

North Sea Commission Maritime Resources & Fisheries Group Activity Report from June – October 2006

1. Background

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to update the North Sea Commission Executive Committee on the work of the NSC Fisheries Group between June-October 2006

- 2. NSCFG Chair** – Cllr.Anders Fasth
Vice Chairs, Cllr. Harry Jensen & Cllr. Sandy Clunes
Co-ordinator – Ann Bell

3. Meetings

14 June 2006 - Aviemore, Scotland

Present: -

Anders Fasth – Chairman

Harry Jensen – Vice Chair & EU Spokesperson

Sandy Clunes – Vice Chair & Proposed Chair NS Inshore Fisheries Network

Ann Bell – Co-ordinator

Lena Soderholm – Deputy Co-ordinator

Malcolm Morrison – Aberdeenshire Council

John Watt & Michael Sutherland – Scottish Fishermen's Federation Services (SFFS)

This short meeting was called to discuss the proposed Fisheries Safety Workshop to be held during the Maritime Policy Conference in Stavanger in November.2006.

It was agreed that the aim of workshop is to highlight the importance, of all users of the North Sea, working in partnership. The SFFS have been working together with the oil & gas sectors for many years and through this work have developed "FishSafe", which has saved many lives. It is hoped that this equipment will be made available to all fishermen operating in the North Sea. However the equipment is only as good as the data that is fed into it. One major problem is the lack of Norwegian data. This it is hoped will be addressed at the workshop.

4/5 October 2006 in Vastra Gotaland, Sweden

NSCFG Politicians Meeting.

Anders Fasth – Chair

Harry Jensen – Vice Chair & EU Spokesperson

Ann Bell – Co-ordinator

Ake Linden – VGRegion

Stefan Lind - VG Region

Stena Sinclair - Regional Secretary, Christian Democratic Party

Apologies:- Sandy Clunes Vice Chair & Proposed NS Inshore Fisheries Network Chair.

The NSCMRFG Politicians meeting on day one took place in Ockero, an island outside Goteborg. We met with local politicians and the Manager of the Fisheries Centre.

The Fisheries Centre Manager gave a very interesting presentation on the work of the Centre and its future developments. It was very impressive and had students from as far away as Australia. Representatives of the Centre had visited the North Atlantic College in Shetland before developing the Centre.

We then went to discuss the future work of the NSCMRFG, in particular the new name and what it could mean to the work of the group. We felt the name was too all encompassing without the word Fisheries in it. After much debate it was agreed that the name should be North Sea Commission Maritime Resources and Fisheries Group, this would enable us to be more focused.

We also discussed the work of the Group and how it could be better organised. It was felt that to ensure that more members could be involved and influence the day to day work, they needed to have specific roles. As the work of the Group was becoming more politically focussed it was felt that role of the Co-ordinator was becoming more that of an Advisor. We felt it was important that Advisors (as is the case now) would need to have expertise in their field, to ensure that actions taken by the Group and advice passed to politicians was of the highest quality. The following is how we would like the NSCMRFG to operate.

- Maritime Resources & Fisheries Advisor (to organise the work of the group and to advise the politicians)
- Project co-ordinator (to be responsible for projects undertaken by the Group and to advise Group of possible funding opportunities)
- Aquaculture and renewable energy specialist (As both these topics are felt to be very important, it will be necessary to have persons with expertise to be responsible for keeping the Group informed)
- Liaison person (to ensure that there is co-operation between groups and the Baltic Sea Fisheries Group)

- Web-page editor (to be responsible for ensuring our web page is updated)

We then went on to debate the draft new Terms of reference which included looking at the areas which be of interest to Group and agreed on the following:

- Marine Resources and Fisheries policies and programmes of the European Union (and its individual member states and of Norway where relating to North Sea co-operation)
- Fisheries policies and programmes of the European Union
- Other programmes and initiatives of the European Union where Marine Resources and Fisheries are involved
- Co-operation and exchange between the member regions of the NSC
- Ensure fisheries is highlighted within EU Maritime Policy

Also was agreed that the work of the group would include the following **Key Issues** :

- Coastal zone management
- Fisheries strategies
- Fisheries policies
- Economic dependence
- Aquaculture
- Selectivity of fishing gear
- Quality assurance including eco-labeling
- Coastal fisheries
- Working in partnership with other users of the North Sea.
- Development of Science Fisheries Partnerships
- Continue to support NSRAC
- Inshore Fisheries Network
- Safety at Sea

During the meeting we drew up a new draft Work Plan, we felt it was important to have a longer-term plan covering from 2006 – 2008.

The main priorities of this work plan will be:

Aquaculture
 Users of the North Sea – Renewable Energy, oil, gas and cable etc
 Fisheries – Inshore, Offshore and onshore.
 Fishing Ports- Waste treatment & management, future developments

We also discussed future co-operation between the NSC & BS Fisheries Group, as it was felt that both areas had much in common.

It was agreed that we would also continue to work very closely with the CPMR Fisheries Group and would have more joint meetings them.

The next item to be discussed was the NSC/CPMR Closed areas resolution.
(Attached)

Harry Jensen led this item. He informed that his County had commissioned a legal firm to look into how e.g. Directives particularly those regarding closed or protected could be amended in line with the our resolution.

A meeting with MEPs is to be arranged to discuss the above. Ann Bell is also to speak to Jean Didier Hache.

At the end of the meeting it was agreed that this Politicians had been a very useful in forming the Political focus for the NSCMRFG. The next Politicians meeting is planned for January 2006.

The next meeting of the NSCMRFG is planned for 21 November in Stavanger.