

The **New Under Ten Fishermens Association** has instructed their team of lawyers to commence legal proceedings against DEFRA.

This decision has been taken in light of the refusal by DEFRA to address the imbalance of quota available to the under ten fleet, and the recent introduction of a two tier license system that will devalue the license of around a third of the English (not the UK) fleet.

The Fishing Minister Huw Irranca Davies has stated his intention of “keeping as many fishermen as possible fishing in the inshore fleet and enabling them to make a decent living”. How he hopes to achieve this without a re-allocation of quota is by the removal of two thirds of the English fleet.

With only £5million available it is obvious that this will only be achieved by starving the sector into bankruptcy, we cannot allow this to happen and therefore have been left with no other option.

NUTFA feel that the British Taxpayer should be made aware that the proposed decommissioning scheme is not an EU directive but is being used by DEFRA as a way to hide the incompetence that has allowed the under ten fleet to be deprived of its rightful quota.

DEFRA used the lack of response to the consultation document (only 300 responses out of 3000 fishermen) as a green light to go ahead with the measures that they wished to implement, however the complacency shown by many is rapidly changing as fishermen wake up to the hard facts put before them. NUTFA membership is increasing and money to fund the legal challenge is coming forward as more and more fishermen realise that their way of life is being threatened.

With the increasing problems of over supply and poor prices in the shellfish sector the need to diversify until prices improve will be impossible for many under the license capping, crab fishermen who for a long time considered that the problems of the under tens did not effect them should think again.

Until DEFRA take a new approach and start listening to fishermen things will only get worse, whilst we at NUTFA appreciate that many fishermen are in other smaller associations only NUTFA has the strength and numbers to instigate legal action, we therefore urge every under ten fishermen to join us and achieve our aim of a fair and just industry.

Dave Cuthbert Co-chairman NUTFA