

# Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

## Meeting, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 Zoom Video Conference Call

### Minutes

#### Attendance

##### Members

Alan Winstone\*  
Ioan Thomas  
James Wilson\*  
Lewis le Vay

Chair  
Gwynedd County Council  
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd  
Bangor University

##### Observers

Alex Scorey  
Howard Mattocks  
Kate Griffith  
Kim Mould  
Michelle Billing  
José Constantino  
Rob Floyd  
Trevor Jones

Natural Resources Wales  
Beaumaris Town Council  
Natural Resources Wales  
BMWAG  
Welsh Government  
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 everyone to the meeting. He noted that this was the first MSFOMA meeting conducted during the period of the new Menai Strait (East) Mussel and Oyster Fishery Order 2022 which came into force on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2022.

#### **2. Apologies**

Gareth Roberts  
Iwan Huws  
Julian Bray

Bangor City Council  
Isle of Anglesey County Council  
Welsh Government

#### **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 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 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 March meeting that were not formally addressed on the agenda were discussed:-

### **Keith Andrews**

A formal letter of thanks had been sent to Keith Andrews following his resignation in December.

**Action: Secretariat**

### **Sand in Penrhyn Dock**

James Wilson reported that a marine licence application was being progressed by the Penrhyn Estate & Dickies. The cost of dredging the sand was likely to be considerable, and would have to be borne with the Estate and / or the company leasing the quayside for unloading and storing sand. Members discussed the relationship between consenting of activities on land that could impact the marine environment and the need for better integration of the consenting regime generally.

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 5<sup>th</sup> November 2021, causing some damage to the mussels in cultivation. James Wilson reported that some mussels had been harvested in this area in March and catches had been lower than expected. With the passage of time and harvesting activity, no signs of damage remain.

### **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, but that this seemed unlikely to be altered.

Lewis Le Vay reported that the University has been carrying out some work to investigate the presence of *Bonamia* DNA in species other than mussels and oysters in the Strait. He offered to circulate this report.

**Action: Lewis Le Vay**

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

### **Water quality**

This issue was still important, and it was agreed that it should be discussed under agenda item 16.

### **Autumn workshop / conferences**

Lewis Le Vay reported that the Shellfish Centre are planning to hold either a conference or series of workshops during the autumn (late September / early October) to discuss the findings of recent work on water quality, Pacific oysters and other areas of research. He would keep everyone informed.

**Action: Lewis Le Vay**

## **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](https://www.msfoma.org/?page_id=478)) to confirm whether it is accurate.

**Action: All**

## **7. Widening engagement**

The Chair introduced this item, which had been added to the agenda following a discussion at the previous meeting. The Secretariat had prepared a paper which addressed two key issues: how to replace Keith Andrews who has resigned as a director; and whether it is appropriate to widen participation at MSFOMA meetings.

After a short discussion, the meeting agreed that both Trevor Jones and Kim Mould would be suitable candidates to fill the vacant directorship. They were invited to agree between themselves who would be best placed to fill this role and to let the Chair and Secretariat know the outcome of this discussion so that one of them could be formally appointed.

**Action: Kim Mould, Trevor Jones, Secretariat**

All agreed that the Association could benefit from wider participation. The key non-fishing interests in the Strait are recreation (sailing) and wildlife. After some discussion it was agreed that RYA Cymru and the North Wales Wildlife Trust should be invited to attend the next MSFOMA meetings as Observers, and that if their participation proved mutually beneficial the Articles of Association should be updated to formalise their involvement.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **8. Financial Update**

The financial report was accepted.

It was agreed that lease fees for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April - 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 should be reduced by 1/3 in response to the delay in Ministerial approval for the leases to be issued.

**Action: Secretariat**

The improvements to financial management arrangements were welcomed, and the Association agreed that historical accounting errors should be corrected in the accounts for the 2021-22 FY.

**Action: Chair, Secretariat**

It was agreed that the proposals set out by Fraser Wood for improving financial control should be modified to suit the needs of the Association and presented to the next meeting for formal adoption.

**Action: Secretariat**

It was noted that a sum of £1,000 had been donated to Bangor City Council to help with the restoration of the kiosk on the pier that commemorates HMS Conway. Photographs of this kiosk and also the playgrounds swing that had been funded by MSFOMA in Beaumaris had been requested and would be put on the MSFOMA website.

## **9. Public Profile of the Association**

The Chair and Secretariat reported that Dr Andy Olivier had intended to attend the meeting but had been unable to do so. He had submitted a brief summary of the status of the Association's Twitter account. Key points were: we have just over 1,300 followers; that when we Tweet original material we get 10-40,000 views of them, compared to around

700 views of re-Tweeted material; that there is a paucity of new material from MSFOMA; and that a recent review of the demographic profile of different social media outlets suggested that Twitter remained the best “fit” for the MSFOMA target audience.

It was agreed that it was appropriate to continue to retain Andy Olivier to manage our profile. All present were reminded to send any items of interest to Andy Olivier for him to Tweet.

**Action: All**

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**

### **10. Welsh Government Activity**

The Secretariat’s report was noted and received. There had been no meetings of WG fisheries groups. The meeting was informed that the Minister is due to be setting up a new structure for liaison between Government and the fishing sector which is due to start later in June 2022.

### **11. NW IFCA Activity**

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

Kim Mould and Trevor Jones reported that there were some signs of seed mussel settlement in Morecambe Bay, and it was hoped that a dredge fishery would be permitted this year.

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

**Action: Secretariat**

### **12. All Party Parliamentary Group: Shellfish Aquaculture**

The report on this Group was received and accepted by the meeting.

James Wilson provided an update on the meetings of this group that he had attended since its inception in February. He felt that it provided a valuable and influential forum for airing and discussing the key challenges facing this sector. MPs from all around the UK were participating in the meetings, including Hywel Williams MP for Arfon. Mr Williams was showing a keen interest in the fate of shellfish cultivation in North Wales, and it was hoped that he would shortly be visiting Port Penrhyn to discuss current challenges and future opportunities.

The meeting felt that this APPG should be welcomed and that MSFOMA should engage with the Group. There was some discussion about the sort of issues that it would be appropriate to raise, given its semi-official status. It was agreed that it would be appropriate for MSFOMA to raise technical issues, but that it should not lobby or take a position on business or financial issues.

It was agreed that the Secretariat & Chair should draft a letter to the Chair of the APPG to set out the Association’s perspective on the key technical challenges facing this sector

(principally the difficulty exporting shellfish to Europe and shellfish hygiene / water quality issues), and circulate this for comment before sending it to the APPG.

**Action: Secretariat & Chair**

James Wilson noted that a similar cross-party group had been set up at Senedd Cymru by Mabon ap Gwynfor, MS for Dwyfor Meirionnydd. It was agreed that the Association should make contact with this group as well, again to raise technical issues.

**Action: Secretariat, Chair, James Wilson**

### **13. Menai Strait East Fishery Order**

The Chair introduced this item, noting that the report was largely an update on the work that had been successfully carried out to put the new Fishery Order in place. He was pleased to report that the Order was now fully implemented, and that leases had been issued to the tenants on all of the layings.

The meeting expressed its gratitude to the Welsh Government officials and NRW staff who had worked hard during April and May to progress the "Habitats Regulations Assessments" that were needed to complete the implementation of the Order.

It was noted that the Secretariat needed to work with NRW and the tenants of the layings to review and ideally reduce the extent of the "Managed Areas" that had been set up on a precautionary basis to protect potential reef habitat features.

**Action: Secretariat, NRW, tenants.**

### **14. 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.

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the Shellfish Centre's report about the issues associated with Pacific oyster cultivation in the Menai Strait had been formally presented to a meeting of interested parties shellfish farmers, Natural Resources Wales, MSFOMA and Welsh Government) on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022. The key findings were that there is no evidence of recent settlement of Pacific oysters in the Strait in recent years; that the abundance of "feral" oysters has declined since 2019; that the spawning potential of diploid Pacific oysters is very low; and that triploid oysters would provide a viable mitigation method for managing this very low risk.

The Association considered how the findings of this report could be used to resolve the current impasse caused by uncertainty at Government level about how best to manage Pacific oyster cultivation. MSFOMA understood that the absence of an agreed Government policy (at either the Welsh or UK Government) was an obstacle. Robert Floyd (WG) remarked that decisions on new cultivation areas are made on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the facts relevant to each case.

It was agreed that the Chair and Secretariat should pursue the following actions:-

- a) Write to Lesley Griffiths, providing a summary of the report and encouraging her to progress with the making of the Fishery Order for Menai West either with or without a national policy on Pacific oysters; and
- b) Organising a meeting with WG officials (Michelle Billing & Julian Bray) to discuss how the new Order might be progressed; and

- c) Liaise with WG Policy advisors (Rob Floyd & José Constantino) to determine both the prospects of developing a policy for Pacific oyster cultivation and/or the possibility for progressing with the Fishery Order without a policy being in place.

**Action: Chair & Secretariat**

### **15. Funding proposals & Research Update**

Lewis Le Vay indicated that the projects relevant to MSFOMA have been progressing since the last meeting. In summary:-

- a) **Pacific Oysters** - this report has been produced (see Item 12 above).
- b) **Spat collectors / MOSSS** -work was ongoing, and an application for a larger cultivation area was being progressed.
- c) **Water quality** -this work which was being progressed through a partnership between the Shellfish Centre, Dŵr Cymru, the Rivers Trust, Deepdock and MSFOMA.

Lewis Le Vay confirmed that the Shellfish Centre was due to be hosting some a conference or some workshops covering these issues in the autumn, and there could be a role for MSFOMA to support and / or participate. He agreed to provide details as these became available.

**Action: Lewis Le Vay**

### **16. 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**

James Wilson reported that following poor shellfish hygiene sampling results in May, all of the shellfish beds in the eastern Menai Strait now had a "B" shellfish hygiene classification. This was a considerable setback - there had been hopes that an "A" classification would be attained for some areas prior to these results. This is vital for the future of shellfish farming in the Strait, as mussels from "B" class shellfish beds can no longer be practically exported to the EU.

Shellfish farmers were taking action to challenge these particular results, which are outside the normal range seen in this area. The samples are taken by a firm of consultants, Carcinus Ltd.

It was noted that a 2021 report had found that the UK approach to sampling and classifying shellfish waters is less pragmatic than the approach implemented in other countries both within the EU and elsewhere in the world<sup>1</sup>.

Shellfish farmers also have concerns about the decisions that have been taken by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) with regard to designating Representative Monitoring Points (RMPs) and determining the boundaries of areas, which have also been based on work carried out by Carcinus Ltd. These locations do not appear to adequately take account of local conditions.

Members of the Association discussed the role of local authorities, and in particular the “Local Action Group” (LAG) that was meant to provide liaison between environmental health officers and stakeholders over these issues. It was noted that the chairing of the LAG is rotated between different authorities, and that communication links were not always clear or consistent.

Lewis Le Vay reported that the Shellfish Centre are working closely with Dŵr Cymru and NRW to identify the sources of bacterial inputs to the Strait and address them. NRW have identified a goal of attaining Class A status for the area, and Dŵr Cymru are also keen to achieve improvements.

After lengthy discussion of these issues and their consequences it was agreed that:-

- MSFOMA should clarify lines of communication between MSFOMA and the LAG and seek to promote a constructive dialogue at the local level; and
- MSFOMA should contact Carcinus Ltd to encourage discussion of sampling, the location of sampling points, and the extent of shellfish hygiene boundaries.

**Action: Chair, Secretariat**

It was further agreed that a meeting should be held between the Chair, Secretariat, James Wilson and Lewis Le Vay to clarify some of the points discussed and to refine the approach for MSFOMA to adopt.

**Action: Chair, Secretariat, James Wilson, Lewis Le Vay**

It was also noted that shellfish hygiene and water quality were issues being considered by the APPG on Shellfish Aquaculture (item 12 on the agenda), and that these events could be presented to that group to demonstrate how the UK’s approach to legacy EU requirements is putting UK industry at a disadvantage.

**Action: Chair & Secretariat**

**ii. *Bonamia***

This was discussed at the start of the meeting (see Matters Arising).

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

Kate Griffith had provided the Secretariat with the link to a simulation model for larval dispersal in the Irish Sea, to be circulated to all at the meeting .

**Action: Secretariat**

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<sup>1</sup> Available here: <https://www.seafish.org/document/?id=621ffa11-4943-4698-bdd4-bcf3784bdda8>

Kate Griffith reported that one *C. fornicata* specimen had been reported from the western Menai Strait, and another from Caernarfon Bay. All were reminded to keep an eye out for slipper limpets in the area.

**Action: All**

**iv. Norovirus**

No further update.

**17. Any Other Business**

**a) Correspondence**

No additional correspondence had been received.

**b) Local Government elections & representation**

Ioan Thomas and Howard Mattocks were both congratulated on their re-election.

It was noted that some of the council representatives had not yet been confirmed, and that some who are invited to participate in MSFOMA meetings had not attended for some time. It was agreed that the Secretariat should make enquiries to determine if these organisations wished to review their participation; it would also be useful to review the existing Articles & Standing Orders for the Association to ensure that they provide for adequate participation.

**Action: Secretariat**

**18. Dates for next meetings**

Proposed meeting dates for 2022:-

- a. Q3 2022 - 14<sup>th</sup> September
- b. Q4 2022 - 14<sup>th</sup> December [AGM]

It was agreed that the Secretariat and Lewis Le Vay should liaise to book the conference room at the Shellfish Centre for the next two meetings.

**Action: Secretariat, Lewis Le Vay**



## Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Sand in Dock - keep under review.	James Wilson & Secretariat
2.	Register of Interests - review current Statement of interests on MSFOMA website ( <a href="https://www.msfoma.org/?page_id=478">https://www.msfoma.org/?page_id=478</a> ) and confirm it is accurate.	All
3.	<i>Bonamia</i> - share recent research into presence of <i>Bonamia</i> DNA in other species in the Strait.	Lewis Le Vay
4.	Autumn workshop / conferences - keep MSFOMA informed about plans for these events.	Lewis Le Vay
5.	Directors - appoint either Kim Mould or Trevor Jones as a new Director.	Kim Mould, Trevor Jones, Secretariat.
6.	Participation - invite RYA Cymru and North Wales Wildlife Trust to attend next meeting as observers.	Secretariat
7.	Finances - issue lease invoices with a 1/3 discount for the period April-September 2022.	Secretariat
8.	Finances - account for historical book-keeping errors in formal accounts submitted for 2021-22	Chair, Secretariat
9.	Finances - develop proposals for financial control for discussion at next MSFOMA meeting.	Secretariat.
10.	Social media - all to send any items suitable for the MSFOMA Twitter feed to Andy Olivier ( <a href="mailto:avdsolivier@gmail.com">avdsolivier@gmail.com</a> ).	All
11.	Website / Twitter - provide photograph and brief resume suitable for website and Twitter	All
12.	NWIFCA - encourage adoption of Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan.	Chair & Secretariat
13.	All Party Parliamentary Group - MSFOMA to write to Chair of this group to set out the key challenges facing the UK shellfish farming sector.	Chair & Secretariat
14.	Menai East - work with lessees and NRW to review extent of "managed areas" around reef features.	Secretariat, NRW, tenants.
15.	Menai West - write to Lesley Griffiths, summarising results of oyster study, encourage progress with new Fishery Order either with or without a policy on Pacific oysters.	Chair & Secretariat
16.	Menai West - organise meeting with WG officials (Michelle Billing & Julian Bray) to discuss options for progress.	Chair & Secretariat
17.	Menai West - keep WG Policy Advisors informed about MSFOMA action to encourage creation of a new Fishery Order in Menai West wither with or without a policy on Pacific oysters.	Chair & Secretariat
18.	Invasive Alien Species - circulate details of simulation model to participants.	Secretariat
19.	<i>Crepidula fornicata</i> - look out for slipper limpets and report sightings of any shells / individuals.	All
20.	Local authority participation - ask appointing bodies to review their representation and encourage participation.	Secretariat
21.	Date for next meeting - 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2022, Shellfish Centre	Secretariat & Lewis Le Vay