

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 22nd February 2018
FV Mare Gratia, Port Penrhyn

Minutes

Attendance

Alan Winstone	Chair
Ioan Thomas	Gwynedd County Council
James Wilson	Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Keith Andrews	Licensed hand pickers
Colin Charman	Natural Resources Wales
Lewis le Vay	Bangor University (by Skype)

Observers

Trevor Jones	Menai Strait (West)
Kim Mould	BMWAG

Advisors

Jim Andrews	MSFOMA Secretariat
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1. Chair's announcements

The Chair tabled a paper for discussion concerning the potential development of a "Community Fund". All agreed to discuss this under AOB.

2. Apologies

Rowland Sharp	Natural Resources Wales
Tim Croucher	Welsh Government
Iwan Huws	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Stuart Evans	Welsh Government (Head of Fisheries Policy)
Nicola Britton	Welsh Government (Fisheries Strategy Officer)

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 9th January 2018 were accepted, pending some minor corrections.

4. Matters Arising

It was considered that all of the matters arising from the last meeting were addressed on the agenda for the current meeting.

Code of Conduct for Invasive Non-Native Species - it was noted that this CoC was due for review. It was agreed that it should be considered at the next Association meeting.

5. Membership of the Association

There were no new Members of the Association.

It was agreed that a report considering options for broadening membership and the quorum for meetings should be considered at the next Association meeting.

Action: Secretariat

6. Financial Update

The report was accepted.

There was a discussion of the options set out for altering the basis for calculating lease fees. It was felt that the simplest charging mechanism was the current fixed rate approach. The “dynamic” approach was considered to offer benefits but could introduce unwanted administrative complexity. It was concluded that the fixed fee approach should remain in place.

After some discussion it was agreed that the Secretariat should investigate whether it may be possible for the Association to allow the two new leaseholders to defer their lease payments for a period of time until their areas have become productive.

Action: Secretariat

It was reported that the Cabinet Secretary has been informed of the increase in lease fees for the 2018-19 Financial Year.

7. Welsh Government Activity

a) Meetings of Fisheries Groups

It was noted that there had been no meetings of any Inshore Fisheries Groups, and that the Wales Marine Fisheries Advisory Group is currently the forum for discussion.

b) Meeting with Cabinet Secretary

A verbal report of a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary was provided to the meeting by Trevor Jones. This meeting was felt to have been very productive. It has provided an opportunity to raise concerns about a lack of progress with key areas of policy implementation directly with the Cabinet Secretary. The Cabinet Secretary was keen to meet with MSFOMA.

It was agreed that the Association should invite the Cabinet Secretary to visit the Menai Strait.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

c) Wales National Marine Plan

The consultation on the Wales National Marine Plan was discussed. It was agreed that MSFOMA should make a response. Key issues to address in this response would be to ensure that the WNMP makes adequate provision for aquaculture and addresses key issues such as the need to manage the spread of Invasive Non Native Species. It was noted that some commercial shellfish species (such as Pacific oysters and Manilla clams) are non-native species, and that the WNMP should take account of this.

It was agreed that a response to the WNMP should be submitted by MSFOMA.

Action: Secretariat

d) Wales Marine & Fisheries Strategic Action Plan

This plan had set out an objective of doubling shellfish aquaculture output in Wales to a production level of 16,000t by 2020. At a recent meeting with WG officials it had been indicated that this target has been dropped.

The Association noted with concern that this target was part of the Welsh commitment to the UK contribution to the EU “Blue Growth” strategy as well as UK commitments under the EU CFP.

8. NW IFCA Activity

The report on recent activities of the NW IFCA was received and accepted by the meeting.

Some concerns were raised about the possible implications of the proposed “trading permit” under the proposed new Byelaw 3. It was agreed that there was no need to respond to this issue at present, but that a watching brief should be maintained.

9. Menai Strait East Fishery Order Renewal

The revised application forms were discussed page-by-page at the meeting. It was agreed that the application should be submitted to WG once all of the changes discussed had been made, and pending the addition of some missing information.

Action: Secretariat

It was felt that it was important to maintain regular communication with landowners, especially the Crown Estate.

Members discussed the uncertainty in the application process. It was felt that it would be helpful for WG to make the application process more accessible and predictable, for instance by making application forms available on the WG website and agreeing new procedures for processing applications with deadlines defined for both the applicant and for WG.

10. Menai Strait West

The report on this matter was received and discussed.

It was noted that despite repeated assurances from WG officials, no progress with the application had been made since the Association had written to the Cabinet Secretary to ask her to determine the application in July 2017.

It was agreed that the Association should write to the Cabinet Secretary to enquire about the lack of progress with the renewal of this Fishery Order.

Action: Chair / Secretariat

It was agreed that progress with the renewal of this Fishery Order should be considered at the next Association meeting.

11. EMFF Bid Proposal

Lewis le Vay provided an update on projects and grant applications that were being progressed by the Centre for Applied Marine Science (CAMS) in Menai Bridge.

Offshore area - an Interreg funded project to research the use of seed mussel collectors in collaboration with BIM in Ireland is continuing and is due to be completed by September 2018.

A tender call was due to go out to design a commercial-scale system off the North Wales coast, also under Interreg. It was anticipated that subject to agreement with NRW and The Crown Estate, this work might start in April 2018.

EMFF Bid - a bid for EMFF funds a project titled "Menai Offshore Subsurface Shellfish Systems" (MOSSS) is due to be submitted on the 7th March. The project would support 4 more years of trials, and will also aim to model the Welsh EEZ to identify areas where seed mussel collectors could be located and characterise areas of interest for commercial scale operations.

ERDF Bid - funding was being sought to establish a "Shellfish Centre" at CAMS, with 3 years' funding provided to 6 experts who would work in partnership with the industry to investigate key scientific and technical issues (such as carrying capacity of shellfish production areas).

Research & Innovation Shellfish Centre - this project (the creation of a new facility) would be progressed separately. The Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO) is due to be making an announcement about this shortly.

It was agreed that MSFOMA should write to offer its support for the EMFF bid.

Action: Chair / Secretariat

Colin Charman added that the EMFF bid would link to and support the development of a Wales National Marine Plan and the implementation of the strategy for the Sustainable Use of Natural Resources by identifying areas suitable for shellfish cultivation. NRW are also looking at the opportunity for funding of a project looking at marine planning and aquaculture development under Article 51 of EMFF.

12. Fishery Management Issues

a) Coastal / marine developments

i. Bangor Pier

Kim Mould reported that maintenance work had now started and that there had been no problems.

ii. Dickies Boatyard Development

It was agreed that a response to the consultation on planning permission for this development should be submitted to Gwynedd County Council that highlighted the risk of pollution arising from the project.

Action: Secretariat

It was further agreed that MSFOMA should write to the developer (Watkin Jones) to raise concerns about the potential impact of the development on water quality.

b) Environmental / health issues

i. *Bonamia*

No additional news.

ii. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) / Invasive Non Native Species (INNS)

It was reported that there had been an unconfirmed report of *Didemnum vexillum* in the Menai Strait.

iii. *Norovirus*

It was reported that the SAGB had discussed a legal action that had been brought against a celebrity chef by a group of people that had been ill after eating cockles at his restaurant. The key issue in this case was that it was being brought under the Sale of Goods Act, which could set a precedent with wide implications.

Two technical reports on Norovirus are due for publication later in 2018: one is a 3-year FSA study; the other is an EU report.

c) Meetings attended

i. Caernarfon Harbour Trust

There had been a meeting of the harbour trust that neither Trevor Jones nor Keith Andrews had been able to attend; both sent their apologies.

13. Any Other Business

a) Community Fund

The proposal for establishing a Community Fund was discussed. It was agreed that this should be considered further at a future meeting.

14. Date for next meeting

The next meeting was set for Thursday 26th April at 1000.