

# Cross-Party Group on Fisheries and Coastal Communities

2 October 2024, 18:30-20:00

Minute

Present

MSPs

Karen Adam MSP - Convener

Audrey Nicoll MSP

Finlay Carson MSP

Tim Eagle MSP

Jamie Greene MSP

Ariane Burgess MSP

Gillian Martin MSP, Acting Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy

Non-MSP Group Members

Archippus Sturrock, Scottish Parliament (Office of Karen Adam MSP)

Kat Troake, Scottish Government

Rebecca Hackett, Scottish Government

Lewis Hurley, Scottish Government

John Mouat, Scottish Government

Conor Nangle, Scottish Government

Lee Robb, CPG Secretariat, 3x1 Group

Charlotte Cochrane, Simply Blue Group

Jack Norquoy, Scottish Renewables

Cameron Moffat, Ørsted

Mark Shotter, Loch Long Salmon

Elsbeth Macdonald, Scottish Fishermen's Federation

Elaine Whyte, Communities Inshore Fisheries Alliance

Rebecca Millar, National Trust for Scotland

David Stevenson, BlueFloat

Charles Millar, Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust

Eleanor Adamson, Fishmongers' Company

Prof. Mitchell Lennan, University of Aberdeen

Pamela Neri, Fraserburgh Harbour

Alan Munro, Fauna & Flora

Cllr. Sonya Warren, Moray Council

Simon Macdonald, Aquaculture, Fisheries and Processing Consultant

Mark Shotter, Loch Long Salmon

Cllr Ann Bell, North East Scotland Fisheries Development Partnership

Nick Underdown, Open Seas

Bally Philp, Scottish Creel Fishermen's Federation

Paula Duffy, University of Aberdeen  
Alex Watson-Crook, Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Alliance  
Mark Cummings, Invicta  
Peter Duncan, Peterhead Port Authority

## Agenda item 1 - apologies

Apologies received from Beatrice Wishart MSP, Rachael Hamilton MSP, Rea Cris, David Stevenson, Phil Taylor, and Ailsa Nicol.

## Agenda item 2 - approval of minutes from previous meeting

The CPG approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2024.

## Agenda item 3 – statement from Cabinet Secretary Gillian Martin on Marine Spatial Planning

Acting Cabinet Secretary Gillian Martin outlined the ongoing work by the Scottish Government on marine spatial planning. She emphasised the need to react to climate change and biodiversity loss, as well as the need to exploit relevant economic opportunities.

She said there was a need to ensure rural economies have a future, pointing to the correlation between healthy seas and healthy people. She stated there was a need to take the opportunities available in fisheries, as well as decarbonising energy – and that the two should coexist.

However, she noted this must be done in a way that is just, and that the National Marine Plan (NMP) is key to ensuring that is the case. She emphasised that the Scottish Government's plans for a NMP 2 will help to address climate change and biodiversity loss in a way that is sustainable for communities.

She stated that what is being done in NMP 2 will be similar to the aims of the National Planning Framework in that it will reflect the needs of different areas.

She pointed to the Scottish Government's consultation on Marine Planning Zones and encouraged members to submit their views by October 14.

The Acting Cabinet Secretary took questions from CPG members:

She confirmed that inshore marine planning areas were being developed. However, she highlighted this was a big task as there were around 180 areas.

She explained that the Scottish Government was consulting on marine planning and fisheries management plans and this was a lot of joined-up work, involving multiple government departments.

She agreed with comments that this must be developed in a way that gets it right, rather than being rushed, and confirmed that she would not impose a plan that the industry wasn't involved in the creation of.

She confirmed that NMP2 was an overarching strategy to which policies will be added; it will not dictate what policy is to be.

## Agenda item 4 – update on auxiliary work on marine spatial planning for CPG

Dr Mitchell Lennan (University of Aberdeen) explained that legal researchers at the University of Aberdeen were looking at the marine environment in the face of climate change and proposed to conduct academic research work on clarifying what the Scottish Government's legal obligations are in terms of spatial squeeze.

He explained his intention to map out how fisheries can be properly included in marine spatial planning and wanted to speak with all non-MSP members of the CPG before work begins.

He said he wouldn't begin work on this until 2025 and would speak to Eleanor Adamson (Fishmongers' Company) to arrange a research contract.

He then took questions from CPG members:

He confirmed that he would integrate into his research planning the issues discussed with the Acting Cabinet Secretary (Agenda item 3).

He said the terms of reference have not been worked out yet and this would be in collaboration with CPG members.

He confirmed that he would work into the final report the findings of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee's inquiry into Salmon Farming in Scotland – once it is published.

He emphasised there was a need for a better understanding on devolved and reserved competencies in the areas that will be explored in this research.

## Agenda item 5 – approval of non-MSP members

MSPs approved Moray Council, the University of Aberdeen, Coastal Communities Network Coordinator, Young Sea Changers Scotland, and the Scottish Wildlife Trust as non-MSP members of the CPG.

## Agenda item 6 – introduction of new secretariat

Karen Adam MSP introduced Lee Robb (3x1 Group) as the new secretariat for the CPG.

Lee Robb explained his role with 3x1 to members, as well as his background in supporting MSPs and CPGs in previous employment at the Scottish Parliament. He encouraged members to get in touch if they had any questions or ideas about the work of the CPG.

## Agenda item 7 – discussion on future work agenda and survey results

Lee Robb explained the results of the non-MSP survey conducted in the weeks before the meeting. He thanked respondents for taking the time to share their views.

Outlining the results of the survey, he explained:

- Members wanted the CPG to enable them to communicate with MSPs, inform policymaking, enhance the understanding of marine / fisheries issues, and provide updates on areas of research
- Most people preferred to attend a CPG meeting in Parliament, with there being a 50:50 split between those who considered an in-person meeting and attending online being the most feasible way to attend
- A third of respondents said it would take too long or cost too much to get to Parliament to attend a meeting in person
- Most respondents said it was easy to be an active participant of the CPG, however Lee Robb confirmed he would reach out to individuals who indicated there were challenges
- Issues that the majority of respondents felt the CPG should be focused on were: regulations in the fishing industry; communities impacted by industry; fishing; the environment; planning issues; government relations; and wild fish stock
- Other areas included: social, economic, and environmental impact of marine management
- Areas respondents would like to see the CPG working on included: Marine Protected Areas; inshore fisheries management; labour and skills in offshore development; marine planning; and how Scotland lives up to its legal and policy commitments
- Other suggestions included: inviting speakers from outside of Scotland to discuss successful management measures with the CPG; the need for inshore planning plans.

Karent Adam MSP emphasised there was not enough time to work on all of these issues. However, she said there would be on-going communication and that members could get in touch with the secretariat.

## Agenda item 8 – Scottish Government consultation on Offshore Marine Conservation Measures

Karen Adam MSP encouraged CPG members to respond to the Scottish Government's consultation on Offshore Marine Conservation by October 14.

## Agenda item 9 – impact of coastal erosion on coastal communities

Karen Adam MSP set out an issue facing coastal communities on the deterioration of sea walls and who is responsible for their upkeep and repair. She led an open conversation on the issue, inviting CPG members to share their views.

She highlighted Cruden Bay was badly damaged, and it was suggested there may be a role for community benefit funding in repairing infrastructure such as this.

Questions were raised around the role of the CPG in addressing issues such as this, a view which Finlay Carson MSP indicated he shared – stating that other CPGs look more specifically at issues which might relate to coastal erosion.

Karen Adam MSP said it would be possible for multiple work streams to take place on behalf of the CPG and that this doesn't necessarily distract from fisheries issues. She emphasised it was important for coastal communities to feel connected to the fishing industry.

Audrey Nicol MSP indicated she was keen for there to be a broader approach continued by the CPG which considers coastal communities.

There was a general discussion on the role of the CPG, which Karen Adam MSP and the secretariat will take into consideration for future meeting agendas.

## Agenda item 10 – any other business

There was a request for there to be a presentation on the Inshore Fisheries Group and the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities to explain their role.

Karen Adam MSP confirmed the secretariat would communicate with members about what key priorities highlighted on the survey should be considered first.

Jamie Greene MSP highlighted the need to consider the workforce in the fisheries industries. This includes work on understanding where they're coming from, and any issues around visas. There was a suggestion to look at the work conducted by the Maritime Academy in Glasgow.

Jamie Greene MSP also pointed out the average age of fisherman is 55 – stating this is an issue which must be addressed in terms of the future workforce of the industry.

## Agenda item 11 – date of next meeting

Karen Adam MSP confirmed the next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12 March 2025, at 18:00.

