

# Board Meeting

Held on Wednesday 26 February 2020 at the Grand Hotel, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GD

**Present:**

Brian Young (BY) (Chair)  
Michael Sheldon (MS) (Deputy Chair)  
Jonathan Shepherd (JS)  
Nathan de Rozarieux (NdR)  
Linda Rosborough (LR)  
Jimmy Buchan (JB)  
Peter Hajipieris (PH)

**Executive:**

Marcus Coleman (MC), CEO  
Aoife Martin (AM), Operations Director  
Declan Byrne (DB), Finance Director  
Hazel Curtis (HC), Corporate Relations Director  
Linsey Neill (LN), HR Director

**In attendance:**

Jon Parker (JP), Panel Chair: Importers  
Jerry Percy (JP2), Panel Chair: Domestic  
Lesley Cunningham (LC), PA to Declan Byrne (Minutes)

**1 Welcome and Apologies**

BY welcomed everyone to the meeting.

BY highlighted the fact that this would be Peter Hajipieris' final Seafish Board meeting after many years of service. On behalf of the Board and Executive, BY thanked Peter for the commitment he has demonstrated throughout his time on the Board. BY noted how Peter drew on his years of experience in the food industry and was extremely generous in the way he translated this into insightful advice and guidance. Particularly noteworthy was the influence and energy Peter has brought to promoting the cultural transformation of Seafish over the past decade. The Board wished Peter all the very best for the future.

Apologies were received from Chris Lamb (CL), Panel Chair: Supply Chain and Consumers, Alison Austin (AA) and Mike Mitchell (MM).

**2 Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3 (i) Minutes from the Previous Meeting – 27 November 2019**

The Board agreed the minutes from the previous meeting were a true record.

## **(ii) Action Tracker**

### **14.4 China Fisheries Expo**

MC stated the Executive Team would review the China Fisheries Expo due to the current coronavirus outbreak and review risk assessments for the trip.

### **17.3 September and November 2020 Board Meetings**

MC confirmed the Executive Team will consider agenda items for the meetings and to consider an appropriate venue in Cardiff for the November Board meeting with the Devolved Administrations.

## **4 Preparation and Planning for Seafish Strategic Review**

BY recapped on the discussions from the Development Day on 25 February 2020.

**ACTION:** MC to translate the information from the flip chart notes and convert this into a Gantt chart.

The Board agreed that Seafish could produce accurate information to be communicated to staff and industry about the purpose and need for the strategic review.

LN stated that it would be useful to provide Board members with a simple 'key points' briefing so that stakeholders and Seafish staff receive the same messages at the same time.

JB asked the Executive Team if they have reflected on how they will continue to manage their day to day job with the imminent demands following the discussions from the strategic review meeting. The Executive confirmed that some items of work will be delayed or put on hold to enable the delivery of the strategic review.

BY stated the Executive Team could look at the option of drawing down cash reserves for urgent causes. However, the use of funds would need to support the timetable for the delivery of the strategic review process.

DB confirmed there was a discussion at the recent ARC meeting in relation to using such funds and reminded the Board that the auditors would be looking to ensure all expenditure would adhere to the 'Managing Public Money' guidance.

**ACTION:** DB and MS to discuss the use of cash reserves before the next ARC meeting in May and share the outcome with Board members.

Both BY and MS encouraged the Executive Team to protect the future of Seafish and its projects through appropriate use of all available assets.

## **5 Measuring Stakeholder Sentiment**

HC updated the Board on the progress to improve stakeholder sentiment and sought views on the new approach to monitoring and reporting of stakeholder sentiment.

### **5.1 Strategy**

HC referred Board members to the new Draft Corporate Brand Guidelines (March 2020/v2.0) to which staff members contributed at workshops. She noted that the Communications Team is engaged in 3 key strands of work:

- i. Internal communications – ensuring Seafish colleagues are up to date on internal matters and stakeholder engagement matters
- ii. Promoting the seafood industry to the public – media, PR and positive industry campaign, links to “Love Seafood” consumer-facing initiative
- iii. Promoting Seafish and our work to our stakeholders via an external, year-round “*Seafood is thriving*” campaign, featuring a range of outputs, including case studies, stories, etc.

## 5.2 Structure and people

HC advised the Board of internal reorganisation which has resulted in separation of the Communications Team from the Marketing Team, with the Head of Communications being responsible for stakeholder engagement. New appointments to the Team are will have the appropriate skills, stakeholder engagement and communications experience to ensure effectiveness.

A question was raised regarding the relationship between the Communications and Regional Teams. HC stated the Regional team appointed an additional team member in Wales regional team members were reviewing their connection with stakeholders according to regional needs.

AM stated there is also a range of engagement across the whole of Seafish through Regulation, Economics and other teams.

## 5.3 Year-round approach to assessing stakeholder sentiment

HC advised that the periodic telephone survey of stakeholders would be replaced by a multi-source, year-round approach to collecting indications of stakeholder sentiment. This approach would include an online survey.

The Board discussed the new Seafish corporate brand guidelines and noted that the guidelines are excellent and that it would be important to ensure they are effectively implemented by all.

The Board noted that while some stakeholders may not want to complete an online survey, it would not be appropriate to run a phone survey in an attempt to reach every single stakeholder.

Some of the proposed actions were complementary to the Strategic Review process and it was agreed that the Executive would consider ways to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of data collection in relation to the SR and for general stakeholder sentiment.

**ACTION:** HC to consider the viability of a mechanism for telephone surveys and consider the time and effort of such a process.

## 6 Seafish Annual Plan for 2020/21

AM gave an overview on the third Annual Plan under the current Corporate Plan.

### 6.1 Overview of Annual Plan 2020/21

AM stated the plan reflects the five challenges and key areas set out in the Corporate Plan.

The format of the Annual plan will follow in line with previous years and will include:

- Multi-year activities, e.g. Fish & Chip Awards, Seafood Training, Kingfisher bulletins
- Launch and the implementation of Love Seafood and new the Exporters’ Forum

- Deliver consumer campaigns
- Respond to emerging issues
- Ethical issues, e.g. lack of foreign labour within the seafood supply chain
- Stepping up with climate change work to ensure credible information is shared with industry.
- RFS moving to GSA

Priority for our Enabling Services will be to:

- Progress with the digital transformation programme
- Implement a well-being programme linked to the Scottish Healthy Working Lives Programme
- Progress with the Seafish website to ensure stability

Work will also include continuing to work alongside businesses to understand and communicate the issue and impact of plastic pollution within their businesses. Collaborate with the US National Fisheries Institute by bringing together industry leaders and experts from the US and UK to share knowledge, create and build a network landscape for future research.

To continue to work with the Ethics Common Language Group to ensure industry is aware of the ethical issues and their implication for the seafood supply chain. Seafish is focussing its efforts and working with government on these issues. Seafish will also update the tool on climate change and greenhouse gas emissions.

## **6.2 Budget**

DB stated that once underspend has been accounted for, Seafish expect to deliver the 2020/21 Annual Plan with an allocation of 35% of our original Corporate Plan budget.

## **6.3 Timeframes**

The draft plan will be shared at Panel meetings in April/May 2020 and with Regional Advisory Committees to ensure clear links between work programmes and to these fit in with the strategic review.

AM reported the Heads of Teams have collated all project information which includes the Digital Transformation Programme and a Project Management System. The HoTs and Executive Team will consider delivery of all these projects in relation to the strategic review.

HC confirmed the website will be available from July 2020.

AM stated there was a clear steer from the Seafish Expert Panel on the different environmental impacts and the need to manage a climate change work programme.

## **7 Sunday Times 100 Best Not for Profit Organisations to Work For**

LN asked to note within the minutes that PH has been a great champion and supporter of the Best Companies (Times 100) since the initiation of the programme.

LN stated at the recent Best Companies (Times 100) awards ceremony Seafish were placed 90<sup>th</sup> in the Times 100 table and is the only public body in the Top 100.

LN asked the Board to note that the Top 50 companies to work for in Scotland will be published on Monday 2 March 2020. [Note: Seafish subsequently listed at number 35.]

### **7.1 Best Companies Times 100 Staff Engagement Survey Results**

LN gave an update on the Best Companies Times 100 including the recent staff engagement

survey results.

### 7.1.1 Engagement Scores & Response Rate

LN pointed out the high survey response rate of 92.47% (86/93) and for Seafish being only 6 points away from being a 'one star' employer to work for. A one star accreditation from Best Companies is a significant achievement and shows an organisation is taking workplace engagement seriously.

LN summarised the positive key points and areas for improvement/exploration within the presentation.

LN confirmed the work will continue through Rem Com with their next meeting being held on 11 March 2020 in London.

**ACTION:** LN agreed to give an update on Best Companies (Times 100) at the November Board meeting.

BY stated the results from the survey are excellent and Seafish should be proud of doing a great job in managing to attain 90<sup>th</sup> position within Best Companies (Times 100).

MC pointed out by not completing the survey in 2020 would mean losing the Times 100 label, but reminded the Board that the value was not so much in a label and more in the benchmarking data that the process provided.

**ACTION:** The Executive Team to consider how the Times 100 information could be communicated to levy payers. This is excellent news to share with levy payers who should be made aware they have a good productive organisation supporting them.

## 8 Responsible Fishing Vessel Scheme

AM stated the purpose of the paper is to:

- Seek approval from the Board on the revised Responsible Fishing Vessel Standard (RFVS) (version 2). (*RFVS was previously known as the Responsible Fishing Scheme and in July 2019 both Seafish and the GSA Boards agreed to the name change*).
- to give the Board an update on progress to transfer RFS to Global Seafood Assurances (GSA).

### 8.1 Background

In 2017, the Board agreed that the RFVS would be put up for tender to secure a delivery partner that would roll out the international standard since Seafish is not a standards management body.

In February 2018, the Seafish Board agreed, following the tender process to work with Global Aquaculture Alliance to transition the RFVS to a new entity called Global Seafood Assurances (GSA) and agree the transition would conclude no later than May 2020.

The development of Version 2 of the standard has been undertaken by Seafish and GSA to ensure the RFVS continues to meet the needs of the UK seafood sector and being of interest internationally.

The process to develop the new standard was guided by Terms of Reference agreed by the RFS Oversight Board. The revised standard and 'sign-off' is now required by both GSA and Seafish Boards to enable roll out in the UK and internationally. GSA is working on a training programme with guidance from auditors.

AM stated there is work to be done to get the international pilots underway from the outset and highlighted the following outstanding issues:

- Seafish is committed to resource the standard to the transition point: May 2020. GSA requested Seafish to continue to support the standard in the UK which is 1.5 - 2.0 FTE members of staff.
- RFS take up within the fleet in the UK has stalled.
- Industry wants to see what version 2 looks like as they need to be clear on what they are embarking on.
- ILO 188 has been implemented in the UK which has seen vessel owners focus on compliant with that requirement rather than RFS
- There is an issue regarding some supply chain companies not supporting the processes including the issue of cost.
- The audit fees under the first version of the standard were set very low with the new standard potentially being 3-4 times higher. However, GSA's model states it would be the supply chain that would be paying the fees and not vessel skippers.

JB stated in his role within the Scottish Seafood Association he is very uncomfortable to support this certification as there are businesses in Scotland with no accreditation and he has concerns about how fees will operate in practice. GSA may need to decide if they can subsidise the standard for the UK fishing fleet.

PH stated the supermarket sector would also need to be more robust in their request for the supply chain to adopt version 2 of the standard.

BY pointed out that Seafish is a public body and not a commercial company. From May 2020, GSA will develop and manage the new standard, take on the risks and this is the reason that the Seafish Board cannot support and be involved in the further management of the standard.

NdR raised concerns about small boats not joining the scheme compared to large pelagic boats. Seafish created the standard and in his view this will succeed globally where the ILO standard is not being used. However, the RFVS will not have take-up in the UK in his view.

AM confirmed version 2 of the standard has been approved. The Board expressed concerns regarding investment in another 1.5 - 2.0 FTE for a year onwards.

BY stated Seafish public/levy monies should not be used to subsidise any standards with monies given to a commercial organisation. The 1.5 – 2.0 FTEs should be paid directly by the commercial company.

JS reminded the Board that RFVS is a voluntary scheme. AM confirmed the Manager RFVS role and fleet engagement is budgeted within the corporate plan to May 2020.

**ACTION:** The Board agreed for the messaging and communications to be clear and concise in relation to the transfer of the standard to GSA.

## **9 Confidential Item**

## **10 Digital Transformation Programme**

DB stated the purpose of the paper is to update the Board on the progress of the Digital Transformation programme.

### **10.1 Core Infrastructure**

DB confirmed Storm ID concluded a full analysis of our current infrastructure and produced a plan to assist in the migration to a cloud based model.

#### **10.1.2 Connectivity**

Fibre/high speed broadband has been ordered for both Edinburgh and Grimsby offices as this is vital for:

- the success of the migration to the cloud
- to enhance the speed of current internet connections and new Wi-Fi units will then be installed to improve user experience

#### **10.1.3 IT Team Efficiency**

A new IT ticketing system has been installed and merges emails into a helpdesk. The system prioritises requests and records jobs and time spent on solving issues.

#### **10.1.4 Finance Systems**

Discussions on the migration of the Finance systems are ongoing with Sapphire Systems including the examination of a cloud based approach for our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and levy systems. These systems will be discussed at the Digital Transformation Board meeting on 12 March 2020.

#### **10.1.5 Corporate Website**

HC confirmed Storm ID won the contract to migrate the website to a commercial web Content Management System (CMS). The target date for the new CMS and website are planned to go live in June 2020.

### **10.2 Digital Transformation Board (DTB)**

The DTB is not a formal committee of the Board and is set up to develop a coherent approach to digital development and focus on project strategy, budget and the delivery of the programme.

The core group of the DTB are:

Marcus Coleman (Chair)

Mike Sheldon (Board member)

Dafydd Sands (Head of IT)

Declan Byrne (Director of Finance)

Mark Hancox (Storm ID)

Lesley Cunningham (Secretariat)

The group will also rotate project managers as projects change.

At the first meeting, the group will agree:

- the Terms of Reference
- the incorporation of a Gateway Review process (discussions have taken place with the NAO regarding measuring completed milestones throughout the project)
- the revision of current/new digital projects

A question was raised regarding broadband for home based workers. DB confirmed discussions are ongoing with Storm ID in relation to Citrix receivers and if these areas in the UK are covered by fibre optic technology.

## **11 Chair's Report**

BY reported on:

- Board members replacement: Waiting to hear from Defra regarding PH's replacement and for MM and NdR's contracts being extended.
- February 2020 – Defra's Chairs meeting: BY joined a teleconference where priority discussions were held on the UK leaving the EU; the Spending Review and climate change. Defra's 2020 spending review will take into account Brexit and set our plans for long-term reform.
- Reference to David Frost's recent speech in Brussels in relation to negotiating free trade agreements and framework decisions.
- Interesting to hear about Defra's fraud issues and their IT networks.

## **12 CEO Report**

MC stated the report provides an overview since the last Board Meeting in November 2019 and highlighted the following items:

### **12.1 Selection of New Chair for Seafood 2040**

MC and HC interviewed for the new Chair of Seafood Industry Leadership Group: Seafood 2040. Neil Auchterlonie from IFFO has been appointed. Neil will start on 4 May 2020.

### **12.2 Engagement in Scotland**

MC and AM met with Cabinet Secretary Fergus Ewing at Scottish Parliament on 29 January 2020 to discuss the forthcoming review and the new Fisheries Bill.

### **12.3 May Board Meeting**

MC met with New England Seafoods in Chessington regarding the May 2020 visit. They are a major supplier of fresh and frozen premium sustainable fish and seafood in the UK and one of the largest UK importers of fresh tuna.

New England Seafoods welcomed the opportunity to discuss the import of tuna and show the Board round the operation with lunch included.

After the visit, MC suggested the Board would transfer to the Oatlands Park Hotel, Weybridge, Surrey where the afternoon session would incorporate a number of presentations.

For the evening session, a representative from Nomad Foods would deliver a presentation with the Board meeting taking place on 21<sup>st</sup> May.



The board agreed with MC's suggestions regarding the May 2020 visit.

**13 Testimonials**

MC confirmed the Testimonial Report is an internal document. Testimonials received from industry stakeholders acknowledge the value of work and advice delivered by Seafish.

**14 Committee Updates**

**15.1 Draft: Audit and Risk Committee Minutes**

MS confirmed the accounts were laid before parliament on time.

Internal audits for 2020 have not yet been confirmed.

The item of cash reserves will be discussed at the next ARC meeting in May 2020.

**15 Forward Plan**

DB confirmed the Forward Plan would be updated and the November meeting in November will be with the administrators and held in Cardiff.

**16 AOB**

JP2 spoke about the project on seafood marketing for Wales which has progressed to launch a brand for seafood. The project, while not a Seafish Project and managed by a third party, has had some input from Seafish in an advisory capacity. JP2 is concerned about Seafish's reputation due to its involvement in the project.

AM stated Seafish has an agreement with the project owner to help to establish a steering group.

<b>ACTION:</b> HC to consider the need for comms in relation to this item.
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**17 Date and Details of the Next Meeting and 2020 Board meetings**

The next Board meeting will take place on 19, 20 and 21 May – West London (Heathrow)

**18 Acronym List**

The list is enclosed to information.

The Chair thanked the Board for their time over the past 2 days in York.

PH said goodbye and thanked everyone for their kind words and wishes. He relayed how he has enjoyed being on the Seafood Board and being able to make a contribution.

PH wished Seafish all the success in the world and expressed his hopes for a prosperous and sustainable seafood industry.

Meeting end.