

**Wales Marine Fisheries Advisory Group (WMFAG)**

**Notes of meeting held on Monday 1 October 2018 at WG office, Rhodfa Padarn, commencing at 10.10 am.**

**Attending:**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Nick O’Sullivan (NOS)	Chair
Jim Evans	Welsh Fishermans Association
John O’Connor	Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers
Brett Garner	Llyn Fishermans Association
Trevor Jones	MSFOMA
Rowland Sharp	Natural Resources Wales
Holly Whiteley	Seafish Wales Advisory Com.
Sion Williams	Llyn Pot Fishermans Association
Julian Bray	Welsh Government
Bethan Jones	“ “
Mark Stafford	“ “
Colin Charman	“ “
Michael Jones	“ “
Tim Croucher (11-2)	“ “
Margaret Rees	“ “
<b>By telecom:</b>	
Alison Kitchener	Welsh Government
Emily Williams	RSPB/WEL
<b>Apologies were received from:</b>	
Len Walters	West Wales Shellfishermans Association
Kevin Denman	South West Wales Fishing Communities

1.	<p><b>Welcome and apologies</b> - The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and in particular Alison Kitchener, Head of Fisheries, who was attending her first meeting via telecom. Apologies were as listed.</p> <p>Following introductions AK provided a brief outline of her work within Welsh Government and was now looking forward to further challenges with the Fisheries Division.</p> <p>JB thanked members and colleagues for attending and their ongoing support. He outlined the substantial workload staff continued to deal with since the last meeting, with Brexit and Government Business placing substantial additional pressure on the Marine and Fisheries Division and the internal support services we rely on.</p> <p>Members were informed Brexit was to be a substantive agenda item, however due to ongoing discussions, there were many things which could not be discussed at this stage. It is anticipated that an extraordinary meeting of WMFAG would be held in November when more concise information is available; this will be arranged by the Brexit team.</p> <p><b>Action 1: Brexit team to schedule an extra ordinary meeting of WMFAG during November to provide update to members on state of play to date.</b></p> <p>Members were also informed of a number of structural changes within Marine &amp; Fisheries Division, which included the departure of Stuart Evans. Colin Charman has been seconded to WG from NRW and will be undertaking some of the work streams previously covered by Stuart.</p>
2.	<p><b>Notes of meeting held on 16 May 2018</b> – were approved as a true record. There were no further matters arising.</p>
2(a)	<p><b>Actions:</b> The Chair took members through the actions and the status of each was outlined.</p> <p><i>Action 3 – Escape hatches</i> – WFA contacted their members, they now have an indication of numbers interested in including escape hatches in their pots. As a result JE agreed to proceed with an EMFF application to secure funding to help industry introduce escape panels on shellfish pots. Numbers for the application process will also include hobby potters who may be interested.</p> <p>As discussions continued, it was agreed that Seafish and WFA would work together to produce an information brochure and a YouTube video to help inform industry of the benefits of using escape hatches.</p> <p><i>Action 4 – Brexit task &amp; finish Group</i> – JE explained a Technical Group had been set up.</p> <p><i>Action 5</i> – Tim Croucher would be attending meeting to provide and update on Export Certificates, u10m vessel reporting and iVMS. James Watkins was unable to attend therefore Item 6 will be held over until the next meeting.</p> <p><i>Action 6 – Whelk fishery</i> – Science seek fishers to take part in a reference fleet, particularly in mid Wales – to date there has been no take up on this. JE confirmed</p>

	<p>a small number of individuals were interested in contributing.</p> <p><i>Action 7 – Possible vessel engine replacement under EMFF scheme.</i> JE confirmed there had been very little interest expressed through the survey put forward by WFA.</p> <p><b>Action 2:</b> BJ to prepare email for industry explaining that this item would not be progressing further due to lack of interest.</p> <p><i>Action 10:</i> To be discussed under Agenda item 7.</p> <p><i>Action 11:</i> Revised documents provided at item 9(i).</p> <p><i>Action 12:</i> Suggestions to contact fishermen not affiliated to associations – Some responses had been put forward which included using Twitter, Facebook, other Social media sites, flyers being sent out with licence variations.</p> <p>Members were informed that meetings papers were now available on the Marine &amp; Fisheries web pages. During discussions members were asked to consider the most effective way to be able to engage fishers who were not affiliated to an association.</p> <p><b>Action 3 –</b> Members to consider and inform Secretariat of social media areas which are known to be used by fishing industry. This will enable M&amp;F to consider ways in which to contact those who are not affiliated to associations and make use of sites which are most likely to be used by industry.</p> <p><i>Action 14 – Escape Gaps –</i> The Chair and members thanked Sion Williams for providing a paper on the pros and cons of using escape hatches in pots. JB suggested using the paper to inform wider industry including recreational fishermen.</p> <p>During discussions members supported the use of escape hatches in pots, whilst there is limited resource within Marine &amp; Fisheries to introduce a scheme to make such a scheme compulsory, it was suggested this could be introduced as a voluntary scheme on a short term basis. Members also felt funding under EMFF should be sought to take such a scheme forward to enhance sustainable fishing.</p> <p><b>Action 4:</b> WFA to put together an EMFF application for funding for escape hatches for pots / also work with Seafish to produce an information brochure with a link to a You tube video to inform industry.</p>
3.	<p><b>Fisheries Operations -</b> Members had received a written update on fisheries operations which had taken place between May – end September, which included the opening of the Three Rivers cockle fishery. JB outlined other key areas of work which included bass and whelks.</p> <p>Members were also advised of prosecutions which had taken place during this time period, these included offences relating to scallops, cockles and marine licencing.</p> <p>Members raised concerns over the use of the current FPVs; JB explained current resource issues had caused problems as staff were having to work on other</p>

	<p>areas. It is anticipated this issue will be addressed shortly.</p> <p>JB reported there have been 26 successful prosecutions since 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018, these included scallop and marine licences offences. It was hoped that by the end of 2018 there would be a total of 30 prosecutions. During discussions members noted the value of some fines and sought clarification on whether WG received these monies; however it was confirmed only the costs are received.</p>
4.	<p><b>Brexit – Including Item 8 – Sector Readiness/Wales Seafood Strategy –</b></p> <p>Although a member of the Brexit team did not attend, BJ provided an update on Sector Readiness, Wales Seafood Strategy.</p> <p><i>Sector Readiness</i> – Research undertaken by Miller Research was now complete and the Cabinet Secretary had been informed. A final version of the report was awaited and would be distributed to the group when ready. This would include an action plan, which would explain what could be considered in the event of a ‘no deal’ scenario, and sector readiness.</p> <p>A comms plan is also being considered to ensure industry is informed.</p> <p><i>Wales Seafood strategy</i> – BJ explained she was hoping to provide an update to members following the recent seafood trade mission to Hong Kong. However, BJ is still awaiting feedback from those who attended.</p> <p><i>Simplified costs scheme for EMFF</i> - Members received a document ‘Welsh simplified costs EMFF proposal – BJ explained this draft list of items is available to small scale fishermen via an online application only. An upper limit would apply although this is not currently available. Feedback from members is required as soon as possible.</p> <p><b>Action 5: Members to provide feedback to BJ on the content of the Simplified costs scheme.</b></p>
5.	<p><b>Summary of Key Workstreams</b> – Members were informed of changes made to the priority of some workstreams with the top 3 priorities changing to now include Export Certificates, under 10m catch reporting and inshore iVMS. JB explained this now reflected the urgent requirement to complete Brexit ‘day 1 readiness’ work.</p> <p><i>Priority 1</i> - TC provided an update on the work being undertaken on each of these workstreams and in particular Export Certificates explaining this was a substantial piece of work involving each of the devolved administrations to develop a digital system to enable exporters to generate export certificates.</p> <p><i>Priority 2/3 – Under 10m Catch Report/Vessel Monitoring.</i> - TC explained EMFF funding was available to help develop an under 10m catch reporting system and also apply mandatory regulations to iVMS for the inshore fisheries fleet. Members were informed a procurement exercise was underway to develop a technical spec for both systems which will be finalised shortly. Potential suppliers have been identified and will go to tender early October.</p> <p>Members were also informed of a series of workshops which are to be held to inform industry of the Data Capture System. The group were asked to make members of their associations aware of the workshops. The U10m reporting</p>

	<p>system will provide data which will ‘feed’ into catch certificates above.</p> <p><b>Action 6: Members to make their association members and wider fisheries interests aware of the various workshops which will be held during October to inform industry of the requirements for the data capture system.</b></p> <p><i>Priority 4 – Whelks.</i> Members were informed work was ongoing with Legal to introduce new legislation. Officials would soon be briefing the Cabinet Secretary on proposals and it is anticipated new legislation could be introduced by end of 2018.</p> <p><i>Priority 5 – Scallops -</i> This workstreams remains RED. Officials are waiting for advice on the most suitable vehicle to introduce flexible permitting measures.</p> <p><i>Priority 6 – Cockles –</i> Officials are waiting for advice on the most suitable vehicle to introduce flexible permitting measures. A further consultation will be undertaken and will include key measures for consideration.</p> <p>Discussions took place during which members raised concerns over the time taken to introduce new legislation. Members felt Brexit work was taking priority over the business as usual, and felt additional resources were needed to cover this work.</p> <p>FAPs – CC and Michelle Billing will be continuing work on the consultation document.</p> <p>Assessing Welsh Fisheries – work ongoing on next stages of the purple assessments.</p> <p>Wrasse – It was confirmed that no live wrasse were being taken.</p> <p>Razor Clam fishery – An initial sub-tidal survey has been completed which showed 3 species present, officials are looking at the options for conducting sub-tidal survey which will be more challenging.</p> <p>Dee Estuary/Angling – continued to be monitored</p>
6.	<p><b>Marine &amp; Fisheries Evidence Strategy</b> – Members were informed this item would be carried over to next meeting.</p>
7.	<p><b>Common Fisheries Policy Update</b> – Members received the paper provided. Further updates were given by MS and MJ. MS explained that the commitment to fish all stocks at Maximum Sustainable Yield mortalities by 2020 would have a lowering effect on the setting of quotas in the next two years. As part of accounting for all fishing mortality, the Landing Obligation would take full effect from the beginning of 2019. Fortunately, as part of the North West Waters Regional Group process, high-survivability exemptions had been secured for most stocks of interest in Welsh waters and as such Welsh fishers would feel minimal effect. MJ provided further update on fisheries for 2018, explaining at December Council 2018, Wales received better news than expected. The quota allocations given were well within the parameters and as a result no fisheries had been closed during 2018. Major uptake was for skates and rays, below 60% uptake for the year.</p>

Now looking at quotas for 2019, scientific advice has been produced Commission will now issue guidelines to the approach for issuing that advice and in November produce their first attempt at setting quotas. This will be discussed at a stakeholder meeting, and members will be invited to this in November – invites come from Defra.

Intention is email to members seeking interest to have invitation; if you want to go the invitation will come from George Eustice.

Breakdown on scientific advice for 2019 for welsh fisheries is mostly good; increases in the Irish sea for sole, plaice and cod, and haddock. Carrying forward quota levels for 2018 for many other species.

MJ extended Defra invite to WMFAG stakeholders who had a direct interest.

**Action 7:** MJ to contact fishery members of WMFAG to determine their interest in attending the stakeholder meeting with Defra during November.

**Bass** – MJ explained restrictions had been amended to allow 1 bass per person per day whether fishing from shore or a boat; this is from 1<sup>st</sup> October - 31<sup>st</sup> December.

Some signs of stock recovery for bass, December Counsel in December probably won't see any major changes in restrictions. MJ explained there may be some changes to restrictions on fishing with nets and possibly from the shore.

On recreational bag limits on UK position – charter fishing had suffered through restrictions, 3 might work, 5 would definitely work.

From industry happy with allocation, recreational limits charter problem with charter boats landing every type of fish they catch and selling them. JE aligned the WFA with the response to the Commission made by the NWW Technical Group on bass.

JOC – should have bag limits on recreational angling – for shore anglers 1 fish per day. No increase in commercial activity

**Berried Lobster and Crawfish** – Members received a paper outlining current legislation to protect berried lobsters and crawfish in certain parts of the UK. Currently the only protection for berried lobster and crawfish in Wales is voluntary.

The EU Commission proposals to introduce regulations on technical conservation regulations prohibiting the landing of berried hens received a mixed reaction in Wales in the past. It is not clear when the legislation would be introduced, and may be discussed at December Counsel and introduced as part of the general quota Regulation.

Members at the meeting were supportive of legislation to protect berried hens and felt this should have been introduced during the initial crustacean review.

UK stakeholder meeting – members would be invited (see Action point 7 above) to the UK stakeholder meeting in London on 15 November. Additionally there will be an opportunity to meet with the Cabinet Secretary ahead of the European Council in December to discuss particular Welsh issues. This has now been arranged for

	<p>21 November and invites sent out to WMFAG members.</p> <p><b>Action 8:</b> MS will write to WMFAG members to invite them to a stakeholder meeting with the Cabinet Secretary ahead of negotiations at December counsel</p> <p>Holly kindly offered for Seafish to update the socio-economic reports on bass and skates and rays; she will be able to provide the reports ahead of the meeting.</p> <p><b>Action 9:</b> HW to provide MS/MJ with the socio-economic reports on skates &amp; rays.</p>
8.	<b>Sector Readiness – Wales Seafood Strategy</b> – discussed under item 4
9.	<p><b>Items for information</b></p> <p>(i) <i>Website</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Activity / hits</i> - Members felt the information was useful however further explanation was required. It was also agreed this should be provided on an annual basis.</li> <li>• <i>Structure options – for proposed web site pages</i> - Option 2 was the preferred option</li> <li>• <i>Stakeholder register / GDPR Privacy Statement</i> – Members raised concerns over the difficulty in registering.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action 10:</b> JB to ascertain what information members should be informed of following registration on the Stakeholder Register.</p> <p>(ii) <i>Angel Shark</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Harbour Porpoise</i> – Annual Report (web links provided)</p> <p>(iv) <i>Dates of meetings 2019</i> – Meeting dates provided, however members were informed these are likely to be changed.</p> <p>(v) <i>Cadmium &amp; Arsenic concentrations in Cardigan Bay Scallops</i> - BJ explained test undertaken by the Mod had shown high levels of cadmium and arsenic concentrations in scallops. WG are undertaken further tests together with the Food Standards Agency.</p>
10.	<b>Terms of reference and further deputies/members</b> – Members advised Secretariat was still waiting for details of additional deputies and confirmation of acceptance of ToR from some members/associations.
11.	<b>Items of any other business</b> - HW provided members with a brief outline of the work being undertaken by Caroline Dawson on the project for Welsh Seafood. Holly will invite Caroline to the next meeting of WMFAG.