

# Community Meeting Seagrass Dale

## 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019 Coronation Hall

**23 attendees, to include Community Councillors, Dale Yacht Club (committee) members, fisher, POMH Environment Manager & Water Ranger, wider community.**

### **Project team:**

Engagement team Jess & Jetske (PCF), Sue Burton (PMSAC)

Swansea University: Richard Unsworth, Sam Rees, Chiara Bertelli

### **Introduction** - Sue Burton, Pembrokeshire Marine SAC

Introduced project team, summed up the engagement activity to date and concerns raised as well as project benefits.

<slides [here](#)>

### **Project** - Richard Unsworth, Project Seagrass (charity) and Swansea University

Described activity to date and need for the project. He highlighted how conservation is often in conflict with other use and he would like to bring back conservation by working together, finding commonality not division. The proposal looked at Dale, due to the multitude of activities happening.

An apology was given to Dale community that PCF, who are now involved to engage the community wider, were not involved sooner.

Porthdinlaen videos were shown, showing 50 species of fish, prawns, plaice, bib, pollock, cod. A rich environment supporting fish life.

Richard explained how carbon is stored in seagrass, and that there is anecdotal evidence from the 1950s about seagrass in Dale.

He showed examples of 3 UK sites that are full of boating activity and moorings with abundant seagrass:

1. St Mary's – Scilly Isles
2. Weymouth Harbour
3. Porthdinlaen

Whilst Richard accepted the original drawing of the 'box' in the South side of Dale Bay was not the best start, he believes there are ways of addressing concerns. Richard will now go back to see whether the area can be moved and will present new options, trying to be flexible to find location that is acceptable to have a project that is a great example of community of users that has restored an area, improving marine biodiversity and storing carbon. He made clear that no one in the project team wants to stop mooring or any activity and to have seagrass without altering people's livelihoods or ways of life. Seagrass for people to fish in, snorkel over, amongst fishing pots, seagrass between boat moorings.

<slides [here](#)>

**Discussion** - Extensive Q&A session (see list of questions below, the project team, led by Swansea University will provide full answers in the FAQ as soon as possible) **Q&A**

1. What do the Port of Milford Haven/ NRW think. See moorings in Longoar, no more anchoring?
2. What is the future of more visitor moorings?
3. What if seagrass spreads across the Bay, what is the back stop?
4. What about servicing of moorings? Lifting moorings to service.? Not all moorings are lifted.
5. There was a thank you for the apology – communication has been poor to start with.
6. A clarification on the map shown in the presentation was asked for – whether the map shows new proposal?
7. Does seagrass take in nutrients, i.e. excess nutrients in the Gann?
8. Queried the size of the proposed planting.
9. Questioned the fact that there was seagrass in Dale prior to the 2017 trial by Swansea University.
10. Licence conditions were questioned – piling?
11. Request for method statement (accompanied licence application) and commented on need for project to address the details adequately (e.g. parking and trailer arrangements).
12. Could the ‘naturally occurring’ seagrass patch be dated? The idea of carbon dating was welcomed.
13. Need to get to a position that sees a variation of footprint
14. It was asked whether seagrass would run ‘amuck’
15. How does cultivated seagrass develop? Will it be like an invasive species, choking the Haven?
16. How are the hessian bags secured?
17. The Studland Bay conflict was brought up.
18. Can Dale village exist as is in the future?
19. No-one opposes seagrass. Need to make sure we are speaking to the right people?
20. When will you start planting?

Summed up **Next Steps**, Jetske Germing, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum:

- A. Alternative options for siting to be considered, to find mutually agreeable planting area. Then share with Dale Yacht Club and Dale Community Council in the first instance.
- B. Community Drop In Event to consider alternative planting proposals
  - a. Note – due to availability this will take place on **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September in the Coronation Hall Dale 6.30-9:00pm**, all welcome.
- C. PCF to request letter from Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, to give assurances around avoiding Highly Protected Sites, ensuring that all existing users can co-exist with conservation efforts.
- D. Update web page with information, FAQs for community, hosted by Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum: <https://www.pembrokeshirecoastalforum.org.uk/seagrassoceanrescue/>
- E. Share Method Statement
- F. Organise site visit to Porthdinllaen to see seagrass co-existing with mooring holders, boating & fishing activity. To take place **Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September, day visit by minibus. Please let us know if you wish to join.** We plan to also film this event, for others to see after.
- G. Schools engagement with local schools, offering opportunities to get involved.