Cross-Party Group on Fisheries and Coastal Communities

23 September 2026 – 18:30

Minute

Present

MSPs

Karen Adam MSP
James Adams MSP
Andrew Baxter MSP
Donald Mackinnon MSP
Max Bannerman MSP
Ariane Burgess MSP

Guests

Charlotte Cochrane, Capital Projects Managers
Robert Younger, Independent Member
Laura Gordon, Coastal Communities Network Coordinator
Alan Munro, Youngsea Changers Scotland
Esther Brooker, Scottish Environment Link
Aine Purcell-Milto, Community of Arran Seabed Trust

Non-MSP Group Members

Bally Philp, Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation
Elaine Whyte, Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance
Elspeth Macdonald, Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Emily Wilson, 3x1
Lee Robb, Secretariat
Rea Cris, Open Seas
Simon R. Macdonald, West Coast Regional Inshore Fisheries Group
Alastair Hamilton, North West Coast FFIG
Rosie Landon, Sustainable Inshore Fisheries

Apologies

Finlay Carson MSP
Tim Eagle MSP

Agenda item 1 – Introduction - Karen Adam

As the previous convener, Karen Adam MSP, welcomed all returning and new members to the CPG.

Agenda item 2 – Election of Office Bearers

Convener – Karen Adam (nominated by Ariane Burgess, seconded by James Adams)

Deputy convener – James Adams (nominated by Andrew Baxter seconded by Karen Adam)

Secretariat – Lee Robb (nominated by Karen Adam, seconded by Simon MacDonald)

Agenda item 3 – Approval of new non-MSP members

The following organisations were approved to become members by the cross-party group:

Capital Projects Managers
Independent Member
Coastal Communities Network Coordinator
Youngsea Changers Scotland
Scottish Environment Link
Community of Arran Seabed Trust
Capital Project Managers
Invicta PA

The following individual was approved:

Robert Younger

Further information was requested of Invicta PA who were listed to become members.

Concern was also raised over the underrepresentation of both fishing and coastal community groups in the CPG. Accordingly, the CPG will reach out to organisations within the described groups regarding their involvement. Members were also encouraged to provide the secretariat with organisations which they feel may be beneficial to join. Lee Robb suggested a press release to trade titles as a route to get more people to join the CPG.

Agenda item 4 – Secretariat update

Lee Robb, CPG secretariat, provided an update on how the CPG will improve based on the feedback from the previous session.

At present Lee Robb is focussing on creating a monthly member drop-in session which will provisionally take place on the first Monday of each month. The sessions will last around 30 minutes, acting to feed future actions and ensure that non-MSP members have a voice. Lee stated his keenness to trial the sessions and gain the groups feedback.

Karen Adam MSP emphasised the importance of creating a space of action, where tangible work can be done.

General interest was expressed in implementing the regular meetings however concern was raised over governance and transparency. Members questioned what the governance structure would look like, requested for a scope to be agreed and suggested that minutes be circulated following each meeting to ensure transparency

Karen Adam MSP, explained that the sessions would function as a space for feedback and communication, noting that any actionable decisions would have to come back to the CPG as a whole. Lee Robb also described the monthly meetings as a place to voice ideas rather than make decisions, preventing the disproportional representation of certain groups.

It was suggested that to help organise the group meetings there should be a terms of reference. Lee Robb stated that there was a terms of reference for the previous session, and a discussion will be had about one for the current session.

The continuation of members from the previous session was also explained. Lee Robb stated that due to the new session being a continuation of the previous CPG, all non-MSP membership was continued. Non-MSP members were asked to update if they didn't want to continue.

Agenda item 5 – Past CPG work

The secretariat discussed the evidence report submitted to the APPG in the CPG's last session. The report was submitted when parliament was dissolved, a decision that was agreed by the previous CPG. Lee Robb gave thanks to the members that had supported the submission and recommended that it be circulated to the members and, once the CPG is formally reinstated, published on the webpage. This prompted discussion over the governance of the CPG as members discussed the need to approve the document before circulation. Some members felt that the final content had to be agreed as it would be endorsed by the CPG, while others felt that there need not always be a full consensus. It was agreed that the report would be circulated and discussed at the next meeting.

It was recommended that the terms of reference clarify on the requirements of agreement and passing action. Karen Adam MSP stated that the CPG will get the terms of reference and revise them.

Agenda item 6 – Future work

Karen Adam began the discussion of future work by highlighting that no decisions were to be made now. She asked the group where they see the CPG going and what they want its focus to be.

In response several initial ideas were shared including improving the local voice in fisheries management, supporting colleges in coastal areas, commissioning social research, employability, fuel costs, and secure supply chains. It was also noted that the CPG could work with existing policy initiatives, such as how management can be consistent with legal and policy expectations.

Members stressed the need to not forget about other groups and work for the whole CPG name.

It was highlighted that the CPG must contextualise these ideas in the terms of the terms of reference and that they must be realistic about commissioning work.

Karen Adam MSP, responded to the ideas by emphasising that the CPG is not limited to one piece of work. She also added that linking up education and coastal communities may be a strong idea as it would help ensure that there is a next generation. She added that it may be good to also consider a piece on scrutinising Government policy.

Members were told to submit their ideas to the secretary for later discussion. Lee Robb stated that he will send out an email asking all members for their views which can be taken to the group for general discussion.

Karen Adam MSP asked members to share requests for the MSPs they would like to come to a meeting. She further asked MSPs to reach out to others who may want to get involved.

The Convener must submit a form to CPG clerks to formalise the CPG.

Future meetings will be hybrid so as not to exclude coastal community groups. Future locations of meetings will be considered with respect to accessibility for these groups.