

## Workshop - 'Whose sea is it anyway?'

This workshop considered the sea as a provider and resource; multiple uses, offshore spatial planning and the environment. 28 participants joined this workshop. The workshop started with a presentation from Richard White of Devon Wildlife Trust. This is a summary of Richard's presentation:

- Whose sea is it anyway? This is not a new question. Hugo Grotius in the mid 1500s offered two alternative answers;
  - The sea belongs to everyone
  - The sea belongs to no-one
- Each answer leads to different approach to resource use
- Devon Wildlife Trust pool cars – an example;
  - all the cars were being misused because everybody treated them as if they belonged to no-one
  - rules had to be introduced to make the car pool work for everyone
- Devon's seas and coasts seem to be nearer the 'belongs to no-one' end of spectrum.
  - Dirty, litter filled, often left with no fuel (car pool analogy)
  - Need rules and systems to ensure sensible use
- Is this where we are with the sea?
  - Generally treated as if no-one owns it
  - Over exploitation
  - Need rules and systems – regulation!
- Is this the only way?
  - Belongs to everyone
  - All have stake in resources
  - All have role in delivering sustainable use
- One aspect of Marine Spatial Planning and new Marine Bill
  - Can give us an approach – agreement on goals and use of resources
  - Recognise that all have valid place at table
  - Work together for common good
- Are there any losers?
  - Shouldn't be
  - More agreement, less regulation?
  - Sustainable use of resources – important for everyone's future

**Our current approach isn't working – lets try a new vision!**

Spike Searle who represented a Cornish fishing community then made a brief presentation. There are no notes available for this presentation. Spike can be contacted at Interfish.

Following these presentations, participants were asked to identify the key issues that a forum would need to address. The issues they raised were mapped. This is a summary of that work:

- Many people need access to this resource. There is competition for space and usage – exclusion zones result in reduced space for leisure activities. We need to understand the needs of all the varied interest groups. These include indirect users who benefit from coastal resources e.g. people who eat the fish.
- Some of the challenges facing us relate to “human nature”. For instance the drive to make a ‘quick buck’
- We need a process of education and awareness so that all these interest groups can co-exist effectively.
- These resources need managing for the benefit of all
- Who holds the power?
- How can we make sure we involve the right people?
- Should power be divided amongst the individual stakeholders or co-ordinated in some way?
- We need to find a way for information to be traded in a way that is respectful and does not result in using information being withheld as a form of control.
- There needs to be some integrated management and connections made between coastal and land-based strategies to consider effects such as agricultural pollution on marine life.
- There are conflicts between some interest groups. For instance, we need to conserve biodiversity (e.g. fish stocks) whilst maintaining social diversity, which may be lost if fishing communities die. Fishing restrictions also result in a loss of livelihoods.
- Some interest groups can cause damage that affects others. For example, setting up offshore electricity generators requires laying cables to bring the power to shore. This can affect sea life. Trawling can also cause damage to the sea bed.
- Some of these sectoral divisions are artificial and can be broken down by raising awareness of the issues using dialogue.
- We will need to use new management styles. Bottom-up is better than top-down. We need something that is flexible,

adaptable to constant change, which avoids discrimination and is equitable in terms of providing access to benefits for all stakeholders.

- The forum should be a process for discussion and dialogue rather than a decision-making structure.
- There is a danger of professionalisation – we need to make sure that all positions and knowledge bases are respected – not just the professionals.
- There are many international effects and inputs over which we have no control. How big is the region that would be covered by a forum – 12 miles out?
- There is a lot of existing research, which we can refer to. In some areas further research needs to be set up.
- We need new planning processes so that we do not have to use land-based planning approaches for the marine environment.
- We need to conform with imposed legislation. We can also influence the legislative process.
- Could we learn from other disciplines and use set-aside programmes?
- This forum could be a prototype for a national rollout. Other regions could copy this model. This would be more effective than some terrible national body like DEFRA!

At the end of the workshop participants were asked to vote for the three issues that they felt most urgently needed to be addressed by a Maritime Forum. These were summarised as:

1. Understanding the needs of interest groups
2. Who holds the power and how?
3. Maritime Forum as a process for discussion and dialogue rather than a structure.