

**Newsletter No. 30, May 2009.
Marine Information Network,
Friends of the Earth Local Groups**

The Gathering Storm

MARINET is facing changed circumstances, and very difficult times. This Newsletter has been written to inform you. Accordingly we need you to respond clearly and to support us.

The clouds first appeared in the second half of last year. MARINET has always had a very low status in the campaigning priorities of national FOE, and the national FOE members on our Steering Group advised us that the way to change this was to make sure that MARINET is written into FOE's 5 Year Plan which was then under review. We were told that we had good prospects because national FOE would be setting two overarching objectives for the next 5 years: climate change and biodiversity.

The reply we received was negative. National FOE refused to include MARINET, or anything to do with marine issues, in the 5 Year Plan. Therefore, in November last year, we (MARINET's elected officers on the Steering Group) decided to appeal to Andrew Atkins, the new Executive Director, about this decision. After much delay, a meeting was finally given us at the end of February.

The result of this meeting has been worse than we could ever have foreseen. We were told that no, there is definitely no place for MARINET in FOE's 5 Year Plan (yes, there is an overarching objective linked to biodiversity, but that is to be translated solely into work on tropical forests and nothing else). Worse, we were told that due to the "credit crunch" and falling revenues, national FOE's support for the expenses of Steering Group meetings at Underwood Street, amounting to around £900 per annum, are to be permanently withdrawn. Thus, we will no longer receive any financial help from national FOE for our core administrative costs (creating serious difficulties, see overleaf). Worse still, the two members of Underwood Street who sit on our Steering Group in accordance with our constitution (agreed with national FOE back in 2002) are to no longer take up their places. Thus Underwood Street will no longer honour its constitutional obligations to MARINET, and our ability to converse and develop MARINET through these two national FOE Steering Group members will cease. We have appealed against all these decisions, and even offered to meet half of the core funding needs for the Steering Group by offering to provide half via an appeal to our members.

This appeal has failed. There is still no place for MARINET in the 5 Year Plan. Still no financial help with core funding, despite our offer to meet half our SG Meeting costs. Furthermore, no re-instatement of the Underwood Street Steering Group members. We have been provided with a contact person at Underwood Street (Roger Higman) but he is under no obligation to attend Steering Group meetings. In short, the answer is clear. We are to be given nothing and can expect nothing.

Overleaf we describe the state of our finances, the state of our campaigns, and what we would like you to do in order to help MARINET to survive. We have been shocked, indeed dismayed by these events. However, with your support we are determined to survive the storm that has gathered very suddenly on our horizon. We refuse to countenance the alternative : dissolution.

MARINET's Funding:

MARINET has two main items of expenditure and two main sources of funding.

The first is our internal administrative costs (running our computer, website, newsletter and so forth) which amount to around £850 per annum. These are paid entirely by you, the members, through your annual donations.

The second is the costs of the Steering Group meetings (generally four a year). These are largely travelling expenses. These meetings are essential to determine policy and administer our network and campaigns. They have been hosted by Underwood Street who have met these expenses of around £900 per annum.

From now on, Underwood Street will no longer meet these Steering Group expenses, and we will now be totally reliant on you, our members, in order to fund these costs.

Our campaigns have been grant-aided by Underwood Street. Our ongoing marine aggregate campaign received £1500 in the past (now spent), and our current Marine Reserves (Marine Bill) work has received £6000 from Underwood Street with £500 contributed from our own reserves.

<u>Our current finances are:</u>	£
General fund balance:	513. 62p
Marine Reserves fund balance	2042. 03p

The cost of a SG meeting is around £250. Thus, the reality we now face is that we have just enough to meet our core administrative costs (£850 pa) until next January, but no money at all to fund SG meetings. To pay for these essential SG meetings we are therefore faced with having to raid the Marine Reserves campaign fund.

Marine Reserves (Marine Bill) Campaign.

This is our key national campaign, designed to ensure that the kind of marine reserves included in the Bill are such that they act as a management tool for the whole UK marine ecosystem, and are used by Government to help to rebuild our fisheries.

Key to this is *having highly protected (no-take) marine reserves* in the Bill, selection of the reserves using *scientific criteria*, and selection in such a way that they form an *ecologically coherent network*.

Currently, the Bill has none of these features.

Also, we want the reserve network to be *sufficiently extensive to enable social and economic uses of the sea to be environmentally sustainable*, and for an initial network to be established by 2012 (neither in the Bill so far).

Marine Reserves/Marine Bill continued:

We have been working hard to secure these amendments to the Bill (see attachment), and we have met widely with politicians, industry and conservationists. We are currently seeking to assemble a political alliance in the House of Lords for the Bill's amendment, and we are lobbying hard in the House of Commons via EDM 337 (see www.marinereserves.org.uk) to create a new UK Marine Act that will contain these essential features

Amazing as it may sound, **we are the *only* NGO lobbying for highly protected marine reserves and these related amendments in the Marine Bill**

Important ACTIONS for you to take:

1. If you have not yet done so, write to your MP and nearby MPs to ask them to sign EDM 337. This is crucial for our campaign's success - see details on our website www.marinereserves.org.uk

2. Please consider making an extra donation to MARINET. As you know, we have *no membership fee* and members donate according to their means. We are standing by this principle. However as you can see, we are facing a serious financial deficit in our General Fund (which meets administrative expenses). So please can you make an extra donation to help us with *these costs*, thus avoiding the need to raid the Marine Reserves Fund

3. Write to Andrew Atkins at Underwood Street to ask that MARINET is part of the 5 Year Plan.

Membership Renewal:

Some members and supporters have not yet completed the 2009 Membership Form. If you are in this category, please find a membership form enclosed, **complete it and return by post.**

MARINET AGM:

We hold our AGM at the Local Groups Conference in September. Having cancelled the 2009 Conference, national FOE has now re-instated it (a shorter version, still in September, venue to be announced). Accordingly, we still hope to hold our AGM at the Conference in September.

MARINET Website:

We believe we run one of the best marine websites in the UK, with a huge amount of information on important issues. The website has over 350 visits daily. Visit us at www.marinet.org.uk
MARINET Contact: Stephen Eades (Co-ordinator)
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Amendments to the Marine and Coastal Access Bill.

April 2009.

In the light of the discussion of Part 5, Chapter 1, in the Committee Stage of the House of Lords, we have drafted the following revised list of amendments. We believe this revision reflects the priorities and arguments made clear in the Committee Stage, and offers the basis for voting amendments at the Report Stage. The areas where we believe amendment is warranted are described below. We then follow this with the specific wording of proposed amendments.

- 1. Highly Protected Marine Reserves** : we believe that this need has been identified in the Committee Stage, and therefore propose their inclusion in Section 113, and their definition in Section 114 (1) and Section 114 (2).
- 2. Scientific criteria in the designation of MCZs** : we believe that there is a necessity for the inclusion of scientific criteria in the process of the identification of MCZs and, as the Marine Bill does not contain this provision at present, that this amendment be included in Section 114 (7).
- 3. The Network of MCZs must have ecological coherence** : we believe it is widely agreed that the network of MCZs must have ecological coherence. This is not currently specified in the Marine Bill, and therefore we propose an amendment to Section 119 (2).
- 4. The Network must balance economic, social and environmental uses** : we believe that debate in the Committee Stage has identified the need for a network that recognises social and economic imperatives, but ensures that they are balanced with conservation imperatives. In other words, that there is a network of MCZs which conforms with the current economic, social and environmental definition of sustainability.

We also believe that central to the debate about the function of the network is the question of its size, and that the network must be of sufficient size in order to deliver its purpose. We recognise that Parliament does not want to place a figure on the size of the network, therefore we have used the phraseology “sufficiently extensive”, and linked this to the provision of a network which exists to “enable economic and social uses of the sea to be environmentally sustainable”.

The wording of this amendment thus permits us to stipulate the need for a sufficiently sized network whilst, at the same time, ensuring that it is a network where the full range of social and economic uses are allowed to operate on the condition they are consistent with environmental considerations. In short, an extensive network that meets all the criteria of sustainability.

We therefore propose an amendment to Section 119 (3) which makes this provision within the legislation. This can be achieved either by amending the wording to Section 119 (3) (a), or by writing a new subsection 119 (3) (d). We would welcome views as to which is preferential.

- 5. The Network must have an initial starting date** : We believe that, due to commitments under EU and international law, the legislation must recognise the need for an initial network of MCZs by a specific date. This ensures the establishment of a nascent network in accord with our legal obligations, and allows for the development of the network within a future time framework without having to resort to the specification of that future framework within the Marine Bill. We therefore propose an amendment to Section 119 (4) based on our established OSPAR commitment of 2012.

Proposed Amendments.

Note: Amendments are indicated in **bold**.

Highly Protected Marine Reserves.

Section 113.

113 (1) : The appropriate authority may by order designate any area falling within subsection (2) as a marine conservation zone (an “MCZ”) **or as a highly protected marine conservation zone.**

Section 114.

114 (1) : The appropriate authority may make an order under section 113 if it thinks that it is desirable to do so for the protection of conserving –

- (a) marine flora or fauna;
- (b) marine habitats or types of marine habitat;
- (c) features of geological or geomorphological interest;
- (d) the marine ecosystem as a whole;**
- (e) or, in order to exclude all extractive and damaging activities.**

114 (2) : The order must state –

- (a) the protected feature or features;
- (b) the conservation objectives for the MCZ;
- (c) that the MCZ is a highly protected MCZ whenever the conservation objectives of the MCZ require the exclusion of all extractive and damaging activities;**
- (d) that the MCZ is a highly protected MCZ whenever the conservation objectives of the MCZ require the protection of the marine ecosystem as a whole.**

Scientific criteria in the designation of MCZs.

Section 114.

114 (7) : In considering whether it is desirable to designate an area as an MCZ, the appropriate authority **must have regard to selection criteria which are scientifically based and** may have regard to any economic and social consequences of doing so.

The Network of MCZs must have ecological coherence.

Section 119.

119 (2) : The objective is that the MCZs designated by the appropriate authority, taken together with any other MCZs designated under section 113 and any European marine sites that have been established in the UK marine area, form an **ecologically coherent** network which satisfies the conditions in subsection (3).

The Network must balance economic, social and environmental uses.

Section 119.

Either:

119 (3) The conditions are –

(a) that the network contributes to the conservation or improvement of the marine environment in the UK marine area **and is sufficiently extensive to enable economic and social uses of the sea to be environmentally sustainable.**

(b) that the features which are protected by the sites comprised in the network represent the range of features present in the UK marine area;

(c) that the designation of sites comprised in the network reflects the fact that the conservation of a feature may require the designation of more than one site;

Or

119 (3) The conditions are –

(a) that the network contributes to the conservation or improvement of the marine environment in the UK marine area;

(b) that the features which are protected by the sites comprised in the network represent the range of features present in the UK marine area;

(c) that the designation of sites comprised in the network reflects the fact that the conservation of a feature may require the designation of more than one site;

(d) that the network is sufficiently extensive to enable economic and social uses of the sea to be environmentally sustainable.

The Network must have an initial starting date.

Section 119.

119 (4) In exercising the power conferred by section 113 so as to comply with the duty imposed by subsection (1) above, the appropriate authority must have regard to any obligations under EU or international law that relate to the conservation or improvement of the marine environment, **and establish an initial ecologically coherent network by 2012.**