

# Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017  
FV *Mare Gratia*, Porth Penrhyn

## Minutes

### Attendance

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

### Observers

Trevor Jones	Menai Strait (West)
Kim Mould	BMWAG
Andy Fraser	Welsh Government (Head of Natural Resource Management)
José Constantino	Welsh Government (Fisheries Strategy Officer)

### Advisors

Jim Andrews	MSFOMA Secretariat
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### 1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed Andy Fraser and José Constantino from Welsh Government, Trevor Jones from the proposed Menai West Fishery Order and also Kim Mould (invited to attend as a participant in the North West IFCA "Bivalve Mussel Working Group).

The Chair proposed and it was agreed that the sequence of agenda items should be altered to allow appropriate time for discussion of the Menai Strait West Fishery Order report.

### 2. Apologies

Rowland Sharp	Natural Resources Wales
Iwan Huws	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Tim Croucher	Welsh Government

### 3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016 were accepted subject to correction of some minor errors.

### 4. Matters Arising

It was considered that any 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.

Kim Mould and James Wilson reported that the land agents for the Penrhyn Estate had enquired about the possibility of MSFOMA appointing a member from the landowning sector.

There was some discussion about the options for widening membership of MSFOMA. Landowners were recognised as one of several sectors that might wish to participate in MSFOMA meetings. It was also noted that there are several land owners within the Fishery Order area and that the landowners might be asked to nominate a single appointee.

Participants in the process for renewing the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order reported that several stakeholders from that area had also enquired about participating in MSFOMA meetings.

Changing the membership would require an alteration of the Articles for the Association and that it would perhaps be beneficial to invite a landowner and perhaps appointees from other sectors to participate in meetings as an observer before changing these Articles.

It was agreed that the membership of the Association should be kept under review and that a report considering options for broadening membership should be considered at the next Association meeting.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **6. Financial Update**

James Wilson provided a verbal report confirming that the MSFOMA accounts were submitted on schedule to Companies' House and are now on their website.

It was agreed that a report about expenditure and budgets for MSFOMA should be discussed at the next meeting.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **7. Welsh Government Activity**

The report was accepted by the meeting.

### **a) Meetings & Groups**

#### **i. Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group**

Andy Fraser reported that a quarterly progress report will be submitted to the next WMFAG meeting scheduled for April 2017. This will report on progress with key issues for fisheries management in Wales and upcoming plans.

#### **ii. North Wales Inshore Fishery Group**

Andy Fraser reported that the IFGs had been suspended for 12 months and that progress was being driven through WMFAG. This was considered by WG to offer a clearer and more transparent approach.

### **iii. Welsh Aquaculture Advisory Group**

There was some discussion on whether this group still had a role, given the greater emphasis being placed on WMFAG. James Wilson noted that the AAG provided a forum for land-based and freshwater aquaculture businesses to liaise with WG that would not be provided by WMFAG. After some discussion it was agreed that it would be appropriate for the AAG membership to be asked to indicate its preferences for future liaison.

## **b) Consultations**

### **i. UK Fisheries Concordat**

The report on the agreement of a new UK Fisheries Concordat between the UK Government and devolved administrations was discussed. It was noted that this is principally of interest to wild capture fisheries; however the administration of fishing licences issued to aquaculture vessels was relevant to MSFOMA.

There was some discussion of whether withdrawal from the EU would have any implications on the Welsh Government's commitment to double aquaculture production by 2020. WG officials indicated that this commitment pre-dated the commitments set out in Multi-Annual National Plans under the CFP and would thus not be affected.

### **c) Call for Aquaculture Project Ideas**

MSFOMA representatives reported that work was underway to develop ideas for a Shellfish Centre associated with the Menai Strait, which would be a good candidate for funding.

James Wilson reported that the initial plan for a Shellfish Centre had been to locate it at Porth Penrhyn. The revised current plan was to use two sites: a research centre at Marine Centre Wales; and a processing facility at Porth Penrhyn. The income and profit from the processing facility would be used to fund research.

The main challenge to this approach is that a limited funding budget seems to be available for processing projects. It is anticipated that the proposed Shellfish Centre processing plant would cost around £1M, and thus require around £500k of funding support.

James Wilson indicated that a meeting to discuss funding of the proposal was due to take place with Neil ??????. Andy Fraser asked to be kept informed of progress.

**Action: James Wilson**

## **8. NW IFCA Activity**

### **a) Proposed dredge byelaw**

Trevor Jones and Jim Andrews (both NW-IFCA members) reported that this byelaw had been "made" at the NW-IFCA meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The

version made was that with a scale of charges relating to vessel size. The Menai Strait vessels would now be expected to pay £9,000 to dredge within the NW-IFCA District.

This byelaw would now be subject to a statutory period of consultation before being sent to the Secretary of State to be confirmed. The Association had registered as a stakeholder with the NW-IFCA via their website. It was anticipated that MSFOMA would therefore be consulted. It was agreed that an appropriate response should be submitted to any consultation on the byelaw.

**Action: Secretariat**

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

The report submitted to the meeting included a revised consultation strategy. This focussed on an initial phase of liaison and discussions with landowners and statutory bodies prior to a subsequent phase of liaison with wider stakeholders ahead of the application for renewal of the Fishery Order in late 2017. The revised strategy and schedule was discussed and approved.

Sue Utting informed the group that an initial meeting had taken place with Huw Jones at Natural Resources Wales in the morning prior to this MSFOMA meeting. Huw is the Team Leader for Natural Resources Management in Gwynedd and Anglesey. The meeting had been attended by Sue Utting, Trevor Jones, Kim Mould and Jim Andrews from MSFOMA. The meeting had been very positive. The lead NRW contact for consultation on the renewal of the Fishery Order would be Rowland Sharp.

To assist with the pre-application liaison activities, José Constantino agreed to send the WG list of key consultees to MSFOMA.

**Action: José Constantino**

Sue Utting suggested that it would be appropriate to set up a "Working Group" to progress work on the Fishery Order renewal. It was agreed that a Working Group comprising of Kim Mould, Trevor Jones and James Wilson should be established.

**Action: Secretariat**

The draft website text describing the renewal of this Fishery Order was discussed. It was agreed that this should be re-circulated for comment prior to translation and publication.

**Action: Secretariat / All**

## **10. Menai Strait West**

The report on this matter was received and discussed. It was noted that discussions had been held with the RYA and that they had proposed some changes to the proposed "Operating Plan" as well as proposing a draft "Side Agreement" which would be an enforceable agreement between MSFOMA and the RYA.

It was noted that a further meeting with stakeholders was due to take place in the evening, directly after the MSFOMA meeting. WG officials expressed regret that they would be unable to attend this meeting.

After careful consideration it was agreed that the RYA's proposed changes to the "Operating Plan" were acceptable to MSFOMA (pending approval by the "Liaison Group" at the evening meeting).

Sue Utting and Jim Andrews indicated that the "Side Agreement" had been drawn up by the RYA following a telephone conference during which both MSFOMA representatives had indicated that they were not in a position to make a commitment to enter into any agreement, but were happy to discuss it and report back to MSFOMA.

Concerns were expressed about the prospect of MSFOMA entering into a "Side Agreement" with the RYA. The feedback from the prospective shellfish farmers in the area had been against this approach. Lewis Le Vay noted that the proposed Fishery Order anticipated that any leases issued under the Order would be subject to conditions, but that these required approval from the Minister and not a third party. Welsh Government officials confirmed that it would not be appropriate for the Minister's consent to a Fishery Order to be fettered by an agreement with a third party.

After some discussion it was agreed that the RYA proposal for a side agreement should be politely declined. It was further agreed that in any submission to the Minister to request that the Order is determined, MSFOMA should request that the Operating Plan should be made a condition of any leases issued in the event that the Fishery Order application is approved.

**Action: MSFOMA**

There was some further discussion on the amount of time that had passed since the consultation on the Fishery Order proposal back in October-November 2015. MSFOMA was grateful that Welsh Government had extended the usual period of 3 months allocated for resolving objections to a Fishery Order application. All agreed that it would be appropriate to now seek to move forwards with the application process following further discussions with stakeholders at the evening meeting.

**Action: MSFOMA**

#### **a) Roberts of Port Dinorwic**

It was noted that this company had registered an objection to the proposal to resume shellfish farming on "Plot D" in the proposed new Fishery Order area. Following a site visit, Dr Jon King had proposed an operating area within this Plot that would ensure that no oyster trestles were placed within 30m of the outfall operated by this company. No substantive response had been received to this proposal.

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

James Wilson reported that work on finalising the HRA for offshore cultivation areas was ongoing.

Kim Mould reported that resolution of issues associated with vessel licensing would be important for the future success of shellfish cultivation in Wales. Mussel dredgers from the Menai Strait are engaged in aquaculture and collect

wild seed mussels for the purposes of cultivation rather than harvesting wild adult mussels for sale. The vessels should therefore should be regarded as aquaculture vessels, obviating the need for a fishing licence.

Trevor Jones indicated that this issue was due to be discussed at an upcoming Fishing Industry Safety Group.

**Action: Trevor Jones**

The uncertainty over Brexit is felt to be a real risk to the marketing of harvested mussels. It is likely to be more difficult to transport mussels to Europe, with trade tariffs and delays at new customs controls likely.

It was felt to be absolutely essential to explore opportunities to develop the UK market through new outlets and new products.

## **12. Research Perspectives and Update**

Lewis LeVay gave a brief report on the current and future research projects as well as providing a list of the publications in refereed scientific journals from previous research projects. The long standing and on-going commitment and input from the mussel industry is clearly apparent.

A report on current research projects is attached as an Annex to these minutes.

## **13. Fishery Management Issues**

### **a) Bangor Pier**

No additional news.

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

No additional news.

### **c) Invasive Alien Species (IAS) / Invasive Non Native Species (INNS)**

There was nothing to report on *Bonamia* in the western Menai Strait, but there had been a notification from Defra about *Marteilia refringens* in Belfast Lough which will have an effect on mussel movements to and from that area.

Rowland Sharp (NRW) had reported that the trial of the isolation berth at Holyhead had been completed and that NRW were reviewing a draft report on its effectiveness. This should be available within a month. NRW were grateful for the WG funding for this project.

NRW were due to be holding an internal workshop to start work on a bid for EU LIFE funding for a project looking at marine INNS.

It was noted that the Bangor Mussel Producers' Code of Practice for INNS needs to be updated. It was considered possible that NRW might be able to assist with this, to revise the text and to help to extend the code from the current 8 INNS to include additional species recently identified as potential INNS in the area.

**Action: JW**

### **d) *Norovirus***

The baseline study of Norovirus continues. The FSA has put an update on tetrodotoxin on its website but so far the FSA has not taken an official position on this.

**e) Enforcement**

No enforcement issues were reported.

**f) Proposed new SACs and SPAs**

Work in the Liverpool Bay SPA is still ongoing.

**g) Dickies Boat Yard development**

NRW had been consulted about the proposed discharge into the Menai Strait from the site.

**14. Any Other Business**

**a) Correspondence**

Local underwater photographer Paul Kay has been in touch with MSFOMA to seek funding for a photographic exhibition in Beaumaris. It was agreed that Trevor Jones should liaise with Mr Kay and determine the amount of sponsorship requested.

**Action: Trevor Jones**

**b) True Taste of Wales**

True Taste of Wales were due to be holding an event locally that the Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths AM was due to attend. Some MSFOMA representatives would also be present and would seek the opportunity to liaise with her.

**c) Caernarfon Harbour Trust**

Rowland Sharp had reported to that at a recent meeting of the Caernarfon Harbour Trust that he had attended it had been agreed that a representative from MSFOMA should be invited to participate in the Trust. He expected that a formal invitation would be sent to MSFOMA.

**d) Social media**

James Wilson noted that MSFOMA does not presently use social media to raise the profile of its work or the Menai Strait mussel fishery. It was felt that it would be useful to build a presence in this area, particularly with the proposals to renew the Menai Strait Fishery Orders underway. It was agreed that this should be considered at a future meeting of the Association.

**Action: Secretariat**

**e) Chair**

Sue Utting reminded the Association of her intention not to stand for re-appointment as Chair. It has been previously agreed that Mr Alan Winstone (formerly a MSFOMA appointee from the Environment Agency) should be asked to take on this role. Mr Winstone had accepted the invitation, and it was agreed that he should be invited to attend the next meeting.

**Action: Secretariat**

**15. Date for next meeting**

The next meeting was set for the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

## Annex: Summary of Research Projects Relevant to the Menai Strait



**Balancing Commercial Seed Mussel Harvest and Shorebird Conservation** - Alistair Feather, Line Cordes, Jan Hiddink (Bangor Univ) Co-sponsored by Myti Mussels Ltd

**Valuing the ecosystem services provided by shellfish aquaculture** - Andrew Olivier, Shelagh Malham, Lewis Le Vay (Bangor Univ), Laurence Jones (CEH), Mike Christie (Aberystwyth Univ). Co-sponsored by Deepdock Ltd

**Simulating the temporal and spatial variability of North Wales mussel populations** – Jonathan Demmer, Shelagh Malham, Peter Robins, Simon Neill (Bangor Univ). Co-sponsored by Extramussel Ltd



**Irish Sea Portal Pilot** 20 month project between Bangor University and BIM in Ireland. Focusing on mussel seed supply the project will monitor larvae and seed settlement patterns, developing models for predicting larval sources and settlement areas and piloting methods for settlement collection of seed. The project is also establishing a cluster of shellfish producers across the Irish Sea, to help identify common resource issues and to develop new products and processes that can benefit the industry through a programme of collaborative research.



**Bluefish** 4 year project, collaboration between Bangor University, Aberystwyth University, Swansea University, University College Cork, Marine Institute, BIM. Addressing vulnerability of shellfish and fish stocks to climate change – covering fisheries and aquaculture and with significant components on shellfish populations, disease and water quality.



**Viraqua** 3-year NERC-funded consortium – Bangor, Liverpool, Cambridge, CEH, CEFAS – with support from Deepdock Ltd, SAGB, NRW, EA, Public Health Wales, Conwy Council. Investigating the origin and fate of human pathogenic viruses in the freshwater-marine continuum – with a focus on the Conwy. Developing novel methods for the quantification of enteric viruses in environmental matrixes. Identifying and quantify harmful viruses in the Conwy catchment, using water, sediment, wastewater and shellfish samples. Assessing the infectivity of viruses. Modeling viral movement in the Conwy river and estuary and improving current risk assessment for waterborne viruses.



**Examples of recent publications**

Hassard F, Sharp JH, Taft H, Le Vay L, Harris JP, McDonald JE, Tuson K, Wilson J, Jones DL, Malham SK (2017) Critical Review on the Public Health Impact of Norovirus Contamination in Shellfish and the Environment: A UK Perspective. *Food Environ Virol* (2017). doi:10.1007/s12560-017-9279-3

Galley TH, Beaumont AR, Le Vay L, King JW (2017) Influence of exogenous chemicals on larval development and survival of the king scallop *Pecten maximus* (L.) *Aquaculture in press*

Perkins, T.L., Perrow, K., Rajko-Nenow, P., Jago, C.F., Jones, D.L., Malham, S.K., McDonald, J.E., 2016. Decay rates of faecal indicator bacteria from sewage and ovine faeces in brackish and freshwater microcosms with contrasting suspended particulate matter concentrations. *Sci. Total Environ.* <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2016.03.076>

Robins, P.E., Skov, M.W., Lewis, M.J., Gimenez, L., Davies, A.G., Malham, S.K., Neill, S.P., McDonald, J.E., Whitton, T.A., Jackson, S.E., Jago, C.F., 2016. Impact of climate change on UK estuaries: a review of past trends and potential projections. *Estuar. Coast. Shelf Sci.* 169: 119-135

Winterbourn JB, Clements K, Lowther JA, Malham SK, McDonald JE, Jones DL (2016) Use of *Mytilus edulis* biosentinels to investigate spatial patterns of norovirus and faecal indicator organism contamination around coastal sewage discharges, *Water Research* 105: 241-250

Owens L., Malham S. (2015) Review of the RNA Interference Pathway in Molluscs Including Some Possibilities for Use in Bivalves in Aquaculture. *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering* 3 (1), 87-99

Roche R.C, J. M. Monnington, R. G. Newstead, K. Sambrook, K. Griffith, R. H. F. Holt, S. R. Jenkins (2015) Recreational vessels as a vector for marine non-natives: developing biosecurity measures and managing risk through an in-water encapsulation system. *Hydrobiologia*: 750:187–199

Flannery, J., Rajko-Nenow, P., Winterbourn, JB., Malham, SK., Jones, DL. (2014). Effectiveness of cooking to reduce Norovirus and infectious FRNA bacteriophage concentrations in *Mytilus edulis*. *Journal of Applied Microbiology*. DOI: 10.1111/jam.12534.

Lynch, SA., Morgan, E., Carlsson, J., Mackenzie, CM., Wooton, EC., Rowley, AF., Malham, SK., Culloty, SC. (2014). The health status of mussels, *Mytilus* spp., in Ireland and Wales with molecular identification of a previously undescribed haplosporidian. *J. Invertebrate Pathology* 118: 59-65.

Mackenzie, CM., Lynch, SL., Culloty, SC., Malham, SK. (2014). Future oceanic warming and acidification alter immune response and disease status in a commercial shellfish species *Mytilus edulis* L. *Plos One*. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0099712.

Mackenzie, CL., Ormondroyd, GA., Curling, SF., Ball, RJ., Whiteley, NM., Malham, SK. (2014). Ocean warming, more than acidification, reduces shell strength in a commercial shellfish species during discontinuous feeding. *Plos One*. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0099712.

Malham SK, Rajko-Nenow P, Howlett E, Tuson KE, Perkins TL, Pallett DW, Wang H, Jago CF, Jones DL, McDonald JE. (2014). The interaction of human microbial pathogens, particulate material and nutrients in estuarine environments and their impacts on recreational and shellfish waters. *Environmental Science. Processes & Impacts*. 16(9): 2145-2155.

Perkins TL, Clements K, Baas JH, Jago CF, Jones DL, Malham SK, McDonald JE. (2014). Sediment composition influences spatial variation in the abundance of human pathogen indicator bacteria within an estuarine environment. *PloS One*. 9 (11) e112951.