

Minutes of Seafish Board Meeting

Held on Thursday 25 May 2023 at 0830 at the Slieve Donard Hotel, Downs Road, Newcastle, BT33 0AH

Present:	Michael Sheldon (MS)	Seafish Board Chair (by videoconference)
	Jeffrey Halliwell (JH)	Seafish Board Deputy Chair
	Graham Black (GB)	Seafish Board Member
	David Brooks (DB)	Seafish Board Member
	Nigel Edwards (NE)	Seafish Board Member
	Heather Jones (HJ)	Seafish Board Member
	Mike Mitchell (MM)	Seafish Board Member
	Linda Rosborough (LR)	Seafish Board Member
	Nathan de Rozarieux (NR)	Seafish Board Member
	Harry Wick (HW)	Seafish Board Member
In attendance:	Stuart Caborn (SC)	Chair of Processing and Importers Sector Panel
	Michelle Jean Mullane (MJ)	Board Apprentice
	Marcus Coleman (MC)	CEO, Seafish
	Aoife Martin (AM)	Operations Director, Seafish
	Kenneth McIntosh (KM)	Director of Finance, Seafish
	Lynn Gilmore (LM)	Communications and Engagement Director, Seafish
	Rachel Muckle (RM)	Deputy Director Marine and Fisheries, Defra (by videoconference)
	Jo Walsh (JW)	Secretariat

1 **Welcome and Apologies**

- 1.1 JH welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that although MS will be joining the meeting online, JH would be Chairing due to MS being ill. He thanked all those involved in arranging the stakeholder visits and events.
- 1.2 Apologies were received from Jerry Percy and Linsey Neill.

2 **Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 HJ stated her employment at the University of Sterling as an interest; the register would be updated accordingly.

3 **Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)**

- 3.1 The minutes of 22 March 2023 were approved as a true record.

4 **Action Tracker**

- 4.1 The actions were reviewed. The Sector Panel discussions action will be carried forward, all other actions closed.

5 **Seafish Levy Reforms**

- 5.1 AM briefed the Board on the contents of the papers. There was a discussion on the proposals, how the reform would be received by industry and whether Seafish needs to improve the way it adds value to stakeholders. MS commented that the levy reform has been needed for some time and an increase in levy will always be a difficult process to navigate with stakeholders.
- 5.2 RM commented that more work is needed on demonstrating a robust argument for a levy reform before submission to Ministers. She advised that particular attention would be paid to assessing the risk of legal challenge. The process may take some time.

5.3 The Chair summarised that Seafish should be proud that this difficult issue is being addressed, and that consultation responses have been useful in developing a set of technical recommendations for the levy reform. Further work will be done on developing a robust case for presenting to the Devolved Administrations.

6 Chairs Report

6.1 MS briefed the Board on his recent activities and highlighted the work on the levy reform, and his recent attendance at the Barcelona Seafood Expo which he found extremely valuable. He praised the hard work put in by Seafish staff, the Department for Business & Trade and other colleagues. MC expanded that stakeholder numbers showing at the UK Pavilion had increased in 2023 and there has been strong encouragement to host a UK stand at the Expos in China and Japan.

7 West Yorkshire Pension Scheme

7.1 KM presented the paper as read and commented that the unfunded part was essentially an administrative change, i.e., relating to a change in the paying entity and shouldn't be controversial. He also mentioned that there may be scope to negotiate settlement terms on the funded element but if going down this route would look to settle of a relatively short horizon - 2 – 3 years max. KM asked RM about readiness for formal approval from Defra. RM responded that Defra has noted the process and are satisfied this is a Seafish decision; a letter will be sent to MC to formally confirm this position soon.

7.2 The Board agreed to the recommendation made and requested that KM implement the proposed approach.

8 Revised Seafish Framework Document

8.1 MC introduced the document and asked for any comments before submitting for a formal government response. The following suggestions were made:

- 16.2 – regarding Board member composition, there was no mention of industry experience or background
- 14.3 – correct the wording referencing the Annexes
- 16.1 – in the sentence “The role of the Board shall be to run Seafish”, the word “run” to be replaced with “guide”

8.2 The frequency of the Remuneration Committee and Audit & Risk Committee meetings were discussed and noted. It was also noted that legislation prevents industry members from being Chair or Deputy.

8.3 The Framework, subject to proposed amendments, was approved by the Board. AM will make the amends to the Framework Document and pass to Defra for submission to HMT. RM commented that it has been a long time since the Framework was last revised so the process has taken longer than usual, but the next review, in 3 years, will be much quicker.

ACTION: AM to amend Framework agreement and progress formal approval.

9 Board Effectiveness Review

9.1 The Board supported the following recommendations in the report:

- The creation of an Action Plan as per BDO recommendation and supported this being on the Board agenda for review in September.
- The Board undertake the Effectiveness Review annually in October.

9.2 **ACTION: An action plan to tackle areas for improvement based on the effectiveness review will be brought to the September Board meeting.**

10 Salary and Grading Items

10.1 The Board discussed the pay and grading proposals. DB raised concerns about how the proposals may be perceived. Remuneration Committee (RemCom) members assured DB that there was lengthy debate and scrutiny at RemCom without Executive members present and they had decided to support the recommendations. KM confirmed that the salary amendments were budgeted for, and the process followed the Seafish pay policy. The Board agreed to

support the recommendations and the amendments will be processed in the June payroll.

11 **Management Report**

- 11.1 MC summarised the report and picked out a few points of note, updating that the Diversity and Inclusion survey response rate is now at 66%. He reported that GB has taken on the Chair of the Seafish Wales Advisory Committee. JW will work on the performance report from the Annual Plan and the Risk Register update, which will be brought to the Board in September.
- 11.2 There was a discussion on recruitment and welfare issues in the catching sector. AM stated that it is a complex issue and Seafish is working to address it with analysis, advice and guidance to both industry and government. The Chair asked for this issue to be kept under review.
- 11.3 It was noted that there were hard copies of the new Seafish Corporate Plan available for Board members.

12 **Financial Position**

- 12.1 KM summarised that the 2022/23 financial year concluded in line with the budget set. This was due to various factors, most materially the accrual of the pension exit payment, with other positive deviations relating to the receipt of unbudgeted external funding, restructuring activity, non-spend of contingency fund, unbudgeted bank interest received, and underspends due to cautious behaviour relating to the economic environment. The FY24 budget was now presented with only the unfunded element of pension payments, revised from the budget paper presented at the March board meeting. The position was noted.

13 **Committee and Sector Panel Insights**

- 13.1 The minutes were reflected on and noted. SC provided a summary of the recent Processing and Importers Panel with MC updating on key points from the Domestic and Exporters Panel and LG providing an update on the Supply Chain and Consumer Panel meeting
- 13.2 The Chair highlighted the revised Terms of Reference for the Remuneration Committee, and they were formally adopted.

14 **Forward Plan**

- 14.1 MC invited comments on the proposed revised venues for the September and November 2023 Board meetings. It was agreed that both meetings would be held in Edinburgh.
- 14.2 The March 2024 meeting location is to be determined, but Grimsby is an option.
- 14.3 The annual stakeholder visit for May 2024 was discussed. Financial implications of visiting Shetland or Peterhead will be investigated before a final decision on location is made.

15 **AOB**

- 15.1 Nothing to note.

16 **Dates of Future Meetings**

- 16.1 Future meetings discussed under Forward Plan item.

17 **Close**

- 17.1 Meeting closed at 11:43.