

# Menai Strait Fishery Order Management Association

## Meeting, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023 Zoom Video Conference Call

### Minutes

#### Attendance

##### Members

Alan Winstone\*  
James Wilson\*  
Kim Mould\*  
Lewis le Vay

Chair  
Bangor Mussel Producers Ltd  
Myti Mussels Ltd  
Bangor University

##### Observers

Alex Scorey  
David Salisbury  
José Constantino†  
Nia Jones  
Rowland Sharp  
Ruth Iliffe

Natural Resources Wales  
Ynys Môn County Council  
Welsh Government  
North Wales Wildlife Trust  
Natural Resources Wales  
Royal Yachting Association Cymru

##### Advisors

Jim Andrews\*

MSFOMA Secretariat

#### Notes

\* *These individuals are also Directors of the Association*

#### 1. Chair's announcements

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, and in particular Dave Sailsbury, the new Harbour Master for Beaumaris, who had replaced Iwan Huws as the representative of Ynys Môn County Council.

#### 2. Apologies

Howard Mattocks  
Ioan Thomas  
Iwan Huws  
Julian Bray  
Michelle Billing  
Rob Floyd  
Trevor Jones

Beaumaris Town Council  
Cyngor Gwynedd  
Isle of Anglesey County Council  
Welsh Government  
Welsh Government  
Welsh Government  
Menai Strait (West) Applicants

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

The Chair asked participants in the meeting to declare any interest in each agenda item before speaking.

### **4. Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting that took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 2022 were accepted.

### **5. Matters Arising**

It was considered that most of the matters arising from the last meeting were addressed on the agenda for the current meeting.

Some items raised at the December meeting that were not formally addressed on the agenda were discussed:-

#### **Thanks to Iwan Huws**

Jim Andrews had written to Iwan to thank him for the support that he had given the Association over the past few years.

#### **Sand in Penrhyn Dock**

James Wilson reported that there had been no further progress with removal of the sand that had accumulated in the dock and was restricting access.

It was agreed that this issue should be kept under review.

**Action: JW, Secretariat**

#### ***Bonamia***

There had been no change to the Bonamia designated area, nor did this seem likely.

#### **Water quality**

This matter was due to be discussed under item 8 on the agenda.

#### **Public Profile of the Association**

James Wilson noted that the article on The Fish Site had now been published and that the link should be circulate as well as linked to the MSFOMA website.

The link is here: <https://thefishsite.com/articles/menai-strait-mussel-farmers-fear-for-their-livelihoods-brexit>

It was suggested that the MSFOMA website would benefit from updates to better link to the work of participants, and all agreed to provide links to relevant items that could be promoted either on the website or through the MSFOMA Twitter account.

**Action: All, Secretariat**

#### **Menai Strait West**

The Chair had raised the need to make progress with Pacific Oyster cultivation at the Ministerial Advisory Group.

An update had not been sent to the prospective tenants of the Order. It was agreed that this should be done.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **6. Register of Interests**

The Chair reminded all participants to check their Statement of Interests on the MSFOMA website ([https://www.msfoma.org/?page\\_id=478](https://www.msfoma.org/?page_id=478)) to confirm whether it is accurate.

The Secretariat reported that this page has been updated with new photographs following the last meeting of the Association.

## **7. Financial Update**

The meeting accepted the report that had been submitted about the Association's finances. Performance against the current financial plan was noted. It was noted that the recommendations of the report needed to be updated.

**Action: Secretariat**

## **8. Water quality**

The Chair introduced the report on shellfish hygiene classifications in the Menai Strait, which are critical to the financial viability of mussel farming here.

The Association welcomed and endorsed the Chair's response to the "Action State" that had been triggered by a higher than normal level of *E. coli* in a mussel sample taken from the Cegin Channel in December 2022.

It was noted that several representatives from the Association attended a meeting of the "Local Action Group" of local authority Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) that took place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023. This meeting had provided the opportunity to stress the importance of shellfish quality and the efficient operation of the sampling regime with the EHOs and representatives of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) that were in attendance.

At the meeting in March the FSA representatives had stated that a draft of the new "sanitary survey" for the Strait should be available within 2 months. It was felt that this would be a key document for improving shellfish sampling results.

It was agreed that there was a role for MSFOMA to play in seeking improvements to the shellfish sampling regime in in the UK. It was felt that this should be complementary to the actions already being taken by other groups. Key areas that MSFOMA could address would be progressing the new sanitary survey, encouraging the LAG to respond appropriately to anomalous high shellfish sampling results, and perhaps encouraging the Minister to take an interest in this issue.

It was agreed that a group of MSFOMA participants should meet to discuss how to use MSFOMAs role and remit to best effect in encouraging improvements in water quality and shellfish sampling. Lewis Le Vay and James Wilson agreed to work with the Chair and Secretariat on this matter.

**Action: Chair, Lewis le Vay, James Wilson, Secretariat**

## **9. Public Profile of the Association**

The Chair and Secretariat reported that Dr Andy Olivier was continuing to use Twitter to raise the profile of the Association. Andy was constantly looking for fresh news to Tweet, anyone with suitable items could e-mail them to him ([avdsolivier@gmail.com](mailto:avdsolivier@gmail.com)).

**Action: All**

## **10. Welsh Government Activity**

The Secretariat's report was noted and received.

The Chair informed the meeting that he had attended another meeting of the new Ministerial Advisory Group for Welsh Fisheries (MAGWF). He had presented a paper to the meeting about the challenges facing Pacific oyster cultivation in Wales. He had highlighted in particular how progress with shellfish cultivation in the western Menai Strait has stalled despite lots of work by MSFOMA and the shellfish industry over many years.

Gareth Bevington, Deputy Director for Marine & Fisheries, had agreed to propose a way forward to the next meeting.

Lewis Le Vay indicated that the Shellfish Centre report about Pacific oysters in the Strait provided a firm evidence base, and that this is now a policy issue for Welsh Government to determine. It was appropriate to raise this matter with the Minister.

The Chair agreed to provide an update on progress with this issue at the next MSFOMA meeting.

**Action: Chair**

## **11. NW IFCA Activity**

The report on recent activities of the NW IFCA was received and accepted by the meeting. It was agreed that MSFOMA should continue to encourage NWIFCA to resume work on the Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan.

**Action: Secretariat**

James Wilson noted that NWIFCA scientists were carrying out seed mussel surveys in Morecambe Bay. After several years of both poor recruitment and survival of seed mussels it was hoped that this year would be better and that NWIFCA would act expeditiously to allow access to it by both hand gatherers and dredgers.

## **12. All Party Parliamentary Group: Shellfish Aquaculture**

James Wilson reported that the most recent meeting of this group had taken place on the 15<sup>th</sup> March in Westminster Hall and online. There had been good attendance, with 18 MPs present along with a wide range of industry representatives participating.

James felt that this APPG provides a very good forum for raising issues of concern and building engagement of MPs.

Meetings of the APPG are ongoing. Updates will be provided at future MSFOMA meetings.

**Action: JW, Secretariat**

## **13. Menai Strait East Fishery Order**

The report was accepted. It was noted that the only outstanding area of work for this Order was to review the "Managed Areas" around reef features. It was considered that in view of the low level of cultivation activity and the desire to minimise expenditure, this was not presently a priority and should be held in abeyance.

#### **14. Menai Strait West**

The report was accepted. The meeting acknowledged that the sticking point with the proposed new Fishery Order was the absence of a policy for managing Pacific oysters, already discussed in the context of the new Ministerial Advisory Group above.

It was agreed that in the light of the decisions of funding of the Association, the Chair and Secretariat should provide a progress update to the potential tenants of the Menai West area, and also inform them that unless and until a policy for managing Pacific Oysters is in place, MSFOMA will not be carrying out further work on the proposal.

**Action: Chair & Secretariat**

#### **15. Menai Strait Partnership Forum**

The Chair and Secretariat provided an update on the creation of a new “Menai Strait Partnership Forum” (MSPF) in collaboration with the North Wales Rivers Trust, and using funding from the Welsh Government’s Coastal Capacity Fund.

The key achievements of this project to date had been the creation of a website highlighting concerns about water quality and a meeting of the Partnership Forum on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March. This meeting was a great success, with 66 delegates attending to hear presentations from 7 speakers.

The Chair and Secretariat had been working with NWRT to identify how to build upon this enthusiasm. It was expected that terms of reference will be drawn up to provide clarity on the relationship between the Forum and its membership, and that will also provide a platform from which to secure further funding that would help to develop the Partnership and drive improvements in water quality. The Secretariat shared a copy of a draft partnership agreement for feedback.

Nia Jones shared her view that the meeting in March had been very positive. She felt that an appropriately founded organisation could be a good vehicle for attracting funding.

Ruth Iliffe suggested that it would be good to include the Personal Watercraft Partnership in the Forum. She agreed to provide contact details.

**Action: Ruth Iliffe**

Rowland Sharp agreed that it was important for the Partnership Forum to have clear terms of reference if it is to secure wide engagement.

The Chair and Secretariat agreed to work with NWRT to progress this initiative and report back to future MSFOMA meetings.

**Action: Chair, Secretariat**

#### **16. Fishery Management Issues**

##### **a) Coastal / marine developments**

###### **i. Bangor Pier**

No additional update.

###### **ii. Sand in the dock**

This was discussed at the start of the meeting (see Matters Arising).

##### **b) Environmental / health issues**

**i. Shellfish hygiene classification**

This was discussed earlier in the meeting (see item 9).

**ii. Bonamia**

This was discussed at the start of the meeting (see Matters Arising).

**iii. Invasive Alien Species (IAS) / Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**

Nia Jones reported that North Wales Wildlife Trust has been providing species ID training as part of the Shoresearch Intertidal surveys project. She asked if there were areas in the Strait or on the Anglesey and Gwynedd coasts which it could be useful to target for IAS. All were asked to advise Nia of any suitable locations that they knew of.

**Action: All**

As a standing item, all were asked to be alert to the presence of slipper limpets (*Crepidula fornicata*) and to report any observations to NRW.

**Action: All**

**iv. Norovirus**

No further update.

**17. Any Other Business**

**a) Correspondence**

No additional correspondence had been received.

**b) Website**

It was suggested that the MSFOMA website could benefit from providing more information about the research work (PhDs & MSCs) that have been funded by the shellfish farmers. It was also suggested that better linkage with the Shellfish Centre website and reports would also be helpful.

**Action: Secretariat**

**18. Dates for next meetings**

Meeting dates were agreed for 2023:-

- a. 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (virtual) Updated to **20<sup>th</sup> September**
- b. 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023 [AGM] (in person)

## Summary of Actions

Item	Action	Responsibility
1.	Sand in Dock - keep under review.	James Wilson & Secretariat
2.	Update MSFOMA website to include more information about the work of participants.	All, Secretariat
3.	Menai West - advise potential tenants that work on proposal will be halted until the Pacific Oyster stalemate is resolved.	Chair & Secretariat
4.	Group of MSFOMA participants to work together to determine best strategy for MSFOMA to influence local / national agenda on water quality and shellfish hygiene.	Chair, Lewis Le Vay, James Wilson, Secretariat.
5.	Social media - all to send any items suitable for the MSFOMA Twitter feed to Andy Olivier ( <a href="mailto:avdsolivier@gmail.com">avdsolivier@gmail.com</a> ).	All
6.	Circulate link to, and promote, article on The Fish Site about mussel cultivation in the Strait ( <a href="https://thefishsite.com/articles/menai-strait-mussel-farmers-fear-for-their-livelihoods-brexit">https://thefishsite.com/articles/menai-strait-mussel-farmers-fear-for-their-livelihoods-brexit</a> ).	Secretariat.
7.	Provide update to next Association about MAGWF progress with Pacific Oysters.	Chair
8.	NWIFCA - encourage adoption of Morecambe Bay Mussel Management Plan.	Chair & Secretariat
9.	APPG - provide update on progress to next meeting.	JW, Secretariat
10.	Work with NWRT to progress the Menai Strait Partnership Forum and report back.	Chair & Secretariat
11.	<i>Crepidula fornicata</i> - look out for slipper limpets and report sightings of any shells / individuals.	All
12.	Date for next meeting - 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 (updated to 20 <sup>th</sup> September)	All