

North Western Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Quarterly Meeting: 6 December 2011

Morecambe Town Hall: 10.30 a.m.

Agenda Item: 6

FISHERIES: AUGUST TO OCTOBER 2011

Owing to intense pressure of duties, principally associated with cockle fisheries, my report on fishing and other activities that have taken place during the past quarter is somewhat abridged. Nonetheless as usual more detailed information on the fisheries can be found in the area officer's individual reports.

Members should note that there is no report for this quarter covering North Morecambe Bay (Haverigg Point to Arnside). This is due to the new area officer Ian Dixon, only being in post for the last 3 weeks of the reporting period.

Fishing operations offshore were severely hampered by lengthy spells of strong to gale-force winds, particularly so during last September and early October. Whilst fishermen were seen to have taken every opportunity to put to sea, the number of days lost to unfavourable weather during the quarter will undoubtedly have resulted in considerable loss of earnings for all sectors of the inshore fleet.

The Authority's offshore enforcement capability was severely compromised this quarter due to a major engine failure in the patrol vessel "Solway Protector". Details of this can be found in the report of the Master, Hugh Thinnesen. Members will no doubt be aware that the vessel is now in its 22nd year of operation and despite being well maintained, there is an increasing likelihood of unforeseen and potentially expensive breakdowns such as this occurring at any time.

Despite problems with the "Solway Protector" enforcement officers including the crew of the patrol boat have been kept very busy during the past 3 months. Management and enforcement of the Ribble cockle fishery, as expected, proved to be extremely demanding, particularly so after the introduction of the emergency byelaw to close the fishery. At times officers were required to work for lengthy periods during both day and night. On top of this, staff were also required to undertake their more normal routine duties attending to the management of various other fisheries within their respective areas.

The North Western IFCA has now been in place for 6 months. I think it fair to say that all the staff have worked extremely hard since the amalgamation of the two SFCs to make the IFCA a success. With regard to enforcement staff, I would like to inform Members that as Enforcement Director it is my considered opinion that the Authority is being well served by its current team of enforcement officers.

D T DOBSON
Enforcement Director

17 November 2011