

# Dorset and East Devon Fisheries Local Action Group

## Board meeting Minutes

**Date: 10 October 2017**  
**Venue: Safe Wise, Weymouth**  
**Time: 18:00 – 20:00**

### In attendance:

Marine Management Organisation	Dorset County Council
Quest Marine Ltd	Southern IFCA
CEFAS	Swanage Fishermen's Association
Weymouth and Portland Borough Council	East Devon Fishermen's Association
Weymouth Harbour	SEAFISH
West Bay Fishermen's Association	Lyme Regis Fishermen's Association
Weymouth and Portland Fishermen's and Licensed Boatman's Association.	Resort Marketing Ltd

### Apologies

#### Purbeck District Council

#### 1. Welcome and Brief Introductions

#### 2. Last meeting's minutes

The minutes from the last meeting were agreed by the board.

There was one action from the previous meeting:

- I. *FLAG Staff to update the Board on any successful core applications for replacement fishing gear that they are aware of.* There have not been any successful applications that FLAG staff have been made aware of as yet and so no update was given to the Board.

#### 3. Finances

The FLAG financial update was circulated to the Broad prior to the meeting. The figures are subject to approval of previous project funding by the MMO. The MMO are still yet to approve the FLAG programme's management and administration costs. So far, subject to MMO approval around 10% of the fund has been committed to projects. There are four projects up



for discussion at this meeting with an approximate value of £66,000 (12%) of the FLAG fund. There has been no spend on either Priority 2 (Aquaculture) or Priority 4 (Adding Value to Catch). The FLAG staff are networking with stakeholders to develop projects for these priorities, however if none come forward for the next Board meeting in December, FLAG programme staff will present the Board with options for moving money from these priorities to others where the demand is higher.

#### **4. FLAG Objectives and Result Indicators**

- The FLAG has been established to support economic growth and while there can be an element of competition in certain projects the MMO take the stance that for most vessel improvement and gear replacement projects the funding is available for all eligible stakeholders and so the competition element is not applicable. There are regulations in place to ensure that fishing effort is not increased under the EMFF or FLAG schemes. For projects that may introduce competition in a particular sector, applicants are asked to provide evidence of mitigation measures at application stage.
- A board member asked for clarification on whether the FLAG should be supporting projects that maintain equipment regarded as 'tools of the trade'. The MMO clarified that this is part of the wider regulations and therefore is an eligible item. There is a distinction that should be made between competition and competitiveness. The EMFF scheme recognises this and this is why there is an enhancement for small scale coastal fishers (SSCF) to be able to compete with larger vessels.
- A board member asked for clarification on Health and Safety projects and those projects that were being sent to core for replacement gear. The FLAG staff will help develop both types of project and as previously agreed with the Board replacement gear projects will be developed for core EMFF and, where suitable, health and safety related projects will be developed for FLAG funding. The Board were reminded that FLAG staff do screen and assess projects for their suitability for core or FLAG funding accordingly. The FLAG staff do help individual applicants to apply to the core fund as well as developing projects for FLAG funding.
- The EU commission expects to see a diverse range of projects funded under FLAG schemes and for this reason DEFRA have specifically outlined certain projects for development under FLAG funding alone. These projects must still align with the FLAG development strategy but may have less measurable or less tangible outputs. These types of project can only be funded through the FLAG and are not eligible for the core fund. This will mean that the Board will be presented with a variety of projects where the direct output is not the creation of jobs or businesses but the project could contribute to these outcomes in other ways. They must also meet with the Local Development Strategy priorities.
- The Board were reminded that FLAG staff do screen and assess projects for their suitability for core or FLAG funding accordingly. The FLAG staff do help individual applicants to apply to the core fund as well as developing projects for FLAG funding.



## 5. Voting

The voting process has been streamlined so Rhiannon clarified voting options to the Board:

- Moving forward a single vote will be taken on each project presented to the Board to either approve or reject a project. There will be no vote to send it to the core fund as that is entirely up to the applicant if they wish to do so.
- Board members can add conditions to the offer of funding to projects. The condition must be put forward by a board member and seconded. The addition of conditions to offers of funding will be voted on by the Board **before** the vote to approve or reject the project as a whole is taken.
- Projects will only be assessed on the whole application. No part funding will be voted on.
- A Board member asked that if projects are rejected for FLAG funding do the FLAG programme staff signpost the applicant to the core fund. The FLAG staff confirmed that this does happen, but ultimately the onus is on the applicant to make that decision.

## 6. Update on FLAG work

- There are three projects at Expression of Interest stage, four for discussion at this meeting, five that have been approved but are still waiting for MMO approval and one that has had an offer of funding issued. A press release will be circulated once further projects have been approved.
- Rhiannon has been to Newcastle and London for training from the MMO to better understand the application pipeline process and also the claims process. Currently, there is an eight week turn around on claims if all the information submitted for the claim is correct.
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- Rhiannon has also been working with stakeholders in Swanage and Weymouth investigating larger projects to develop to the core EMFF. She has also been attending meetings with stakeholders from a variety of sectors including looking at developing aquaculture projects and working with the education sector to help develop relevant skills in the FLAG area.
- Rhiannon will be attending a two-day meeting with other FLAGs in Hastings in November where FLAGs can share projects and lessons learnt so far.
- The MMO have advised that engine replacement will be an eligible item in the near future. The finer details of this are still to be confirmed, however the MMO did confirm that de-rated engines would not be eligible and the very nature of a new engine would probably mean that there would be an associated reduction in emissions when an engine was replaced.



- Martin has been to Edinburgh for a UK FLAG event where all the FLAG's from each of the devolved national administrations met for a two conference. This was an opportunity to network and gain an understanding of how other FLAG's around the UK operate.
- Martin attended the Aquaculture Common Issues Group meeting in London where some good connections were made in the aquaculture sector, which will help in moving projects forward for this FLAG priority.
- A FLAG Aquaculture workshop will be held in January 2018 to explore the sector and any potential projects and after the good feedback that was received from the FLAG launch event held in March 2017, the FLAG staff will be arranging a 'meet the buyer' event for February 2018. Processors, fishers, seafood restaurants and suppliers will be invited to the event to help build working relationships across sectors within the FLAG area.
- Martin will also be attending a European FLAG aquaculture conference in Germany at the end of November.
- Martin has helped seven applicants develop projects and apply to core EMFF and he is also working with a further six applicants on core fund projects.

## **7. Project Discussions and Scoring**

There were four projects presented for review by the Board. Each project was independently appraised prior to the meeting and these were 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.

The applications discussed at this meeting were:

- I. **ENG 2394** – Weymouth and Portland Fishermen's and Licensed Boatman's Association, Weymouth Harbour Authority and Weymouth and Portland Borough Council declared an interest.
  - **A vote was taken to recommend this project for FLAG funding.**
- II. **ENG 2385**
  - **A vote was taken to recommend this project for FLAG funding.**
- III. **ENG 2406** – Axmouth Fishermen's Association declared an interest.
  - **A vote was taken to recommend this project for FLAG funding.**
- IV. **ENG 2380**
  - **A vote was taken to recommend this project for FLAG funding with a condition attached.**



## 8. Any other business

- A Board member asked if there were any other sources of funding available to applicants to assist them with the overall costs of projects prior to FLAG or EMFF funding re-reimbursing them. Rhiannon asked the Board to share any experiences they have regarding this. A Board member commented that another FLAG approached Seafarers UK and were awarded a grant for this purpose. A Board member commented that the South Coast Fisherman's Council may also have funds to assist with this. Contacting the local Credit Union was also suggested. Martin has carried out some initial research and there are some local credit unions that can supply short term loans but these tend to be aimed towards clients with good credit rating. Crowdfunding may also be an option for applicants although this can take a lot of effort for little reward. The Chair asked if interest on loans can be covered by EMFF or FLAG. The MMO confirmed that this is not covered.
- The FLAG Chair asked the Board if they would find it useful to run through the appraisal of a project at the next board meeting with the independent appraiser present. The board agreed that this would be useful. The FLAG staff will arrange for the appraiser to be at the next meeting.

**ACTION: Rhiannon to contact Seafarers UK and the local credit union.**

**ACTION: Martin to raise the possibility of interim funding at the next South Coast Fishermen's Council.**

**Date of next meeting is December 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 at Safewise, Weymouth.**