

Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group Board meeting Minutes

Date: 20th February 2018
Venue: Safewise, Weymouth
Time: 18:00 – 22:00

In attendance:

The Fishing College	Weymouth and Portland Licensed Boatmen's and Fishermen's Association	Southern IFCA
Axmouth Fishermen's Association	CEFAS	SEA FISH
Swanage Fishermen's Association	Dorset Wildlife Trust	Native Marine Centre Ltd.
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council	Dorset County Council	Quest Marine Ltd.
Weymouth Harbour Authority	West Bay Fishermen's Association	

Apologies:

Marine Management Organisation
Purbeck District Council
Natural England
Devon and Severn IFCA
Dorset Coast Forum

1. Welcome and Brief Introductions

The chair welcomed the FLAG members to the meeting.

2. Chair and Vice Chair Election

The FLAG Chair and Vice Chair roles were widely advertised before the meeting and two nominations for the position of FLAG chair for the upcoming year to March 2019 were received. A closed ballot was taken when board members arrived at the meeting.

Bob Huggins from the Dorset Coast Forum was voted as FLAG Chair until March 2019 (Bob Huggins, Dorset Coast Forum - 9 votes; Steve Postles, The Fishing College - 5 votes)

Robert Clark from Southern IFCA was nominated for the position of FLAG Vice Chair. The other candidate retracted their nomination. Robert Clark will take up the role of FLAG Vice Chair until March 2019.

The FLAG officers thanked the outgoing Chair for all their hard work and contribution over the last year. Their knowledge of the sector and training within the sector has proved invaluable and will still continue to be as a member of the FLAG board.

Rhiannon advised the board that Resort Marketing Limited has withdrawn from the board due to other commitments.

3. Last Meeting's Minutes

The board reviewed and agreed the minutes from the last board meeting.

There were seven actions from the last meeting:

- I. **Rhiannon to update board with developments regarding 'bridging loans' from a local credit union.** Dorset Community Action were unable to assist with the scheme. However, Seafarers are now open to the credit union applying directly to them. The FLAG officers are helping with the application to Seafarers and hope the scheme will be set up by early May. This might not coincide with most of the FLAG money but it could potentially help with core applications from people within the FLAG area. Rhiannon asked the board to make the FLAG officers aware of anyone who may need bridging loans as it would help to support the application to Seafarers.

ACTION: Board members to advise Rhiannon and Martin of anyone who may need financial assistance with bridging loans

- II. **Board members were to actively promote projects surrounding priority 4: Adding Value to Catch. Examples of projects could include facilities to improve quality of catch including storage or projects that utilise by-products of the industry.** This is an ongoing action.
- III. **Rhiannon to clarify timescales with MMO.** This has not been done yet. The FLAG manager at the MMO left their post on the 19th January 2018 and their replacement started on the 9th February. Rhiannon will get a clarified timescale from the MMO as soon as possible.

ACTION: Rhiannon to seek clarification of timescales from the MMO

- IV. **FLAG programme staff to investigate the possibility of funding a larger FLAG wide programme like that funded by Plymouth Council.** Three of the local fishermen's associations have submitted Health and Safety projects for review at this meeting. Martin has been talking with the remaining associations but projects have proved difficult to develop.
 - A board member commented that Totnes Council will be developing a similar project and as it will extend to vessels that fish out of or port at Brixham, this may cover some of the vessels that aren't covered by the three projects already submitted.
- V. **The FLAG programme staff will pursue the development of a suitable project to create an Aquaculture Development Officer role and report back to the Board as the project progresses.** FLAG held a workshop and are currently writing up report and looking at the next steps to develop an officer role. The report will be circulated to the Board for feedback.
- VI. **FLAG Programme staff will ensure that the Expression of Interest for each project is forwarded to the independent appraiser along with the application form.** EOI's were sent to the appraiser with the applications. The appraiser this time was Phil Sterling, the coast and countryside manager at Dorset County Council.
- VII. **Rhiannon to contact the Fishermen's Associations to help write a joint letter to DEFRA outlining current issues they have regarding quota management.** After discussion with the board member who raised the issue, there was a consultation happening with the MMO that gave the opportunity to give their views.



- Weymouth and Portland Licensed Boatmen's and Fishermen's Association updated the board on this point. There has been some representation from the Dorset area regarding issues with quota specifically surrounding Bass legislation. There has been a response from the MMO and there may be a review in March 2018. The board member advised the board, according to the MMO, there have been seven boats effected across the UK. The board member advised there have already been jobs lost in Weymouth because of the quota changes and they are also aware a boat has had to be sold due to the caps that have been imposed.
- A board member asked if the MMO's response could be circulated to the board. The board member advised they would need to check if that was possible.
- A board member suggested that there were more than seven boats effected and that the MMO's figures were perhaps out of date.
- A board member commented that the reduced allocation of Bass is not viable for sustaining a fishing boat.
- A board member commented that it is the large-scale fishing that has caused the issues and now the effects of apparent lack of regulation is being felt by the small scale inshore fleet.

ACTION: Weymouth and Portland Licensed Boatmen's and Fishermen's Association is to check if they can forward the MMO's reply to the FLAG board members

- A board member commented that there had been some press coverage of the four most recent projects to be funded by FLAG and commended the officers for their work. The Vice Chair asked if another press release could be made about the FLAG projects so far and perhaps it could be circulated to the board.
- Martin advised the board that the latest press release has been uploaded to the Dorset Coast Forum website at www.dorsetcoast.com and was also publicised on social media.

ACTION: FLAG staff will ensure that board members are forwarded copies of all future press releases

4. Aquaculture Development Workshop Feedback

Martin updated the board on the outcomes of the workshop that was held at the CEFAS in Weymouth on January 16th 2018.

- 32 people from across the aquaculture sector attended the workshop
- The workshop had 3 stations
 - I. Why and where aquaculture development opportunities could exist
 - II. Defining the aquaculture hub and aquaculture development officer role
 - III. What other projects could help drive sector development and how FLAG can help develop them
- The early indications are that a virtual aquaculture hub focusing on promotion and branding of the sector would be most suited to the area's needs
- The feedback also suggests that the role of an Aquaculture Development Office could be undertaken by a single contractor
- A detailed report will be published and distributed to the board for review. The report will inform the writing of the tender advertisement for the Aquaculture Development Officer and will include details of the projects that were identified at station 3 at the workshop.
- A board member asked if pressure can be applied to Portland Port as they appear to be a key player in the sector. Rhiannon advised the board Portland Port attended the workshop are open to development of the sector on their land and water.



A board member suggested that the directors of the port are focused on commercial shipping and if they were made aware of the potential for aquaculture development they would be amiable to it. A board member asked if the FLAG chair could arrange a meeting with Portland Port to help bridge the gaps between the sector and the port.

- A board member advised the board that Mike Ford, a well-known person within the aquaculture sector had sadly passed away recently. The board expressed their condolences.

ACTION: Rhiannon to arrange another meeting with Portland Port

5. Local Development Strategy Review

The MMO have asked the FLAG board to review the Community Led Local Development Strategy. Rhiannon clarified that, despite some board members benefiting or likely to benefit from FLAG funding, the MMO have confirmed the entire Board can discuss the proposed changes to the LDS. However, Declarations of Interest should be made. Declarations of Interest were made by....

The FLAG finances and officer recommendations were circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. The summary of the discussion regarding moving of funds between LDS priorities is below.

- A board member asked if there was any tolerance built into spend for each priority and that a 5% overspend is realistic. Rhiannon advised this was not built in to the spend.
- Rhiannon reminded the board that any movement of funding between priorities must be suitably justified. The MMO clarified that movements of up to £30,000 could be justified easily but larger amounts may be more difficult
- A board member suggested that the delays caused by the MMO may mean that a project will have to be withdrawn as the applicant can no longer support it with match funding as their circumstances have changed so if the project withdraws this will free up some money in priority three. A board member asked what would happen if a project that had already been approved for funding was withdrawn. Can this be accounted for in any movement of funds? Rhiannon advised that technically, any project can be withdrawn at any stage but it would be very difficult to account for that during this review.
- A board member asked if the Core infrastructure for Ports and Harbours article was still being depleted. Rhiannon clarified that it is and the MMO expect that it will exhausted by June. The Core Fund Article relating to equipment is still open and we haven't received any notification of it becoming exhausted.
- The Vice Chair commented that the recommendations outlined by the FLAG officers seemed appropriate.
- Rhiannon advised the board that if the recommendations were accepted Priorities 1 and 3 would be closed. All remaining projects that are currently at Expression of Interest stage for these priorities would be directed to the Core fund and this would not be detrimental to the intervention rates for those projects.
- Rhiannon also reminded that board that the Management and Administration costs for year one will be known after March 2018. If this proves to show an underspend, funds could be released for allocation to priorities.
- A board member asked if the FLAG could expect any further allocation of funding from the MMO. Rhiannon advised that this is unlikely, unless funding from another FLAG became available and a successful bid was made.
- A board member asked if FLAG officers would still support core applications under FLAG LDS priorities that were closed. Rhiannon advised that both she and Martin would still support core applications, but



as they would be to the Core fund the responsibility of project submission and communications would be with the applicant and the MMO.

- A board member commented that if the aim is to ensure priorities are spent then this review will help to achieve that.
- Rhiannon assured the board that the remaining priorities will remain open for applications.
- A board member asked if funds can be moved again should the need arise? Rhiannon advised that this would be possible, if it can be justified.
- A board member asked if a 10% contingency for each priority could be built in to any change of funds.
- A board member advised that moving large amounts can prove very difficult. The board member is aware of an organisation that has attempted to do this and it has been very difficult to do so
- A board member asked for clarification on what would happen if the officer's recommendations were rejected. Rhiannon advised the board that the FLAG funding rate would be reduced on each project accordingly. A board member advised that if the board declines to follow the recommendations set out by the officer's report it could make or break an entire project as the applicant would perhaps then need to find further match funding.
- A board member commented that the figures presented were excellent and asked if it would be advisable to request more funding from the MMO as there are clearly upcoming projects that could require it.
- A board member asked that it is clarified with the MMO what is the absolute maximum amount that can be moved between priorities.

ACTION: Rhiannon to ask for clarification from the MMO about absolute maximum funds that can be moved and whether we can put a contingency of 5-10% on each priority to cover future situations of minor overspends and underspends. Rhiannon to also highlight areas where we could potentially spend more money to the MMO in case more funding becomes available.

Two votes were taken to approve the moving of funds between priorities as outlined in the officer's recommendations report.

Vote 1

In Favour 12
Against 0
Abstained 0

Vote 2

In Favour 12
Against 0
Abstained 0

6. Project discussions and scorings

There were seven 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 2770** CEFAS declared an interest
 - **A vote was taken to reject this project for FLAG funding**
- II. **ENG 2805** CEFAS declared an interest



- **A vote was taken to defer a decision on this project until further information can be supplied**
- III. **ENG 2814** Bridport Fishermen's Association declared an interest
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding**
- IV. **ENG 2818**
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding**
- V. **ENG 2838** East Devon Fishermen's Association (Seaton Branch) declared an interest
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding with a condition attached**
- VI. **ENG 2838** Dorset Wildlife Trust and Southern IFCA declared interests
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding with a condition attached**
- VII. **ENG 2853** Weymouth and Portland Fishermen's and Licensed Boatmen's Association declared an interest
 - **A vote was taken to approve this project for FLAG funding**

8. Any other business

- A board member asked if FLAG officers could liaise with the Fishermen Association's that have not submitted a group health and safety project and encourage them to do so. Rhiannon advised that this has already been done but it has proved difficult to develop projects with those associations. However, this can be revisited if the board feels it is needed. A board member commented that he was concerned that a larger safety scheme was raised as an action last time but was not carried out.
- A board member suggested that applicants could do a short presentation to the board where projects warranted it. The board agreed this would aid discussion and improve understanding.

ACTION: Where appropriate the FLAG staff will invite applicants to make short presentations to provide extra information to the board before project discussion

9. Date of Next meeting

- The next meeting will be on Tuesday 27th March at 1800 at SafeWise in Weymouth. Rhiannon reminded the board that if projects that were deemed time sensitive and needed to be reviewed between board meetings they could be voted for and reviewed via e-mail.