**Natural Environment Group**

**Video Conference via Microsoft Teams**

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**Jessica Taylor– Natural England**

**2nd November 2022**

**AGENDA**

## 09.15 am Pre-meeting networking (voluntary)

**09.30 am. Welcome and introductions**

1. **Actions Arising from the Last Meeting 27/04/22–** Karen McHugh, Solent Forum
2. **Update on NEG actions from SEMS** **(Paper 1) –** Karen McHugh, SF
3. **NEG funded projects update –** Karen McHugh, SF (see below)

## 11.00 am. Comfort Break (10 mins)

1. **Lymington trials to restore saltmarsh using beneficial use of dredgings** – Colin Scott, ABPmer

1. **Developing the evidence for microplastics – Discussion (Paper 2**)
2. **Finance** **(Paper 3) –** Karen McHugh, SF
3. **AOB** (Update Seagrass restoration work (HIWWT);INNS Funding updates to biosecurity plans in the Solent (NE)

## 12.00 pm. Close

The group will next meet on 26th **April 2023**

**NEG Funded Projects Update**

Salt marsh passive regrowth promotion – Lands’ End, Old Bursledon (AQASS) – Awarded April 2020

As a brief addendum to the interim update report of March 2022, the AQASS and SAND passive saltmarsh study undertaken at Lands’ End, Old Bursledon, is now in the write up stage. However, in October 2022 a request has been emailed to Natural England to allow one last drone flight after a six-month gap since the final previous time-period allowed flight. This request is intended to establish if a longer-term pattern of habitat change is occurring, or if the early aerial data results analysis is correct in initial conclusions / recommendations.

The final report will be delivered prior to the April 2023 NEG meeting, and will, if allowed, include data from the requested extra flight. A presentation and report recommendations regarding structure design and approaches to legislation / interaction with regulators, will be given at this time.

Tackling the microplastic pollution – testing a new biocomposite material as artificial filtration device, in Chichester Harbour. (Corina Ciocan University of Brighton) – Awarded April 2021

Work looking at bioaccumulation of glass fibres in oyster tissues and the impact on zooplankton through the food web. They are also developing a new bio composite material that may absorb GRP shards/powder and are identifying the best areas to deploy and test this material. A [presentation](http://www.solentems.org.uk/natural_environment_group/NEG_Meetings/Environmental_Effects_GRP.pdf) was made to its Natural Environment Group in November 2021 which showed the presence of glass fibres in oysters.

The biocomposite has been deployed at 2 locations in Chichester Harbour (next to active boatyards) however it was found that the material wasn’t strong enough to withstand the waves and the tides and it crumbled into small pieces (all contained within the metal box used for deployment!).

They are now developing a new proposal just to focus on the biocomposite strength and mechanical tests. Although the previous data show that in the laboratory tests (small aquaria), the biocomposite actually behaves very well and shows affinity for microplastics and fibreglass, it is not strong enough to allow us the validation in the field.

Another area research The University of Brighton are pursuing at the moment is the development of a quick method to identify the fibreglass on sediment samples by spectroscopy means, in association with the Uni of Portsmouth. This would be a major step as it would allow for the quick identification and quantification of fibreglass in a handful of sand for example as currently many days are spent in the lab trying to isolate the fibreglass from sand or mud in the first instances, and only then trying to certify that it is glass.

Intertidal Seagrass Restoration in the Solent (Fathom Ecology) - Awarded March 22

Still on-going

Recording common Snipe on coastal site using thermal imaging and - HCC Equipment to capture Common Snipe and Jack Snipe at Lymington & Keyhaven (HCC – Andrew Davidson) – Awarded March 22

Still on-going