Angling Advisory Group (AAG)

Draft Minutes of Meeting – 15.10.2024

IFI Headquarters, Citywest, Dublin 24 & Remotely via Zoom

Attendees:

Philip Nugent (DECC, Chair), Frank Gallagher (DECC), Barry Fulham (DECC), Cathal Gallagher (IFI), Martin McEnroe (ACI), Noel Carr (FISSTA), Martin Kearney (NARA), John Drinan (TAFFI), Paul Byrne (IPS), Bob Seward (SSTAI), Warren Doyle (EFSA), Barry Fox (IFI), Fergal Bell (IFPAC), Oliver O Cadhla (Dept Of Housing), Coilm McArdle (DECC)

Agenda Item 1 – Adoption of minutes of previous meeting 06 August 2024

FISSTA and IPS both requested amendments to the August minutes before being accepted. The AAG Chair re-confirmed that the payment of the 2023 expenditure items as part of the ACI/DECC 2023 Grant Funding MoU were authorised by him at the 6th August 2024 meeting.

Action Point: Draft minutes of the 6th August 2024 meeting to be re-circulated prior to finalisation.

Agenda Item 2 – Update on Marine Protected Areas Legislation

Oliver O'Cadhla (Dept. of Housing) gave a presentation on Marine Protected Areas Legislation and also provided an update on the related EU Life Programme.

EFSA enquired on the matter of accessing further information on MPAs, Dept of Housing informed the Group that information regarding this is available online.

ACI raised a query on the 6 nautical mile zone in terms of enforcement issues relating to trawling activity and were advised that this was a matter for Dept of Agriculture who are examining the issue.

Dept of Housing advised the participants at the meeting that it would provide an email address for all angling groups to engage in the MPA stakeholder consultation process.

Action Point: Ensure that the email address is passed on to all members of the AAG to enable them to engage in the MPA stakeholder consultation process.

Agenda Item 3 – New EU Fisheries Control Regulation (2023/2842) provision on recreational fisheries (Article 55)

DECC stated that the European Commission was developing an electronic system (app) at EU level for all recreational sea anglers to be registered and record their catches of specific species subject to Union conservation measures. The Regulation providing for this new requirement requires that it takes effect by January 2026.

SSTRAI stated that article 55 was high on the agenda of the European Anglers Alliance and that there may be challenges around adoption of the app if socio economic information was not included on the application. EFSA stated their view that sea anglers may be less inclined to join federations if compelled to use the application. It was re-stated that this is an EU Regulation and will apply to all recreational anglers individually.

IFI said it was vital that awareness of this upcoming registration system be disseminated across the recreational sea angling community.

DECC confirmed it would continue to engage with the EU and Dept of Agriculture on this process and would keep the AAG informed on developments.

Agenda Item 4 – ACI paper on regional input into Inland Fisheries matters.

The Chairman stated that the paper produced by the ACI was not in line with what was agreed at last meeting.

ACI informed the Group that it has liaised with anglers on the matter of regional input, some of whom have lamented the cessation of regional boards in that there are no anglers on the board of either IFI or MARA and they take the view that this affects meaningful input into policy.

IFI responded to this saying that regional Fisheries boards were ended primarily for reasons of inertia as they were often unable to come to agreement around national policies, hence the transition to a centralised national Board. IFI said that through the platforms of the AAG and NIFF, angling representative bodies had a considerable input into angling policy.

The Chairman agreed with the fact that through AAG angling bodies had input into policy and legislation. The primary responsibility of the Board of IFI is the corporate governance of that agency and its Board have a broad range of diverse qualifications and relevant experience. He added that policy matters are principally a matter for the Minister and his Department.

IPS indicated its members were frustrated with the level of engagement with IFI on the Western Lakes Management Plan (WLMP), IFI proposed its openness to a face-to-face meeting when WLMP goes out to public consultation.

The Chairman requested that ACI put down a proposal in writing in terms of regional input into inland fisheries matters so that such a proposal may be discussed at a future meeting.

Action Point: ACI to draft a proposal for the Group's consideration regarding regional input into inland fisheries matters.

Agenda Item 5 – AOB & Date of next meeting.

Regarding the upgrading on its hatchery in Roscrea, IFI said that this full upgrading would now not be going ahead.

IFI intends to input on its next Corporate Plan at the next AAG meeting.

DECC will seek a local authority representative to brief the AAG on the access to beaches issue for sea anglers.

The Chairman proposed the next meeting to take place on 28th November 2024 at 11am