

Minutes of the Scottish Seafish Advisory Committee Meeting

Held virtually on Thursday 11 August 2022

Attendees:

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| Members | Mike Park, Scottish White Fish Producers Association (Chair) Sheila Keith, Shetland Fishermen's Association Elaine Whyte, Clyde Fishermen's Association Lynne Forman, Associated Seafoods Michael Clark, Nor-Sea Foods / International Fish Canners |
| Observers | Luke Anderson, Technical Policy and Blue Economy, Scottish Government |
| Seafish | Aoife Martin, Director of Operations Helen Duggan, Head of UK Regions (East) Jess Sparks, Regional Manager Simon Potten, Head of Training, Safety and Services (In-part) Arina Motova, Chief Economist / Interim Head of Economics (In-part) |
| Minutes | Phillip Quirie, Project Co-ordinator and Administrator |
| Apologies | Colin Hinds, Topsy Midgie Whisky Bar John Anderson, Scottish Fishermen's Organisation Jimmy Buchan, Scottish Seafood Association Yvonne Rae, George Campbell & Sons Iain Matheson, Skye fisherman Donna Fordyce, Seafood Scotland |

Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and shared apologies on behalf of Colin, John, Jimmy, Yvonne, Iain, and Donna. Aoife acknowledged that attendance was affected by the holiday season and noted August will be avoided for future meetings.

Minutes of the previous meeting and action arising

2. The Chair invited feedback on the draft minutes of the meeting held on 31 May 2022. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

ACTION 01: Phillip to upload the approved minutes to the Seafish website.

3. Jess reported on the status of actions arising from the previous meeting (Attachment: *01 SSAC 110822 Seafish Update*, pages 2-3). Aoife gave a brief update on further progress of the small haddock project. Three of the four workshops have taken place, the final one will take place in September and may be open more widely for industry to attend. Aoife added that the collaborative integration of the supply chain will be key to a successful outcome.

SSAC work programme update

4. Jess provided an update on the delivery of the Seafish work programme in Scotland. (Attachment: 01 SSAC 110822 Seafish Update, pages 4-9).
5. A brief discussion took place about the 'Sea a Bright Future' careers promotion campaign, and it was asked if the campaign can have a focus on schools and colleges to encourage the younger generation into the industry. Helen explained that the pilot campaign engaged with schools and colleges, who generally said having members of industry undertake visits is the most effective means of engagement. Seafish are exploring ways to facilitate that.
6. Jess referred to meeting paper 2 – BATmap 2022-23, the proposal seeking a contribution of £10k funding for phase 3. The Chair confirmed that all attending members were in favour to support the proposal from SSAC budget. As there were insufficient members to constitute a quorum, it was agreed that Jess would contact non-attending members to confirm their view on the proposal, before updating the committee on the outcome.

ACTION 02: Jess to co-ordinate a response to the BATmap funding proposal from SSAC members absent from the August meeting.

SSAC members update

7. The Chair invited committee members to provide an update from their sector, outlining any pertinent challenges or opportunities.
8. Supply issues remain a challenge for many Scottish processors, as does access to and retention of labour.
9. Labour challenges are also being felt in the catching sector – crewing vessels has become increasingly difficult, Clyde fishermen are finding it disturbing to see fully crewed vessels from Northern Ireland fishing in the Clyde, whilst local vessels are being tied-up or sold because skippers and owners are unable to find crew.
10. The rise in energy costs continues to be an increasing concern, with processing firms seeing a rise of 150% in new contracts for electricity alone. This has caused some to cease operating and it's feared other larger companies may follow.
11. High fuel prices remain challenging, and it was reported that young skippers with young crews in Shetland are finding it difficult to continue operating with fuel prices so high. Also in Shetland, it's feared that next year's quota allocations will see lower precautionary decisions being made where there is insufficient scientific data for some stocks, particularly monkfish.
12. On a recent visit to Shetland, Fisheries Minister, Victoria Prentis, was reported to have told industry representatives that the issue of spatial squeeze in waters around Shetland will only be addressed in government when industry can provide evidence of selling more of its catch domestically in the UK.

Scottish Seafood Resettlement Opportunities Steering Group

13. Luke gave a brief overview of the resettlement programme, explaining that a steering group was formed after a Scottish Seafood Industry Action Group meeting in March, where it was agreed that the Scottish Government will undertake work to facilitate employment opportunities for resettled labour in Scotland – most notably those from Ukraine and Afghanistan. The overall steering group is underpinned by two working groups: the Industry Working Group and the Government and Agency Working Group.
14. A brief discussion followed, where it was reported that some resettled workers are employed at a North-East seafood processor. However, lack of access to housing is a problem and local councils appear unwilling to assist in finding suitable housing. The workers are living in hotels or being offered housing in remote rural towns without transport links to Fraserburgh, meaning the company must look at arranging buses for the workers. Michael and Elaine commented that the resettlement initiative is a positive one in the longer-term but more immediate labour solutions need to be found.

Seafish Economics activity update

15. Arina gave an overview of the wide range of activities and services of the Seafish Economics team (Attachment: *01 SSAC 110822 Seafish Update*, pages 10-25). The Economics team currently have three focus areas of work activity: the fishing fleet (fleet survey and report, data and publications, fuel price impact analysis); the processing sector (processing census, data and publications); and trade data and analysis.
16. A brief discussion followed, with Mike asking if Seafish can provide fuel prices from the last five years. Jess said this information is featured in the marine fuel price index Seafish has recently started to circulate and will offer committee members the opportunity to be included in the circulation list.

Action 03: Jess to offer committee members access to the circulation list for marine fuel prices index updates.

17. Michael asked if Seafish could provide similar information on the price of electricity and gas.

Action 04: Arina to explore the practicality of sourcing and tracking commercial price indices of electricity and gas rates.

Action 05: Jess to circulate the Economics presentation slides.

UK Skills and Training Fund update

18. Simon provided a summary of the [UK Seafood Fund](#), which is a £100m pan-UK fund to support the long-term future and sustainability of the UK fisheries and seafood sectors, managed by Defra. The fund has four separate pillars of funding:
 1. Science and innovation (£24m)
 2. Infrastructure (£65m)
 3. Skills and training (£10m)
 4. Exports support (£1m)
19. For the past year, Seafish has worked closely with Defra to assist with the design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of the Skills and Training scheme. Seafish help administer the fund and agreeing to this means Seafish cannot apply for funding or be involved in any applications. The

Skills and Training fund is now open for applications and further information on the application process is on the [UK Gov website](#). Up to £10m is available, which has been split into two pots:

- **Pot 1** (open until 10 October 2022) - Up to £5m for the development and piloting of new training courses, the updating and piloting of existing training courses, and the purchase and piloting of specialist training equipment to enhance training delivery and access to training.
- **Pot 2** (will be open from late Autumn 2022) – Up to £5m for the construction or refurbishment of training centres.
- Seafish is actively communicating and promoting to industry that the scheme is now open for applications.

Seafish Executive update

20. Aoife gave a brief overview of UK wide Seafish corporate activity, and other work relevant to the Scottish industry:

- Ongoing implementation of the outcomes of the Strategic Review which will include updating the levy system. The structure and operation of the levy will be reviewed and Seafish will consult with industry in the process of this revision.
- Development of the next Corporate Plan is underway: this will be the first time that there is a mandate for a Corporate Plan spanning five years. The final plan will be sent to Ministers for approval in early 2023.
- A symposium on the topic of microplastics is being facilitated with the aim of bringing together industry and international research experts to discuss and assess current knowledge and risks associated with microplastics in the marine environment. The outcome will help prepare seafood industry responses to any future reputational challenges that may arise.
- Supporting the processing and fishing industry on welfare issues via the Seafood Ethics Actions Alliance and the Fishermen's Welfare Alliance respectively.
- Ongoing work with industry bodies to develop codes of best practice at key points within the decapod crustacean supply chain in response to the recent changes in animal welfare legislation which now recognises these species as sentient animals.
- Facilitating a programme of industry workshops to assess the feasibility and scope for introducing mussels as an ingredient or protein replacement in processed foods.

Any other business

21. No other business was raised.

Date and format of next meeting and close

22. Phillip confirmed the next meeting is on 10 November and will take place on Microsoft Teams.

23. The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting.

Action List

| | Action | Timeline | Owner |
|----|---|------------------------|--------------|
| 1. | Phillip to upload the approved minutes to the Seafish website. | August | Phillip |
| 2. | Jess to co-ordinate a response to the BATmap funding proposal from SSAC members absent from the August meeting. | September | Jess |
| 3. | Jess to offer committee members access to the circulation list for marine fuel prices index updates. | August | Jess |
| 4. | Arina to explore the practicality of sourcing and tracking commercial price indices of electricity and gas rates. | Update at next meeting | Arina |
| 5. | Jess to circulate the Economics presentation slides. | August | Jess |