



**ocean
conservation**
all-party parliamentary group

**Thriving Ocean, Thriving People: Ocean Recovery and Human Health
And EGM**

2nd December 2021

Virtual Meeting: Zoom

10:00 – 11:00

ATTENDEES

MPs and Lords

Selaine Saxby MP (Co- Chairing)
Aaron Bell MP
Antony Higginbotham MP
Ben Everitt MP
Caroline Ansell MP
Cherilyn Mackrory MP
Chris Evans MP
Dawn Butler MP
Gagan Mohindra MP
Holly Mumby-Croft MP
Ian Levy MP
Jane Hunt MP
John McDonnell MP
Julie Marson MP
Katherine Fletcher MP
Kieran Mullan MP
Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP
Mark Jenkinson MP
Martin Vickers MP
Nickie Aiken MP
Rachael Maskell MP
Rupa Huq MP
Sally-Ann Hart MP
Toby Perkins MP
Virginia Crosbie MP

Derek Thomas MP (Co- Chairing)
Angela Richardson MP
Barry Gardiner MP
Beth Winter MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Chris Clarkson MP
Dave Doogan MP
Debbie Abrahams MP
Geraint Davies MP
Ian Byrne MP
James Sunderland MP
Jerome Mayhew MP
Jonathan Gullis MP
Kate Griffiths MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
Lee Anderson MP
Luke Pollard MP
Mathew Offord MP (representative)
Neil Coyle MP
Paul Howell MP
Robin Millar MP
Ruth Jones MP
Suzanne Webb MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Lord Hendy

Stakeholders

Hugo Tagholm, CEO of Surfers Against Sewage
Hannah Mills, Olympic Gold Medal Sailor, Founder of the Plastic Pledge
Dr Jo Garrett, Post-Doctoral Research Associate, University of Exeter
Joe Taylor, Founder and CEO, The Wave Project
Henry Swithinbank, Policy Officer, Surfers Against Sewage (Secretariat)
Amy Slack, Head of Campaigns & Policy, Surfers Against Sewage (Secretariat)
Patrick Mahon, Head of Policy, Common Seas
Nicola Bridge, Ocean Conservation Trust

MINUTES

Welcome

Selaine Saxby MP, Standing Chair, opened the meeting, thanking Steve Double MP for his work in chairing the Ocean Conservation APPG until now.

EGM: Election of New Chair

Vote on Motion for Co-Chairs

Geraint Davies MP proposed a motion for the group to elect co-chairs. There was concern raised by a number of Members that co-chairs could be from the same party and this would not be in the spirit of a cross party group. It was highlighted that there were same party co-chairs of other APPG's

The motion was carried unanimously

Vote on New Chair

It was confirmed that votes would be on the tickets rather than for individual people.

The following votes were received for the nominations made:

Co-Chairs - Cherlyn Mackrory MP and Derek Thomas MP - 30 votes
Co-Chairs – Matthew Offord MP and Geraint Davies MP - 18 votes

Cherlyn Mackrory MP and Derek Thomas MP were elected as new Co-Chairs of the group.

Ocean Conservation APPG Meeting – Ocean Recovery and Human Health

Hannah Mills outlined how her early experience of the ocean and her connection with it has influenced her career. She highlighted the confidence and mental stimulation the ocean gives people. She discussed how her experience of the destruction of the ocean inspired her to use her platform as an Olympian to drive change, raise awareness and power engagement. She highlighted that we know we

are destroying the ocean and we can no longer ignore it. She finished by calling for action, before it's too late.

Dr Jo Garrett presented her work on the Blue Health programme undertaken through the European Centre for Environment & Human Health. She highlighted that living closer to the coast is better for health & wellbeing and that the presence of blue spaces has a positive benefit. The quality of blue spaces also has an impact with perceived high-water quality associated with more happiness. Jo provided a case study of how wellbeing has been improved in Plymouth as a result of better access to blue space

Joe Taylor discussed the work of the Wave Project to improve the mental health and wellbeing of young people through surfing. Joe highlighted the Wave project focus on three principles of fun, acceptance and exploration results in increased confidence, and a reduction in anxiety for individuals. This in turn has positive impacts on families and communities. Joe presented a case study of a young person who came to The Wave Project with a traumatic family history and had dropped out of school. Through the Wave Project, he was given the time, space and opportunity to recover and after 18 months was back in School full time.

Hugo Tagholm thanked the outgoing Chair of the group, Steve Double, for his work in leading the APPG and congratulated the new Co-chairs. Hugo announced the launch of SAS report 'Thriving Ocean, Thriving People' which highlights the wellbeing and mental health benefits of the ocean. Hugo outlined several key findings from the report; 85% of people find spending time by the sea makes them feel refreshed and revitalised, Participation in water sports were shown to have doubled since 2019, The physical health benefits of people undertaking water sports at the coasts could be worth up to £20.2bn per year.

Audience Q&A

What recommendations do the speakers have for policy makers to ensure the value of the ocean is recognised?

Jo Garrett – It's important to recognize that costs are paid for by different people to those who see the benefits; that people value nature in different ways e.g. monetary and non-monetary; and nature and the ocean provide a range of health benefits so it's important to recognize all ecosystem benefits.

Joe Taylor –It's critical that we look at ways to create easy routes for people to access the ocean. Its also clear that connection with the ocean leads to greater value of the ocean which will support protection and restoration.

Hugo Tagholm –We need policy interventions that create fast paced change. He called on policy makers to set a level playing field for businesses. 'We need incentives through taxes, deposit return schemes, investment from industry and

emphasis on nature-based solutions.'

Ian Levy requested more information be sent through on The Wave Project

How does The Wave Project continue to get funding?

Joe Taylor – funding is the biggest challenge for the project. The project started with a small grant from the NHS and has had funding from the Lottery, Children in Need and some trust funding. The project undertakes a significant amount of individual giving and events fundraising and depends on a lot of volunteer action. The project is looking to find ways to make financing more sustainable.

How to we get more older and younger people more involved in ocean based activities?

Jo Garrett – it's important to reduce barriers, for example coast, transport, motivation.

Hugo Tagholm – highlighted an explosion in wild swimming and inland water sports over the last two years. Its important that we raise the ambition with more bathing water designations, particularly on our rivers, that protect people from pollution.

Final thoughts from the speakers

Jo Garrett – We need to restore the environment but we also need to educate people to use the environment in a way that does not cause harm. We must also remember that climate change is likely to change our relationship with the coast and this might include health disincentives too.

Hugo Tagholm –There are ample opportunities to restore ocean environments and we must adopt Highly Protected Marine Areas and tackle pollution.

Joe Taylor – We need optimism. We live in a time of a lot of anxiety and there is massive opportunities to improve peoples mental health and wellbeing though connection with the ocean. The work of this APPG in driving this is really important.

Hannah Mills – We are lucky to have the ocean surrounding us. Its important to get people into sport for the long-term benefits this can create for people's health and wellbeing.

Closing remarks

Derek Thomas MP thanked SAS for their continued support as secretariat to the group and thanked Steve Double MP for his work as Chair.

Meeting closed 10:07