

Whitstable Fishermen's Association

Chairman

Chris Attenborough

Secretary

Esther Gilson

Treasurer

Jean West

17th October 2022

FOR THE ATTENTION OF KEIFCA CHAIRMAN AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

It has come to the attention of the Whitstable Fishermen's Association that some of our members misunderstood the documentation provided during the second consultation phase of the cockle fishery review. Fishermen completed the questionnaire based on complex guidance which did not provide enough clarity for them and consequently they made choices which were based on misunderstanding.

The perception given to fishermen via the Consultation was that the Jamaican option would allow the inshore boats to have a small scale fishery in Area 15. Crucially, what wasn't made clear enough, was that the current cockle fleet would not be able to fish Areas, 11, 13 and 15. Our members were anxious not to miss out in the future and therefore felt pressurised to make a choice. This was despite our members only wanting to predominantly fish in Area 15, not other parts of the regulated fishery on a permanent basis.

Our members have worked in harmony with the current TECFO fleet for many years and we have no wish to adversely affect their industry, whether this is by preventing them from fishing on any of the cockle beds, or by forcing current licence holders into a 7 year re-licensing cycle. Instead we want to be able to work alongside the cockle fleet, in a sustainable, flexible, well managed way, without decreasing their fishery in any way or changing the TECFO framework which has worked so successfully since 1994.

The current cockle industry represents one of the main fisheries of the Thames Estuary, supporting our community in Whitstable by providing local employment and re-investment. Our Association is united in wanting to ensure that the stability and continuity provided by the cockle industry can

continue unhindered. The complexity and length of both Consultations, has produced results are divisive and inaccurate, and we wish to distance ourselves from these.

With kind regards,



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