

MARINE RESOURCES PANEL MEETING

113th Meeting

Brief notes and action points from meeting held at Howard Davis Farm

23rd July 2024

Present:	William Peggie (WP) – Director Natural Environment (Chairman) Steve Luce (SL) – Minister for the Environment Don Thompson (DT) - representing Jersey Fishermen’s Association Chris Le Masurier (CLM) – representing the Aquaculture Industry Ian Syvret (IS) – representing Jersey Inshore Fishermen Association Natalie Porritt (NT) – representing Jersey Merchants Stanley Richard-dit-Leschery (SR) – representing Ports of Jersey Chris Isaacs (CI) – representing Recreational Fishermen’s Association Ian Clarkson (IC) representing Ports of Jersey Gabby Mason (GM) – representing Jersey Inshore Fishermen Association Mike Sheldon (MS) – representing Société Jersiaise Chris Casey (CC) – representing North coast fishers
In Attendance:	Alex Plaster (AP) – Marine Science and Research Manager, Marine Resources Katie Bacquet (KB) – Marine Operations and Compliance Manager Samantha Blampied (SB) – Marine Resources and Fisheries Data Officer Kerrie-Anne Egre (KAE) – Marine Resources and Fisheries Officer (minutes)
Apologies:	Francis Binney (FB) – Head of Marine Resources Steve Viney (SV) - representing Jersey Fishermen’s Association Garry Allen (GA) – representing Jersey Inshore Fishermen Association Steve Mullins (SM) - representing Jersey Inshore Fishermen Association

		Action
1.	Approval of Minutes from the previous meeting and Matters Arising	
	The minutes from the previous meeting on 21 st October were approved. Actions from last meeting FMA – DRAFT working document in place and moving forward with DEFRA to negotiate the right arrangement for Jersey. No timeline for delivery as of yet. RMA – newly formed Jersey Ramsar Advisory Group with Andrew Mitchell as the chairperson, JFA and JIFA are on the membership and will have received emails. There will be the right opportunity in the short term to invite the chair of JRAG to update on the work of JRAG.	
2	Ormer Tagging Project - presentation from Société Jersiaise (Portelet No Take Zone)	
	Suggestion from merchants to run another social media campaign to continue to keep the public informed about what to do if they find a tagged ormer.	

	<p>Thank you from Willie Peggie on bringing this project to everyone’s attention.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Increase to minimum size for Lobsters</p> <p>AP - as part of new lobster management measures, Marine Resources have now agreed to a change in the minimum size limit for lobsters. The size will increase incrementally from 87mm up to 90mm over the next 2 years, starting at 88mm from 1st August 2024. Both France and Guernsey have been informed about the measures. Legislation is now in place.</p> <p>DT – this is the first instance of collaboration through the Lobster Working Group, and there have been frustrations along the way due to covid and Brexit, but this is an excellent news story, and really shows what can be achieved through working together. A move to 90mm straight away would have really affected the fleet economically, so good to introduce it over time. The group decided on the measure that gave the greatest benefit in the shortest time. The percentage weight increase from leaving the lobster until the next molt is phenomenal and will bring economic benefit. It is much better to collaborate and face issues front on than wait for an issue to arise. The lobster fishery of 2017-2019 was world class, and now vessels are barely surviving – this is painful. We must learn lessons from this and credit to the department for getting this through.</p> <p>CI – this should have happened years ago, and we must not wait for the stock to be on the curve and take action faster in future.</p> <p>AP – good to see the TCA in action through this process with the EU notification periods for any changes being utilised and adhered to, we would have found it much more difficult to get this through pre-Brexit as under those previous arrangement all parties would have had to agree on any of the measures presented.</p> <p>WP – we must continue to adopt an evidence-based approach and keep under review what the data tells us.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Expansion of Aquaculture concession – presentation by Peter Tarrant, Bay Shellfish Limited</p> <p>PT – project Trident involves expansion of current site and introduction of two new species (mussels and manilla clams), in addition to the oysters.</p> <p>Current licence was issued in 2019 and in 2024 is now up again. £100K invested but with no security of tenure, or economies of scale it is difficult to make the business work. At a point where we need to expand and diversify as the current business is not viable. Would like to lease half of the area set aside for new entrants to the (4 hectares) and relinquish norther site (N.B. Need clarity on exact area being requested). Trails will be required for mussels and clams.</p> <p>WP – reminder of process, use MR to present and invite questions.</p>	

	<p>GM - asked what might be the negatives for introducing invasive non-native species (INNS) to the seabed and not in bags?</p> <p>PT - it is of low concern as there are already quite prolific in the area and the UK have now classified manilla clams as a domesticated species.</p> <p>CLM - manilla clams need to be kept under netting until they are ¾ of full size, there is a lot of light sand in the area and seaweed that will lift the nets.</p> <p>CLM – one of the criteria for entrance is 1) present usage of current concession area 2) planned usage of new area.</p> <p>PT - current usage is 2 hectares and confirmed the new site would be primed and ready for expansion, but that it was difficult to invest/make plans without security of tenure.</p> <p>CI - one of the issues we have seen in the past is that there is no requirement for ongoing review and concern that licences are given in perpetuity, when ecological systems and landscapes change over time.</p> <p>SR - are there any implications of the species being set adjacent to each other.</p> <p>PT - no, as they are bivalve molluscs so no implications.</p> <p>AP – what assurance will you be able to give the public that the plastic mesh will be removed from the seabed? We have seen issues with this before</p> <p>PT – may not go down the seed route and so there may not be a need to put plastic down at all. Mesh will be a last resort.</p> <p>CI raised the issue of not just the environmental/ecological impacts of farms, but the visual aspect and how they change the seascape, also the ability to walk freely down the seashore is hindered causing sometimes a 100-metre diversion. Gaps should be created.</p> <p>IS – declared a conflict of interest and so would not be commenting further on the application.</p> <p>WP/SL can PT clarify proposal alongside map of area being conceded and new area being applied for. This can then be circulated, and we can have a round up of comments by email.</p>	
5	<p>Terms of reference (ToR) for Marine Resources Panel</p> <p>AP- DRAFT has been circulated – request for anyone to raise issues on any area of particular concern for having a ToR</p> <p>DT attended first meeting in 1984 and we have navigated so much since then. Does feel it is time and this seems like a good draft and covers what is needed e.g. who can join etc.</p> <p>SR raised concern around the voting system and ability to break consensus, with issues of safety regs/changes to legislation.</p> <p>SL confirmed that the purpose of the group is to advise the Minister, so all advice (or vote) is on an advisory basis only. Suggested the group might have “advisory” in the name to make it clear – not sure why this was taken out. Raised a concern on the scope with the name Marine Resources and may attract membership interest from leisure group where the business isn’t focussed around fisheries.</p> <p>DT suggested to call it “Fisheries and Marine Resources Panel”</p> <p>AP confirmed that the sectors were listed and represented in the membership already (in the ToR) so there naturally wouldn’t be too much deviation in the subject matter due to the membership.</p>	MR to review ToR for next meeting

	<p>WP Fisheries and Marine Resources Panel is good, and let's ensure the opening paragraph clearly states the remit of the group</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p>Jersey Marine Spatial Plan – presentation and update from Sam Blampied, Marine Resources</p> <p>DT a positive solution has been created with the areas designated for seasonal access, stands by the agreement to keep them open at the most economically useful time. Has concern over the Survey area designated to the East and has spent many a year fishing here. The tide brings mearl in and out of the area. Care should be taken where we are only using presence of Maerl, and that is cited as being sufficient enough to close an area. Fear over this black and white scenario where fishing ground can be lost forever. There is a strong case to argue that the OSPAR list of species cannot be the be-all and end-all. You must weigh this up against how the areas are fished and used by the industry. The fleet is extremely fragile, and loss of fishing ground could tip the scale. The good news is that we have got this far with the plan.</p> <p>WP – what will the secondary assessment of the Survey area look like?</p> <p>SB it will be a series of 500 metre drop cams to establish Mearl densities. Where areas of dense Maerl are detected, we will return and do grab samples within those areas.</p> <p>AP confirmed this is an evidence-based process so it will only be areas with fragile habitats which would be recommended for closure.</p> <p>CI- the issue is that the Maerl is already dredged so likely in poor condition anyway. We can't step back on our international commitment and obligation to protect these habitats. Maerl is an important habitat and nursery ground and supports most of the commercially exploited species anyway.</p> <p>SL reminder that this only affects a handful of mobile gear vessels and that static vessels would not see any change through these measures.</p> <p>SL confirmed the plan is lodged with scrutiny for full review, it will be debated in October, then there is a long legislative process to follow.</p>	
<p>7</p>	<p>EGM results – update from Don Thompson, Jersey Fishermen's Association</p> <p>DT - The JFA was set up in 1965 as a limited company but evolved into representation of the fishing industry. In recent years, felt that it isolates some of the fleet and not everyone is represented, communications are sometimes difficult. The outcome is that for the moment, species specific or metier specific working groups will operate so that non-elected members can participate, and everyone can feel represented. The permit system is the future despite some of the fleet being opposed to it. Encourages the department to put aside the mindset of the few and focus on creating a viable fishing industry for the long-term future.</p> <p>WP sorry to see you go and the door is always open for you here if you want to participate in future. On a personal level I feel we have worked together on some chunky discussion topics over the years, some have been contentious issues (covid, Brexit, Bass) but we have come through it and I thank you for your time and contribution over the years</p> <p>SL you have been the glue holding it all together and, on behalf of the Government, I would like to thank you for everything. We will work to ensure everyone's view is taken on board with the new set up.</p>	

	<p>CLM would like to appreciate and thank Don for everything he has done to support the Aquaculture industry.</p> <p>SR would like to offer thanks on behalf of Ports of Jersey, and in particular mention Don's contribution which was key to what we needed to achieve for the the Under 15m vessel safety code.</p>	
	<p>Next Meeting date 21st October 2024</p>	