

FACTSHEET: INTRODUCING OUR CAMPAIGN PARTNER, MARINET

ABOUT MARINET

SOS is working with Marinet to access expert advice and guidance on the facts around the impact of dredging, as well as how to effectively construct our campaign. As a community marine campaigning organisation, incorporated as a non-profit limited liability company, it offers Membership to people and organisations in both the UK and the EU, and is run by its Members on a voluntary basis.

“We take no money from government, and are thus able to take a wholly independent stance on the issues involved with the protection of the marine environment. We see our role as promoting strategies that deliver change realistically, and we do not pander to any particular interest, whether it be political, conservation or commercial. In addition, because we are not charity but rather a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, we face no legal restrictions on our ability to address the political dimensions any marine-related issue. Our independence ensures our integrity. Our independence also means that our finances are very slender with all our work being done voluntarily by our members.”

“In campaigning terms, Marinet is not prepared to accept decisions or solutions which are based on the lowest common denominator that all parties can agree to. Rather it stands for scientific truth, and advocates principles of management built on the logic of scientific evidence. Marinet is always looking to the future, and encourages its Members to engage with issues which they are interested in and to take responsibility for campaigning action.”

<http://www.marinet.org.uk/>

THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM MARINET ON THE GOODWIN SANDS

Based on the Scoping & ES reports which can be downloaded here:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/SaveOurSands/files/>

“Firstly, this work is now commencing and is based on the assumption that the sand (aggregate) for the construction of the new docks in the harbour will come from Goodwin Sands, although no licence to dredge this sand from Goodwin Sands has yet been applied for or granted. It is clear that the Harbour Company is proceeding on the basis and assumption that it will subsequently obtain this offshore sand dredging licence.

“Secondly, the ES for the existing demolition and disposal dumping sets out very clearly – page 45 onwards – the procedure that the applicant must follow with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) in order to convince the MMO that dredging Goodwin Sands will have no adverse effect on the MCZ and its protected features.

“The ES also sets out what the protected features are in the Goodwin Sands MCZ (around page 75). It is to be noted that Goodwin Sands is not yet formally designated a MCZ, but is recommended for designation in the next round of designations (roughly a year or two away – Defra is imprecise on this date).

“However, this fact is not disadvantageous to your campaign. Firstly because you will see from the Scoping Assessment that Natural England have required that Goodwin Sands be treated as if it were already a MCZ for the purpose of the offshore (sand) dredging licence, and so the MMO criteria for assessing impact must be complied with by the applicant.

“Secondly, if the dredging of Goodwin Sands were to be considered to adversely affect the protected features of Goodwin Sands recommended MCZ (rMCZ) then this would be “real” because to view the matter otherwise would be to effectively destroy the MCZ before it had been created. This is logically and morally unacceptable.

“Therefore Marinet’s advice to you is to consider your campaign real from this point onwards. The Harbour company have obtained a licence to commence the demolition and disposal work relating to the building of the new docks, and the building of the new docks is built on the assumption that they will be getting the “construction sand” from Goodwin Sands rMCZ. In other words, the Harbour Company appear to have made a massive assumption that they will get the sand they require from Goodwin Sands – even though they do not have a licence.

“It has to be said that this is not an unusual “commercial tactic” because having commenced the work, committed very large sums of money, and created a large number of construction jobs, they have now created “pressure” on the MMO to subsequently approve the Goodwin Sands dredging licence when it eventually comes forward – if the MMO does not approve, they will be accused of undermining essential economic development, causing the loss of substantial financial invests, loss of many jobs, and so forth.

“In other words, the “conservation” arguments and principles relating to sustainable development and marine protected areas have been out-manoeuvred.

“Sustainable development is meant to be built on a balance between three pillars – economic, social and conservation. Here we have the economic (enlarged port) and social (jobs) pillars being agreed to before the conservation pillar has been properly assessed. Hence the conservation pillar is disadvantaged and compromised. The MMO is meant to base its decisions on its judgement of what is “sustainable development” in this instance. If the process has been distorted as I have just described, then the ability of the MMO to make this judgement is “handicapped”.

“This corruption of the process needs to be highlighted in your campaign. As you can see, you are already in danger being out-manoeuvred, and the only way to defeat this tactic is to expose this tactic, and to expose it relentlessly and ruthlessly. The only thing that can stop such a juggernaut is public opinion, and its sense of the injustice that is being handed out.

“You are now effectively engaged in the defence of Marine Conservation Zones – and Goodwin Sands in particular. Marinet is strongly committed to the defence and proper implementation and subsequent management of Marine Conservation Zones. Accordingly, we will assist you in any way we can.”

Also check out Marinet’s extensive body of information on marine aggregate dredging here:

<http://www.marinet.org.uk/campaigns/aggregate-dredging>