

Angling Consultative Council of Ireland (ACCI)

Minutes of Meeting – 25.07.2022

IFI, Citywest & Remotely via Zoom

Attendees:

Martin McEnroe (ACI, Co-Chair), Bob Seward (SSTRAI), Denis Maher (DECC), Barry McCartin (DECC), Dr Cathal Gallagher (IFI), Joe Birney (IFSA, Assistant Chair), Jonathan Rice (Co-Secretary), Mary Breslin (DECC, Co-Secretary), Warren Doyle (EFSA), Fergal Bell (IFPAC).

Noel Carr (FISSTA) was available to attend remotely but could not be admitted to the meeting due to technical issues.

Apologies:

Philip Nugent (DECC, Co-Chair), Francis O' Donnell (IFI), Suzanne Campion (IFI).

Agenda Item 1 - Minutes of previous meeting

Meeting opened with welcome to all.

The minutes of 30 May 2022 were circulated prior to the meeting. Adoption of the minutes was proposed and seconded.

Matters arising:

No matters arising.

Agenda Item 2 – Draft Policy Paper – Policy and Legislative Framework for the inland fisheries sector.

DECC gave a summary of this draft policy paper and committed to circulating it shortly.

Action Point:

DECC to circulate draft policy paper.

EU Legislation

A discussion took place on future EU legislation that may put a catch quota in place for recreational angling. SSTRAI advised ACCI are at a disadvantage due to a lack of funding as they are unable to attend meetings at EU level.

Agenda Item 3 – Updates

Western Lakes Management Plan (WLMP)

IFI advised that the draft plan is currently undergoing an appropriate assessment and will be released for public consultation in August for a period of approximately six weeks.

Co-Chair (ACI) understood that ACCI would have sight of the draft WLMP in advance. DECC advised that it will be available to all when it is released for public consultation. DECC will explore the possibility of it being released one day early to ACCI but did not want this to compromise or become the focus of the process.

Action Point:

DECC to consult with IFI if the draft WLMP can be circulated to ACCI members in advance of the public consultation.

IPS/IFPAC and IFI meeting

IFI reported it had a constructive and positive meeting with the pike groups on 16 June 2022. There was positive engagement with progress made on certain issues. It is hoped that this momentum will continue.

Co-Chair (ACI) welcomed the update and will give feedback when the full report and recommendations from the meeting are issued. IFPAC confirmed the meeting was productive, and the release of the draft WLMP is awaited. A full response from the pike groups would be formulated after the release of the plan. Engagement with all groups is important and they hope further discussions with IFI will continue to be constructive.

Finance Sub-Group

A discussion took place on the proposal submitted by the ACCI Finance sub-group and the potential financing of the ACCI. DECC's letter dated 22 July 2022 addressed a range of funding options in response to the sub-group.

The issue of support for attendance at international meetings was specifically discussed. DECC advised that the current travel and subsistence rules did not appear to provide for this, but other options would be explored.

Concerns were raised in relation to a discussion of financial support for ACCI at a meeting in 2019 with the then Minister of State. Differing accounts of the discussion were put forward and it was suggested that those present at that meeting would check their record of the discussion.

The finance sub-group clarified that the submission was made by the ACCI sub-group and that the input of one group is awaited.

On the issue of staff and administration raised in the letter, DECC advised that they supported directly with Sport Ireland, ACI's requirement for staffing and resource support as outlined in the finance sub-group letter. DECC suggested that ACI might usefully follow up with Sport Ireland and DECC/IFI would be happy to support ACI at any meeting with Sport Ireland.

Action Point:

DECC and IFI to provide ACCI members with a copy of the note of meeting with Minister Canney regarding the setting up of the group.

Agenda Item 4 – AOB

EFSA asked DECC if Minister Ryan would meet with the ACCI. ACCI were advised that Minister Ryan had a busy schedule with two government portfolios. DECC advised that the ACCI should invite Minister Ryan but to bear in mind that it may be a senior advisor that attends.

Action Point:

ACCI to request that Minister Ryan attend an ACCI meeting.

Cleaner Fish

EFSA understands that several countries are now harvesting their own cleaner fish. The decimation of cleaner fish and other species to trawlers are having a detrimental effect on fish species and habitat in our water.

Action Point:

EFSA were asked to provide any information on cleaner fish farming to DECC for further investigation.

6 Nautical Mile (NM) Limit

IFSA asked if there were any updates on the 6 NM limit. DECC advised they had no further update as the Court decision is awaited.

SSTRAI advised on several specific projects that ACCI could support.

1. Possibility of designating Cork Harbour as a rod only fishery. The view was expressed that this can help with future discussions with DAFM if the results of keeping trawlers out of the harbour is successful. This can be carried out over a three-year period with a nursery ethos in mind. EFSA said that Cork Harbour was the go-to venue for longlining for specimen Conger Eels, but these specimen fish were no longer in abundance there.
2. Discussions are underway with IFI on the acquisition of the Waterways Ireland site (Athlone) for further development.
3. Tibbotstown Reservoir secure fencing required and improved access and pontoon for disabled angling boat.
4. Canal development – improved stakeholder engagement and the requirements of anglers to be considered in planning stages of greenways.

SSTRAI mentioned that the CEO of IFI was due to meet with Waterways Ireland regarding canals and access.

Action Point:

SSTRAI to submit potential project list to IFI and DECC.

Sea Angling Fishing Competitions

IFSA confirmed that France is unable to host the World Boat Championships in 2023 as charter boat numbers have dwindled significantly due to rising costs and the effect of COVID-19. CIPS (Confédération Internationale de Pêche Sportive), the governing body,

have asked if Ireland (IFSA) would be able to host this event. Cobh Harbour, Cork has a fleet of charter boats operational and is the preferred venue. IFSA said that the cost of running such an event is over €100k and requires a huge amount of sacrifice, manpower and willingness from all stakeholders. The shortage of hotels and venues for participants and supporters to stay in will also pose problems. IFSA may have to turn down the request by CIPS due to the lack of financial support to host the event. DECC advised they will be making a proposal in the Estimates Campaign and would hope that there is a four-fold increase for the IFI sponsorship programme.

IFSA reported that Ireland had a successful Home Nations Shore Fishing Championships in the UK recently where the Irish teams won the following -
Senior Men's – Gold, Ladies – Bronze, U21's – Silver, U16's – Silver

Congratulations were extended to everyone on their achievements.

Agenda Item 5 – Date of next meeting

Tuesday 20 September 2022 @ 16.30 (Remotely)