

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 4th December 2019
Marine Centre Wales, Menai Bridge

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone*

Chair

Observers

Gareth Roberts

Bangor City Council / Gwynedd C.C.

Iwan Huws

Isle of Anglesey County Council

Kim Mould

BMWAG

Michelle Billing

Welsh Government

Rowland Sharp

Natural Resources Wales

Trevor Jones

Menai Strait (West)

Advisors

Jim Andrews*

MSFOMA Secretariat

Notes

* *These individuals are also Directors of the Association*

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair announced that the AGM of the Association had just taken place. New Articles of Association had been adopted and the Chair and Jim Andrews had both been appointed Directors of the Association.

Prior to the meeting Rowland Sharp had informed the Chair that he was due to take on a new role at NRW from January 2020. The Chair and all present thanked Rowland for the expert input he has given to the Association since it was formed (and to the mussel industry for many years prior to that) and wished him success in his new position.

2. Apologies

Howard Mattocks

Beaumaris Town Council

Ioan Thomas

Gwynedd County Council

James Wilson*

Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd

Julian Bray

Welsh Government

Keith Andrews*

Licensed hand pickers

Laura Harris

Welsh Government

Lewis le Vay

Bangor University

3. Declarations of Interest

The Chair drew attention to the opportunity to declare an interest in agenda items on the meeting attendance register.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on the 17th September 2019 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.

Some items raised at the September meeting were discussed:-

Community Fund

It was agreed that it would be good for the Association to explore how it might make contributions to local community projects - such as local authority playgrounds; interpretation material / signage for the Menai Strait, and also school education projects. It was agreed that such ideas should be further considered at the next meeting and a sum allocated from the budget to support them.

Action: Secretariat, All

Sand in Penrhyn Dock

It was reported that sand was still accumulating in the dock from the storage area on the western arm of the dock at Port Penrhyn. There was some discussion about whether this was a deposit in the sea that, whether accidental or not, should require a Marine Licence. It was felt that it would be appropriate to continue to try to find a voluntary rather than a regulatory solution to this problem in the short term and to review the situation at the next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

Moorings and pots in the Strait

A query was raised about uncertainty in some quarters about whether the Fishery Order made the existing boat moorings in the Strait illegal, and also about illegal potting amongst the moorings.

The Secretariat provided an assurance that the moorings situated in the Fishery Order area were not illegal, and that both the Association and its predecessor organisation had provided assurances to Beaumaris Town Council and interested local residents on a number of occasions in the past. It was agreed that a copy of the correspondence to Beaumaris Town Council should be provided to Cllr Mattocks.

Action: Secretariat

With regard to potting activity, it was noted that MSFOMA has no remit or power to authorise or regulate potting for crabs or lobsters in the Menai Strait. This activity is managed by the Welsh Government. Jim Andrews provided a quick recap of the WG byelaw regulations which require that all pots are marked with buoys bearing the PLN of the vessel. There is no legal requirement for pot fishermen not to set their pots among moorings, but most pot fishermen do not do this as a matter of courtesy to other sea users.

6. Register of Interests

Members were advised that their statements of interests are now shown on the MSFOMA website.

7. Financial Update

Jim Andrews provided a verbal update on the status of the Association's financial position. The key points were income to the Association of £31,126 from lease fees in the past financial year, and a fall in total expenditure from £21,999 in 2017-18 to £16,726 in 2018-19. The Association had a surplus of £15,150 during 2018-19 and finished the FY with a bank balance of £44,023.

The AGM had agreed to a Financial Plan for the remaining duration of the Fishery Order under which the lease fees will continue to increase at 2.8%pa.

Quarterly financial statements will be provided at Association meetings during 2020.

Action: JW, Secretariat

8. Public Profile of the Association

Jim Andrews provided a quick update. Andy Olivier has continued to maintain the Association's Twitter account. The number of tweets and profile of the Association continues to grow steadily.

All present were reminded of the value of the public profile of the Association and were asked to remember to send items of interest to Andy Olivier for him to Tweet.

Action: All

Any items can be sent directly to Andy Olivier (avdsolivier@bangor.ac.uk).

9. Code of Good Practice for Non-Native Species

Rowland Sharp reported that this document has now been revised and finalised. This code was felt to be a vital foundation for the management of environmental risks associated with mussel cultivation in the Menai Strait.

It was noted that the scope of the code is limited to mussel translocations and that other vectors which create a significant risk (such as commercial and recreational vessel movements) are beyond its scope and remit.

It was agreed that the Code should be made available on the MSFOMA website.

Action: Secretariat

10. Welsh Government Activity

The Secretariat's report was noted and received.

a) Meetings

Progress with the fisheries groups established by Welsh Government was reported by delegates who had attended these meetings as follows:-

- **Inshore Fisheries Groups** - is being kept under review.
- **Welsh Marine & Fisheries Advisory Group** - James Wilson is due to be attending the next meeting of this Group on the 5th December.
- **Aquaculture Advisory Group** -no meetings had been held recently.

It was again noted that for the WG food sector targets to be met it would be important to ensure that WG Fisheries and the sector-specific groups are integrated with them.

b) Consultations

It was noted that there are no current WG consultations underway of relevance to MSFOMA.

c) Welsh National Marine Plan

It was noted that this plan had been published on the 12th November. The policies set out in the plan are broadly supportive of shellfish cultivation. It was noted that the extent of the area considered to be suitable for shellfish cultivation in the WNMP remains excessively large, and may create a misleading impression that could lead to a view that the areas where shellfish cultivation currently takes place are less important than they actually are.

d) WG officials

It was noted that regular engagement with WG officials has continued and that this was proving to be beneficial.

11. NW IFCA Activity

The report on recent activities of the NW IFCA was received and accepted by the meeting.

It was noted that the CEO of the NWIFCA had replied to the Association's request that a more pragmatic approach to charging for mussel dredging permits should be considered. It was felt that the two NWIFCA Members present (Jim Andrews and Trevor Jones) should take this issue up with the NWIFCA at its upcoming meetings and report back to the Association.

Action: TJ & Secretariat

Rowland Sharpe reported that he has discussed the method for carrying out surveys for Chinese Mitten Crabs with IFCA Officers.

12. Menai Strait East Fishery Order

a) Renewal of the Order

The report on this Fishery Order was received and discussed.

Michelle Billing (WG) reported that progress with the new order was on schedule and that internal consultation processes within WG were almost complete. Papers in support of the application had been sent to WG legal in November.

Michelle also reported that WG have an internal delivery plan for all Welsh fisheries and that work on Fishery Orders was part of this plan.

The news of progress was welcomed. It was agreed that regular (monthly) discussions should be held between MSFOMA and WG to ensure that progress was maintained and that deadlines were met. The Secretariat was asked to schedule meetings for this purpose.

Action: Secretariat

b) Engagement with stakeholders

It was reported that a very constructive meeting had been held with the Royal Anglesey Yacht Club in October. Trevor Jones indicated that he had invited the RAYC members to visit Port Penrhyn, and was working with them to organise this event.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to engage with the general public in the area now that there was certainty about the timescale for progress. It was further agreed that “drop in” sessions for the general public should be set up in Bangor and Beaumaris at the earliest opportunity.

Action: Secretariat

13. Menai Strait West

The report was received and discussed.

Michelle Billing (WG) reported that discussions were underway about the conditions that would need to be associated with the new Fishery Order. The current legal advice indicated that the mechanism for ensuring that conditions associated with the Order would be met would be through the leases issued to operators. The terms of these leases would need to be approved by the Minister, which would give an appropriate level of Government control over activities.

The key issue for discussion remained the risks associated with the cultivation of Pacific Oysters. There was a lengthy discussion of both the practical issues associated with management of this risk (such as use of triploid oysters), and how such mitigation measures should be taken into account in both the management of the Order and also its assessment against the relevant environmental legislation.

It was agreed that this matter needed a swift resolution. The Secretariat was asked to set up a phone conference to discuss these issues before Christmas. It was agreed that this should involve the applicants for the Fishery Order, WG officials and NRW.

Action: Secretariat

14. Funding proposals

Lewis LeVay had given his apologies to the meeting. He had attended the AGM over a video link earlier in the day and had agreed that he would provide a full update on the funding proposals being progressed by the University at the next meeting.

15. Fishery Management Issues

a) Coastal / marine developments

i. **Bangor Pier**

Further to the discussion at the September meeting, it was understood that Bangor City Council were keen to discuss options for managing any waste water discharge that could result from reinstating the tearooms on the pier. It was agreed that a response should be sent on this matter, and an invitation should be extended to the pier master to attend the next meeting in March.

Action: Secretariat

ii. **Dickies Boatyard Development**

There had been no further consultations about this project.

iii. **Beaumaris Pier**

Iwan Huws reported that the pier was due to be painted in May 2020, and that the Council is presently tendering for contractors to carry out this work.

Iwan also reported that a meeting of the Pier User Group had taken place on 2nd December, and that on the 12th December there would be a further meeting to develop a code of conduct for recreational users of the eastern Menai Strait. It was anticipated that this would result in new signage and information for recreational users in the area.

Trevor Jones had attended the recent meeting on behalf of MSFOMA. He noted that 3 senior officers from the MCA had attended and that the meeting had been productive. Trevor echoed the concerns raised at the meeting about certain recreational users in the area who have not had adequate training in the use of their craft, and welcomed the steps being taken in this regard.

iv. **Sand in the dock**

Further to the earlier discussion it was agreed that action should be taken to address this issue as appropriate.

Action: JW, Secretariat

b) Environmental / health issues

i. **Bonamia**

No further update.

ii. **Invasive Alien Species (IAS) / Invasive Non Native Species (INNS)**

No further update.

iii. **Norovirus**

No further update.

iv. **Shellfish hygiene**

It was noted that the Chair had written to the CEO of NRW to recognise the progress that had been made to improve water quality in the Menai Strait, and that an acknowledgement had been received.

16. Any Other Business

a) Shellfish Association of Great Britain & Fishmongers' Hall

It was noted that the Association has close links to the SAGB and that many of its members regularly attended meetings at Fishmongers' Hall. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to offer support to the staff at the Hall following the recent tragic terrorist attack.

Action: Secretariat

17. Dates for next meetings

It was agreed that the Association meetings in 2020 should all take place on a Wednesday, as follows:-

- a. Q1- 18th March 2020
- b. Q2- 17th June 2020
- c. Q3- 16th September 2020
- d. Q4- 2nd December 2020 [AGM]

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Community Fund - identify projects that MSFOMA could support and assign budget to them.	All, Secretariat
2.	Sand in Dock -contact Penrhyn Estate to raise further concerns about this issue.	JW / Secretariat
3.	Moorings in the Menai Strait - provide copy of correspondence sent to Beaumaris Town Council to Cllr Mattocks.	Secretariat
4.	Articles of Association to be signed by all and sent to Companies House.	Secretariat
5.	Finances - present quarterly updates to MSFOMA meetings.	Secretariat & JW
6.	Social media - send any items suitable for the MSFOMA Twitter feed to Andy Olivier (avdsolivier@bangor.ac.uk).	All
7.	Code of Good Practice - upload to MSFOMA website.	Secretariat
8.	NWIFCA - encourage a more pragmatic approach to dredge permit fees.	Secretariat & TJ
9.	Menai East - organise monthly discussions with WG officials to ensure progress is maintained.	Secretariat
10.	Menai East - progress stakeholder engagement, set up "drop in" sessions.	Secretariat
11.	Menai West - organise discussions with WG & NRW to address concerns about Pacific Oysters.	Secretariat
12.	Bangor Pier - respond on issue of waster water discharge, invite pier master to next MSFOMA meeting.	Secretariat
13.	SAGB / Fishmongers' Hall - send letter of support.	Secretariat
14.	Date for next meeting - 4 th December 2019	Secretariat