

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 22nd April 2020 Telephone Conference Call

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone*
James Wilson*
Lewis le Vay

Chair
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Bangor University

Observers

Iwan Huws
Kate Griffith
Kim Mould
Lisa Connaire
Michelle Billing
Trevor Jones

Isle of Anglesey County Council
Natural Resources Wales
BMWAG
Welsh Government
Welsh Government
Menai Strait (West)

Advisors

Jim Andrews*

MSFOMA Secretariat

Notes

* *These individuals are also Directors of the Association*

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed Kate Griffiths to her first meeting of the Association.

2. Apologies

Gareth Roberts
Howard Mattocks
Ioan Thomas
Julian Bray
Keith Andrews*

Bangor City Council / Gwynedd C.C.
Beaumaris Town Council
Gwynedd County Council
Welsh Government
Licensed hand pickers

3. Declarations of Interest

Because this meeting was conducted as a telephone conference which prevented the register of interests being circulated, the Chair asked participants in the meeting to declare an interest in each agenda item before speaking.

4. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting that took place on the 4th December 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 December meeting were discussed:-

Community Fund

This was a perennial issue. No ideas for projects had been proposed since the last meeting. It was agreed that a paper should be presented to the next meeting setting out options for funding local community projects.

Action: JW, Secretariat

Sand in Penrhyn Dock

It was reported that sand was still accumulating in the dock at Port Penrhyn from the storage area on the western arm of the dock. James Wilson had approached the Estate about this issue but it has not yet been resolved. It was agreed that the Association should write to the Estate again to ask for this to be addressed.

Action: JW, Secretariat

Moorings in the Strait

Following discussions at the last meeting the Secretariat had sent a copy of the reassurances given to Beaumaris Town Council about the legality of the deep water moorings in the Menai Strait to Cllr Mattocks.

Iwan Huws asked if a copy of this letter could be sent to him for his records.

Action: Secretariat

Iwan Huws reported that Ynys Môn County Council are working on a recreation code of conduct for the Strait, with support from the North Wales Fisheries Local Action Group.

Trevor Jones reported that he was working with Iwan on this project. He also noted that the Fishery Order in the eastern Menai Strait is not marked on Admiralty Charts, and it would be helpful if this could be addressed.

Action: Secretariat

Articles of Association

James Wilson has updated the company records at Companies House to show the changes in Directors agreed at the AGM.

Jim Andrews reported that a majority of the membership have signed the resolution agreed at the December meeting, but Keith Andrews and Ioan Thomas still needed to sign it. It was agreed that this should now be progressed by post.

Action: Secretariat

Bangor pier

It was noted that the pier master had been invited to the previous meeting. It was agreed that he should be invited to attend the next meeting of the Association.

Action: Secretariat

6. Register of Interests

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

7. Financial Update

James Wilson provided a brief verbal update on the Association's financial position. Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on routine activities it had not been possible to prepare a quarterly update as planned.

Jim Andrews confirmed that invoices had been sent out on 1st April for lease fees in the Fishery Order area.

It was agreed that a quarterly financial update should be presented to the next meeting.

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. It now has over 900 followers and had over 43,000 tweet impressions in the 28 days prior to this meeting.

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).

Lewis le Vay note that Andy Olivier has taken up a post in Portsmouth. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for the Association to review its approach to the use of social media at its next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

9. 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** -
- **Aquaculture Advisory Group** -no meetings had been held recently.

b) Consultations

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

c) WG officials

It was noted that regular engagement with WG officials has continued and that this was proving to be beneficial. In particular Gareth Bevington had visited Port Penrhyn in January to meet with mussel farmers and see operations at first hand, which had been very beneficial.

Michelle Billing reported that Gareth Bevington has been temporarily re-deployed, and his role is now being covered by Mike Dowell. This has no implications for the work being carried out by WG officials on Fishery Orders.

d) Covid-19

It was noted that WG had made financial assistance available to fishing businesses as part of its response to the pandemic. This assistance was capped at £10k. Operators reported that they were aware of this assistance, and considered that it was not directly relevant to the Menai Strait fishery.

10.NW IFCA Activity

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

Jim Andrews and Trevor Jones reported that they had raised the issue of the fee charged for dredge permits at the IFCA meeting in December. There had been no indication that the IFCA was likely to change its policy on this matter in the near future.

Trevor reported that he had been working closely with NW IFCA Science staff who were working hard to try to maintain their annual survey programme. Seed mussel survey work was due to be carried out in Morecambe Bay on the spring tides over the 8th / 9th / 10th of May.

In view of the importance of maintaining access to the seed mussel resources in the NW IFCA District it had been considered unwise to press the IFCA on the subject of the permit fee for the time being.

11.Menai Strait East Fishery Order

The report on this Fishery Order was received and discussed.

Michelle Billing reported that she was working on drafting instructions for a new Order, and that a draft Order should be ready for comment at the next Association meeting in June. She was due to receive some queries from her legal advisors on certain aspects of the application which would be sent to the Secretariat and Chair for a response.

It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat should coordinate a response from MSFOMA to any queries from Welsh Government about the application.

Action: Chair, Secretariat

All welcomed the progress that WG officials have been making with this matter, and in particular thanked Michelle and her colleagues for securing additional legal support so that progress with the Fishery Order was not hindered by other commitments.

It was agreed that regular conference call meetings between the Association and WG officials had been very helpful and it was agreed that this practice should be continued.

Action: Secretariat

The report identified a number of items for the Association to determine, summarised below.

a) Scope of the Order

After some discussion it was agreed that the scope of the Order should not be altered in terms of its geographic extent, the inclusion of both mussels and oysters, and the provision for both a several and regulated fishery (i.e. a “hybrid” Order).

b) Engagement with stakeholders

It was noted that under the Covid-19 management arrangements it was unlikely that public meetings could be convened in the foreseeable future. It was therefore agreed that the “Zoom” video conferencing platform should be used to engage with stakeholders for the area prior to the formal consultation on the Fishery Order.

Action: Secretariat

The Association approved expenditure to set up a MSFOMA “Zoom” account.

Action: Secretariat

Iwan Huws asked for a copy of a map of the area to be sent to him for information.

Action: Secretariat

12. Menai Strait West

The report was received and discussed.

Jim Andrews reported that several discussions had been held between the Association, WG Science & Policy staff and shellfish farmers from the western Strait over the past few months. These discussions had focussed on the issues arising from the cultivation of Pacific oysters in the Menai Strait. The key issue associated with this non-native species is the risk of it establishing “feral” populations in the wild, and the need to have an appropriate national policy and set of mitigation measures in place to address this risk.

It was reported that although these discussions had taken longer than hoped, they were productive and it was hoped that progress could be made soon.

The Association had asked WG to consider the possibility of broadening the scope of the Order with respect to oysters from Pacific oysters (*Crassostrea gigas*) alone to the broader term of “oysters”, which could introduce the possibility of cultivating European oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) in this area. Michelle Billing indicated that WG would be providing advice on this option shortly.

Action: Michelle Billing / Welsh Government

All agreed that it was important to maintain progress with this application and that regular meetings between WG officials and the Association should continue.

Action: Secretariat

13. Funding proposals

Lewis LeVay provided a brief update on the projects being progressed by the University that are relevant to MSFOMA. He reported that all staff were working from home under the current Covid-19 restrictions. While fieldwork and lab work has been delayed, these restrictions had not yet impacted significantly on overall progress.

For the Menai Offshore Subsurface Shellfish Systems (MOSSS) project, work is planned to continue at the site near Puffin Island. Details of this work are available on the University website [here](#).

The Shellfish Centre continues to develop collaborative research projects with industry partners across a diverse range of topics from novel methods of measurement of norovirus in shellfish, new approaches to native oyster production and research to support development of offshore shellfish aquaculture. www.shellfish.wales

The DASSH project, working with Seafish, SAGB , FSA and Environment Agency is investigating modelling of catchment drivers of shellfish water quality, with the aim of identifying practical and effective alert systems that could inform shellfish harvesting and classification of areas.

14. Fishery Management Issues

a) Coastal / marine developments

i. Bangor Pier

There was no further news on the proposal to reinstate the tearooms on the pier. It was agreed that an invitation should be extended to the pier master to attend the next meeting in June.

Action: Secretariat

ii. Dickies Boatyard Development

There had been no further consultations about this project.

iii. Beaumaris Pier

Iwan Huws reported that the authority had received its Marine Licence for this work from NRW, and plans for painting the pier in May 2020 would be progressed, subject to any constraints resulting from the response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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)

Kate Griffith reported that some specimens of the slipper limited *Crepidula fornicata* had been found in the Menai Strait during February. NRW had planned to conduct a subtidal survey at the end of April to investigate potential abundance/extent of the species, but this had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 situation. An update will be provided to the Association once the survey has been carried out, unfortunately at present NRW cannot confirm when that will be.

Action: NRW / Kate Griffith

iii. Norovirus

No further update.

iv. Shellfish hygiene

It was noted that NRW had provided regular updates on the repair work that Dŵr Cymru had carried out to the

15. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

No additional correspondence had been received.

b) Meeting arrangements

It was agreed that Members of the Association should be asked if the Zoom video conferencing platform could be used for the next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

16. Dates for next meetings

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

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

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Community Fund - paper to be presented to next MSFOMA meeting.	JW, 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 Iwan Huws.	Secretariat
4.	Contact Hydrographic Office and ask if Menai east area could be shown on Admiralty Charts.	Secretariat
5.	Articles of Association to be signed by all and sent to Companies House.	Secretariat
6.	Bangor pier - invite pier master to next meeting.	Secretariat
7.	Finances - present quarterly updates to MSFOMA meetings.	Secretariat & JW
8.	Social media - send any items suitable for the MSFOMA Twitter feed to Andy Olivier (avdsolivier@bangor.ac.uk).	All
9.	Public profile - review the MSFOMA approach to the use of social media at the next meeting.	Secretariat
10.	NWIFCA - encourage a more pragmatic approach to dredge permit fees.	Secretariat & TJ
11.	Menai East - provide response to any WG queries about legal issues.	Chair, Secretariat
12.	Menai East - maintain monthly discussions with WG officials to ensure progress is maintained.	Secretariat
13.	Menai East - progress stakeholder engagement, using "Zoom" video conferencing platform.	Secretariat
14.	Menai East - provide map of area to Iwan Huws for information.	Secretariat
15.	Menai West - consider possibility of changing scope from "Pacific oysters" to "oysters".	Michelle Billing
16.	Menai West - continue discussions with WG & NRW to address concerns about Pacific Oysters.	Secretariat
17.	Bangor Pier - invite pier master to next MSFOMA meeting.	Secretariat
18.	INNS - provide an update on the Crepidula fornicata reports from the Menai Strait.	NRW / Kate Griffith
19.	Next meeting - consult Members about possible use of Zoom platform.	Secretariat
20.	Date for next meeting - 17 th June 2020	Secretariat