

Minutes of the Domestic & Export Panel

Tuesday 20 October 2020 (via Zoom)

Attendees: Jerry Percy (Chair), Chris Anderson, Michael Clark, Robert Duthie, Jim Evans, David Jarrad, Rosemary Johnstone, Sheila Keith, Elspeth Macdonald, Celia Mackenzie, Kevin McDonell, Dale Rodmell, Marcus Coleman, Aoife Martin, Hazel Curtis and Simon Potten

Welcome and introductions:

1. **JP** welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members of the protocols.

Apologies for absence:

2. None received.

Minutes of previous meeting and actions arising:

3. The minutes of the previous Panel meeting (30 July 2020) were reviewed. Two amendments were discussed and agreed (**JE** clarified his comment recorded under item 7a and **DR** clarified his comments recorded under item 12d). With these amendments the minutes were accepted as an accurate record.
4. **SP** reported on the four actions from the previous meeting:
 - Action 1 – no further guidance on direct selling has been added to the Seafish web-site since the last meeting, but additional content has been drafted and is currently being proof-read
 - Action 2 – information on the Love Seafood campaign had been circulated to members at the beginning of July
 - Action 3 – preliminary results from the Fishing Industry Safety Group's Home and Dry fishing safety campaign had been shared with the papers for this meeting
 - Action 4 – this meeting now taking place

Seafish Round-Up

5. **MC** reported that, following a significant reduction in its levy income (due to COVID-19), Seafish has been forced into making some *organizational changes*, including making nine permanent roles redundant (10-15% of the workforce) and sacrificing some of its planned work. In the meantime Seafish is receiving more and more requests from stakeholders for help with issues arising from COVID-19 and EU-Exit. Both Seafish offices remain closed and staff working from home; moved everything online. Defra is recruiting for five vacancies on the Seafish Board (including a new Chair). A Strategic Review of Seafish has commenced to consider questions including "does industry need Seafish?" and "what is the funding model?";

meetings have taken place with the four administrations and stakeholder engagement will take place in 2021 (avoiding elections).

6. In response to a question from **EM**, MC advised that the strategic review required 10-12 weeks for formal consultation and it would be 2022 before the results came out. **DJ** commented that he was not surprised Seafish's levy was down, adding that everyone's funding is down but the need for action has never been greater. In response to a question from **DJ**, MC advised that Seafish's levy income for the year was already down £800k or so (10%), but that it had stabilized recently. In response to a question from **DR**, MC advised that activities which cannot be undertaken at the moment (such as trade events) had been sacrificed.
7. **SP** presented highlights from preliminary analysis of the impact of the first six weeks of the *Home and Dry safety campaign* which Seafish spearheaded on behalf of the Fishing Industry Safety Group. The campaign's website received 4,500 views from 2,800 users. The campaign video was watched 44,000 times. The Facebook page had 2,250 followers and 77,000 views. Tweets generated 190,000 impressions and 3,620 engagements. At a cost of £50k (provided by the Department for Transport, via Trinity House) the intensive campaign had generated unprecedented levels of engagement. A further £25k has been secured to continue activity through to the end of 2020.

Industry Round-Up:

8. **CA** reported some enquiries (e.g., from Canada) for shellfish, but with very few flights it is prohibitive; limited opportunities for export direct to China - easier via Netherlands but this route is threatened after EU-exit; prices at rock bottom means the sector is in for a tough couple of months until Christmas. Loss of exhibitions is a big handicap.
9. **DR** reported that the Fisheries Bill had now returned to the House of Lords; the NFFO questions the science on which some of it is based. The dumping of rocks on Dogger Bank by a Greenpeace vessel was a cause for concern. Awaiting Defra response on highly protected marine areas (announcement expected in the spring of 2021). Fishing activities are being blamed for causing damage to cables, but industry is concerned that cables are not being buried properly and that some are going through MPAs with proposals to be left surface-laid in order to avoid impacts to the MPA but which would pose a safety hazard to fishing activities. Is government getting priorities right? Also concerned that a test wind farm site off SW Wales is not accounting for fishing interests.
10. **KM** reported that monkfish was not doing too bad, but concerned at impact of new lockdown. Nephrops fisheries/markets still in difficulties with poor prices. Lots of work to do between now and the end of 2020.

11. **CM** reported that the next meeting of the BPA's Fishing Ports committee was on 3 November, focusing on Brexit and the Fisheries Bill with the requirement for strengthening the economic links around landing into British ports. Seeking clarification on availability of future fisheries funding for trust ports. The digital version of the COVID-19 safe working poster has gone out to ports.
12. **RJ** reported that production at Kilkeel Seafoods had re-commenced in June with 250 staff working at Kilkeel and 150 staff at Whitby. The health and well-being of staff is paramount. Extra measures implemented to protect staff (including staggered shifts and phasing of arrival/departure times).
13. **EM** reported that the prawn fleet was still experiencing problems; the white fish fleet had picked up, but the recovery was fragile; very concerned about the impact of new restrictions. Fisheries Bill - Scottish Government published policy intent paper on future fisheries management (ambitious). Brexit negotiations ongoing. Coastal state negotiations started - UK taking its seat in its own right. UK/Norway fisheries agreement published; expecting similar with Faroes soon. Issues around co-existence with other offshore industries.
14. **MC** reported that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, prices were up and down and foodservice was continuing to suffer. The outcome of the Brexit negotiations remains a major concern for businesses. Looking forward to the Seafish review.
15. **RD** reported that with 90% of pelagic exports going to the EU (£150m sales), it is Brexit that concerns the pelagic sector most; it has not suffered as much under COVID. Likely cost of additional documentation required estimated to be £450-500k for the top four primary processors, but "no deal" didn't bear thinking about.
16. **SK** reported that in Shetland new fish markets had opened with good hygiene inspections and new vessels had joined the fleet. An online food and drink festival involving 500 people for four hours had been viewed by 200 people.
17. **DJ** reported that the shellfish sector remained concerned/frightened; uncertainty over certification (no certification for wild bivalves). The Chinese rules on permissible cadmium levels are possibly changing (suggested increase to 3mg per kg), but this is still not high enough unless only testing white meat. Assistance from Seafish (Ivan Bartolo) much appreciated. Worried by suggestion that stunning machines might be required.
18. **JE** reported that Welsh Government had announced a COVID "firebreak" lockdown for minimum two weeks with immediate effect. This will have a big impact, e.g., on direct selling to hospitality sector (cancelling orders for half-term); no information on any support measures. Sales dropped off a cliff again; huge concerns regarding exports - so many questions, not a lot of answers.

Covid-19 Update:

- 19. **AM** provided an update on Seafish's support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 20. Members were advised of an online tutorial on using Seafish's Fleet Enquiry Tool, taking place on 30 October.

Brexit – EU Exit Transition Support:

- 21. **AM** provided an update on Seafish's support in preparation for EU-exit.
- 22. Members were advised of the Japan trade event webinar scheduled for 26 October at 0930.

Launch of Love Seafood:

- 23. **HC** presented an update on the launch of Seafish's Love Seafood campaign.
- 24. Members were reminded that it aimed to change the way people feel about seafood, using people stories.

Overview of Seafish's Carbon Work Programme:

- 25. There was not enough time to cover this on the agenda so it was agreed that Seafish would circulate the slides for information. **ACTION 1:** Seafish to circulate the Carbon Work Programme presentation.

Review of Terms of Reference and Membership:

- 26. **MC** invited comments on the ToR; none were forthcoming indicating members were happy with it.
- 27. It was noted that since JP had become chair, there remained a vacancy for someone to represent the interests of small boat/inshore fishermen. **ACTION 2:** Seafish to take steps to fill the small boat/inshore fisherman vacancy.
- 28. It was noted that UKAFPO had not attended a meeting for some time. **ACTION 3:** Seafish to write to UKAFPO to ask if it wished to remain its membership on the Panel.

Date of next meeting:

- 29. It was agreed for Seafish to arrange another extraordinary meeting towards the end of January to focus on issues arising following the UK's exit from the EU. **ACTION 4:** Seafish to arrange another extraordinary meeting towards the end of January 2021.

Meeting close:

- 30. The Chair thanked all Panel members for their contributions and closed the meeting.

Action List

No.	Action	Date resolved and supporting notes
1	Seafish to circulate the Carbon Work Programme presentation.	
2	Seafish to take steps to fill the small boat/inshore fisherman vacancy.	
3	Seafish to write to UKAFPO to ask if it wished to remain its membership on the Panel.	
4	Seafish to arrange another extraordinary meeting towards the end of January 2021.	