



The Manx Blue Carbon Project Working Group

Thursday 22nd September 2022 – 2nd Meeting

Attendees:

David Beard	Manx Fish Producers' Organisation (MFPO) Chief Executive
Peter Duncan	DEFA - Senior Marine Biodiversity Officer
Jack Emmerson	DEFA – Sea Fisheries Policy Manager
Claire Evans	National Oceanography Centre (NOC) – Senior Scientist
Glen Geeves	DEFA – Climate Change Partner
Rowan Henthorn	DEFA - Manx Blue Carbon Project Officer
Lara Howe	Manx Wildlife Trust (MWT) - Marine Officer
Martin Skov	Bangor University – Professor of Oceanography
Jacqui Keenan	DEFA - Manx Blue Carbon Project Officer
Leigh Morris	MWT - CEO
Hannah Muir	Swansea University – PhD Researcher
Emma Rowan	DoI – Senior Infrastructure Policy Officer
Richard Selman	DEFA – Ecosystem Policy Manager
Andy Stewart	DfE – Director of Policy & Strategy

Apologies:

Adam Creamore	KPMG – Advisory Manager ESG
Simon Nicholas	KPMG – Assurance and consulting partner

Meeting overview

- The Manx Wildlife Trust's seagrass restoration work in Port Erin, and mapping around Derbyhaven and Fort Island, is progressing well. Data on all currently known seagrass beds is to be shared among working group members, including DEFA, MFPO, and DoI, to ensure that relevant marine users are aware of them. This data will be used to ensure all known seagrass areas are protected, and will be included in the Blue Carbon Mapping tool currently in development.

- The Manx Blue Carbon Project Phase 1b funding bid is being submitted to the Climate Change Transformation Board at the end of October, to go on to the Treasury Board in early November. It will acknowledge that the Manx Territorial Seas are a multi-use working environment, and that managing 'hot spots' of blue carbon supports a sustainable and holistic approach to marine management.

The recommended bid includes funding for fieldwork and analysis for both Bangor and NOC/Swansea PhDs, which will focus on quantifying blue carbon resource and understanding fisheries impacts on blue carbon stocks, which will additionally support other government initiatives such as DEFA's request to UK DEFRA for additional fishing quota.

Member updates

Bangor University

- PhD to start in January, looking at fisheries impact on blue carbon in seabed and building on research done by NOC/Swansea. Potentially includes experimental work, and lab work looking at bioturbation.
- MRes is looking at faunal compositions in seagrass beds – potential to link in to/inform work in IOM.

Blue carbon project

- Final NOC/Swansea fieldwork campaign in September, conducting side scan sonar and drone mapping.
- Blue carbon mapping tool in development under the Government's Small Business Change Scheme in early. Team have requested to include internal interface, plus public interface to share where BC habitats are.
 - **RH to engage with Rob Clynes re mapping and to keep ER informed/copied.**
 - **RH/JK to involve partners/stakeholders at relevant points to ensure joined-up approach.**
- Phase 1b bid – due for submission to the Member for the Environment 7 October, then Climate Change Board 24 October, followed by Treasury Board 2 November.
- Include acknowledgement that the Territorial Seas are a multi-use working environment and a pragmatic approach to management is needed, which involves other commitments relating to meeting net zero (e.g. offshore wind).

Climate Change Transformation Team

- Climate Change Plan 2022-27 agreed by Council of Ministers (CoMin), going before Tynwald in October. Different regulations for each interim target (35% by 2030, 45% by 2035).

DEFA Ecosystems Policy

- Nature Conservation Forum - KPMG attending 22 Sep to discuss funding nature conservation.
- Orsted reengaging in potential offshore wind farm.

DEFA Fisheries

- Working with MFPO on application for additional quota for nephrops & herring; DEFRA are allocating quota to community groups who can demonstrate sustainability benefits. Bangor PhD will help meet DEFRA sustainability requirements, exploring experimental closures, cost-benefits of switching to creeling.
 - Need specifics on spatial management/suggested closures ASAP from Bangor.
 - Bangor to take into account changes in access and effort patterns over time.
- Seagrass protection – working with MFPO to ensure fishing community are aware of all locations and protections are in place.

Department of Infrastructure: No updates

Department for Enterprise

- Joining to understand economic implications and any support DfE can give, and support links with business.

Manx Wildlife Trust

- Seagrass work:
 - Transplant trial at Port Erin has taken well. Control trial at edge of Fort Island seagrass bed failed –substrate may have been unsuitable (hence being the edge of the bed).
 - Mapping of Fort Island and Derbyhaven seagrass areas continues, and has identified several dense beds - one covered in grooved top shells.
 - MWT have a growing team with variety of knowledge including diving, mapping, and flying drones. Planning to add density/abundance to mapping/assessments, and looking at potential locations for a nursery.
- **LH to share known seagrass coordinates with DEFA, NOC/Swansea, DoI, and MFPO.**

MFPO

- Consultation on long-term management plan for scallops completed, various measures implemented to reduce impact.
 - Fleet reduction scheme - now 55 active boats. King scallop fishing effort in 03m is now about 30% of 6yrs ago.
 - Daily catch limits reduce seabed contact time.
 - Number of dredges reduced, maximum tow bar length capped, number of teeth reduced.

- Applying for quota from UK DEFRA for fish found in Manx waters. DEFRA pushing for sustainability measures.

National Oceanography Centre and Swansea University

- 'Bio Isle' funding bid, in collaboration with KPMG - submitted to UKRI and awaiting decision; aims to develop bio accreditation scheme using the IOM as a test bed.
- Core analysis in progress to determine carbon content and sequestration rates.

Working Group Terms of Reference

- Terms of Reference updated in response to feedback:
 - Membership application simplified.
 - Decisions by majority, except for Terms of Reference and any outputs to be issued by the Group, which will be by consensus.
- Responsibility for the project lies with DEFA, so ultimate decisions lie with DEFA Minister.
- Observer status –, 'Observer' status can be granted where no seats available or membership not appropriate; Observers will receive correspondence and can suggest agenda items, but cannot attend meetings.

Any other business

- Stakeholder engagement – key to include thorough engagement early and throughout project to avoid issues.
- Salt marsh at Poyll Doey: signs installed by MWT to monitor salt marsh #PDPics – members to share on social media.
- Blue Economy – Importance of engaging businesses e.g. aquaculture, and government support of enterprises which give BC and economic benefits. Benefit of DfE and businesses to engage with BC WG at earliest opportunity. Government should be conscious of ensuring businesses/schemes are valid and trustworthy.

Date of next meeting

Suggest Wed 11th Jan – doodle poll to be sent