

Note of Morecambe Bay Partnership Annual General Meeting

23rd October 2003, Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Captain John Green (JG) welcomed everyone to the second AGM of the Morecambe Bay Partnership as a charity. He particularly welcomed the Mayor and thanked him for officially opening the AGM & Conference.

JG reported the following staff changes:

1. Michelle Waller joined us as Office Manager in February 2003.
2. Dominic Charkin joined us as BeachCare Officer in May 2003.
3. Susannah Bleakley started maternity leave in June 2003, and now has a daughter. Susannah will return to work in December 2003.
4. Alan Chester has stepped down as trustee of the Partnership to enable him to assume the role of Partnership Officer for the duration of Susannah's leave.
5. Chris Rowley will continue to work on a part-time basis.
6. Trustee Geoff Paul has taken over the role of Treasurer.

On behalf of the Partnership he offered the following thanks:

1. To the Conference sponsors for their generous financial contributions.
2. To the staff of MBP for their organization of the days events

Apologies for absence were noted.

2. Election of Chair and Vice Chair of Conference

Alan Chester (AC) invited nominations for the Conference Officers.

Captain John Green, Chair and Colin Peacock, Vice Chair were re-elected unopposed.

3. Report on Partnership Activities

AC summarised the achievements of the last 12 months, which are detailed in the Business Papers. He then outlined the Partnership's plans for the coming months:

1. Continue our work on our newsletters, website, conferences and other meetings to form the basis of our communications network.
2. To maintain our position as consultee on coastal management via the North West Coastal Forum, PISCES and the Irish Sea Forum.
3. We will continue to identify new funding sources and make appropriate applications linked to our work.
4. Funding for BeachCare has now been secured for 2¼ years. The programme supports existing volunteer and community groups around the Bay. It also aims to engage new groups, especially from the disenfranchised sector working closely with other initiatives and organisations.
5. Proposals for alternative energy are progressing. Since our last Conference the Walney offshore windfarm has received approval. The DTI has designated the shallow waters off the NW Coast as suitable for further development. A proposal has been submitted for a bridge, with tidal turbines, spanning from Heysham to Barrow-in-Furness. We have positioned ourselves as a communication channel for the public consultation phases of such developments.
6. A number of topics have arisen during the year with which we will continue to be involved:
 - Vehicle access and dumping at Pilling Sands
 - Peeler crab trapping at Roa Island
 - The proposal to construct a bridge from Heysham to Barrow
 - Concerns over a project to store gas underground at Preesall
 - Jet ski usage on the River Wyre
 - Commercial cockling across the Bay.

7. Publicity during the summer has been extensive and positive. We will continue to build on our strong relationship with local press.
8. In line with the Interpretation Strategy, we wish to progress with our plans to improve information about the Bay. We aim to secure funding for the delivery of this work but as the proposed programme is beyond our existing funding, full implementation is likely to take some time.
9. Discussions to establish Morecambe Bay as a Regional Park are progressing. We have given full support to this concept. The delivery of the Interpretation Strategy would be a key component of such an initiative. The development of a NW Coastal Trail from Chester to Carlisle is proposed and could link various coastal Regional Park Resources.

4. Morecambe Bay Partnership AGM

a) Notes of Last Meeting

Notes of the Business Meeting held at the conference on the 10th September 2002 were accepted as a true record. There were no matters arising or outstanding actions.

c) Resignation and Election of Trustees

The constitution provides for 12 trustees. AC had resigned in February

The following retirements were required under the constitution:

Richard Greenwood and John Hetherington by rotation, leaving potentially 3 vacancies to fill.

Richard indicated his wish to stand for re-election, but John does not seek re-election.

Joyce Lynch had been nominated but no other nominations had been received.

JG proposed that one vacancy be held open to allow AC to rejoin as trustee

The meeting unanimously approved these proposals.

d) Trustees Report

AC introduced the Morecambe Bay Partnership Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31st March 2003 and reported a successful year.

AC outlined the Partnership's objects, reiterated the key achievements for the reporting period.

Geoff Paul (GP) reported on the financial statements, which were also presented within the Business Papers. The accounts had undergone independent examination in line with Charity Commission requirements and had been approved by Fiona Parker, Group Management Auditor, Cumbria County Council. GP stressed that funding is always tight and that historic surplus is being eroded. Future financial viability continues to depend on the generation of management fees from project funding streams, in addition to membership and sponsorship income. Financing the day-to-day running costs through core funding is as always difficult and new sources are always appreciated.

There were no questions from the floor on the Trustees' Report and it was adopted by the meeting. AC on behalf of the Trustees formally thanked the many organisations that support the Morecambe Bay Partnership.

f) Amendment to the Constitution

The following amendment to paragraph 12.1 of the constitution to assist day-to-day financial management was proposed and accepted unanimously:

12.1 Any bank account in which any assets of the charity are deposited shall be operated by the Executive Committee and shall be held in the name of the charity. All cheques and orders for the payment of money from such account shall be signed by at least 2 persons from 5 named signatories comprising 3 named Trustees, the Partnership Officer and Office Manager. Cheques above £250 must include the signature of at least one Trustee.

g) Appointment of Auditors

The proposal to re-appoint Fiona Parker, Group Management Auditor Cumbria County Council as auditor, was accepted unanimously.

h) Honorary Life Membership

2002 saw the first nomination of Honorary Life Membership to the Morecambe Bay Partnership. This is an initiative that we wish to continue and the Trustees unanimously agreed that Tom Hayhurst be awarded Honorary Life Membership this year. This is in recognition of his tremendous work with Arnside Sailing Club and HM Coastguard, and in supporting the development of the Morecambe Bay Partnership.

5. Closing Remarks

Questions or comments were invited from the floor. The following were received:

- Does the Partnership know of any hovercraft activity in the Bay? *About 7years ago a proposal to run trips around the Bay was submitted. Following discussions with the relevant bodies this received approval, but the person decided to relocate elsewhere. A further initiative has recently been passed to us. This will undoubtedly need to follow the consultation process again.*
- What about the collation of information regarding vehicle dumping at Pilling Sands. There are opposing views whether the beach should be closed. *MBP have indicated their support for a discussion process between the interested parties.*
- The wish to ensure that consultation with regards to the closure of Pilling includes all Councils and Parish Council. *MBP have not taken the lead with arranging these discussions, but will make the point to the people taking the discussion forward.*
- Concern was expressed that the Sport & Recreation Group does not take into consideration the environmental implications of the Bay. A specific point was with regards to the collecting of Elvers. *The Sport & Recreation Group aim to always take into account the environmental impact of any activities or proposals. This comment will be fed back to the Chairman.*
- Linked with the Cross Bay Walk leaflet, the lack of NW Rail carriage space for walkers was raised. *MBP have been in discussion with First North Western with regards to both carriage space, and trains occasionally not stopping. Organisers have been contacting Tim Brawn tele 0161 228 4428, of First NW for additional carriages and stop requests, although on a few occasions the system in place for special arrangements has failed.*
- Linked to the proposed Regional Parks it was asked if we are also in discussion with regards to the NWDA 'A New Vision for Coastal Resorts' report. *MBP is aware of the report and also of the work going on to address some of the recommendations of the report. It is envisaged that current local projects within the Regional Park will be recognized and that coordination of those projects will be encouraged.*