



# Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

## Panel

### Review of the Marine Spatial Plan

**Witnesses: Mr. S. Viney and Mr. K. Singleton**

Friday, 6th September 2024

**Panel:**

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair)

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair)

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South

**Witnesses:**

Mr. S. Viney

Mr. K. Singleton

[12:07]

**Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair):**

Just to let you know - I am just looking at the dates of what is happening - this week we are collecting evidence. We interviewed the Minister already on Wednesday, and after this week we are closing the submissions, we are getting in also witnesses and we will be starting to write the report. The report is due on 14th October. You will receive a copy before of the sections where you have inputted into for you to review as well at that stage. But it will be launched on 14th October and we, as a States Assembly, will have the debate on 22nd October. How that works is the Marine Spatial Plan is already, as the Minister ... the draft has been presented already to the States Assembly. We, as Scrutiny, are going to be making a report that we will then publish alongside that and then all the States Assembly will hopefully read both documents and then decide where they want to go. The Minister has made it very clear, on Wednesday, he is not putting any more amendments or anything

further to the plan, but we are able to, as part of our report, not only make recommendations that the Minister has to respond to those recommendations, but also if we feel as a panel we want to do any amendments we also can do that, and they will be debated on the day. Also any States Members can also do their own amendments as well to be debated on the day. So there is still a flow, I suppose, for the plan. We received your submissions so we have that as a basis, but really this is an open conversation to hear again how you feel about the plan and what you would like to tell us.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

We are not really here to drill down into any particular thing. It is just to give the feeling of how ourselves as individuals and a lot of fishermen feel about the whole process basically and what it means to us. Because obviously we are actually probably the only ones that are affected by the Marine Spatial Plan, by the marine part of it.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

What type of fishing ...?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

We are trawlers.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

So you are trawlers?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Yes. Mobile gear.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Mobile gear, yes.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

I have been in the fishing industry for the best part of 40 years. I have done different types of fishing; mobile 28 years I think I am up to, scalloping and trawling. I have built a business up, and so has Kevin, over quite a few years and probably got invested in my boat and gear, et cetera, in the region of about £300,000. The prospect of the marine park coming along is a very big concern because we are going to be basically put out of the areas where we actually fish.

**Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South:**

Sorry, can I just say, you used the word “process”. Concerned about the process. Do you mean the process which has been done?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Yes.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

The way in which the process has been carried out? I just need to get into your thought process as opposed to whether it is right or wrong, but the process of how.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Obviously the consultation was where it all started from, really; the workshops, et cetera, was out to general public and stakeholders. We did attend some meetings. We did not think sometimes they were structured in a way that it was, shall we say, non-biased, or it seemed that the point of having a marine park was the focus, was the end goal, to reach that point. We feel that we are basically collateral damage to what is trying to be achieved. The previous Minister obviously was Jonathan Renouf. We did not have too many meetings with the Minister present. We did not really feel he listened particularly well to our concerns and particularly with the economic ...

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

So it is the previous Minister or the current Minister?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

The current Minister has obviously taken over now and we have had quite good communication with Steve since he has taken over. He has been in the position before, and he is quite a marine-based chap. He has dealt with the oysters and all sorts of things, and he is a seagoer himself, so he is probably a good man for the job. He has listened. We had a meeting with him yesterday, but previous to that we felt that the end goal of the marine part was basically targeting the mobile gear. Obviously the idea to protect the seabed, you have to protect something that is from something. So we were seen as the ones that were basically causing the so-called damage, if you like. Therefore the marine park was drawn around the areas that we fished, which seems to us that if that becomes the marine park, then we are displaced to somewhere else. So, it seems all the effort has gone into the areas where we fished, the data collecting, the seabed analysis, et cetera, but we feel that a lot of the areas that could have made up the 30 per cent have been ignored. The problem being is we are going to be displaced from the areas where we traditionally fished. We are probably going back to the 1800s when the oyster fishing was live and very, very large around the east coast. We are going to be displaced to other areas, which we feel have not been surveyed. So, if you like, we are just being moved, the problem is being moved. We still have to make a living. That is what we are

out there for. We love fishing, but we are also out there to make money. So we feel that all they are doing is shifting the problem. The public are: "Oh, the seabed is going to be protected", but in reality we are just moving somewhere else where there could be maerl beds, there could be a lot of other types of habitats. Within the blanket area, if you like, there are areas that are not ... they do not hold the species that O.S.P.A.R. (Oslo and Paris Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic) did want to protect. So it seems a bit ... on the outside, it looks great, but the reality is we are only going to get shifted somewhere else, and we will have to work longer hours, we will have to intensify our fishing in a way to get the same return. I do not know if you have got any questions on that.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

It was a shame that they did not include deep water habitats because we have worked all in the Island's waters and we know that there are some really good areas out there, nursery areas for fish and for shellfish, and they have not been included in the plan. They have kind of stuck with this whole O.S.P.A.R. list.

[12:15]

The feeling in the fleet is that they have just included areas that are inside Jersey's territorial waters that they have absolute control over. Because if they annoy the French too much, then there will be all sorts of accusations flying in from Europe. So it was disappointing that they did not take more time because it was very rushed into. Francis Binney, his acknowledgement, it was a lot of work in a short amount of time. But it is just a shame that more time was not taken because they could have actually genuinely protected more areas and they could have actually worked with us. In the past, we have done scallop work with the Fisheries Department to establish different things with them. It is just a shame that it was not a more science-based approach. There are lots of assumptions in these charts that they put out there. They are very big areas of blanket-ban style to try and bring the numbers of the M.P.A. (marine protected area) up. But within those areas, there are lots of bits where there is nothing to protect. There are big mud banks or there is just generally nothing that is on that piece of seabed. I just feel it is a shame that more time was not taken there.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

On those bits of areas that, as you said, the mudbanks and stuff, would you ... you could still work on those? Those I think are areas that you would actually find scallops?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

It depends on the O.S.P.A.R. because the things that we target do not necessarily have to be in among the O.S.P.A.R. species that the department is trying to protect. We can work around them.

There is definitely scope there, but the perception is that maerl banks and seabed is absolutely everywhere across the seabed. The public, when I speak to people, they seem to think the scallop dredger will leave the harbour and the whole seabed ahead of us is completely pristine. It is not. There are dead areas of seabed all over the place. The fact is that we work close to and in among these areas because that is where things grow.

**Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:**

Can I ask, because you mentioned the French and the French fleet. How does your equipment differ from theirs? Because if you are saying that they might have left these deeper areas, I have heard that they have got bigger ... I do not know a huge amount about fishing, to be quite honest. We have heard that they have bigger boats, so does that mean they can pull deeper and dredge and trawl deeper? So you guys generally do not hit those deep waters quite so often, but they do, is that ...?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Basically, we are being forced out to fish among a foreign fleet in our own waters, and they are larger boats, they are subsidised, they get all types of subsidies. Even at the moment they are getting a fuel subsidy going back to COVID; they are still collecting that. It seems a shame that we are being moved out. Our only exclusive areas are inside our 3-mile, and we are losing a lot of that to the marine park. Then we are going to be pushed out into an area where we have to compete with a foreign fleet, which is a lot larger than us. There are only about 20, 25 boats left in the fishing fleet now. It was up in the 70s and 80s a few years ago, and half of that is on mobile gear. We are having to compete with a larger subsidised fleet in deeper waters further offshore. That is reality, that is what we are looking at, which means we have to travel further, longer days, and it is just more difficult and exposed to more weather as well. I mean, talking about the meeting with Steve and the mention of the windfarm, for instance, when you have the marine park and then you have got a windfarm you are reducing the area that we can fish. To say that the area where the windfarm is that we do not fish there very often is correct but once it is a windfarm and we have got the marine park, we probably would have to utilise those areas, but we are not going to. The French fishing fleet that predominantly fish in where the wind farm is, they are going to be displaced further into our waters. So basically we are being concentrated into a smaller and smaller area, and unfortunately the scallops are not everywhere, if you know what I mean. People see water and they think: "Oh there are scallops." There is not. They are in particular habitats that are not dead pieces of ground, they are lively. The reason they are there is because the food is good for them there, the seabed is healthy. We are just going to be squeezed more and more into a smaller area. Then that puts pressure on those smaller areas. Management is something that is going to come along afterwards. So we are losing areas, then we are going to have quotas, et cetera, and it just seems to be all going one way and making it more difficult for us. The Island has got to decide whether it wants a fishing

fleet because we are on the edge right now. If you lose a few more boats, the merchants will go because the scallop export is a big part of what is keeping them here now, keeping them going. So we are at critical mass. We go past that, the whole thing will collapse. So the economic survey should have been done much earlier on rather than at the end. I know there are arguments that we cannot have the economic survey until you know what is going to be affected. But we feel that it has rushed ahead so far now that it is just ... we have got to accept it. There is not a lot we can do about it.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

I am just trying to get my thoughts in a row here. One of the arguments, obviously, is your activity is not “sustainable”. Could you explain why what you do ... or how you ensure that there are scallops there? You talked about it being dredged for ... these places being dredged for 100 years. What is it about ... how do you recognise sustainability, in other words, keeping your business sustainable?

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Can I just put a layer on that as well, is that a lot of our submissions ... we have got a lot of submissions of people who are concerned about dredging? So I think that that adds to David’s question, is just to understand that.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Yes, because I do not think we understand.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

How do you see we can be sustainable.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, absolutely. Jersey is quite a unique market. But we have got a fish-to-order basis, so we will take the orders in from the customers, and then we will go out, and then we will catch only what we can sell. We have not got a situation like the U.K. (United Kingdom) or like Europe, where a boat can just stay out around the clock, come in, get rid of it; that is not there. We lost our rights to land into Granville during the Brexit negotiations. That is out now. So we cannot go there. But generally, it is just fish to order, and we are quite responsible fishers in the areas. Because the scallop fishery is generally very good, we will fish it down to a certain point. Let us say if you get down to 100 kilos and then you move on. We are certainly not out there ...

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

What do you mean by 100 kilos? You will be pulling 100 out?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Per haul.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Per haul. So when you say it is down to 100 kilos on a haul do you mean that before ... when you start you could be doing 200 kilos or 300 kilos in a haul?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Absolutely.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

So every time you pop that dredger down and you are pulling something out, you see the decline in the number you are picking up?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes. Absolutely.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Sorry, I just want to get my head around exactly what the process is.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, because we want to be able to come around to that piece of ground in a year's time and do exactly the same thing. This is seen on our chart plot. We constantly move around and what we are trying to chase after is the yield, the amount of weight that we get out of the scallops. We are constantly moving around, looking to keep that yield as high as possible, keep the profits up. Our gear that we use, our fishing gear, is a hell of a lot lighter. When you look towards the U.K. fleet, big heavy steel bars up to 6 or 7 tonnes at a time. But in Jersey it is unique to Jersey. Again, what the fishing fleet has done, particularly since I have started, is they have noticed that we can get away with using a hell of a lot lighter fishing gear. Actually on my boat I took 25 per cent of the gear off the boat because there was just no need to be pulling it around. There were that many scallops ...

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Because of the fuel cost presumably, the more weight you are ...

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, the more weight you are pulling ... but for me that was for my business, and what it needed there was just absolutely no need to be hauling around all this gear and filling the boat up with fish when I could only sell a certain amount. So it was beneficial, it was less fuel. We do have generally

a very responsible fleet. But we are interested in talking to the Fisheries Department and actually bringing more gear measures in again to try and make sure that we are not using as much fuel and that we are not taking as much up from the seabed, like ring sizes and things like that. We are very, very open to a managed fishery. It is a hell of a shame because the reason that the permit scheme has just been implemented on the Jersey boats is because of applications from U.K. companies and the U.K. companies are very big commercial companies that work in a completely separate way. They will get a boat which is twice the size of ours and they will just tell the skipper: "You are going there and you are going there for 3 weeks and you are going to stay going up and down for 3 weeks solid" and it has happened up off Guernsey. We have had to watch it on the marine traffic app. These English boats have come in and they do not move. That is the point. Once a piece of seabed is worked that aggressively with that heavy gear set, that is when it takes 15 or 20 years to rejuvenate. But if you are responsible and you actually move your way around the ground, it can work really well. We have proved it by our landing numbers.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

That is a really interesting thing you are saying about the U.K. So you are saying that U.K. fishing boats are coming or do they hire people here to do it?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

No, they applied, or they were trying to get fishing rights to come down here into Jersey's waters because they have had a lot of M.P.A.s in their waters and have displaced them. So it goes back to the displacement. They are willing to travel 100 miles across the Channel to get their fish somewhere else. Now, we just did not want to see this aggressive type of fishing so we actually spoke to Fisheries, and we said: "Hang on, that is going to take our futures away because once one English boat comes in then there are not really any grounds to say that others cannot."

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

So at the moment they are stopping them?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Due to the permit scheme that has been implemented ... yes, it is a pain and it does not allow local people here in Jersey to buy a trawler until the Fisheries have said they can do a stock assessment and just make sure that what is coming out, the maximum yield, is sustainable and that that fishery is protected, which is something that we completely agree with.

**Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:**



Again, apologies for being late. An incident on Victoria Avenue apart from everything else. You refer to the lighter equipment - a very basic point - but presuming the basic thing is the lighter the equipment the less damage it does to the seabed, is that the point or not?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, pretty much, because if you go over a piece of seabed ... let us say if I put on a set of gear that was a standard set that you would order from a manufacturer in the U.K., it would be up to 25 per cent to 30 per cent heavier. Now the heavier that is, the more it goes in. So what we have realised is lighten everything up. There is no need to be dragging up a ton of granite when you can just bring up scallops.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

So apart from your own interest in keeping it light, is there any ... does the department draw any distinction?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

No. it is all standard.

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

So there is scope there for ...

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, we would absolutely support that as an industry.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Technical measures going forward for management, we would be looking at the weight of the dredgers, the number of dredgers. Those types of technical measures are what we want to work towards. If it is more efficient for us using, say, larger rings, leaving ... we hardly bring anything up from the seabed now, the way that our gear has evolved, apart from scallops. I think the public perception of dredging is that we shoot these dredgers, massive steel things, we drag them along and we haul the seabed on to the deck and then that is the process. It is not. Dredging to me is a horrible word. I mean dredging is like aggregate boats in the North Sea bringing up the seabed and whatever. But what we are doing is ... as I say, we do not destroy the seabed, in my view. Okay, we disturb the seabed but after a few months it comes back, you would not even know that we have been there. The tidal ranges we have got over here, the storms, the weather conditions, et cetera, we go to areas where the seabed will actually move as much as 2 or 3 feet.

[12:30]

It goes from sand to rock and what have you, so it is a very aggressive environment that we have got around Jersey. There is natural, if you like, damage; if you see it as damage. Nature does a lot more damage than what we could actually do to the seabed. Just one 39-foot tide ... one tide overnight will do more ... move the seabed around more than I could do in 10 lifetimes, the energy that is out there. But what we really want to get through is that our businesses now, through this marine park, have been ... made it probably impossible to sell. It has been devalued. Businesses we have taken years to build up, and the economic survey which we felt was the most important thing that should have been done first before the plan and the areas were outlined, because now we feel that all we are doing is trying to claw back bits and grandfather rights and a few areas that could be surveyed. Also what we do not know is the uncertainty of what has been ... how it is going to ... where is it going to end? They are looking at researching more and more areas and Steve said himself it is not about 30 by 30; it is whatever needs protecting will be protected. So we do not actually know where it is going to end and how much we are going to ... where is it a point where it is not viable for us to maintain staying in the business space? How long do we wait for these areas to go looking for other areas to fish? Now we have got trackers. If we are going to fish an area, are those areas then going to be surveyed to see what damage we are doing there and then included in a larger marine park. We need to know: is this the marine park? Is that it finished 30 by 30? It seems that it is not. It seems that there are going to be a lot of N.G.O.s (non-governmental organisations), Blue Marine, some local ones that will be looking ... still carrying on research to protect more and more and more. If the objective is to get rid of dredging completely or mobile gears, say so. Decommission us or find us other methods of fishing. The department should be investing. If there are other ways of making a living from the sea, they should go out and do that for us. We cannot afford to gamble on trying a different type of fishery, whether it be squid fishing or whatever. We are in the game we are in. We have got all our eggs in one basket. It has been a good business. I was potting previously. I was encouraged to go scalloping because there was a lot of pressure on the lobsters and crabs, but that was 25 to 30 years ago. Now I am being pushed out of something else. I thought my boat was going to be my retirement package, but realistically it has gone from 300 down to 200, if I can sell it. So it is a big concern. Where is it going to end? Do we keep investing or do we just accept that we are going to be pushed out? We need to know, we want an answer.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

It is a good point. I just want to bring up on that economic survey point that you were making quite a strong point on and I wanted to ask you about that, because what we heard on Wednesday from the Minister and from his officers was that it was really difficult to do that economic survey because they had not got the data from yourselves and from others to be able to do it and that is why they

had to delay it. Because I think we have, as a panel, noticed that why would they not do an economic survey earlier, and that was the response that we got. I just wanted to play that ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

I strongly disagree with that because we mentioned that very early on, that the economic survey should be done. We were told right at the beginning: "No, we do that at the end." So it was not due to ... and we have supplied data. There was a fear from us of the data that we provided would be used in some way against us because they have only drawn the marine part around the areas where we fished. If we had have provided even more data, it might have been drawn around a few more areas, if you like. Where was that data going to end up? There was, within the department, some people that were previously part of N.G.O.s such as Blue Marine, et cetera, if that was data that was seen by them, they cannot unsee it. They cannot change what their beliefs are. I am not saying there is a conflict of interest, but they are minded to ... they are marine biologists. They do like to obviously save the planet is the thing that is going on. We felt that the data would be better provided to Steve Webster who did the economic impact survey. We would not mind him seeing it but we did not want it in some way used against us. Kevin has submitted some plotted data to you, which you can see that ...

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Yes, we did.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Which he did not want going public and there is a reason for that. But it does show you the intensity, and that is just Kevin's plotting lines on there. So if you overlaid mine and several other boats, there is a lot of activity in those areas that are being closed. But we had meetings and we did provide data. Unfortunately ... we have got trackers on us now. Had we had trackers at the beginning of the process, or maybe 2 or 3 years ago, the data would be available. So if you like, why was it not left ... why were the trackers not fitted and they track us for 2, 3 years and then work out where the marine parks go. It is basically just drawn around where they know we work. They have come out, spotted us there, and then ... actually some of the data that we provided, the box has been drawn around it.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

So do you feel, because I think this is a tension that ... and it is interesting as well and something I guess for the panel is that the message has been very clear that this Marine Spatial Plan, as a whole, but of course M.P.A.s within that, is the bit that people are focusing on, but it is ... we got handed it and it is that thick. But that it has been based on scientific evidence. They have done for many, many years data on many areas of the marine environment and therefore that is what they

are basing everything on, but I am hearing a very different ... your message is very clear, that you are saying no, they want to stop the dredging. That is the first thing. They want to stop it, so therefore they need to find out where we are dredging and therefore then drawing lines around rather than saying that, actually, there is this tension because the scientific evidence is there, that there are protected areas under the O.S.P.A.R. and therefore ... in a way, unfortunately, because of it being good habitats you are also dredging there.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

That is right. It is protection, is it not, because the whole meaning of the word "protection" is you are protecting those areas from us, from us utilising those areas of catch? Otherwise if we did not fish there, there would be no need to protect them because you would not protect them from anything. So the fear is that we move somewhere else and then they need to protect those areas as well.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

I see where the ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

You can see there is no point in drawing a marine park where there is no damage being done.

**Deputy T.A. Coles:**

It is sounding like if this was more of an intuitive process that those ... we will call them fields for a better word ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

That is a brilliant way of putting it because if you take out 6 fields from a farmer that has got 12 he intensifies his work in those 6 fields that are left.

**Deputy T.A. Coles:**

But at the same time you can also leave a field go fallow to recover, to regenerate.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

That is what we do. It is exactly what we do.

**Deputy T.A. Coles:**

So actually you think if this plan was more in a structured way, so okay you are going to have either seasonal or annual or decade ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Managed.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

It is the managed bit.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

A combination of seasonal with the management and an M.P.A. A marine park, in my view, should not mean that there is no mobile gear in it. You can have a marine park, but you could have areas within that marine park. You could still have your 30 per cent, but where does it say that you must have no mobile gear in a marine park? I do not know if it does, because there are marine parks in parts of the world where you have got access with mobile gear.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

I think that comes back to what is a definition of a marine park, is the big thing around this. In the international convention of 30 by 30, the idea is to protect not just now but in the future. So it is not about necessarily ... I hear you completely saying "because of us", but at the international level it is about the future as well. Many different kinds of human activity, it is not necessarily just for one particular human activity. I think what you are saying is that you feel that these ... in the Jersey waters in this particular instances the M.P.A. is very much a clash with your particular human activity because you are seeing it is exactly in your area of work rather than it being ... it could be in other places like you said about the deep water habitat. It is an interesting point.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

It is important to tell the panel as well, that the tone of the engagement with the consultations, the tone was set very early on. We went as a group, as you know, where there were fishermen and merchants at our table, and all the people that gained from the activity financially. We were shown ... well, I think there were 2 consultants that Jonathan brought in from somewhere. We were shown all these lovely pictures of all this work that they have done, and it was like: "Okay, well, that is great" and then they came around with a piece of paper, 4-inch square piece of paper, and they said: "Can you put your thoughts down on this piece of paper?" It was like: "Wow, that is how we are going to open this dialogue. That is how this is going to go." We have been on the defensive from the beginning. We feel like it could have gone a lot ... it could have gone a completely different way.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

If we had been involved more.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, but to do that.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Rather than be on the outside we could have been on the inside.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

How on earth am I supposed to put down on a piece of paper that I am going to lose 80 per cent of my income? How do I even begin to do that? Then we went on to the other town hall, we went to one in St. Brelade; same again as a group. If it was not for us being there, there probably would have only been 2 other people there. But we were steered away from talking about what we wanted to talk about because everything was just concentrated on fishing. The other people in the room were supporting us, going: "Yes, we want answers to this."

**Deputy T.A. Coles:**

There was no really good proper round-table mixed discussions between, say ... you called yourself commercial people who gain from your activities, but there was none of the alternative view put there, so you could, as we are now, discussing as normal civilised human beings that well this is your view that is our view.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

We did go up to Howard Davis Farm and we sat down with a chart. Again, just one hour of our time. At the town halls, another hour. St. Brelade's another hour. So maybe 3 hours of total time where people could have this exchange. It did not feel like enough. They say it is the Marine Spatial Plan, but it just does not feel like it to us. It feels like it is a mobile gear issue than more so a whole spatial plan because there is so much in that plan that is not being talked about by anybody. I have not even looked at it. I just do not know the outline of what happens in Jersey seas, but it all comes down to this. If it is such a contentious issue, more time should be spent on it. Just to rush it through and have a bad taste in the air. I think a good, solid, managed fishery where things are absolutely protected that need to be. There is scope for other areas, working with the industry. It is great to bring in these kids from university and go out with their cameras for the afternoon. That is brilliant, but we have the means to go and do the testing with the guys. We can work with them.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

I am hearing as well, what I think is interesting and something that we have noticed as well, about the management of fishing, because a lot of us are not experts in this area. So we have been learning a lot this last week, especially intensely on the difference. It is interesting that I think from the Minister's side - both Ministers - and also mainly marine resources, they see this as a spatial plan, whereas many stakeholders see it as part of the management of fishery management because, as you are saying, you are being managed because you know there are big chunks of areas that

you are not going to be able to fish in. In that sense that becomes part of fishing management, does it not, without even thinking ...

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

Basically draw a distinction between management and ...

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Exactly and it becomes a blurred line whereas if you just stepped it back and just had it as a spatial plan or ... more of us are more in line with the Island Plan. The Island Plan is kind of that ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

It is easier to see.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Exactly. But because we have been saying it is the Island Plan and the Island Plan does not have quite so ... it is a bit prescriptive.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Probably to the public the idea of a marine park, it has been compared during this process with marine parks in Barbados.

[12:45]

You go and swim out 20 feet in Barbados and you are among corals and all types of tropical fish, et cetera. This is not going to create anything. I do not actually think it will do anything apart from tick boxes for the O.S.P.A.R. Convention. It will impact us severely. The idea that once we have got a marine park it will fill with scallops, they will breed and there will be scallops everywhere, there will be lobsters everywhere. I am sorry, that is not the case. Nature is in charge of what is out there.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

You do not think that habitat areas ... the protected areas they are saying because it is not a park, we know that. It is a protected area of what you cannot see.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

I do not think when they go back in a few years' time and film the seabed again you will see any difference to now, to be honest. The illusion that it is going to ... we will have kelp forests and all this kind of thing going on out there and there would be dolphins and tuna fish; that is fantasy. I mean what is there is there now, it has been there for 100 years. We have got tuna fish coming

down into our waters we have never had. Anglers are moaning that there is no mackerel and it is down to us somehow. It is not. There are tuna fish out there. There are seals out there. They are all predators. It is a healthy fishery. I have been here 28 years and I am going back to the same areas that I went 28 years ago and fishing and catching well. Catching more now than I ever have. Now, when I started fishing, there were spider crabs crawling up Corbière and the ponds and everywhere. We have got that again now. Six years ago, the lobster fishing was fantastic. Best I had ever seen it. But when I started fishing, it was like it is now. So half a basket of lobster and 2 tonne of spider crab you would see, but you could sell the spider crab. What has happened is that we have lost the market for spider crab. So everyone has been concentrated onto fishing for lobster. Lobster, just by nature's coincidences of weather conditions, et cetera, they have not obviously been breeding as well as other years, and it is a big cycle. If we get another frost like we had in 1962 and wipe the spider crab out and the octopus. Then the lobsters, it will suit them more. It is not all down to human interaction with the fishing environment that causes all the things that go on out there. A lot is down to nature. Right now, obviously, there is the climate, increasing temperatures, et cetera. That is affecting it. It is not all down to us.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

No, of course, it is not.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Creating a marine park is not going to change the jet stream, if you like.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Another thing I would like to mention as well is just how important the scallop fishery is locally here in Jersey. Although we do export quite a lot, it makes up quite a huge amount.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

How much do you export, do you think, compared ... I mean not necessarily from the kilos but just like percentage-wise of what the boats are pulling in?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Percentage-wise I would say about 70 per cent.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Yes, 60 per cent, 70 per cent.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Sixty per cent or 70 per cent is exported out.



**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

But simply because the market for Jersey is not big enough.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

There is a commercial liability issue here, is there not?

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, that is right. But the other benefits, people moan on about the trawlers and what they do. Steve will have 2 guys on board within the 2 crew on the boat. There are 2 guys in the processing facility. These are all people that are being paid. I have got one guy and then another guy in the processing, shelling the scallops. There is a really good demand for the stuff that we are actually catching. We have spent a lot of time ... Steve actually got going on it first where he updated his premises to all the latest freezing equipment. Everything super cold temperature, super clean. Then I followed on and the demand, particularly after COVID, locals really started turning towards eating lots of local fish. It is brilliant. There is a thriving market here where locals actually love our product. It is brilliant. We are making a real effort to make sure that we keep it. This is just a shame because it might get to the point where if we cannot get out to these traditional winter grounds, I would say, is what the east and south-east coast are. They are winter fishing grounds. If we cannot get out there and our customers, the merchants, the restaurants, they cannot get hold of the stuff, it would just be so disappointing to see imported stuff in our restaurants. It would just be silly to have that resource right there. The people love it. Everyone is happy, people ... it is not a lot of people, maybe 8 or 10 people in total around in wages from our activity, but it would just be a shame to see it gone and then be eaten by someone different.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

I do not want to bring up anything that is going to cause big issues but of course some of our submissions have been from hand-diving scallop fishers. My question to you would be how ... it is obviously very different, but how easy ... would you see you could go towards that?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Myself?

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

No, but I mean as in how easy from the industry perspective. I realise from the future ... I realise that you are ... because you were talking about retirement, so I am just talking about the future. Like how easy would you see ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

For the Island to rely on dive scallops?

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Yes, because you were just talking about that.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Obviously, with weather conditions diving is a little bit more seasonal than the dredging side of things. Also, we do not target the areas that they dive in. There are hardly any areas where there is a crossover of diving and dredging. We tend to be in deeper water and the divers tend to be in more sheltered areas, the Écréhous, or in shallower areas where obviously they get more bottom time. The investment of a diver is nowhere near the investment of a trawler. I mean they have an inflatable rib and we have ... my boat is 12 metres and 50 tonnes in the region of 300 grand as opposed to a diver that will go out and catch a small amount of scallops and supply restaurants. There is a market for theirs and there is a market for ours. It more about the markets. If you like, we keep the markets going when the divers cannot get ... in the winter times especially. So we keep ... the restaurants keep them on the menus. They are a local product. It is food security at the end of the day.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

There is absolutely a place for the diver scallops that come in. There is absolutely a place for that because some restaurants, they only use that stuff and that is brilliant. Some of the scallop divers are even coming over into our sector now, the export sector, and they are exporting dive stuff alongside our dredged stuff. The thing with scallop divers, what should be remembered is there is one particular troublemaker. We get on very well with the rest of them. There is absolutely a place for that in the market, and it is the consumers' choice. We completely respect ... we do not push our products on to restaurants and things, but speaking to the merchants and the chefs, the people that use the product, they say they do not want to be changing their menus every 5 minutes, and it needs to be affordable.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Diving, presumably there is a significantly higher cost.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Yes, significantly higher and less reliable For the people that are actually using the product, 2 of the most important things to them, but that is the reason why we have such a share in that particular market.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

That is interesting. It is going off a little bit from M.S.P., as such, but you were saying 60 per cent, 70 per cent you export. Do you see that you could increase that local market a little bit with ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

No.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

It is at its peak?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

If you like, the local market allows us to exist because we are seasonal. The time that we make money is from April, May through until end of August. Then that is it. For the rest of the year, we are just ... the bank account goes down or just about hovers. Then we get to next season. So it is very much a seasonal thing. We predominantly make our or do our most fishing when the French close their season. They close 15th May and then that opens the door for us to export for a merchant into France. That is where ... we have got a very short season. The rest of the year we are just basically ticking over and fishing for local restaurants.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Why do they close the season then?

**Mr. S. Viney:**

It is just that they always have. They have got so many boats and when they attack something it is, if you like, a bonanza. They have got a very well-managed scallop fishery. They are very strict with permits and everything. We admire the French. As much as we get annoyed with them, we are not annoyed at the fishermen, we are annoyed with the Governments that allow these things to happen and obviously the licences that are given out. We are outnumbered 5 to one probably in our own waters by boats a lot bigger than us, but that is Brexit. We are where we are and that is where it is. But we lost the market in France, which was serious that we were not allowed to ... although we share our waters ...

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

It is the same scallops basically.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

It is the same scallop. It is a bureaucracy thing. We feel that we have been left behind really where we should have had a bit more effort ... a bit more effort should have gone into getting us to be able to survive by being able to land back into France again. External Relations maybe should have pushed a little bit harder when the licences were given out to make it clear that it is access to markets for access to our waters and that is what we were always told. They have got access to our waters but we have not got access to the market, so the crab and lobster you can take into France, wet fish you can take into France but you have got to jump through hurdles and if you get one mistake on your paperwork it is not just change it, it is go back 24 hours and start all over again or get arrested and fined. There is an atmosphere there of going into France which is not very nice, but we would like to go back into France. That would make our business more viable. At the moment we have had Brexit, now we have got this marine park. It is all coming at us from all directions. We just need, if you like, a bit more time to either adjust our businesses, remodel them or what we have to do. The impending doom of whether it be 18 months or 2 years or 5 years; what is it? It is a moving target. Is it going to end at 30 per cent? Are they going to come and grab more? It is the uncertainty.

**Deputy T.A. Coles:**

The transition between these M.P.A.s being in existence.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Yes. How do we get from where we are now, 5 years down the line, to still be in the game? That is the fuzzy bit in the middle.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

I just need to know whether to invest any more money.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

We were told this 2 days ago.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

I honestly do not know what to do. Do I try and invest in a bigger boat now to go offshore or to get as much out of it as I can. That is not the attitude that I want because I am very happy with my business, the way it is running. I am settled and I am really happy. But without knowing exactly what is going to happen, I just do not know what it is ... I am going to go and try and buy a house next year and what do I do if 80 per cent of my income is taken away when I am 2 years into a mortgage?

**The Connétable of St. Mary:**

The bank might ask the same question when you apply.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

It really is difficult. Like I said earlier, I just think there are a lot of unnecessary closures; these blanket bans are huge areas. A thing that really does frustrate me is the lack of work that is done in the existing M.P.A. that we have, that were placed on us over 10 years ago. The lack of work to actually show the benefit that it has had. If they went in and said: "We have seen a huge increase in this stuff here, it is proof that this is excellent", then great. But that is not what we are hearing. We are hearing lots of ... we work alongside the M.P.A.s, and the scallops have gone through their life cycle, which is on average 8 years. Now the scallops or the seabed that they were protecting in the beginning, that stuff has died of old age and the seabed is absolutely littered with dead scallop shells all over the seabed. It is just to try and get a better look at it. The public are being informed about all these O.S.P.A.R. areas and how great they are. Show us what you have done in the past.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

That is a very good point to end on.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

People cannot just rely on assumptions all the time. It is not fair to tell the public one thing when the reality from people that are actually on the ground looking at it is something completely different.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Portelet is a good example. That is a no-take zone now. Now they are boasting about how things have flourished in there, but you need to do that over 100 years or 1,000 years of every combination of winters and summers. You can go in there and say: "Oh, there are rockfish, there is this, there is that", but they were there before. It could be 5 years' time there is nothing in Portelet Bay. It would be nothing to do with fishing, it would be just southerly gales we have had during the winter. If you look at Portelet, the stones are like rugby balls, they are all polished and round.

[13:00]

That is because the seabed in there moves around like a washing machine. There is a lot of stuff that is put out by N.G.O.s, Blue Marine, et cetera, that is propaganda in a way that is fed to the public, which the public thinks: "Fantastic". But the reality is that we are there every day. We make a living on the sea. If there is anybody that knows what goes on there, it is us. This is going back to where, when the marine park idea came along, it would be much better if we were taken around the table right at the beginning, rather than have to go to a Parish Hall. Then we were actually

discouraged from going to those meetings because we were told there are other avenues that we can attend one-to-one with Ministers, et cetera. We did not have as many meetings with the previous Ministers for the Environment we would have liked. We did not feel the tone of when we met with the Minister was what we wanted. So the assumption that has been portrayed is that we did not take part as much as we should have done. We feel it is the opposite. We were not included as much as we think we should have been. We could have prevented even us being here today, had we? It is the rush. We have not got time to adjust the business I have been in for 40 years. I have not got time to ... it is a big boat I have got. The question is whether I can even sell it now. I would like to carry on fishing. That is all I want to do. I do not want to put my hand out for subsidies. I do not want decommissioning. I just want to get to retirement and follow my dream as a kid. I had my first boat when I was 12 years old. Here I am now.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Can I quickly go over on to the quality of the data as well and just how the data is collected? We were part of a group that went with Jersey Fisheries up to the Isle of Man to see how their scallop fisheries is managed, and what have you. They were really good. They took us in and they had done some great meetings with us and they showed us just how much work goes into seabed analysis. Actually, it is done over there. It is independently done by Bangor University. It is a completely impartial party that goes out and collects the samples from the seabed with all the proper equipment. Here in Jersey, the use of some of the stuff for us, it is quite hard for us to get our heads around. A camera dropped down on a piece of string for 5 minutes is going to be good enough evidence to present to the States of Jersey and to put me out of a job. I just feel ... and the people are not necessarily impartial either. People that are in the Fisheries Department have other commitments outside of the Fisheries Department. Blue Marine or Société are more than entitled to do that, but it is a bit disappointing. It would be really good if Government could have concrete data from someone completely impartial. It just rules out all that bad feeling. Because if it is something that absolutely has to be protected, we would be the first people to turn around and say: "Okay, let us have it. If it is really important, have it. Let us try and fit us in somewhere else." It is horrible when you are just working off ... it is a lot of assumption, I feel. I know that they are collecting data, but it is just the standard of the data. If you are going to put people out of a living, it should be concrete.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

It was mentioned in one area that one of your colleagues asked a question about the south-east coast where there are 100 per cent maerl and why is that being left for further research? The answer to that was because modelling is only 70 per cent accurate. Now, if that is the argument for that area, why was that accuracy not as important everywhere else? I know that has kept that area ...

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

That could be argued the other way round as well.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

That is what I was going to say. It has actually helped us by that being asked for in that particular area. I did watch the meeting you had the other day and it was spun quite cleverly around to say because that is how important it is to us to get it right, if we are going to be affecting people's businesses. It sort of came around in the right way in the end but it was not actually the question that Deputy Curtis asked. But in the end it ended up all nicely.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

That is something I noted.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

But then I thought, well, due diligence is going to be done 100 per cent in that area to get it correct.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Which I think is hopefully ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Is fair enough.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

... something that you have seen that that is there. There needs to be that. But I realise the arguments can be either way in, yes, why the areas are not on the same evidence. Why is this one evidence ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Strength of evidence. Because of the importance to us ...

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

The Minister was very clear it was because of the economic areas trumped ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Yes, the importance of ...

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

... the need for but I am completely hearing you. I realise we are over time and also I know that my colleagues have got to leave. But I absolutely ... I think everyone has asked their questions and we have heard some very clear points that you have raised. So thank you very much for coming.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

Thank you.

**Mr. K. Singleton:**

Thank you for listening.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Our officer will be in touch with the transcript itself and then also how you would like to see that presented or just to us. We have an external adviser as well who is helping us with the report, so the transcript will be sent to them in whatever format, whether it is anonymous or for the public or how you choose to present it. They will see it and then of course we will see it. We also see it from our side to see if what we have said is what we have said.

**Mr. S. Viney:**

We have not come here for a moan today.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

We have not heard you moan once. We have some very important points that we ...

**Mr. S. Viney:**

It is part of our heritage. Fishing goes back in our families a long, long way. It would be sad to see it go on your watch. It is heading in a very, very negative direction. The whole industry, not just us. If you lose part of it, the rest will tumble quickly behind it.

**Deputy H.L. Jeune:**

Thank you very much, Kevin and Steve. Thank you very much for coming.

[13:07]