

## **EAST COAST DREDGING/FISHING LIAISON COMMITTEE**

### **Issues Update Q1 2016**

#### **Introduction**

At the East Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee which took place in June 2012, it was agreed to trial an alternative way of sharing relevant information relating to marine aggregate dredging activities and the commercial fishing sector.

Both sectors agreed that while the local focus remained important, the lines of communication and contacts now existed to allow bi-lateral discussions to take place should any specific liaison issues arise. This had increasingly resulted in the liaison committee meetings becoming a forum for more general updates.

As an alternative, a single annual liaison meeting would take place in the summer. This would then be supplemented by a written report that provided an update of issues to be circulated electronically, in place of the additional winter liaison committee meetings that had traditionally occurred. The idea would be for this report to broadly mirror the traditional agenda of the committee meetings.

This document represents the fourth issues update that has been produced, and its usefulness and effectiveness as a replacement for the winter liaison committee meeting will continue to be reflected upon at the next meeting of the East Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee which will take place during June/July 2016.

If you have any thoughts on the usefulness or relevance of the information contained within this update, or have any suggestions as to how the liaison arrangements between the marine aggregate and commercial fishing sectors can be improved we would welcome your comments. These can be sent to [bmapa@mineralproducts.org](mailto:bmapa@mineralproducts.org)

#### **Update on aggregate dredging and prospecting applications**

The 15-year renewal pre-applications/applications and licensed areas in the Outer Thames, Anglian and Humber regions are detailed in the document that accompanies this update (Current status of East Coast Aggregate Areas March 2016).

## **Fisheries Liaison Arrangements**

The marine aggregate industry, in conjunction with The Crown Estate, continues to fund an electronic reporting arrangement for marine aggregate specific issues through the Kingfisher Fortnightly Bulletin service.

This service commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012, and mirrors the equivalent services already in place for oil & gas, renewable energy and offshore cables – allowing information on changes to active dredging zones, commencement of works on new licence areas, notification of survey works and navigation obstructions to be flagged across the wider fishing sector.

The bulletins can be accessed via the link below, and individuals can also register to receive the published updates via email.

<http://www.seafish.org.uk/industry-support/kingfisher-information-services/kingfisher-bulletins>

As part of the wider licence renewal programme that has been taking place, the established and long standing and largely informal operational code of practice that covers the interaction and communication between marine aggregate operations and fisheries interests was updated in July 2012. The updated document is now formally endorsed by the Marine Management Organisation and The Crown Estate, and is directly referenced in the conditions attached to all marine licences relating to marine aggregate extraction issued after this date.

An updated version of this guidance was adopted in May 2015 to cover the notifications required in advance of the various survey works that may be associated with marine aggregate extraction. An additional section now covers survey operations, and explains the type of surveys that may be undertaken, the risks these may pose to fishing activities and the steps to be taken by marine aggregate operators to minimise any interactions with existing fishing activities. This includes the requirement for a minimum four weeks' notice for surveys taking place outside of active dredging zones unless there are exceptional circumstances. In these instances, additional site specific liaison will be necessary.

[http://www.bmapa.org/documents/Marine Aggregate Fisheries Liaison CoP with survey\\_notifications.pdf](http://www.bmapa.org/documents/Marine_Aggregate_Fisheries_Liaison_CoP_with_survey_notifications.pdf)

## **Regional Active Dredge Area charts**

The 27<sup>th</sup> issue of the Regional Active Dredge Area charts (dated 31<sup>st</sup> January 2016) have been published on the BMAPA and Crown Estate websites in February. These provide a 6-monthly snap-shot of the extent of the area where dredging is permitted (enforced by 'black box' Electronic Monitoring System data), and show changes in the permitted area that have occurred since the previous issue.

Electronic versions of the latest active dredge area charts are available via the following link: [http://www.bmapa.org/issues/other\\_sea\\_users.php](http://www.bmapa.org/issues/other_sea_users.php)

Laminated copies of the charts have been circulated to the MMO local offices in Grimsby and Lowestoft for distribution to local fisheries interests.

The 28<sup>th</sup> issue of the charts will be published in early August 2016 (to be dated 31<sup>st</sup> July 2016).

### **Regional baseline sampling surveys – Summer 2014/2015**

Work commenced on the Regional Seabed Monitoring Programmes during the Summer 2014, with the industry commissioning surveys across the Humber, Anglian and Outer Thames regions. These works were required to fulfil the baseline seabed sediment licence conditions for the new marine licences that had recently been issued by MMO. Rather than operators commissioning their own surveys for individual licence areas, a single contractor was being appointed to undertake the work across each dredging region on the basis that this was a more efficient way to approach the work, and would facilitate the fisheries liaison arrangements.

The Kingfisher Fortnightly Bulletin service was used to provide notifications around the timing and location of the sampling, along with the vessels that are undertaking the works.

Inclement weather combined with vessel availability meant that the survey works in the Humber and Anglian regions continued into the second half of 2015, with all works in both regions being successfully completed by mid-November.

### **Annual 'Area Involved' Report**

The 17<sup>th</sup> annual 'Area Involved' report was published by BMAPA and Crown Estate in October 2015. This reports the area of seabed licensed and dredged for marine aggregates during 2014 at both national and regional scales.

A PDF version of the latest report can be accessed from the following link:

[http://www.bmapa.org/issues/area\\_dredged.php](http://www.bmapa.org/issues/area_dredged.php)

### **Dredging screen damage to gear claims**

There are currently no outstanding claims relating to damage to fishing gear arising from dredging screens.

### **Next meeting of the East Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee**

The next meeting of the East Coast Dredging/Fishing Liaison Committee will take place at a suitable East coast venue during June/July 2016. The arrangements for this meeting, together with a draft agenda, will be circulated at least 4 weeks in advance.

The production of this Issues Update has been coordinated by the British Marine Aggregate Producers Association.

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