

Northern Ireland Fishery Harbour Authority

Ardglass Stakeholders Forum Meeting

held on

Friday, 19 January 2024 at 2.30pm

Harbour Masters Office, Ardglass

Present:	
Port Users:	<p>Jim Masson (JM) – Ardglass Harbour Development David Zych (DZ) – Golden Reaper Dick James (DJ) – Ardglass Harbour Development Harry Wick (HW) – NIFPO CEO & NIFHA Board Member</p>
NIFHA:	<p>Kate Burns (KB) - Board Member & Chair of Meeting Lynn Gilmore (LG) – Board Member Stephen Welch (SW) – Chair of the Board Kevin Quigley (KQ) – Chief Executive David Lindsay (DL) – Project Manager James Lenaghan (JL) –Harbour Master Belinda McCaughey (BMcC) – Accounts Administrator</p>
Apologies:	<p>Dermot Curran David Knott</p>
	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions KB welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made by all.</p>
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting Minutes of the previous meetings held on 04 November 2022 were accepted.</p>
3.	<p>Matters arising from the Previous Minutes</p> <p>HM to ensure Accidents are recorded in Accident Book – JL confirmed all accidents that he is aware of are entered in the Accident Book. The meeting discussed a previous accident which had not been reported to the HM.</p> <p>Converting Net Racking to Store – This project was promoted by NIFPO but will not proceed.</p> <p>NIFPO support for Beach Cleans – This is awaiting the return of our Environmental Officer from Maternity Leave.</p> <p>Feasibility of Sea Bins – NIFHA harbours are not suited to Sea Bins. Waters are not calm and not oil free.</p> <p>Funding for moving vessels to make way for Pelagic Vessels – Whilst NIFHA would love to help this is not a viable financial option at the moment.</p>

<p>4. Thanks</p> <p>KQ thanked all the fishermen and Port Users for their cooperation over the past year. It is greatly appreciated.</p>	
<p>5. Finance</p> <p>KQ advised the meeting that prior to the pandemic NIFHA were fully self-funded. This has since changed. This bad news story is likely to have consequences in the future. Pressures on Government spending will not go away.</p> <p>If the boats are not fishing, then this effects both the fishermen and the Authority.</p> <p>The facility to dismantle abandoned vessels has opened in Portavogie and one vessel has already been dismantled. A tender for dismantling a second vessel is underway and this will hopefully happen before the end of March 2024.</p> <p>Next year we plan to dismantle five vessels – which will include one in Ardglass.</p> <p>The meeting discussed the issues around abandoned vessels and different ways to try to move this forward.</p> <p>KQ confirmed in response to a question asked by DJ that if the Authority seek increased funding from DAERA then yes there is a risk of higher costs to the industry. The Ad Valorum rates may need to be increased from 2.75%.</p> <p>HW advised that NIFHA needs to be aware that increasing the Ad Valorum rate is tightening the noose around the neck of fishermen.</p> <p>The loss of Pelagic Vessels (size of vessel and depth of harbour) being able to land in Ardglass has considerably reduced revenue.</p> <p>KQ noted that waste costs are increasing every year. We are fighting for better pay for our staff.</p> <p>Solar Panel installation is complete, and the main beneficiary will be the Ice Plant. There is currently no batteries to store any power generated during the day to enable usage at night. Review of their usage will take place in the summer.</p> <p>KQ noted that once the Environmental Officer returns the Environmental issues will progress.</p>	
<p>6. Health and Safety / Port Marine Safety</p> <p>KQ noted our good record in relation to all matters concerning Health and Safety and Port Marine Safety.</p> <p>This is a priority and KQ reminded all to stay focused on three things – safe use of ladders, preventing trip hazards and to be aware of alcohol and substance abuse.</p>	

<p>7. Harbour Investment (FSDP)</p> <p>KQ updated the meeting on the current progress of the FSDP. A shortlist of approved tenderers has been completed – we have not seen this list and do not know details of how many are included.</p> <p>Ardglass and Kilkeel will be treated separately. The next step is the Environmental and Technical Studies. There will be many challenges ahead.</p> <p>Ardglass tender will be issued first.</p> <p>NIFHA will continue to encourage DAERA to move this forward. SW confirmed that in his meetings with DAERA this has been at the top of the agendas.</p> <p>KQ thanked both Producers Organisations and Ardglass Development Association for all their help in this process.</p> <p>DJ noted that the Ardglass project was designed to bring back the larger Pelagic Vessels to land in Ardglass Harbour.</p> <p>KQ confirmed that NIFHA have no input on which company will be appointed. This is solely the responsibility of CPD. As soon as appointment is made then NIFHA will have the opportunity for input.</p> <p>The meeting discussed the cost of the Ardglass part of the project. DL confirmed that the higher costs that expected were due to the rocks and the level of Risk which had to be transferred to the Contractor. Blasting of Rocks is not allowed due to Environmental Issues.</p> <p>DL confirmed the next stage is to set up a consultation team. This will go through a Gateway Review System. A decision will need to be taken on the Risk Strategy adopted.</p>	
<p>8. Capital and Minor Works</p> <p>DL advised the meeting that it is increasingly difficult to get works done. Marine Licencing are requiring a Habitats Risk Assessment for new projects. This requires a month-long public consultation. An Environmental Impact Assessment will take up to 12 months.</p> <p>Last year short term funding became available. Three projects - Solar Panels, Quay Edge Fendering and Upgrade of Fishmarket Shower and Toilet Facilities were completed in Ardglass.</p> <p>DL updated the meeting on the procurement process for projects over £30k which need to go through CPD.</p> <p>Potential Projects – DL discussed the list of potential projects for the next 10 years. We are always open to suggestions from our stakeholder.</p> <p>Project to install a drum for net stretching was raised at a previous meeting with fishermen – DL confirmed this will be added to the potential projects list.</p> <p>KQ confirmed that although this list is long, we may be missing some requirements. What are our stakeholders’ priorities? Short notice of funding may bring smaller projects to the top of the list.</p>	DL

<p>The meeting discussed each of the potential projects and KQ confirmed that NIFHA are dominated by funding availability to determine which, if any, will proceed. Existing Harbour Structures need to be maintained as well.</p> <p>KQ confirmed that the two abandoned vessels in Ardglass are on the list for dismantling in 2024/25. They will be taken out of the harbour onto the quayside and subject to NIEA requirements will be dismantled.</p> <p>Vessel Dismantling is on NIFHA’s Risk Register and DAERA are taking this very seriously.</p>	
<p>9. Environmental Improvements</p> <p>JL advised that 15 beach cleans have taken place over the last 12 months. He also noted that the number of blue gloves being collected is reducing.</p> <p>Fishing for Litter – 2.5T last year.</p> <p>A project to recycle End of Life Fishing Gear took place last year. 6T of old netting was recycled.</p> <p>Solar Panels are up and working on the Fishmarket Roof. This will be monitored over the next 12 months but should be able to run the Ice Plant. On a dull day 10Kw is being generated.</p> <p>Electric Forklift arrived in November and Solar power will be used to charge this.</p> <p>All bulbs are being replaced with LEDs as needs arise. Over 1/3 of the Fishmarket have been replaced to date.</p> <p>JL confirmed recycling is being carried out as much as possible. Fishermen are mostly clearing up their own net cuttings, but the Sweeper does have to be used as well.</p> <p>DZ asked about the possibility of net racking possibly at the back of Milligan’s Potato Store to store nets? JL noted that as much as 10% of the nets around the harbour could be decommissioned. To be reviewed.</p> <p>HW advised the meeting that NIFPO sponsors Youth Organisation in the local community. The local primary school could be sponsored to carry out a Beach Clean. JL will approach the local school and provide details to HW.</p>	<p>KQ / JL</p> <p>JL</p>
<p>10. OPERATIONAL MATTERS</p> <p>KQ discussed operational matters and in particular:</p> <p>Crewing – HW updated the meeting on current situation. NIFPO have recruited a new member of staff to source crews from all over the world for NIFPO members.</p> <p>LG noted that Seafish are currently carrying out an Economic Appraisal of the supply food chain and the effects of this rise in level of pay.</p> <p>Dredging – KQ noted campaign carried out in Ardglass this year. This should last 3-4 years.</p>	

<p>JL gave thanks to the local men for moving their vessels when the Pelagic Vessels came into land – sometimes at short notice.</p>	
<p>11. EQUALITY</p> <p>KQ stressed the Authority’s commitment to Equality and our Duty of Care around Disability and Good Relations.</p> <p>KQ also thanked everyone for their consideration of these matters in the harbours.</p>	
<p>12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>DJ asked about NIFHA staff relations and pay levels. KQ confirmed that all staff pay increases are subject to Department of Finance Approval – outside of NIFHA control.</p> <p>KQ noted staff have joined UNITE the Union and NIFHA are currently in process of recognising the Union. Strike by staff is a real possibility.</p> <p>JM asked if there was a Defibrillator available within the harbour? No there is not. The nearest is at the SPAR shop on the main road into Ardglass. LG will look into funding for this.</p> <p>DZ asked whether something could be done about increased dog fouling around the harbour. JL will source signage.</p> <p>KB thanked everyone for their attendance at the meeting.</p> <p>This being all the business the meeting closed at 4.20pm</p>	<p>LG</p> <p>JL</p>