

South West Aquaculture Network

19th February 2020

The Pengelly Room, Kingston Maurward College, near Dorchester DT2 8PY

1) Present:

Freddie Amos	Dorset Council
Rhodri Baines	Cefas
Esther Baker	Kingston Maurward College
Lisa Bickley	University of Exeter
Tom Birbeck	ARC Marine
Kevin Brooks	Brooks Kebbey/Dorset LEP
Ross Brown	University of Plymouth
Kevin Forshaw	University of Plymouth/MUKSW (Chair)
Joanna Rufus	Dorset Council
Louise Smith	Cefas
Martin Sutcliffe	Dorset Coast Forum
Oliver Symons	Kingston Maurward College
Hugh Wiltshire	Jurassic Sea Farms
Via Skype:	
Lee Cocker	Seafish
Huw Thomas	Offshore Shellfish

2) Apologies:

Rob Milton	Othniel Oysters
Gary Wordsworth	Othniel Oysters
Adam Parnell	Torbay Council
Sheldon Ryan	Maritime UK South West
Carly Daniels	University of Exeter
Nicola Rogers	University of Exeter
Luke Rake	Kingston Maurward College
Martin Syvret	AquaFish Solutions
Rhiannon Jones	Dorset Coast Forum
Christophe Harwood	Simply Blue Energy
Dan Merrifield	University of Plymouth
Hans Hoff	Houghton Springs Fish Farm
Richard Prickett	Dorset Cleaner Fish/Jurassic Sea Farms

3) **Welcome** by Oliver Symons, Deputy Principal Learning & Performance, Kingston Maurward College

4) **Why we are here – Kevin Forshaw, MUKSW and University of Plymouth**

- Raise profile and promote aquaculture sector in South West.
- 56% fish to be farmed by 2030.
- Effective networking/research support group to relay a strong message to the policy makers.
- Boost production in smarter Tech Push/Market Pull of triple helix – industry/research/policy makers.
- Take the lead on R&D funding for this sector and demand for infrastructure to lead growth.
- Global applicability within the South West and how this sector complements others e.g. offshore renewables and marine autonomy.

5) **Maritime UK South West update – Kevin Forshaw**

- South Coast Marine Cluster is now Maritime UK South West, launched 31 January 2020 attended by 120 people representing the marine/maritime sector, coastline Cornwall to Dorset. Merger of Cornwall Marine Network with their existing membership. Will also have a separate launch event at Poole Maritime Week, Business Days 1-4 June 2020.
- Complementary strengths to open up the industry. A huge diverse sector therefore there are difficulties in giving a voice to the sector in the South West.
- Maritime 2050 strategy, maritime focused. Need to highlight the South West's strengths in marine tech and science.
- Defra 25 year plan to be incorporated in new Agriculture Bill, Environment Bill, Fisheries Bill. Further adaptation of One Health agenda.
- National Food Strategy – Henry Dimbleby – alternative protein sources.
- There is no ministry for oceans, instead the challenge is working with several government departments responsible – DfT, BEIS, MoD, Defra.
- International ocean strategy being led by Foreign & Commonwealth Office.
- UN 2021 – Decade of Ocean Science, an attempt to measure ocean health and climate change. Difficulty to achieve a measure however the South West has much to offer in terms of research.
- Aquaculture can offer many other systems, benefits are not talked about enough. Need to generate evidence.
- Marine spatial planning needs to be addressed.
- A big challenge however presenting an opportunity for the SW region to take forward 4:
 - i) Offshore renewables
 - ii) Marine advanced engineering
 - iii) Aquaculture

6) GREAT South West Prospectus – Kevin Forshaw

Action: JR to circulate link.

AQUACULTURE (extract from GSW prospectus)

Aquaculture is projected to be the prime source of seafood by 2030, creating a global market in excess of £200 billion. The UK domestic aquaculture industry is the eighth largest producer of fin fish from marine and coastal aquaculture in the world, and worth an estimated £1.4 billion a year currently.

For the Great South West, aquaculture provides opportunities to diversify farming and improve the livelihoods derived from inshore fishing in sheltered waters around the coast. Growth opportunities also exist in supply chain by developing and deploying a diverse range of technologies (sensors, automation and engineering) for life support (nutritional feed, health and welfare), farming and processing fish for sale.

Research and training centres at Bournemouth, Exeter and Plymouth Universities, Kingston Maurward and Bridgwater and Taunton Colleges, and the presence of CEFAS at Weymouth, provide key capacity. To support the growth of this sector, we need to ensure strong links to the work on sea bed mapping and other environmental data.

- Both Kevin Forshaw and Sheldon Ryan contributed to the document.
- £45m boost to the economy and looking to create 190,000 new jobs.
- Highlighted marine sector – offshore renewables, marine autonomy, cyber, smart ports and aquaculture.
- Important prospectus which requires overall support and representation from the 3 LEPs – Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, Heart of the South West and Dorset plus political champions.
- SWAN fits the exact footprint of GSW.
- To enlist Government sector support which is currently given to Northern Powerhouse and Midland Engine. South West divided into GSW and Western Gateway.

7) GSW MPs

- We must feed in our asks to reach potential. Lobby our own GSW MPs.
- George Eustace, MP for Hayle, Cornwall and newly appointed Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. He is closely linked to Shellfish Association of Great Britain, should be included in this conversation.
- All Party Parliamentary Group on Fisheries (APPG Fisheries) – ask the question why they do not cover aquaculture and blue economy in the wider sense within their remit. Is there another parliamentary group which covers this already?

Action: Martin Sutcliffe to follow up.

MS attended APPG 25th February 2020. MS will investigate further as to existence of different APPG for aquaculture.

- Chris Loder, MP for West Dorset successful in ballot for private members' bill. Have heard mention it could be based on environment.
- Anthony Mangnall, MP for Totnes has been in contact with Adam Parnell as regards constituency surgeries and shown interest in local fisheries.

Action: Adam Parnell to follow up fisheries/aquaculture with Anthony Mangnall MP.

- Kevin Brooks stated that Dorset MPs had not been invited to Dorset's OH Aquaculture Expo on 4th March and therefore perhaps a missed opportunity although Hugh Wiltshire mentioned correspondence with Richard Drax MP (South Dorset) re Portland Harbour.
- Proposal discussed to host a dinner for all GSW MPs, could be held at Kingston Maurward House to promote SWAN and its aims, challenges and targets. Present our Positioning Paper. Invite Henry Dimbleby to present. Present joined up thinking aquaculture/offshore renewables.

8) SWAN Draft Strategy – Rhodri Baines, Cefas

Presentation attached.

- Positioning paper (**attached**) discussed - current context, why the South West.
- Aligned to Maritime UK South West.

Action: All – comments to be received by RB by cop 11th March 2020.

Comments to date:

- Barriers to growth and how to address.
- Regulatory barriers.
- Road map and action plan.
- Multi use of marine space: water quality in which to undertake aquaculture is a barrier. Should be outside the regulation and bureaucratic processes.
- 60% Dorset coast protected.
- Keep brief to have impact.
- Commonality of marine space with evidence base.
- Science case: knowledge gaps.
- Address the message to?
- Assistance required? E.g. Centre of Excellence.
- Who to talk to? E.g. Ben Bradshaw much environmental experience and based in Exeter.
- Skills and facilities development.
- Discussion – Strength in Places Fund and Strategic Priorities Fund.
- Aquaculture Park or a virtual campus? Join up facilities and research units/institutions along our coastline to incorporate our strongest offer and feature their own specialities. Ensure that these facilities are suitable for what they are being proposed for e.g. water quality of the necessary requirements for hatchery or research other than that which Scymaris is currently using the labs.

- Discussion of our existing marine sector focused facilities:

SeafLife Laboratory, Weymouth – currently vacant

Brixham Laboratory, presented by AstraZeneca with some proscribed uses.

Virtual campus?

Action: Martin Sutcliffe to share research from East Devon & Dorset FLAG

- Appears to be a step change in the funding process.
- MFF – 100% funding in small measure.
- Links within Local Industrial Strategies of 3 LEPs and BEIS to be promoted for strategic investment/grant funding. Subsidies for public goods will change priorities.
- Lee Cocker added that Seafish is very encouraged by what is happening to aquaculture in the South West. There are important stakeholders and initiatives based in the South West eg SWEEP and Cefas's aquaculture mapping and crucially there seems to be a growing local/regional political will to see aquaculture increase. Keen to see these flourish and for Seafish to explore ways to be able to support SW aquaculture activities/work elements in their own right, but ones which could feed into national initiatives such as English aquaculture Leadership Group (under Seafood 2040) and/or be able to be replicated across other parts of England and rest of the UK.

9) Seafood Innovation Fund, Policy and Funding update – Rhodri Baines

Presentation attached.

- Seafood Innovation Fund
 - £10m. UK panel. Encourage collaboration. Strategic evidence base.
 - No regional quote. Merit alone. Open to all.
 - IP to be retained by supplier.
 - £4m to be added 2021 and 2022.
 - Disruptive partnerships and encourage cross sector relationships.
- Quality of idea and how it is presented: encourage universities to lend their expertise in presentation skills.
- EMFF closed in UK.
- MFF basically a cut and paste grant, £15m to commit in England.
- Industry is stifled and restricted at present but once the regulatory and policy barriers are overcome funding could flow.
- EEN SW – Columbia Trade Mission – Tilapia – circulated to SWAN under separate email.

Other Funding sources:

- SAIC Fund – collaborative R&D projects covering main topics:
 - Environment and Health eg sea lice
 - Unlocking additional capability in Smart Aquaculture.
 - Scottish Partnership – seeking industry partners, call closed EOI 12 March 2020.

- Horizon 2020 – clean and efficient energy closing 21 April 2020.
- TAPAS (Tools for Assessment & Planning of Aquaculture Sustainability), Stirling – analysis and regulatory process, final meeting March 2020 in Brussels.
- Innovate UK – Transferring food production – further funding rounds 2020.
- Canadian Aquaculture - Innovate UK and High Commission of Canada visit w/c 2nd March 2020, applications closed.
- Lloyds Foundation – charitable arm and fund for R&D e.g. seaweed
- Government Bills – keep a watching brief to forthcoming amendments.
- Strength in Places Fund – highly competitive, cluster approach, a regional lead at University of Exeter.
- SF2040 recently received EMFF funding to research and identify issues and challenges facing England's seafood industry in skills, training, recruitment and retention. **Please see attached invitation to respond.**

10) Kingston Maurward College Aquaculture Course, Autumn 2020 – Oliver Symons

Presentation attached.

- KMC not an HE college but is still seeking a progressive route to address a sector need and skills gap.
- Increase the labour pool and create a workforce.
- Dorset Horizon 2038 - agri-tech and aquaculture a key sector of Dorset's economy.
- Clear progression into HE and university courses.
- Looking to short/medium term success.
- Full time curriculum – 540 hours per year with a recognised qualification.
- Work experience and engagement with industry.
- There is no qualification for aquaculture therefore including it in a technical qualification Level 3 giving the fisheries option.
- KMC specialises in offering a holistic education around the subject matter to include:
 - Skills – knowledge – behaviours
 - Work ethic
 - Business section
 - Research skills
- Valid cohort of students for Autumn 2020 would be 5/6. Some existing aquaculture sector employees e.g. Dorset Cleaner Fish keen to gain a recognised qualification.

11) Dorset Coast Forum Draft Strategy – Martin Sutcliffe

Presentation attached.

12) OH Aquaculture Expo, 4th March 2020

Kevin Brooks confirmed the programme should be finalised by Monday 24th February.

13) AOB

- Department for International Trade Marine Plan does not refer to aquaculture.

- Terms of Reference -To be developed and used as a focus for the group and wider information e.g. GREAT SW.

Action: Martin Sutcliffe, Kevin Forshaw, Sheldon Ryan, Rhodri Baines

- Policy and framework are important issues and must be addressed by this group.
- Develop a plan to engage industry more widely.
- Huw Thomas – there is much talk of how we grow English aquaculture but there is a spectacular lack of progress. Offshore Shellfish would welcome SWAN pulling the strands together and delivering a tangible facilitation to enable aquaculture in the South West to grow and to consider fishery enhancement as a link between farming and fisheries.
- Devon and Cornwall Councils – find an ability to bring them on board with Dorset’s progress as an illustration.
- MMO are presenting a roadshow for MFF – 10th March 2020, Poole Harbour Commissioners
- Occupational Route Maps – under review at KMC. No standards for aquaculture at present. March meetings to discuss with both Bicton College and Sparsholt College.
- There is a South Wales Aquaculture Network.
- Hugh Wiltshire stated he had received no satisfactory reply re AgriTech Innovation Grant.
- Transforming Food Production – grants will include aquaculture.
- Volunteers sought for Chair and Secretariat, to volunteer on an annual review:

Chair: Martin Sutcliffe, Aquaculture and Fisheries Development Officer, Dorset Coast Forum

Secretariat: Joanna Rufus, Economic Growth & Regeneration Team, Dorset Council

14) Next Meeting: TBA

Suggested during Marine Tech Week, Plymouth, 1-2 July 2020