

MPA and Renewables Consultations

I attended events in Brodick , Campbeltown , Oban and Craignure and found all of these events to be handled in a professional manner by both Marine Scotland and SNH/JNCC staff.

I asked my IFG Chairs to attend some of the meetings in their own areas and my feedback includes their input from those meetings.

Attendances were inconsistent , good in some areas and poor in other areas ; there were occasions where this was impacted by good weather and good fishing , resulting in non-attendance of active fishermen. An example of this could be the returning Campbeltown fleet into port between 8.30 and 9.30 PM when the consultation event finished at 8.00PM. Attendees themselves seemed to be wide ranging ; an example of this would be holiday makers from England visiting the event in Brodick and groups of students attending events in the Moray Firth area.

Interaction with fishermen was also patchy as many thought their representatives should be attending events and answering on their behalf ; that may well be the case but there are fishermen who are not members of FAs or IFGs/etc and that remains a concern. Many fishermen felt there were too many consultations all at once and felt overwhelmed by the entire process.

There was no doubt that the fishing industry would require to work closely with renewables companies and marine spatial planners for MPAs , in the future , and to this end many fishermen and those in coastal communities around our coast would like to see better communications between industries and more transparency in projects and proposals where potential impacts are likely for the fishing industry and their communities .

The perception amongst fishermen was that they would be the ones to suffer over the introduction of MPAs and renewable energy sites.

I encouraged as many as possible to respond to the consultations and to have their voice heard ; I hope they have done that and I look forward to the publication of the consultation next year.