

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 10th March 2016
FV Mare Gratia, Porth Penrhyn

Minutes

Attendance

Sue Utting	Chair
Eilir Thomas	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Keith Rowlands	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Keith Andrews	Licensed hand pickers
Trevor Jones	Menai Strait (West)
Colin Charman	Natural Resources Wales
James Wilson	Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Ioan Thomas	Gwynedd County Council

Advisors

Jim Andrews

1. Election of Chair

Mr James Wilson proposed that Dr Utting should be re-appointed Chair. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Ioan Thomas and was supported unanimously.

It was agreed that the Minister should be informed about Dr Utting's appointment.

Action: Secretariat

2. Chair's announcements

Dr Utting expressed gratitude at her re-appointment. She indicated that this would be the last year that she would be able to stand as Chair of the Association.

3. Apologies

Bill Somerfield	Welsh Government
Tim Croucher	Welsh Assembly Government
Lewis le Vay	Bangor University

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 17th December 2015 were accepted.

5. 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) **Ynys Môn County Council** - the representatives from Anglesey County Council were welcomed to the meeting.

- b) **Annual report** – JW reported this had been submitted to the Minister.
- c) **Handpicking licences** – it was noted that there was a need to ensure that the possibility of issuing handpicking licences in the Fishery Order area should be retained.
- d) **Menai Strait West** – the Chair confirmed that all of the actions agreed at the last Association meeting had been discharged.
- e) **Code of Conduct for non-native species** – James Wilson noted that this Code of Conduct is due for a review.

6. Membership of the Association

There were no new Members of the Association.

7. Financial Update

James Wilson reported that end of year accounts have been approved.

8. Welsh Government Activity

a) Environment Bill

It was noted that this Bill has now been made. It does not appear likely to adversely affect shellfish cultivation activities in the Menai Strait.

9. NW IFCA Activity

a) IFCA Meetings & Correspondence

It was noted that the IFCA is working on an update to its existing Byelaw 3 (regulating the gathering of cockles & mussels) and that it had made an emergency byelaw to extend the application of the NW-IFCA Byelaw 12 into the old Cumbria SFC District.

The Association noted progress with these two byelaws and was keen to ensure that decisions on byelaw changes in the NW-IFCA District should be based on good information and also should be rational.

b) Bivalve Mollusc Working Group

This Group has been working to develop management plans for both cockles and mussels in Morecambe Bay.

Mr Kim Mould is a member of BMWG (pronounced “bumwag”). It was agreed that Mr Mould should be invited to attend the next meeting of the Association as a representative of BMWG.

Action: Secretariat

10. Menai Strait East Lease Renewal

The report on this matter was accepted by the meeting and discussed. It was resolved that:-

- a) The Association approved the re-issue of leases for cultivation areas 1-6, pending confirmation from the Minister.

Action: Secretariat.

- b) A 5% annual increment should be applied to lease fees.

Action: Secretariat.

- c) Current leases should be extended by 6 months pending confirmation by the Minister of the Association's decision to renew the leases.

Action: Secretariat.

After some discussion it was further resolved that the renewal of the Menai Strait Oyster and Mussel Fishery Order 1962 should be an agenda meeting at the next Association meeting.

Action: Secretariat.

11. Menai Strait West

The report on this matter was accepted by the meeting and discussed.

a) Consultation meetings

It was noted that after the initial robust objections to the renewal of the Fishery Order, the applicants and MSFOMA had held a very constructive meeting in December with a wide range of stakeholders, and also site visits in January 2016.

It was noted that further meeting with stakeholders had been scheduled for April 14th 2016. Representatives of the Association were due to hold "drop in" sessions during the afternoon on that day, and then attend an evening meeting with stakeholders in Port Dinorwic.

The Association resolved that if the meetings on the 14th April were positive, then further meetings should be held to see if solutions could be found to the issues raised during consultation. It was felt that care should be taken to try to expedite progress and to minimise the costs incurred during this process.

Action: Secretariat.

b) Communications

The Association considered that it was important to ensure that the Minister did not impose a guillotine on progress while discussions with stakeholders were underway, and also to ensure that the applicants were aware of how the Association was working to progress the application. It was therefore agreed that correspondence should be sent to the Minister and also to the applicants for the Fishery Order to keep them informed of progress.

Action: Secretariat.

12. Developing Shellfish Aquaculture in North Wales

a) Conwy Estuary

There was no news of progress at Conwy.

b) Offshore areas

James Wilson reported that he has been working on a Habitats Regulations Assessment for a Marine Licence for offshore mussel cultivation. He was working to progress this as swiftly as possible so that dialogue with the Crown Estate Commissioners could be opened at an early stage.

13. Fishery Management Issues

a) Bangor Pier

There was no news of any maintenance activity at Bangor pier.

b) *Bonamia*

There had been no change with respect to *Bonamia* in the western Menai Strait. James Wilson noted that the regulations for the movement of mussels between *Bonamia* controlled areas in Eire were less restrictive than those in Wales.

c) Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

Code of Conduct

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

Didemnum vexillum

There was no further news about this species in Holyhead.

d) *Norovirus*

Sue Utting provided an update on a proposal for a baseline survey of Norovirus from the EFSA journal. James Wilson noted that the number of areas and deputation centres being assessed in the UK is very high. By contrast to the UK and other EU Member States, the deputation centres in the Netherlands are assessed on a regional basis rather than being assessed independently.

e) Enforcement

No enforcement issues were reported.

c) Proposed new SACs and SPAs

The consultation period on new SACs and SPAs had been extended, due to a reconfiguration of the evidence required to support their designation.

14. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

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

b) Welsh Government / EMFF meeting

Lewis LeVay had provided a report about this meeting. He noted that any decisions on funding were likely to be made at the end of the year. Lewis LeVay and Trevor Jones would participate in future meetings and provide feedback on MSFOMA.

c) BBSRC / NERC Aquaculture Initiative

Trevor Jones reported on this initiative. There are up to £6M of funding available, for funding projects with UK universities.

d) Marine Stewardship Council Re-Assessment

James Wilson reported that the consultation on the re-assessment report was due to end on the 7th April 2016.

e) Tetrodotoxin

James Wilson reported that tetrodotoxin had been found in Dutch production areas in March 2016. This toxin is produced by Vibrio bacteria and may affect mussels, oysters, fish, gastropods and scallops. It is triggered by warm seawater, and there are possibilities that in the past some PSP events have been caused by Tetrodotoxin.

15. Date for next meeting

The next meeting is set for 14th July 2016 at 10am.