

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 13th October 2016
Marine Centre Wales, Menai Bridge

Minutes

Attendance

Sue Utting	Chair
Jose Constantino	Welsh Government ¹
Keith Rowlands	Isle of Anglesey County Council
Kim Mould	BMWAG
Lewis le Vay	Bangor University
Rowland Sharp	Natural Resources Wales
Trevor Jones	Menai Strait (West)

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) to the meeting.

2. Apologies

Ioan Thomas	Gwynedd County Council
James Wilson	Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Keith Andrews	Licensed hand pickers
Tim Croucher	Welsh Assembly Government

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 14th July 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.

6. Financial Update

Jim Andrews reported that he had checked with James Wilson prior to the meeting and that the Association's reserves are accumulating in line with the agreed financial plan.

¹ Participated by conference phone.

7. Welsh Government Activity

Jose Constantino provided the group with an update on recent staffing changes in the Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries Division. In summary:-

- Andy Fraser has been appointed as the lead on marine & fisheries. His role is to oversee both enforcement activity and policy development.
- Margaret Rees has been appointed as the replacement for Bill Somerfield as Fisheries Policy Manager
- Jose Constantino is responsible for marine and freshwater aquaculture, and for liaison with other sectors.
- Robert Floyd works with Margaret Rees on Several Orders.

There was some discussion of Welsh Government objectives for aquaculture development. Jose Constantino and his colleagues were invited to visit the Menai Strait mussel fishery at Porth Penrhyn so that they could see the country's largest aquaculture site at first hand. Jose welcomed this invitation.

8. NW IFCA Activity

a) Proposed dredge byelaw

It was noted that the IFCA had consulted with the industry about this proposed new byelaw, but had not consulted with MSFOMA. It was felt that the IFCA should again be asked to include MSFOMA on its consultation list.

The proposed new byelaw was discussed, and some amendments that could be forwarded to the Authority were agreed. These included a suggestion that there was no merit in making a distinction between under- and over-30m vessels; and also that there was no point having a toll on catches, as this just added to administrative and enforcement costs for the IFCA.

It was agreed that the letter presented to the Association meeting should be sent to the IFCA with some minor amendments to reflect the discussion of this issue.

Action: Secretariat

b) Bivalve Mollusc Working Group

Kim Mould and Trevor Jones had attended the BMWG meeting in August. They both noted that all of the fishermen present at that meeting had supported the proposals for using ground discriminating sonar and ground truthing to map the extent of the mussel resource.

Kim Mould reported that the Porth Penrhyn vessels Mare Gratia and Valente had harvested around 3,000t of seed mussels. Starfish had eaten all of the mussels in the areas that had been suitable for dredging but where it had not been permitted.

It was felt that the IFCA could make better informed decisions if it worked more closely with the industry. The work with ground discriminating sonar was felt to be a good development in this regard, and BMWG was proving to be a useful forum.

The Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan was discussed. It was noted that a scientific rationale was lacking for the proposal to establish a Minimum Spawning

Stock Biomass (MSSB) for stock conservation purposes. It was also noted that the proposals to protect a biomass for shellfish eating birds did not seem to incorporate the most recent ideas from John Goss-Custard on this subject, which were presented at the recent SAGB annual meeting.

It was agreed that these issues should be raised with the IFCA.

Action: Secretariat

9. Menai Strait East Fishery Order Renewal

The proposed schedule for renewal of the Fishery Order was discussed and approved. It was agreed that:-

- a) A letter should be sent to Welsh Government indicating the Associations formal intention to renew the Fishery Order.
- b) A list of stakeholders should be compiled and circulated to MSFOMA members, ahead of the start of the consultation process.

Action: Secretariat

10. 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. Until the meeting in July these had been productive, but the RYA had now raised concerns about the enforceability of the MSFOMA proposals to minimise impacts on recreational activities through an "Operating Plan" appended to leases.

The Association members felt that the proposal to append an "Operating Plan" to all leases provided a pragmatic and enforceable mechanism for implementation. It was noted that this mechanism is used to implement the Management Plan for Fishery Orders, and also the Code of Conduct for Invasive Alien Species in Menai East.

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to Welsh Government by the Association, seeking guidance on the approach that should be followed to ensure that the proposed "Operating Plan" would be enforceable.

Action: Secretariat

It was noted that several stakeholders including the RYA had expressed concern about the absence of WG officials from meetings to discuss this issue.

11. Developing Shellfish Aquaculture in North Wales

a) Conwy Estuary

No further news had been heard from here.

b) Offshore areas

Rowland Sharp reported that the HRA has been completed and sent to James Wilson.

12. Fishery Management Issues

a) Bangor Pier

Kim Mould reported that painting work had not yet taken place and that there had been no interference with mussel farming activity.

b) Bonamia

No additional news.

c) Invasive Alien Species (IAS)

Rowland Sharp reported that NRW have a new member of staff in post looking at IAS. There is also some discussion about designating *Crassostrea gigas* as a non-native species.

d) Norovirus

No additional news.

e) Enforcement

No enforcement issues were reported.

f) Proposed new SACs and SPAs

Rowland Sharpe reported that work on the Liverpool SPA extension is ongoing.

g) Dickies Boat Yard development

Trevor Jones understood that this development had been approved.

13. Any Other Business

a) Lease fees

A request had been received from one of the new tenants asking if the lease fee could be reduced while they were developing their business. After some discussion it was agreed that it would not be appropriate to reduce any lease fees.

b) Whiteford Point, South Wales

Kim Mould reported that he had applied for a licence to fish for seed mussels at Whiteford Point during the summer. No response had yet been received from Welsh Government, and all of the seed mussels had now been swept away.

14. Date for next meeting

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