



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Wales Marine Action & Advisory Group (WMAAG): 29 August 2021

Minutes of the WMAAG meeting of 29 August 2021.

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Key messages and actions

Meeting number: 15

Start time: 10.30am

End time: 12.30am.

Attendance

Peter Davies (Chair) (PD Partnership),
Phil Hollington (Cragen Llyn a Mon)
Jonathan Hughes, National Trust
Jetske Germing, Pembs Coastal Forum & Marine Energy Wales
Steve Hall, Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum
Rhona Macdonald, British Ports
David Harding, British Marine Aggregates Association
Kirsty Lindenbaum, Natural Resources Wales
Alys Morris, Severn Estuary Partnership
Alex Hubberstey, Blue Marine Foundation
Nicola Gandy, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
Ed Salter, The Crown Estate
Emily Williams, RSPB
Jim Evans, Welsh Fisherman's Association
John Wrottesley, Seabed Users and Developers Group
Trevor Jones, Bangor Mussels
Clare Trotman, Marine Conservation Society & Wales Environment Link
Jonathan Monk, Port of Milford Haven
Fergus O'Brien, Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water
Mike Williams, Marine Energy Programme Project Director
Welsh Government
Julie James, Minister for Climate Change
Gareth Bevington, Deputy Director, Marine & Fisheries
Caryn Le Roux, Head of Marine Resilience and Climate Change
Bekah Cioffi, Head of Marine and Fisheries Science
Carla Owen, Marine Evidence Strategy Manager
Becky Phillips, Senior marine ecosystems and biodiversity manager
Jasper Roberts, Renewable Energy Programme & Projects
Adam Yardley, Marine Energy Programme Project Manager

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Michelle Fraser, Corporate Support Officer
Daniel Butler, Special Adviser
Sara Faye, Special Adviser
Hilary Evans, Secretariat

Presenters

Julie James, Minister for Climate Change
Gareth Bevington (Deputy Director WG)
Caryn Le Roux (WG)
Jasper Roberts, Marine Energy Programme
Mike Williams, Marine Energy Programme
Emily Williams, RSPB

Apologies

David McDermott, One Voice Wales
Phil Horton, RYA
Mark Russell – David Harding attending
Jon Parker, Aquaculture Industry Wales
Katie Harvard-Smith – Alys Morris attending
Jennifer Goodwin – John Wrottesley attending
Rhian Jardine – Kirsty Lindenbaum attending
David Tudor, Blue Marine Foundation – Alex Hubberstey attending

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Marine & Fisheries Deputy Director's update
3. COP Cymru
4. Leading a Blue Recovery – Julie James, Minister for Climate Change
5. Blue Recovery next steps
6. Marine Energy Programme

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7. Biosecurity for Life

8. AOB

Introduction

The Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG) provides a forum for discussion and debate, and provides support and advice to the Welsh Government on strategic marine and coastal policy. It is the overarching stakeholder group for the work of the Marine and Fisheries Division of the Welsh Government.

The WMAAG is comprised of 40 stakeholder leads who represent the interests of all sectors with an interest or investment in the Marine environment in Wales. Details of sectors and lead organisations can be found within the group's Terms of Reference.

Key points and actions

Item 1: Welcome and Introduction

Key messages

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the agenda for the morning.

The Chair explained requested organogram was out of date due to staff changes and agreed a revised one would be circulated when available.

Members were encouraged to submit updates to the secretariat and for these to be circulated to the group ahead of next meeting.

Actions: Secretariat to circulate revised organogram

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Members to provide secretariat with updates ahead of next meeting.

Item 2: Marine & Fisheries Deputy Directors' update

Key messages

Gareth Bevington, Deputy Director for Marine and Fisheries outlined key policy areas and progress.

Marine Planning work progressing on Strategic Resource Areas (SRAs), working with the Stakeholder Reference Group. Marine Evidence packages | GOV.WALES published in August. Work is progressing on Strategic Resource Areas and the development of Sector Locational Guidance is due to be published in the near future.

MPAs and MCZs has incurred slight delays in launching the pre-consultation event, due to Ministerial changes with the new Government. We are committed to the process and expect to launch a pre-consultation in the coming weeks. Details will be discussed with the Task and Finish group pre-launch.

MPA Network Management Action Plan, Annual Report and Relevant Authority Group reports have all been published and can be found here - Marine Protected Areas | GOV.WALES.

UK Marine Strategy Part 3 is currently out for consultation and closes 29th November.

Seabird Conservation Strategy is a very new exciting piece of work which is in its early stages.

Joint Fisheries Statement is being drafted with all the UK nations involved. Consultation is expected January/February next year.

Whelk legislation is progressing well and due to come into force later this year. We are talking to stakeholders about guidance and fishery management.

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Thanks were offered for the Whelk legislation but concern was raised that the JFS was being designed without stakeholder input.

GB explained the reason for delays to the WMFAG review and how it was being considered in conjunction with how we manage stakeholder engagement, Ministerial advice and co-management of fisheries. He agreed to set up a bespoke meeting to discuss JFS. An agency approach is not being considered as this would require primary legislation.

Actions: GB to arrange separate stakeholder meeting on JFS.

Several Orders work is progressing aiming for delivery by March 2022.

Assessing Welsh Fisheries Activities project – Gareth agreed to provide an update with further details.

Actions: Gareth agreed to provide an update on the Assessing Welsh Fisheries project.

Item 3: COP Cymru

Caryn Le Roux gave an update on COP26 and COP Cymru. The aim is to get marine firmly on the agenda for Wales Climate Week and asked members about how they would like to see marine themes represented.

Caution was offered on focusing on one theme. Ocean literacy/awareness raising was supported to cover a suite of marine and fisheries issues, which could include sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, blue carbon and marine planning and evidence.

Members suggested an email be sent out with the further COP Cymru action and key dates.

Actions: Details of COP Cymru and the Expression of Interest form to accompany these notes. Members to consider opportunities for raising marine agenda and feed back to Caryn Le Roux.

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Item 4: Leading a Blue Recovery

The Chair welcomed Julie James, Minister for Climate Change.

Members of this group co-developed a proposal for an integrated Blue Recovery package, which covers a cross cutting range of work areas supporting and utilising the marine environment.

The Chair gave an overview of the Blue Recovery proposals as outlined in 'Leading a Blue Recovery' which was presented to the Minister in July.

- Developing **ocean literacy** across all parts of society - raising awareness of the significance of our coasts and seas will encourage further action across policy areas, and other administrative frameworks such as Public Service Boards.
- **Sustainable long term investment** and developing longer term sources of public and private finance is crucial to support delivery of key objectives
- **Building capacity**, particularly at the local level, will enable meaningful community engagement to identify local opportunities and challenges and deliver action

The Minister wholeheartedly supported the proposals outlined and thanked members for their work in developing 'Leading a Blue Recovery'.

The Minister gave her commitment to getting our oceans back into good environmental status whilst supporting sustainable fisheries and ocean derived energy.

Members raised points with the Minister on cross portfolio working, particularly with Lesley Griffiths, but also on water quality, coastal erosion and community engagement, and the need for capacity to deliver legislative commitments.

The Minister explained how Brexit and Covid-19 was taking up a lot of legislative counsel time and pushing down priorities, causing delays to policy and legislative decisions.

She gave assurances that Ministers are working across boundaries and there are a number of other areas where collaboration is needed e.g. the Community

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Food Strategy and behaviour change to reward the right behaviour with regards to impacts on the sea. She also confirmed that marine energy is not about energy at any cost.

The Minister strongly supported co-production of an implementation plan and that working with WMAAG was the best approach to carry this out. She invited members to begin the design of a Blue Recovery Plan for delivery this Senedd term, working with WG officials, to identify specific actions, focussing on delivery and articulating practical actions and how we tackle these things. A particular ask was to identify the absolute essentials, both practical and regulatory, we cannot move forward without.

Item 5: Blue Recovery – Next Steps

The group welcomed the positive endorsement given by the Minister for Climate Change, for 'Leading a Blue Recovery'.

The group discussed how to progress with developing an implementation and action plan.

Including:

- Focussed working groups/Subject focused forums.
- Prioritising and focus on solutions
- Working collectively to identify policy gaps where there is a key need.
- Identify non-legislative priorities
- EMFF successor scheme funding

Next steps

- EMFF replacement scheme as a substantive item on the next WMAAG agenda.
- Individual organisations to look at regulatory and non-regulatory priorities to feed into a collective summary.
- Lesley Griffiths, RWANT to be copied in on fisheries priorities.
- Consider links to raising marine agenda during Wales Climate Week
- Caryn Le Roux and Hilary Evans will be the designated officials working with

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WMAAG on the Blue Recovery Action Plan. Peter Davies agreed to help facilitate.

Actions: Secretariat to add EMFF Replacement Scheme to agenda for next meeting

Secretariat to ensure Lesley Griffiths, RWANT is copied into relevant priorities.

WG officials to discuss with Peter Davies how to bring group together to identify priorities.

Item 6: Marine Energy Programme (MEP)

Jasper Roberts, (Deputy Director Renewable Energy Programme & Projects & Public Transport Bill) introduced the aims of the Marine Energy Programme and explained this session as an initial reach out to stakeholders.

Mike Williams, Project Director presented an overview of the programme, its aims, challenges and desired outcomes. The team would like to work with stakeholders as the project develops.

MEP consists of 3 main themes:

- Floating Offshore Wind
- Tidal Stream and Wave
- Tidal Lagoons

Any development will have an impact on the natural environment. We are in a Global Climate and Nature Emergency, and it is important to address these issues. The MEP team are keen to reach out to stakeholders for guidance and advice to help find solutions to mitigate negative impacts.

Actions: Stakeholders are encouraged to contact the MEP team to provide advice, guidance and discuss any concerns.

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Contacts:

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Item 7: Biosecurity for Life

Emily Williams, RSPB provided members with a presentation of the **Biosecurity for Life** project.

Biosecurity involves protecting places from the threats to wildlife posed by introducing new diseases or types of plants or animals which do not occur naturally there.

The Project is working hard to raise awareness of the threat of invasive predators and put in place systems to prevent their accidental introduction to islands. They are focussing their efforts on specially protected islands which are designated for breeding seabirds.

Biosecurity booklets, leaflets and posters are available to offer guidance and help spread awareness. See Awareness Raising · Page text (biosecurityforlife.org.uk) for further details.

Item 8: AOB

Key dates:

- 9 November – CSAG stakeholder meeting
- 1-12 November – COP26. There will be 4 Regional Green Zones (North, Mid, SW & SE Wales) held in Wales to coincide with COP26.
- 11-12 November – Scottish Blue Carbon Conference
- 22 – 26 November – Wales Climate Week
- 29 November – UK Marine Strategy Part 3 - consultation closes
- January / February 2022 – Launch of Joint Fisheries Statement consultation

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(13 weeks).

Actions: Members to send any agenda requests to secretariat:
Hilary.evans2@gov.wales

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