



All Party Parliamentary Group on Fisheries

Minutes of the Extra General Meeting held on Monday 26 June 2023, 4.00pm, Room N, Portcullis House.

Attendees:

Sheryll Murray MP (Con)
Peter Aldous MP (Con)
Robert Davidson
David Morris MP (Con)
Eleanor Adamson (The Fishmongers' Company, Secretariat funders)
Katrina Ryan (Secretariat)

1. Chair's welcome

Sheryll Murray MP, APPG on Fisheries Chair, welcomed all present to the meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been supplied for Dr Philippa Whitford MP, Derek Thomas MP, Martin Vickers MP, and David Duguid MP.

3. Discussion of the Income & Expenditure statement

The EGM of the APPG on Fisheries was held to discuss an updated income and expenditure (I&E) statement submitted by the Secretariat for the period April 2022 - March 2023. A previous I&E statement had been discussed by MPs at an AGM held for the Group in April. However, the Chair was made aware of an error in the underlying accounting for the statement by the Secretariat, the I&E statement was withdrawn, and a new EGM (the day's meeting) was held to rectify this error.

The Treasurer, Peter Aldous MP, requested the updated I&E statement and the underlying breakdown of the balance of funds. This was supplied and Members and the Secretariat worked through the figures for the previous year, noting the closing balance for the period as a positive figure at £9,160.53. It had previously been understood that Secretariat had gone into overspend for the year, due to the error in the earlier I&E statement.

The Chair noted that Fishmongers had agreed a donation for 2023-2024 activity of £40,000.00. It was highlighted to Members that a breakdown of spend for remaining work

within 2023 (up to October, when the grant period for support of the APPG renews) had been supplied, as had a costed budget for work within the 2023-24 grant period, ensuring proposed activities were within funds available.

It was noted at this point that the next proposed event within the period up to October 2023 (a meeting on safety at sea) was to be sponsored by The Seafarers' Charity - providing the funds needed to run this event without entering into overspend.

Katrina Ryan, representing the Secretariat, provided context on the error occurring within the previous I&E statement, underlining the Secretariat's apologies that this had occurred. A shift in business-wide accountancy and time-tracking systems had taken place at Mindfully Wired across the previous 18 months, affecting the tracking of financial and time-based information underpinning outputs such as the I&E statement. Alongside these new systems, a Head of Finance had been appointed. In the preparation of the previous I&E, a step to escalate the statement to the Head of Finance had been missed, resulting in a statement which did not fully account for the value of the grant received, nor reflect the balance brought forward into the project as per updated Mindfully Wired accounts in 2022-23.

Mrs Ryan provided wider reassurances around financial management of Mindfully Wired and the APPG - noting that the company now operates set-aside and deferred income accounts, where grants are placed and not spent until they have been evidenced as earned within the new time-tracking systems in place. Beyond this, it was noted that Mindfully Wired operates as a company Ltd by Guarantee, such that no grant funding can be taken as a dividend payment by Directors. Additionally, the Secretariat had been reviewed or audited twice in recent years - by OpenDemocracy and by an independent governance consultant - and found to be high-performing in terms of transparency and effective governance.

The new I&E statement was agreed by all Members present and an action was taken to post this on the APPG website within the week. Additionally, it was agreed - and an action was taken - that the Secretariat should at no point go into overspend for the project (even if it is considered that funds can be recouped at a future date).

The motion to approve the I&E statement was proposed by the Chair and seconded by the Treasurer.

4. Discussion of future programme of work

A proposed future programme of work was presented to Members. This included events on topics proposed by the APPG Expert Panel, with many events designed to be responsive to upcoming policy moments - such as anticipated consultations on 'frontrunner FMPs'. Other topics included the importance of fishing to food supply, and the implementation of HPMA in England and Scotland.

The proposed APPG event in partnership with The Seafarers' Charity, to be held in October 2023, was discussed in more detail. It was noted that Seafarers' would like to announce the event during Maritime Safety Week, on the 5th July, via a press release. It was agreed this could proceed.

It was further agreed that the APPG Chair would write to Baroness Vere of Norbiton, the Minister with responsibility for maritime safety, to invite her to attend the event and engage with the industry.

The proposed topics for future work, and the associated delivery budget, were approved. The motion to approve the programme of work was proposed by the Treasurer and seconded by the Chair.

5. Conclusion of the meeting

The Chair thanked all present for their attendance at the EGM, and the meeting concluded.