



THE MORAY FIRTH PARTNERSHIP  
("the Partnership")  
Company Number: SC196042

**MINUTE of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Partnership**  
**Great Glen House, Leachkin Road**  
**Inverness, IV3 8NW**  
**19 February 2014, 11am**

**Present**

Maureen Macmillan (Chair)  
George Hogg (Vice Chair)  
Mike Comerford (Director)  
Bill Ruck (Director)  
Gordon Mackie (Director)

other members of the Partnership and non-members, as shown in the AGM Attendance List  
MFP staff including Kathryn Logan, Manager, Marion Rhind, Administrator and Frances Bell

**Apologies**

Apologies were intimated from a number of other members, appendix B.

**Welcome and Housekeeping**

The Board of Directors and current MFP staff were introduced.

**Notice and Quorum**

Notice of the meeting, copied to members, was taken as read. More than 10 members being present, or duly represented, the meeting was declared quorate and proceeded to business.

**1. Chair's Report**

Maureen Macmillan gave a brief overview of the Partnership and its objectives followed by a review of the activities and achievements over the last year. The diversity was illustrated through the range of partnerships with which we were aligned from local level to European level. Key achievements mentioned included work relating to:

**Moray Firth Sectoral Interactions Matrix**

A successful marine planning approach requires understanding the nature, extent and intensity of interactions amongst coastal users and identifying potential conflicts and opportunities.

Work continued in 2012 and 2013 to provide more background information to the Moray Firth Sectoral Interactions Matrix which included the result of interviews and feedback from representatives covering over 90 different sectors and sub-sectors, such as fishing, recreation and offshore energy. Work is now progressing on mapping specific spatial information from all the coastal partnership areas, with funding provided through Marine Scotland and organised by the Scottish Coastal Forum.

**Moray Firth Special Area of Conservation**

The Moray Firth Partnership continues to provide secretariat services to the Moray Firth SAC Management Group. Given the range of new developments proposed in the Moray Firth that might affect the bottlenose dolphin interest, the Management Group agreed there was a need for more area-specific guidance as well as the more generic SAC management guidelines. Six key topic areas were identified. During 2013, the MFP completed a short desk-based scoping study to consider how some of the priority issues might be taken forward through the SAC group, and these will be reviewed when the group next meets in 2014. Significant research has been carried out by Marine

Scotland , other agencies and developers in 2013, particularly relating to the range of off shore renewables and infrastructure developments proposed for the firth.

### **Engaging with Young People and Communities completed in 2012**

With only two staff members, we don't have as much time as we would like to devote to community activities, but carried out a couple of beach cleans and took part in the Highland Seashore Project Open Day at Nairn during the summer. This was a fantastic day, with brilliant sunshine and great crowds. The MFP is one of the organisations helping to steer the Highland Seashore Project, and more information was to be provided in the talks at the end of proceedings..

MFP staff also helped organise various company work days including a group from Moray Offshore Renewables who worked on a river restoration project near Strathpeffer.

### **Gansey Project.**

Although the funded element of The Moray Firth Ganseay Project ended in 2012, the interest in ganseys is still very much alive. Our Ganseay exhibition is now on its UK tour. It was in Hull Museum for four months during the summer, where local students did some complementary project work, and this attracted over 20,000 visitors which was quite amazing. The displays have now moved to Sheringham in Norfolk and will be going to Shetland in October.

### **The Dolphin Space Programme**

The MFP has been providing temporary secretariat services on a voluntary and unpaid basis to the Dolphin Space Programme since 2011 with the intention that the new SmarT project would provide a project officer post capable of taking on this work long-term. Since this is not now the case, the DSP steering group will be reviewing the longer term requirements of the DSP and how it should be administered.

### **Wildlife SMarT (Sustainable Marine Tourism).**

We are still in the process of fund-raising for this project, as it was very tricky to pull this together across all the local authority areas between the Moray Firth and Fife, given the timing of different funds. The latest proposal is to move forward one area at a time and to focus on integrating the recreational boating interests along with commercial tour boat operators. An application was being made to the Aberdeenshire FLAG – European Fisheries Fund for support to include the whole of Aberdeenshire in a one year project starting this Spring. If successful, this would create two new marine recreational charts showing areas for wildlife watching, one for the Moray Firth and one for the Grampian area which will help to reach out to recreational boaters and the general public. Training and events will also link into the existing North Sea Trail and other walking and tourism initiatives, helping to support local coastal and fishing communities.

### **Seafood Trail**

In Scotland, most seafood that is landed is exported, whereas most seafood eaten in Scotland is imported. We want to identify ways to redress this balance and increase the amount of locally landed seafood available to enjoy around our coast. In 2013 we were awarded £3,500 through the Highland Fisheries Local Action Group and the European Fisheries Fund for a short feasibility study. We made contact with a range of organisations across the supply chain as well as with tourism and community organisations and the public to identify current demand for locally landed seafood, problems in accessing supplies and opportunities for improvement. We developed ideas for a new seafood initiative and are working with the East Grampian Coastal Partnership and a small steering group to raise enough funds to deliver a joint area project covering the North coast, Moray Firth and Aberdeenshire areas.

Plans are progressing for an East Scotland Seafood Trail covering the whole east coast, which aims to promote areas and their seafood. However, we feel there is a clear need to ensure that more

locally landed seafood is readily available to buy, BEFORE the area is marketed as being part of the seafood trail. We are making funding applications now for a one year FLAG funded project starting April 2014 working across three local authority areas. This one year project has been defined to help increase awareness of the resources already available round the coast, and to make it easier to buy locally landed seafood.

### **Inshore Fisheries Groups**

Marine Scotland has now revised the boundaries of the six Inshore Fisheries Groups in Scotland so that they cover the whole coastline. IFGs aim to offer an innovative, partnership-led and locally specific approach to fisheries management. In 2013, the MFP started providing secretariat services to the IFG covering the Moray Firth and North Coast area, which ties in well with our key objectives of promoting sustainable use of the firth's resources and economic development in coastal communities. It also provides links to other work we are doing through the SAC management group, the seafood project etc. We have now been asked to work with the East Coast and North West IFG areas on the same basis which will allow us to draft in some additional resources.

### **Touch Table: GIS Consultation Tool**

The Partnership is working in conjunction with the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) and others who are developing a new consultation tool to help gather and analyse map data. The touch table is like a giant ipad, with interactive touch screen capability. A number of people can work around the screen and use their hands to draw on top of maps, add pictures, lines, add values to squares, and generally customise how they view the data. The first workshop was held in Oban in October. The Moray Firth workshops planned on 20 and 21 March would focus mainly on three stakeholder groups – sea kayaking, sea angling and recreational boating / jetskis etc., and will look at mapping key areas, known conflicts etc. Anyone interested in taking part should contact Kathryn.

### **Future Marine Planning Work**

Much of our work over the next few years will depend on how proposals are taken forward by Marine Scotland for Regional Marine Planning and how these are to be set up and managed at a local level. One proposal was for some form of marine planning partnerships. We have received no indication as yet of a likely timescale for this roll-out at regional level, although we understand that other areas who have already had funding to develop local management plans through the Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative, would be likely to proceed before the Moray Firth area. We aim to continue to provide local information and services to support Marine Scotland and other agencies in developing these longer-term marine and coastal management aims. We also look forward to seeing the lessons being learned from development of the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan . Marine Scotland has agreed to fund MFP in 2015 at the same level as in previous years, so we are planning how we can best use those resources and looking at other funding and income generation opportunities.

## **2. Formal Resolutions :**

Mike Comerford led discussion on the formal resolutions.

### **Resolution 1 - Accounts & Reports**

“To receive the statement of accounts of the Partnership for the period ended 31 March 2013 and the balance sheet as at that date, with the reports of the Board of Directors and Independent Financial examiners thereon.”

Kathryn Logan, Partnership Manager, gave a brief overview of the accounts for the year to 31 March 2013. Resolution 1 was passed unanimously.

## **Resolution 2 - Election of Directors**

George Hogg, vice chair explained that the Partnership can have a maximum of 7 directors in terms of its Articles of Association. Each year, one third of the directors must retire by rotation.

Maureen Macmillan (retiring by rotation and standing for re-election)

George Hogg (retiring by rotation and standing for re-election)

We had two new nominations as directors, who quite coincidentally, have strong links to the Cromarty Firth. However, directors are appointed for their individual skills and not as representatives of any organisation.

Graham Grant is currently Deputy Harbour Master at Cromarty Firth Port Authority, and has a range of experience and contacts. His personal interests include amateur archaeology, fishing and a love of the flora and fauna of the Highlands.

Captain Ken Gray retired last year as Harbour Master and Chief Executive of Cromarty Firth Port Authority and again has a wealth of experience relating to coastal and maritime issues both from his merchant Navy career and as a senior manager in the ports industry. Ken played an active role on the SAC management group and has significant experience of working within the Habitats Directive. Ken's personal interests include sailing.

Since there were four vacant places on the board, and four nominees, there was no need for a competitive election. There were no objections to any of the four candidates and all were agreed unanimously.

### **Composition of Board following the election:**

Following this election / reelection of directors, we have a full complement of seven directors: Maureen Macmillan, Mike Comerford, George Hogg, Gordon Mackie, Bill Ruck, Ken Gray and Graham Grant.

### **Appointment of Chairman**

Members were advised that the Chair is elected annually by the Board at its first meeting following the AGM. The current Chair of the Partnership is Maureen Macmillan. Any current director is eligible to stand. Details of this appointment will be included in the MFP newsletter. MC thanked Maureen Macmillan for being a great chair and ambassador for the partnership over the last year and for giving a lot of her time to support the MFP and its work.

## **Resolution 3 - Appointment of independent financial examiners**

Resolution 3 authorising the Board to appoint independent financial examiners to the Partnership and to fix their remuneration was agreed unanimously. Members were advised that it was proposed to reappoint the present independent examiner, Mohamed A. Ashour of Signpost INC, Highland Rail House, Station Square, Inverness IV1 1LE.

### **3. Votes of Thanks**

The Board recorded their thanks to the wide range of organisations that have supported us, both with core funds and project finance over the last year, and particularly those key funders who have provided long term support. It would not have been possible for the Partnership to achieve the work it has done over the years without our core funders.

### **End of Formal AGM Business.**

### **Post AGM Talks and Discussions**

Following the end of formal business, the Board welcomed a range of speakers, after which the floor was open to members to raise any other ideas or issues for discussion.

### **Update from Marine Scotland**

Tracy McCollin of Marine Scotland gave an update on progress on marine planning issues. Tracy is Project Manager of the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters Marine Spatial Plan.

### **Update from Scottish Coastal Forum**

Lady Isabel Glasgow, chair of the Coastal Partnership for the Firth of Clyde and the Scottish Coastal Forum provided an update on national coastal issues – the Scottish Coastal Forum advises Marine Scotland, from an operational perspective, on the development of policy relating to marine planning and licensing within a sustainable marine environment. The Forum also provides a network for circulating information and best practice in coastal management amongst its own varied membership and the wider ICZM community.

### **Presentation - ‘How to build a Skiff and inspire a community’**

Lorna Morrison & Keith Robinson of Ardersier Boat Club gave a stimulating illustrated talk showing the process of gathering support, funding and manpower to build their rowing skiff – “Esther”, which was on display in the atrium. It was amazing that this had started out as a “flat-pack”. There had been great local interest in the project and many individuals of all ages were now actively rowing that had not been involved before, generating a great community spirit. Many other villages were building their own skiffs and local races and events were planned which again would foster links between coastal communities.

### **Open Speaker Sessions (5 minute sessions)**

- James Mackie gave an update on issues relating to coastal erosion at Gartmouth & Kingston and research plans to be taken forward through the James A. Mackie Memorial Trust
- Jon Palmer raised the idea of water taxis for the Moray Firth and was keen to hear from others to explore these as an opportunity to enhance local trade and tourism attractions
- Dr David Worthington highlighted plans for a Moray Firth History Project and seminar in 2016
- Mike Kendall gave an update on the very successful Highland Seashore Project which was helping to raise awareness, participation and enjoyment around the region.

### **Scottish Schools Photographic Competition “Focus Environment”**

MM introduced Muriel Roberts and Kim Seeley from Chevron Upstream Europe and thanked them for the support and involvement from Chevron the MFP over many years. Images from the Scottish Schools Photographic Competition “Focus Environment”, sponsored and organised by Chevron in association with Scottish Wildlife Trust and The Conservation Volunteers were on display in the atrium. The full display of images were at Fraserburgh Lighthouse Museum last year and other locations round Scotland.

There being no further items raised for discussion, the meeting closed at 13.00 hrs  
This was followed by networking and light buffet lunch.

**END**