

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 17th September 2019
Marine Centre Wales, Menai Bridge

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone
James Wilson*
Lewis le Vay

Chair
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Bangor University

Observers

Gareth Roberts
Iwan Huws
Julian Bray
Kim Mould
Laura Harris
Michelle Billing
Rowland Sharp
Trevor Jones

Bangor City Council / Gwynedd C.C.
Isle of Anglesey County Council
Welsh Government
BMWAG
Welsh Government
Welsh Government
Natural Resources Wales
Menai Strait (West)

Advisors

Jim Andrews

MSFOMA Secretariat

Notes

** These Members are also Directors of the Association*

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed Julian Bray to his first MSFOMA meeting.

2. Apologies

Howard Mattocks
Ioan Thomas
Keith Andrews*

Beaumaris Town Council
Gwynedd County Council
Licensed hand pickers

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 18th June 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 June meeting were discussed:-

Community Fund

It was considered that establishing a "Community Fund" for the Menai Strait that is part-sponsored by the Association could be beneficial and that it would be useful for all to consider potential funding partners for this fund.

Action: Secretariat, All

Sand in Penrhyn Dock

It was reported that sand was still accumulating in the dock. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for the Association to write to the Estate about this issue once again.

Action: Secretariat

Caernarfon Harbour Trust

Information about CHT charges had been passed on to the operators, who would liaise with the Trust in the event of activities in this area. Trevor Jones was due to be attending the next meeting of the CHT Advisory Group in October.

6. Membership of the Association

There have been no changes in the membership of the Association since the last meeting.

7. Articles of Association

Revised Articles of Association were presented to the meeting and were discussed. The proposed changes would take account of institutional changes, the widening of the Association's membership, and also ensure that meetings of both Members and Directors will be quorate.

After discussion of the Articles some detailed changes were agreed, and all present were invited to submit further comments by the end of September 2019.

Action: All

It was proposed and agreed that a further revision to the Articles, taking account of any submissions, should be discussed and adopted at the Association's AGM in December 2019.

Action: Secretariat

8. Register of Interests

The report on this subject was accepted and discussed. It was noted that the last meeting of the Association had agreed that participants should all submit a declaration of their interests and that all should agree to abide by the "Nolan Principles" of public life.

A proforma for recording interests was circulated at the meeting for participants to complete. It was agreed that the declared interests of each participant should be published on the MSFOMA website.

Action: Secretariat

9. Financial Update

James Wilson reported that he was working to organise e-banking for the Association accounts. Work on this would be continued.

Action: JW

Annual accounts would be drawn up by the Association's accountants in advance of the AGM in December (the end of year for the Association is 30th November).

Action: JW & Secretariat

It was also agreed that it would be appropriate to set an annual budget and quarterly targets for the Association at the AGM in December.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

10. Public Profile of the Association

It was reported that Andy Olivier has continued to maintain the Association's Twitter account. The number of tweets and profile of the Association continues to grow steadily. The key challenge for Andy Olivier is to obtain relevant and current information to Tweet.

Participants in MSFOMA were asked to provide any information of interest for the MSFOMA Twitter feed. Examples of information that could be of interest included:-

- Past research papers & existing research activities (ideally with a photograph / figure from research).
- Food-related items (such as food festivals; items relating to Food & Drink Wales)
- Welsh Seafood Cluster activities
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) related items

Action: All

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

11. Welsh Government Activity

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** - the future of these groups is due to be discussed at the next WMFAG meeting.
- **Welsh Marine & Fisheries Advisory Group** - Lewis Le Vay had attended the WMFAG meeting on 25th June and felt that it had been very positive. No items of direct interest to the Association had been discussed at that meeting. It was reported that WMFAG had discussed the idea of replacing the Aquaculture Advisory Group with a group similar to WMFAG.
- **Aquaculture Advisory Group** - James Wilson reported that no meetings had been held recently. It was felt to be important to ensure that such a group covered all aquaculture sectors.

It was noted that WG has a strategy for the food sector which has targets that are dependent on targets in the seafood sector (in terms of increasing production of Welsh food products). For the food sector targets to be met it would be important to ensure that they are integrated with WG Fisheries and the sector-specific groups.

b) Consultations

The Association had responded to Welsh Government's two recent consultations on time. Key points made in the responses were:-

- **Marine Strategy Part One** - the Association's response had highlighted the value of the ecosystem goods and services provided by shellfish cultivation as well as the social and economic benefits.

- **Brexit and our Seas** - the consultation document was lengthy and a detailed response had been submitted. The key points in the MSFOMA submission were that the Welsh Government should build on the existing strengths of the Welsh seafood sector rather than replacing these with new and untested management measures. The response also highlighted that growth in the Welsh shellfish cultivation sector was not dependent on any post-Brexit fisheries negotiations with the EU, but would be dependent on ensuring that shellfish exports to the EU would not be adversely affected.

c) Staff changes

Julian Bray provided the meeting with an update on the changes that have recently been made within the Welsh Government Marine and Fisheries Division. In summary:-

- Gareth Bevington is now the Deputy Director, Marine & Fisheries
- New Branches have been established within the Fisheries Department as follows:-
 - Control & Enforcement - led by James Watkins
 - International Fisheries - led by Elin Gwynedd
 - Domestic Fisheries Policy & Management - led by Julian Bray
 - Fisheries Science & Evidence - led by Bekah Cioffi
 - Marine Science Evidence - this branch is still being set up and staffing arrangements are not yet finalised.

The Domestic Fisheries Policy & Management Branch is responsible for Fishery Orders and permitted fisheries. It was confirmed that staff resources within this Branch will be dedicated to progressing Fishery Order applications. In addition to Michelle Billing and Laura Harris, Lisa Connaire will also be working on Fishery Orders.

James Wilson & Kim Mould thanked WG for the progress that had been made with processing the application for seed mussel dredging at Caernarfon Bar this year. Julian Bray indicated that it would assist WG if applications for the seed mussel fishery were submitted in June; this would enable better scheduling.

12.NW IFCA Activity

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

The proposal to open a small area of seed mussels at Perch Scar on the Wyre Estuary to fishing was welcomed. Fishing representatives noted that it would cost them £9,000 to access this area using dredges, and that there was only a limited quantity of seed mussels here, so fishing might not be cost-effective.

It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the IFCA to thank them for the opportunity to fish this area and to query whether the permit fee was appropriate when the fishing resource was limited.

Action: Secretariat & Chair

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

13.Menai Strait East Fishery Order

a) Renewal of the Order

The report on this Fishery Order was received and discussed. It was noted that the Association had been in correspondence with the Minister to confirm that it would like the application for renewal of the Order to be progressed under new administrative arrangements; that the application for renewal of Menai East should be prioritised; and that options for establishing a “safety net” should be explored to address the risk that the Order might not be renewed by the end of March 2022.

Michelle Billing confirmed that new administrative processes for Fishery Order applications have been put in place in the Fisheries Department and that these will be used for this application. Additional staff have also been recruited to work on Fishery Orders, and Lisa Connaire would be working on the renewal of Menai East. She was due to start work on this in October 2019.

There was some discussion of timescales for the renewal process. Michelle Billing indicated that the new process was designed to allow applications to be completed within a 2 year period.

The fishery operators invited WG staff, and Lisa Connaire in particular, to visit Porth Penrhyn for a site visit in October.

It was agreed that the Association’s lawyers should be instructed to explore options for creating a “safety net” in the eventuality that the Order is not renewed on time.

Action: Secretariat

The proposal is to renew the Fishery Order on a “like for like” basis. Iwan Huws enquired whether this would include the regulation of potting activities in the Strait. It was confirmed that potting activities lie outside the scope of the Fishery Order and the remit of MSFOMA. Welsh Government officials provided some advice on the byelaws and regulations that apply to potting activities in the area.

b) Engagement with stakeholders

It was reported that a meeting with the Royal Anglesey Yacht Club was due to take place later on the 17th September. A report on the outcome of this meeting would be provided to the next Association meeting.

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to engage with the general public in the area once there was greater clarity 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, ideally in November.

Action: Secretariat

c) Code of Good Practice

James Wilson and Rowland Sharp reported that this Code had now been revised. It focuses on management actions for 4 core species (*Crepidula fornicata*, *Eriocheir sinensis*, *Didemnum vexillum* and *Crassostrea gigas*). Other “species of concern” are also listed, with a watching brief for these. There have been no major changes to the management processes set out in the Code, which are still founded on good liaison and consultation with statutory bodies.

The revised code has been reviewed by an international expert on non-native species, and it also includes references to global standards for good practice in the management of these species.

Some minor revisions remain to be made, which should be completed by the end of September 2019. The revised Code would then be made widely available. It was agreed that it should be published on the Association website.

Action: JW & Secretariat

14. Menai Strait West

The report was received and discussed.

Michelle Billing (WG) reported that new draft conditions arising from the Habitats Regulations Assessment for inclusion in the Order had been sent to WG legal department and discussed with them 2 weeks previously. Discussions with the lawyers were continuing.

It was noted that the WG legal department were being asked to advise on issues associated with Brexit as a priority. It was hoped that the revisions to this Draft Order would be completed by the end of 2019.

It was agreed that regular liaison between the Association and WG officials should continue to ensure that there was both good awareness of progress and to ensure that any queries could be resolved swiftly.

Action: Secretariat & WG

It was agreed that it would be appropriate to provide an update on costs and possible lease fees for Menai West for consideration at the December meeting of the Association.

Action: Secretariat

15. Funding proposals

Lewis LeVay provided an update on the funding proposals being progressed by the University:-

- **Shellfish Centre** - a workshop had been held in August as part of the project looking for *E. coli* environmental risk indicators for shellfish. This was now looking at sites in the Conwy Estuary and Burry Inlet, and opportunities for looking at sites in the eastern Menai Strait were also being considered.

The Association discussed the factors in watercourses that could affect water quality, including the uses of agricultural land as well as the discharge of waste water effluent.

- **Menai Offshore Subsurface Shellfish Systems (MOSSS)** - ropes were set in the offshore area for spat collection and are being monitored. The results would be reported at the December meeting of the Association. Ongrowing of mussels was due to be trialled over the winter and the Association will be updated on progress.

16. Fishery Management Issues

a) Coastal / marine developments

i. Bangor Pier

There has been correspondence with NRW and a company who were proposing to reopen the Pavilion tearoom on the pier. Concerns have been raised by the Association about the potential impact of effluent discharges from the pier into the Menai Strait. NRW have responded that in the short term any events held on the pier would use temporary chemical toilets, and that in the longer term options are being explored for either piping effluent from the pier into the sewerage system or establishing some treatment facilities on the pier itself.

It was agreed that this development should be kept under review.

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. A Marine Licence will be needed for this.

Iwan also reported that the number of recreational vessels operating in the area has increased significantly (there are now around 20 RIBs permitted to operate in the Strait) and this is thought to be linked to the Council's work to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure in the area, such as the piers.

iv. Sand in the dock

Further to the earlier discussion it was agreed that a letter about the accumulation of sand in the dock should be sent to the Penrhyn Estate.

Action: JW, Secretariat

b) Environmental / health issues

i. Bonamia

James Wilson noted that *Bonamia* is a notifiable shellfish disease, and it is not clear whether this will affect shellfish exports to the EU post-Brexit.

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

There have been no reports of any INNS in the area. Lewis LeVay reported that the University is due to be carrying out a survey of invasive species and will produce a model / risk map for the area (including the area notified for *Bonamia*). An update on progress with this work will be provided to the next meeting of the Association.

iii. Norovirus

Work is being carried out to determine appropriate Norovirus trigger limits. The EU is working on a Regulation, and a review of proposals is due to be completed later in 2019.

iv. Shellfish hygiene

It was noted that 7 of the 8 sampling points in the Menai Strait are now achieving a "Class A" shellfish hygiene classification. The other sampling point is a long term "Class B". These represent significant and important improvements in classification which result from concerted efforts to improve water quality. It was agreed that the Association should write to NRW to formally thank the organisation for its work on this issue.

Action: Secretariat

17. Any Other Business

No items of AOB had been raised.

18. Dates for next meetings

The next meeting will take place on 4th December 2019 (this is also the AGM).

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 opportunities for local stakeholder engagement.	All, Secretariat
2.	Sand in Dock - write to Penrhyn Estate to raise further concerns about this issue.	JW / Secretariat
3.	Articles of Association - send comments to Secretariat / Chair by end of September 2019	All
4.	Articles of Association to be amended and presented to December MSFOMA meeting.	Secretariat
5.	Register of Interests - revise MSFOMA website to publish individual's declarations of interest.	Secretariat
6.	Finances - set up e-banking arrangements.	JW
7.	Finances - present annual accounts to December meeting of Association (AGM)	JW
8.	Finances - set an annual budget and quarterly targets for the AGM in December	Chair & Secretariat
9.	Social media - send any items suitable for the MSFOMA Twitter feed to Andy Olivier (avdsolivier@bangor.ac.uk).	All
10.	NWIFCA - write to thank for opportunity to fish for seed mussels at Perch Scar and query the scale of permit fee for this activity	Secretariat & Chair
11.	Menai East - instruct lawyers to advice on "safety net" options.	Secretariat
12.	Menai East - progress stakeholder engagement, set up "drop in" sessions.	Secretariat
13.	Code of Good Practice - publicise on MSFOMA website once completed.	JW & Secretariat
14.	Menai West - liaise with WG officials to maintain progress	Secretariat
15.	Menai West - provide update on costs and likely lease fees for December Association meeting.	Secretariat
16.	Shellfish hygiene - write to NRW to praise actions taken to improve water quality.	All, Secretariat
17.	Date for next meeting - 4 th December 2019	Secretariat