

South West Aquaculture Network (SWAN)

21st July 2020

Zoom Virtual Meeting c/o Dorset Coast Forum

1) Present:

Martin Sutcliffe	Dorset Coast Forum, SWAN Chair
Joanna Rufus	Dorset Council
Kevin Brooks	Brooks Kebbey/Dorset LEP/SetSquared
Oliver Symmons	Kingston Maurward College
Benjamin Ciotti	University of Plymouth
Connor Conneely	Torbay Development Agency
Emma Greenwood	Dorset Bio Solutions
Helen Sweeney	Innovate UK, Horizon 2020 National Contact Point Sustainable Agriculture and the Bioeconomy
Huw Thomas	Cornish Shellfish
Jayne Codling	EEN/Business West
Kimberley Cullen	Seafish
Lawrence Brown	DIT HQ AgriTech
Tim Messeder	KTN
Martin Syvret	Aqua Fish Solutions
Nicola Rogers	University of Exeter
Oliver Robinson	British Trout
Pete Adams	Super Nature Human
Peter Miller	Plymouth Marine Laboratory
Rhiannon Jones	Dorset Coast Forum
Rhodri Baines	Cefas
CLlr Rob Smith	Lyme Regis Town Council
Ross Brown	University of Exeter
Sarah Clark	Devon & Severn IFCA
Sheldon Ryan	Maritime UK South West
Tim Huntington	Consult Poseidon

2) Apologies:

Gary Wordsworth	Othniel Oysters
Chris Lyons	Innovate UK
Lee Cocker	Seafish
Richard Prickett	Jurassic Sea Farms
Caroline Chambers	Gobe Consultants
Angela Mead	Biome Algae
Lucy Mather	KTN

1. Welcome, housekeeping and apologies, Last meeting's minutes

Martin Sutcliffe, Dorset Coast Forum martin.sutcliffe@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Welcome by Martin Sutcliffe, Chair, SWAN and many thanks to Dorset Coast Forum for the use of their Zoom account for holding this meeting.

Actions from previous meeting:

a) MUK SW Aquaculture Position

This has been signed off by the Maritime UK South West Board. The paper was developed in discussion with the network via surveys and consultations. It provides the first 'mission statement' for the network. We will look to start developing additional material that will provide opportunities to deep dive into specific areas that the network covers. The aim of this paper was to find a middle ground for our diverse range of members and concisely explain the context to non-aquaculture stakeholders to demonstrate SWAN's intent to engage in a proactive, solutions-based approach to the current hurdles facing the sector.

b) **Jo Rufus to circulate the link to the Great South West Prospectus** – sent via e-mail Feb 2020.

c) **Adam Parnell to follow up with local MP re fisheries and aquaculture** – MS to contact.

d) **Martin Sutcliffe to ask question at All Parliamentary Party Group (APPG) on Fisheries if aquaculture is in their remit.** MS asked this question at APPG in March. He was advised that APPG focuses on wild capture sector and there was an existing Aquaculture focused Group. Despite research, no trace of the Group can be found.

e) **Martin Sutcliffe to share Dorset AONB report on Seafood Supply Chain.** Sent to Network via e-mail Feb 2020.

1. SWAN Terms of Reference and Positioning Paper

Martin Sutcliffe, Chair

Terms of Reference

A draft is now ready to be shared with the Maritime UK SW Board for feedback. This will then be shared to the wider network for feedback before being finalised.

SWAN first meeting held to discuss the possibility of forming the group 5 September 2019, therefore still within first year of activity.

SWAN membership currently 89, predominantly covering the South West region but some members spread across the UK.

Membership made up from academia, research and development, regulatory, public sector (LEPs, Local Government, Department for International Trade), industry, marine and maritime.

Great South West (GSW) supporting Local Enterprise Partnerships – Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, Heart of the South West, Dorset.

2. Maritime UK South West Update

Sheldon Ryan, Maritime UK South West (MUKSW) Coordinator sheldon.ryan@maritimeuksw.org

Sheldon stated his pleasure in seeing SWAN develop. It was evident from previous work with South Coast Marine Cluster that there was a gap to filled by such a network.

MUKSW board gave a very positive response in June 2020 to the SWAN positioning paper.

Background to formation of Maritime UK that several years ago there was no effective organisation for the ocean economy and therefore a complete lack of economic evidence. There appeared to be no collaboration between regions. The Department for International Trade (then UKTI) made funding available to support the growth of regional clusters to demonstrate their strengths. From that the South Coast Marine Cluster was formed which stretched from Isles of Scilly to Portsmouth. A cluster supported by the Local Enterprise Partnerships but also supported by the universities and centres of excellence.

Its focus is to promote the maritime sector to both government and inward investors with key economic drivers while showcasing the assets.

Three main areas of work:

- Offshore renewables
- Autonomy and geospatial data
- Ocean technology (which is the least well developed and into which SWAN is a natural fit)

MUKSW board represented by the three Great South West (GSW) LEPs (Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, Heart of the South West and Dorset), business, R&D partners creating a forum to collaborate.

Current projects:

- £30m Strength in Places Fund bid – offshore renewable energy
- DIT High Potential Opportunity – Autonomy and Geospatial data
- Smart Sound, Plymouth
- MUKSW web site and video – SWAN to be included
- Great South West proposition – maritime key opportunities

New projects

- Encourage SWAN to generate new projects which will benefit from the sub sector collaboration. Are there any “oven-ready” projects at present which could benefit from Government funding? Forum to generate new projects and formulate response to the different funding calls.
- Funding examples: Horizon 2020 – clean growth call. Analyse our assets to create a bid e.g. offshore installations and sustainable aquaculture.
- Create a Department for Transport/Business Energy Infrastructure and Skills proposal to take to the national level.

3. Seafood 2040 Project update

Kimberly Cullen, Project Manager, Seafish Kimberly.Cullen@seafish.co.uk

This project is for England only. Relying heavily upon support of Seafish and Defra.

Aquaculture Leadership Group (ALG)

Establishment of ALG February 2019.

Vision and action plan to cover the entire supply chain taking account of pan UK (plus devolved administrations) and national strategies to enable seafood to play a much larger and important role.

In 2015 a leadership group formed of key England and government stakeholders, led by George Eustice. By 2018 Seafish had agreed to move forward with a year's funding in place. Marine Management Organisation (MMO) extended this to February 2021. It is SF2040's intention to seek funding to continue the project beyond February 2021, once a suitable scheme becomes available.

The vision:

6 strategic priorities with 3 channels of significant growth.

- Marketing recommendations
- Aquaculture recommendations
- Export recommendations
- Import recommendations
- Fisheries management plans in place.
- Training groups.

Particular reference to RECOMMENDATION 13 & 14

The current document is therefore different to that printed in 2017 as 13 & 14 have been altered to make them fit for purpose.

Map aquaculture development zones (Cefas and East Devon & Dorset FLAF involvement)

Refresh all 25 as the landscape could be substantially damaged by Brexit, Covid-19 etc.

Recommendation 14

Focuses on the relationship government/industry. The complex nature needs to be recognised and Defra has taken a lead on this.

Not a Seafish programme and a report must be made on progress via the minister and Defra. Benefits from direct ministerial contact.

Two committees to be set up to assist with the recommendations Seafood Industry Leadership Group (SILG) and wild capture fishing representation.

ALG is responsible for the progress on 13 & 14 for achievements to date and promotion of the vision.

Achieved some recommendations:

2 x EMFF grants (one received)

6 research recommendations now summarised.

Gain results for the 2 recommended portions of fish per week. This is important as dietary research has already shown improvements in health and an annual saving of £1bn. This is an important message and the must be publicised.

288 companies surveyed.

Impact of Brexit and Covid-19.

Specific funding for aquaculture in skills and training.

Keen to see apprenticeships progress.

Future plans – consult with SWAN, apply for funding, make use of all 25 recommendations.

ALG is engaged and productive. It must tackle the national English aquaculture strategy, make recommendations and enlist collaboration.

Jayne Codling, Europe Enterprise Network spoke about funding opportunities. Jayne uses the SWAN membership to post opportunities from EEN, Horizon 2020 and Innovate UK.

Identify and look at the funding opportunities e.g. environmental, climate change and link collaborative teams to take up the opportunity.

4. English Aquaculture Strategy

Tim Huntingdon, Director, Poseidon Consulting tim@consult-poseidon.com

Tim thanked SWAN for the opportunity to discuss the piece of work.

Primary recommendation is to develop a strategy for the next 10 years.

Production has declined, Cefas reports Trout at 60% and Mussels 20% of our aquaculture harvest giving 8,000 tonnes per annum.

Sustainable aquaculture will provide employment in deprived, rural areas, there is the potential to expand and diversify the sector substantially.

Why has it not flourished?

There appear to be issues with co-existence and limited government support. A “watershed moment” has arrived and with emerging technology this can drive and encourage major change, but it will require courage and ambition with government commitment.

The growth aspirations must give shape to the strategy and where the sector wishes to be in 2040.

A delivery plan to implement the policy of 2 x portions of seafood per week and the beneficial impact to climate change/environment.

Strong political mandate from Defra and MMO who take the lead in the understanding of English aquaculture. Implement integration into the Blue Economy and the greater maritime co-existence.

Strategic actions required by utilising the cross-cutting elements:

Defra on regulation – aquaculture planning – lack of formal training – co-existence with blue economy.

Incorporate a strong regional approach – mapping and local stakeholders.

Two strands

R&D – prioritise needs from ideas leading to mechanisms for progress.

Finance – always a challenge to structure to lead for adoption. Available channels eg Innovate UK

Landscape – readily reactive.

Comment – Rhiannon Jones, Dorset Coast Forum

Drew attention to the importance of regional aquaculture mapping and spatial planning. It is not sufficient at present to assist with greater expansion of the sector.

Comment – Martin Sutcliffe

Marine plans from the MMO are too large scale for detailed aquaculture spatial planning at present.

5. OH20 Aquaculture Expo review and funding update

Kevin Brooks, Brooks Kebbey, SetSquared, Dorset LEP kev.brooks@setsquared.co.uk

Kevin cast back to pre-Covid-19 pandemic with a review of the One Health 2020 Aquaculture Expo held at Kingston Maurward College on 4th March 2020.

100 attendance with 50 businesses, keynote speakers from Cefas and Department for International Trade. Very good feedback received for the event.

Kevin highlighted the Kingston Maurward College activity surrounding preparation of an aquaculture course and interaction with industry and the opportunities provoked.

A follow up One Health 3 being prepared with a focus on practical support for the sector emerging from the pandemic.

Innovate UK funding opportunities – 2 live opportunities at present through the Sustainable Innovation Fund. Broad ranging support to industry to assist recovery

- a) Grant £175,000 each, match funded
- b) Small business research initiative, phased

Nuanced for primary producers, very much connected with NetZero, green, clean growth approach.

Agri-Catalyst - aquaculture courted.

Sustainable Innovation Fund

Another round planned. Will be open to the impact of Covid-19. Small amount £££s, £50k against project/exploitation plan. Should be available to aquaculture projects.

NEW INNOVATION NOT INCREMENTAL.

Energy efficiency grants, some will be relevant to aquaculture.

Comment: Martin Sutcliffe commented on problems which had arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic, however with funding opportunities on stream opportunities will be given for development and growth.

Action: JR to circulate formal links.

6. An Apprenticeship Pathway for Aquaculture

Oliver Symons, Deputy Principal Learning & Performance, Kingston Maurward College

Oliver.Symons@kmc.ac.uk

Responsible for programmes and training. An opportunity presented to create an apprenticeship for sustainable aquaculture.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the Kingston Maurward College full time course in aquaculture has been delayed for one academic year to September 2021.

At present there is a gap. There is no provision on the Occupational Route Maps provided to colleges and further education providers and only when the proposed occupation is contained on the Route Map can work on submitting an apprenticeship begin. Proposal to be held within Agriculture, Environment and Animal Care.

Required consultation and development of the occupational apprenticeship made to LandEx to prove that aquaculture is a recognised occupation/profession.

Take the discussion surrounding aquaculture and develop a standard. Wild fisheries to be included as well to be complementary.

Apprenticeships are virtually all linked to end occupation with an end of point assessment and are employer led.

Key stages in the development of an apprenticeship:

These are led by an employer group – “Trail Blazer Group” of usually about 10 employers and this group drives the standard.

Scottish apprenticeships do exist however the nature of the industry particularly in the South West would endeavour to produce our own standards.

Key duties: to be interested in working with employers together with working the principles of the standards.

2 x Workshops must be held to work out the skills and behaviours required, and these inform the training plan and delivery model.

Knowledge – Skills – Behaviours

Agree an Assessment Plan and the end of point assessment (usually an interview). End point assessors are LANTRA.

Therefore, looking to start September 2021, requirements – Employer Group in place with an appointed chair and the first workshop needs to be organised and held. Dorset and the South West to lead this phase and that leads into the national framework.

Trail Blazer Group must be industry led, with no more than 12 representatives to work affectively and can be enhanced with different, complimentary sectoral representation.

Oliver stated that Humberside had shown interest already in setting up a Trailer Blazer Group.

Action: Any organisation or SWAN member who wish to volunteer for the Trail Blazer group, please contact Martin Sutcliffe before Friday 14 August 2020.

7. Freshwater Aquaculture Sector Crossover

Oliver Robinson, British Trout Association oliver.robinson@britishtrout.co.uk

Represents the freshwater aquaculture sector which does have membership across the South West of England.

Collection of data always important to demonstrate the strength of the existing sector

- 17,000 tonnes trout for sale in restaurants, retail chains
- 3,500 tonnes restocking which is high value
- Demand now for larger trout 3kg has replaced the portion requirement. This offers restaurants and customers more versatility.

Land based sites are limited.

Industry focus

- Ingredients in food and vision on continuous improvement for health benefits.
- Minimal antibiotics – successful reduction in breeding and grow-on.
- Successful and leading advance in breed genetics eg Hans Hoff, Houghton Springs Fish Farm, Dorset.
- Leaders in best practise.
- Large contribution to food security.

British Trout Association vision:

- Grow the industry
- Produce economies of scale
- Key partner Seafood 2040
- Report back to Defra minister

Challenges faced:

- Water extraction
- Retailers demands are very strict with robust systems in place and audits to complete.
- Competition from imported products
- Legislation and recovery
- Skills and training – fish farming is a husbandry business
- Retain high standards
- In the immediate future, licences are difficult to obtain from the Environment Agency and Defra – a “One Stop Shop” to regulatory approval would benefit the industry enormously.
- Market price at present does not support Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems (RAS)
- Marine farming is met with fierce opposition.

Immediate future:

- Trout as a food ingredient has made a “comeback” especially with the production of larger fish.
- RAS is the way forward but requires support.

8. Any other business and next meeting

- a) Martin Sutcliffe stated the Dorset Coast Forum Marine Aquaculture Strategy will be published and available within the next 2 weeks. All content completed and currently with designers.
- b) Next SWAN meeting likely to be October 2020 and held online.