

## Minutes of the Shellfish Industry Advisory Group inaugural meeting held 25 November 2019

Attendee list:

Name	Organisation
Barrie Deas	NFFO
Tony Delahunty	NFFO
Anne Freeman	Defra
Holly Kaiser	Seafish
Aoife Martin	Seafish
Don Thompson	Jersey Fishermen's Association
Jim Portus	SWFPO
Helen Hunter	Defra
Patrick Smith	DAERA
Harry Wick	NIFPO
Paul Trebilcock	CFPO
Mark Rowse	Rowse Fishing
Andy Wheeler	Fisheries Business Adviser East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Neil Robson	Genesis Fishing
Mike Roach	Holderness Fishing Industry Group
Brian Pawley	NFFO SW.
Trevor Bartlett	South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen Association
Paul Brown	Brown and Bright
Nick Bright	Brown and Bright
Claire Pescod	Macduff Shellfish
Beshlie Pool	South Devon and Channel Shellfishermen Ltd.
Steven Williamson	Lynn Shellfish Ltd.
Les Lawrence	Dorset Fish and Shellfish Ltd.
Colin Bannister	SAGB
David Jarrad	SAGB
Gary Hodgson	Venture Seafoods
Mark Moore	Dartmouth Crab
Andrew Brown	Macduff Shellfish
Bill Brock	BNFS Ltd.
Jim Evans	NFA
<b>Apologies</b>	
Ewen Bell	Cefas
John Balls	NDFA

Action	Responsible	Timeframe
Facilitate appointment of chair and gather expressions of interest.	Whole group?	Late February 2020.
Organise next meeting.	NFFO/Seafish	Late February 2020.
Explore potential funding mechanism for the new group.	NFFO	tbc
Prepare a draft ToR.	NFFO/Seafish	Late February 2020.
Assess shellfish sector representation of the group.	Seafish	Late February 2020.
Seafish to take on role of secretariat.	Seafish	Commencing November 2019.
Create a SIAG email list.	Seafish	In advance of the next meeting

### **(1) Chair**

It was agreed that Barrie Deas would chair the initial meeting on the basis that it was an initiative that began with the NNFO Shellfish Committee.

### **(2) Welcome and Introductions**

Interim Chair (Barrie Deas) thanked participants for the strong attendance at the meeting. This highlighted the real appetite to establish a collaborative group that is capable of steering shellfish science, shellfish policy and industry in a positive direction.

### **(3) Provisional Agenda**

No additions to the provisional agenda were made and it was agreed it suitably satisfied the purposes of the inaugural meeting.

### **(4) Background**

The meeting pack included a background document detailing the drivers for establishing the SIAG. Key drivers include that the shellfish sector is highly valuable and is important to the inshore sector , but that there are a range of challenges that can only be addressed effectively through collaboration and coordination.

- Displacement by other sectors.
- The changing market.
- The pace of technological change.
- The need for coherent and evidence-based fisheries management.
- Impact of EU Exit
- Opportunity on the back of the inshore fisheries conference for greater co-management, the SIAG is a first step.
- The shellfish sector has traditionally had a reactive role due to having to deal with issues, rather than being able to work proactively with regulators to deliver effective fisheries management.

How to ensure effective UK-wide representation at an industry and government level was highlighted as an important issue to address. Membership currently reflects the people who showed initial interest but there is a need to ensure the group has appropriate representation.

There was reassurance from Defra that it is keen to involve industry in future management and that stock sustainability, industry profitability and sustainable coastal communities are common objectives.

### **(5) Scope**

The initial scope of the Group should be the pot fisheries for crab, lobster and whelk. While there is a desire to see the group take on a UK wide focus it may be more realistic to focus on English shellfish fisheries initially.

## (6) Purpose

Purpose of the group is to answer the questions posed in the overview paper circulated in advance of the meeting (see Appendix A)

- Where are we now?

The current state of fisheries management lacks the quality of science to provide sufficient stock assessments, leading to data deficiencies. Therefore, going forward we need to determine how science decisions can be better informed and what role industry can play in addressing these issues.

- Where do we want to be?

The group considered a range of potential objectives:

- A shellfish sector that has access to sustainable resources and provides for a vibrant and economically viable industry. We need to ensure the sector is ecologically sustainable, whilst maintaining high profitability.
  - Improved communication and engagement with government, and the science community.
  - Opportunity to explore how co-management might work effectively in the shellfish sector.
  - Agreed that the SIAG should establish a list of priorities focused on science and fisheries management intervention.
- How do we get there?

To achieve our goals we need a strong purpose and a target to work towards – key issues that will need addressing include:

*The mandate of the group* - credibility is essential if the group is to engage effectively with government. Therefore, the group needs appropriate representation from across the industry; otherwise, there is the risk that the group will be perceived not to have a sufficient mandate to work collaboratively and co-manage.

*Lack of data* - whilst it is desirable to have fully substantiated data, it is not necessary to wait until it is obtained and action can be taken using the data we currently have.

*No one-size fits all approach* – there are a range of management options available. The group needs to be able to identify the most appropriate management interventions and at the right scale.

*Species-specific approach* – there is recognition that we may want to take a different approach depending on the species. This may influence how the group is structured and how it operates.

Main elements to be determined are:

- Deciding on the problems that need to be solved; key to this is the need for a common understanding of what a success would look like (gap analysis).
- A roadmap that sets out the actions that need to be taken and the expected timeframe.

- The role of government in the process; observers or partners (more aligned with co-management).

### **(7) Terms of Reference**

Agreed that a draft Terms of Reference for the group would be created that sets out the purpose of the SIAG, its objectives and governance and delivery mechanisms. Given that the group is evolving it was agreed it would be useful to give the SIAG some time to 'find its feet' before finalising the Tor>

### **(8) Membership**

Initially, the members of the group are based on those with a direct interest in the relevant fisheries and who had expressed a wish to be involved. The membership will evolve and this will set the direction of the group. Whilst important to accommodate those prepared to engage, the membership of the group will be reviewed over time, allowing gaps in representation or expertise to be brought in accordingly.

It is an industry group but success will depend on having appropriate knowledge and experts around the table. Given data deficiency and fisheries management issues, scientists and fisheries managers should attend.

Defra's involvement – active observers and sense checkers for anything industry presents.

Concern was expressed over Scotland's involvement and the lack of representation from the under 10 metre fleet. It was acknowledged that organisations already at the table represented a significant number of the under-10m fleet but it was acknowledged that geography and fragmentation were endemic problems in ensuring adequate representation from the small-scale end of the industry. If deemed within the scope of the group, additional representation can be sought later.

A sub-group structure, at the species level, may also be beneficial, to ensure stock specific issues are addressed where appropriate.

### **(9) Secretariat**

It was agreed that Seafish would provide secretariat support and assist with progressing actions. Defra also offered to provide support.

### **(10) Funding**

Funding will be required if the SIAG is to successfully pursue its priorities. An appropriate funding mechanism is needed; the SICG provides a potential model.

Seafish, Defra and the NFFO may be able to provide initial funding to get the group established.

### **(11) Work Programme**

A defined work programme needs to be established if we are to expect people to commit to the group. Essential to the work programme is an understanding of the current state of our shellfish industry at the appropriate scale, and identifying the gaps or blockages to effective management so

that we can work collaboratively to address these. Suggested structure for a draft work programme includes:

- Establishing fisheries objectives (stock sustainability but also social and economic objectives) for key species and at the appropriate unit of management.
- Completing a gap analysis – what do we know about the state of our shellfish fisheries, what is missing.
- Defining the actions that need to be taken to fill the gaps.

#### **(12) Inshore Management Conference**

Seafish provided an update on the 'Future of Our Inshore Fisheries' Conference. The outputs from the conference have a clear relevance, particularly with respect to co-management and industry-led science.

Seafish are in the process of working with Mindfully Wired to produce the post-conference report. Once this has been done, a high level work plan will be created but Future of Our Inshore Fisheries Steering Group in late January. The initiatives taken post-conference will work alongside and have an effect on the shellfish group, hopefully providing a framework to drive fisheries management improvement. To ensure the group has industry representation, Seafish has invited a number of active fishermen to attend steering group meetings on a rotational basis.

#### **(13) Any Other Business**

The following topics were also discussed in brief:

1. The impact of EU Exit on the shellfish sector in terms of access to fishing grounds but also in terms of export and sale of product. This is potentially very challenging for the sector so needs to be a priority for the group in the short to medium term.
2. Perception that there have been similar initiatives to SIAG in the past but nothing was achieved. To be effective, top-down engagement from organisations, such as Defra, will be required. However, it is agreed that to effect meaningful change, perseverance is key.
3. Important to maintain momentum and engagement outside formal meetings. Agreed that a SIAG group email would be created and used to provide updates and share information. s.

#### **(14) Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting is to be held in late February 2020 = Seafish to arrange in collaboration with the NFFO.