

Cornish Fishing Chaos



Bad weather, new EU regulations and their usual share of the crumbs from the bottom of the EU quota pot, that continues to favour other member states, has thrown Cornish fishermen into chaos. Apathy is fast giving way to anger as yet more ill thought out policy made in Brussels are denying them access to fish sustainably and productively in UK waters. Many boats have been tied up since November as the men have waited for a window in the weather, although a few have taken the risk in order to support their families.

UKIP MEP, Ray Finch, Coordinator in the EU Fisheries Committee, came to Newlyn for a meeting with Paul Trebilcock, CEO of The Cornish Fish Producers Organisation, to discuss how new regulations are likely to affect the industry in the SW.

Mr Trebilcock told the Fisheries Spokesman he favoured: “A more regionalised approach managing Cornish fisheries, especially given its diverse nature in terms of ultra-mixed fisheries and staggering range of different vessel sizes and types from beach launched hand-liners to 30m beam trawlers.”

“Local and sustainable fishing fleets should be supported by balancing sustainable fisheries with the economic and community needs of fishery dependant areas like Cornwall.”

“There are challenges facing all fishermen not least with proposals from DEFRA to restrict licences for inshore under-10m vessels.”

According to NUTFA (New Under Ten Metre Fisheries Association) Britain has been dominated far too long by the interests of over ten metre vessels operating and overfishing in UK waters leading to loss of income and widespread bankruptcy for the under tens. They have warned the inshore, shell-fishing communities, that the EU with the backing of the UK government have plans to access control of their management, who up until now haven't suffered the same disastrous consequences of Cornish mixed fisheries like Newlyn.

Mr Finch said: “The regulators have not yet got their fingers in the shellfish pie but things are starting to change now.”

Describing how the controversial bass ban is causing major national friction between the commercial sector and sport anglers (a six month blanket ban on bass fishing for anglers to recover depleting stocks while giving a 30% increase to EU gill netters) he explained: “Years of pair trawling for bass, wiping out huge quantities of the species before it has a chance to reach maturity “Has been an ecological and economic disaster.” And something his party have been pressing EU member states with access to UK waters to stop for a long time but they'd refused. After the meeting, he spent a couple of hours chatting with skippers and fishermen around the harbour to enable him to take these issues back to Brussels to be addressed by the Commission. Newlyn fisherman, Dave Hicks, said: “There are too many EU boats chasing too little British fish.”

“Newlyn has gone from ‘boom town to gloom town’ in the past thirty years.”

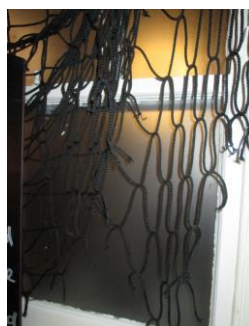
The MEP for South East England said he intends to visit Newlyn again now that these problems have been brought to his attention, although there is little he can provide apart from advice and support as CFP reform is not part of the Prime Minister's renegotiation deal and the industry is unlikely to survive without it.



Paul Trebilcock (left) with Ray Finch

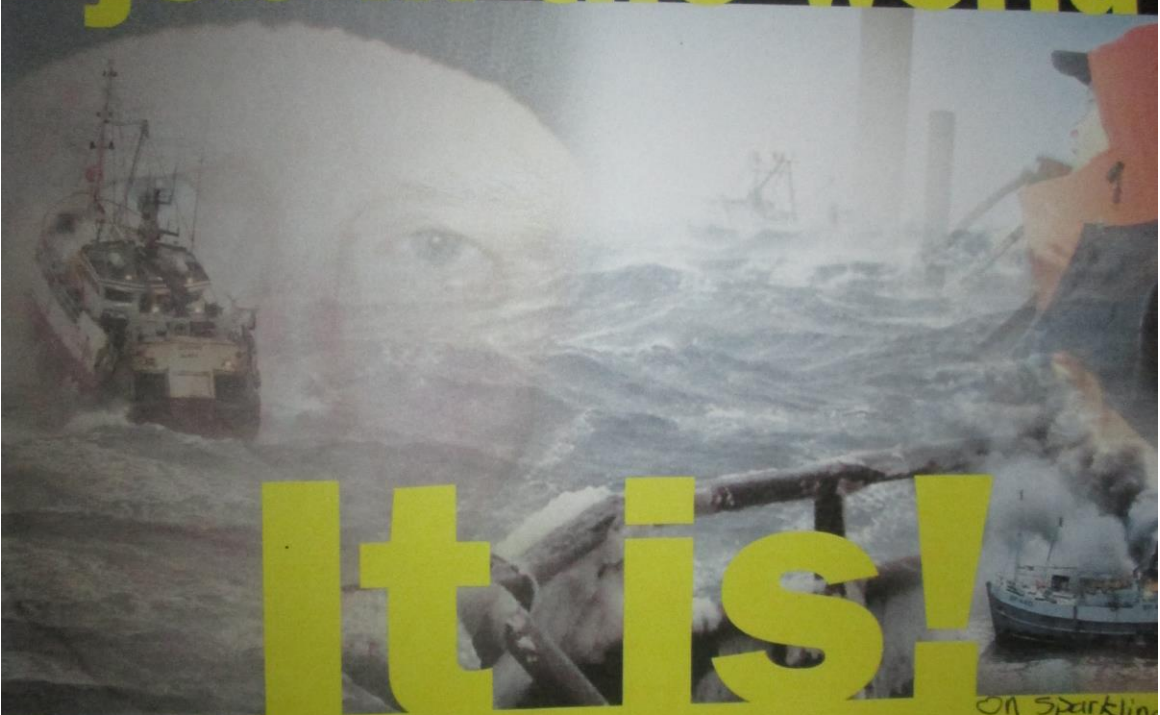


By Deborah Cowley



UKIP: St Austell & Newquay

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