

## ***Sailfish Project***

Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

Present:- (Members) John O'Mahoney, Feargal O'Connor, Joe Aston, Con Minihane.  
For the Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority:- Peter Whelan (Executive Chairman), Andrew Kinneen, Michael O'Mahoney.

Group business: It was decided to initiate the raising of finance by asking members to subscribe €20.00. Members present gave said sum to John O'Mahoney, treasurer. He will open an account with Skibbereen Credit Union for it. All subscriptions will be gratefully received. Coordinator Joe Aston gave an account of a preliminary meeting with West Cork Leader, where he outlined the feasibility study which we are hoping to carry out (see below). They were very interested and mooted the possibility of 90% funding.

The meeting with the SFPA was sought by themselves, in the context of the up-coming review of the Common Fisheries Policy. They did not contend with our assertion that the present quota system is failing in its objectives, and that a more effective system will necessarily comprise more technical measures, in terms both of fishing techniques and the restriction of effort, and will require the active support and participation of all stakeholders, especially the fishermen themselves.

Such an approach cannot be aspired to if the necessary measures simply make life impossible for fishermen, if there appears to be no alternative available beyond sticking with their present way of working to the bitter end. Even apart from considerations of conservation, in a context where the next peak in the price of oil is likely to finally render trawling for example uneconomic, there is a most urgent imperative to develop passive fishing methods that do not depend on the sheer power of diesel engines.

So our visitors expressed great interest in our project and offered their strong support, which is again very encouraging. Sincere thanks!

This outline of the Sailfish Project was discussed and approved by members present:-

### ***Feasibility Study for Development of Sail and Fuel Cell Powered Commercial Fishing Vessel***

- 1) Source and install electric/hydrogen fuel cell drive in punt, evaluate same for commercial use.
- 2) Research and develop hydrogen production with renewable energy, probably wind.
- 3) Research and develop storage and distribution of hydrogen.
- 4) Research availability of suitable fish stocks, such as albacore tuna, pollack, mackerel and squid, and assess sustainability of their exploitation.
- 5) Research, evaluate and develop suitable fishing techniques, such as trolling or jigging.
- 6) Solicit and evaluate plans and costings for prototype sail and electric powered commercial fishing vessel. At this stage, we envisage the electric motor also functioning as an alternator, with surplus power from the sails being used via the propellor to charge a bank of batteries or supercaps, augmenting the power of the hydrogen fuel cells that would carry the electric base load.
- 7) Establish management structure for finance, construction and operation of same, on a research basis.

While it is clearly going to be a major challenge to finance such a project, seeing that it answers to so many of the major challenges that we face, in terms of fuel and food security, sustainability and conservation at sea, employment and climate change, there appears to be agreement on all sides that it is something that simply has to be done.

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