

# Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2016  
Marine Centre Wales, Menai Bridge

## Minutes

### Attendance

Sue Utting	Chair
Kim Mould	BMWAG
Rowland Sharp	Natural Resources Wales
Tim Croucher	Welsh Assembly Government
Jon King	Bangor University / Menai West
Keith Rowlands	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Ewan Huws	Isle of Anglesey County Council
James Wilson	Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd

### Advisors

Jim Andrews

### 1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed Kim Mould (invited to attend as a participant in the North West IFCA "Bivalve Mussel Working Group) and Ewan Huws to the meeting.

### 2. Apologies

Bill Somerfield	Welsh Government
Lewis le Vay	Bangor University
Keith Andrews	Licensed hand pickers
Trevor Jones	Menai Strait (West)
Ioan Thomas	Gwynedd County Council

### 3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2016 were accepted subject to correction of some minor typographic errors.

### 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. Additional matters arising were:-

- a) **Offshore cultivation areas** - the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is underway for these. JW reported that there have been some recent institutional and staffing changes at the Crown Estate Commissioners.
- b) **Invasive Alien Species Code of Conduct** - JW reported that the code of conduct is under review. Asian shore crab would be added to the scope of the code.

- c) **Marine Stewardship Council recertification** – JW reported that on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 the Menai Strait mussel fishery was re-certified for a further period of 5 years.
- d) **Tetrodotoxin** – JW provided an update on how the issue of tetrodotoxin in shellfish has been addressed by DG SANCO at the European level. It was understood that the European Food Standards Agency is due to provide guidance on this issue.

## **5. Membership of the Association**

There were no new Members of the Association.

## **6. Financial Update**

James Wilson reported that the Association's reserves are accumulating in line with the agreed financial plan.

## **7. Welsh Government Activity**

No significant changes to legislation or policy have been proposed since the last meeting. There have, however been some staff changes. David Tripp and Bill Somerfield have moved to new positions in Welsh Government and have been replaced by Andy Fraser and José Constantino. Graham Rees remains head of fisheries.

## **8. NW IFCA Activity**

### **a) Seed mussel fishery, Morecambe Bay**

It was noted that the IFCA had acted swiftly to open the seed mussel dredge fishery in Morecambe Bay, and that Menai Strait vessels had been able to fish in Morecambe Bay in early July. The Association welcomed the IFCA's action.

### **b) Byelaw Proposals**

The Association considered the proposed new IFCA Byelaw 11 (Dredging) and Byelaw 3 (Cockle and Mussel Fisheries). It was agreed that comments on both byelaws should be sent to the IFCA, and that clarification should be sought on how they could apply to the activities of Menai Strait vessels.

**Action: Secretariat**

### **c) Bivalve Mollusc Working Group**

Kim Mould is a member of BMWG (pronounced "bumwag"), and provided an update on its most recent activities. He felt that this group had been helpful in securing swift agreement to seed mussel dredging in Morecambe Bay this year.

The proposed "Management Plan" for mussels in Morecambe Bay was discussed. There were some doubts about the scientific rationale for proposal to manage the mussel biomass in the Bay in order to protect a broodstock of mussels in the Bay, since there is no evidence of a stock-recruitment relationship in any mussel populations and it is unlikely that recruits to the Morecambe Bay stock originate from the Bay. The proposal to ensure that adequate food was available for birds in the Bay was noted.

It was noted that MSFOMA has funded and will be supporting research into the interactions between mussels and eider; dispersal of mussel larvae; and the ecosystem goods & services provided by mussel cultivation.

It was agreed that the Association should write to the IFCA in connection with the proposed management plan, to offer support and to enquire about the underlying rationale for the management plan for mussels in Morecambe Bay.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **9. Menai Strait East Lease Renewal**

The report on this matter was accepted by the meeting.

## **10. Menai Strait East Fishery Order Renewal**

It was agreed that the Menai Strait East Fishery Order should be renewed. After discussion of the commercial value of the industry to the Welsh seafood strategy, it was agreed that the application for renewal of the Order should be for as long a period as possible, ideally 35 years or longer.

It was agreed that the Association should write to Welsh Government officials to indicate the intention to start the process of renewing the Fishery Order.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **11. Menai Strait West**

The report on this matter was accepted by the meeting and discussed. The Chair provided an update on the ongoing series of meetings with stakeholders. These had been productive, and it was hoped that the meeting scheduled for the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> July would enable agreement on key issues, and that the application process could resume shortly afterwards.

It was agreed that work should continue to progress this Fishery Order application.

## **12. Developing Shellfish Aquaculture in North Wales**

### **a) Conwy Estuary**

It was reported that the Conwy fishermen are keen to renew their Fishery Order, which lapsed in 2008.

### **b) Offshore areas**

As noted earlier, the HRA for these areas are being progressed.

## **13. Fishery Management Issues**

### **a) Bangor Pier**

Kim Mould reported that painting work is due to take place in the summer and that he has been consulted about this.

### **b) *Bonamia***

It was reported that Cefas have formally confirmed the presence of *Bonamia* in the western Menai Strait. There is a permanent control zone between the western Menai Strait and Conwy.

### **c) Invasive Alien Species (IAS)**

#### **Code of Conduct**

The Bangor Mussel Producers' code of conduct was still under review with NRW to ensure that it met current best practice and knowledge of the non-native species concerned.

#### ***Didemnum vexillum***

There have been no recent surveys or any news of further spread of this species. Bangor University are due to be working with the isolation berth at Holyhead this summer.

### **d) Norovirus**

It was reported that baseline survey work for *Norovirus* is underway in oyster growing areas.

### **d) Enforcement**

No enforcement issues were reported.

### **e) Proposed new SACs and SPAs**

The proposed Liverpool Bay SPA extension is in the process of being confirmed. NRW are treating this area as if it is already designated.

### **f) Dickies Boat Yard development**

Trevor Jones had raised concerns that the proposed new development at Dickies Boat Yard in Gwynedd could give rise to toxic leachate running into the Menai Strait. NRW have raised this concern and had requested bunding around the development area.

It was agreed that the Association should write to the planning authority to draw their attention to the existence of the Fishery Order and the role of MSFOMA.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **14. Any Other Business**

### **a) Correspondence**

No correspondence other than that referred to in reports had been received.

### **b) Welsh Government / EMFF meeting**

James Wilson has invited the new Cabinet Secretary to visit the Menai Strait, and received a favourable response.

### **c) Menai Bridge Seafood Festival**

This is due to take place on the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> August. MSFOMA are sponsoring an event on the Friday night on Bangor Pier

### **d) Microplastics in mussels**

This issue had been reported in The Times. Seafish and the Food Standards Agency have responded to it.

**e) Waste Water Discharge, Beach Road Outfall**

A discharge from this outfall has been reported by the mussel industry to NRW.

**15. Date for next meeting**

The next meeting is set for 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 10am.