

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 27th March 2015
FV Mare Gratia, Porth Penrhyn

Minutes

Attendance

Sue Utting
Ioan Thomas
Keith Andrews
Rowland Sharp
Trevor Jones

Chair
Gwynedd County Council
Licensed hand pickers
Natural Resources Wales
Menai Strait (West)

Advisors

Jim Andrews

1. Chair's announcements

2. Apologies

Bill Somerfield
James Wilson
Lewis le Vay
Mike Barton
Tim Croucher

Welsh Government
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Bangor University
Ynys Môn County Council
Welsh Assembly Government

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 18th December 2014 were accepted, subject to some minor amendments suggested by Mr W. Somerfield from the Welsh Government.

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.

5. Membership of the Association

There were no new Members of the Association.

6. Financial Update

The balance of the MSFOMA account was reported to the meeting, and it was noted that a reserve is accruing as intended by the agreed financial plan for the Association.

It was also noted that invoices should be issued for the new leased areas on the 1st April 2015, along with those for existing areas.

Action: Secretariat

The meeting considered that it would be appropriate to review the lease fee charged to all operators during the next FY (2016-17) to ensure that the financial plan remains on target.

7. Welsh Government Activity

The report submitted to the meeting was accepted. The Chair reported that a very productive meeting had been held in Cardiff on the 13th February 2015 with the new Minister for Natural Resources, Carl Sargeant AM.

Concern was expressed about the apparent lack of progress with the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order proposal. The Chair reported that there had recently been some signs of a more favourable view of the prospects for creating a Fishery Order for more than 7 years, and hoped that this would prevail.

Trevor Jones reported that the Director of Marine, Andrew Slade, was due to visit the Menai Strait on April 14th, and that this would provide a good opportunity for further discussions.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to highlight the importance of progressing the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order with Mr Slade. It was also felt that if there was no evidence of progress in the near future, the Association may need to consider at its next meeting which of the options available to it would most effectively expedite progress.

Action: Secretariat

8. NW IFCA Activity

The report was accepted by the meeting and discussed. It was noted that the IFCA membership is presently depleted, with a number of MMO appointments remaining empty. There was a degree of concern about how this may be affecting the effectiveness of the IFCA as a management body.

Trevor Jones reported that a visit to the Menai Strait had been organised for IFCA Members and Officers in February 2015. The meeting was considered to be very successful, though it was noted that none of the IFCA officers that had been invited to the site visit had participated.

a) Seed mussel fishery, Morecambe Bay

It was agreed that Association Members should actively pursue opportunities to participate in the proposed new Bivalve Mollusc Working Group.

It was also noted that IFCA officers had reported that resource constraints were hindering work on the seed mussel fishery in Morecambe Bay. The Association considered that the IFCA should be offered support (either financial or practical) to help address this problem.

Action: JW, Secretariat

b) Vessel size proposals

The report on this matter was received, noting that no significant progress has been made.

c) Morecambe Bay Fishery Order

It was noted that a special meeting of the IFCA had been held in December 2014 at which it had been decided not to progress the proposed new Morecambe Bay Fishery Order, and to manage the Bay's shellfisheries under IFCA byelaws.

9. Fishery Management Issues

a) Bangor Pier

There had been no further news on this issue.

b) *Bonamia*

Trevor Jones reported that all of the larger *Tiostrea chilensis* in the western Menai Strait had recently died; only smaller individuals (<55mm) remained. The reasons for the die-off were unknown. There was some concern that the die-off might interfere with monitoring the status of *Bonamia* in this area, since these oysters are the host for *Bonamia*. Rowland Sharp agreed to raise this issue with Lewis LeVay.

Action: Rowland Sharp

c) Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

Didemnum vexillum

Rowland Sharp reported that a survey had been conducted in Holyhead in February and *D. vexillum* had been found again in the marina but not outside the area. The distribution seemed to be limited to moorings and boats, and was similar to that seen previously. Work on an isolation berth is ongoing. All of the work to survey and control this species is being funded by Welsh Government, and the Association expressed gratitude for this commitment and support.

Japanese shore crab *Hemigrapsus sanguineas*

There was no further news about this species.

d) *Norovirus*

Trevor Jones reported that James Wilson had been very active in addressing issues associated with Norovirus, and also that the Welsh Government is driving the agenda for shaping future management measures at the EU level.

At present, the EU are carrying out a study of Norovirus in shellfish populations to inform the development of any future management measures. Responsibility for this matter rests with the EU Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO).

e) Enforcement

Tim Croucher reported that there has been some mussel removal from Traeth Lafan, and that this activity is being closely monitored.

10. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

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

b) Annual Report

This is due for submission after the end of the Financial Year.

c) Meetings with Welsh Government

Trevor Jones reported that during April several meetings had been scheduled with representatives of the Welsh Government. It had been hoped that these would include a site visit and meeting with the Minister, but this had not been possible. Nevertheless Mr Andrew Slade (Director, Natural Resources) was due to visit Porth Penrhyn on April 14th, and a meeting to discuss the proposed new shellfish centre was due to take place with Graham Rees & Damien O Brian on April 16th.

11. Date for next meeting

The next meeting is set for 9th June 2015 at 10am.