

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 8th December 2021 Zoom Video Conference Call

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone*
Ioan Thomas
James Wilson*

Chair
Gwynedd County Council
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd

Observers

Howard Mattocks
Kate Griffith
Kim Mould
Michelle Billing
Trevor Jones

Beaumaris Town Council
Natural Resources Wales
BMWAG
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 everyone to the meeting. He reported that he had just been re-appointed to serve as Chair of the Association for a further two years at the AGM that had taken place earlier in the day.

It was reported that Keith Andrews, one of the founding directors of the Association, had formally tendered his resignation on 3rd December 2021. It was agreed that a formal letter of thanks for the support that Keith had given the Association since its creation should be sent to him.

Action: Secretariat & Chair

2. Apologies

Alex Scorey
Gareth Bevington
Gareth Roberts
Iwan Huws
Julian Bray
Keith Andrews*
Lewis le Vay

Natural Resources Wales
Welsh Government
Bangor City Council
Isle of Anglesey County Council
Welsh Government
Licensed hand pickers
Bangor University

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 8th September 2021 were accepted, subject to minor corrections.

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 that were not formally addressed on the agenda were discussed:-

Sand in Penrhyn Dock

Kim Mould reported that he understood that a marine licence would be needed from NRW to allow dredging of the sand in the dock. Kate Griffith confirmed that the sediment would need to be sampled to determine its composition and that a sediment sample plan may be required.

James Wilson reported that sand was still being unloaded, and that water sprinklers were not being used, so sand continue to blow into the dock.

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

Action: JW, Secretariat

Deo Gloria

The vessel Deo Gloria had run aground on one of the layings on 5th November 2021, causing some damage to the mussels in cultivation. James Wilson had raised concerns about this damage with the operator and with Caernarfon Harbour Trust.

It was agreed that the Secretariat and tenant of this area should contact the Association's legal advisors to determine how best to proceed.

Action: JW, Secretariat

Bonamia

James Wilson reported that he had participated in a number of discussions with Cefas about revising the extent of the *Bonamia* restrictions in the area. He was highlighting the difference between EU and UK approaches to this issue, and was concerned that Cefas did not seem willing to adopt a more pragmatic approach. Discussions were ongoing, and an update would be provided to future meetings.

Action: James Wilson

Water quality

The importance of good water quality for the future of the mussel fishery was discussed. All agreed that improving water quality would address many of the problems affecting the export of Menai Strait mussels to the EU post-Brexit. Work is progressing on several fronts: the Shellfish Centre work working with Dŵr Cymru to identify the main effluent inputs that affect water quality; and the Food Standards Authority are considering the implications of changing the approach to classifying shellfish waters.

6. Register of Interests

The Chair reminded all participants to check their Statement of Interests on the MSFOMA website (https://www.msfoma.org/?page_id=478) to confirm whether it is accurate.

Action: All

7. Financial Update

The financial report was accepted.

It was agreed that the revised budget should be adopted, and that lease fees should be kept as low as possible in response to both the reduced costs facing the Association and the poor trading conditions being experienced by the industry. The proposal that lease fees should be set at £2,312pa for each of the 8 layings was accepted.

It was agreed that the Community fund proposal from Bangor City Council (to support the renovation of the HMS Conway kiosk on the pier) should be supported and that the Secretariat should liaise with the Council to progress this.

Action Secretariat

8. Public Profile of the Association

The Chair and Secretariat reported that regular meetings continue to be held with Dr Andy Olivier to ensure that both the Association's website and Twitter account are being used to raise the profile of the Association more effectively. The number of tweets and profile of the Association continues to grow steadily. It now has over 1,300 followers.

All present were asked to provide a picture of themselves and a few paragraphs of text suitable for both Tweeting and posting on the MSFOMA website, to give MSFOMA a "face".

Action: All

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

9. Welsh Government Activity

The Secretariat's report was noted and received. There had been no meetings of WG fisheries groups.

The Chair provided an update on the video meeting with the Minister that had taken place on the 1st December. The key messages appeared to be that the Minister wants to increase shellfish aquaculture production, but does not want to develop a new Strategy for this; at the same time it is acknowledged that the objectives of the 2013 Strategy have not been met, but it is claimed that the sector is now more diverse than it was. The meeting was attended by David Morris (Deputy Head, WG Food Division), who was very positive about the potential of the Welsh shellfish aquaculture sector.

James Wilson had also attended this event and the follow-up plenary session with officials. He reported that Robert Floyd and Gareth Bevington had made a commitment to follow up the Ministerial meeting to set out the next steps for this sector. He also noted that Minister's reference to the 2013 Fisheries Strategy Objectives and the enthusiasm from David Morris.

During the discussions with WG it had been reported that the EU EMFF funding would be coming to an end and that a commitment had been made by WG to engage with industry partners to co-design future funding arrangements for this sector.

10. NW IFCA Activity

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

It was agreed that MSFOMA should continue to encourage NWIFCA to resume work on the Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan.

Action: Secretariat

11. Menai Strait East Fishery Order

The Chair introduced this item, noting the progress that has been made to allow for the introduction of a new Fishery Order in the eastern Menai Strait in April 2022 to follow on from the existing Fishery Order.

After discussion it was agreed that:-

- Written applications for new leases should be sought from the existing tenants of leased areas.
- The Chair and Secretariat should work with NRW and WG to progress a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the new Order, for the Designated Several Area, and for the layings in the new Order.
- That the Chair and Secretariat should complete all of the administrative steps required for new leases to be issued for the layings in the new Fishery Order.
- That the Secretariat should invite those Members of the Association without a pecuniary or prejudicial interest in the leased areas to form a Lease Allocation Committee that would make a determination on applications for leased areas.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

It was further agreed that the close working relationship between MSFOMA and WG should be maintained, with regular meetings between Michelle, the Chair and the Secretariat.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

12. Menai Strait West

The Chair reported that MSFOMA have continued to organise meetings between the applicants for renewal of this Fishery Order and other parties including Natural Resources Wales, WG officials, and scientists from the Shellfish Centre at Menai Bridge. A key area of work that had been progressed through these meetings was a proposal for a review of management and mitigation options for Pacific oyster cultivation in the Strait, which had been reported to previous meetings.

At the last meeting between parties on 17th November it had been agreed that the draft report should be finalised in mid-January and discussed at a meeting of this group by the end of January. An update on this report and its findings could be brought to the next Association meeting.

Action: Secretariat

James Wilson reported on discussions at the SAGB Mollusc Committee about this issue. There have been discussions about the national policy for Pacific oysters at this meeting, and it appeared that further discussion and negotiation was needed between Natural England and Cefas to develop a settled policy. James agreed to provide an update on any progress at this level to future Association meetings.

Action: James Wilson

13. Funding proposals & Research Update

A brief update on progress with funding and research was provided. In summary:-

- a) **Pacific Oysters** – some areas for research have been identified and are to be progressed (see Item 12 above).
- b) **Bonamia** – James Wilson reported that he had been in touch with Cefas about the size of the current designated area, which extends from Conwy to Malltraeth and Llandwrog beyond the western end of the Menai Strait. Cefas had indicated that any change to this boundary would take time. JW will continue to pursue this issue and will update the Association.
Action: James Wilson
- c) **Spat collectors / MOSSS** – James Wilson reported that work was ongoing, and an application for a larger cultivation area was in preparation .
- d) **Water quality** – the Shellfish Centre was continuing to work with Dŵr Cymru and other partners to identify sources of effluent input to the

14. Fishery Management Issues

a) Coastal / marine developments

- i. **Bangor Pier**
No additional update.

- ii. **Sand in the dock**
This was discussed at the start of the meeting (see Matters Arising).

b) Environmental / health issues

- i. **Shellfish hygiene classification**
No further update.

- ii. **Bonamia**
No further update.

- iii. **Invasive Alien Species (IAS) / Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**
Kate Griffith reported that the School of Ocean Sciences would be holding a webinar looking at larval dispersal of Invasive Non-Native Species. She agreed to share information about this webinar via the Secretariat.

Action: Kate Griffith

All were reminded to keep an eye out for slipper limpets in the area.

Action: All

- iv. **Norovirus**
No further update.

15. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

No additional correspondence had been received.

16. Dates for next meetings

Proposed meeting dates for 2022:-

- a. Q1 2022 - 31st March
(Revised proposal - to mark the end of the old Order and the start of the new one)
- b. Q2 2022 - 8th June
- c. Q3 2022 - 7th September
- d. Q4 2022 - 14th December [AGM]

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Keith Andrews - letter of thanks	Chair & Secretariat
2.	Sand in Dock - keep under review.	James Wilson & Secretariat
3.	Deo Gloria grounding - determine how best to proceed.	James Wilson & Secretariat
4.	Register of Interests - review current Statement of interests on MSFOMA website (https://www.msfoma.org/?page_id=478) and confirm it is accurate.	All
5.	Community Fund - progress proposal for support to Bangor City Council for renovation of HMS Conway kiosk.	Secretariat
6.	Website / Twitter - provide photograph and brief resume suitable for website and Twitter	All
7.	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@gmail.com).	Secretariat
8.	NWIFCA - encourage adoption of Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan.	Chair & Secretariat
9.	Menai East - request written applications for new leases from existing tenants.	Chair & Secretariat
10.	Menai East - work with WG officials to progress HRAs of "Designated Area" and new leases.	Chair, Secretariat, NRW & WG
11.	Menai East - complete all steps needed for renewing existing leases & issuing new leases.	Chair & Secretariat
12.	Menai East - convene meeting of Lease Allocation Committee to determine lease applications.	Chair & Secretariat
13.	Menai East - maintain close working relationship with Welsh Government.	Chair & Secretariat.
14.	Menai West - provide summary of Pacific oyster research report to next meeting.	Secretariat
15.	Menai West - provide update on national Pacific oyster policy discussions at SAGB.	James Wilson
16.	<i>Bonamia</i> - James Wilson to liaise with Cefas about boundary of designated area and prospects for change.	James Wilson
17.	Water quality - Shellfish Centre to work with Dŵr Cymru and Bangor Mussel Producers to progress microbial source tracking project.	Lewis Le Vay, James Wilson, Kim Mould, Trevor Jones
18.	Invasive Alien Species - provide details of webinar for circulation to participants.	Kate Griffith
19.	<i>Crepidula fornicata</i> - look out for slipper limpets and report sightings of any shells / individuals.	All
20.	Date for next meeting - 31 st March 2022	Secretariat