



**Helford Marine Conservation Group – Report of Annual General Meeting
Gweek Village Hall, 7.30 p.m. Saturday 19th March 2011**

Chairman's Welcome

The chairman, David Muirhead, welcomed the 45 people present, especially on what was another clash with the Six Nations tournament.....

The minutes of the previous AGM, certified accounts and current newsletters containing the Group Report had all been circulated in advance and further copies were available.

Apologies for absence

J Green, D Nightingale, P and S Garrard, V Tutwell, R Pipkin

Minutes of the previous AGM held on 20th March 2010

Minutes of the 2010 meeting, along with certified accounts, were circulated before the meeting. These were accepted without addition or alteration. (proposed WL Collins; seconded M Burford). There were no matters arising.

Chairmen's Reports

Advisory Section, David Muirhead

Networking – the Group's excellent tradition of networking between numerous organisations and members of the public continued this year. An average of 16 people attended our quarterly meetings, with Minutes circulated to over 70.

One item of recurring concern to the Group is the protection of the Helford's eelgrass beds. During the year, Mike Langshaw, an HMCG member, has seized the initiative to develop an awareness-raising project in the press and boating spheres. Mike will proactively take his presentation around to various clubs etc when completed – well done Mike.

Projects – The Your Shore project, ably co-ordinated by Abby, has delivered some excellent and exciting activity this year. Following a successful, well-attended first meeting in July, people have volunteered to help with litter picking, bird monitoring, eelgrass dive surveys, cockle studies etc. There is clearly a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm out there that the project seems to be tapping into. Please contact Abby if you wish to get involved.

Derek Goodwin continues the important Sea Bass studies, willingly supported by CSFC staff and other volunteers – thanks to all these people for carrying on this long-running scheme.

Good links are developing with Exeter University's Biology Society. As well as adopting a regular stretch of shore for litter clearing, other projects such as invasive species monitoring, are being considered.

Awareness-raising – the Group delivered another excellent Events Programme this year, kindly funded this time by Cornwall Council's AONB Unit. We are now seeking funding for the 2012 programme, as well as planning the details of the events. Publicity of this programme and the HMCG as a whole is expanding all the time. We continue to produce two newsletters each year, and our website is regularly updated by Jayne Herbert. Much additional information has been up-loaded recently, and we receive many 'hits' on a range of topics. Future website ideas include a wildlife blog.

Trebah Gardens have kindly offered us space for a recruiter throughout the summer, as well as inviting us to have a specific presence at their Cornwall Wildlife Trust day on 8th May. We will be seeking volunteers to help with this.

Thanks – We have many people and organisations to thank.

Gweek Seal Sanctuary continues to provide us with storage and meeting space, and we hope to gain some HMCG display space in their new wildlife interpretation area which they hope to develop in the coming year.

The National Trust continues to support the Group, for example, they recently provided the opportunity for HMCG volunteers to carry out some woodland work at Tremayne. Many volunteers are interested in all aspects of local natural history, and welcome the chance to learn more about the interactions between land and sea

Fiona Beale. We were very sad to lose the staunch support of Fiona Beale during the year. She rarely missed a meeting and her knowledge was extremely valuable. We are very grateful to her family for their generous bequest, which has been used to fund the provision of a third buoy to stand guard over the eelgrass beds. We feel sure she would approve.

Helford Passage Car Park. We are very grateful to Simon Walker for the generous donation to HMCG resulting from season tickets sold at Helford Car Park.

Finally, we are indebted to all the volunteers, sponsors and supporters who ensure that the Group continues to flourish and carry out a range of worthwhile activities.

The Future – Exciting, busy times lie ahead. Through links with Your Shore and CWT, further monitoring projects are planned. During 2011 we will embark on a series of training events for local teachers, with the objective that they will be able to continue long-term shoreline studies around the Helford, beyond the lifespan of Your Shore.

It is no surprise, given all this activity that Abby has regretfully decided to stand down as HMCG Co-ordinator – the Group is a victim of her success! Of course, the Group will continue to benefit greatly from her work on the Your Shore project. We are actively engaged in seeking a replacement – see the advert in the newsletter. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at an event or meeting soon.

Members' Section, David Thomson

Echoing the successful, busy year described above, the Members' Section is also in fine health. Our finances are in good shape and we continue to undertake lots of activity. The next 3 events are all as yet under-subscribed and should be promoted – in particular the cruise, which this year is in May – please make sure you book soon.

David recorded his thanks to all the committee for their ongoing commitment. While all are happy to continue for the next year, he urged anyone else to feel free to come forward too – there is plenty for all to do!

Financial Statements

Advisory Section Treasurer's Report for 2010 – Rob Hewett

Rob highlighted two main issues on the accounts. Firstly, the group should note the healthy closing balance of nearly £9,000 compared with nearly £6,000 last year. This reflects the Group's receipt of another 3 years' funding from the Esmee Fairburn Foundation, a strong supporter of the HVMCA Group over many years. We are extremely grateful for this ongoing support.

Secondly, Rob wanted to record his thanks to Duchy of Cornwall, who granted the Group £750 in mid year, when finances were getting tight.

Rob finally expressed thanks to Ian Jakeways, who will from now on run the accounts of both HVMCA Sections.

Members' Section Treasurer's Report for 2010 – Ian Jakeways

Ian continued the positive theme, noting that the closing balance of the Members' Section account was just over £6,000. Subscriptions and donations had increased significantly since 2010. Of particular note was the generous bequest from the family of the late Fiona Beale, described previously.

Major expenditures included updating the website, which now has far more information and downloads available. Ian pointed out that the quality of photos in the newsletters is even better viewed on-screen, and is worth a look.

The Group also funded essential maintenance of the eelgrass buoys in 2010, in time for the summer season.

Finally, Ian mentioned the Helford Passage Car Park. We received a generous donation from Simon Walker this year, resulting from season ticket sales. Ian informed the meeting that anyone buying a season ticket and making it known that they were HMCG members could make future donations to HVMCA more likely – worth a thought.

At 1st January 2011 we had 90 family members and 85 individual members, the equivalent of 265 paid-up members, counting families as two individual members. This is a very similar number to last year, although 39 did not renew, while 40 new members joined us.

Adoption of the Financial Reports was proposed by D Muirhead and unanimously agreed. The Chairman recorded the Groups' ongoing gratitude to Atkins Ferrie for continuing to verify our accounts free of charge.

Election of Officers to Advisory and Membership Groups

The Chairman informed the meeting that after many years' sterling service, Leslie Collins has decided to stand down as Vice-chairman. All those present expressed thanks to Leslie for all he has done, and continues to do, for the Group. He believes he has only missed 2 meetings over the 20+ years since HVMCA was set up, and said he has enjoyed every minute. The Chairman considers him the 'Father' of the Group. Following a suggestion from the floor that he could become an Honorary Life President, Leslie said he'd rather be 'one of the flock'.

David Muirhead proposed David Thomson as Vice-chairman; seconded WL Collins.

The other change relates to the HVMCA Co-ordinator. Sadly, Abby Crosby has found it necessary to stand down due to her very full workload with the 'Your Shore' project. The Group is currently seeking a replacement – attention was drawn to the advert in the current newsletter.

The Advisory Section officers are as follows: **Chairman:** D Muirhead; **Vice-chairman:** D Thomson; **Treasurer:** I Jakeways; **Co-ordinator:** to be appointed, April 2011.

No nominations or resignations being received, the Membership Section officers for 2011 are as follows: **Chairman:** David Thomson; **Treasurer:** Ian Jakeways; **Secretary:** Martin Rule.

Other committee members elected as follows: Charles Richardson: **fundraising**, Paul Garrard: **Events**, Rhiannon Pipkin: **publicity**.

It was proposed by D Thomson, seconded by D Muirhead, that Abby Crosby be elected to the Membership Committee as 'Your Shore' representative. Unanimously agreed.

Adoption of new Constitution

During recent months the Members' Section had considered a number of changes were necessary to our Constitution. Paul Garrard very kindly took the lead on this. All members had been notified of the proposed changes. There were no proposed alterations or comments from the floor: **therefore changes accepted in full.**

Any other business

None was raised.

Date of next AGM in 2012

The date of next Annual General Meeting (2012) would be arranged in due course.

.....

Following the business meeting, Abby introduced Dave Jarvis from the charity **British Divers Marine Life Rescue**. Dave provided a very informative presentation on the very 'hands-on' activities of this organisation. It is clear that as time goes by more people call on their help each year, in all weathers and at all times of year. A full report of this talk can be found on the HVMCA website. Following some thoughtful questions from the audience, the Chairman thanked Dave and his team for an interesting talk.

Margaret Burford and her team had arranged welcome hot drinks and biscuits enabling discussions to be continued until the meeting closed around 10.00 p.m.

David Muirhead *Chairman*

Abby Crosby, *Co-ordinator*