

Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

Meeting, 9th June 2021 Zoom Video Conference Call

Minutes

Attendance

Members

Alan Winstone*
Ioan Thomas
Lewis le Vay

Chair
Gwynedd County Council
Bangor University

Observers

Michelle Billing
Julian Bray
Kate Griffith
Iwan Huws
Trevor Jones
Kim Mould
Alex Scorey

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

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. The Chair proposed, and it was agreed, that items 11 & 12 on the agenda (Menai Strait East and West respectively) should be discussed at the start of the meeting when Welsh Government officials were available, so that they could leave the meeting to attend to other pressing engagements that would prevent them from participating in the entire meeting.

2. Apologies

Gareth Bevington
Gareth Roberts
Howard Mattocks
James Wilson*
Keith Andrews*

Welsh Government
Bangor City Council
Beaumaris Town Council
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd
Licensed hand pickers

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 10th March 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 March meeting that were not formally addressed on the agenda were discussed:-

Sand in Penrhyn Dock

James Wilson reported that the Penrhyn Estate has a new land agent who seems to be taking this issue more seriously. No remedial action has yet been taken. James agreed to keep the Association informed of progress, and it was agreed that if a letter of support was needed for addressing this issue it could be provided.

Action: JW, Secretariat

Beaumaris Pier User Group

Iwan Huws reported that ABPmer had been commissioned to carry out a review of current maritime uses by Anglesey County Council. A presentation had been made to the pier user group about the scope and plans for this review on 11th May 2021 by Harry Aitchison from ABPmer. A PowerPoint presentation was available, and it was agreed that it would be informative for Iwan to circulate this to the Association.

Action: Iwan Huws

6. Register of Interests

The report was received. The Association noted that improvements had been made to the Association's website to make the role and interests of each participant in MSFOMA more transparent.

It was agreed that the Secretariat should continue to revise the presentation of information and the Register of Interests to ensure that they meet the requirements that Welsh Government have recently identified.

Action: Secretariat

7. Financial Update

The financial report was accepted. It was noted that the Association presently has more funds in Reserves than budgeted.

It was agreed that both Beaumaris Town Council and Bangor City Council should be approached again and asked to propose projects suitable for support from the Community Fund.

Action: Secretariat

It was reported that the proposal to extend the payment terms on the invoices issued on 1st April 2021 from one month to six months had been implemented. Payment on these invoices would now be due at the end of September.

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 Chair and Secretariat have worked with Andy to implement the communication strategy, as agreed at the last Association meeting.

The number of tweets and profile of the Association continues to grow steadily. It now has over 1,250 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

Welsh Government officials Michelle Billing and Julian Bray were welcomed to the meeting.

The Secretariat's report was noted and received.

a) Meetings

There were no reports from any WG fisheries groups since the last Association meeting.

b) Consultations

It was noted that there had been no recent consultations 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.

d) Cabinet Minister

WG officials confirmed that Lesley Griffiths MS had been re-appointed although her portfolio had changed from Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs to the Minister for Rural Affairs, North Wales and Trefnydd.

10. NW IFCA Activity

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

Kim Mould (MSFOMA representative on the NW IFCA Bivalve Mollusc Working Group) reported that there had been no meetings of that group; however there were seed mussels in the northern part of Morecambe Bay. He was due to inspect the mussel beds by helicopter on the 26th June, with the intention of requesting their opening for dredging. Kim indicated that he had invited NW IFCA science staff to accompany him on this trip.

It was noted that the Technical, Scientific & Byelaws Sub-Committee that had been scheduled for 18th May had been cancelled at late notice. It was not clear when the next meeting would take place or whether this would discuss the seed mussel fishery.

There was some discussion about whether it would be appropriate for the Chair and Secretariat to encourage progress with the seed mussel fishery by writing to the CEO of the NWIFCA. It was decided that there was a risk that this could be counter-productive but that the Chair and Secretariat should keep this under review and consult with the Association if it was felt that this could be helpful.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

11. Menai Strait East Fishery Order

The Chair introduced this item. It was noted that the Association had applied for a new Fishery Order in the eastern Menai Strait in August 2018. The existing Order is due to expire on 31st March 2022. Welsh Government officials were present to provide an update on the process of making a new Order.

A draft of the new Fishery Order was provided to the Association on 23rd March 2021, following our last meeting. An Extraordinary Meeting had taken place on 30th March 2021 to discuss this draft. In accordance with the wishes of this meeting, the statutory consultation process for the new Order started on 8th April 2021 and ended on 8th May 2021.

During the consultation process the Association had taken all of the required actions to alert statutory bodies and stakeholders to the proposed new Fishery Order. Public Notices were placed in the press and at locations around the Menai Strait.

A total of 24 responses to the consultation had been received by Welsh Government and MSFOMA. Of these, just 8 were objections (4 sent to both MSFOMA and Welsh Government, and 4 sent to Welsh Government alone).

The key issue that had been raised by objectors was the potential impact of the new Order on moorings for yachts in parts of the Menai Strait. This issue was considered in detail in the report for the meeting and was discussed at the meeting. It was noted that the moorings that concerns had been raised about were all located within the existing Order.

It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat should write to the objectors that had contacted MSFOMA directly, and offer to meet with them by the end of June, with a view to trying to resolve their concerns by the end of July.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

It was noted that some parties may be very set in their views. It may prove impossible to persuade them to adopt a different view. It may, therefore, be appropriate to agree to

differ with these parties after a period of discussion, rather than initiate protracted negotiations which could result in failure to meet the deadline of having a new Order in place by 1st April 2022. The Minister has powers under the Shellfish Act to either amend the Order, overrule objections or to call an Inquiry, and it was felt that she should be given sufficient time to exercise these powers.

It was further agreed that MSFOMA should work with WG officials to progress the creation of a “Designated Area” under the new Fishery Order, and determine the process for the consultation on leases that is required under the new Order.

Action: Chair & Secretariat

The Association considered the process for issuing new leases under the existing and proposed new Fishery Order. It was agreed that these should be adopted, with the addition of a requirement to demonstrate an appropriate level of competence to operate safely (as specified in §12(2) of the Draft Order).

Action: Chair & Secretariat

12. Menai Strait West

It was reported that since the last Association meeting in March further work had been carried out to develop the research proposal for Pacific Oysters, which was intended to inform the concerns about cultivation of this species in the western Strait.

Lewis Le Vay summarised the scope of the research proposal, which had been developed through a series of meetings hosted by MSFOMA.

The next phase in the project would require industry partners to provide their support (in kind and / or in terms of practical assistance) for the project. This would enable the Shellfish Centre to progress the project.

It was agreed that MSFOMA should write to all of the prospective lessees in the western Menai Strait to seek their support for the research proposal.

Action: Secretariat

13. Funding proposals & Research Update

Professor Lewis Le Vay provided a brief update on progress with funding and research. In summary:-

- a) **Pacific Oysters** - some areas for research have been identified and are to be progressed (see Item 12 above).
- b) **Bonamia** - a survey has just been carried out in conjunction with the work on the native oyster restoration project in Conwy (the concern being the risk of spreading Bonamia as a result of this work). The results of this work are expected in the spring / early summer.
- c) **Spat collectors** - it was reported that work is ongoing and that the 2021 trials are due to start shortly.
- d) **Water quality** - a brief report was submitted about a research project for microbial source tracking in the Menai Strait. The project was intended to focus on the Ogwen RMP ("Representative Monitoring Point") which appears to be the most directly affected by catchment run-off. The project would be progressed through a collaboration between Dŵr Cymru and the Shellfish Centre. It was agreed that MSFOMA should offer its support to this work. Lewis agreed to liaise with the members of Bangor Mussel Producers to progress the project.

Action: LLV, JW, KM, TJ

14. Fishery Management Issues

a) Coastal / marine developments

i. **Bangor Pier**

No additional update.

ii. **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. **Bangor to Treborth rising main**

James Wilson reported that Dŵr Cymru had been in touch to propose a meeting to discuss their strategy with respect to this outfall which has had problems recently. An update would be provided to the next meeting.

ii. **Shellfish hygiene classification**

No further update.

iii. **Bonamia**

No further update.

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

Crepidula fornicata - Kate Griffith reported that some more slipper limpets had been recorded between Malltraeth and Brynsiencyn. NRW were planning to carry out survey work in the vicinity of Caernarfon. Kate agreed to provide maps of recent records.

Action: Kate Griffith

Kate requested that any observations of slipper limpets are sent to her, and also that if anyone should survey an area and find an absence of slipper limpets that this information could also be shared to help with survey planning.

Action: All

It was noted that information about slipper limpets should be put on the MSFOMA website to help raise awareness.

v. *Norovirus*

No further update.

15. Any Other Business

a) Correspondence

No additional correspondence had been received.

16. Dates for next meetings

The schedule of meetings for 2021 was confirmed:-

- a. Q3 2021 - 8th September
- b. Q4 2020 - 8th December [AGM]

Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Sand in Dock - keep under review, MSFOMA to write to Penrhyn Estate if necessary.	James Wilson & Secretariat
2.	Beaumaris Pier User Group - circulate presentation about review of current uses.	Iwan Huws
3.	Register of Interests - review presentation of information and ensure that WG requirements are met.	Secretariat
4.	Community Fund - seek proposals for new projects from Bangor City and Beaumaris Town Councils.	Secretariat
5.	Website / Twitter - provide photograph and brief resume suitable for website and Twitter	All
6.	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).	All
7.	NW IFCA - keep option of writing to encourage the opening of seed mussel beds for dredging under review.	Chair & Secretariat
8.	Menai East - write to objectors by end of June, seek meetings, aim to mitigate / address concerns by end of July.	Chair & Secretariat
9.	Menai East - maintain monthly discussions with WG officials to ensure progress is maintained.	Chair & Secretariat
10.	Menai East - work with WG officials to progress "Designated Area" an consultation on new leases.	Chair & Secretariat
11.	Menai East - revise procedure for renewing existing leases & issuing new leases.	Chair & Secretariat
12.	Menai West - maintain regular discussions with WG officials to ensure progress is maintained.	Secretariat
13.	Menai West - invite WG officers to next discussion about Pacific Oysters.	Secretariat
14.	Menai West - seek support from prospective lessees for the research proposal.	Secretariat
15.	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
16.	<i>Crepidula fornicata</i> - look out for slipper limpets and report sightings of any shells / individuals.	All
17.	<i>C. fornicata</i> - provide update on sightings for next meeting.	Kate Griffith
18.	Date for next meeting - 8 th September 2021	Secretariat