

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 12th December 2013, Porth Penrhyn

Minutes

Attendance

Rowland Sharp	Natural Resources Wales
James Wilson	Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Lewis le Vay	Bangor University
Sue Utting	Chair
Ioan Thomas	Gwynedd County Council
Keith Andrews	Licensed hand pickers

Advisors

Jim Andrews	
Trevor Jones	Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair announced that Mr Alan Winstone was due to retire at the end of December. Mr Winstone had been involved in the management of the Menai Strait mussel fishery for nearly 20 years, firstly as a Member of the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee and subsequently through the Association. All joined the Chair in an appreciation of Mr Winstone's valuable contribution to the Menai Strait mussel fishery and wished him well for his retirement.

2. Apologies

Alan Winstone	Natural Resources Wales
Tim Croucher	Welsh Assembly Government
Mike Barton	Ynys Môn County Council

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 17th October 2013 were accepted.

4. Matters Arising

It was considered that most of the matters arising from the last meeting were addressed on the agenda for the current meeting. Two issues were briefly discussed.

Biotoxin sampling

No response had been received yet to queries about the frequency of biotoxin sampling. No action was required on this issue.

New cultivation areas

Mr Ioan Thomas had pursued this issue and had concluded that Mr Gareth Roberts (Environment Portfolio) was perhaps a more appropriate representative for the Council on the Association and suggested that he should attend future meetings. The Association expressed regret that Mr Thomas would not attend

further meetings, but looked forward to ongoing input from Gwynedd County Council.

Correspondence

Replies had been sent to the letters received from Ynys Môn County Council and to Anglesey Boat Company (concerning proposed new cultivation areas). No response had been received from either party.

5. Membership of the Association

There were no new Members of the Association.

6. Financial Update

It was reported that the annual accounts had been submitted.

The Association's accountant had noticed that the Articles of Association that were held by Companies House needed to be updated. James Wilson had contacted the Association's lawyers to progress this matter.

Action: JW

7. Environment Bill

The Association considered the Welsh Government proposals for updating the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967 under its proposed Environment Bill. The Chair and Mr Wilson provided an update on the presentations that had been made by Welsh Government at a recent Environment Bill "roadshow".

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to provide a constructive response to the proposals, and to seek clarification of issues that were not clear in the document. It was also felt that the Association should offer its services and expertise to assist the development of the proposals.

Action: SU

8. Leased Areas

a) Boundary query: Area 2

Mr Jones, Mr Andrews and Mr Wilson declared their interest in this agenda item and did not participate in the discussion.

Mr Kim Mould had requested that the current boundary of this leased area should be changes to match an older boundary.

The Association considered that the time to have discussed the boundary was when the current lease was issued by the previous Grantee of the Order. The proposal to change the boundary would intrude on an area that another party had requested.

It was therefore considered that the boundary for this area should not be changed. The Chair was asked to write to the lease holder to communicate this decision.

Action: Chair

b) Lease fees

Mr Jones and Mr Wilson declared their interest in this agenda item and did not participate in the discussion.

It was agreed that the fees for leased areas should be increased and that it could be appropriate to take the geographic extent of each area into account when calculating lease fees.

It was felt that figures should be calculated and circulated to lay holders for comment before the next set of invoices was sent out in April 2014. The responses from lay holders could be considered by the next Association meeting.

Action: Chair

c) Applications for new leased areas

It was reported that all consultations for these new areas had been carried out, and all that remained was to finalise aspects of the consultation with Natural Resources Wales with respect to the Conwy Bay and Menai Strait Special Area of Conservation. The applicants for the new areas were asked to progress this consultation.

Action: JW & KA

9. Bangor Pier Proposals

The proposals to renovate and extent Bangor Pier were discussed at the meeting. The Association agreed that the Pier was an important landmark in the area. The proposals raised a number of concerns (principally the potential impact on mussel beds; effects on geomorphology & hydrography of the area; navigational issues; and the possible introduction of Invasive Alien Species both during the construction and operation of the pier).

It was agreed that a response to the proposals should be sent to Bangor City Council by the Association.

Action: Chair

10. NW IFCA Activity

The report was received.

Mr Jones reported that the vessel size byelaw that had been under consideration as now being revised and would be considered by the IFCA at a later date.

The Morecambe Bay Fishery Order application was being progressed; the IFCA were discussing how to generate income to the order and how best to impose a levy on the dredge fishery. There was a risk that dredgers might be charged a levy per tonne of mussels gathered whilst hand gatherers were not subject to a levy per tonne, which seemed inequitable.

It was suggested that the Association should make representations to the IFCA requesting that all operators working in the proposed new Fishery Order are treated equitably.

Action: Chair

11. Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order

The Chair provided an update on the recent meeting involving the applicants for this Order and the Welsh Government Head of Fisheries, Mr Graham Rees. The meeting had also been attended by the local Assembly Member, Mr Rhun Ap Iorwerth. The meeting had been very constructive.

A revised application for this Fishery Order had subsequently been submitted to the Welsh Government.

A report on progress would be made to the next meeting of the Association.

12. Fishery Management Issues

a) *Bonamia*

Some *Bonamia ostreae* had been found in flat oysters (*Tiostrea chilensis*). The source was unknown. A control zone had been established between Fort Belan and the Conwy Estuary. Discussions were underway about both the management response and research into this issue.

The removal of *T. chilensis* was under consideration. This species is not found in the eastern Menai Strait and it was felt that it would be important to ensure that it is excluded from the area.

b) Non-native species

Didemnum vexillum

Rowland Sharp reported that more *D. vexillum* had been found in Holyhead in October. Further actions were under consideration with respect to eradication and management of the outbreak, as well as the reinstatement of the isolation berth in the harbour.

NRW were discussing how to respond to this issue with Welsh Government.

Chinese Mitten Crabs (*Eriocheir sinensis*)

Work on the genetics of CMCs in the Dee estuary was still underway, and more work was scheduled for 2014.

c) *Norovirus*

With proposals for new statutory controls shelved, voluntary options for managing *Norovirus* issues were under consideration. No action was currently required on this issue, but it should be kept under review.

13. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

The meeting considered the following items of correspondence:-

Gwynedd County Council

A letter had been received indicating that Gwynedd CC had no objection to the creation of new cultivation areas.

Lt. Col. Burkham (retd).

A letter had been received enquiring about the agenda for MSFOMA meetings. The Chair had responded to this letter.

Welsh Government

The Welsh Government had written to request annual fishery returns, and a response had been submitted by James Wilson.

b) Menai Strait West

Trevor Jones noted that he and Mr Lea-Wilson were interested in finding out whether the fishery order application might be eligible for funding from the local Fisheries Liaison Action Group which has a £600k budget for projects to the benefit of the local fishing community.

14. Date for next meeting

The next meeting is set for 13th March 2014 at 10am.