

Fishing into the Future

AGM Workshop Minutes

Summary

The year past has been problematic, with funding issues to the fore. The year ahead is a different proposition, with positive funding news meaning that the charity is now operational in a way it hasn't been previously.

Executive Committee members gave feedback on their own work and the current work of the charity:

- **Chairman's Address:** Alan Steer
- **Executive Director's Report:** Jim Masters
- **Orkney Sustainable Fisheries Organisation:** Sean Dennison
- **The Business of Fishing:** Alexa Dayton
- **Data Collection Guidelines for Industry:** Steve Mackinson

The FitF AGM Workshop also aimed to raise the profile of a few specially chosen and inspirational stories from around the UK. These were used to help initiate positive discussions within the charity, to support discussions about potential new work streams and to raise awareness for the projects themselves:

- **Fresh from the Boat:** Chantelle Williams illustrating the journey take by this family business
- **Holderness Fishing Industry Group:** Mike Cohen explaining how and why the HFIG was established and how it is working to improve industry data for specific fisheries
- **Fisheries Science Partnership 50:** Stephen Mangi from Cefas explaining how different industry-data initiatives are collaborating and combining to address some critical issues in fisheries science
- **Trawl Know-How:** Harriet Yates-Smith from Mindfully Wired Communications providing a brief insight in to what this new project seeks to deliver.

Following these presentations, an open discussion within the group ensued, with recommendations for action by the charity – and issues to be aware of - being made. The headline comments and take-home messages are:

1. Do a few things well – and stick to our current work programme of:
 - Industry data; Training; Supporting innovation; Outreach and engagement
2. Communications is key: develop better materials for distribution, improve the website, develop a 'blog, promote activities as well as outputs, live-stream meetings where appropriate
3. Plan to fund and deliver a symposium for fishermen (focus and theme to be agreed) for delivery within the next 18 months.
4. Build strategic partnerships and collaboration where possible.

Charity updates:

Chairman's Report (Alan Steer)

- Alan welcomed new people who joined us and thanking everyone for attending. Last AGM was Dec 2015 in London, struggling with investors/financial support – they didn't understand the concept.
- There's a real sense of achievement/optimism moving forward.
- Moving into the new office space was a real milestone, fantastic base/platform to work from.
- Two of our long-term goals - training/data collection - coming to fruition.
- Need to look forward into the future, can't ignore Brexit although we're not a political charity but it will influence some of our decisions.
- Have gained trust and ... Need to gain respect from the industry level.
- Bringing industry/science together is something we should consider as a future role for FitF.
- Thanked Ex-com team, trustees and JM.

Director's Report (Jim Masters)

- Jim presented a list of our trustees.
- Jim flagged who we have been working with closely and mentioned that there are other people in addition to the ones on the list.
- There's been lots of dialogue, teething problems that you expect with a small company.
- 2016 summary, Jim showed a list of work strands that are being completed this year and a list of projects being started. Funding success has transformed the outlook for the charity.

Data Collection Protocol Guidelines (Steve Mackinson - CEFAS)

- Fisherman have been involved in collecting data but often it's not been used correctly or is undervalued.
- Guidelines for Industry-Science Data Collection act as general guidelines and a focused tool to develop the process for specific case studies.
- Road-tested on real case-study fisheries with great success (monkfish, Brown Crab, skate & seabass)
- Guidelines too is being finalised at present and being packaged in to a user-friendly format
- It was noted that training in the use of the tool may be part of the next phase of operationalising the guidelines.

The Business of Fishing: Training Programmes (Alexa Dayton)

- Taken 6 years to pull together a training session for the UK fishing industry.
- Training is a professionalization of the industry.
- Training pilots will be delivered in Scotland (June) and England (January 2018)
- Infusing energy into the charity - collaborative projects involving key industry representatives, fishery scientists and managers.

Inspiring Stories – The Year Ahead

Orkney Sustainable Fisheries (Sean Dennison – Vice Chair, FitF)

- Orkney Sustainable Fisheries (OSF) set up in 2006 to take over the running of the successful Orkney Lobster Hatchery which was initially set up to help sustain a lobster fishery around Orkney by pioneering local fishermen and merchants.
- OSF is Industry led with Fishermen, Shellfish merchants and the main shellfish processor on the Board – SD holds role on this Board.
- It now takes on various other different roles as the marine environment in Orkney continues to evolve.
- Some of the projects involving Fishermen and Scientists working together through the OSF are:
 - Crab tagging of white shelled crab to monitor their movements and migrations.
 - Observer trips on local fishing boats to collect biological data on the crab stock from the gear hauled in different areas.
 - Study into the reproductive maturity of the Brown crab, Velvet Crab, and Lobster which has been very helpful for the Fishermen of Orkney to make their own judgements on the legal landing sizes of the shellfish that are caught.
 - Breeding-maturity size was much larger than the legal landing size. This was a realisation for the fishermen of Orkney, that for decades we have had the fishing effort and capability to probably over harvest a stock.
 - Initiated a consultation led by Orkney Fisherman's Association for the increase of the legal landing sizes, which was won on a majority vote from Fishermen in Orkney. This then led on to the increased implementation of the legal landing sizes earlier this year for Orkney.
- OSF is gaining small amounts of momentum as time goes on.
- Potential for more projects to be carried out through OSF in the future, showing how fishermen, scientists and Regulatory Bodies can work together to provide a sustainable fishery for generations to come.

[Steve Mackinson – Acoustic Herring Survey](#)

- [Short film of the survey process](#)

Fresh from the Boat (Chantelle and Peter Williams)

- Set out to sell local sustainable fish to local people for a fair price.
- started a not for profit Community Fish Box (whole fish not filleted) in 2014 and taught the community about the fishing industry/fish/how to handle fish.
- They held free community events to help the community and fishermen to work together to learn the importance of sustainable fish.
- They have two websites:
 - [My Community Fish Box](#)
 - [Fresh from The Boat](#)
- Have received a lot of support from the local community who believed in them and their company.
- Made an award-winning film about working in the fishing industry as a family.
- 2016 they won Family Business of the Year in their area.

- 80% of their fish is sold locally and they have been nominated as Independent Fish retailer of the Year.
- Expressed the difficulties local fisherman have had here and how they have clubbed together to share equipment and practises.

White Coats and Fishing Boats (Mike Cohen - Holderness Fishing Industry Group Data Collection Programme)

- Linking science and fishing.
- They are based in Bridlington Harbour, off the East Yorkshire coast.
- Fishermen need data on their stocks: where are they breeding, are they breeding, the impact we are having on their environment and how they could go about it.
- Bought their own research boat which they have used for stock assessment since 2013.
- Work the same way fishermen work: measuring and returning the catch to gather data.
- They measure what is caught, not what is landed. They work with various Universities.
- Yorkshire Marine Research Centre is being built on shore above the existing fish quay with a lobster hatchery and wet lab to help understand the effects of wind farms, disease, parasites, basically anything that they can't look at out at sea.
- The research agenda is driven by fishermen in collaboration with scientists.
- Funded by their commercial business, it's a struggle to fund the research and outlined the financial difficulties.

FSP50, Industry Data and Beyond (Stephen Mangi, CEFAS)

- Fishing 4 data is a group of interested people looking at how data from the industry can be fed in and the impact of it on the industry.
- They identified areas where data was needed
- Survey findings showed that fishermen could assist with collection of some data types and with general environment information.
- Greatest concerns of fishermen is that data would be used against them and the diversion of activity from fishing to monitoring.
- There seems to be a move of trust between the two groups but there is some way to go.
- Critical factors for a successful industry-led data collection initiative include:
 - industry participation, trust, incentives, resource and feedback to the industry and the actions plans for each stock case study (sea bass, monkfish, skates/rays and brown crab).

Trawl Knowhow (Harriet Yates-Smith - Mindfully Wired Communications)

- Trawl Knowhow is an industry focussed tool to support fishermen, information about gear selectivity through to landing obligation requirements.
- A series of workshops will be used to help shape the online digital interface, understanding what information the industry needs from the database and how they might interrogate it.
- Focus is on towed gear (trawl), with little current emphasis on static gear.
- There was a question asked as to whether it should be called "Fishing Knowhow" rather than "Trawl Knowhow".

Setting the Charity 'Compass' – strategic planning for the charity

- HRH the Prince of Wales receives regular updates and wants to know what is going on within the industry.
- He was really encouraged to hear about the workshops, the secured funding, the fact that science and fishing industry are working together.
- He said that he would help to push things along and would like to play a role and be involved.

Communications:

- There is a need for wider engagement with fishermen themselves
- Live-streaming of events on Fishing News Live must become a standard option – for people at work. This would develop a lot more interchange between people.
- The events need to be the right ones – making sure the content is appropriate for broadcast.
- There need to be more promotional materials developed to help spread the work of the charity and the people involved. It's time to update the charity website and the comms associated with this.
- A bigger general emphasis on communications and engagement is needed across the board.
- Fishermen representatives are paid for and selected by the fishing industry so that fishermen can focus on fishing. Getting actual fishermen to engage in a process is very hard to achieve.
- We can reach fishermen who are already committed and engaged, less easy to reach other fishermen who are not so interested
- **ACTION:** Plymouth University has offered to host an event for the charity free of charge – this offer to be explored further by the team.
- **ACTION:** Work up the ideas, content and funding for a large symposium for the fishing industry within the next 18 months

New project ideas

- FitF should stick to what it's good at and sticking to the core issues. Don't dilute the message/work.
- Profiling is important, engaging the fishermen. Use social media to interact with people in the area and the community, it doesn't have to be expensive. Have a blog. It will bring more funding and interest. Use it as a platform to promote the positivity within the industry to engage with the fishermen.
- How to reach people that aren't 'following' FitF. More stories need sharing.
- Publicise when we've done something not just saying what we are going to do.
- Promote what FitF has done rather than telling other people's stories.
- We could do a short video to show a timeline from the start to now.
- Make the most of the new office location and attendant networks as part of a 'blue hub'.
- Trial different methods on fishing boats to gather data.
- Emphasise the need for collaboration. Fisherman quite often don't work with each other and need to more and more. FitF should maintain its role – deliver the training courses.
- We need to be mindful about "what's in it for me" – there's got to be some outcomes that are more direct and rewarding in the short term as well.
- FitF is a collaborative engine that can provide project management, attract funding and enable project delivery.
- How can we connect with US, EU and UK fisheries?

Appendix:

Presentations:

- Chairman's Address
- Executive Director's Address
- Training Programme update
- Data collection guidelines
- Trawl Know How
- Fresh from the Boat
- White coats and fishing boats
- FSP50
- Acoustic Herring Survey
- Orkney Sustainable Fisheries project