

Wales Marine Fisheries Advisory Group (WMFAG)

Notes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 24th June – 7-9.30pm

Present Nick O’Sullivan, Chair, Welsh Marine Fisheries Advisory Group Jim Evans, Welsh Fisherman’s Association Trevor Jones, MSFOMA Kevin Denman, South West Wales Fishing Communities Mark Roberts, North Wales Fishermen’s Cooperative Holly Whitely, Seafish Wales Sean Evans, NRW John O’Connor, Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers Gill Bell, Wales Environment Link Gareth Bevington, Deputy Director, Marine and Fisheries, Welsh Government Mike Dowell, Deputy Director, Marine and Fisheries, Welsh Government Julian Bray, Domestic Fisheries Policy and Management, Welsh Government Rob Floyd Gary Douch James Watkins Bekah Cioffi Elen King, Welsh Government (note taker)
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1	Welcome and apologies: Apologies from Carwyn Thomas, Pembrokeshire County Council
2	I) Approval of notes of meeting held on 12th March Minutes of last meeting approved subject to the following changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update from Sean Evans – delete after NRW Request for more detailed minutes in future II) Progress on actions from previous meeting Actions all completed
3	Introduction: Mike updated how demanding the work as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic had been on the Division, especially implementing the Welsh Fisheries Grant. But there are big challenges ahead and the level of ambition has not diminished. The work on EU Exit is starting to move again and Wales is preparing to react quickly to progress fisheries negotiations.
4	Control and Enforcement: James Watkins gave an update on Control and Enforcement. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shore based enforcement will recommence next week at around 70% capacity• Extra staff have been recruited for the vessels and full safety management processes are now in place and so the vessels will be back at sea from next month• Catch certs – work is progressing and there will be well developed systems in place in time for the end of the transition period

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • iVMS in Wales is further ahead than in the rest of the UK and is ready to roll out <p>ACTION: Any intelligence and thoughts on key priorities for enforcement to James</p>
5	<p>Domestic Fisheries Policy and Management:</p> <p>Julian gave an update and reinforced that WG remains focused on Flexible Fisheries Management</p> <p>Updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Rivers cockles – getting ready for July opening. With Covid 19 currently risk assessing opening the fisheries to ensure the safety of public, gatherers and staff • Whelk consultation closed on 7th June and 57 responses were received. Response generally very positive with a minimum of 70% positive response to the questions. Further consultation may be needed on some aspects • Cockle Order – hoping for Ministerial approval to consult on cockles towards the end of the year. • Several and Regulating Orders – Menai SO's on track against delivery plan. Officials discussing Bury Inlet and Dee, in discussion with NRW <p>Gill asked about the timeframe for the Assessing Welsh Fisheries Activity, Julian responded he hoped to issue consultation in the Autumn. She also asked regarding resource. Julian responded that there would be no additional resource in the short term but would be reprioritising the resource available.</p> <p>Holly asked if there were target dates for subsequent consultations on whelks. Julian responded, if necessary, as soon as possible but depended on legislation being available. There is no timeline for scallops.</p> <p>Trevor asked regarding the Menai West and Menai East Several Orders</p> <p>Julian responded:</p> <p>Menai West – there is a particular issue in Menai West and if able to solve that then the several order would be in place early next year</p> <p>Menai East – due to expire in April 22 - WG working to ensure that new order will start on the demise of the old one.</p> <p>Julian said that he recognised the importance of Several Orders for Menai East and Menai West and understood the concerns for Menai East but the team is working in a systematic way and aiming for that date. It is currently on target.</p> <p>Regarding whelks, Kevin acknowledged that, although time consuming, working closely with the industry on a pre-consultation had produced a better consultation which was well supported but reinforced that enforcement will be crucial.</p>

<p>6</p>	<p>UK Fisheries Bill</p> <p>Rob Floyd presented an update on the UK Fisheries Bill. The presentation has been circulated to members</p> <p>Jim asked how WG was intending to engage on management plans and objectives for the JFS. He also stated the need for a 5 year strategy.</p> <p>Rob confirmed that the JFS would be needed within 8 months of the enactment of the UK Fisheries Bill. The JFS will be part of delivering a Future Fisheries Policy and the intention is to have a stakeholder group to inform that work. The Minister's statement on Brexit and our Seas was delayed because of the COVID 19 pandemic but hope to revisit soon.</p> <p>Jim and Holly agreed that it would be useful to have a common understanding of the direction of travel.</p> <p>Rob also confirmed that an extra 100 tonnes of quota had been secured for Wales this year.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Marine and Fisheries Funding Policy</p> <p>Gary gave an update that the £2.4 million was not ring-fenced and work is needed to ensure that the money is still available for use following the response to the COVID 19 pandemic.</p> <p>Jim gave thanks for the Welsh Fisheries Support Grant that gave a much needed lifeline to the industry and that it would be a shame if the £2.4 million and subsequent consequential was lost given the need to address market failures.</p> <p>Kevin said that it would be good to be able to invest in port facilities and infrastructure.</p> <p>Gary said that WG is working for the EMFF successor to be available from 2022 and working on the basis of the commitment that Wales does not get a penny less</p> <p>Jim - SCS one of the features of successor schemes - noted & understand.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Seafood Market & Supply Chain Development</p> <p>Bethan updated that they had been looking into a possible market for Ray wings but that there was no market or processing capacity among the manufacturers contacted.</p> <p>Bethan mentioned Menter a Busnes' Port to Plate initiative as a way of finding partnerships to developing product lines</p>

<p>9</p>	<p>Fisheries Science and Evidence</p> <p>There was an update from Bekah on fisheries science and evidence.</p> <p>COVID 19 has impacted on timings of ICES survey and that work takes priority so there may not be the budget to fund surveys in other areas.</p> <p>Gill asked about action to develop a spatial plan on fish stocks especially sand eels and sprats. Sean stated that there wasn't as much pressure on those to stocks in Wales as in the North Sea.</p> <p>Holly asked about the Fisheries Evidence Plan. Bekah confirmed this had been pushed back as the timing for the statement on Brexit and our seas was delayed but that she is working on the next plan.</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Paper 6 was for information</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group thanked Sean as it was his last meeting as Colin is returning to NRW • Please send comments and feedback on virtual meeting to Louise Durns

Actions

Action 1 : Any intelligence and thoughts on key priorities for enforcement to James

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