



Welsh Fisherman's Association  
Cymdeithas Pysgotwyr Cymru

The national voice of Welsh fishermen

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Email to Mike Hedges, Chairman CCERA

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017

Dear Mike

Firstly I would like to apologise for my tardy reply and thank you for your kind and prompt response to my letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

Disappointingly your reply does not address the issues that were raised by the Welsh Fisherman's Association – Cymdeithas Pysgotwyr Cymru Cyf (WFA-CPC) that we set out clearly and objectively.

We understand that Committee Inquiry's would need to engage with as many individuals and organisations as possible, however, in our experience, the evidence would suggest that the Committee's outreach in this case has not met this objective. It is important to note that, as a result, the majority of evidence received by this Committee Inquiry does not reflect the experience and knowledge of fishermen throughout Wales who are disadvantaged in one respect because their full time employment is fishing, not as many other witnesses that exist to produce responses to inquiries, consultations or questions to A.M.'s. Having said that the WFA-CPC exists to broadly represent wider fishing interests and yet despite our previous history of giving evidence we were not invited to provide evidence directly. Having indirectly discovered the details of the Inquiry via Twitter and submitted a detailed, reasoned, objective and honest response the "Turning the Tide" Report fails to recognise our written or oral evidence with the exception of 4 examples where the WFA-CPC's contributions fit neatly within the theme of the Report.

To summarise evidence in this way is selective, dismissive and exclusive and in our view inconsistent with the statutory principles of the Wellbeing & Future Generations Act and challenges the principles of impartial and objective use and understanding of the evidence submitted and similarly disrespects and disregards the views of Welsh fishing communities that, as mentioned earlier, are disadvantaged in their opportunity to (if they were aware) reply or contribute evidence hitherto presented on their behalf by the WFA-CPC.

The Committee Report as our letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> September sets out relies on the evidence and opinions of a few individuals and organisations with a narrow agenda. This approach will only support conclusions that fit a popular agenda rather than an evidence led and balanced solution.

Marine & Fisheries Policy cannot progress if it relies on opinions alone, these are complex and heavily regulated areas of the Environment and Rural Affairs Portfolio recognised by the Cabinet Secretary's endorsement of an evidence led approach to decision making. It is our sincere belief that an evidence led approach is the only way to achieve a reasoned consensus that engages all parties equally, respectfully and constructively. Fragile fishing communities have been neglected for too long by public figures in favour of costly environmental lobbyists that have little regard for Welsh life, heritage, culture and language. Wales has a rich maritime and fisheries heritage which has co-existed with a healthy marine environment for centuries pre-dating any MPA designations or environmental industries.

For some reason lobbyists have succeeded in misleading the Welsh public and public figures demonising the characteristic small scale fishing fleet in Wales. We would suggest closer attention be paid to the “conservation status” of Terrestrial SAC Designations and the Environment Act Wales 2016 - Section 7 “Species & Habitats “of principle importance for conservation of biodiversity in Wales. Following decades of protection and many millions of pounds of public money invested, biodiversity continues to decline and pollution, waste, and litter increase at source contaminating rivers and ultimately our marine environment??

Welsh fishermen have never been in receipt of subsidy and are proud hard working primary food producers that work in the most dangerous peace time occupation in the world to provide fresh, healthy and sustainable food to the public. I am at loss to understand why fishermen and women in Wales are not held up in the same way as agricultural food producers.

I fear this change will never happen whilst scrutiny continues to marginalise fishing and fishing communities relying on the subjective opinion of false prophets.

I would therefore respectfully urge you and your colleagues to revisit the detail our letter of the 29<sup>th</sup> September and our written evidence, as sadly your reply does not begin to address or comprehend the significance of our concerns or indeed the true status of marine protection in Wales. .

Unfortunately despite your reassurance we maintain that there would appear no value in contributing to further marine or fisheries inquiries by CCERA until our concerns have been fully recognised and addressed, given our experience of the Inquiry into MPA’s Management in Welsh Waters we would have no confidence in contributing to the Committees scrutiny of future fisheries policy and legislation resulting from the UK’s departure from the EU.

Yours sincerely

Jim Evans

For and on behalf of  
Welsh Fisherman’s Association-Cymdeithas Pysgotwyr Cymru