

# **Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association**

**Meeting, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013, Bangor**

## **Minutes**

### **Attendance**

Rowland Sharp  
James Wilson  
Lewis le Vay  
Sue Utting  
Ioan Thomas

Natural Resources Wales  
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd  
Bangor University  
Chair  
Gwynedd County Council

### *Welsh Government*

Bill Somerfield  
Jodi Massey  
Sarah Price

### *Advisors*

Jim Andrews  
Jon King

Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order

### **1. Chairman's announcements**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Thomas from Gwynedd County Council to the meeting. The officers from Welsh Government were also welcomed, along with Jon King as a representative of the shellfish farmers from the western Menai Strait.

### **2. Apologies**

Alan Winstone  
Tim Croucher  
Trevor Jones  
Keith Andrews  
Mike Barton

Natural Resources Wales  
Welsh Assembly Government  
Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order  
Licensed hand pickers  
Ynys Môn County Council

### **3. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2013 were accepted.

### **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. Two issues were briefly discussed.

### ***Biotoxin sampling***

James Wilson mentioned that there was a long-standing problem with the frequency of biotoxin sampling in the UK compared with the rest of Europe, and that this caused concern in export markets. The problem seemed to stem from the Cefas interpretation of EC Regulation 854/2004 (at Annex II B 5). Welsh Government officials offered to assist the industry in investigating this issue further.

**Action: JW & BS**

### ***New cultivation areas***

Mr Ioan Thomas offered to seek views from Gwynedd County Council with respect to the proposed new cultivation areas.

**Action: IT**

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

There were no new Members of the Association.

The meeting was informed that Anglesey County Council had written to the Association to indicate that they were unable to provide a representative at meetings, but were keen to remain informed about the activities of MSFOMA.

## **6. Financial Update**

A financial report and projection was presented to the Association and accepted by the meeting.

It was agreed that the lease holders in the Menai Strait East should be consulted about the financial plan that would meet extra costs and accrue a reserve of £25,000 by 2015/16.

**Action: JW / JA**

It was also agreed that the stakeholders in the Menai Strait West area should be consulted about the proposals for funding the administration of that area.

**Action: JW / JA**

## **7. Fishery Activity**

James Wilson reported that the seed fishery in Morecambe Bay had been poor because there had been many vessels operating there. A total of 9 vessels (7 fishing, 2 trans-shipping) had been fishing, compared to the historical norm of just 2 or 3 vessels.

The autumn market for mussels in Europe was just starting. The standing stock in the Menai Strait is good.

## **8. Developing the Fishery Order Area**

The Chair informed the meeting that following the last meeting of the Association the two applicants for new areas had been invited to progress their applications. The other lease holders in the Menai Strait had been informed of the Association's decision to do this.

Some correspondence had been received about this decision, which was summarised by the Chair:-

### **Myti Mussels**

Myti Mussels had enquired about the relationship between the proposed new areas and existing lays, and had sought clarification about the precise definition of the boundaries of leased areas. Concern had also been raised about possible adverse interactions with yacht moorings in the Menai Strait.

It was reported that the proposed new areas would not interfere with any existing yacht moorings. Information about the precise definition of leased areas and any historical changes would be provided to existing lease holders.

**Action: SU / JA**

Myti Mussels had also registered an interest in any opportunities that may arise for any new leased areas in the Menai Strait.

It was agreed that Myti Mussels should be invited to identify any areas that they are interested in.

**Action: SU / JA**

### **Anglesey County Council**

Anglesey County Council had written to the Chair to acknowledge receipt of the notification that new cultivation areas were under consideration, and had indicated that the Council was agreeable to the proposals subject to receipt of further details.

It was agreed that a response should be sent to the County Council in response to this letter and to seek the most recent information available about mooring positions.

**Action: SU / JA**

### **Anglesey Boat Company**

Anglesey Boat Company had written to seek confirmation of the proposals, and also to enquire about the Association's plans for renewal of the Fishery Order. It was agreed that a response should be sent to ABC.

**Action: SU / JA**

There was some discussion about the application process. It was agreed that the two applicants should be given some guidance about the information that they were expected to be gathering in support of their applications. It was also agreed that the Association should set out a deadline for applications to be progressed.

**Action: SU / JA**

## **9. Enforcement issues**

No enforcement issues had arisen.

## **10. Welsh Government activity**

### **a) Environment Bill White Paper**

Jodi Massey reported that the White Paper for the Marine Bill is due to be published on 21<sup>st</sup> October and that it would contain proposals for amending and simplifying a range of legislation, including the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967. There would be a 12 week consultation period for these proposals.

The meeting welcomed the proposal to improve the process for establishing new Fishery Orders that had been put forward by the WG officials.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate for the Association to make a response to these proposals when they were published.

**b) Cockle fishery management proposals**

The new management measures that have been introduced by the Welsh Government were welcomed by the Association. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the Minister to formally welcome these measures.

**Action: SU / JA**

**11. NW IFCA Activity**

**a) Byelaw 3**

It was noted that the NW IFCA had used its Byelaw 3 powers to regulate the seed mussel dredge fishery in Morecambe Bay.

**b) Morecambe Bay Fishery Order**

Representatives of the Association had met with the NWIFCA in May. The meeting had been productive and it was understood that the NW IFCA was making good progress with this proposal.

**12. Developing the Association**

**a) Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order**

There was an interesting discussion about the prospects for creating a new Fishery Order in the western Menai Strait. The main topic of discussion was the possible duration of a new Order. WG officials indicated that they were currently advised that it would be impossible to create an Order that would last for more than 7 years; the Association members felt that it would be very beneficial for the industry if the Order could have a longer duration.

After some detailed discussions it was agreed that the Association should consult further with the applicants for the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order, and that the new WG proposals for revising the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act may also have some bearing on this issue.

**b) Conwy Fishery Order**

There was no news of any further interest in progressing a Fishery Order for the Conwy. It was however reported that the shellfish classification for part of the area had been downgraded to a C.

**13. Fishery Management Issues**

**a) *Bonamia***

There were still no signs of *Bonamia* in the western Menai Strait. There are 18 months remaining of the 4 year quarantine period for this area.

**b) Non-native species**

**EC Draft Regulation**

The meeting considered an update on the EC draft regulation on Invasive Alien Species (2013/0307 COD). It was noted that this set out a

framework for preventing and managing Invasive Alien Species, and that there was not yet an agreed list of IAS in the proposals.

It was agreed that it would be important to keep this new legislation under review, and also to ensure that it was compatible with existing provision for dealing with IAS.

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

Rowland Sharp reported that more *D. vexillum* had been found in Holyhead earlier in the year and that further steps had been taken to eradicate it. A further survey was scheduled for the autumn to see if this had been successful.

RS thanked the Menai Strait operators for their assistance with the eradication programme at Holyhead.

#### **Chinese Mitten Crabs (*Eriocheir sinensis*)**

It was reported that DNA analysis of CMCs in the Dee was being carried out. This could establish whether the Dee has an isolated population or if it is linked to CMC populations in other areas.

Crab traps had been installed in the Dee to monitor the movement of CMCs as part of this work and also to establish the trigger for crab migration down the river into the estuary.

There was still only 1 report of a CMC from the Conwy, in 2009/10.

#### **c) *Norovirus***

The meeting was advised that the proposals for implementing new *Norovirus* standards in shellfish had been shelved while further research was carried out.. This decision followed vigorous representations by MSFOMA following our last meeting, and also by the SAGB. The actions of the Chair to address this issue were welcomed by the members of the Association.

The Chair noted that there was considerable confusion among the public and in the media about the level of risk associated with *Norovirus* from shellfish, which was negligible when compared to other food products.

#### **d) Marine Conservation Zones**

The meeting was advised that progress with MCZs had been suspended for the time being.

### **14. Any Other Business**

#### **a) Correspondence**

There were no additional items of correspondence for the meeting to consider.

### **15. Date for next meeting**

The next meeting is set for 12<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at 10am.