

# Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 7<sup>th</sup> February 2012, Porth Penrhyn

## Minutes

### Attendance

Tim Croucher  
James Wilson  
Keith Andrews  
Rowland Sharp  
Sue Utting

Welsh Assembly Government  
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd  
Licensed hand pickers  
Countryside Council for Wales  
Chair

### Advisors

Jim Andrews  
Trevor Jones

Bangor Mussel Producers' Association

### 1. Chairman's announcements

The Chair welcomed Trevor Jones of BMPA to the meeting.

### 2. Apologies

Mike Barton  
Lewis le Vay  
Alan Winstone  
Hugh P Hughes

Ynys Môn County Council  
School of Ocean Sciences, UCNW  
Environment Agency Wales  
Gwynedd County Council

### 3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011 were accepted.

### 4. Matters Arising

Most of the matters arising from the last meeting were addressed on the agenda for the current meeting.

- **Enforcement** - it was agreed that it would be appropriate to clarify certain aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding, particularly with the prospect of the Menai Strait (West) Order being re-established in the near future.

**Action: JA / JW**

- **Integration of research activity** - a written update on this issue had been prepared by Alan Winstone and was discussed at the meeting. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to pursue this matter further.

**Action: JA / AW**

- **SAGB Membership** - James Wilson reported that the Association has now joined the SAGB as a Corporate Member.

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

The meeting expressed hope that the Ynys Môn County Council representatives would attend a future meeting of the Association.

The Association discussed the possibility of admitting Mr Trevor Jones to the Association as a representative of the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order at a future date.

## **6. Financial Update**

It was reported that the accountants had drawn up accounts for the Association. The Association is gradually building up a reserve, in line with the financial plan.

## **7. Fishery Activity**

James Wilson reported that the main activity at present has been harvesting and selling mussels.

## **8. Handpicking licences**

CCW had been consulted over the proposal to modify the period that handpicking is licensed for. A site visit at Ballast Bank has been scheduled with CCW to progress this. CCW were due to write to the Association to confirm their formal response to this proposal and the proposed number of licences.

**Action: Rowland Sharp, CCW**

## **9. Enforcement issues**

No enforcement issues had arisen. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to ensure that appropriate procedures are formally agreed in advance of the creation of the Menai Strait (West) Fishery Order area.

## **10. Welsh Government Review of fishing vessel length**

Comments had been sent to WG in advance of their consultation deadline (2<sup>nd</sup> February) by the Chair. These comments were endorsed by the meeting and no further comments were raised.

## **11. Welsh Government Review of Shellfish Waters**

The proposed changes were considered by the meeting. There were no objections to the proposed changes.

It was observed that the area that has been designated "Inland Sea" on Anglesey is in fact outside the Inland Sea, and is the area occupied by the Penrhos Point mussel fishery order.

It was agreed that a letter of support for these proposals should be sent to the Welsh Government.

**Action: Chair**

## **12. North West IFCA Activity**

### **a) Morecambe Bay Fishery Order**

Progress with the proposed Morecambe Bay Fishery Order was noted and endorsed by the meeting.

### **b) Vessel size restrictions**

The meeting shared concern that there had been no formal response to the correspondence with the NWIFCA about the proposed vessel size restrictions. It was felt that these could adversely affect mussel fishing activity. The meeting considered that clarification of the status of these proposals should be sought from the NWIFCA, and that the Welsh Government could be alerted to the potential consequences of the original proposals.

**Action: Chair**

## **13. Developing the Association**

The meeting agreed that MSFOMA had proved its capacity to manage the Menai Strait Fishery Order effectively. It was appropriate to look at how MSFOMA might work with the local shellfish industry in North Wales to encourage its development. It was agreed that legal advice should be sought from the Association's lawyers to ensure that this activity was compatible with the Articles of Association.

**Action: James Wilson**

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

Trevor Jones provided an update on this proposal. Good progress had been made. The management plan was being finalised, and informal consultations on the proposal were due to take place in advance of the formal consultation later in the year.

A Memorandum of Understanding had been drawn up to define how costs and responsibilities for the Menai Strait (West) Order should be shared with MSFOMA during the application phase. The meeting endorsed this Memorandum. There was also some discussion about how the long-term management costs for the Fishery Order might be met. It was agreed that it would be important to establish appropriate arrangements for this, and that it would be an iterative process.

The Crown Estate had responded to the proposal indicating that it would be necessary to establish appropriate leasing arrangements in the Fishery Order area, particularly for the oyster fishery. These suggestions would need to be taken into consideration as the project progressed further. It was also noted that the Crown Estate had requested permission to forward the consultation request about the Menai Strait (West) Order to other parties. The meeting agreed that a response should be sent to the Crown Estate indicating that there were no objections to this and that consultation was underway.

**Action: James Wilson / Trevor Jones**

### **b) Conwy Fishery Order**

The Conwy Fishery Order had lapsed in 2008, and there is some enthusiasm in Conwy to establish a new Fishery Order that would enable cultivation of mussels

in this area as well as to reinstate the regulatory measures provided by a Fishery Order.

The meeting agreed that it would be appropriate to approach the Conwy fishermen to discuss whether, and how, they would like to progress with a new Fishery Order for this area.

**Action: Chair**

It was also agreed that it would not be possible for MSFOMA to provide funding for the Conwy Order. It might be possible for the Conwy fishermen to obtain funding under the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) scheme.

## **14. Fishery Management Issues**

### **a) *Bonamia***

*Bonamia* had been found in the western Menai Strait in late 2011. Its appearance coincided with the arrival of oysters from Loch Ryan as part of experiments being conducted by the School of Ocean Sciences. There have been no records of *Bonamia* in Loch Ryan.

All of the introduced oysters (*Tiostrea chilensis*) introduced to the area as well as samples of the native oysters (*Ostrea edulis*), have been removed and sent to Cefas for analysis. No *Bonamia* has been found in these oysters.

The source of the parasite remains a mystery. It has been confirmed that the records were of *B. ostreae*, rather than the non-native *B. existiosa*.

From a practical perspective, the western Menai Strait will be subject to enhanced monitoring over the next 4 years. The industry is working with Cefas to ensure that the monitoring is carried out effectively.

There was some discussion in the meeting about the possible source of the parasite, and it was agreed that it might be appropriate to work with Cefas to identify and examine other potential sources in the area that are not directly connected with shellfish cultivation.

### **b) Non-native species**

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

It was reported that action is being taken to attempt to eradicate *D. vexillum* in Holyhead harbour. This action includes bagging of pontoons and temporary removal of the swinging moorings. CCW had secured adequate funding for work in 2012, and were making plans for funding further work in 2013.

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

It was reported that the North Wales Wildlife Trust bid for funding to monitor the Dee, Conwy, Clwyd and Mawddach rivers systems to check whether the environmental conditions are suitable for this species has been successful. Volunteers are also looking for evidence of adult crabs in these rivers.

### **c) Norovirus**

James Wilson reported that EFSA have now concluded that norovirus is endemic in Europe, and that shellfish production areas should not be located near to areas known to harbour norovirus.

The Bangor Mussel Producers are working with Bangor University to carry out research into norovirus. Mussels are being used as a “sentinel” organism in the vicinity of waste water outfalls. The FSA and Cefas are also being proactive in researching this issue.

James Wilson mentioned that in 2009-10 there were 250,000 norovirus cases in the UK. Of these, just 59 were linked to shellfish.

## **15. Any Other Business**

### **a) MSC certification**

James Wilson reported that the annual surveillance audit for the Menai Strait MSC fishery had taken place, and that ongoing certification had been approved.

The unit of certification was being extended to include the Dee Estuary as a potential source of seed mussels. Management measures had been implemented to ensure that this would not result in the spread of Chinese Mitten Crabs from the Dee Estuary, and these measures had been endorsed as part of the MSC process.

## **16. Date for next meeting**

The next meeting is set for 19<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at 10am.