

Minutes of the Seafish South West Advisory Committee Meeting

Held at the Plymouth Marine Aquarium on Tuesday 15 November 2022

Attendees:

Present	Ed Vidler, Independent Chair Nathan de Rozarieux, Falfish Chris Ranford, Cornish Fish Producers' Organisation Andrew Pillar, Northbay Pelagic (in-part) Hazel Bennett, Western Training Association (in-part)
Seafish	Marcus Coleman, Chief Executive Officer Aoife Martin, Director of Operations Gus Caslake, Regional Manager – South West England Jack Simpson, Regulatory Affairs Advisor
Minutes	Phillip Quirie, Seafish Project Co-ordinator and Administrator
Apologies	Mark Webber, Blue Sea Food Company Samantha Davies, Cornish Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Society Martyn Youell, Waterdance Beshlie Pool, South Devon & Channel Shellfishermen Ltd Samantha Davis, Cornish Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association Carly Elson, Marine Management Organisation Karen Pringle, South Western Fish Producer Organisation Juliette Hatchman, South Western Fish Producer Organisation Barry Young, Brixham Trawler Agents John Balls, North Devon Fishermen's Association Chloe North, Western Fish Producers' Organisation Tim Barnes, National Federation of Fish Friers John Holmyard, Offshore Shellfish Sarah Clark, Devon & Severn Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority

1 Welcome and apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies were shared.
- 1.2 It was noted that the meeting was very poorly attended, with many late apologies received. A brief discussion followed, and it was agreed that the next meeting will be held online to encourage a fuller attendance. It was also agreed that Gus would review committee membership and Nathan offered to provide foodservice nominees to enhance committee membership.

ACTION 01: Nathan will provide Seafish with foodservice nominees for SSWAC membership consideration.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 12 April 2022

- 2.1 The Chair invited feedback on the circulated minutes. The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
- 2.2 Gus reported that all the actions from the previous meeting were complete.

ACTION 02: Phillip will upload the approved minutes of the April 2022 meeting to the Seafish website.

3 Seafish South West work activity update

- 3.1 Gus provided an update of Seafish work delivered in the South West, which included:
- Completion of South West Ecological Risk Assessment report, due to published in November 2022.
 - Attendance at two successful seafood festivals (Weymouth and Plymouth), with a fish display and auction at both events raising £4k for the Fishermen's Mission.
 - A further £5k has been secured from Morrison's to continue the gear recycling work in the South West, and work with the Indigo project to assess fishing gear recycling opportunities in Brixham.
 - Successful MSC sardine audit completed in August, with an application submitted to Ocean Stewardship Fund to support CSMA members with certification costs.
 - Provision of expert advice and support on fishing gear as part of FAO gear recycling workshop.
 - Delivered a presentation at an ICES workshop on English Channel and Celtic Sea sprat.
 - Successful application on behalf of CSMA to participate in a Defra-led community catch quota trial.
 - Membership of Clean Catch UK steering group and also a member of the local cetacean focus group. Work included the Cefas i360 catch monitor project, 3 ring net vessels fitted with prototype voice recording video systems.
 - Closely working with Cefas to set an agreed catch limit for the Cornish sardine fishery based on the results of the Peltic survey and best available science.
 - Delivered bespoke gear technology training to the MMO and IFCA on request.
 - Facilitation of regional visits to the South West, including DBT, CCUK, and the Seafish Board.
 - Provision of expert advice on gear marking to the MCA in preparation of their roll-out of updated advice to vessel owners and skippers.
- 3.2 Gus then provided an overview of Seafish work in the South West going forward, which included:
- Delivery of the ERA action plan as agreed with the client group.
 - Continuation of the work looking at solutions for end-of-life fishing gear recycling and the reduction of marine plastics. Work with the Indigo project at Plymouth University to further assess end-of-life fishing gear in the South West and review potential recycling opportunities.
 - Support safety initiatives and fishermen's training in the role of Chair of the South West Fishing Industry Safety Forum.
 - Membership of the Clean Catch UK steering group and looking at mitigating cetacean bycatch.
 - Work with Cornwall IFCA to assess any impact of ring net activity on seagrass in relation to fishing activity within protected marine areas. Also looking at mapping fishing effort and catches of the ring net fleet in Cornwall.
 - Development of a Fisheries Management Plan for sardines to form an essential part of the ongoing MSC requirement.
 - Support the submission of a funding proposal for the Sumwing II project, looking to expand the scope of fuel saving and impact reduction. Subsequent commercial sea trials are to test the adaptations to the sumwing design.

- Delivery of the community quota management scheme on behalf of the CSMA. Ongoing monitoring and management of catch allocations and uptake of sardines.
- Bespoke virtual or in-person gear training to South West industry.

4 **Seafish Executive update**

4.1 Marcus provided an overview of the seafood marketplace, which has been challenging and difficult in recent times. The pre-pandemic retail decline resumed, and in 2021 foodservice revenue was down 29% and seafood was beginning to disappear from menus. This perhaps relates to the fact that UK vessel landings are 15% lower than pre-pandemic. Seafish levy income has dropped because of these industry challenges. Further to that, the Seafish Board are looking at levy reform and industry will be consulted on the proposed levy changes in early 2023.

4.2 Marcus then referred to Paper 2 which gave an overview of the priorities identified during the recent Strategic Review and narratives, outlining how Seafish will address the priorities in the new Corporate Plan. The priority areas are:

- A safe and skilled workforce
- International trade
- Climate change
- Fisheries management
- Supply chain resilience
- Data, insight, and innovation
- Reputation

4.3 Members were asked:

- Are we focusing on the right priorities?
- Have we pitched the ambition correctly under each priority?
- Are we looking to focus our resources on the right programs of work within the priorities?
- Which areas are of particular interest to the South West committee?
- What particular projects should we be focusing on to help support the sector in the South West?
- Have we missed anything?

4.4 A discussion followed, and the following points were raised:

- The draft narratives seem suitably ambitious given the budget Seafish have available.
- Levy payers would like to see Seafish championing British wild caught seafood more prominently. Data exists to demonstrate the quality of wild caught products.
- Marine spatial squeeze is a major concern in the South West and any further work Seafish can do to gather and provide data or evidence in this area will be welcomed by the industry.
- It was noted that Fisheries Management Plans may be poorly received by fishermen and is a delicate subject – implementation of these plans could cause friction or discomfort within the South West fleet.
- Fishermen fear that the training network could be adversely affected as the Seafish approved courses will now be under MCA control – fishermen find it difficult to engage with the MCA.

ACTION 03: Gus will circulate the Corporate Plan 23-28 draft narratives to the committee so that non-attending members can input any thoughts.

5 **Plastic Packaging Tax and the EU fresh fish tube trade**

5.1 Jack introduced himself as Seafish Regulatory Affairs Advisor and gave a presentation on how the new plastic packaging tax and EU fresh fish tub changes will impact the UK seafood industry (Attachment: SSWAC 151122 – *Plastic Packaging Tax and EU Fresh Fish Tub Trade*). Further guidance is available on the [here on the Seafish website](#).

5.2 A discussion followed, and the following points were raised:

- Polystyrene is categorised as plastic packaging.
- There appears to be a lack of logic in the EU approach to decision-making around the fresh fish tub changes.
- Exporting frozen product may be a solution to the new fresh fish tub legislation.
- Fishing effort may be limited because the new tubs required for exporting fresh fish have limited capacity.
- Transitioning to the new tubs will have significant recycling implications, as previous plastic tubs become obsolete.

5.3 Jack encouraged members to contact him directly (jack.simpson@seafish.co.uk) to report any examples of the impracticality of the plastic packaging tax or the EU fresh fish tub transition. All comments will be conveyed to Defra and they will in turn report to the European Commission.

6 Any other business

6.1 The Chair invited members to raise any other business.

6.2 Nathan suggested that some of the SSWAC budget could be allocated towards funding SSWAC members and young seafood professionals in the South West to attend international seafood expos so they can see other parts of the seafood supply chain.

6.3 It was noted by Andy that the South West catching sector is suffering at the moment, particularly due to increased overhead costs such as fuel and gear.

7 Date of next meeting

7.1 The Chair thanked everyone for their participation and asked Seafish to arrange the next meeting in approximately six months.

ACTION 04: Phillip will arrange the next meeting (online) in approximately six months.

Action List

No.	Action	Timeline	Owner
1.	Nathan will provide Seafish with foodservice nominees for SSWAC membership consideration.	Next meeting	Nathan
2.	Phillip will upload the approved minutes of the April 2022 meeting to the Seafish website.	December	Phillip
3.	Gus will circulate the Corporate Plan 23-28 draft narratives to the committee so that non-attending members can input any thoughts.	December	Gus
4.	Phillip will arrange the next meeting (online) in approximately six months.	Next meeting	Phillip