

Background information: Ørsted and fishermen

Agreements during construction of UK offshore wind farms:

During the construction of an offshore wind farm in the UK, in order to ensure our vessels are able to conduct their work safely and efficiently there are times when we must request access to certain areas of the sea. In these instances, we always inform fishermen and other users of the sea in advance. Our approach in the UK is to find a fair agreement for any fishermen with evidence that they have been affected. If an agreement cannot be reached directly between Ørsted and affected fishermen, we will offer a mediation option whereby an independent third party with relevant expertise can propose a fair settlement amount. Building a sustainable relationship with fishermen and other users of the sea is very important to us.

“By using official landings data, fishermen’s accounts and other sources, we have been able to reach fair agreements between Ørsted and Holderness fishermen on numerous occasions. The central feature of this process has been the foundation of our discussions in independently verifiable evidence. By working together, we have arrived at a process that everyone regards as fair and honest.”

As well as ensuring that affected fishermen aren’t adversely impacted by our activities, Ørsted also voluntarily contributes to fishing groups all over the UK via West of Morecambe Fisheries:

Mike Cohen, Chairman of National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations, 2016-2018

West of Morecambe Fisheries (WoMF)

Established in 2013, WoMF is a not-for-profit UK company that manages funding for fishing community projects provided by offshore wind farm owners. In total, around £0.9 million of funding has been donated on a voluntary basis, over 95% of which (c. £850k) has been donated by Ørsted. Most recently £300,000 of funding was announced in February 2017. The fund is independently managed and has so far benefitted a wide range of fishermen’s groups throughout the UK, with more projects to be announced.

“I have personally witnessed WOMF at work, here in the Irish Sea. It has funded a series of very worthwhile projects that continue to benefit the fishing industry and has helped forge constructive relationships with the developers of Offshore Wind Farms in the region. The feedback that I get from fishermen is very positive and I would like to see this continuing on into the future”

Tom Watson (2016) NFFO, Irish Sea Onshore Fishing Industry Representative

“The West of Morecambe Fisheries Fund is demonstrating an exemplary approach of how marine developers can work together with existing fishing communities. The fund is helping to transform what may initially and understandably be seen as a source of anguish and a potential threat by local fishing communities into something that helps to foster positive relationships and provide much needed support to fishermen so they can maintain and improve their businesses. It offers an important contribution to achieving co-existence between two industries operating in the same marine space.”

Dale Rodmell (2014) (Assistant Chief Executive) National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations

“The West of Morecambe Fisheries Fund has provided much needed support to local fisherman. It is good to see industries that share our seas with fishermen supporting their work, and the communities they come from.”

Cat Smith M.P. Lancaster and Fleetwood

“B & M Fishing LLP would like to take this opportunity to thank the wind farms for their contribution to us ... and we appreciate the good communication”

Anne Bynham (2016) Director, B & M Fishing LLP, Fleetwood

Case study: Holderness Fishing Industry Group

The Westermost Rough Offshore Wind Farm is located off the east coast of England within highly productive fishing grounds for both lobster and crab. In planning the wind farm, local fishermen expressed concerns that construction could have a deleterious effect upon local lobster and crab stocks and therefore affect their future livelihoods. The Environmental Impact Assessment predicted only minor impacts, and Ørsted supported a bespoke study with the aim of addressing any residual concerns.



The fishermen active in and around the wind farm belong to the Holderness Fishing Industry Group (HFIG). Founded in 2011 by East Yorkshire fishermen, HFIG aims to protect and promote the local crab and lobster fishery, and to facilitate co-operation and coexistence with other marine sectors.

Ørsted took the opportunity to collaborate with HFIG and Hull University on a long-term study examining potential effects on shellfish that might be associated with the construction and operation of the Westermost Rough wind farm. The research initiative is a significant undertaking, funded by Ørsted, and conducted using a dedicated survey vessel, the MV Huntress. The Huntress research vessel is a unique venture, owned and operated by HFIG but crewed by a mix of professional scientists and experienced fishermen.

The wind farm study is the first of its kind to be conducted anywhere in the world and is proving to be of significant value in assuaging fishermen's concerns about offshore wind development. One aspect of this work was recently presented at a major international conference on lobster fisheries in Maine. This paper discusses the potential for wind farms to have beneficial implications for the long-term management of shellfish stocks, by acting as quasi-marine protected areas. It has brought international attention to the work and its results, with particular interest being generated as a result of the positive collaboration between the fishing and offshore wind industries.

All Steering Group members agreed the survey was undertaken to a very high standard and many positive comments were made, a selection of which are detailed below:

"Fishermen can sometimes be skeptical of surveys, but not this one, as it was conducted under commercially realistic conditions"

Mike Cohen (CEO HFIG)

"There is shared ownership of the data and Ørsted should be congratulated"

Dr Magnus Johnson (University of Hull)

"This is a collaborative and innovative approach to survey design which uses the fishing community"

Mike Roach (HFIG researcher)

"The design of the survey by the Steering Group and the undertaking of the survey by the fishing industry with a Client Representative on board at all times is a "belt and braces" approach to ensuring credibility of the results"

Dr Julian Addison (Independent Shellfish expert)

"The approach used in this survey has helped with 'trust building' between the fishing industry and Ørsted and in the results that have been obtained"

Jamie Robertson (Mate of the Huntress)