

Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group
11th Meeting, key messages and actions

Title of Meeting	Wales Marine Action & Advisory Group (WMAAG)			Date	22.05.2019
Meeting Number	11	Start Time	10:00	End Time	16:00
Attendance	<p>Peter Davies (Chair) (PD Partnership), Peter Barham (Seabed Users and Developers), Phil Hollington (Cragen Llyn a Mon), Gill Bell (Marine Conservation Society & Wales Environment Link), Jetske Germing (Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum & Marine Energy Wales), Emily Williams (RSPB), Lucy Taylor (Severn Estuary Partnership), Emma McKinley (Cardiff University), Tegryn Jones (Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority), Nick Barcock (Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water), Dan Crook (Natural Resources Wales), Hannah Osman (Refill Project), Richard Weaver (Ekosgen), Jake Davies (ZSL Angelshark Project), Fenella Wood (ZSL Angelshark Project), Nick O'Sullivan (Welsh Fisherman's Association) Mary Lewis (Natural Resources Wales), Dan Crook (Natural Resources Wales), Rhian Jardine (Natural Resources Wales), Deanna Groom (RCAHMW), Mike Parry (Pwllheli Partnership), Mike Butterfield (Royal Yachting Association), Duncan Savage (Royal Yachting Association), David Jones (Marine Energy), David Tudor (The Crown Estate), Rachel Sharp (Wildlife Trust Wales), Becky Phillips (JNCC) Claire Carew (Tourism Marketing).</p> <p>Gian Marco Currado, Gareth Bevington, Alison Kitchener, Julia Williams, Rob Floyd, Gary Douch, Elen King, Louise George, Hilary Evans, Rebecca Rees, Lisa Roberts-Clarke (Welsh Government).</p>				
Presenters	<p>Gareth Bevington (Welsh Government) Richard Weaver (Ekosgen) Jake Davies (Zoological Society London) Fenella Wood (Zoological Society London) Gian Marco Currado (Welsh Government) Louise George (Welsh Government) Elen King (Welsh Government)</p>				
Apologies	<p>Jim Evans (Welsh Fishermen's Association), David McDermott (One Voice Wales), Peter Chaniotis (JNCC)</p>				

#	Agenda Item
1.	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies
2.	Marine and Fisheries Division update – Gareth Bevington, Welsh Government
3.	Supporting the Economic and Environmental Sustainability of the UK's Marine Sectors – Richard Weaver, Ekosgen
4.	Angel Shark project - Jake Davies & Fenella Wood, Zoological Society London
5.	MPA Management Framework and Action Plan - Louise George, Welsh Government
6.	Stakeholder Engagement – Louise George & Elen King, Welsh Government
7.	Brexit and Our Seas Consultation – Elen King
8.	Summary and reflections on the day – Peter Davies

Introduction

The Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG) provides a forum for discussion and debate and the provision of 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, sitting alongside the Welsh Marine Fisheries Action Group (WMFAG), the lead Welsh Government fisheries industry forum in Wales.

The WMAAG is comprised of 32 stakeholder leads who represent the interest of all sectors with an interest or investment in the Marine in Wales. Details of sectors and lead organisations can be found within the group's Terms of Reference.

Item 1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair confirmed a number of members would be joining the meeting later as the Climate Change Committee meeting was taking place in Cardiff Bay that morning.

Presenters were welcomed, including: Richard Weaver; the Angelshark Project presenters and Gareth Bevington.

Apologies were received from Jim Evans, David McDermott, and Peter Chanotis.

Item 2. Marine and Fisheries update – Gareth Bevington

Gareth Bevington welcomed members to the meeting which was his 2nd WMAAG meeting since being in post. An overview of the structure of the division and changes were provided. The joint role of the Deputy Directors was marine policy, international fisheries and freshwater fisheries were Gareth's areas of work while Graham Rees lead on the domestic, brexit preparations, and enforcement policies for Wales.

Gareth's role was to provide extra capacity at Senior Civil Service level. Further resource had been acquired, with Gian Marco Currado's recent arrival in the Department.

The objective for the group was to look at the work of Marine and Fisheries now and also to the future of our seas and the engagement mechanisms with stakeholders and the industry. A good example of stakeholders shaping policies was the Marine Plan. The production of Wales' first National Marine Plan, which was significant was created using a large amount of stakeholder involvement. It was near completion and expected to be published later in the year. In addition, the Marine Protected Areas Network Action Plan had produced and needed further work with stakeholders.

Brexit preparedness had a large impact on all government departments. This resulted in balancing resources and priorities. Work preparing the industry for a 'No-deal' Brexit has seen delivery of fisheries roadshows, fisheries bulletins, communication via Preparing Wales website, and external experts engaged to consider the fisheries supply chains. The challenge was acknowledged on how we align ourselves in the division to progress the work streams.

The division had to plan for a number of scenarios given the uncertainty of leaving the EU. 'No-Deal' was still a possibility and the Welsh Government would be appraising priorities over the next few weeks and months.

Legislation had been prepared with introduction of Statutory Instruments. Part of the programme of work was preparation of the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and to make sure we have a functioning statute book in Wales at the point of exit. A key piece of legislation was the UK Fisheries Bill, which the Welsh Government supports. It contains distinct fisheries policies for Wales and provides the necessary powers and management for us to deliver fisheries policy in Wales. The joint fisheries statement would be the key mechanism for stakeholders to engage to help shape our policies. This was being drawn up jointly by the devolved administrations.

The Fisheries Bill provides the extension for our legislative competence relating to fisheries in the Welsh zone, which is a good achievement. Clarity on the timing of the Fisheries Bill was expected over the following weeks.

The fisheries enforcement vessel procurement had been completed. In the last two months the last 2 vessels had been procured and the training for enforcement officers started.

Over the next 6 months it was expected the Brexit and Our Seas consultation work would unfold. This would be the start to shape our future policies in Wales. The division would also be focussing on domestic fisheries policy; reprioritisation for Whelk and Scallop would be discussed at the WMFAG meeting on 25 June.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions.

Enforcement officers training was raised and whether conservation measures would be considered. Gareth explained the training at present was prioritised so staff could familiarise themselves fully with the vessels.

Gill Bell raised her concern about the impact of Brexit would have on the economic, social and environmental sustainability study relating to Marine Protected Areas. Marine tourism had been included rather than conservation. Gill was disappointed as she wanted to see a more holistic approach and to see what benefits the marine networks could bring.

Action:

Emily Williams asked whether damage to historic wreck sites was an area of work enforcement officers were able to be trained to include in their roles.

Gareth confirmed this point could be taken back to the office and checked further.

Item 3. Supporting the Economic and Environmental Sustainability of the UK Marine Sectors Workshop – Richard Weaver, Ekosgen

Richard Weaver of Ekosgen presented the study to the group. The development of the evidence base had produced a set of questions about how the economic environmental and sustainability of the marine sector could help inform the development of future funding and support mechanisms.

The 7 sectors covered were:

- Aquaculture
- Seafood processing
- Commercial capture fisheries
- Commercial Seaweed harvesting and growing
- Offshore renewable energy
- Oil and gas decommissioning
- Marine Tourism

Richard explained Ekosgen was commissioned by Marine Scotland, to explore the evidence to show the challenges, market failures and constraints on these sectors and the priorities to be addressed. The evidence gathered would fill the gaps in understanding and help develop the case for future industry support schemes.

The objectives for the workshop were set out. Discussion highlighted the difference in devolved administration and underpinning policies i.e. Scottish Government's focus

on sustainable growth and Welsh Government use of the Well Being and Future Generations Act.

Julia Williams addressed the issue of providing clarity for stakeholders on the structure and to articulate where any overlaps between the DAs exist, to better help stakeholders.

Richard confirmed the marine tourism definition did include recreation such as sailing.

Stakeholders were divided into groups and given time asked to consider the main issues – opportunities, constraints, challenges and priorities which existed for the sector. Feedback was to be captured on the pro forma sheets.

During discussions Peter Davies confirmed the importance of having strong Welsh responses and the key priorities and messages to collate into Richard's study.

Wales has marine coastal tourism, wildlife watching and it was recognised there was an overlap with culture, food and tourism and the need for better integration. Initial challenges were the seasonal nature of marine sector; and the isolation of coastal towns, while keeping younger people in situ and provision of necessary amenities.

Lack of integration between funding for land and coastal projects being separate was an issue.

Difference noted with how Australia and America treat their marine environments and create marine parks.

Priorities identified initially for sea fisheries and shellfish. Guidance notes were being produced for seaweed harvesting as enquires were increasing.

Action

Richard confirmed if the group had further comments to send them on to him.
Hilary Evans to circulate Richard's contact details to members.

Peter Davies summarised the importance of marine tourism and an integral approach. The Welsh National Marine Plan also contained evidence already which could be utilised.

Action

Claire Carew mentioned the current Tourism Strategy for Wales which members would benefit from seeing. The closing date for the work was end of May.
Claire to circulate to WMAAG members for their input.

Item 4. Angelshark Project Presentation – Jake Davies & Fenella Wood, Zoological Society London

Jake Davies and Fenella Wood of Zoological Society London gave a presentation. The Angelshark project received funding from Welsh Government for 2 years. Anwen is the prop used for training fishers on handling. They are protected must not be landed as fishers will be fined. The project has been working with fishers to understand the species, their cultural value and being an important element of maritime heritage.

Angelsharks had been found in Wales and Ireland and had previously thought to exist in Welsh waters. The project works with the fishermen to record their stories and experiences and produce best practice guidance.

The main aims of the project are:

To understand the status and ecology of the species in Wales;

Fishers to act as stewards of the conservation of the Angelshark;

For communities to help unlock Angelshark heritage and share across generations;
and

To develop an action plan to identify key steps to secure their future.

Volunteers are to shortly receive training and to search through archive material going back to 1875. The Angelshark History Roadshow was extremely popular and went global.

Item 5. Marine Protected Area Network Management Framework and Action Plan – Louise George, Welsh Government

Louise George gave the presentation about the published framework which spans from 2018 – 2023. The network has a management steering group and works towards gaining a collective understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

An Annual Action Plan also runs alongside the framework. The first cycle of review and update is agreement of the 2019-20 Action Plan. There were 23 actions and investigators work is ongoing.

Task and Finish groups would need to be flexible and would not want to be created to address for each action as this would be too burdensome. The work of the steering group and management of site was favoured to split into 4 regions. Louise noted there was an issue of annual funding, but this matter was for further discussion for the steering group.

The term Coastal Squeeze was discussed and its definition, which was summarised as it being 1 of the 7 keys on the impact on the MPAs – their Habitat and environmental management and link to the shoreline management plans.

Action

The availability of advice and guidance was queried. Louise to recirculate the document to the group.

Availability of the literature on Sea Angling was also queried.

Louise to confirm on this point.

Item 6. Stakeholder Engagement workshop

Louise Gorge and Elen King explained the importance of engagement and the large amount of activity happening in government.

The time was right to ensure all the right engagement structures were in place.

Brexit and Our Seas consultation launched on 1 May and is the first step in considering the conversation about the future of a Welsh fisheries policy with a unique opportunity to set our own Welsh policy.

The group were asked to provide their views for an appropriate mechanism for future engagement and collaboration on a range of biodiversity/ ecosystem related issues.

The proposal to establish a WMAAG sub group with a fluid membership and flexible meeting schedule was raised.

Elen confirmed the present groups which existed in Marine and Fisheries and the present methods for communications.

Members were asked to spend some time to respond to the questions on the templates provided about:

How engagement could be improved and strengthened;

For views on one sub/group liaison group for the biodiversity/ ecosystem issues; and whether the way information was shared worked.

Members commented on the need for better engagement and the need for it to be earlier, meaningful and collaborative. For the Welsh Government website to be used more often; to consider potential to merge groups. However, face to face meetings were considered the most effective.

Hilary Evans thanked members for their input and the possibility of producing a news letter for sharing relevant information with the group.

The Chair summed up discussions and recognised there was a significant amount of work to be done to improve upon present communications, and linking to other areas, such as Visit Wales.

Key outputs from the engagement workshop:

- Proposal for a group jointly led by WG and NRW to cover marine ecosystem and biodiversity work areas group received widespread support.
- Flexibility in meeting frequency, developing agendas and membership is key.
- Members supportive of level of engagement from Marine and Fisheries.
- Members benefit from networking opportunities WMAAG brings although cross linkage between different groups could be improved.
- Members felt WMAAG engagement is much better than counterparts in other forums, but could be improved to allow more two-way engagement and be more task driven.
- Members expressed it was important to have high official level engagement and were encouraged to have Director and Deputy Director present at WMAAG.
- Members felt WMFAG was very transparent with its priorities which they felt refreshing.

Suggestions for improving engagement:

- Set objectives and output reports for task groups.
- Collaborative agendas.
- Stakeholder update in hyperlinked newsletter format / twitter feed. More frequent to be more current.
- Use technologies as well as face-to-face meetings; eg webinars, teleconferences
- Basecamp or similar for information sharing
- Have marine policy representation at WMFAG and Fisheries officials at WMAAG.

Detailed output at **appendix 1**.

Gian Marco Currado – Director, Environment and Marine, Welsh Government

Gian Marco gave a short presentation introducing himself to the group. Gian Marco outlined the challenges which existed in his portfolio area and the impact Brexit had on the Welsh Government and resources.

He stressed the importance of having the right kind of conversations with stakeholders and expected to meet members individually in due course.

Peter Davies thanked Gian Marco for his level of engagement and commitment to this area of work.

Item 7. Brexit and our Seas consultation – Elen King, Welsh Government

Elen King presented an overview of the 16 week consultation which launched on 1 May. The consultation was committed to the Well-being and future generations Act, which was enshrined in the first Welsh National Marine Plan.

Welsh Government is committed to continue environmental standards and to invest in new systems, staff and vessels to enforce those standards. The consultation was the start of a conversation about shaping the Welsh marine and fisheries strategies over the coming years.

The work reconfirmed commitment to the Marine Environment, fishing opportunities, and sustainable management of commercial fisheries. The present legal framework mean the National Assembly did not yet have full legislative competence for fisheries in the Welsh Zone.

Fisheries management could see a shift in how quota is allocated between UK administrations which could lead to a fairer share for the Welsh fleet. Also commitment was mentioned about the use of Maximum Sustainable Yield, but to additionally explore alternatives to sustainable management regimes.

Fish stocks should be managed for the benefit of Wales and Welsh coastal communities. Opportunity included investing in the Welsh fishing industry to allow it to make the most of resources.

The 2 things Wales differed to the rest of the UK was the industry is based on shellfish and not finfish; and most of the exports are live, unprocessed and almost exclusively go to the EU.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions. Nick O'Sullivan noted fishers would want to feedback their views. Gill Bell outlined her view for a more holistic approach and not to feature so heavily on fisheries.

Tegryn Jones commented on how Brexit and our Land included extensive consultation with communities. He requested WG ensure coastal communities are fully involved.

The group were asked to feed any comments into the consultation. Elen confirmed events on the consultation were expected to be held along the coast before the summer.

Item 8. Summary and reflections on the day

Peter Davies confirmed the group had a lot of opportunity for discussion and it had been useful.

The Crown Estate has produced a social and economic report and their findings could be shared with members. Hilary Evans was happy share this information with the group.

Members commented on how useful WMAAG meetings were for networking and facilitating collaboration across the Welsh stakeholder network. Members also commented how WMAAG is a community and this unique set up should be preserved. The Well-being and Future Generations Act is a common framework for how we do our business using a common language.

Appendix 1 - Do you think engagement with you, through our Stakeholder Groups, is working?

<p>How do you want to engage with us?</p>	<p>Combination of: meetings like WMAAG, more focused groups to achieve joint working, presentations, email updates, newsletters, utilising the WG .Gov website. Include overview of what all the groups are in stakeholder update, what the groups/fora are and who to contact and organisations which attend.</p> <p>Networking at the wider meeting is very important.</p> <p>Papers don't necessarily need printing.</p> <p>Basecamp or similar for information sharing Shorter, more frequent webinars Needs to be task driven – not just updates Better communication on certain issues eg biodiversity Various groups Consultations earlier, meaningful, collaborative Written stakeholder update very useful, but lot of things not in sync with timescales. – long, No clear mechanism for asking questions of contributors to stakeholder update.</p> <p>Difficult for those without policy staff. Tourism reps? Need to target our time. Some members who sit on T&F groups felt WMAAG sometimes repetitive of discussion from other groups. Other members felt it gave a good overview and brought them up to speed with key issues.</p> <p>RSPB and WEL work across all the different work areas of the M&F division and as such appreciate opportunities to go into the different policy areas in detail. Some of the groups enable this better than others (e.g. WMFAG is focused on fisheries and looks at specific stocks) whereas others focus more on giving an</p>
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	overview and networking opportunities. In our view, WMAAG is very broad in scope. We would therefore welcome a new Biodiversity subgroup of WMAAG to better enable more detailed discussions on sustainable marine management
What benefits do you get from the groups you belong to?	<p>Networking, information, opportunity to get people 'bought into' a joint or collective way forward.</p> <p>Understanding other perspectives and motivations. Neutral ground Networking opportunities.</p> <p>WMAAG – meeting contacts, getting updates, umbrella WMAAG is great as a networking forum and meeting other stakeholders whilst also receiving updates from their area. Format of WMAAG could be changed slightly – however, stakeholders were thankful for how far M&F engagement has come in recent years and don't want to lose that and this forum. WMAAG engagement is much better than counterparts in other forums – eg MMO. Some felt agenda didn't always allow for two way engagement. Some felt WMAAG was a bit of a 'catch all' whereas WMFAG discuss real issues where they could have meaningful impact.</p>
Are you getting what you want/need out of the groups?	<p>Main way to look at synergies Partly – hence suggestion of new thematic group Could use technologies as well as face to face.</p>
What else would you like to get out of stakeholder groups?	<p>More tea and cake! Understanding organisations remits and what their agendas are More trust in both directions</p>

	<p>Flexibility – Clean Seas Partnership is a good example.</p> <p>Groups with specific tasks and direction. More is fine but need clear objectives</p>
Are there any groups not working for you?	<p>No – although there may be opportunities for merging some?</p> <p>? Seas and Coast round-table sub-group possibly Brexit Seas and Coasts – didn't fulfil remit, too much focus on fisheries. Not currently meeting. Frequency of WMAAG not ideal – open to others.</p> <p>Seas and Coasts haven't met for some time. It was much more of a WG directed group than other roundtable groups and didn't involve the group as much as it could have in creating outputs. Our understanding is that other roundtable groups have been actively involved in producing outputs and will be contributing to whitepapers etc. Rather than cancel S&C, I would recommend considering how the expertise in that group can be put to best use. A teleconference call with the membership may be useful to help with this.</p>
Should we have fewer groups/merge groups?	<p>Need to avoid duplication as there's potential across the groups.</p> <p>No – people can look at agendas and choose not to attend. In our view, more stakeholder engagement is needed not less</p>
What are your views on the proposed group jointly led by WG & NRW to cover marine ecosystem and biodiversity work areas?	<p>Meet as and when needed – when input, decision and feedback Inclusive</p> <p>Unanimous support – flexibility is key though. Bring in others outside of WMAAG. Telecons an option Will need secretariat support.</p> <p>Absolutely!</p>

	<p>It would be positive if the group could collectively create the agenda ie if stakeholders were asked what they wanted to discuss/focus on. In the past, we have noticed that where frustrations with groups arise, this is typically because items of interest haven't been included on the agenda (leading to concerns that the topic is being avoided) or because stakeholders haven't been involved in developing outputs. With this in mind, it would also be positive to make more use of the expertise in the room (the marine planning SRG is a good example of this being done – we regularly comment on outputs)</p>
<p>What do you think of the flexible nature of this group in terms of the meeting schedule and membership?</p>	<p>WMAAG 2x per year New group – generally happy with flexibility</p> <p>Positive – but needs some structure and timetables and plenty of notice for commenting on documents etc.</p> <p>A flexible nature sounds sensible.</p>
<p>How could we secure the range and balance of attendance at each meeting?</p>	<p>Bringing in others via networks depending on meeting topic and expertise. Capacity and time to disseminate to members networks.</p> <p>Advance notice and/or teleconference facilities.</p> <p>Short, 1-2 hour regular informal teleconference/skype calls would be a positive opportunity for people to engage flexibly.</p> <p>It would be nice to facilitate a sense of the biodiversity sub-group being a “team”</p>
<p>How would we ensure this group adds value to other fora and avoids duplication?</p>	<p>Would be useful for many WMAAG members at times all. Some core members but others would have passing interests.</p>

Any other comments?	Whilst having separate groups is useful to focus on specific tasks, it is important that the links between the different areas (or teams in the division) are not forgotten. With this in mind, it would be positive to see the marine conservation branch at more Seas and Coasts and WMFAG meetings and vice versa for fisheries officials to attend the biodiversity group at times
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Q2 – Do you think the way we share information and developments is working?

What do you think the best communication channels are for Marine and Fisheries stakeholders?	<p>Website is problematic – basically just lists. Could use knowledge that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shares information - Discussion groups <p>Face to face meetings good, Stakeholder Update good,</p> <p>High level engagement important – eg Gareth and Gian Marco.</p> <p>Face to face meetings</p> <p>The Marine Planning newsletters are informative</p> <p>The Marine Planning SRG regularly meets and asks for regular feedback from the group on outputs</p> <p>WMFAG is very transparent with its membership (it lists all its priorities even if they aren't all being progressed due to funding/capacity). This is really refreshing.</p>
Do you think the stakeholder update is engaging?	I think it's too long. A hyperlinked newsletter/twitter feed for WMAAG may be more engaging.

Could social media channels such as Twitter be used more effectively?	Yes! WMAAG twitter channel which re-tweets memberships' tweets as well as its own.
How do you promote Welsh Government developments through your networks?	Email Basecamp meetings Blogs Social media Website