

**Newsletter No. 41, March 2012
Marine Information Network
Friends of the Earth Local Groups**

**Our AGM and CFP Reform:
*Raising the Standard.***

MARINET's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Saturday, 15th September 2012, 6.15pm** at the Friends of the Earth Local Groups Conference, Imperial College, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BB. **All members are invited**, and non-members welcome. Please inform your colleagues.

MARINET AGM: Chairman's Report:

At last year's AGM I listened to those who challenged the Steering Group to broaden its efforts, and I hope that we have risen to the challenge.

The Steering Group (SG) has been strengthened during the year by the expertise of FOE officers Paul de Zylva and Tim Atkinson who serve on the SG and advise on biodiversity and media issues from the National FOE perspective. This has resulted in new initiatives on social media which is, according to Paul and Tim, the future when it comes to campaigning. In turn, this has brought in the help of two further people, Timothy Hill (Nottingham FOE) and Katy Malkin (Affiliate) who now run the Twitter facility. Also currently serving on the Steering Group are Deborah Wright (Affiliate) as a researcher, Tom Appleby (University of West of England) who provides legal expertise, Tim Watson (N. Tyneside FOE) covering marine reserves and implementation of the UK Marine Act, and John Stansfield (Bristol FOE) who works on Common Fisheries Policy reform. In addition our Steering Group is composed of its elected officers, chair: David Levy (N. Wiltshire FOE), secretary: John Bassendine (Sevenoaks FOE), Malcolm Scott (N. Tyneside FOE) and co-ordinator: Stephen Eades (N. Wiltshire FOE), and SG meetings are now open to all members who wish to take part, in person or by telephone link.

The present officers are all offering themselves for re-election at the AGM. **Membership currently stands at 71** (43 Full Members: FOE Local Groups, and 28 Affiliate Members : Individuals and non-FOE organisations). Last year the figure was 66 members (39 Full Members and 27 Affiliates).

Marinet is now fully incorporated into Ocean2012, the Brussels based European NGO Network campaigning on reform of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), and we liaise with Ian Campbell who is its UK co-ordinator. The job of being Marinet's contact with Ocean2012 has fallen on the shoulders of John Stansfield who has communicated with all of its hundred plus groups across Europe. We have taken a lead role in educating many of them, and we now have a more integrated approach on reform of the CFP. John and I realised when we attended the recent 3rd birthday of Ocean2012 in Brussels that the CFP reform process is open to horse trading, and this is what is currently happening. We also appreciated that the knowledge level, even amongst leading political figures, is very shallow and little attention is being paid to the solutions. The only real issue being spoken about is fish discards due to TV action taken by Fish Fight and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall.

Continued overleaf

The EU Fisheries Commissioner, Maria Damanaki, who leads the reform process doesn't even have marine reserves on the table, and co-location of marine reserves with other uses of the sea is a foreign language to them. This is the disappointing picture we have to accept, and it challenges us as to our own on-going strategy.

As a result, John and I have come to the unanimous conclusion that we have to find a **legal lever** to apply to the UK government which will lead to fisheries reform in our sovereign waters, and that this has to also be taken up by other campaigning groups around Europe applying pressures upon their own national governments. To this end, we are building a working relationship with Germany's coordinator who is a specialist marine lawyer, and within our own SG we have been working with Tom Appleby, who is a legal marine specialist working at the University of West of England, on a legally-based reform case which focuses on the trustee status of government with respect to the good management of fish stocks, and the violation of that trust when exceeding scientific advice in the allocation of quotas. We foresee this legal case taking the form of letters being fired at the Government which, in turn, seeks to answer our questions but we must be prepared to keep a back-pocket case for the law courts if necessary.

Tim Watson is monitoring the implementation of **marine reserves** under the UK Marine Act, and the delivery procedure is currently in the hands of the Minister at Defra, with some 127 sites being recommended to him. At the present time, the selection process has been criticised and the aspiration for ecological coherence seems uncertain, but we must keep fingers crossed and hope Prof. Callum Roberts and his scientific advisers prevail - but don't hold your breath. We are also currently discussing **CFP reform research** with a PhD student (and Marinet member) and with our own Deborah Wright who is looking at how fishing quotas are being allocated. Also in the background our work on **marine aggregate dredging** is being expertly led by Pat Gowen (Norwich FOE), and a new modernised format for our website is currently being developed by our webmaster, Hugh Rout. **Our website is now an immense store of marine campaigning information and provides, we believe, the premier marine news and information service in the UK.**

I thank all those mentioned above for their efforts, as I do to all in our Network who have unfailingly supported us. I hope you are content with our endeavours.

David Levy, Chair, Marinet.

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MARINET Workshop on CFP Reform, FOE Conference, Saturday 15th September, 3.15pm.

We will be providing a **campaigning and information workshop** at the Conference on how you can assist in securing real, genuine Common Fisheries Policy Reform – a vital campaign now that our fish stocks are so depleted that over 80% are over-fished, with 30% of these stocks on the brink of commercial extinction, and our ability to meet our need for fish (food security) now reduced to just six months of the year. The purpose of our CFP reform campaign is to turn this situation around.

The MARINET campaign aims to rebuild **food security** (meeting our needs for fish for all 12 months of the year) by means of **restoring stocks** to high levels of abundance and fishing levels based on genuine conservation principles, using **marine reserves** to protect nursery and spawning grounds.

The MARINET campaign is focused on **political action** both in the UK and the EU. We need **you** to help deliver this campaign, and the Workshop will tell you how you can do this. Please join us.