

Minutes of CPG on Fishing

26/09/17

Introduction:

Meeting begins with brief opening remarks of CPG co-convenor Tavish Scott MSP. Mr Scott welcomed those attending the meeting and gave a brief outline of how the meeting would run for the evening. Mr Scott then sought approval for the minutes of the previous meeting which was given by the members of the group. The meeting then transitioned to a series of presentations on topics that were chosen based on the last meeting.

Presentation 1:

The first presentation was titled “Brexit and Fishing – The Story So Far”, delivered by Scottish Fishermen’s Federation President, Ian Gatt. Mr Gatt explored the issues that will become the dominant factors for the fish catching sector relating to Brexit. The main themes were on opportunities that will emerge for the fishing industry and how best to navigate these. Mr Gatt also raised points about what type of framework for fisheries will exist after leaving the EU and what the new relationship with other countries and previously shared fish stocks will be.

Presentation 2:

The second presentation was titled “Scottish Seafood Processing: A Vision of Opportunity”, presented by Vice Chair of the Scottish Seafood Association, Andrew Charles. Mr Charles highlighted the current circumstances of the seafood processing industry. He highlighted challenges for the processing sector which included high operating costs and the decrease in the GVA of the sector. He then outlined what positive actions can be taken to meet these issues. He suggested that modernisation of factories, development of the workforce, reduction of business rates and encouraging investment would all play an important role in maintaining a successful processing industry after leaving the EU.

Presentation 3:

The final presentation of the evening was titled “Science in Support of Inshore Fisheries: Forging New Partnerships”, delivered by Director of the International Centre for Island Technology at Heriot Watt University, Dr Sandy Kerr. Dr Kerr began by giving a general overview of the Orkney fisheries. He went on to explain the Fisheries Improvement Project, a project with Orkney creel fisheries, working alongside M&S, WWF and the Marine Stewardship Council. He explained the benefits of fishers and scientist working together in creating a sustainable, successful fishery and how retailers are looking to develop sustainable supply chains. He suggested that the model in Orkney is good model for inshore fisheries management and changing the relationship between fishing and science.

Open Discussion:

There was then an open discussion about the presentations. There was a discussion on the use of statistics and that all stakeholders stand to benefit from working together for sustainable, scientifically supported, economically robust fishing industry. There was further discussion about how to coordinate science and industry and how that funding might be structured after leaving the EU. A member of the SCFF then suggested inshore issues be covered at the next meeting.

Close of Meeting:

The convenor suggested that the next meeting take a similar format to this evenings meeting. He then invited all stakeholders to contact either his office or Stewart Stevenson MSP’s office to make suggestions about what topics might be presented at the next meeting of the CPG. He suggested that the next meeting take place in later this year in December or January and that everyone would be notified of the next meeting date once a decision had been made.

Attendee List:

Tavish Scott, MSP

Peter Chapman, MSP

Kate Forbes, MSP

Jamie Halcro Johnston MSP

Liam McArthur MSP

Maureen Watt, MSP

Robert Younger, Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation

Professor Michael Heath, Strathclyde University - Science

David Bailey, Glasgow University - Science

Alex Watson Crook, Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

Charles Millar, Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

Robin Parker, WWF Scotland

Dr Sally Campbell, Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation

Ian Gatt, Scottish Fishermen's Federation

Stewart Crichton, Orkney Fisherman's Society General Manager

Calum Duncan, Marine Conservation Society Scottish Conservation Manager

Russell Cheshire, Community of Arran Seabed Trust Vice Chair

Andrew Charles, Vice Chair of the Scottish Seafood Association.

Sandy Kerr, Director of the International Centre for Island Technology at Heriot Watt University,
Orkney Campus