

# Meeting notes

## Pan-Wales Fishing Safety Meeting

**Date:** Tues 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 2016    **Time:** 09:00 am    **Venue:** Caer Beris Manor Hotel, Builth Wells, Powys, LD2 3NP

---

### Attendees

Steve DeWaine – on behalf of West Wales Shellfisherman’s Association Ltd  
Brett Garner – on behalf of Llyn Fisherman’s Association Ltd  
Robert Greenwood – independent safety consultant and NFFO Safety Officer  
Trevor Jones – on behalf of North Wales Fisherman’s Cooperative  
Dean Parry – on behalf of Cardigan Bay Fisherman’s Association Ltd  
Greg Phillipot – Managing Director, Welsh Seafish Industry Training Association  
Nigel Sanders – on behalf of South and West Wales Fishing Communities Ltd  
Dr Holly Whiteley – Seafish Wales Regional Manager, Seafish

### 1. Welcome and introductions (Robert Greenwood, Chair)

Robert Greenwood (RG) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced himself and the purpose of the day.

RG informed attendees of his MCA search and rescue experience and other marine safety related jobs. He is currently acting as Safety Officer for the NFFO, which is a primarily policy role. RG also designed and created the [Fishing Vessel Safety folder website](#), which is a 100% voluntary web-based resource designed to support health & safety compliance and best practice onboard fishing vessels. The site currently has around 490 vessel users in the UK.

A key focus of the meeting was to consider what could be done in the face of recent, poor fishing safety statistics in Wales.

### 2. Introduction to the day – why are we here (Robert Greenwood, Chair)

RG thanked the fishing industry representatives around the table for attending and representing their Association members. Robert informed attendees that he was keen to discuss whether or not Welsh industry thought there was scope for a focused and industry-led coordinated effort to improve safety and achieve zero fishing-related deaths in Wales. In particular, the meeting aimed to explore the feasibility of Fishermen’s Associations in Wales forming a collaborative ‘Welsh Fishing Safety Committee’ to i) help address key health and safety issues facing the Welsh fleet, and ii) help Welsh fishermen comply with incoming regulations, ultimately reducing incidents and deaths.

RG emphasised the importance of having all fishermen in Wales represented in this discussion and any actions going forward.

RG highlighted the fact that a wealthy fleet tended to be a healthy, safe fleet. Health and safety standards tended to slip when a fleet became under financial pressure, due to the fact that ‘safety’ maintenance onboard fishing vessels tended to be the first thing to be neglected when fishermen were under financial pressure. This suggests that improving safety culture is easier for a fleet that is economical comfortable.

There was agreement amongst meeting members that the socio-economic situation of fishermen should be considered in fishing-related policy and regulations, in order to ensure that the health and safety of the fleet was not negatively impacted. This aligns with the position outlined in the Common Fisheries Policy.

# Meeting notes

## Pan-Wales Fishing Safety Meeting

---

It was acknowledged that safety equipment was often considered secondary to other types of fishing equipment. The primary concern is usually equipment and improvements that help a business making money. It was also noted that many items of safety equipment were not hugely expensive, and in some cases could be hired quite cheaply (i.e. life rafts). It was highlighted that any vessel that has the room for a life raft should have one.

### 3. The online Safety Folder – supporting compliance (Robert Greenwood, Chair)

RG informed the meeting that 20 fishing vessels in Wales are registered users of the online safety folder, a free service that helps to improve compliance and thus the safety of working vessels.

There was a discussion around the online safety folder and its potential role in supporting the work of a Welsh Fishing Safety Committee, should one be formed. In particular, there was a question over whether or not wider membership of Committee could include Welsh fishermen who joined the safety folder (membership of the safety folder is 100% free, therefore there are no barriers to joining). The wider membership could then feed into any Committee-led health and safety improvement projects, as well as any policy development that could influence health and safety, through the free communication platform the safety folder provides.

As well as providing a platform and structure for fleet engagement and input into the Committee and health and safety issues, RG outlined the potential role of the safety folder to evidence that a Welsh Fishing Safety Committee could use to direct health and safety improvement projects and interventions, as well as to measure the impacts of these projects and interventions. For example, it could give information on the number of risks assessments, inductions, drills etc undertaken by the fleet. RG also highlighted that if desired, a 'Wels-branded' safety folder could be created to further facilitate engagement between the fleet and the Committee.

A concern was raised over the general IT literacy of Welsh fishermen, with reference to the average age of fishermen being fairly old, around 57-60 years. There was a discussion around the fact that one could help a vessel sign up to the safety folder, whether it was a crew member, another member of a local Association, or perhaps even a local Fisherman's Mission officer.

There was also a discussion around incentivising the safety folder. RG highlighted the 'star rating' system that was already in place, which allowed vessels to monitor and compare their progress in terms of compliance. There was a discussion over whether or not the star ratings could be linked to the MCA certificate, in order to give a historical record of the vessel's health and safety management.

Another incentive highlighted was the fact that vessels have the ability to allow MCA access to the safety folder records for their vessel, so that the MCA don't need to complete a full MCA safety check – thus saving the vessel money.

The Fisherman's Association representatives at the meeting agreed that the online safety folder was a very useful tool that should be promoted amongst their membership. There was a proposal that the Committee, should it be formed, would aim to encourage 100 vessels to join the online safety folder by 2020.

**ACTION 1:** RG to draft an email introducing the safety folder for circulation to Fisherman's Association members via the Association secretariats.

# Meeting notes

## Pan-Wales Fishing Safety Meeting

---

**ACTION 2:** Fisherman's Association representatives and others to help raise the profile of the safety folder through a variety of other channels, e.g. social media, industry meetings etc.

#### 4. Health & Safety of the Welsh fishing fleet – current challenges and issues (All)

RG introduced the paper submitted by Steve DeWaine on behalf of the West Wales Shellfisherman's Association. This paper outlined a concern that the implementation of legislation without appropriate impact assessment can have a detrimental effect on the health and safety of fishermen (see paper for further information).

As discussed at the beginning of the meeting, it was highlighted that the CFP gave provision to ensure that safety and working conditions of fishing operations were not negatively impacted by policy and management decisions. There was a brief discussion around the Discard Ban and the possible lack of a sufficient impact assessment on the safety of fishing vessels and fishermen.

There was a discussion over the possible role of the Welsh Fishing Safety Committee supporting Welsh Government and other policy-makers and regulators to conduct regulatory impact assessments that fully considered the health and safety of fishermen.

#### 5. Wales Fishing Safety Project' – a collaborative, EMFF-funded project between Seafish, RNLI, and the Fishermen's Mission.

RG introduced the papers detailing a proposed 'Wales Fishing Safety Project', which had been prepared by Holly Whiteley for industry review and comment (see paper for further detail).

There was a discussion around the project proposal, and the Fisherman's Association representatives present were very supportive of the provision of Personal Floatation Device (PFD)-integrated Personal Locator Beacons (PLBs) to active commercial fishermen. There was a discussion over the different models available and it was highlighted that an automatically-activated device would be preferable.

**ACTION 3:** HW to develop Wales Fishing Safety project proposal for agreement at next meeting, in preparation for application to EMFF.

The physical health (fitness) of fisherman was also briefly discussed. RG informed the attendees that a declaration of medical fitness for commercial fishing might become mandatory under future, international conventions, for certain vessel sizes. RG also highlighted that research had indicated that there was a strong link between physical fitness and mental fitness / health. Good physical fitness was also considered important for reducing the incident of injury and death whilst working at sea, i.e. due to fatigue etc. All these points emphasised the importance of ensuring a safety AND healthy fishing community.

#### 6. Wrap up and next steps – including possible formation of a Welsh Fishing Safety Committee (Robert Greenwood, Chair)

There was agreement across all Fisherman's Association representatives at the meeting that the formation of a Welsh Fishing Safety Committee would be very worthwhile and a valuable asset for industry. The following points were discussed and / or agreed:

---

# Meeting notes

## Pan-Wales Fishing Safety Meeting

---

- It was agreed that the Committee would be called the 'Welsh Fishing Safety Committee'
- Each Fisherman's Association should nominate a 'safety representative' to attend meetings and represent the Association in Committee discussion and decision-making.
- Need to be mindful that the number and timings of meetings does not become onerous on Association representatives. It was agreed that there would be one, two face-to-face meetings maximum a year.
- An inaugural meeting of the Committee would be required, where the Committee structure and Terms of Reference were agreed. It was agreed that this should take place before the end of the year (2016).
- Committee structure and Terms of Reference need to be as inclusive as possible, so that all commercial fishermen in Wales, regardless of Association membership (or not) were able to input and benefit.
- A Committee Chair based in Wales would be required. The meeting attendees nominated Greg Philpot to be Chair, to be reviewed on an annual basis.
- The Committee would establish a positive working relationship with Welsh Government on health and safety issues.
- The Committee could feed into the biggest fishing safety forum in UK, the Fishing Industry Safety Group (FISG), via Trevor Jones (Welsh rep on FISG board).
- Fishing safety technical and NFFO support would be offered via Robert Greenwood.
- It was agreed that a press release about the formation of the Welsh Fishing Safety Committee should be released. To include a statement emphasising the importance of fisherman's health and safety.

**ACTION 4:** HW to arrange inaugural meeting of the Welsh Fishing Safety Committee for November / December 2016.

**ACTION 5:** HW to draft press release about the formation of the Welsh Fishing Safety Committee, plus a Committee 'statement of intent'. To circulate to attendees for feedback.

### 7. Any Other Business

No items were raised under Any Other Business.

### SUMMARY OF ACTIONS:

**ACTION 1:** RG to draft an email introducing the safety folder for circulation to Fisherman's Association members via the Association secretariats.

**ACTION 2:** Collectively help raise the profile of the safety folder through a variety of other channels, e.g. social media, industry meetings etc.

**ACTION 3:** HW to develop Wales Fishing Safety project proposal for agreement at next meeting, in preparation for application to EMFF.

# Meeting notes

## Pan-Wales Fishing Safety Meeting

---

**ACTION 4:** HW to arrange inaugural meeting of the Welsh Fishing Safety Committee for November / December 2016.

**ACTION 5:** HW to draft press release about the formation of the Welsh Fishing Safety Committee, plus a Committee 'statement of intent'. To circulate to attendees for feedback.