

## Comments to date:

SUBJECT	COMMENT	ANSWER
<b>Farming</b>	Will there be restrictions for farmers?	<p>This project will not create any restrictions for farmers.</p> <p>The area chosen has been assessed for nitrate levels and they were acceptable for seagrass restoration. Seagrass can actually be an important factor for mitigating the effects of surface run off as it actively uptakes nitrogen as part of its natural photosynthesis cycle and locks nitrogen in the seabed.</p>
<b>Sponsors</b>	What is Welsh Government's involvement in the project?	<p>Welsh Government are not directly involved in the project. The Seagrass Ocean Rescue Project is a partnership between Swansea University, WWF and Sky.</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales will be the regulator for the project, granting the partners a license to plant seagrass but that is the limit of their involvement.</p>
	Why are WWF and Sky doing this rather than focussing on plastic?	Ocean health is declining. Many factors are affecting this, from plastics to climate change. We need to find solutions to lots of problems. Sky Ocean Rescue has multiple projects, looking at multiple factors including both plastic and, with this project, Seagrass meadow Restoration, amongst many others.
<b>Fishing</b>	Will the fishers be stopped from fishing there?	Swansea University is hoping to work with the fishers in the area to have a voluntary agreement to mark out and avoid the planting area during the initial sowing and growing period (this autumn/winter). Beyond that period fishing practices, such as gill net fishing and prawn pots, have been discussed with local fishers as a sustainable option for catching fish in the meadow.
<b>Moorings</b>	Will the project be located in the existing area for moorings?	<p>No, the initial meadow area will avoid placement in areas where there are already moorings. The project is working with DYC to understand where this is.</p> <p>Ultimately the community, including mooring holders, fishers and other interests will decide the areas that will be planted up.</p> <p>Mooring servicing activities and positions can continue as they always have.</p>
<b>Project</b>	How long will the demonstration project last?	<p>Swansea University are currently collecting seed, and will need to plant out in Autumn this year to match with the plants natural lifecycle, as the colder winter temperatures help with germination.</p> <p>It is hoped the seagrass will then grow and develop over the next year. Where there are areas of failure, Swansea University is looking to fill in. They have a programme to monitor and report over 5 years. If the restoration is successful the seagrass will be here forever, providing local benefits to local people.</p>
	Why 2 hectares? Will you try and plant more?	<p>It is thought that 2 hectares is a big enough and dense enough area at which seagrass becomes self-sustaining. Small areas are susceptible to disturbance and storms and do not have the critical mass to repopulate bigger areas.</p> <p>This project is limited at 2 hectares of cultivated area, the other activities in Dale take precedence and therefore we are working within them. If successful, this project will be replicated in other areas in Wales and England.</p>

<b>Future</b>	Will the seagrass spread?	<p>The project will plant 2 hectares of seagrass, over time this may spread. Its spread will be limited by water depth though, as it only grows where light levels are high enough. We expect this to be up to 3m depth.</p> <p>If it does spread, it will clearly demonstrate how boating, fishing and conservation can successfully co-exist.</p> <p>No formal restrictions will be made on users such as mooring holders, commercial users or fishers. The team hope to work with a community group 'managing' the seagrass area.</p>
	What if the project is successful? Will it become a protected site?	<p>The area is already in the Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC).</p> <p>Additional protection is only brought in to areas if something is perceived to require protection due to threats that are there.</p> <p>Swansea University and WWF would like this project to be an example of how users such as fishers, mooring holders, commercial and recreational users can co-exist in an area, without a need for specific protection.</p> <p>The team is looking to get assurances from Welsh Government stating the above.</p>
<b>Seagrass info</b>	How tall is seagrass?	<p>Given the seabed conditions and light levels in Dale it is expected to grow to no more than 70cm.</p> <p>It is a perennial plant and over winter reduces in size, storing energy in its roots to regrow the following spring.</p>
	Will it stabilise the seabed?	<p>Yes – and as the seagrass grows and develops it will also help spread and reduce water movement. It has also proven an effective way to dissipate wave energy, improving coastal defences.</p>