

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 17th June 2020 Zoom Video Conference Call

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone*
Lewis le Vay

Chair
Bangor University

Observers

Ioan Thomas
Kim Mould
Lisa Connaire
Michelle Billing
Rowland Sharp
Trevor Jones

Gwynedd County Council
BMWAG
Welsh Government
Welsh Government
Natural Resources Wales
Menai Strait (West)

Advisors

Jim Andrews*

MSFOMA Secretariat

Notes

** These individuals are also Directors of the Association*

1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first MSFOMA meeting to be held using Zoom video-conferencing and outlined the protocols for the meeting.

2. Apologies

Gareth Roberts
Howard Mattocks
Iwan Huws
Julian Bray
Kate Griffith
Keith Andrews*
James Wilson*

Bangor City Council / Gwynedd C.C.
Beaumaris Town Council
Isle of Anglesey County Council
Welsh Government
Natural Resources Wales
Licensed hand pickers
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd

3. Declarations of Interest

Because this meeting was conducted as a video-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 22nd April 2020 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 April meeting were discussed:-

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 has discussed this recently with the Estate's land agent. No letter had yet been sent to the Estate from the Association. It was agreed that the Association should write to the Estate and propose a site meeting to discuss the concerns.

Action: JW, Secretariat

Moorings in the Strait

It was reported that 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 Iwan Huws.

Articles of Association

It was reported that the Articles of Association were now being circulated by post to allow Members of the Association (Ioan Thomas and Keith Andrews) to sign it.

Hydrographic Office / Admiralty Charts

The Secretariat has corresponded with the Hydrographic Office about the possibility of showing the eastern Menai Strait fishery order on Admiralty Charts of the area.

Bangor pier

It was agreed that the pier master should be asked for an update on progress with the proposal to reinstate the tea room at the end of the pier.

Action: Secretariat

6. Register of Interests

No changes were recorded.

7. Financial Update

The financial report was accepted. It was noted that both income and expenditure had been lower than expected for the first quarter of the year.

It was agreed that a sum of £2,000 should be allocated to a Community Fund, shared equally between projects on the Anglesey and Gwynedd sides of the Menai Strait and that Bangor City Council and Beaumaris Town Council should be asked to nominate possible good causes which would be discussed at the next meeting.

Action: Secretariat

VAT registration was discussed. It was agreed that figures should be calculated to show the savings that the Association would make and the additional costs likely to accrue to lessees who are not VAT registered, and that a decision should be taken at the next Association meeting.

Action: Secretariat

8. Public Profile of the Association

Jim Andrews provided a quick update. Andy Olivier has continued to maintain the Association's Twitter account. He was happy to continue providing this service to the Association.

The number of tweets and profile of the Association continues to grow steadily. It now has 1,000 followers and had over 35,000 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).

It was also agreed that appropriate 'headlines' from today's meeting would be produced and sent to Andy Olivier to use as tweets.

Action: Chair, Secretariat

9. Welsh Government Activity

The Secretariat's report was noted and received.

a) Meetings

It was reported that no recent meetings of WG fisheries groups had taken place since the last MSFOMA meeting. Trevor Jones reported that a meeting of the Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group (WMFAG) was scheduled for later in June.

b) Consultations

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

c) Marine Planning

Lewis LeVay reported that he and James Wilson are involved with the WG Expert Panel Group for Aquaculture. The main purpose of this Group is to review the ABP-Mer reports on aquaculture that were prepared as part of the Marine Planning project.

It was agreed that that Secretariat should contact Phil Coates from WG, who is leading much of the work on Marine Planning, to ensure that the interests of MSFOMA are not overlooked.

Action: Secretariat

d) Fisheries Bill

There was some discussion of the potential clash between some of the provisions of the new UK Fisheries Bill and the Sea Fisheries (Shellfish) Act 1967. It was agreed that these concerns should be drawn to the attention of the Shellfish Association of Great Britain in the first instance, and then if their legal experts agree on this issue, should be raised further with the UK and Welsh Governments.

Action: Secretariat

e) WG officials

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

10. NW IFCA Activity

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

Trevor Jones provided a verbal update on the survey work that he had carried out and which had been reported by the NW-IFCA. He had found abundant seed mussels in areas of Morecambe Bay that were suitable for mussel dredging. There was also evidence that these areas were eroding and in some areas were subject to starfish predation.

The next NW-IFCA meeting was due to take place on the 18th June, and the next meeting of the Bivalve Mollusc Working Group was due to take place on 19th June. These meetings were likely to determine which areas in Morecambe Bay may be opened for seed mussel dredging in the next few weeks. It was understood that hand gatherers in Morecambe Bay were not enthusiastic about seed mussel dredging taking place in the northern part of the Bay.

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. 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.

There was some discussion about NW-IFCA policies and procedures concerning seed mussel dredging. It was agreed that it may be a good idea for the Association to suggest to NW-IFCA that it would be useful to adopt a "decision tree" for seed mussel resources to make these processes transparent and consistent.

Action: Secretariat

11. Menai Strait East Fishery Order

The report on this Fishery Order was received and discussed.

a) Licences

The proposed procedure for determining the number of licences that could be issued by the Association annually and the process for managing applications was discussed.

It was agreed that the process for managing applications should be revised to clarify that applications should be submitted in writing by post. In the event of new licences becoming available, that would be issued to applicants on the waiting list in chronological order, and that in the event of multiple applications having been received simultaneously, the successful applicant would be selected at random.

It was further agreed that a lower age limit of 16 years should be set for licence holders.

Subject to these amendments it was agreed that the proposed procedures should be adopted by the Association and sent to Welsh Government.

Action: Secretariat

b) New Fishery Order

Michelle Billing had submitted some draft conditions for a new Fishery Order prior to the meeting. These were discussed, and it was agreed that comments should be sent to Michelle as soon as possible.

Action: Secretariat

Michelle Billing reported that she had been working closely with WG legal advisors (both external and internal). Work was progressing well. She was due to revise some of the deadlines in the outline timetable agreed in January, and would circulate this once these had been agreed internally.

Action: Michelle Billing

c) Engagement with stakeholders

It was agreed that engagement with stakeholders was important, but there was still some uncertainty about the timetable for progress, which made it difficult to make firm plans to progress this. It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat should work together to identify and progress opportunities for this.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

12. Menai Strait West

The report was received and discussed.

It was noted that WG Science & Policy staff are currently investigating the issues arising from the cultivation of Pacific oysters in the Menai Strait. A report that would inform WG policy on this issue was due to be completed in early July. There was some discussion about the scope of this report and the staff who were involved with its production.

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. Fieldwork and lab work has been delayed, and it was hoped that progress would resume shortly as the lockdown restrictions were relaxed.

One of the main research areas likely to be examined in 2020 is the effect of the location of spat collectors to optimise mussel settlement.

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 update should be sought from the pier master.

Action: Secretariat

ii. Dickies Boatyard Development

There had been no further consultations about this project.

iii. Beaumaris Pier

It was understood that painting the 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)

Rowland Sharp agreed to contact Kate Griffith to obtain more information about the specimens of the slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata* that had been found in the Menai Strait during February. James Wilson had previously expressed concern about this issue, and all were keen that further investigations of the location and extent of this species should be carried out as a matter of urgency, whether by NRW staff or MSFOMA members (or a combination).

Action: NRW / All

iii. Norovirus

No further update.

iv. Shellfish hygiene

No updates

15. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

No additional correspondence had been received.

16. Dates for next meetings

The dates for the remaining meetings in 2020 were confirmed as:-

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

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Sand in Dock -contact Penrhyn Estate to raise further concerns about this issue & propose site visit.	JW / Secretariat
2.	Liaise with Hydrographic Office about update to Admiralty Charts.	Secretariat
3.	Articles of Association to be signed by all and sent to lawyers.	Secretariat
4.	Bangor pier - ask pier master for update about tea room proposal.	Secretariat
5.	Finances - present quarterly updates to MSFOMA meetings.	Secretariat & JW
6.	Community Fund - invite local authorities to apply for funding up to a total of £2,000 this FY.	Secretariat
7.	VAT - check on costs for lessees and likely benefits for Association & present figures to next meeting.	Secretariat
8.	Social media - Secretariat to send a summary of headlines from today's meeting, and all to send any items suitable for the MSFOMA Twitter feed to Andy Olivier (avdsolivier@bangor.ac.uk).	All
9.	Fisheries Bill - share concerns about potential impact of the Bill with SAGB. Raise concerns with Government if appropriate.	Secretariat
10.	NWIFCA - suggest to the Authority that it could adopt a more transparent procedure for determining seed mussel dredging requests.	Secretariat & TJ
11.	Menai East - revise licensing procedure as agreed.	Secretariat, Chair
12.	Menai East - provide response to WG proposals about conditions for the Order.	Chair, Secretariat
13.	Menai East - maintain monthly discussions with WG officials to ensure progress is maintained.	Secretariat
14.	Menai East - revise timetable for making the new Order.	Michelle Billing
15.	Menai East - progress stakeholder engagement as far as possible.	Secretariat
16.	Menai West - continue discussions with WG & NRW about Pacific Oysters and the making of this Order.	Secretariat
17.	INNS - obtain information about <i>Crepidula fornicata</i> reports & investigate any spread.	NRW / All
18.	Date for next meeting - 16 th September 2020	Secretariat