

**TWG PLENARY MEETING – WEDNESDAY, 22 MARCH 2006
SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE, PENTLAND HOUSE, EDINBURGH**

Attending

- Scottish Executive:** David Wilson (Chairman)
Gordon Brown
Phil Gilmour
David Dunkley
Ron Stagg (FRS)
Pauline Munro (FRS)
David Hay (FRS, in place of Malcolm Beveridge)
Julie Brown (Minutes Clerk)
- Wild Fisheries:** Andrew Wallace (ASFB)
Jane Wright (RAFTS)
Ronnie Picken (SANA)
Seymour Munro (Restoration Sub Group, AST)
Gordon Macpherson (Carron AMG)
- Industry:** Sid Patten (SSPO)
John Webster (SSPO)
Julie Edgar (SSPO)
Jean Balfour (SSPO)
David Bassett (BTA)
Alex Adrian
- Others:** Andy Rosie (SEPA)
Iain Sutherland (HIE)
James Bromham (HC)
- TWG:** Anne-Marie Maciver (WI RDO)

1. **Welcome and Apologies**

Apologies were received from Simon Scott (WIFT), Alan Anderson (UKFjord), Richard Munday (WRFT), Karen Starr (WRFT), Charles Marsham (WSFT), Colin Bean (SNH), Dave Wyman, ERAD-FFA), and Malcolm Beveridge (FRS).

The Chairman opened the meeting with a few words of introduction and welcome to new members. The Group was reminded of a number of key events which had happened recently, including the introduction of the Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill consultation and the launch of the Industry Code of Practice; the celebration of 21 years of NASCO; and the advent of the new Scottish Salmon Producers Organisation (SSPO).

The Chairman also announced that the Minister had now given agreement to the Scottish Executive funding TWG for the next 2 years. Particular thanks were given to HIE for their role in funding the last 3 years of TWG.

Although funding would allow TWG to move forward and evolve there was no proposal to make changes to the remit or overall membership of the Plenary. However the Chairman advised that he would look to the SSPO now to co-ordinate the membership from the salmon sector. TWG would remain open to requests from non-SSPO members to join the Group.

Action: SSPO to advise the secretariat of the proposed industry delegation.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

Some amendments were proposed to the last minutes. The secretariat would amend and recirculate the minutes.

3. Matters Arising

The Chairman ran through the actions from the last meeting and noted that there were two outstanding actions. The letter to Mark Bilsby was drafted but had still to be sent and the Executive Summary of the HIE Review would be placed on the TWG website once implemented. These actions would be carried forward. The action on transparency had been overtaken and would be covered at Item 6.

Action: 2 outstanding actions to be carried forward.

The meeting was asked to consider further the issue of G.S. as there was still concern on the wild fish side about live fish imports, although the industry Code of Practice provides reassurance on this issue. The Group was advised that a great deal was going on because the Scottish Executive shared concerns about G.S. The Scottish Executive had convened a G.S. Task Force whose final meeting was scheduled for the following week. Its remit was to consider prevention, contingency and additional powers. Representations were being made to the EU to retain national provision for G.S. to be a named disease in the Fish Health Directive. The Group was also reminded that there was the risk of introduction of *G salaris*

by anglers, as well as the aquaculture industry, although there had been no evidence of this in Norway. There was support from the wild fish sector to see the double disinfection of eggs as a mandatory task. In practice, the industry believed that this will happen although the obligation under EU law had been removed.

Action: The Scottish Executive would seek to establish why the Commission had dropped this requirement.

4. TWG: Third Stage

The Chairman introduced this item with a summary of the HIE review including the difficulty in producing economic evidence of the benefits achieved and stressed a need to be able to demonstrate to Ministers over the next 2 years that there is economic benefit to justify TWG being continued.

Phil Gilmour gave a résumé of paper 4.1 (03-06) and advised the Plenary that the Crown Estate had offered to provide a financial management service for TWG to support the TWG for the next two years. The SE would appoint a project manager on secondment to the Crown Estate to act as secretariat for the Plenary and Management Groups, support the Regional projects, as well as handle the financial management.

Jane Wright thanked the Scottish Executive for their efforts to secure the funding of TWG over the next 2 financial years.

After considering the role of the AMAs, the Plenary agreed that the collection of catch statistics was important and this should also be gathered by the AMGs.

Phil Gilmour advised the Plenary that although the Review Group had highlighted the Western Isles model there was acceptance that the projects should remain flexible to suit the various setups in operation in each region.

The role of a Regional Steering Group was suggested to be just another layer of bureaucracy but it was explained that this Group provided balanced management and support for the

RDOs and it was agreed might provide a useful opportunity to involve the local authority at an appropriate level. Plenary accepted this.

The meeting was reminded that TWG was a voluntary process and, as such, we could not insist upon local authority participation but that a letter, if it helped, could be sent if the local authorities who were reluctant to participate in TWG.

Action: MG to liaise with each Region about need for the SE to issue a letter to relevant local authorities.

The Plenary Group discussed in detail the need for outcomes to be identified. The Chairman reiterated the importance of being clear what constituted success and benefits and what process could be used to measure this. Gordon Brown reminded the Plenary of the Concordat and the aims set out in that document which still applied. The meeting considered gathering environmental indicators, such as wild fish numbers in lochs to establish trends, or the benefits of river restoration. It was also suggested that the performance of TWG should be measured at different levels, for example a questionnaire on customer satisfaction, and that brigading these measures could provide a better picture overall. It was agreed more consideration should be given to this and the Management Group was asked to take this forward and report back.

Action: MG to consider methods to measure progress.

5. Regional Areas and Restoration Sub-Group Reports

Jane Wright reported on the Argyll and Lochaber area. Four AMAs have been signed in the area, one in Lower Lorn is due to be signed and a further two are being worked on.

One area of concern was an application for a site between two of the AMAs which could cause problems if it isn't in synchronous production. It was agreed that it was not for the Plenary Group to take a view on an individual application although the members of the Group could make representation in the normal process. The Chairman suggested that the Management Group should consider this application and its potential impact on 2 AMAs but

that individual bodies should also consider what action, if any, they should take in the application process.

[Action]: Management Group to consider the implications for the AMAs if this site is opened in the firebreak area.

Anne Marie MacIver, reported on the AMAs in the Western Isles. A complete change of personnel at the Fishery Trust had occurred and they were all on a learning curve.

- West Loch Tarbet was straight forward and had been followed successfully.
- East Lewis/Harris – production had been de-synchronous in Loch Seaforth while one company looked for an alternative site. Not ideal but accepted and still working.
- Loch Leurbost – an organic company site has been included in the AMA.
- Loch Roag – most momentum because of the Site Optimisation Plan. It had been split into east and west areas to allow synchronous production and fallowing on each side.
- Southern Isles – delay as new sites were being sought.
- The RDO had no problem with communication, or access to sites and sea lice data was being supplied.

Seymour Munro reported that the Restoration Sub-Group was continuing to meet regularly and that funding for the Restoration co-ordinator for a further 3 years was secured. A guide aimed at owners to assist in restoration would be put before the core group meeting in April although some discussion with the ASFB and RAFTS had to take place to avoid duplication of effort. However, it was accepted that the sub-group should be more proactive and focused and the planned review by the MG would be welcome.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to have the possibility of financial incentives available if Trusts go through the Restoration Plan process.

6. Transparency

Sid Patten advised the Plenary Group that there were still concerns held in the industry about how information gathered might be used. However it was entirely reasonable for companies to be expected to provide information within certain parameters. The SSPO Board has signalled their willingness to be more open and is committed to finding a way forward. It was proposed that John Webster and Andrew Wallace should meet to work through this issue and for it to be given some urgency. Sid Patten advised he was willing to engage with the SSPO Board (with the recommendations) ahead of their meeting in May in order to speed up this issue.

Action: Andrew Wallace and John Webster to discuss way forward, and if possible to propose an agreed way forward to the SSPO Board meeting in May.

7. Reporting within AMAs

It was agreed that this item should be moved up the Agenda. The Plenary Group agreed that there were some AMAs where the supply of information was a problem and that if the provisions of an AMA were not being met then that was unacceptable. It was also pointed out that there was a lack of information from the AMGs to the Plenary level which if available could have proven invaluable. It was agreed that more consideration to this problem could be given in the transparency discussion and Andrew Wallace was asked to send a paper round the Plenary Group.

Action: Andrew Wallace to issue paper on AMA reporting to Plenary.

8. PR Strategy

Andrew Wallace reported that the MG had given some thought to the PR for TWG for the next few years and had come to the conclusion that the newsletter in its current format was a big effort and not widely read. Also the proposed conference was something for the future but that work was ongoing on the website. However, that too should wait for the outcome of the transparency discussions. Julie Edgar was invited to expand further on a PR campaign for TWG. This had been introduced at the last meeting but with secured funding more effort could be devoted to putting out stories under a TWG banner. It was agreed that while the media will continue to look for the negative aspect, the positive should be emphasised. TWG should aim for clear messages and credibility.

Action: Andrew Graham-Stewart and Julie Edgar to prepare PR strategy.

9. New Management Group Structure

Following the reviews the MG had taken steps to expand the membership by including the RDOs/equivalents and had a programme of visits in place where local members of TWG could be invited to participate. Following a meeting with Colin Bean and Ron Stagg the MG had developed objectives and estimated the risk against their achievement. It was agreed that an objective for the science and restoration sub-groups should be included. The diagram in paper 8.1 (03-06) was an attempt to define how the relationship between each element of the TWG partners would fit. With the differing approaches being adopted in each area it was agreed that each Regional Area should define their structure with clear information on reporting and return these to the MG as soon as possible.

Action: Regional Areas to specify the structure and reporting procedures adopted and submit to MG.

It was queried whether the relationship between the Relocation Working Group and the TWG should be formalised and written reports prepared. It was agreed that as Phil Gilmour chaired the Relocation Working Group he could report back to TWG and this would be a standing issue on the agenda.

Action: Report on Relocation WG to be added to standing Agenda items.

Action: Pauline Munro was asked to refine paper 8.1 (03-06) after discussions in the MG.

10. Strategic Framework for Scottish Aquaculture

This was to be a brief update on the progress of the Strategic Framework and it was agreed that this could be done by E-Mail to the members.

Action: Phil Gilmour to E-Mail Plenary members with update of progress on SFSA.

11. Any other business

Further to the earlier discussion on G.S., Ron Stagg advised the meeting of the likely timetable for the new Fish Health Directive indicating that the Finnish Presidency were hoping to conclude negotiations by summer 2006.

12. The secretariat will contact members to set a date for the next meeting to be held in November 2006.