Marine Scotland Licensing: Sand extraction, West Sands, St Andrews

Procedure (Protocol) for Archaeological Discoveries

October 2025.

Background: Wet sand is requested for the purpose of dune restoration. The sand is to be harvested from location within agreed Marine Licence. This sand is to be lifted by 365 excavator and moved by 6ton dumpers onto areas above MHWM.

Operation:

Harvesting: To remove sand from accreting area of beach to a maximum depth of 500mm to reach required sediment amount for specific restoration. This is done at low tide using a 365 digger with all sand transported by dumpers to above MHWM location. The licence is for expected operations spanning 3 years.

The harvesting of sand from accreting beach areas will assist with lowering potential for unexpected finds. Sand volumes are low, harvesting depth is minimal and limited and the site has good visibility and alternative harvest site potential within

Recipient Site: The harvested sand will be placed above MHWM

Duration: Expected days to remove licence total some 4 days. Individual day operation some 6 hours maximum.

Notable Constraints: The West Sands is a SSSI and part of a SAC/SPA site. All necessary consents will be in place. The overall site has no recorded wreck sites, potential remnants of golf course infrastructure and with the site's proximity to MoD Leuchars, the low potential for unmarked and unknown ordnance.

Identified Roles for licenced operation:

Overall Site and Project Lead: Director of Greenkeeping St Andrews Links Trust (SALT).

Project Staff Lead: Lead West Sands Ranger St Andrews Links Trust.

Site Project/Operations Staff: SALT greenkeepers, usually under Eden Course Manager.

Acting Site Champion: Lead West Sands Ranger, St Andrews Links Trust

Nominated Contacts:

[Redacted]

Douglas Speirs, Archaeologist, Fife Council.

Leuchars Station H&S and Environmental Officer, MoD Leuchars.

Operation Planning:

All project staff will be briefed prior to the operation on the requirement to remain vigilant to unexpected finds and 'detritus'. To be aligned with the personnel involved and procedure on discovery and to timeously report findings.

Discovery Procedure:

- Project staff to be vigilant to unexpected finds.
- On discovery of any object or part of object of unknown origin and not 'sediment'. Operations are to cease.
- Project staff to inform Site Champion
- Site Champion to discuss with project staff, investigate find where appropriate.
- If find is of importance or identified as something which could be of importance or indeed unidentified, the site champion is to mark/annotate find location and inform the Overall Lead and Nominated contacts.
- Any and all objects recovered unintentionally as part of the works will be handled with care and placed in a secure place for Nominated contacts to identify.

Operations may be allowed to move to a nearby location to continue works within the agreed licence area if appropriate and safe to do so. This will be subject to consultation with Overall Lead and Nominated contacts.

Procedure following on from discovery will be determined by the Nominated contacts.

There is no commercial pressure to continue operations where inappropriate to do so, there is an environmental pressure from tides however this operation has a flexible timeframe and supported with an excellent communication structure which will allow this procedure to work well whilst managing expectation of operations.

Ranald Strachan

St Andrews Links Trust