

## **A Voluntary Agreement for the Protection of Sensitive Habitat Zones of Subtidal Seagrass and Maerl in Milford Haven**

between **Milford Harbour Users Association (MHUA)<sup>1</sup>** and  
**Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Relevant Authorities Group (RAG)<sup>2</sup>**

1. These sensitive habitat zones are described in the Annex to this Agreement. (We have all agreed that protection is sensible, but it has not been established clearly that the beds are reducing) The habitats lie within the Pembrokeshire Marine Special Area of Conservation (a European Marine Site designated under the EU Habitats Directive) and as such members of the RAG partnership (and ultimately Welsh Government) are responsible for their conservation. Anchoring and mooring of recreational vessels are just some of the many risks that have been identified as requiring proactive attention to ensure future safeguarding of the SAC features.

1.1 This Voluntary Agreement applies to anchoring and mooring in the sensitive zones as defined by the chartlet in the attached Annex. All areas of seagrass and maerl have not been included, only those considered most desirable for habitat preservation. The terms of the agreement are:

- 1.1 Voluntary no anchoring in the selected defined areas is to be observed for all recreational small boats using the Milford Haven Waterway.
- 1.2 The agreement also covers all recreational moorings authorised on an annual basis by the Port of Milford Haven within the defined zones. In most cases, the management of private recreational moorings has been delegated to Voluntary Control Bodies (VCBs). These are local community organisations, mainly yacht and boat clubs, each of whom appoint a Voluntary Control Officer (VCO) for the day-to-day management of the moorings concerned. The areas affected by this agreement are:
  - a. Angle VCA, controlled by the Angle Boat Owners Association VCO.
  - b. Gelliswick Bay VCA, controlled by the Gelliswick VCO.
  - c. Sandy Haven Bay VCA, controlled by the Sandy Haven Boat Owners Association VCO
- 1.3 Temporary race marks are laid by PYC in Gelliswick Bay from time to time; these are only laid for the duration of an event. Their positions can change even on an hourly basis, however PYC agree not to lay them within the designated areas.
- 1.4 MHUA agree to notify its member organisations of this Agreement so that they can inform their members of the protected areas.
- 1.5 MHUA member organisations are requested to self-police this agreement as far as is practically possible, and keep a note of any mooring or anchoring activity that does occur within the voluntary protection zones to pass to the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC Officer for monitoring purposes.
- 1.6 The Pembrokeshire Marine SAC Relevant Authorities Group partnership agrees to produce awareness raising material to aid the agreement including website links detailing all relevant information. The Port of Milford Haven will assist in promulgating the agreement. It will also be desirable that as far as possible all visiting yachts be advised of the detail of the restricted zones.

This Agreement will take effect from the start of the 2014 Season and will be kept under review.

Signed:

30<sup>th</sup> January 2014

BILL KEPPEL-COMPTON  
Chairman,  
Milford Harbour Users Association

SUE BURTON  
SAC Officer  
Relevant Authorities Group

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<sup>1</sup> The MHUA is made up of representatives from various bodies whose members are actively involved in the use of the Milford Haven Waterway, e.g. Yacht Clubs, Rowing Clubs, Boat Yards, etc..

<sup>2</sup> The RAG is a partnership of relevant authorities (defined within the Habitats Directive) and for the Pembrokeshire Marine SAC they comprise Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Natural Resources Wales, Port of Milford Haven, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Trinity House. The RAG was formed in 1999 and jointly employ a SAC Officer to help them in their SAC related joint work programme.