

**Minutes of Seafish Wales Advisory Committee
Held on Wednesday 17 May 2023 by video conference**

Attendees

Members: Marcus Coleman, Seafish (Chair)
Julie Hill, Lobster Pot
Paul Howes, Swansea University
Jim Evans, Welsh Fishermen’s Association
John Penaluna, National Federation of Fish Friers
Lewis Le Vay, Bangor University

Observers: Bethan Jones, Welsh Government

Seafish: Lynn Gilmore, Director of Communications and Engagement
Aoife Martin, Director of Operations (in part)
Eunice Pinn, Marine Environment Regulation Advisor (in part)
Lewis Tattersall, Head of Fisheries Management (in part)
Hannah Thompson, Head of International Trade and UK Regions (West)

Minutes: Phillip Quirie, Project Co-ordinator and Administrator

1 Welcome and apologies

1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that Noemi Donigiewicz is on leave and is expected to return soon. Apologies were shared on behalf of Colin Charman (Natural Resource Wales) and Andy Woolmer (Pacific Bay Oysters).

1.2 The Chair announced that Seafish Board member Graham Black will become the new SWAC Chair and explained that it was Graham’s intention to visit a number of Committee members during the Summer to help familiarise him with the sector in Wales.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 3 November 2022 and actions arising

2.1 The Chair invited feedback on the draft minutes. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

ACTION 01: Phillip will upload the approved minutes of the November 2022 meeting to the Seafish website.

2.2 Phillip provided an update on actions arising from the meeting held in November:

No.	Action List	Status
1.	Phillip will upload the approved minutes of the May 2022 meeting to the Seafish website.	Complete.

2.	Phillip will send Paul the video presented at the previous meeting on the Seafish crustacean welfare work, and ensure Oscar Wilkie and Paul are linked-up to ensure alignment with the “Ignition” project.	Complete.
3.	Julie will provide Lewis and Paul with details of the vacancy to advertise to graduates at their universities.	Complete.
4.	Bethan will open dialogue with the Welsh Government fisheries management team on the topic of Wales-specific Fisheries Management Plans and facilitate discussion with Seafish.	Complete – Bethan and Aoife have been in dialogue.
5.	Aoife will consider broadening out the aquaculture focus in the Seafish Corporate Plan 23-28, based on feedback from SWAC members.	Complete – aquaculture specifically referenced in CP23-28.
6.	Phillip will circulate a poll to members to establish the optimal date for the next meeting in May 2023.	Complete.

3 **Seafish Wales Manager update**

3.1 Hannah presented an overview of recent Seafish activity in Wales (Attachment: *01 SWAC 170523 Wales Work Update*).

4 **Seafish Exec update: Corporate Plan 23-28 and levy consultation update**

4.1 Lynn shared a video outlining the results and impact of the 2018-23 Seafish Corporate Plan and the variety of work delivered by Seafish. The video [can be viewed here](#).

4.2 Lynn presented an overview of the new Seafish Corporate Plan 2023-28 (Attachment: *02 SWAC 170523 Seafish Exec Update CP23-28*) and asked for any comments or suggestions.

4.3 A discussion followed. Members commented that previous Seafish Corporate Plans were too prescriptive, rigid, and failed to describe what Seafish will do at a local level, but this concern had been addressed in the new CP 2023- 28 with more activity of benefit to Welsh industry.

4.4 Marcus explained that the informal levy consultation period has officially closed, but Seafish were continuing to gather comments and suggestions. A brief discussion followed, and Aoife confirmed that all views and feedback will be relayed directly to the Seafish Board for consideration. Members understood the need for a levy review; however, it was felt that that the consultation missed the opportunity to include salmon and trout and that a guarantee needs to be in place that Seafish will revisit the legislation with a view to inclusion of these species in the scope of the levy in future.

5 **Shellfish Stakeholder Working Group: update on shellfish water quality issues**

5.1 Eunice presented an update on the water quality work undertaken by Seafish (Attachment: *03 SWAC 170523 Shellfish Water Quality Update*).

5.2 A discussion followed. Bangor University are involved in this area of work with Seafish and it was remarked that this area of work is technically very complicated and the regulatory landscape is challenging. Had it not

been for Seafish driving this work area forward, the same level of progress would not have been made on addressing this long-standing issue for the Welsh industry.

6 **SWAC member's update**

6.1 The Chair invited members to share any updates, challenges, issues, or opportunities from their sector.

6.2 Paul updated members on the following projects and initiatives Swansea University are currently engaged in:

- SAFE project with Stirling University, assessing wrasse and lumpfish behaviour and whether it can lead to more efficient cleaning in salmon farms, with a view to reducing mortality and improving quality.
- Several projects under Horizon 2020:
 - Developing operational welfare indicators for shrimp, assessing temperature preferences. Similar methods were used to assess sea bass; those results were fed into climate models to predict where future stocks may migrate to in accordance with climate change predictions.
 - [Cure4Aqua](#) project, developing innovative methods to improve the welfare of farmed fish in Europe. Bacteriophages are being used to eat the flavobacterium, which is causing problems in many aquaculture species across Europe.
 - Recently attended a workshop in Aberdare with [CIEL](#) (Centre for Innovation Excellence in Livestock), who are focused on bringing the agrifood and aquaculture sectors together for knowledge exchange and development of best practices) on how to develop a consensus around the direction in which aquaculture innovation needs to move and how the agrifood sector can support that.

6.3 Julie thanked those involved at SENA Boston and SEG Barcelona for the support provided and reported that both shows were a great success for The Lobster Pot.

- No orders have arisen yet from the Boston expo, but there was a significant level of interest. The Barcelona expo is a crucial part of their calendar, and they derive great value from exhibiting and the opportunity to network with every element of the UK supply chain.
- The Lobster Pot have again been shortlisted for the Welsh Food & Drink Exporter of the Year award, after winning last year (2022).
- Trade with China has continued to stall, and no change seems imminent. Other overseas markets have expressed an interest in their product, but the UK currently has no trade agreements in place with the respective nations.
- The Target Operating Model is of interest due to them buying from Ireland, and they are in dialogue with Welsh Government about this.

6.4 Lewis provided an overview of several projects Bangor University are involved with:

- Collaboration with Seafish on the shellfish water quality work presented by Eunice.
- The MOSSS project, looking at developing sustainable techniques for producing mussels in North Wales, reached the end of its EMFF funding. However, an EMFF funded project called Seas of Change will continue the work in this area.
- EMFF support enabled Bangor University to undertake research with the WFA to help inform fisheries management in Wales through a Fisheries Science Partnership. Although the funding for this has ended, a portfolio of FIS projects will enable the extension of this work. This includes filling evidence gaps for Welsh crab and lobster fisheries management and assessing the effects of climate change on whelk fisheries.
- Bangor are also working with Seafish to improve data on crustacean and whelk fisheries, and the effects of mobile fishing gear on blue carbon storage in the seabed.

6.5 Jim reported that the WFA have 8 Fisheries Science Partnership projects, of which 6 are in partnership with Bangor University. These projects have been a welcome opportunity to address the data gaps in Wales and the development of FMPs. Jim felt it was a timely and excellent example of partnerships achieving results. Jim also shared two primary ongoing challenges for the catching sector:

- 1 Access to and retention of labour and crew – Jim commented that the Home Office are challenging to engage with. Additionally, stricter regulations from the MCA in relation to fishermen's health certification may result in a number of fishermen being deemed unfit to go to sea, with nobody available to replace them.

- 2 Offshore renewable energy infrastructure and Highly Protected Marine Areas are further increasing marine spatial squeeze which is displacing fishing with displacement of fishing activity.

6.6 Jim referred to the report produced in 2022 by Seafish on fisheries and aquaculture in Wales, which provided a snapshot of the Wales industry. He asked that Seafish undertake a study to establish what needs to be done across the supply chain to deliver a thriving seafood industry in Wales. Additionally, it was felt that there is a role for Seafish to play regarding climate change and the need for guidance to inform policy in Wales. Welsh Government funding streams will be open for applications soon and it would be useful to consider what can be done in Wales.

ACTION 02: Seafish will begin discussions with members on development of a funding proposal for a study aimed at guiding future investment and delivery of a thriving seafood industry in Wales.

6.7 John reminded members that National Fish and Chip Day is on the 2nd June and they are the only business in Cardiff Bay taking part in the events. Disappointingly, Welsh restaurants have reported that they are generally using less fresh catch from Wales on their menus.

7 Welsh Government update

7.1 Bethan provided a summary of recent activity in the fisheries team at Welsh Gov, which included:

- The funding for seafood marketing under the Welsh Marine and Fisheries Scheme is nearing its end; round two of the funding will address energy and climate, and round three – which will focus on safety – is under development.
- The Food Business Scheme (FBAS) is open to seafood processors for funding applications.
- Scallop and bass FMPs have been progressed and will be presented at Ministerial level soon. Crab and lobster FMP work will be scoped in due course.
- Following on from the success of the Whelk Order (28 permits were issued), work is underway to replicate the Order for the cockle sector.
- The Wales pavilion at SEG Barcelona was a great success and plans are underway to enhance the pavilion for the 2024 expo. Welsh Gov are keen to align and collaborate with Seafish and UK Gov on other forthcoming seafood expo opportunities.
- Welsh Gov will attend a meeting on the Target Operating Model with Defra and the Border Control Agency, which will include a Q & A. Bethan told members that they were welcome to attend and to submit any questions they might have.
- The latest Ministerial Advisory Group meeting was held on 24th April. FMPs, quota, and whelk management were part of the discussions.

8 Update on Seafish fisheries management and long-term sustainability of commercial fisheries

8.1 Lewis Tattersall presented an overview of the Seafish work on shellfish Fisheries Management Plans (Attachment: *04 SWAC 170523 Shellfish FMPs*).

9 Any other business

9.1 No other business was raised.

10 Date and format of next meeting and future presentation suggestions

10.1 The Chair suggested that members take the opportunity to engage with the new Chair, Graham Black, during his industry visits to Wales in the Summer. He said this would also be a good chance to raise any discuss future presentation requests as well as any other suggestions to enhance and develop SWAC.

ACTION 03: Members will provide any future presentation suggestions and discuss SWAC work areas with Graham Black during the visits to Wales industry.

10.2 It was agreed that the next SWAC meeting will take place online in approximately six months.

ACTION 04: Phillip will arrange the next meeting online to take place in October or November.

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

No.	Action List	Timeline (Status)	Owner
1.	Phillip will upload the approved minutes of the November 2022 meeting to the Seafish website.	June	Phillip
2.	Seafish will begin discussions with members on development of a funding proposal for a study aimed at guiding future investment and delivery of a thriving seafood industry in Wales.	Next meeting	Noemi
3.	Members will provide any future presentation suggestions and discuss SWAC work areas with Graham Black during visits to Wales industry.	Next meeting	All
4.	Phillip will arrange the next meeting online in October or November.	October	Phillip