

MINUTE OF MEETING

SW Regional Inshore Fisheries Group

Held in The McMillan Hall, Newton Stewart

at 4 00 pm on Thursday 17th July 2025.

Present:	In Person: Alastair Hamilton (Chair) John McGuire, Andrew Lochhead, Shaun McGuire (GSGFA), Online: Elaine Whyte- CIFA, Kirsten Leahy- SFF, Nick Turnbull- Mulla and Iona FA.
Apologies:	Paul McGuire, Jimmy Brawls, Frazer Scott, John Aspinall, Stewart King, Sean McIllwraith

1.	<u>Welcome and Introductions:</u> The Chair welcomed those attending, both online and in person, noted the apologies and declared the meeting open. The GSGFA advised that the attendance was reduced due to both weather and tides and that they had been accustomed to a meeting which had both a formal part in the afternoon and a more informal meeting in the evening. This was noted. The Chair noted that this was the third time that he had attempted to arrange a meeting and that he appreciated the sacrifice of fishing time skippers attending had gone to. It was noted that the change of venue was due to the unavailability of alternatives given that the tourism season was in full swing.
2.	<u>Reaction to Continuation of Interim Measures:</u> A broad discussion of the continuation of the Interim Measures took place. There was a continued emphasis on the detrimental impact that these measures would have been having, had the local area not been excluded while stock assessment took place. The meeting noted the difficulties that exist on the Clyde as a result of the measures.

	Despite their exclusion from the measures, Solway skippers made the point that one consequence of them is the focus on landing male lobsters. They believe that a shortage of males will be a considerable risk to the future of the stocks The Chair emphasised the interim nature of these measures and pointed to work that is in hand to develop a policy that will limit effort on a more permanent basis. The prospect of creel limits was broadly welcomed, especially as Galloway Static Gear Fishermen's Association, who represent 75% of the Solway skippers warranted that their voluntary policy of a 600 creel limit was being adhered to. There was a discussion on the requirement of MD to police creel limits with a service that spent more time at sea in small and flexible craft that can examine deployed creels. Such a robust approach would be welcomed from the professional skippers present.
3.	<u>Solway Lobster Science Project:</u> The Chair sought views from skippers regarding the data collection project. There were views on whether there could be a complete sample given both the error rate amongst samplers (MG), the unreliability of the equipment (one unit currently broken), and the inability to deploy tablets on more than three boats at a time. Notwithstanding that, skippers believe that they are co-operating and that useful trends shall emerge in time.
4.	<u>Inshore Fishery Management Improvement Update:</u> The Chair gave an update on the various projects captured under the IFMI programme. The meeting discussed the welcome call for evidence regarding a move to Regional Fishery Management. It was felt that more local management would be more flexible, responsive and in line with the needs of the Fishery. [At this point the online zoom meeting failed and EW was unable to reconnect.]
5.	<u>Any Other Business:</u> Clyde Cod Box:

	The meeting discussed the continuing Clyde Cod Box which, after 23 years is not evidencing any environmental improvement. It felt that, as creeling was proven to be a low environmental impact, none of which affected finfish, they should be permitted to continue fishing within the box during closed period.
6	There being no further business the meeting closed at 17 25.