



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

CYHOEDDIAD

Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG) meeting: 17 March 2021

Minutes of the WMAAG meeting of 17 March 2021.

Cyhoeddwyd gyntaf: 28 Mehefin 2021

Diweddarwyd ddiwethaf: 28 Mehefin 2021

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Cynnwys

Key messages and actions

Agenda

Introduction

Key Messages and Outputs

Item 1: Welcome and Introduction

Item 2: Marine & Fisheries Deputy Directors' update

Item 3: Stakeholder Groups Report Back

Item 4: Blue Recovery Update and Next Steps

Item 5: WMAAG Going Forward

Item 6: AOB

Key messages and actions

Title of Meeting: Wales Marine Action & Advisory Group (WMAAG)

Date: 17-03-2021

Meeting Number: 14

Start time: 13:30

End Time: 15:30

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Attendance

Peter Davies (Chair) (PD Partnership),

Phil Hollington (Cragen Llyn a Mon), Jonathan Hughes (National Trust), Jess Hooper (Marine Energy Wales), Jetske Germing and Steve Hall (Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum), John Wrottesley (European Subsea Cables Association) Gill Bell (Marine Conservation Society & Wales Environment Link), Jim Evans (Welsh Fishermen's Association), Rachel Sharp (Wildlife Trust Wales), Nicola Gandy (Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority), Emma McKinley (Cardiff University), , Rhian Jardine and Kirsty Lindenbaum (Natural Resources Wales), David Tudor (Blue Marine Foundation), Katie Harvard-Smith (Severn Estuary Partnership), Becky Phillips (Joint Nature Conservation Committee), Joe Smithyman (The Crown Estate), Emily Williams (RSPB), Jim McKie (CSAG Chair)

Gareth Bevington, Mike Dowell, Chris Jenkins, Caryn Le Roux, Tamsin Brown, Hilary Evans, Louise Durns (Welsh Government)

Presenters

Jim McKie (Chair, CSAG)

Mike Dowell and Gareth Bevington, (Deputy Directors WG)

Chris Jenkins (WG)

Caryn Le Roux (WG)

Kirsty Lindenbaum (NRW)

Apologies

Mark Russell – British Marine Aggregates Association

Phil Horton – Royal Yachting Association

John O'Connor – Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers

Mark Simmonds – British Ports Association

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Agenda

1. Welcome and Introduction
2. Marine & Fisheries Deputy Directors' update
3. Stakeholder Groups report back (Paper)

Consenting Strategic Advisory Group (CSAG)

Marine Conservation Zones

Any other hot issues/Highlights/updates from paper

4. Blue Recovery update and next steps
5. WMAAG Going Forward
6. AOB
7. Close

Introduction

The Wales Marine Action and Advisory group (WMAAG) provides a forum for discussion and debate, and the provision of support and advice to the Welsh Government, on strategic marine and coastal policy. It is the overarching stakeholder group for the work of the Marine and Fisheries Division of the Welsh Government, sitting alongside the Welsh Marine Fisheries Action Group (WMFAG), the lead Welsh Government fisheries industry forum in Wales. The WMAAG is comprised of 36 stakeholder leads who represent the interests of all sectors with an interest or investment in the Marine in Wales. Details of sectors and lead organisations can be found within the group's [Terms of Reference](#).

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Key Messages and Outputs

Item 1: Welcome and Introduction

Key messages

The chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2021 and outlined the agenda for the afternoon.

Apologies received from British Marine Aggregates Association, Royal Yachting Association, Welsh Federation of Sea Anglers and British Ports Association.

Item 2: Marine & Fisheries Deputy Directors' update

Key messages

Mike Dowell gave an overview of what has been going on in Marine and Fisheries since the group last met. Budget was re-purposed at the beginning of the financial year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The key work areas are covered in the agenda.

Implementation of the Welsh National Marine Plan continues to be a First Minister and MEERA priority. Sector locational guidance has been developed. Commissioning studies into marine renewable technologies.

Mike commended the group on the efforts of the Blue Recovery Task and Finish group.

Next time the group meet it will be after the election and there will be a welcome opportunity to look at policies for 4-5 year term and multiannual funding.

Gareth Bevington provided an update on the Division's focus for the last three

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months.

EU Exit has and continues to have an impact on the sector with trade implications, which has resulted in a significant impact on the Division's workload. The focus has been on developing support scheme for fishers and businesses.

Coastal state negotiations continue.

The Fisheries Act 2020 came into force in November. As part of the Fisheries Act 2020 a Joint Fisheries Statement will be in place 2 years from the coming into force date of the Fisheries Act, and officials are working on policy considerations around that.

Budget and resources for the Division was discussed. The budget for 2021/22 is the same as 2020/21 pre-Covid re-purposing.

Members would like to look at the overall budget and resources across WG and NRW.

Replacement EMFF money will be supplied by the UK Government. There is a replacement of structural funds for this year.

Actions

HE to provide link to Fisheries Act 2020 and Brexit and Our Seas announcements: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/flagship-fisheries-bill-becomes-law>

Written Statement: A response to the Brexit and our Seas consultation and the next steps towards a future fisheries policy for Wales

HE to provide link to statement re: resources

Marine and fisheries announcements

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Item 3: Stakeholder Groups Report Back

Members were provided with a round up from the stakeholder groups ahead of the meeting.

Wales Clean Seas Partnership

- continues to support the delivery of the Marine Litter Action Plan. There was a #LoveWelshBeaches social media campaign to help raise awareness of beach litter as visitors returned to Wales.

The partnership continues to support and influence wider Welsh Government work such as the Litter and Fly-Tipping Prevention Strategy and the single use plastics consultation.

Marine Protected Area Management Steering Group -

published their annual report for 2019-20 and the action plan for 2020-21.

The group has also invited new actions to feature in the 2021-22 action plan, through a virtual workshop held last year.

The newly formed Marine Resilience Group has been focussing on the Marine Protected Area Network Management Plan, with the next meeting scheduled for 27 April.

Implementation of the Wales National Marine Plan continues and there are various sub-groups assisting and advising with this implementation.

WMFAG (Wales Marine Fisheries Advisory Group) met 8 March and this was the last meeting for Nick O'Sullivan who has completed his full 10 year public appointment term. I know Nick has been involved with the fishing industry in Wales for over 35 years. Initially joining the Sea Fisheries Committee as the Welsh Office appointee in 1992, chairing the South Wales Sea Fisheries Committee until 2010 when they became part of the Welsh Government

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resulting in him becoming the chair of WMFAG.

With Nick's departure the Division are taking the opportunity to carry out an internal review on how WMFAG operates going forward.

Through WMFAG a task and finish group was set up to address End of Life Fishing Gear to support the developing policy area. Due to covid-19 the group was largely stood down through 2020, but has recently started to engage again to focus on identifying different solutions for end of life fishing gear for the Welsh fleet.

The paper also outlines information regarding the various cockle and mussel fisheries across Wales.

Consenting Strategic Advisory Group (CSAG) – Jim McKie (Chair)

Jim McKie, Chair for CSAG provided a summary of what Wales is currently doing to address some of the Marine Renewable Energy consenting challenges.

Welsh Ministers continue to underline their commitment to the responsible deployment of renewable energy devices by fully supporting firstly the establishment of CSAG and recently Science and Evidence Advisory Group (SEAGP).

CSAG/SEAGP's membership works collaboratively. Currently the groups are focused on environmental matters but there are early plans to connect with other marine stakeholders and interested parties.

Identifying and addressing challenges is one of the key aspects to facilitate timely decision making. It is vital for the industry that timely and robust decisions are made. We have set clear goals and agreed work programmes to identify and facilitate the use of best practice whilst recognising best available evidence and science all of which critically underpins decision making.

The membership follows a balanced and collaborative strategy to identify routes

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that are targeted to help to reduce the regulatory and environmental risks.

Sound and accessible evidence base is critical to support the MRE sector and understand the health of our seas whilst supporting sustainable development.

Progress is being made, however it is worthwhile bearing in mind the significant and time-consuming challenges we face, and the effort and resource required from what is not an endless supply.

Aim to add to the cohesive package of measure in place to support the decision making process, the industry and stakeholders.

CSAG has largely delivered on its initial work plan and priorities list and in response to the importance placed on underlying science and evidence gathering set up SEAGP to focus on science and evidence needs.

CSAG/SEAGP will continue to consolidate their position in identifying and unlocking opportunities to derisk the challenges.

Rachel Sharp raised concerns regarding the rates and scale of deployment of renewable energy in England and asked whether this would be replicated in Wales. Concerns about industry wanting quicker than evidence can be gathered.

Opportunity in Wales is for small scale community and adaptive management is the way forward and aligned with Well-being and Future Generations Act and Environment Wales Act.

John Wrottesley offered to have a conversation regarding laying sea cables and conservation outside the meeting.

Jonathan Hughes queried whether there was a map of the entirety of what is being considered. Jim explained there are a number of maps available for clusters of projects of where resources are available. Currently reliant on members to supply that information.

Marine Energy cuts across everything land and marine. Officials will brief the new Government regarding Energy in general bringing the various strands

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together and bring coherence.

Marine Conservation Zones – Chris Jenkins

Chris Jenkins delivered a presentation to explain the current Marine Conservation Zone process and how his team are engaging with stakeholders to front load the process consulting with sectoral interest before the formal 12 week consultation.

Gill Bell thanked Welsh Government for their level of engagement but expressed deep disappointment about delays to the process. WG recognises this disappointment, however, the pandemic has meant new ways of working has slowed pace together with the imminent election causing delay. However, working with the task and finish group collaboratively the outcome will be better in the long run.

Phil Hollington was concerned at activity maps not taking into account inshore fishing activities. Chris reassured that WG is mindful of that and will be talking to the inshore fishing sector.

David Tudor queried whether this was a Highly Protected Marine Area process. Chris reassured that it was not and features will be assessed against activity and will take into account planned activities.

Next meeting will be shortly after the election.

Any other hot issues/Highlights/updates from paper

Due to time constraints, this item was moved to AOB All: any feedback or questions to HE (secretariat) or Peter (Chair).

Actions

Jess Hooper – to share map of entirety of areas of consideration with the group, when available (Complete – presentation given – offer to extend to any interested WMAAG members, contact Jess).

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Item 4: Blue Recovery Update and Next Steps

Peter delivered a presentation to update the group on recent Blue Recovery meetings, progress and next steps.

Gill Bell agreed stakeholders need to take ownership and hopes funding will be available from Area Statements. Question is how to influence the next Government to raise profile of the marine to get funding.

Rachel Sharp supported the Blue Recovery process as an excellent example of the Well-being of Future Generations Act in action. Agreed that WMAAG needs to be more proactive in raising the profile. There would be benefits into research into wider public benefits / of the marine environment and coastal communities.

Peter agreed to raising profile and WMAAG working proactively can put forward a strong collective voice, to continue to influence and shape Blue Recovery.

Jetske Germing expressed the need to engage more with coastal communities and highlighted the challenges of keeping tourism sustainable without funding in place, especially this year with the current conditions around the pandemic.

Kirsty Lindenbaum commented that the Blue Carbon work in relation to the Marine Area Statement has been well received and highlights the wider benefits of restoring marine habitats.

NRW are appointing a Marine and Well-being Service Advisor to help promote those wider benefits.

Peter asked Jim McKie if he has any experiences from the Scottish perspective which will help us going forward.

Next Blue Recovery meeting Monday April 19th 11:00 -12:30

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Item 5: WMAAG Going Forward

Caryn Le Roux recently joined the Division and is leading on Marine Resilience and Climate Change.

With the current climate of online meetings Caryn wanted to gauge from the group what works well, what doesn't work and how members want to see WMAAG meetings in the future.

To gather meaningful feedback members suggested a short questionnaire for them to consider and return.

Caryn asked members to let us know if they have submitted an Expression of Interest to the COP26 process. [COP26 is the next annual UN climate change conference. COP stands for Conference of the Parties].

Emma Mckinley: Part of a collective bid – ocean stories narrative running across the 2 weeks of COP26.

Jetske Germing: Future Generations Commissioner Climate Cymru are putting in a big bid and Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum is part of that bid.

Actions

Caryn to send members questionnaire for feedback.

All – to consider questionnaire and provide feedback.

Item 6: AOB

Welsh Government Tidal Lagoon Challenge – Jasper Roberts presented the programme at the Marine Energy Wales conference. Jess Hooper will circulate link.

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A Prior Information Notice (PIN) to conduct soft market research to inform the nature and quantum of any support the WG could provide. Its aim would be to work with the selected Pathfinder through development and construction phases of a full-scale tidal lagoon facility, with a sufficient package of support as necessary, to make the chosen scheme environmentally acceptable and economically viable.

Marine Conservation Society launched **MCS Good Fish Guide** recently.

Date for next WMAAG meeting: Wednesday 16th June 13:30 – 15:30 Jess Hooper to provide link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=db747-QMiOI>

Link to PIN: https://www.sell2wales.gov.wales/search/show/search_view.aspx?ID=MAR361326

HE to send diary marker for next meeting.

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Ynghylch y ddogfen hon

Mae'r ddogfen hon yn gopi o'r dudalen we [Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group \(WMAAG\) meeting: 17 March 2021](#) a lawrlwythwyd.

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Efallai na fydd y ddogfen hon yn hollol hygyrch; darllenwch ein [datganiad hygyrchedd](#) i gael rhagor o wybodaeth.

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