

North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Technical, Science and Byelaw Sub-Committee

First meeting: Strathmore Hotel, Morecambe Wednesday 6th April 2011

Note of meeting

Present			Apologies
MEMBERS		OFFICERS	
Janet Butler	MMO Shellfish sector	Helen Ake	Chris Frid
Judith Clark	MMO Marine Science	Stephen Atkins	Ron Graham
Brian Crawford	MMO Anglers & Recreation	Steve Brown	Margaret Owen
Bill Darbyshire	Environment Agency	Dave Dobson	Tony Markley
Tom Glover	Sefton Council	Bob Houghton	
Trevor Jones	MMO Aquaculture sector	Mandy Knott	
Chris Lumb	Natural England		
Neil Robinson	MMO		
Chris Woods	MMO Shellfish sector		
Dick Langley	MMO		
Non- members attending			
Rob Whiteley	Natural England		

2 Appointment of Chairman and Vice Chairman

The Chief Executive invited nominations. Tom Glover nominated Judith Clark as Chairman seconded by Chris Lumb. Chris Woods nominated Chris Lumb as Vice-Chairman seconded by Tom Glover. Both were appointed

3 Chairman's Announcements

The Chairman announced apologies of absence and welcomed the committee.

4 Terms of Reference, Remit, Membership and Work programme

The morning session involved a discussion facilitated by Mandy Knott and Bob Houghton on the membership, terms of reference and remit of the TSB Sub-Committee

- i. Members agreed that meetings should be open to the public. Visitors should notify the office beforehand. The agenda and papers should generally be available from the office and on the website 1 week before each meeting.
- ii. Membership of the sub-committee should be flexible. Besides nominated members, all NWIFCA members who have a general or specific interest in agenda items can attend TSB meetings and contribute to discussions.

- iii. The TSB Sub Committee should meet quarterly, ideally 1 month prior to the main NWIFCA committee. Members or Officers can call additional meetings as required. If urgent action is required the committee agreed that papers could be circulated and decisions taken by correspondence including email between meetings.

Action 1: Officers to draft Terms of Reference and Remit and make necessary amendments to Standing Orders for the May 17th IFCA committee meeting

Work Programme

- iv. **NWIFCA Risk Register** which is currently being undertaken by Cath Dobson should be completed for discussion and approval by this sub-committee.

Action 2: Chief Officer to report on progress at next meeting.

- v. **NWIFCA Enforcement Framework** and Policy document is planned. FOs Colin Britton and Mark Dobson have been tasked to work on this. A 'Task and Finish' subgroup of the TSB may be required to review these documents. The NWIFCA Enforcement framework should reflect the frameworks of other IFCA.

Action 3: Chief Officer to discuss a national IFCA enforcement framework with other IFCA and report back

- vi. Members identified a benefit in sharing news and views between IFCA's and other organisations. A website for sharing technical information and policy matters was proposed.

Action 4: Science Officers to set up a 'Community of Practice website for members and officers and distribute the access information to members and interested parties. Discuss with other IFCA if this should be an England wide initiative which all IFCA members could access and contribute to.

- vii. **Review of all byelaws.** This is required within the next 4 years. NWIFCA needs to review and prepare new byelaws accounting for the new IFCA district. Work is being undertaken by Steve Brown and Dave Dobson to review and combine the existing 3 sets of byelaws.

Action 5: DD and SB to prepare scoping paper showing priorities and timescales for implementing the review for next or subsequent meeting as soon as possible.

Action 6: Guidance on the byelaw making procedure is to be sent to all IFCA members and a NWIFCA procedure for making Emergency byelaws is to be proposed for the for next or subsequent meeting as soon as possible.

- viii. **Sustainable fisheries review.** This is required for all fisheries within in the district to meet an IFCA high level objective. Sustainable management plans to be created and implemented. The NWIFCA must have made progress on this matter by April 2012.

Action 6: Science Officers to scope the review and report to next or a subsequent as soon as possible. Review should include contributions and engagement of local communities using Environment Agency experience.

- ix. Marine protected areas. Work is needed to understand the implication of MPA's for the NWIFCA work programme.

Action 7: Natural England to keep the NWIFCA informed of MPA development and provide advice on forthcoming work as soon as possible

5 NE briefing on Marine Protected Areas in the NWIFCA District

Chris Lumb and Rob Whitely gave a presentation around current Marine Protected areas within the district and the future of MCZ's within the district. IFCA's are required to further the conservation objectives of the MCZ's and in March 2011 the third iteration of potential sites was released. Consultations are ongoing. The following issues were raised and discussed:

- i. Reference sites are now being proposed late in the process. Are they being selected with full care and evidence? Similarly new sites in estuaries are now being proposed for eels and smelt. Meeting with EA and MCZ stakeholder group to establish if MCZ's can fill in gaps for the protection of eels, smelts and sea trout within estuaries. There is a question over the extent to which MPA in the UK can contribute to the conservation and recovery of these species.
- ii. The 1 month process of planning the management plans around conservation advice for Shell Flats SAC and Liverpool Bay SPA will commence shortly. NE to notify when. Risk review will follow from this consultation process and all will help form management measures of which the NWIFCA will be required to later regulate and enforce.

Action 8: Natural England to supply presentation to members and inform IFCA of when the 1 month consultation process for Liverpool Bay SPA and Shell Flat SAC will start and provide guidance. IFCA's to support and advise MPA management groups if they are set up.

6 Ribble Cockle Fishery

- i. A Presentation was received from Bob Houghton regarding current status of the bed and methods of gathering cockles.
- ii. The merits of the various options were discussed. Hand gathering remains the most favoured option. It is generally least damaging to stocks but excessive numbers of gatherers using heavy machinery for transport can seriously damage cockle beds.
- iii. Dry dredging had little or no support as being too efficient and likely to damage stocks most quickly.
- iv. Wet dredging can also be damaging if allowed to continue for extended periods. The sub-committee was willing to support limited wet dredging in some areas where hand gathering is most dangerous because of inaccessibility and remoteness from the shore.
- v. Boat dredging is appropriate in areas inaccessible from the shore by quads and tractors.

Action 9: Science Officers will call a working group of the TSB to work on plans for exploitation of the Ribble cockle fishery this further. The working group should liaise with the multi agency committee convened at the Ainsdale Discovery Centre in March to look at enforcement and conservation issues.

7 Byelaw 5: Draft for remake at the IFCA meeting on 17th May 2011

- i. CEO presented background on the byelaw and why it is needed at this time. Members agreed the byelaw was needed as an interim measure. Bill Darbyshire suggested that 40 new entrants could make the fishery less sustainable and does not fit the criteria of IFCA remit.
- ii. Various possible alterations to the byelaw were considered including reducing the number of new entrants permitted each year and requiring non-commercial fishing to be undertaken without the use of motorised transport. After discussion the sub-committee agreed that changes to the byelaw would create risk that it would not be remade in time for the start of cockle fishing on 1 September and were dropped.
- iii. Officers stated their intention to supersede this byelaw with a District-wide permit scheme covering a variety of shellfish fished commercially within the NWIFCA District as soon as possible as part of the wider IFCA Byelaw review.
- iv. The sub-committee asked to approve remake of Byelaw 5 with no changes to the main body, with alteration only to the boundary area. Vote taken 6 in favour and 1 abstention.

Action: Officers to prepare byelaw with MMO assistance for making at 17 May IFCA meeting.

8 Date of Next Meeting

Date of next meeting: 22nd June 2011. A subsequent meeting will be called in August prior to NWIFCA September meeting.

9 Any Other Business

Dave Dobson asked to put forward for the next meeting discussion of the continuation of the Shore Surveys which have been undertaken in the past years in Cumbria by Dr Jane Lancaster.