

Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group

Board meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday 27th March, 2018

Venue: Safe Wise, Radipole Lane, Weymouth, DT4 0QF

Time: 18:00 – 20:30

In attendance:

Axmouth Fishermen's Association	Dorset County Council	Quest Marine Ltd
Bridport and West Bay Fishermen's Association	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Southern Inshore Fisheries Conservation Authority
CEFAS	Marine Management Organisation	Weymouth and Portland Borough Council
Dorset Coast Forum	Native Marine Centre Ltd	Weymouth and Portland Fishermen's and Licensed Boatman's Association

Apologies:

The Fishing College
Swanage Fishermen's Association
Natural England
Purbeck District Council
SeaFish

1. Welcome and introductions

The chair welcomed the FLAG members to the meeting.

2. Last meetings minutes

There were seven actions from the last meeting:

- I. **Board members to advise Rhiannon and Martin of anyone who may need financial assistance with bridging loans.** The board has not advised FLAG officers of anyone who would need assistance but the application to a local credit union is progressing well.
- II. **Rhiannon to seek clarification of timescales from the MMO.** The MMO have advised that all spend for project commitment must be submitted by March 2019 and all claims must be submitted by December 2019.
- III. **Weymouth and Portland Fishermen's and Licensed Boatmen's Associations to check if they can forward the MMO's reply regarding Bass regulations to the**



FLAG board. Weymouth and Portland Fishermen's Association clarified this point with the FLAG officers. The information was from the local councillor and MP. This letter was circulated to the board last month.

- IV. **FLAG staff to ensure board members are forwarded copies of all future press releases.** There have not been any press releases since the last meeting, but FLAG officers will ensure this happens.
- V. **Rhiannon to arrange another meeting with Portland Port.** A meeting has not been arranged. However, FLAG officers are continuing to liaise with Portland Port on a few topics and will report back.
- VI. **Rhiannon to ask for clarification from the MMO about the absolute maximum funds that can be moved and whether a contingency of 5 – 10% on each priority to cover future situations of minor over and under spends. Rhiannon also to highlight areas where the FLAG could potentially spend more money to the MMO in case more funding becomes available.** The LDS review has now been submitted to the MMO and they have verbally confirmed that the amounts of money and justifications for moving the funds that the FLAG have requested are reasonable.
- VII. **Where appropriate the FLAG staff will invite applicants to make short presentations to provide extra information to the board before the project discussion.** Two applicants have been invited to this meeting to present their projects to the board.

3. FLAG work update

- **LDS review** – The review has now been submitted to the MMO for approval. Other FLAGs are moving much more significant amounts of money between their priorities and we are entitled to do the same, although currently there are no projects coming forward to justify any further moving of funds. A preliminary date of August 2018 for a further review of the LDS has been set should it be needed but we can review as needed.
- **Management and Administration claim** – The MMO have requested some further evidence for the claim that was submitted earlier this year. Some of this evidence may be difficult to provide so Rhiannon is in discussions with the MMO and Dorset County Council to resolve it. The FLAG M&A is being bank rolled by Dorset County Council.
- **Swanage Core Fund Application** – This was submitted in time for the MMO panel at the end of March. The MMO have confirmed that the application is minded to be accepted but they require further evidence before it can be approved.
- **Martin's working pattern** – Martin has been working at four locations around the FLAG area but only two of these have proved to be successful – Weymouth and West Bay. Martin will continue to work at the Harbourside Café in Weymouth and the Harbour Master's Office in West Bay, but he asked the board for suggestions of other places he could work. He will continue to call in regularly at the other ports around the FLAG area.
 - The Chair suggested that in their opinion there are often key people within communities that know a lot of what is happening locally and it would be beneficial for Martin to find out who these people are and meet



with them regularly. Could the board help identify these people and advise Martin who they are?

- A board member suggested that Martin should talk with the fuel suppliers and at each port as they are often aware of what is happening locally

ACTION: FLAG board members to advise Martin who may be suitable to speak with at each port to identify potential projects and of new locations that Martin can work from.

- **Credit Union** – The application is now ready to be submitted to the local credit union to provide bridging loans to applicants. The Board did not advise FLAG officers of anyone who may need the loans. Rhiannon raised the issue that without definitive evidence whether the application was still needed.
 - A board member suggested that if a lack of funds would prevent people bringing projects forward and this scheme could provide applicants with funds to develop projects then it would be worthwhile.
 - Rhiannon confirmed that the scheme would give applicants access to funds up front but that it would be a limited amount of funding. The scheme would be run by the credit union and applicants would have to adhere to their regulations.
 - A board member commented that Credit Unions are very good at accommodating people, giving them access to affordable loans and that interest rates are usually low when compared with other forms of credit.
 - A board member questioned the need for this type of scheme as in their experience applicants they have spoken with have been able to afford the upfront costs, although these were relatively small.
 - A board member expressed concerns that there was a slight risk of damage to the reputation of the commercial fishing industry if the loans were not repaid.
 - A board member suggested that, in their opinion, there would be a need for this type of scheme.
- **Aquaculture Development Officer and hub** – A tender document for the role of Aquaculture Development Officer has been written and it was circulated to the Board for their feedback. The FLAG board did not have comments regarding the document. The Dorset Coast Forum will circulate the tender documents with a view to submitting a project to create a part time role until November 2019.
 - A board member suggested that the position would benefit from having a commercial perspective rather than purely academic.
 - A board member asked if there was a salary available for this role and would a limit be placed on it by the FLAG? Rhiannon advised that there is no cap and the overall cost of the project would depend upon the experience of the successful consultant. The FLAG officers carried out some initial research and up to £250 per day seems to be the standard rate for suitably qualified consultants.
 - A board member suggested that this type of role would maybe suit someone who is semi-retired as the time scales are short.



- A board member suggested that perhaps an established consultant would be able to fit this work around other commitments and therefore it would appeal to consultants who are looking to boost their portfolio of work.
- A board member commented that ensuring the correct person undertakes the role is key.
- Rhiannon suggested that the interview process is crucial to ensuring the right person is in post and asked the board if they would be able to suggest anyone who would be suitable to sit on the interview panel once the tender process is complete.
- Several board members made suggestions for suitable panel members.

ACTION: Rhiannon to get in touch with suggested interview panel members.

- **Other funding opportunities** – The fifth round of Coastal Community Fund has been issued by the Government and the Coastal Revival Fund will be open in a few months. This fund deals with small heritage projects and there is potential for fisheries heritage within that.
 - A board member asked if the Dorset Coast Forum would be submitting another bid for this round of CCF. Rhiannon advised that there are ongoing discussions regarding this now but it is likely that a portfolio of projects would be developed and any potential submissions would have to fit within this theme.
 - A board member asked if FLAG officers will keep the board advised of developments around CCF or other funding.
 - Rhiannon also advised the board of other suitable funding streams such as Innovate and NERC.

ACTION: FLAG officers to keep board up to date with details of other funding applications where appropriate.

- **EMFF Core Fund** – It is expected that the MMO will still have funds available in the infrastructure and ports core priority as some of the projects submitted for the last assessment panel were not successful. However, the deadline for new submissions is April 13th, 2018.
 - A board member asked if a project had been submitted for Weymouth. Rhiannon advised that the FLAG officers have been liaising with Weymouth and Portland Borough Council and there is a potential project being worked up.
 - A board member advised that the project is still being developed but the report which was funded through FLAG is almost complete.
- **Priority 4: Enabling innovation to increase the value of catch and products: Meet the buyer event** – This has been scheduled for late May 2018. It will be aimed at seafood restaurants, processors, fishmongers and suppliers and getting them to connect to the local fishing industry. The invitations will be circulated in early April.
 - The FLAG officers are working on reaching suppliers further up the supply chain and FLAG has been asked to sponsor the Seafood segment at the



Dorset Food and Drink awards later in 2018. To support this a four-page article will also be in the Dorset Magazine in June.

- A board member commented that the Dorset Seafood Festival does not showcase local businesses and could FLAG pay for a stand at the festival for use by local businesses. Rhiannon advised that it would be difficult to justify the long-term benefits of that from a funding perspective.
- A board member advised that if the outcome of the Meet the Buyer event was a list of potential seafood buyers that local fishermen could access then there is a clear benefit to the fishing communities within the FLAG area.
- A board member advised that all seafood buyers must be registered with the MMO and this can create obstacles when trying to sell catch. This problem is overcome if restaurants buy seafood from wholesalers. However, the registration process is simple and perhaps this event could highlight that.
- A board member suggested that the limiting factor is the ability of inshore boats to provide a wide range of catch all year round but raising awareness of seasonal menus should be encouraged. Perhaps the creation of a virtual market place could achieve this.
- A board member asked if the FLAG could support a project to sell seafood from a mobile wet fish shop. Rhiannon advised that projects for direct retail infrastructure are tricky to fund.
- A board member urged caution regarding selling of wet fish from mobile facilities as Health and Safety regulation can be extremely difficult to meet.
- A board member expressed concerns that there are very few places to buy fresh fish from within the FLAG area and there seems to be an opportunity to create that locally but another board member suggested there are a few good fishmongers within the FLAG area.
- A board member advised that there are a few co-operatives of local fishermen around the south west who have established businesses selling their catch and seem to be successful. Could this be replicated in the FLAG area? Rhiannon advised that they could.
- **Time sensitive projects** – Due to current workloads and the time required to prepare projects for review at for board meetings Rhiannon suggested to the board that meetings should move back to every 2 months. The board generally agreed with this. The LEADER LAG programme has experience of voting via e-mail and has found that the process difficult and slow. Therefore, for time sensitive projects Rhiannon suggested that the board hold conference calls to make funding decisions.
 - A board member suggested that this could work well for these types of projects.

4. Project discussion and Scoring

There were three projects presented for review by the Board at this meeting. Each project was independently appraised prior to the meeting and this was circulated to the Board for review. The scoring and Board discussion for each project is documented in the individual FLAG Application Appraisal form. Project details will be made public once they are approved for funding by the MMO.



- I. **ENG 2805** CEFAS and Dorset Coast Forum declared an interest.
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding.**
- II. **ENG 3016** CEFAS and Dorset Coast Forum declared an interest.
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding.**
- III. **ENG 2963**
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding.**

5. Any other business

- A board member raised concerns about the lack of younger fishermen representation on the FLAG board. Rhiannon advised the board that the FLAG officers would welcome new board members and asked that anyone interested contact her directly to discuss the roles and responsibilities of being a FLAG board member.
- A board member suggested that it would be difficult to engage with younger fishermen but they would also welcome them to the board.
- The FLAG chair expressed thanks to the board for their contributions during the meeting and noted that he was impressed with the engaging debate that took place.

6. Date of next meeting

- The next meeting will be on Tuesday 29th May at 18:00 at SafeWise in Weymouth.