the Shed'. • FM noted that OFA has applied for research projects including lobster study (monitoring size, abundance etc), fishery marketing and scallop study. Have funding for 4 year crustacean study, industry led. Monitoring re fish farm developments in North Isles and Scapa Flow. • ES updated that the Modified Proposed Local Development Plan has now been approved by the Development & Infrastructure Committee, and subject to approval by Full Council will proceed to the examination stage in January. Draft Supplementary Guidance Natural heritage was also approved as a material consideration in planning decision making, with subsequent formal adoption pending the completion of a boundary review of the locally designated nature conservation sites. The LBAP was also approved and, subject to ratification by Full Council, will go out for consultation in mid-December. SG aquaculture has been adopted, SG wind energy still out for consultation. The Environment Partnership is developing new Environment Strategy, to be agreed by whole partnership – a workshop meeting was held in September. This should be aligned with the Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement, and will go out for consultation in due course. • VM picked up on small water body data sheet referring to farmers washing out slurry tanks. He noted that nobody washes tanks out in the loch, and asked for this to be corrected. • SS highlighted current work on ballast water and fish farms. • AY referred to September round of Rural Priorities, which included some funding for buffer strips. Going forward, there is uncertainty about funding during the coming year.
4	<p>Marine invasive non-native species work</p> <p>JK noted that she has recently started work on a marine INNS monitoring plan for Scapa Flow. The draft plan is now finished, and there is a ballast water information meeting early next week.</p> <p>If accepted, baseline monitoring work will start in 2013, although some monitoring is already underway.</p> <p>MT asked about circulation of draft document. JK confirmed it will be circulated to the ballast water meeting attendees only at present, but will be made available for consultation once it is agreed.</p>
5	<p>Small water bodies task group</p> <p>KT introduced Paper 3, and welcomed comments on specific comments on the contents of each. Also asked if others wished to comments on further lochs info sheets, and forthcoming burns info sheets.</p> <p>Re Saintear, there is potential to tie in with citizen science approach.</p> <p>Agreed that a small review group should look closely at the wording of the sheets, particularly focusing on how we can ensure wording is not critical of land managers. Some discussion may be required with land managers. HHJ stressed that many people would welcome this dialogue and information.</p> <p>CM suggested that VM, CM, ST should form a review group to consider wording of all sheets. Action: EJ to set up this process and agree deadlines.</p>
6	<p>Reporting on current condition and challenges for the future</p> <p>PG introduced two part report which is being prepared for 2015. It will review current</p>

	<p>condition of the water environment, and identify challenges for the future, plus information on priority substances and other supporting information. Consultation will run from Dec 2013- June 2014, with consultation with AAGs starting next spring.</p> <p>It will include consultation on heavily modified water bodies and changes to classification, and review risks (of missing targets, deterioration in status, priority substance problems, climatic impacts) using a 'traffic light' system.</p> <p>PG noted that the current intention is to identify challenges for the future / Significant Water Management Issues nationally. He asked the group if they wish to be involved in determining locally significant issues? It was agreed that the group would like to be involved, and MT noted that he would like aquaculture to be recorded as an issue for Orkney.</p> <p>PG also noted that new interactive software 'Spotfire' will become available to view data, and demonstrated this briefly. This will form part of the online 'Current condition' report. The group were interested in accessing this information and receiving updates on progress with publishing Spotfire information.</p> <p>PG finished with initial analysis of Orkney progress – generally good. However:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent monitoring shows Voy Burn is now at poor status for dissolved oxygen – this is likely to be linked to action on diffuse pollution and morphology. • Suso Burn was projected to be improved to moderate status by 2015, and one barrier has been removed. However, one barrier in upper catchment is keeping it at poor status. PG asked for views on whether the Muckle Water part of the catchment would be good fish habitat. • Some other changes relating to new information – Burns of Tormiston and Netherbrough, Loch of Boardhouse and Helda Water may be further downgraded for morphology (particularly riparian vegetation). • Loch of Harray may decline in status for phytobenthos. • Bay of Ireland Shellfish Water has now been de-designated. <p>Action: KT recommended a long term action to begin to pull together sources of data on Orkney's water environment. This could be a spreadsheet format detailing the data gathered by a range of different partners.</p>
7	<p>Training and awareness raising events</p> <p>It was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEPA should work with NFUS to offer an event before March 2013, covering a background to RBMP, diffuse pollution and general binding rules. Action: EJ/CM/VM • SEPA ecologist could attend the Orkney Nature Festival (early May 2013), to give further information on ecological sampling. EJ to establish contact between SEPA ecologist and Julian Branscombe at RSPB. • EJ to co-ordinate a visit by restoration specialists and seek practical examples from AAG members where restoration projects could be progressed. Probable dates May / June.
8	<p>AOB and date of next meeting</p> <p>MT noted that aquaculture should be considered for the next 'significant water management issues'</p>

	The next meeting was agreed as Wednesday 12 June 2013. This will again be proposed as a joint meeting with flooding, so venue to be considered.
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	Action	By	When	Progress
1	Provide update on electrofishing upstream of Suso Burn barrier	MT	By January 2013	
2	Give update on Scottish Water programme for investment at next meeting, and note any links with small water bodies	CM / DM	By June 2013	
3	Circulate a list of environmentally valuable but unthreatened small waterbodies	KT / SS	By March 2013	
4	Circulate new ecology results from small water bodies when available.	PG (EJ)	By December 2012	
5	Provide data report by Pete Kirby for Scapa Landscape Partnership	MT	By December 2012	
6	Provide briefing sheet to ES for use with Council elected members.	EJ	By November 2012	
7	Arrange meeting between SEPA Marine Science and JK on their next monitoring visit.	PG / EJ	To be agreed	
8	Provide update on SEPA Marine Science monitoring and findings.	PG	June 2013	
9	Circulate information on the forthcoming 'restoration' consultation to the group.	EJ	November 2012	Done – consultation info sent out November 2012.
10	Establish sign-off group for small water body data sheets (VM, CM, ST) and agree timetable for publishing.	EJ (VM, CM, ST)	December 2012 for group set up	
11	Prepare spreadsheet to gather sources of data on Orkney's water environment, for population by group members.	EJ	December 2012 for initial proposal, then ongoing	
12	Set up events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NFUS / SEPA SEPA contribution to Nature Festival 	EJ/VM EJ/SS	Feb 2013 May 2013	

	• Restoration visit	EJ/MT	June 2013	
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