

Minutes of Seafish Northern Ireland Advisory Committee
Held on Wednesday 5 April 2023 at the Burrendale Hotel, Newcastle

Attendees

Members: Harry Wick, Northern Ireland Fish Producers' Organisation (Chair)
Adam Holland, Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation
Andrew Rooney, Rooney Fish
Ben Collier, Northern Ireland Gear Trials
Colin Adamson, Young's Seafood
Colin Taggart, R Seafood
Giles Bartlett, Whitby (Kilkeel) Seafoods (remote)
Simon Cummings, Kilkeel Seafoods
Ingrid Perry, Fishermen's Mission
Robert Greenwood, The Safety Folder
Ewan Hunter, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
Heather Moore, Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI)
Fiona Taylor, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Jim Hayes, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Owen Lyttle, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)

Seafish: Aoife Martin, Director of Operations
Lynn Gilmore, Director of Communications and Engagement
Sally Chamberlain, Regional Manager – Northern Ireland
Phillip Quirie, Project Co-ordinator, and Administrator

1 Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 Apologies were shared on behalf of Rosemary Johnston (Kilkeel Seafoods), Pieter-Jan Schon and Carrie McMinn (AFBI), Juanita Emerson (Sea Fish Industry Training Association NI), Mark McCaughan (DAERA), Paul Leeman (Scallop Fishermen's Association), John Chambers (Kilhorne Bay Seafoods), Malachy Mallon (National Federation of Fish Friers), Bob McCoubrey (Mourne Seafood) and Sam Mawhinney (Denholm Seafoods).

2 Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 5 October 2022

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

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

3 Actions from previous meeting

- 3.1 Sally confirmed all actions were completed, with the exception of Action 2, reporting that Seafish Fishing Gear Innovation Manager, David Warwick, will be invited to a future meeting depending on agenda priorities.

- 3.2 In regard to Action 3, the Seafish *Analysis of the potential impact of changes to immigration policy on the UK fishing fleet* reports were shared with members prior to the meeting and Sally reported that the findings were included in a report submitted to the Home Office regarding changes to migrant crew transit visas.
- 3.3 In regard to Action 4, Sally reported a Call for Evidence from the Migration Advisory Committee who are commissioned to review the Shortage Occupation List. The deadline for submissions is 26 May 2023.

4 **Seafish Executive update on new Corporate Plan and Levy Consultation**

- 4.1 Lynn presented an overview of the Seafish Corporate Plan 2023-28 (Attachment: 01 Seafish Exec Update – SNIAC – 5 April 23), outlining priority work areas for the next five years:

- Safe and Skilled Workforce
- International Trade
- Climate Change
- Fisheries Management
- Supply Chain Resilience
- Data, Insight, and Innovation
- Reputation

The new CP 23-28 can now be found on the Seafish website here: [Seafish 2023-2028 Corporate Plan — Seafish](#)

- 4.2 Aoife provided an overview of the consultation on changes to the Seafish levy. The online consultation survey is open until 23 April. Full details and a link to the survey can be found on the Seafish website here: [Consultation on changes to the Seafish levy](#)

ACTION 02: Sally to share links to levy consultation with members

5 **Seafish NI work update**

- 5.1 Sally provided an update on the Seafish work programme in Northern Ireland (Attachment: 02 Seafish NI Update – SNIAC – 5 April 23):

- Aquaculture Support (EMFF funded) – The funded project was completed in December 2022 and included rejuvenation of the Aquaculture Representative Group and delivery of a Carbon footprint assessment of NI aquaculture sectors and the ‘Future of Aquaculture in NI Symposium’ in Belfast.
- Marketing Seafood Through Education (EMFF funded) – The initiative was completed in January 2023. Overall between 2019 – 2023, 44 MaSTErclasses were delivered for 637 attendees, instructional videos were produced, and Seafood Guides were disseminated to trainees.
- NI Seafood Trails (MFF funded) – Phase 2 was completed in March 2023 which included the addition of 6 new trails to the [website](#), 15,000 map pamphlets disseminated across NI, a press release, [social media](#) campaign and primary school educational sessions.
- Fishing Safety Roadshow (MFF funded) – Supported SFITA-NI with delivery in December 2022, with focus on Automated External Defibrillator (AED) training.
- Man Overboard Training (Trinity House funded) – Delivered for 47 NI fishermen in January 2023
- Scallop Enhancement Phase 2 – Work delayed due to AFBI resource limitation and meeting planned between Seafish, AFBI, DAERA and the Scallop Fishermen’s Association to agree next steps.

- 5.2 Sally provided an overview of a proposed 2023-24 work programme and asked members to share thoughts and suggestions for projects to address challenges effecting the NI seafood industry. Planned and proposed initiatives alongside regular stakeholder support work include:

- Partnering with The Fishermen’s Mission to deliver medical fitness certificate drop-in events for fishermen.
- Partnering with SFITA-NI to deliver Fishing Safety Roadshows focused on addressing fatigue, PFD & PLB use.
- Engaging the NI seafood industry and stakeholders in pan-UK initiatives facilitated by Seafish, including the Young Seafood Leaders Network and the Vessels of the Future Forum.

- Delivering an NI or all-Ireland seafood waste valorisation seminar.
- Supporting local seafood businesses and promoting the NI Seafood Trails at the Balmoral Show in May 2023.

- 5.3 Aoife shared details of the Seafish project developing new Codes of Practice (CoP) for handling of crustaceans in response to issues raised by research by the London School of Economics and the subsequent amendment to the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill in England. These new CoPs will be shared with industry panels at the end of April for feedback.
- 5.4 Concerns were shared by members regarding the potential negative impacts of offshore renewable energy development for the local fishing industry, potential issues raised included reduced seafood supply and environmental effects, and the behavioural changes caused by underwater noise, vibration and electromagnetic fields on brown crab stocks.

ACTION 03: Sally to share Seafish Corporate Plan and NI Update presentation slides with members

ACTION 04: Sally to share Seafish literature review report on the effects of underwater sound, vibration, and electromagnetic fields on crustaceans with members

6 Roundtable updates and horizons

- 6.1 The Chair explained this was a chance to share key issues in order to identify opportunities for supporting each other and informing Seafish industry support and work programmes.
- 6.2 The main issue effecting the catching sector (and related processing sector) remains crewing. New rules are due to be enforced from 12 April 2023 making it illegal for fishing vessels to employ crew working on transit visas inside of 12 nautical miles, punishable with a fine of up to £20k per man. Unless anything changes, this may put 70% of the NIFPO Nephrops fleet out of business. A request has been with government since mid-February for a managed transition from transit visas to skilled visas and industry awaits a decision from the Home Office.
- 6.3 NIFPO are partnering with Queens University on a 2-year project to develop a pathway towards reducing carbon emissions within the next 5 years.
- 6.4 Following public consultation, the new DAERA Maritime and Fisheries grants programme is due to open in July 2023 and will focus on Green Growth and Net Zero. Processors raised the need to speed up funding for upgrading smaller vessels and DAERA highlighted the need to align development with vessel and infrastructure upgrades that will take time. Sally highlighted alternative ZEVI fund which is currently open for Battery electric vessels and charging infrastructure.
- 6.5 DAERA is responsible for developing three Irish Seas Fisheries Management Plans (inshore, pelagic, and demersal) and aims to work closely with industry, science, NGOs and Seafish.
- 6.6 Access to workers remains to be a key issue for processors. This limits supply for customers and there is a need for government support. Defra have commissioned an independent review on labour which includes the processing sector (but not catching sector) – report due this summer.
- 6.7 Initiatives in the Republic of Ireland and Scotland that support younger entrants to the fishing industry were highlighted. These are similar to schemes delivered for the agriculture sector.
- 6.8 Windsor Framework and red lanes are proving difficult for Kilkeel Seafoods in transporting produce between GB and NI.
- 6.9 Long-term supply of Nephrops for processors are reliant on successful delivery of the Nephrops Fisheries Improvement Project (FIP), which dovetails with the Irish Sea demersal Fisheries Management Plan. Kilkeel Seafoods are working on this with NIFF and DAERA. Critical to this is the reduction of whiting bycatch and Ben Collier is working with AFBI on a project proposal to continue and expand the gear trials work.
- 6.10 AFBI have secured funding for evidence and innovation projects:
- Sustainable land-use strategies for coastal catchments and the development of decision support tools to assist the aquaculture industry
 - Saltmarsh Carbon capture project
 - Pelagic habitat indicators including plankton productivity and climate change impacts and indicators

- Sustainable algal culture in Northern Ireland
- 6.11 AFBI to convene a 'Blue Outlook Meeting' in the summer. This will be a one day conference which will enable the maritime sector to present challenges to the science community and identify areas for research.
- 6.12 The Fishermen's Mission report increased stress amongst fishermen and uptake for mental health services e.g., the SHOUT Campaign, alongside an increased uptake for the SeaFit Programme and medical care from the Dreadnought Medical Services in London.

ACTION 05: Sally to share NI Seafood Funding Streams document with members

7 Fishing welfare transparency project

- 7.1 Robert Greenwood presented on the Safety Folder and the importance of recording accidents and grievances on fishing vessels and how these are incorporated into the Fishing First Transparency Project in Northern Ireland (Attachment: 03 Robert Greenwood – SNIAC – 5 April 23).
- 7.2 The Fishing First Transparency Project in Northern Ireland will focus on developing the technology for reporting and vessels will have ownership of their audit reports.
- 7.3 Robert highlighted the need for an international baseline safety standard code. The Fishing Safety Management Code has been accepted as an International Labour Organisation base document for the next Maritime Safety Committee meeting in June 2023.
- 7.4 Members highlighted that Robert's work will help to professionalise the fleet, simplify reporting and could also be useful within processing factories.

8 NIFF Fisheries Science Support

- 8.1 Adam Holland, the Northern Ireland Fishermen's Federation Fisheries Science Support Officer provided a verbal overview of his role and projects underway.
- 8.2 The overall aim of Adam's role is to allow the fishing industry to take an evidence-based approach to addressing sustainability issues. Projects Adam is involved with/responsible for include:
 - Northern Ireland Brown Crab Marine Stewardship Council Pre-Assessment – This work was completed in 2022 and does not have industry support to go for full assessment but may be eligible for a Fisheries Improvement Project.
 - Improving fisheries data (with industry ownership) and applying this to fisheries management e.g., within Marine Protected Areas.
 - Providing scallop shells for native oyster restoration projects.
 - Designing a Net Zero fishing vessel – This follows a recent visit to Norway to assess options and garner ideas, with plans to deliver a collaborative project between government and industry.

ACTION 06: Adam to check sensitivities of Norway report and share with members if approved

9 NI Trade & Regulation post-Brexit (DAERA update)

- 9.1 Ciaran provided an update for how the Windsor Framework and new red- and green-lanes effect NI seafood businesses (Attachment: 04 DAERA Update – SNIAC – 5 April 23).
- 9.2 Government have published the draft Border Target Operating Model which sets out a new approach to importing into GB that will be progressively introduced from the end of October 2023. Stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback on the proposals before a final version is published in June.
- 9.3 Ciaran highlight the importance of raising queries/concerns directly with Defra via the weekly NI-GB Food Supply Chain Forum or by email: NIGBFoodSupplyChainForum@defra.gov.uk
- 9.4 The Scheme for Temporary Agri-Food Movements (STAMNI) system is now gone, and a new system is in place for red- and green-lanes, with green-lanes limited to products destined for food service, restaurants, and retail in Northern Ireland
- 9.5 Changes include the removal of Catch Certificates and Environmental Health Certificates, which are replaced by one 'catch-all' certificate for a single truck.
- 9.6 GB to NI exporters must now meet criteria of the STAMNI replacement, the NI Retail Management Scheme.

- 9.7 There will be a certain percentage of identity checks for green-lane validation, but the percentage will reduce if checks go well.
- 9.8 Produce will require confirmation on arrival at its destination in NI and 'Not for sale in the EU' labelling will be required.
- 9.9 DAERA are working on integration between Catch Certificate and their internal databases that will speed up the red-lane process.
- 9.10 A Single Trade Window platform is under development that will enable all obligations i.e., EHC, Customs Certificate and Catch Certificate, to be logged on one IT system

10 **Waste shell valorisation (AFBI update)**

- 10.1 Heather provided an overview of the Shell Waste Valorisation project (Attachment: 05 AFBI Shell Valorisation – SNIAC – 5 April 23)
- 10.2 This 5-month desk-based project aimed to:
 - Estimate quantities of shell by-product in the UK
 - Investigate current uses of shell by-product across the world
 - Estimate cost and value of shell valorisation in NI
 - Assess environmental footprint of bivalve aquaculture in NI
 - Investigate the potential footprint from shell valorisation
- 10.3 Data was gathered through questionnaires and site visits from oyster and mussel farms, scallop fishermen and processors, seafood hospitality businesses, government authorities and academia.
- 10.4 The study estimates a total shell by-product of 454.7-628.7 tonnes per year in Northern Ireland, based on oysters (40-140 t/yr), mussels (50-120 t/yr) and scallops (365 t/yr) alone. Total scallop, oyster and mussel shell by-product is estimated at 21,240 – 26, 640 t/yr for the UK and Ireland combined.
- 10.5 Potential uses of shell by-product identified for Northern Ireland included drainage, feed supplements and composting for agriculture. For the construction sector, options include use in aggregates, landscaping, gabion walls, drainage, and concrete production. Other potential uses identified included conservation, biofiltration, wastewater treatment, nutraceuticals, and food packaging. Feasibility of various options were dependant on location, scale of industry and technological readiness. Many of these options have potential for Northern Ireland, but cost analysis identified soil conditioner, feed supplement and aggregate as profitable with payback periods between 0.4-27 years depending on quantities available. Future cost analysis is required to include additional costs for waste facilities e.g., training, health, and safety.
- 10.6 The study also assessed chemical composition of scallop and oyster shell by-product and options for cleaning, crushing and size grading, as well as cradle to gate Carbon footprint of mussels and oysters via a Life Cycle Assessment. Making waste shell a valuable by-product reduces the Carbon footprint and the study estimated reductions of 7% for oysters, 12% for mussels and 46% for scallops.
- 10.7 The project was not a full-scale analysis, but industry recognise the importance of the work which has highlighted the need to re-run and upscale research in this area. This would include further data analysis, a full cost analysis, crushing machine development and identification of other waste streams.

11 **Any other business**

- 11.1 Lynn raised the Seafish Board visit to Northern Ireland in May and the industry evening reception on 24 May which SNIAC members are invited to.
- 11.2 The Chair reminded members to share suggestions for agenda items at the next meeting with Sally
- 11.3 The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

ACTION 07: Phillip to arrange and share date for the next meeting.

No.	Action List	Timeline (Status)	Owner
1.	Upload the approved minutes of the October 2022 meeting to the Seafish website.	April	Phillip
2.	Share links to levy consultation with members	April	Sally
3.	Share Seafish Corporate Plan and NI Update presentation slides with members	Alongside minutes	Sally
4.	Share Seafish literature review report on the effects of underwater sound, vibration, and electromagnetic fields on crustaceans with members	April	Sally
5.	Sally to share NI Seafood Funding Streams document with members	April	Sally
6.	Adam to check sensitivities of Norway report and share with members if approved	April	Adam Holland
7.	Arrange and share date for the next meeting	Alongside minutes	Phillip