

Wave and Tidal Energy in the Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters

Diary of a stakeholder meeting - the industry meets the fishers

A report of the meeting between marine energy developers and the fishers of Orkney on Wednesday 9th March 2011 in the Kirkwall Hotel

Kate Johnson - ICIT, Heriot-Watt University

Background

The Pentland Firth and Orkney Waters (PFOW) area of Scotland has been the subject of the first seabed leasing round in the world to identify specific sites for the location of wave and tidal energy devices. The Crown Estate are empowered by act of parliament to act for the Crown in administering ownership rights to most of the seabed in the territorial waters in the United Kingdom. They have a duty under the law to maximise income and to care for the estate. The income passes to the UK Treasury with a proportion going to HM Queen. In 2010 The Crown Estate entered into agreements with a number of marine energy developers to lease sites to them subject to the award of Scottish government licences to locate generating plant on these sites.

Present

Organisation	Key attendees
The Crown Estate	Duncan McKay (DM) Colin Warwick (CW)
Marine Scotland	Pippa Goldschmidt (PG)
Developers	Martin Meynell (MM); Aquamarine; Brough Head Jennifer Geraghty; SSE; Cantick Head Peter Campbell; SSE; Costa Head Robin Burnett; SSE; Westray South Dave Collier; MeyGen; Inner Sound Douglas Watson; SPR; Duncansby and Marwick Colin Risbridger; SPR; Marwick Laura Carse; Pelamis; Farr Point Joe Kidd; Marine Current Turbines; Brough Ness Joanne Frost; EON; W Orkney S and W Orkney Middle S
Fishers	Fiona Matheson OFA (FM) Michael Sutherland SFF John Watt SFF About 40 fishers including Ian Sinclair and Robert Smith as the most vocal (IS and RS)
General Public	A few

Agenda and form of the meeting

The meeting was held on a Wednesday evening at the Kirkwall Hotel. The organisation of the meeting had got off to a bad start after a Radio Orkney interview with FM in the morning making it clear that the Orkney Fishermen's Association had not been invited to the meeting. CE declined to be interviewed but said this was an oversight.

1. Introduction by Crown Estate
2. PFOW plan briefing by Marine Scotland
3. Introduction by each developer
4. Open Forum
5. One to one fishers with developers

The meeting was fairly hostile and bad tempered. Crown Estate were on the back foot from the start against the accusation that they had ignored the fishers until now. The fishers were quiet except for FM. IS and RS and two other small contributions from the floor. FM made the running with a well argued contribution which was enthusiastically applauded. IS made a bit of a rant which went on too long; he was not curtailed by the chair. RS made a few cutting remarks. Joe Lawton (JL) and one other fisher made telling single points. The developers were generally quiet except for Martin Meynell (MM) who chose to try and have a rational argument with IS over some of IS' more irrational points.

The only positive result of the meeting seemed to be that *"...it had allowed people to vent..."*.

Items 1 and 2 Introduction by CE/MS

CE were represented by DM and CW. CW is a former trawler skipper from Northumberland who has been employed by the CE for the last year to advise on fisheries. CW started by asking everyone to behave themselves and to refrain from swearing because *"...ladies were present..."*.

DM said the CE were not government, not regulators - they were facilitators. He said that it was very early in the process and that things would not really start to happen until after 2015. There was lots of time for consultation.

PG introduced the PFOW plan process which she said they should develop together. Fishers were currently being notified of Fisheries Office run survey to find out where people fished. She asked fishers to refer to the framework plan and to the paper on Fisheries Liaison in the offshore wind industry as the best way to engage.

Item 3 Developer Introductions

No real content. Each developer representative just introduced themselves and their company.

Item 4 Open Forum

Chaired by CW with assistance from DM

FM - FM said that she was trying to be positive but CE should apologise for not contacting the fishermen; fishing a bedrock industry for Orkney; huge areas would be lost to fishing. CE is non-accountable with a mission to maximise returns to the UK government. Government has a duty to protect the right to fish. Oil and gas was deep sea with a big return - renewables not similar. Quality of data used in planning was poor. VMS not used by inshore fishermen. Fishing of socio-economic importance, ripple effect through factories, tourism was complex for Orkney.

[Applause]

CW - CW agreed that there had been mistakes. He had joined CE a year ago and could not put wrongs right. The footprint of fishing on the seabed was unknown. They wanted to work with the SFF to find out what developers need to know; pot of money from the CE to gather data; new must not wipe out the old.

RS - The seabed had been sold under the feet of the fishermen. He was not worried because tidal power was nonsense (tabled his own Pentland Firth assessment) and wave was a mile away. The process, though, was a disgrace.

DM - Implementation is five years away. They had to assess the potential impact and manage stakeholder expectations. There were opportunities - it was not a done deal. No leases had been issued. There was an agreement to lease subject to licensing.

FM - What confidence is there for a 20 year old wanting to enter the fishing industry?

IS - When did CE start talking to developers?

DM - 3 years ago and talked to the SFF. Plenty of time - had to understand the market first and find out which areas were to be impacted.

IS - The CE and the government could not give a toss about fishermen. Look at the Moray Firth and the squeeze on the fishermen there. What power to stop them?

CW - Got to go through the consulting process. Up to MS

IS - You don't give a toss - never ask the fishermen

CW - No excuses for CE bad behaviour but look forward. Please help get the footprint. Give MS the data

IS - Look at Oyster it has been wrecked - it wouldn't boil a kettle

MM - We have proved the concept and Oyster 2 is going in

IS - When are you going to stop scrounging off the government?

MM - We are building experience

IS - Waste of public money

PG - It is not just hard economics - fishing is crucial for jobs and has a future. MS involved in both planning and licensing

Fisherman - You should have looked at these things with the fishermen first. You have worked with the developers for three years and only now do you come to the fishermen.

DM - We want to listen to everyone

FM - Remember UK nuclear at Dounreay. Small populations make huge sacrifices in the name of energy. Nuclear, oil, uranium and now renewables - it is always us.

DM - We note your concerns

FM - This is a political issue. There is never enough energy but we need food security. Fish are a wild resource.

CW - The question is how to move forward with structure? We are asking for your help.

FM - Preserve the right to fish

DM - Where are the fishing areas?

FM - All over Orkney

CW - We need map areas between productive and less productive, data. A tall ask but we are not asking you to give away the crown jewels. There is a risk if no one knows what the fishermen are doing.

RS - There is nothing to worry about. The bottom has dropped out of the renewables investment market - it will never happen

DM - How do we get the information? What is the best way forward? Five years to get through the consenting process - plenty of time

JL - What right does anyone have to put green lines all over a map and take it over? I have fished the west coast all my life and I have been told to get out of the way at the test site.

Fisherman - We don't want compensation, we want to fish

CW - What is the way to move forward? We have to try and move forward.

DM - we should go to the next item of the agenda and you can put your concerns to the developers on a one to one basis. How do you want to engage?

IS - We want you to go away

CW - Have you raised your concerns with government?

FM - Yes, but a major failing of government is that they do not understand the fishing industry

CW - What mechanism do you want us to use?

IS - Who is in charge? Who is running the show?

DM - It is a negotiation between the Crown Estate and the government

CW - This has been an industry to industry event - a venting meeting

DM - We will take things forward in small steps. Let us try and do this together.

The meeting ended at 8.15pm for one to one discussions between fishermen and developers (Item 5).

NB

Crown Estate seemed to be getting a little desperate by the end looking for the fishers to tell them how to get out of a hole and the fishers consciously not helping them to do so. Fiona Matheson as the new Secretary of the OFA caught the mood of the meeting well and had the support and respect of the fishers. Interestingly the SFF people stayed quiet. There was a good attendance. The developers appeared to be bemused by the whole thing.

My conclusion is that neither side made any progress and entrenched divisions were more entrenched by the end of the meeting. Crown Estate can't keep asking for help without giving something in return - there must be something more positive to tell the fishers about what is happening and what gains there might be for the industry. How will the fishers be able to operate after all these devices are installed? What does it mean for them?

Fiona particularly keen on education and training and help for young people starting out to get into the industry. Can help here be part of the programme of engagement?

Duncan Mackay claimed the Crown Estate to be "...merely 'facilitators...'" The question by the fishers "...who is in charge...?" The CE refer most things to the developers who are reluctant (unable?) to take a lead.

The decision (driven by the economics of it) of MS to use fisheries officers to enquire into fishers fishing habits and locations - will be interesting to see how the relationship works out.