



# Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Ltd

**Minutes of OSFLtd Board Meeting held in conference room at Orkney College East Road Kirkwall  
on Wed 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015**

## Present

S Crichton, F Matheson, A Livingstone, N Matheson, G Miller, M Foulis

## By video link

T Tulloch, H Costie, R Hutchison

## Apologies

T Sinclair, D Shearer, G Brown, S Dennison

1. Minutes of meeting held on 6.11.14. Approved by S.C and seconded by G Miller
2. Matters Arising:
  - Scallop Consultation.** OSFLtd submitted its response to the consultation.  
Research - There is to be a meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015 at which Succorfish data will be presented to fishermen. There will be a presentation to OIC on 17th March 2015 when researchers Mike, Mark and Kate will update on the crab lobster and velvet and scallop research. The OIC are currently supportive of industry initiatives.
  - Quota consultation.** OSFLtd sent its response. FM advised that OFA had requested additional ring fencing of Scottish Quota and had asked Secretary of state for Scotland and local isles MP Alistair Carmichael for support on this issue, however AC did not support OFA's request.
  - Ring fenced fisheries fund.** OIC officials appear supportive of initiatives to provide cold store facilities in Orkney and see potential uses for the excess electricity power currently being generated in Orkney in utilising this energy in a high energy development such as a cold store. Funding for a feasibility study has been approved by the Council.
  - Harbour issues.** OIC had set up Kirkwall and Stromness Harbour working groups where fishermen and their representatives had the opportunity to attend. FM advised that OFA had written to OIC asking that fishermen be included in discussions over the needs of Gill Pier in Westray. To date no meeting had taken place in Westray. SC indicated that Westray should have a similar Harbour Working Group to those in Stromness and Kirkwall.
3. Item 2. Request to increase MLS on crab and lobster. Confirmation has been received from Marines Scotland that a national public consultation on the proposed increases in MLS for lobster, velvets and green crabs and the prohibition of landing berried velvets will begin on 6.2.15 and last for the statutory 12 week period. All board members are supportive of the

increases are encouraged to respond and encourage other individual and organisations to respond as without positive backing the request may appear unsupported.

(Heddle Costie entered the meeting at this point).

Marine Scotland favour using the Seafisheries Conservation Act of 1967 to implement the MLS given that this is a conservation measure. There has been some discussion that the regulatory framework for inshore management needs streamlining. The benefits of progressing the MLS through Marine Scotland and the Seafisheries Conservation Acts removes criticism of the actions being pursued by a group with minority interest and transfers policing to a neutral body in Marine Scotland. Issues of enforcement were discussed centred on the possibility of vessels carrying sub-legal shellfish in Orkney waters, issues around 'force majeure'. For occasions when a supplier took in sub-legal shellfish from outwith Orkney for on-growing a consent process would be required. Otherwise the carriage of sub-legal shellfish within 6nm in Orkney waters would be prohibited.

4. Item 3. MLS on Scallop and bar length and dredge limit. Marine Scotland's preference has been to wait until the conclusion of the national scallop consultation prior to consideration of OSFLtds' request for a scallop MLS, fixed bar length and dredge limit. The national consultation has now ended so OSF Ltd now wish to bring forward to MS the limits already widely circulated during the informal consultation period of the Regulating Order Proposal.

These are:

- There will be a MLS for King Scallop within Orkney waters of 110mm.
- Carriage of King Scallops of less than 110mm within the Orkney IFG area to be prohibited.
- No vessel which is used to dredge for scallops may use or carry onboard more than two tow-bars with a combined overall length, or a single tow bar with an overall length, of more than 8.80 metres, or more than a total of 10 scallop dredges.
- There will be a MLS for Queen scallops of 64mm.
- Carriage of Queen scallops of less than 64mm to be prohibited

It was suggested that both a Minimum and Maximum Landing Size on Buckies or Whelks should be considered and relevant fishers should be consulted on the optimum parameters. It was agreed that these further measures should be circulated to all directors for comment prior to submission to Marine Scotland.

5. Lobster Hatchery. It was proposed that a study take place on three levels.

- I. Evaluate fishermen's support or otherwise for the hatchery.
- II. What investment is required to return the hatchery to production of 70k juveniles per year?
- III. Is there potential for greater expansion for the hatchery to include additional facilities like a visitor centre and café?

OIC/HIE are willing to make available £11k for a feasibility study into the above. Part I could be a desk study conducted locally communicating with fishermen at an approx. cost of £1k. SC has approached Mike Bell at Herriot Watt and he is willing to undertake this.

There was discussion on whether it would be feasible to run the hatchery this year or not. Options were;

- Put the hatchery on hold and plan out its future.
- Operate on a scaled back level –missing out rearing to conicals and aquahive.

Discussion ensued on issues that the hatchery had encountered including problems with filtration systems due to age, feed, falling juvenile success rates and personnel fatigue maintaining a struggling project. It was suggested that there could be positive cross fertilisation of other shellfish projects like the development of juvenile scallop for reseedng

which would also bring more fishermen interest into the hatchery project. The levy on lobster landing had only been implemented by 2 buyers. OFS in previous years has paid 30p per lobster handled to the hatchery as did G Costie. Many lobsters are sold out of Orkney which do not contribute any resources to the hatchery. The input and views of merchants and processors should also be evaluated in the first part of the feasibility study.

The view from fishermen present was that they would not like to see the hatchery miss a season's operation and would be extremely concerned that it could spell the end of the hatchery.

Annual running costs are in the region of £20k per year but this need to be quantified also. SC agreed to raise the issue at the next OFS meeting and FM agreed to put it on the agenda for the OFA AGM.

6. AOCB

Consultation on Hobby or unlicensed fishermen. SC referred to this national Consultation and encouraged board members to consider OSFLtd's response.

There was general discussion on permitting of hobby fishermen, limits on catching for the pot which could be greater than those afforded to fishermen who had licences, the marking of creels, identification of unlicensed creels, impacts of the weather on unlicensed gear, the banning of keep boxes for unlicensed fishermen, there being no limit on the quantity of lobsters hobby fishermen can land but that they must land on a daily basis, some unlicensed hobby fishermen in some areas working hundreds of creels, selling at reduced prices into the live lobster market and causing the price to crash for licenced fishermen in other areas. SC proposed to draft a response for circulation and approval and for board members to contribute their views.

Handline Mackerel Quota

NM and RH requested that the handline mackerel quota allocation start at a ton in order that the nature of the fishery better enable boats to catch the allocated quota when the fish are accessible and also ensure that the quota was caught within the time allocation. It was agreed that fishermen and organisations would liaise closely with the local fishery officer. Markets were still embryonic and would take time to build up.

Scallop closure. FM alerted members to an announcement from NEIFCA of an immediate emergency closure to all scallop vessels due to unprecedented fishing effort in the Scarborough and Grimsby area. This could have a knock-on pressure on the scallop fishery in Orkney as displaced vessels moved north. Concern was again expressed that some were already in Orkney waters and again that unsustainable pressures would be exerted on the local stocks again this year. A similar blanket closure could not be sustained by the local artisanal under 10m fleet but again emphasised the need to implement MLS, dredge and bar restrictions as a matter of urgency.