



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

MEETING, DOCUMENT

Ministerial Advisory Group for Welsh Fisheries meeting: 14 July 2022

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2022.

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Agenda

2.30 pm Welcome and introductions – Gareth Bevington
Overall aims and Terms of Reference (Paper 1) - Gareth Bevington
3.15pm Update on the Joint Fisheries Statement – Tamsin Brown
3.30pm Minister to join meeting
Strategic aims for Welsh Fisheries (discussion paper 2) - Minister and Tamsin Brown
4.25pm AOB and Date for next meeting
4.30pm Close

Attendees

Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths, MS
Jon Parker, Chair, Seafish Wales Advisory Committee (SWAC)
Jim Evans, Chair, Welsh Fishermen's Association (WFA)
Colin Charman, Natural Resources Wales
Natalie Hold, Bangor University
Nerys Edwards, Syren Shellfish
Carl Davies, Commercial fisher, lobster/ prawn, chartered angler
Colin Macdonald, Managing Director, Parson's Pickles
Sean Clement, Wales Environment Link, Marine Conservation Society (interim representative)
Aoife Martin, Seafish (representing Lynn Gilmore)
Officials: Gareth Bevington, Julian Bray, Tamsin Brown, Caryn Le Roux, Lisa Roberts-Clarke.

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Welcome and introductions

1. Gareth Bevington (GB) welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the strategic advisory group, which the Minister would join later and was keen to hear views of the new group for fisheries.
2. Introductions were made. GB confirmed the nature and purpose of the group had come about following the review of WMFAG. The reason for a new group was to change the remit and scope and create a more traditional Ministerial Advisory Group which would advise the Minister and be broader in its representation across the industry.

Overall aims and Terms of Reference

3. GB anticipated the discussions would cover co-management and development of the separate groups alongside the strategic group. A recent example of co-management was work for the Whelk Order, which had been co-designed outside of WMFAG. The Wales Whelk Advisory Group would meet in September.
4. GB acknowledged the Ministerial Advisory Group for Welsh Fisheries (MAGWF) did not include aquaculture representatives. The group were given the opportunity to discuss the new approach and the Terms of Reference

Feedback on the Terms of Reference

5. Jon Parker (JP) raised concerns about not including aquaculture within the new group and noted the approach used for the Whelk Order as good practice. Queried what other models had been considered. GB acknowledged there were

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many comparisons to draw from. However, the best and most effective approach was the Whelk model.

6. Jim Evans (JE) agreed engagement with stakeholders was crucial. However, at present no clarity about the development of the distinct groups existed and queried what would happen in the interim. Discussion followed about the hierarchy between groups and where WMAAG fitted in. GB confirmed WMAAG was a separate entity to MAGWF and of the importance to maintain linkages between the two, but the Minister would look to MAGWF for advice from the fishing sector.

7. Colin Macdonald (CM) explained his involvement in the industry and considered MAGWF to be a good start. He understood there would be fringe groups for the areas of the fishing industries. Cockles had been going well and the work completed on the Whelk Order had been excellent.

8. Sean Clement (SC) agreed the point about aquaculture needed resolving. Transparency around the make up of MAGWF and the groups in its orbit was needed. SC welcomed participation and for inclusion of additional representation from Wales Environmental Link (WEL) in the new group.

9. Aoife Martin (AM) welcomed the initiative to provide the Minister with an advisory group and confirmed Seafish were happy to support MAGWF. AM acknowledged the new group was Welsh facing and some of the members present were also engaged within UK wide groups. Therefore, the possibility to tap into a wider knowledge base and expertise existed. Additional areas such as safety, skills, ethics and welfare and the wider supply chain be considered as well as good comms and raising awareness.

10. Natalie Hold (NH) considered co-management was key to achieving delivery, but stakeholders and government viewed the meaning differently. A definition of co-management was required from the beginning of work.

11. Carl Davies (CD) asked for more detail about the role of WMAAG. Regarding co-decision making he considered more fishers should be included in the new group. Comms from Welsh Government was important, and fishers had a role providing data for use in scientific research.

12. Caryn Le Roux (CLR) outlined the remit of WMAAG represented the whole of the marine environment, and that group had a wider ranging remit in comparison to MAGWF. Building capacity in coastal communities was a key theme for WMAAG.

Actions

13. GB thanked members for their views and would consider expanding MAGWF to include additional representation from WEL.

14. GB to provide a paper for discussion at a future meeting about co-management and explore the definition which would benefit the group.

15. To address the issue of aquaculture not being included in the Terms of Reference and consider points made about safety and supply chain with the Minister for possible inclusion into the role of the group.

Update on the Joint Fisheries Statement (JFS)

16. Tamsin Brown (TB) gave a presentation on the JFS and progress to date and outlined the legislative and non-legislative elements of the Fisheries Management and Support Framework, which UK Government and the devolved administrations (the Fisheries Policy Authorities) were jointly developing. From the eight objectives in the Fisheries Act 2020, the policy framework would set

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the direction for the next 6 years and Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) were part of this. The consultation on the JFS closed in April and a summary of responses published on 1 July. The JFS is due to be published by the Fisheries Policy Authorities by 23 November 2022, as well as a government response to the public consultation and a response to the Energy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee report on the JFS.

Questions for discussion in paper 2

17. The group were asked to consider the questions set out in the discussion paper.

1. What do you think of these priorities?
2. How can we improve how we directly communicate and engage meaningfully with fishers and stakeholders?
3. How can we ensure as a group we focus on the key strategic issues and priorities?

18. JE noted the priority for key species included Whelk, Cockle, Scallop, Crab and Lobster. Bass and queen scallops were not included. There was concern on how to engage with the FMPs and decide whether to have a regional approach over a national one.

19. GB welcomed the Minister to the meeting, who thanked members for attending; and the reason for having a new advisory group and for help with developing the fisheries strategy. FMPs were key to supporting the fishing industry. The Welsh Government was working on development of fisheries funding for 2022/23 and this had a dedicated stakeholder group.

20. The Minister confirmed the fisheries priorities paper would be discussed next and was interested to hear views. TB summarised the content of the paper referred to the JFS and management of priority species; allocation of additional

quota; a new entrant scheme; science and evidence; and importance of stakeholder engagement in delivering priorities.

Views on priorities

21. JP agreed with the paper and the priorities were right, but needed to be in a different order, given present landings and volume of fishing to date. NH stated fisheries management for sustainable fisheries should be followed by science and evidence, then co-management and stakeholder engagement.

22. JE commented within fisheries management it was necessary to include a plan for the evidence. With regards to the new funding scheme JE was not confident it was a suitable replacement for European Marine Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Funding was linked to the marine plan and challenges already existed from reforms and decarbonisation.

23. NH commented the top priority areas were fisheries management, and science and evidence. Consideration also be given to climate change in the Fisheries Act. SC agreed and was pleased to see priority given to enforcement and monitoring.

24. CD explained about his work to decarbonise his vessel. Concern was mentioned regarding accessing funding for this purpose in Wales. Fishers were recognised as important in their role to provide information for science and research which could support a long-term strategy. Quota required more planning and confirmed industry needed to be better informed.

25. NE agreed science an important priority but had learned of concerns from fishers who experienced difficulty with iVMS and devices not functioning properly. In addition, there was difficulty with room for growth in the quota, meaning fishers were unable to swap fisheries compared to past practices. GB

encouraged any fishers having trouble with iVMS to contact Welsh Government.

Views on how to improve communication

26. JE wanted the JFS to include a vision and forward planning. The Programme for Government was considered restricted. Overall, Defra's approach publishing monthly newsletters and use of social media was important for the industry. The UK spending review and allocated budget for fisheries in Wales was raised as a concern.

27. NH agreed a vision was important and government should focus on long term planning. Climate change and decarbonisation were long term areas of work which required a clear vision and pathways in place to achieve it. Also cycles of funding needed to be longer to achieve better planning.

28. NE raised the issue about engagement with fishers for the JFS consultation. An approach for face-to-face delivery to explain government policy was preferable and would also welcome monthly updates as mentioned earlier. JP concluded an approach addressing numeracy and literacy within the industry could be considered.

29. GB confirmed the Welsh Government had continually raised views about the budget for Wales through regular interministerial group meetings.

Views on ensuring focus on key strategic issues and priorities

30. JP acknowledged the group needed to get priorities right from the beginning and to tackle difficult areas first.

31. The Minister thanked members for expressing their views on the questions posed, which had been helpful.

Date of Next Meeting

32. GB confirmed MAGWF meetings were to be quarterly. The next meeting

would be on 19 October, and a diary marker would be sent to members.

Close

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