

Cromer Shoal MCZ Stakeholder Group

Terms of Reference

Context

Natural England have advised Eastern IFCA that rugged chalk (raised structures of exposed chalk) is damaged by potting. The pots that are most damaging to the rugged chalk are those left in the water for longer periods (e.g. lost gear). Natural England have also advised that, whilst incidents of damage to rugged chalk by normal potting activity are individually small, they accumulate into a level of impact that hinders the conservation objectives of the site.

Rather than needing to take a precautionary approach, in which any interactions between potting and complex outcropping chalk would need to be stopped with immediate effect, Natural England advised that an Adaptive Risk Management (ARM) approach would be more suitable for this fishery. Under an ARM approach, appropriate management measures would be developed through an iterative process over the coming years whereby management and research inform each other in a feedback loop.

The issue of pots left in the water for long periods, such as lost pots, is required sooner and management to enable fishing effort to be monitored may also be required.

Purpose

The purpose of the Stakeholder Group is, throughout the lifetime of the Adaptive Risk Management Project, to enable effective communication and information sharing between actively interested organisations, groups and individuals and the Adaptive Risk Management Project Board. The Project Board will use information supplied by the Stakeholder Group and considered relevant by Eastern IFCA, to direct the Task and Finish Groups and inform Eastern IFCA decision-making.

Membership

The Stakeholder Group is regarded as integral to the development of the fisheries management of the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. It will comprise organisations, groups and individuals who have an active interest in the MCZ fisheries management being a success for society and sea. The Stakeholder Group membership will not be closed, however we will require that participants request to join to enable proper meeting planning. In order to enable effective communication across all working focus areas, the Stakeholder Group will be joined, wherever possible, by representatives of Eastern IFCA.

Function

The function of the Stakeholder Group is to engage all those with an interest in supporting the societal and environmental needs of the local sea via effective fisheries management of the Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. This is inclusive of those within the fishing and conservation interests, as well as wider societal interests

and needs (e.g. socio-economic interests such as employment and tourism). The Stakeholder Group will support the progress of the Adaptive Risk Management approach by:

- Ensuring that all members are kept up to date on the work of the Project.
- Providing feedback, information and advice to the Project Board.
- Where appropriate, actively supporting the Task and Finish Groups in answering their research and managerial questions.
- Where appropriate, actively providing support to the Task and Finish Groups by taking part in their research. In this instance, the relevant Task and Finish Group will contact the Stakeholder Group member directly about this.

Conduct

It is expected that members of the Stakeholder Group understand that there is common ground between all participants, that ultimately we all want and need a healthy and thriving sea. This shared interest will guide the conversations of the Stakeholder Group. It is recognised that there have been some tensions in the past and there may still be different perspectives on the paths taken to achieve success at Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ. All stakeholders are valued and so it is important that all Stakeholder Group members contribute constructively and treat others with respect. A Code of Conduct will be presented at, and agreed, by Stakeholder Group members at the first meeting and revisited as and when required. Should Stakeholder Group members fail to observe the Code of Conduct, their membership will be reviewed.

Accountability

Both Natural England and Eastern IFCA have statutory responsibilities and organisational and group representatives will be accountable to their respective organisations.

Eastern IFCA are the local fisheries regulator and are ultimately responsible for decision-making with regard to the implementation or not of any fisheries management measures. Eastern IFCA commits to using all information they deem relevant supplied by the Stakeholder Group in their Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ fisheries management decision-making processes. Eastern IFCA also commits to attending the Stakeholder Group meetings as often as possible.

The Agents of Change project commits to the coordination, hosting and facilitation of the Stakeholder Group, collecting the views and values stated at the Stakeholder Group sessions in the form of meeting notes. These notes will be shared with the Stakeholder Group members and given time for feedback ahead of Project Board meetings. The agreed notes will be given to Project Board members and discussed at Project Board meetings. Feedback on these notes for the Stakeholder Group will be provided by the Project Board. It is for the Project Board and Task and Finish Groups to seek further advice or support as required. More about the Agents of Change project in Annex 1.

Administration

Coordination, hosting, facilitation and note taking – Agents of Change project, supported by Eastern IFCA when appropriate.

Frequency – Every 4-6 weeks, or more frequently if required. Every 3 months, from the first meeting, the upcoming meeting dates will be decided by Doodle Poll with the date and time that most participants can make being chosen.

Location – The first meeting will be virtual on Zoom and subsequent meeting locations will be decided by the Stakeholder Group members.

Response times

The Agents of Change project team commits to responding to Stakeholder Group members within a maximum of 10 working days.

Complaints

At any time, should a member of the Stakeholder Group feel unhappy about a process, we would ask that this issue is first taken up with the Agents of Change team: alice.tebb@mcsuk.org. If the Agents of Change project team feel it is an issue they cannot resolve themselves or the Steering Group member feels the issue at hand has not been handled by the Agents of Change project satisfactorily, they should contact Eastern IFCA – info@eastern-ifca.gov.uk.

Membership List

See Annex 2.

Annex 1. Agents of Change

Background and aims

In 2015, Marine Conservation Society (MCS) supported Eastern IFCA with a well-received Community Voice Method project called Common Ground in 2016. The Common Ground project found that, especially in Norfolk, people wanted improved local communication and engagement in order to enhance manager-community relationships, increase wider community engagement and to improve understanding of local marine environment.

Agents of Change is a partnership project led by MCS as part of the Marine CoLABoration and funded by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. While Marine Protected Areas can be a contentious issue in some communities, much of the tension comes from the different ways that people value the ocean (rather than the ocean not being valued at all). Since October 2017, the Agents of Change project has been working alongside local policy makers, including Eastern IFCA and Natural England, to help communities value and better benefit from Marine Protected Area designation and management. Agents of Change seeks to support, enable and encourage a broad range of local people to connect through common ground and effectively collaborate on local ocean protection.

Agents of Change in Norfolk, 2018 - 2021

A series of community workshops were held in July and October 2018 to identify community vision and hopes for the future. At these workshops, participants agreed a vision for local society and sea:

“Informed and engaged communities working together to support a thriving marine environment that provides sustainable livelihoods.”

This vision was broken down into four key focus themes:

- Improved and thriving marine environment
- Informed and engaged locals and children
- Informed and educated visitors
- Supported local fishing economy

The Agents of Change project has been supporting these aims by connecting with local County, District, Town and Parish Councils and through a local Cromer Shoal Chalk Beds MCZ education programme, funded by Seafarers UK, Norfolk Coast Partnership and the Wash and North Norfolk Marine Partnership. We have also supported information to visitors, by engaging with local tourism boards and businesses. Moving forward, Agents of Change will focus on its role within the Stakeholder Group.

Links:

- Common Ground Community Voice Method video: <https://vimeo.com/191148781>
- Common Ground Community Voice Method workshop report: https://www.eastern-ifca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Common-Ground_final-report1.pdf
- Marine CoLABoration: <https://www.marinecolab.org/>

- Agents of Change: <https://www.mcsuk.org/ocean-emergency/marine-protected-areas/agents-of-change/>
- Report from July 2018 meetings at Cromer, Mundesley and Sheringham: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1I1mnbxVoWc0_6hKsYxeLQyXyONBH1gDh4zqLRK7KJ2w/edit?usp=sharing
- Report from October 2018 follow up meeting at Trimingham: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ng8Si3QcYshW8hFof0piB-M1fuSR9PmA7B5phcGeKQU/edit?usp=sharing>

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Annex 2. Membership List

Placeholder for a list after the Stakeholder Group is established.

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