



Tay Estuary Forum Annual Conference Report 2015

Sustainable Coasts

24/4/15 West Park Conference Centre, Dundee

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60 delegates, representing a range of environmental, coastal & marine stakeholders, attended this year's Tay Estuary Forum Annual Conference in Dundee, *Sustainable Coasts*. The event unites researchers, artists, environmentalists and engineers, sharing a common vision of communicating sustainable practice at various scales within regional coastal and marine sectors. Three sessions explored current topics for the Tay Estuary & adjacent coastline of east-central Scotland.

Session 1: Strategic planning for the terrestrial and marine environments (Chaired by Rob Duck, TEF)

Anna Donald, Marine Scotland's Head of Marine Planning and Strategy, introduced Scotland's newly-launched National Marine Plan. Her presentation looked at the various stages of its evolution and illustrated how the Plan will inform regional marine planning over coming years. From marine to terrestrial, Pamela Ewen, TAYplan's Strategic Development Planning Authority Manager, shifted the focus to explore changing land use in Tayside, current trends, priorities and future forecasts. Finally, Rosie Scurr, Mainstream Renewable Power, presented east coast offshore renewables latest developments, highlighting challenges faced during the process of wind farm installation, before summarising progress of the various development projects.

Session 2: Multi-scale working towards a sustainable future (Chaired by Dan Gilmour, University of Abertay)

Session 2 spanned multi-scale initiatives which promote sustainability at our coastline and in our coastal communities. Wendy Murray gave an excellent talk on the work carried out by East Haven Residents' Association & its aspirations for the future; the resourcefulness of which was an example to all. Allan Watt, Dundee's Waterfront Project Director at Dundee City Council, then discussed changes to Dundee's waterfront, including the demolitions, new-construction, investment opportunities, the V&A, and plans for a marina at City Quay. A fly-through video of the completed waterfront reflected the exciting potential for the City. Martin Price, University of the Highlands & Islands, placed the session into context by looking at the lower Tay region as a whole, raising the possibility for nominating the area as a UNESCO Biosphere Region, demonstrating approaches to conservation and sustainable development on a regional scale. A Biosphere Region, by definition, "has a clear identity, is globally recognised for its species, its environment and the commitment of a wide range of stakeholders to work together towards a sustainable future".



Photo courtesy of Wendy Murray: East Haven Residents' Association. Beechgrove Community Garden.

The proposals gave delegates food for thought during the lunch break, after which, a poster/exhibit session allowed delegates time to interact with student research projects and other exhibitors, including: RNLI, Dundee Coastal Study, James Hutton Institute, Tay Landscape Partnership and Fife Biodiversity.

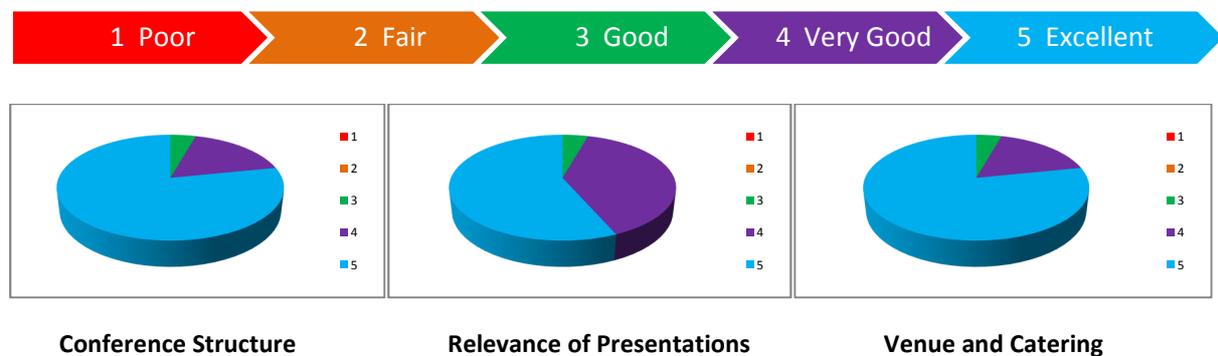
Session 3: Safeguarding humans, habitats and species

Michael Avril, the RNL's Community Incident Reduction Manager for Scotland & Northern England, began by illustrating plans for reducing community incidents at sea, with a focus on Broughty Ferry. This was followed by a report from PC Wilkie (Police Scotland) clarifying the legal ways countryside managers can control pests without breaking the law, focusing on bird crime in particular. Finally, Susan Mains explored creative community approaches to identifying with Tayside Spaces, through a series of writings and short films.

Closing comments by Anton Edwards (University of the Highlands & Islands) concluded the day, offering insights from a TEF perspective. Anton emphasised the importance of reducing complexities within the planning & regulatory system, relying on good science, whilst maintaining a critical objectivity of scientific findings. The cyclical nature of sustainability threaded the day's talks together: identifying a resource, planning for its protection & use, investing effort & capital, monitoring progress, understanding results, then repeating the process, to become ever-more efficient. Practising Sustainability was defined as "writing the future." The creative theme also continued with a Tay poem!

*"The Carse
is noted for its rasps,
but Climate Change is on the way,
and may affect the silvery Tay.
So every raspberry cane you now can see
may soon be swallowed by the sea.
Below the waves, you'll find Dundee.
Or, on Newburgh's gentle slopes,
-and this is what your writer hopes-
if the weather gets much hotter,
you may see a stunning lot a,
Vines,
that give us loads of gallus wines."
(A. Edwards, 2015)*

The event received publicity from local papers, and STV news coverage with Allan Watt (Dundee Waterfront Project Director, Dundee City Council) and Rob Duck (TEF Chair) giving interviews. Feedback from the event has been positive. Of the 60 delegates in attendance, 23 feedback forms were returned, the results of which are seen below (1-Poor, 5-Excellent):



Suggestions for future topics:

- Finance, Engineering
- Skills development, leadership within research
- Integrated approaches to estuary/ coastal management
- Tidal potential in the Tay: ideas, research and opportunities
- Wader populations on the Tay
- Marine biodiversity of estuary- an underwater focus
- River basin planning
- Sea level rise and its effects on coastal sediments
- Interactive sessions/ discussion workshops- more interaction between the speakers themselves

Delegate comments: "Great experience: Informative, enlightening & thought-provoking at several different levels" ... "A good variety of subjects and networking opportunities" ... "Excellent conference. Incredible value for money" ... "Really enjoyed the day, made new connections with people, gave us a new perspective on the Tay and more insight into how we fit into the bigger plan!" ... "Excellent presentations individually & especially as a stimulating and interesting collective" ... "The conference works because it is interdisciplinary & diverse!"