

**FISHERIES WORKING GROUP
ROSEHEARTY COMMUNITY BOAT CLUB**

WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors I Sutherland (Chair), C C Buchan, M Findlater, S W Smith, D Mair, A Kille; A Allan; Cllr M Roy;

Apologies: Cllr P Johnston

Officers: Derek McDonald, Industry Support Executive (Rural and Maritime); Jamie Wilkinson, NESFLAG Coordinator

1. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. Interests were intimated by Cllr Beagrie and Cllr Doreen Mair in respect of projects supported by NESFLAG.

2. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In making decisions on the undernoted items of business, the Working Group **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act, 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) where an Equality Impact Assessment was provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching their decision.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 15 May 2019

The Minute was **agreed** as a correct record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were five action points from the last meeting, all of which had already been addressed or would be covered by the agenda. There were no further matters arising.

The meeting was preceded firstly by a visit to Rosehearty Harbour to learn of the plans underway by Rosehearty Inshore Fishermen's Association for a new harbourside chill, ice machine and other improvements to help maintain the quality of locally landed seafood. This had been followed by a presentation in Rosehearty Community Boat Club on the refurbishment of the building (a former toilet block) and the club's wide range of activities. Members noted the considerable benefits both projects were generating for the local community and requested that both speakers were thanked for making time available to address members and answer their questions.

Action point 1: Derek McDonald to offer members' thanks to hosts.

5. PRESENTATION: NESFLAG OVERVIEW BY JAMIE WILKINSON, NESFLAG COORDINATOR

Mr Wilkinson opened by advising that North East Scotland Fisheries Local Action Group (NESFLAG) is a partnership of over 20 organisations from the public, private, community and fisheries sector. NESFLAG delivers the community-led local development elements of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2014-2020.

The NESFLAG budget for the programme period is £1.437m which covers the Aberdeenshire and Angus coasts, encompassing most fishing communities and coastal settlements. Aberdeenshire Council administers the programme through a dedicated co-ordinator and part time support staff. The programme is split between three Local Development Strategies (North Aberdeenshire, South Aberdeenshire and Angus) and is linked to the LEADER rural development programmes.

Since its launch NESFLAG has worked with a wide range of applicants: community groups, third sector organisations, public bodies, private companies, business collectives, fishermen's associations and others. Projects can cover a wide range of activities but must address at least one of the following priorities set out by the FLAG's strategy:

- a) adding value and promoting innovation at all stages of the fisheries and seafood supply chain
- b) creating jobs, attracting young people, encouraging lifelong learning and facilitating training in fisheries areas
- c) supporting diversification inside or outside commercial fisheries
- d) enhancing and capitalising on the environmental assets of the fisheries areas
- e) promoting social well-being, cultural heritage and community development in fisheries areas

NESFLAG launched in March 2016 and the first application round was held in July 2016. Although the number of applications was low at the outset, interest steadily increased and the programme gathered momentum during 2017 and 2018. To date 28 projects have been approved with a total grant commitment of £1,108,293.40. This equates to 77.13% of the programme budget.

Following the most recent round of approvals, the budgets for North Aberdeenshire and Angus were now fully committed (subject to two projects currently in the approval process) and NESFLAG is currently closed for new applications in those areas. There remains around £200,000 in the South Aberdeenshire budget for new projects, and an application deadline has been set for November 2019. Subject to location and budget constraints, the NESFLAG Co-ordinator continues to work with potential applicants, with a particular focus on South Aberdeenshire to encourage further applications, particularly in Stonehaven, Gourdon and Johnshaven. Following assurances from UK Government, NESFLAG grant offers can be made up until September 2020. The deadline for projects to be completed and draw down all funding is December 2020, though there may be some flexibility to extend this date if required.

Mr Wilkinson went on to describe several projects funded by the NESFLAG programme to illustrate the wider range of initiatives undertaken, several of which have cooperated to deliver mutual benefit (eg both the Fraserburgh Harbour tele-handler and the Stonehaven Sea Safari rigid inflatable boat had assisted beach clean activities undertaken by the Turning the Plastic Tide project).

Members expressed their appreciation of the many benefits generated by NESFLAG and asked Mr Wilkinson whether future UK structural funds were likely to support a similar programme. Mr Wilkinson advised that representations to that effect had already been made

to UK and Scottish Governments by the council and by NESFLAG. The Chair thanked Mr Wilkinson for his presentation.

Action point 2: Members to be kept informed of future Maritime and Fisheries structural funds

6. BULLETIN: COUNCIL RESPONSE TO SOUTHERN TRENCH PROPOSED MARINE PROTECTED AREA (pMPA) CONSULTATION

There had been circulated a Bulletin report dated 30 August 2019 by the Head of Economic Development which set out the response submitted by Aberdeenshire Council on 30 August to the proposal by Marine Scotland to create new Marine Protected Areas in Scotland, specifically off the coast of Aberdeenshire (Southern Trench) and the background to the proposal. The council's view had been informed by input from Banff and Buchan Area Committee and from Infrastructure Services Committee.

The council's Economic Development service had met with the Scottish Natural Heritage project lead in April 2019 to discuss the proposals in some detail. A meeting was thereafter sought and obtained with the Scottish Whitefish Producers Association's Chief Scientific Adviser to discuss the proposals and potential consequences for the fishing industry. He advised that the Southern Trench pMPA had already been the subject of lengthy consultation with industry and that the association was content with the proposals as they stood. As the Southern Trench pMPA is currently in good environmental condition it was thought that fishing activities within it were unlikely to be significantly affected.

Action point 3: Members to be kept informed of development in the pMPA process for the Southern Trench

7. BULLETIN: SCOTTISH SEAFOOD ASSOCIATION TRAINING ACTIVITY

There had been circulated a Bulletin report dated 30 August 2019 by the Head of Economic Development which provided a summary of seafood industry related training delivered by the Scottish Seafood Association, with which the council's Economic Development service has worked closely since SSA was formed to help enhance the sector's performance.

The council had assisted SSA in its application to NESFLAG for financial support for a training centre project which led to the appointment of Michael Sim as SSA's Technical Training Consultant to drive enhanced levels of training, including a bespoke induction course for new entrants. A significant driver of seafood industry training is the desire amongst several businesses to attain recognised accreditation standards such as SALSA (Safe and Local Supplier Approval). In late 2018, Aberdeenshire Council approved a funding package (Support for Aberdeenshire Business) to assist ten seafood businesses in Aberdeenshire with the costs of attaining the SALSA Plus Seafood standard.

After consideration, the Working Group **agreed** to note information provided in the update.

8. BULLETIN: VERBAL UPDATES

The Industry Support Executive (Rural & Maritime) provided a number of brief verbal updates on the NESFLAG-funded Future-proofing Fisheries Project, which is expected to report early in 2020; on the Scottish Seafood Centre of Excellence project and on the indicative Total Allowable Catches (TACs) for 2020, based on the provisional scientific advice from ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Seas)

After consideration, the Working Group **agreed** to note information provided in the update.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 29 January 2020 at a venue to be confirmed

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