

Cross-Party Group on Fisheries and Coastal Communities

20 February 2024 at 18:30 to 20:30

Minute

Present

MSPs

Karen Adam MSP – Convener
Beatrice Wishart MSP – Deputy Convener
Alastair Allan MSP
Finlay Carson MSP
Rachel Hamilton MSP
Audrey Nicol MSP

Invited guests

Dr Mitchell Lennan

Non-MSP Group Members

Archippus Sturrock – Office of Karen Adam MSP
William Norton – Pagoda PR
Phil Taylor – Open Seas
Allan Young – Open Seas
Caitlin Turner – Young Sea Changes Scotland
Jessica Jones – Scottish Wildlife Trust
Mark Shotter – Loch Long Salmon
David Nairn – Fairlie Community Croncke
Iona Yule – Invicta Public Affairs
Richard Lyle – Invicta Public Affairs
Ailsa Nicol – Orsted
Mario Ray – Howell Marine Consulting
Elena Balastri – SFF
Jack Mackenzie – SIFT
Eleanor Adamson – Fishmongers Company
Paula Duffy – University of Aberdeen
Jack Norquoy – Scottish Renewables
Cameron Moffat – Orsted
Elaine Whyte – Clyde Fishermans Association
Bally Philip - Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation

Apologies

Non Recorded

Agenda item 1- Welcome

Karen Adam MSP welcomed members to the meeting.

Agenda item 2 – Approval of Non-MSP members

Fauna and Flora; Fife Coast and Countryside Trust; National Trust for Scotland; Scottish Creel Fisherman's Federation; Muir Mhor Offshore Windfarm; Open Seas; Maritime and Coast Guard Agency; Clyde Fisherman's Association and Howell Marine Consulting were all approved as non-MSP members for the CPG.

Agenda item 3 – Yearly Agenda Discussion

The discussion opened with non-MSP attendees thanking MSPs for forming the group and looking forward to the year ahead.

Finlay Carson MSP said he wanted to group to give local communities a voice and listen to the wider fishing industry, the other present MSPs agreed with him.

The convener then introduced William Norton, Secretariat for the group and informed them of the role of a secretariat.

The discussion then was halted to allow for the next agenda item in the issue of time.

Agenda item 4 – Talk from Dr Mitchell Lennan

Dr Mitchell Lennan was invited from the University of Aberdeen to discuss the 'Spatial Squeeze: Understanding the Regulatory Context'. His talk began by laying out the wider image of the Scottish fishing landscape with regards to the law in that field. He discussed that 63% of the UK's economic zone is Scottish and that fishers are seeing an increased threat from the 'Spatial Squeeze'.

The talk then progressed onto the current legislation within Scotland regarding fisheries, coastal communities, and the spatial squeeze. The Marine Act Scotland (2010) was introduced as a topic where the financial, social and cultural differences of this act were discussed especially with regard to the rising prominence of wind farms off Scottish coastal areas. This can lead to fishers being squeezed out of the area.

A short Q and A then followed.

Attendees further asked Dr Lennan about the complexity of the Marine Act and whether the act could be seen as out of date as it is now 14 years old.

Attendees were also keen to avoid the idea that things were going bad insisting that they were not and were positive.

Agenda item 5 – Closing Discussion on the next CPG meeting.

Convener, Karen Adam MSP, to end the formal procedures of the meeting was keen to engage with attendees to see what they CPG could do that would be most helpful for members and non-members. She mentioned the idea of a report into the spatial squeeze and wanted to see the ideas and thoughts of members.

Cameron Moffat and Ailsa Nicol discussed the possibility of exploring how co-existence between windfarms and fishers could be made better. As wind farm developers they said they were keen to look at how they can work together and how they can support through a financial sense the transitions that fishers go through regarding community benefit funds.

Jack Norquoy from Scottish Renewables mentioned that they are currently active discussions between renewables industries and government that included disruption payments and strategic investments to fishing communities. Mr Norquoy offered himself to people to talk to if they wished to discuss this further.

Finlay Carson MSP was keen to express that renewable energy providers are just a small part of a larger picture; he mentioned native oyster beds and sea grass as specific examples.

Following input from other participants, the focus seemed to highlight that Marine spatial planning and how co-location and co-existence could work together would be a more successful report than the originally planned one on the spatial squeeze.

Karen Adam then reminded the group this was a place for open discussion and that this group would try to touch on every issue but cannot possibly cover them all which may make some people annoyed. Therefore, she said she would take what had been mentioned within the meeting and think about an agenda for the next meeting which was to be at a still to be decided date.

The meeting ended and informal networking and discussion continued until the end of the evening.