

MINUTE OF NESFLAG MEETING

THURSDAY, 11 JUNE 2015 AT 1.30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBER, BUCHAN HOUSE, PETERHEAD

Present

Michael Bates	Peterhead & Fraserburgh Fish Processors Association
Jamie Bell	Scottish Enterprise
Darren Broadley	Peter & J Johnstone Ltd
George Cameron	Aberdeenshire Council
John Cox	Moray Firth & Northern Inshore Fisheries Group
Georgios Gkintziris	Angus Council
Shelly Hague	Angus Council
Linda Hope	Scottish Maritime College (Chairperson)
Ian Land	Seafood Scotland
Robin Maddock	Banffshire Partnership Ltd
Andrew Newton	Kincardineshire Development Partnership
Mark Nicol	Marine Scotland (via conference call)
Panos Pliatsikas	Aberdeenshire Council
Philip Smith	Visit Scotland
Judith White	Marine Scotland (via conference call)

Officers in Attendance

Martin Brebner	Team Manager European Policies & Programmes
David John McRobbie	European Programmes Co-ordinator
Anne MacLennan	European Programmes Claims Officer

Apologies

Anne-Margaret Anderson	Scottish Whitefish Producers Association
David Anderson	Aberdeen Fish Producers Association
Anne Birnie	North East Scotland Fishermen's Organisation
James Bream	Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
Jimmy Buchan	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation
Allan Crockart	Scottish Seafood Association
Roger Goodyear	Banffshire Coast Tourism Partnership
Stephen Murray	Royal National Mission to Deep Sea Fishing
Liz Scott	Buchan Development Partnership
Brian Stewart-Coxon	Federation of Small Businesses
Ian Watson	Fraserburgh Development Trust

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Linda welcomed those present. Mark Nicol and Judith White from Marine Scotland joined the meeting via conference call.

2. DRAFT MINUTE OF LAST MEETING

- 2.1 The draft minute of the AFLAG meeting held on 12 February 2015 was approved by Robin Maddock and seconded by Panos Pliatsikas.

3. EUROPEAN TEAM MANAGER UPDATE

- 3.1 There has been limited progress to report since the last meeting. The main developments have been the submission of the Local Development Strategy at the end of April and the extension of FLAG boundaries to include Angus.

4. UPDATE ON NEW EMFF PROGRAMME

- 4.1 Mark Nicol from Marine Scotland provided an update and the main points are summarised below:

- Negotiations have started.
- Scotland is to receive an increased share of the funding allocation.
- The UK operational programme has been agreed.
- Draft operational programme was submitted to the Commission at the end of 2014.
- Approximately 330 comments were received.
- Revised programme was submitted in April 2015.
- Awaiting response as to whether the operational programme is admissible before moving on to the detail of the programme.
- This is likely to take six months (three months consultation period).
- Could be October but MS hope to have a letter of comfort prior to then.
- Working on new systems.
- New programme will be much more outcome and objective driven.

FLAG Specific Issues:

- MS is hoping to be in a position to potentially reduce the numbers of FLAGS in Scotland.
- FLAGS must have a majority representation from the fisheries sector.
- Wider European Maritime Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to complement the work of FLAGS.
- Scotland's increase in the total UK allocation is up from 10 to 11 %.
- Ministers are keen to support the work of FLAGS where they can.

John Cox asked for clarification about match funding for the new Programme.

- Maximum 75% EMFF contribution and minimum 25% member state contribution.
- Must try to lever in as much member state contribution as possible.
- The intervention rate will depend on the type of project.
- Possible to link wider EMFF fund to work at a local level, for example, FLAG can support a feasibility for an ice machine then look to the wider EMFF for the capital works.

Martin Brebner asked when indicative allocations would be announced.

- This is dependent on the final number of FLAGS in Scotland.
- MS is looking for targeted activity so it is hoped that the number of FLAGS can be reduced.
- Once the FLAGS are decided then MS can work on allocations.

5. CO-ORDINATOR UPDATE

- 5.1 North and South Local Development Strategies were circulated to members for approval. These had been amended to take account of recommendations and guidance from Marine Scotland and Scottish Government. No comments were received from FLAG members and therefore the LDS & business plans were re-submitted in April.

Mark Nicol informed the FLAG that all LDS's have been reviewed and, if we have not heard to the contrary, then our submission will more than likely be accepted.

- 5.2 The list of datazones which had been approved by the Chairs, was included in the revised submission. The datazones are based on historical interest.

Shelly from Angus Council worked out datazones in a similar manner with Arbroath and Montrose being the main settlements.

John Cox asked if Sandend is to be included? David John will double check.

Aberdeenshire boundaries will be extended to include Angus and this will form the larger North East Scotland FLAG (NESFLAG). Moray was also invited to join the NESFLAG but has declined.

Mark Nicol thanked NESFLAG for their work in trying to achieve amalgamation. Moray decided against joining with Aberdeenshire and Angus but it might prove to be a better fit for Moray to join with Highland.

It was confirmed that there will be no further pressure to include Moray.

- 5.3 It is hoped that a funding allocation will be received from Marine Scotland by the end of summer although this timescale is not confirmed.

A draft timetable was circulated as Appendix 1 although this document is still considered to be a moveable feast.

- 5.4 Work will begin on procurement of a single website for NESFLAG/NALAG/SALAG. The website will have one home page but will be sub-divided into three different sites.

A distinct identity Logo is being worked on. Marketing materials will be designed and available for the launch of the programme possibly in December.

- 5.5 **Membership Update**

Following on from the last meeting, an invitation to join NESFLAG was issued to the Kincardineshire Development Partnership, who have accepted, the Bay Fish & Chip Shop in Stonehaven, who have intimated an interest but have not returned the paperwork as yet, and the East Coast Inshore Fisheries Group who have failed to reply. David John is following up on this.

The Moray Firth and North Inshore Fisheries Group have nominated John Cox as their representative and the Scottish Seafood Association have nominated Alan Crockart.

Angus Council have joined NESFLAG with Shelly Hauge and Georgios Gkintziris as the representatives. Shelly confirmed that the Arbroath Harbour Users Group have agreed to join the FLAG. The search for a representative from the Montrose area is ongoing.

To date, twenty two organisations from private, public and third sector bodies have agreed to join NESFLAG. This number will increase once organisations from Angus are identified.

Other FLAG areas have experienced difficulties with recruiting FLAG members.

Members were reminded that meeting papers will be issued to the nominated representative in the first instance. If unable to attend, the main representative will be responsible for forwarding papers on to their substitute.

5.5 **Media Strategy**

Going forward, it will be essential to advertise the new programme through various channels. An official press release will be issued to relevant bodies by the Council's Corporate Communications department as soon as notification of the funding allocation is received.

Panos Pliatsikas has drafted an animation strategy to promote the new Axis 4 programme.

A programme launch date has not yet been set but it is proposed that events will be held in each of the three areas, North, South and Angus.

In order to adopt a more strategic approach, Mark Nicol suggested joining up with various agencies and inviting other sectors to attend the promotional events.

It may be possible to align these events with the LEADER launch to ensure a greater attendance. Engagement workshops tailored to the needs of the fishing industry are proposed. These engagement sessions could be held from 10am till 4pm to allow fishermen and processors to drop in. It may be possible to simultaneously provide information about other funds and business development initiatives available to the sector. Organisations such as Aberdeenshire Council SAB Scheme or Zero Waste Scotland could also be invited to attend.

Further promotion will involve David John attending NESFDP, Skipper Expo, Whitefish Supplies Forum, SSA meetings and IFG meetings.

Martin Brebner is preparing an invitation to quote for the design and production of new NESFLAG logo, leaflets and banners which will be produced prior to the launch.

Jamie Bell considered it to be essential that NESFLAG is absolutely clear about Axis 4 elements before advertising and launching the new programme in order to avoid raising expectations within the industry.

5.6 Project Assessment Committee (PAC) The PAC is a sub group which meets three weeks prior to the main FLAG meeting to assess the eligibility criteria of the application. The PAC can make recommendations to the applicant in order to allow them to strengthen their application in advance of the FLAG meeting. This is a means of speeding up the process, ensuring that issues are highlighted before the application reaches the FLAG.

It is proposed that this two-stage process is continued in the new programme. A 'notification of interest' form will be circulated to invite organisations who express an interest in joining the PAC.

It is proposed that the PAC will consist of eight different organisations from private, public and community bodies.

John Cox considered it to be imperative that PAC membership provides full coverage of the Aberdeenshire coastal area.

PAC membership may have to be increased to ten if Angus is to be included.

5.7 Co-Chairs and Appointment of Vice Chairs

At the last FLAG meeting, Linda Hope and Jimmy Buchan were appointed as Co-Chairs. There are currently two vacant positions for Vice Chair. An e-mail will be circulated inviting members who are interested in taking up the position of Vice Chair to put themselves forward. Appointment of Vice Chairs will be made at the next meeting.

David John met with the Co-chairs in April. Although it was not deemed necessary to hold a full committee meeting at that time, the meeting with the co-chairs addressed concerns that momentum could be lost due to delays with the new programme. An e-mail was circulated to reassure NESFLAG members that Aberdeenshire is being proactive in securing a new allocation of Axis 4 funding.

A joint meeting of NALAG/SALAG/FLAG Chairs was held on 5th June to discuss admin budgets and staffing resources. There will be an element of sharing resources due to FLAG admin costs being covered by rural funding.

Discussion took place regarding the transition from EFF to EMFF. David John's costs will be covered by the EFF programme until approximately October when the current programme is closed off. Staff costs will then be picked up by the rural budget.

5.8 Expression of Interests (EOI's) and Potential Projects

Following on from the last FLAG meeting, EOI forms were circulated to potential applicants and FLAG members. The EOI allows applicants to submit a brief description and indicative costs of their proposed project.

Twelve informal project ideas have been received to date including:

- Diversification outwith the fisheries sector
- Training schemes and hubs
- Pontoons and eco-tourism projects
- Tourism related infrastructure improvements
- Harbour development projects
- Adding value to fisheries products
- Feasibility studies.

It is anticipated that many more EOI's will be submitted following the promotion and launch of the programme.

Members were concerned about making organisations who have already submitted a project idea aware that it may be into 2016 before the first funding round is open.

It was agreed that the EOI forms be re-circulated to enable members to forward these on to potential applicants.

5.9 Mark Nicol had to leave the meeting at this point. It was agreed that a second conference call will be held between Mark, Martin and David John to discuss the aid intensity rate and identify how things will work on the ground.

5.10 NESFLAG members agreed the processes outlined for:

- the media strategy
- the process for the appointment of Vice Chairs
- the proposed structure of the Project Assessment Committee

6. AOCB

6.1 Aberdeenshire is keen to work with Marine Scotland on developing the guidance for the new programme. Martin will ask MS if they would welcome input and support from both himself and David John.

6.2 David John will continue to be formally based in Inverurie, but consideration is being given to relocation to Peterhead or flexible working.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

7.1 It is unlikely that there will be anything significant to report before October so a meeting date will be set for some time in November. A doodlepoll will be circulated to establish a suitable date.

Linda thanked members for their attendance and input at the meeting.