

MEMAG Meeting Minutes

Date: 11/4/11

Location: Menie Lodge

Attendees:

Bill Ritchie (Chairman)
Alan Garvie SCF (AG)
David Bale SNH (DB)
Keith Newton AC (KN)
David Ogilvie SEPA (DO)
Mark James (Sec.) (MJ)

In Attendance:

Esie O'Mahonay – SOL (EM)

Apologies:

Andy Rosie (SEPA)
Sarah Malone (TIGLS)

Invited:

David Watson (BCC)

Welcome and Introductions

1. The **Chairman** welcomed **David Ogilvie** representing SEPA on behalf of Andy Rosie. **DO** is the local Unit Manager and will now be the permanent SEPA representative on MEMAG.
2. Apologies were received from Andy Rosie (SEPA) and Sarah Malone (TIGLS). David Watson (BCC) had been invited and was scheduled to attend the meeting.
3. The **Chairman** noted that **MJ** had recently been appointed as the Operations Director for the Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland (MASTS) and as part of his agreement with his employer; the University of St Andrews, he would continue his work with MEMAG and the Scottish Aquaculture Research Forum.

Minutes of last meeting and matters arising.

4. The Minutes of the last meeting were approved by email and lodged on the MEMAG website.

Actions arising:

Action points from MEMAG meeting 23rd November 2010

5. 45 - **Action: The Chairman** to visit the site and respond to Mr Menlove on behalf of MEMAG – completed. *No further response comment received.*
6. 53 - It was agreed that another MEMAG site visit should be arranged to coincide with the next MEMAG meeting in early 2011 – completed.
7. 54 - **The Chairman** requested some initial assistance from SEPA in reviewing the hydrological data.
8. 65 - **Action: CS** (Caroline Simmers – SEPA) to ask **AR** for some initial SEPA assistance in reviewing the hydrological data.

Action points from MEMAG minutes 13th April 2010

9. **[23] Action: NH** agreed to provide an inventory of TIGLS data holdings to **MEMAG** to include information such as: title, content, date, where held and in what format. **NH** noted that requests for the provision of data should be routed through TIGLS with specific reference to need and use. Not completed but overtaken by subsequent events.
10. **[26] Action: MJ** to circulate a proposal to **MEMAG** re database development, archival and GIS linkage. This action will be progressed once the inventory of data holdings is supplied to the **Secretariat**.
11. [28] A draft data management agreement form was circulated for comment. This action will be progressed once data access requirements are clarified.
12. [34] The **Chairman** noted that there was a need to compile an archive of the photographic records of the site as this would be an important future resource for **MEMAG**.
13. **[35] Action: Secretariat** should begin to collate this material. Other members of MEMAG were invited to supply any photographs that they might hold. In progress. Collated Secretariat and Chairman's recorded images. JW to discuss with ECoW re access to their images – no further response.
14. **MJ** explained that it was unlikely that the ECoW would provide an archive of images but would be willing to respond to specific requests for images if required. Collation of images supplied by the **Secretariat** and other MEMAG members would be an on-going action.
15. [91] **Action: AR and DB** to provide the Secretariat with possible nominations [for Advisory Group] as soon as possible with a view to MEMAG making an appointment by mid summer. Some names suggested but on-hold.
16. **DO** queried the role of MEMAG in relation to TIGLS and the ECoW. **The Chairman** explained that MEMAG was convened as part of the planning consent for the development of the golf course and MEMAG's role is to provide independent oversight to ensure that the development does not cause adverse environmental change – beyond that permitted under the terms of the planning consent.
17. Although not envisaged at the inception of MEMAG, at this time and until the conclusion of its contract with TIGLS, the ECoW was fulfilling some of MEMAG's role by providing on-site assessment of the construction phase of the course development. As such, some of the monitoring work anticipated as part of MEMAG's role had been deferred.
18. However, it was noted that TIGLS and the ECoW meet on a weekly basis to discuss both previous and forthcoming work. In addition, the **Chairman** attended monthly management meetings to ensure that MEMAG remained apprised of any salient issues.
19. TIGLS also engaged the **Chairman** in the provision of *ad hoc* advice which was formally reported to MEMAG and reports lodged with the **Secretariat**.
20. Monthly ECoW reports are circulated to MEMAG for information and comment as soon as they are received by the **Secretariat**.
21. It is likely that the Monitoring Committee, as an independent group of experts, would be appointed nearer the time that longer term monitoring work would commence.
22. There was general discussion related to defining the remit of future monitoring work. As outlined in the provisional monitoring strategy and other background documentation, monitoring would be required to detect any adverse environmental effects on areas contiguous to the development site – including those areas designated as inviolate within the boundaries of the site. Further, that monitoring (normally short term) through the ECoW and, where appropriate, MEMAG through its *ad hoc* protocol, to ensure environmental best practice would continue to be undertaken.

23. It was acknowledged that long term monitoring would need to stand the test of being “reasonable” but TIGLS should be reminded that there would be a requirement for increased monitoring activity once the initial construction phase was complete – and that there would be increased costs associated with this activity, as agreed in the original MEMAG budget projections.
24. **Action - Chairman** to indicate to TIGLS the need for increased monitoring activity and anticipated increase in costs at least six months in advance.
25. There was general agreement that understanding and monitoring the hydrology of the site would be critical and was a priority in terms of establishing the scope of the baseline material and any on-going data collection (also see 44 to 49, below).

Review of reports from ECoW

26. The ECoW has produced three reports since the last MEMAG meeting – 9,10, and 11. The reports have been circulated to MEMAG members by the **Secretariat** for information and comment. No comments have been received.

Report 9

27. **DB** queried the method of soil mixing on the grounds that it would, in principle, be difficult to reconstitute the site to its “original” state should the development not be completed.
28. **EM** explained that green composted waste from off-site had originally been the method approved for producing a mix of sand and organic matter suitable for growing grass for the fairways and greens. However, as this mix proved unsuitable, it was agreed that local topsoil could be used to replace the green composted waste material.
29. **EM** went on to explain that for logistical reasons the soil mixing was taking place on-site and that any unused material would be removed.
30. **KN** confirmed that this practice had been cleared by the Council and SNH.

Report 10

31. There was general discussion related to the works undertaken to prevent further erosion of the inter-tidal stream bank of the Blairton Burn which was threatening the area of the green at Hole 3.
32. **DO** expressed concern that the works had been undertaken and licenced retrospectively.
33. **EM** explained that due to acceleration in the rate of erosion post December 2010, urgent action had to been taken. Initial advice from the ECoW suggested that no licence for the work would be required. However, subsequent inquiries revealed that a licence from Marine Scotland would be required as the area in question was below Mean High Water Spring Tide level.
34. **DO** indicated that SEPA were statutory consultees referred to under the Marine Scotland Licence for this work and that it was important that in future prior consent should be given to ensure that appropriate measures, in keeping with the site, were undertaken.
35. **EM** assured the Group that Marine Scotland had approved the revetment work that had been undertaken and that the Group would be assured about both the need for and the solution to the problem during the site visit which would take place after the meeting.
36. **DB** was of the view that given the ephemeral and dynamic nature of the dunes at the southern end of the site, some of these issues could have been foreseen.

37. The **Chairman** referred back to the original description of this area and noted that it was recognised that “special management” would be required in the vicinity of the outlet of the Blairton Burn and there was no defined coastal dune ridge in this part of the site.

Report 11

38. The **Chairman** requested that TIGLS provide MEMAG with copies of the Otter Reports.
39. **Action – EM** to lodge copies of Otter Reports with the Secretariat.
40. **AG** – requested feedback on the archaeology reports.
41. **EM** – noted that the archaeologist had reported nothing of interest at present.

Budget - November 2009 – March 2011

42. **The Chairman** reminded the Group of the agreed provisions and the protocol for managing the MEMAG budget. He confirmed that since a Bank Account and a system of proforma invoicing of TIGLS quarterly in advance had been established, an appropriate cash flow was being maintained.
43. The need to alert TIGLS to a significant increase in costs related to monitoring activities at the conclusion of the current construction phase was reiterated.

Hydrology Report

44. A summary of the Fairhurst Water Quality Report had been circulated to the committee by email on the 4th April 2011. With the agreement of **KN** the hard copy of the report was tabled and each member was given a copy of the covering letter from the TIGLS Lawyer and the executive summary of pp 1 to 12. This report, plus a map, was considered to be a most valuable addition to the MEMAG database. Nevertheless questions were raised as to its value for **other** hydrological information, especially relating to subsurface movements and water table variation – both critical to environmental conditions.
45. It was agreed that **The Chairman and DO**, who was given, on loan, the hard copy of the report, would meet with a SEPA expert to assess the hydrology report in detail and the need for further hydrology monitoring. **The Chairman** will also contact Fairhurst directly to ascertain whether any other baseline hydrology data has been, or is being, collected.
46. **Action – Chairman and DO** to meet with SEPA representative from Dingwall to discuss hydrology data requirements. MEMAG to cover the cost of travel to/from Dingwall if required.
47. **EM** noted that irrigation systems were now in place throughout the site and that water would initially come from the well field. In the future, it was possible that run-off would be collected from the roofs and hard standing areas of the development. It had been proposed that storage reservoirs might be installed under the car parks.
48. There was general discussion related to the possible implications of capturing run off.
49. **Action** – It was agreed that **EM and The Chairman** would discuss the possible implications of the proposed water harvesting strategy and other aspects of hydrological conditions in the links and dune areas as a preliminary to further discussion of “hydrology” as a key environmental and ecological control at the next meeting of MEMAG.

AOB

50. **EM** welcomed the opportunity to take the Group on a tour of the site and invited the Group to visit at any stage in the future.

Date of Next Meeting

51. **Action** – Secretariat to canvass for dates in October.
52. Meeting closed – followed by site visit.