

**MINUTE OF NESFLAG MEETING
THURSDAY 24 AUGUST 2023 AT 2.00 PM
MICROSOFT TEAMS CONFERENCE CALL**

Present

Duncan Abernethy	Scottish Maritime Academy (Public)
Jamie Bell	Scottish Enterprise (Public)
Millie Clarke	Visit Aberdeenshire (Private)
David Jackson	Visit Scotland (Private)
David John McRobbie	Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation (Private)
Robin Maddock	Banffshire Partnership (Private)
Andrew Newton (Chair)	Kincardineshire Development Partnership (Private)
Jess Sparks	Seafish UK (Private)

Officers in Attendance

Jamie Wilkinson	Investments & Projects Executive
Anne MacLennan	Investments & Projects Officer

Apologies

Anne Birnie	North East Scotland Fishermen's Organisation (Private)
Martin Brebner	Team Manager – Economic Strategy & Policy
Helen Duggan	Seafish UK (Private)
Jennifer Mouat	North & East Coast Region Inshore Fisheries Group (Private)

1. Welcome & Apologies

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed new members, David Jackson from Visit Scotland, Millie Clarke from Visit Aberdeenshire and Jess Sparks, substitute for Helen Duggan from Seafish UK. Introductions were made round the table. Apologies were noted as above.

2. Draft Minute of NESFLAG Meeting, 29 March 2023

- 2.1 The minutes of the NESFLAG meeting held on 29 March 2023 were approved as an accurate record. Proposed by Robin Maddock and seconded by Jamie Bell.
- 2.2 An action from the last meeting was to circulate the Annual Report which went to Aberdeenshire Council's Infrastructure Services Committee. This is still outstanding but will be circulated to NESFLAG members soon.

3. Membership Discussion

- 3.1 A review of FLAG membership has to be undertaken. The current constitution and membership is a legacy from the days of the European Maritime Fisheries Fund. Representatives from Angus are still officially members of the FLAG, although they

no longer attend by arrangement.

The FLAG agreed to delete the three Angus organisations. Jamie will write to these organisations to suggest that they withdraw.

3.2 Because the project activities being supported are now less focused on the fishing industry and more on community projects, it may be that the FLAG has an over-representation from the private and fisheries industry and a gap in community representation. It was agreed that additional FLAG representation from community led organisations would be required.

3.3 Following the last meeting, Robin Maddock approached Buchan Development Partnership but unfortunately the staff members do not have capacity to join the FLAG. It may be possible to approach one of the directors to ask if they would consider joining the FLAG. Robin will follow this up.

3.4 Seafish has been involved in the FLAG since the EMFF programme but, now that the focus of the group is heading more towards more broader community support, it may not now merit the input from Seafish. Jess Sparks will discuss the options with his colleagues and, if Seafish does decide to step down, it may still be possible to remain on hand on an as-needs basis if that would be of benefit to the FLAG.

3.5 David-John McRobbie who currently represents Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation, is happy to remain on the FLAG to represent the fisheries sector. However, David-John suggested that it would be more appropriate if he could represent his employer, the Don Fishing Company rather than AFPO. A membership form will be issued to David-John to enable him to apply on behalf of Don Fishing Company.

3.6 It was suggested that representation from Aberdeenshire Community Councils could make up that community element of the FLAG membership. Robin Maddock undertook to discuss this possibility with Duncan Leece who is currently carrying out a piece of work with the Community Council in Banff and Buchan.

Rather than having several new members representing all Community Councils, it was suggested that, if there is an overarching organisation, they could perhaps nominate one or two Community Councils to represent them all.

3.7 It was suggested that it may be an option for harbours and ports in Aberdeenshire to be invited to participate on the committee. The influence of some of the smaller harbours on their local communities would make them ideal candidates to join the committee.

3.8 It was also suggested that it may be possible to invite Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action (AVA) to become a member. AVA is currently represented on the LAG. Robin Maddock undertook to contact AVA to ask if they would be interested in joining the FLAG.

3.9 It was confirmed that Fraserburgh Development Trust is being wound up. There are no employees or representatives and therefore nobody to replace Ian Watson, who sadly passed away in June. It was agreed that FDT will be removed from the

member list.

3.10 Of the current member organisations, three do not have a nominated representative at the moment:

- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Federation of Small Businesses

Jamie will follow up with these organisations to ask them to nominate a member. If they are unable to nominate a representative, then they will be given the option to withdraw.

Action Points:

- Robin Maddock will pursue the possibility of one of the Directors of Buchan Development Partnership joining the FLAG.
- Jess Sparks to discuss with colleagues about whether or not Seafish will continue to be involved in the FLAG.
- Anne MacLennan will issue a membership form to David-John McRobbie to allow him to represent the Don Fishing Company rather than Aberdeen Fish Producers Organisation.
- Robin Maddock will look into the possibility of approaching Community Councils for representation on the FLAG.
- Jamie Wilkinson to investigate the possibility of getting representation from Aberdeenshire harbours/ports.
- Robin Maddock will contact AVA to ask if they would be able to nominate a representative to join the FLAG.
- Anne MacLennan to remove Fraserburgh Development Trust from the current membership list.
- Jamie Wilkinson will write to the three member organisations who do not currently have a nominated representative.

4. Constitution

- 4.1 Martin Brebner has provided a draft of the re-written constitution. Martin's hard work has produced a more slimmed down constitution document. The document now more accurately reflects the committee's purpose to support community local development in coastal communities.
- 4.2 The constitution states that it is possible to have a chair or two co-chairs plus two vice chairs. The FLAG considered this to be slightly top heavy and would prefer to have one chair and one vice chair.
- 4.3 In the PAC terms of reference, the quorum has been changed from 5 to 3. This was considered to be a more realistic number for the PAC.
- 4.4 Item 4.2.2 was considered to be a little confusing. It states that 'for the avoidance of doubt, applicants may include Aberdeenshire Council'. Applications from Aberdeenshire Council were eligible under EMFF but under the current programme, half the allocation of Crown Estate funding is allocated directly to the Council via the Area Committees. The other half, which is allocated to NESFLAG, is intended for use by communities and small businesses. Council applications

are therefore not eligible. The wording at 4.2.2 of the constitution will be corrected to reflect this.

- 4.5 Members discussed the name 'FLAG'. It was felt that it no longer accurately reflects the work of the committee. Between now and the next meeting, members will give some consideration to a new name which will better reflect the community focus of the fund.
- 4.6 There is no current Local Development Strategy but there is some historic reference made to the LDS throughout the constitution document. Any reference to the LDS will be removed.
- 4.7 A review of priorities was carried out for the Coastal Communities Challenge Fund via community consultation. This was then approved by Aberdeenshire Council Committee. The resulting new Crown Estate framework document has been much slimmed down from the LDS document. A copy will be circulated.
- 4.8 Reference is made to a communications plan. The communications plan related to the delivery of the EMFF programme and no longer exists. However, it is still a priority that as many potential applicants are made aware of the fund at application stage. It was also considered essential to promote the impact of what has been achieved in order to make the case for future allocations. The fund is currently based on an annual allocation. In order to achieve long more long term security, it will be essential to continually highlight the successes of the programme.
- 4.9 The points raised will be taken into consideration and the finalised constitution document will be presented at the next meeting.

Action Points:

- Martin Brebner to correct the wording at point 4.2.2 of the constitution document to clarify that Aberdeenshire Council is not eligible to apply to the Coastal Communities Challenge Fund.
- Members to give consideration to a new name for NESFLAG. Email to be sent out ahead of the next meeting as a reminder.
- Martin Brebner to ensure that all reference to the LDS is removed from the constitution document.
- A a copy of the Crown Estate Framework document will be circulated to members.

5. Update on Projects

- 5.2 Jamie gave an informative presentation on a selection of the successfully completed projects.
- 5.3 In the most recent funding round, 13 projects were approved. There was a slight delay in issuing grant contracts due to the switch over from EU State Aid legislation to the new UK Subsidy Control legislation. The Council's Legal department was involved in re-writing the grant offer contract and this took longer than expected.

6. Next Application Round

- 6.1 The work of the FLAG is being restricted due to the delay in receiving the next funding allocation from the Crown Estate via the Scottish Government. There is a small amount of underspend and carry forward from last year's allocation but not enough to warrant the launch a full application round.

The option to launch an application round before the new allocation is confirmed was discussed but the FLAG considered this to be too much of a risk. Members were not prepared to raise applicant expectation until the new allocation is confirmed.

It may be possible to open up for the submission of Expression of Interest forms but again this could raise applicant expectations.

Jamie will advise the committee as soon as the next allocation is confirmed and an application round schedule will be set based on that timescale.

7. AOCB

- 7.1 There was no other business.

8. Date of Next NESFLAG Meeting

- 8.1 A doodle poll will be issued to set a date for the next meeting. There are a number of action points to be followed up from today's meeting and it was agreed that another interim meeting in November/December would be beneficial.

Summary of Action Points

Outstanding action from the last meeting: Annual Report which went to Committee to be circulated to NESFLAG members.	Anne MacLennan
Directors of Buchan Development Partnership to be invited to join the FLAG	Robin Maddock
Continuation of membership of the FLAG to be considered by Seafish	Jess Sparks
Membership form to be issued to David-John McRobbie to allow him to represent the Don Fishing Company on the FLAG	Anne MacLennan
Community Council representation on the FLAG to be investigated	Robin Maddock
Representatives of Aberdeenshire Harbours/Ports to be invited to join the FLAG	Jamie Wilkinson
Representative from Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action to be invited to join the FLAG	Robin Maddock
Fraserburgh Development Trust to be removed from the FLAG membership list	Anne MacLennan
Three member organisations who do not have current representation on the FLAG to be contacted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce • Aberdeenshire Council • Federation of Small Businesses 	Jamie Wilkinson

Wording at point 4.2.2 of the constitution to accurately reflect that Aberdeenshire Council is not eligible to apply for CCCF funding	Martin Brebner
Suggestions to be made for a new, more appropriate name for NESFLAG	All members
All reference to the LDS to be removed from the constitution document	Martin Brebner
Copy of the Crown Estate Framework document to be circulated to members	Anne MacLennan

Minute Taker
 Anne MacLennan, Investments & Projects Officer



FLAG Chairman

Date: 14th May 2024

Approved