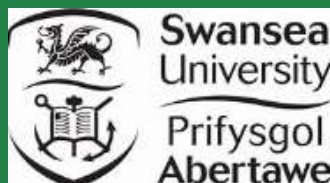




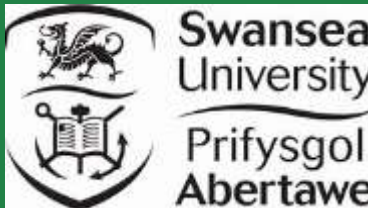
RESTORING SEAGRASS IN DALE COMMUNITY MEETING

Dale Coronation Hall, September 2nd 2019





Ricardo Zanre (WWF)



Dr Richard Unsworth

Chiara Bertelli, Leanne Cullen-Unsworth, Nicole Esteban, Evie Furness, Benjamin Jones, Richard Lilley, Hanna Nuuttila, Sam Rees



**Jetske Germing
Jess Hooper**



Sue Burton



Tonight:

Introduction to what has happened so far, concerns raised, project benefits (Sue)

Project specifics (Richard)

Discussion and next steps (All / Jetske)



seagrass
ocean rescue

RESTORING SEAGRASS IN DALE WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

Timeline:

2017 – start of Swansea University seagrass restoration experimental trial replanting in Dale Bay (20 small hessian seed bags)

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fevo.2019.00311/full>

March 2019 – met with statutory stakeholders (e.g. NRW, Port)

April 2019 – PCF contracted to produce a stakeholder engagement plan for the project (delivered in May).

Advised early engagement with main users (Dale Yacht Club and fishers).

Met with Dale Yacht Club and main fisher in Dale.



seagrass
ocean rescue

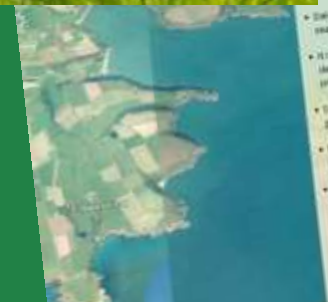
RESTORING SEAGRASS IN DALE WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

Timeline:

June – hoped for start of liaison with local stakeholders but unfortunately delayed due to project start-up paperwork with funders.

July /August – engagement with local interests and community members. 1:1 meetings and communications and also open opportunities to find out about and discuss the project. Presence at Dale Fete 26th July, project presentation 31st July (Jubilee Suite), drop-in meeting on 19th August (Jubilee Suite), presence at RNLI fundraiser 24th August.

August/September – liaison to address concerns and find a mutually acceptable planting area



Dale Seagrass Drop in 19 August – Community Feedback, updated with answers to concerns and questions

Background

The following feedback was collected during the Drop-in event for the Seagrass Ocean Rescue project. Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, together with Pembrokeshire Marine SAC Officer facilitated this event for RWP. The project is funded by Sky Ocean Rescue and the research and technical work is delivered by Swansea University.

Summary of project

The project 'Seagrass Ocean Rescue', led by Swansea University in partnership with WWF and Sky Ocean Rescue, aims to restore two hectares of seagrass meadow in collaboration with local people in Dale. The project is being helped locally by Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum and the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation Officer to ensure that local users and the community are properly involved, so that those who enjoy or work in the sea around Dale have an opportunity to share their views and help decide on the location for this exciting new project.

This demonstration project could show how restoration can co-exist with existing users and activities (such as fishing, recreational use, community), now and in the future.

Attendees

PCF arranged the event on behalf of WWF and Sky Ocean Rescue, with facilitators from the PCF team, Jackie Gerring and Jessica Hooper, alongside Sue Barton (SAC officer) and Sam Rees from Swansea University, who provided technical support and brought a couple of seagrass. We estimate that approximately 50 people attended the event. However, it became very busy at one point, so it is likely some attendees were not asked to sign in. Where possible the facilitator team captured names of those we knew attended. If your name got missed, and you wish to be kept informed, please let us know.

Collated responses

Attendees were asked to feed into the project via direct engagement with the facilitators and by adding their thoughts, feedback, concerns and questions to a series of boards which are collated below for transparency and to facilitate ongoing project communications. This is an evolving document. If participants identify that an issue has been omitted or overlooked please either visit our website: <https://www.pembrokeshirecoastalforum.org.uk/seagrassoceanrescue/> and fill in the "have your say" section or get in touch with the team directly and we will update accordingly.

Answers following the drop in event

The project team have answered the concerns and questions raised at the event, please note below, in blue.



Why choose Dale?

- It offers the right conditions for seagrass - sheltered (that's why there are moorings here – both boats and seagrass need sheltered areas), with the right seabed conditions and water depth and sufficient light levels for seagrass to grow.
- There is a very small patch of seagrass here naturally already.
- Nitrate levels here are lower than further up the waterway, and levels monitored within existing seagrass blades show that Dale seagrass is very healthy.
- Dale Bay has room for both new seagrass and existing activity. This is unlike alternative areas suitable for seagrass with more pressures and less available space.



Will this project impact use of the moorings?

- We are working with users/the community to find a suitable area, and there will be no restrictions on users. We hope to work closely with local fishers to prevent gear being placed directly on the young shoots during the initial period of development.
- Existing activity is very much a part of this project. No moorings will be affected. The project recognises how very important the moorings are to users and to Dale and does not wish to do anything to negatively impact them, either now or in the future.
- Where moorings are present within existing seagrass beds, the mooring causes a 'scar' within the meadow. This is an accepted part of this project – seagrass will not be planted underneath moorings.



Will this impact use of the moorings? (cont...)

- There are many meadows all around the world that sit within boat moorings with no impact upon the boats e.g. Porthdinllaen, Weymouth, Falmouth...
- The project wants to plant 2 hectares of seagrass, over time this may spread. Its spread will be limited by water depth, as it only grows where light levels are high enough. We expect this to be up to 3m depth. Given the seabed conditions and light levels in Dale it is expected to grow to no more than 70cm in height. *If it does spread, it will clearly demonstrate how boating, fishing and conservation can successfully co-exist.*



What about potential future restrictions?

- The area is already in the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Additional protection is brought in to areas if something is perceived to require protection due to threats that are there. The project is working with users to ensure that existing use is part of the project and so will not be regarded as a negative or 'threat'.
- Example: Bait digging management on the Gann flats / Jubilee Beach. The intensity of commercial digging has been known to have a negative impact on the unique protected habitat there for decades. A voluntary code has been in place for 3yrs to restrict digging but management enforcement is practically non-existent at present due to limited resources.
- *The intention is for 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.*



What guarantee that there won't be future restrictions? Is this the “thin edge of the wedge”?

- Anxiety about excessive marine conservation restrictions is understandable given the poor “consultation” by Welsh Government on highly protected MCZs some years ago. This project is completely different and is backed by Sky Ocean Rescue and WWF.
- Management organisations have all been contacted by the project. E.g. Natural Resources Wales, PCC, PCNPA, Port, Welsh Government. They have all indicated their support for the project and its approach.
- The project team is seeking written assurances from the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs.



Fisheries Support – 20% of the world’s biggest fisheries are supported by seagrass meadows as fish nurseries.

Biodiversity Support – 50 species of fish live in or visit UK seagrass, supporting 30 times more animals than nearby habitat.

Fight Climate Change – Seagrasses store carbon 30 times faster than forests. Restoring them traps carbon dioxide.

Interest in Dale from Sky Ocean Rescue and WWF

This project to restore seagrass is the first of its kind in the UK, placing Dale in the limelight and promoting its image as a community working towards a positive environmental future. This project can be an opportunity for enhancing biodiversity, fisheries and improving tourism appeal.

Proposed seagrass restoration in Dale Bay



Swansea University
Prifysgol Abertawe



Dr Richard Unsworth

Chiara Bertelli, Leanne Cullen-Unsworth, Nicole Esteban, Evie Furness, Benjamin Jones, Richard Lilley, Hanna Nuuttila, Sam Rees



College of Science
Coleg Gwyddoniaeth



www.swansea.ac.uk/science

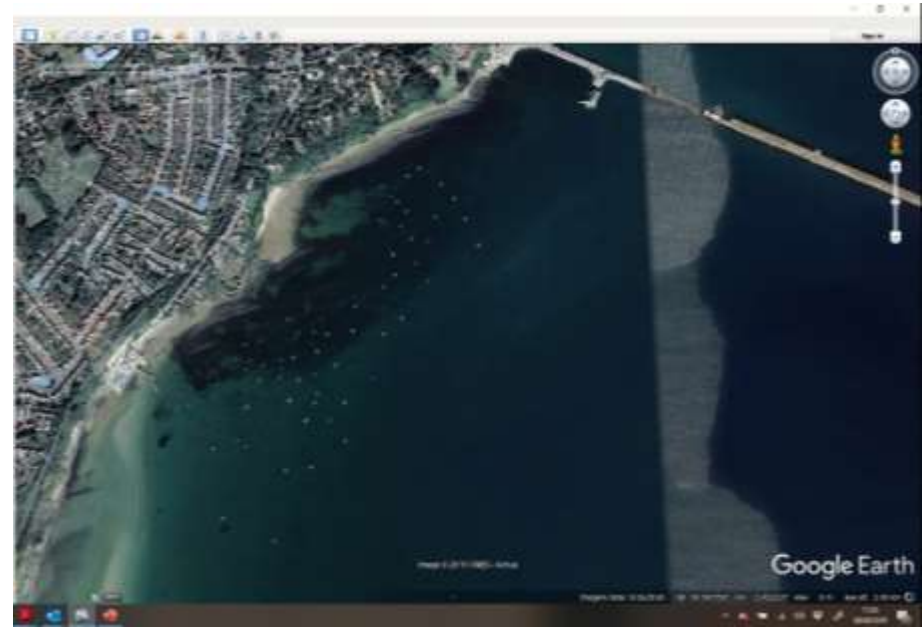
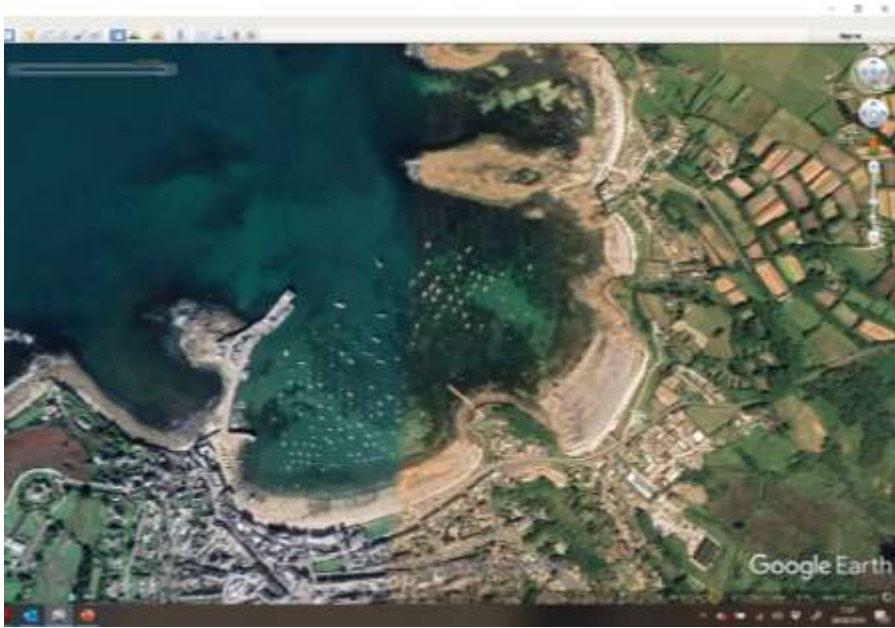


Seagrass in North Wales
found to harbour over
50 species of fish

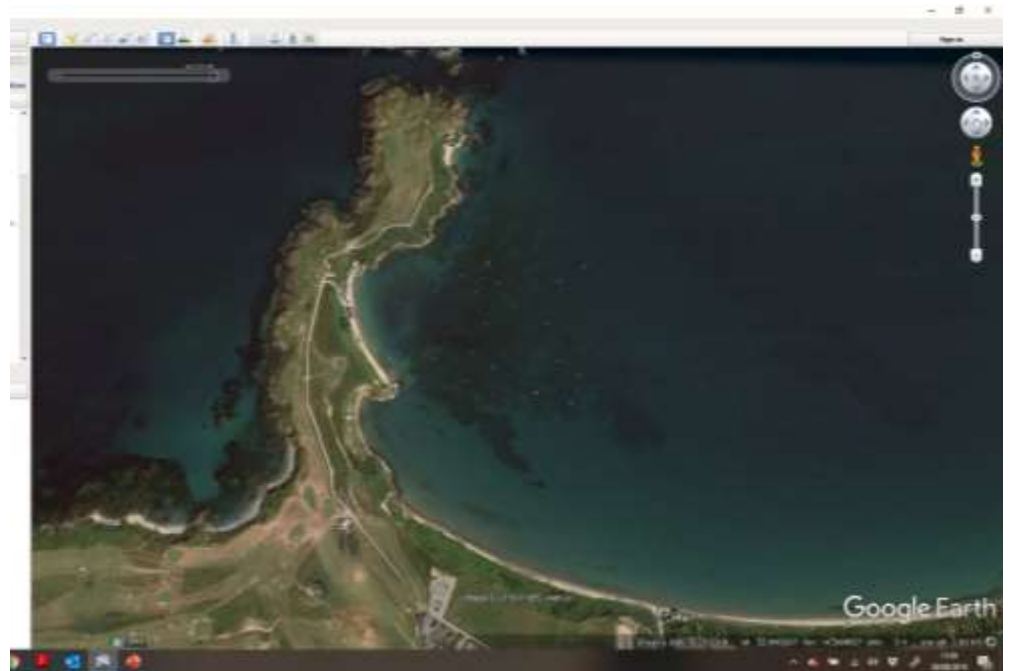
Bertelli & Unsworth In Prep

20% of the worlds
biggest fisheries
supported by seagrass
nursery habitat

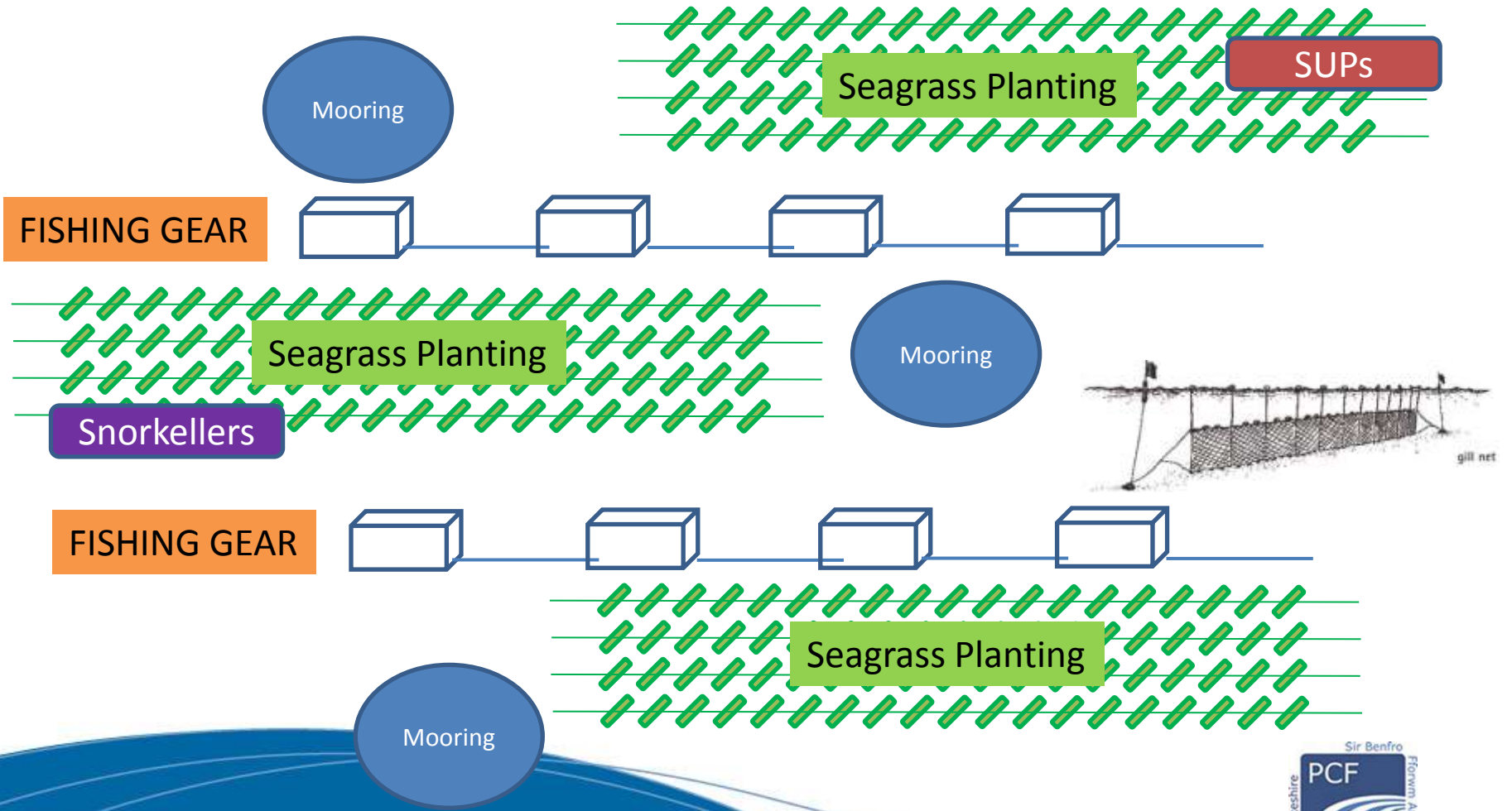
Unsworth et al 2019



Examples of other similar sized sites with seagrass in the UK



A Vision for Seagrass & People Together in Dale





Seagrass WITHOUT altering peoples livelihoods and way of life

Seagrass as a resource for everyone



Seagrass amongst fishing pots



Seagrass between boat moorings



Seagrass to snorkel or SUP over



Seagrass for people to fish in

Some working draft possible options for the seagrass planting line (still being discussed with users)

