

PRESENT – MEMBERS

Mr R. Benson	MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – North West)
Councillor K. Brown	Lancashire County Council
Mrs J. Butler	MMO appointee (Shellfish sector)
Councillor M. Byram	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Dr J. A. Clark	MMO (Marine Science)
Councillor B. Crawford	MMO appointee (Anglers and Recreation)
Mr D. T. Dobson	MMO appointee (Anglers and Recreation)
Mr R. Graham	MMO appointee (Commercial)
Mr T. Jones	MMO appointee (Commercial/aquaculture)
Councillor J. J. Kelly	Sefton Council
Councillor K. Little	Cumbria County Council
Mr C. Lumb	Natural England (Officer)
Councillor A. J. Markley	Cumbria Count Council
Mrs M. R. Owen	MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – North West)
Ms C. Reed	MMO appointee (Marine Science/Conservation)
Dr P. Williams	MMO appointee (Recreation)
Mr C. J. Woods	MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – North West)

OFFICERS

Dr S. M. Atkins	Mrs C. Dobson
Mrs K. Atkins	Ms M. Knott
Mrs I. V. Andrews	Ms A. Leadbeater
Mr S. Brown	Mr A. Lindop
Mr A. Deary	

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor T. Aldridge	Lancashire County Council
Ms E. Baxter	Cumbria Wildlife Trust
Mr S. Benson	Lancashire County Council (Officer)
Ms L. Talbot	Environment Agency
Mr R. Littleton	MMO (Officer)
Dr D. McAleavy	Sefton Council

APOLOGIES

Councillor T. Beaumont	Liverpool City Council
Councillor L. Beavers	Lancashire County Council
Mr D. Clarke	MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – Cumbria)
Mr B. Darbyshire	Environment Agency (Officer)
Prof C. Frid	MMO appointee (Marine Science)
Mr J. D. Murphy	MMO appointee (Marine)
Mr N. Robinson	MMO (Officer)

164 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Chief Executive opened the meeting by calling for nominations for Chairman for the forthcoming year. Members nominated were

Mr R. Graham nominated by Mrs M. R. Owen. Seconded by Mrs J. Butler
Dr J. A. Clark nominated by Councillor B. Crawford. Seconded Councillor M. Byram

In accordance with Standing Orders 18(a) and 19 Members voted on each of the nominations.

Mr R. Graham	5
Dr J. A. Clark	9

RESOLVED

Dr J. A. Clark be appointed Chairman of the North Western IFCA for the forthcoming year.

165 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 2)

1. The Chairman welcomed new Members Councillors K. Little (Cumbria), K. Brown (Lancashire) and J. Kelly (Sefton).
2. Members were asked to approve the proposed dates of NWIFCA and TSB Sub-Committee meetings for the remainder of 2013 and 2014. Changes to the dates of the September and December 2013 meetings were proposed to 20th September and 6th December and this was agreed.
3. The Chairman announced that copies of the quotes from Humber and Ribcraft (Agenda Item 9) were available from the Clerk if any Member would like to see these.
4. The Chairman announced that MMO appointee Brian Crawford had been elected as a Cumbria County Councillor for Millom, South Copeland. Councillor Crawford had also been appointed Mayor of Millom for the current year. Councillor Tony Markley (Cumbria) informed Members that he is currently Mayor of Silloth. Members congratulated Councillors Crawford and Markley on their appointments.
5. The Chairman announced one Item of Any Other Business. This related to Article 17 reporting under the Habitats Directive. With Members' permission this would be taken under Agenda Item 15.

6. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Agenda Item 9. Financial Report. Mr B. Crawford, Dr J. A. Clark.

Agenda Item 12. Science Report. Mr T. Jones, Mr C. J. Woods.

Agenda Item 13. Proposed Byelaw 6: Protection for European Marine Sites. Mr R. Benson, Mrs J. Butler, Mr R. Graham, Mr T. Jones, Mrs M. R. Owen.

Agenda Item 14. Byelaw 13A – Closure of Mussel Fishery at Foulney Twist. Mr R. Benson, Mrs J. Butler, Mr T. Jones, Mrs M. R. Owen.

166 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN (Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman called for nominations for Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

RESOLVED

Councillor A. J. Markley be reappointed Vice-Chairman of the NWIFCA for the forthcoming year.

167 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE RESCHEDULED NWIFCA MEETING HELD ON 19 APRIL 2013 (Agenda Item 5)

Minute No. 158. Members were informed that the Cumbria Fisheries Liaison Action Group is based in Copeland and not Allerdale. Mrs Owen proposed that the minutes be amended accordingly. The proposal was seconded by Councillor T. Markley.

RESOLVED

1. Following the amendment to change the reference from Allerdale to Copeland in Minute No 158 the Minutes of the NWIFCA meeting held on 19th April 2013 be approved and signed as a correct record.

168 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 6)

Minute 162. Consultation on coast protection works. The Senior Scientist reported that Fylde Council has made substantive changes to the proposals. The Council seems to have taken the Authority's concerns into consideration and has worked hard on reaching a compromise. The issue around the use of limestone has not yet been resolved and Officers have responded to the MMO consultation for a marine licence along the lines suggested by the TSB Sub-Committee. The Chairman informed Members that she has been in correspondence with scientists from the Sealife Centre in Blackpool, one of whom is interested in carrying out research on limestone and its effects on shellfish. She suggested this is something the Authority should carry forward and work towards in the future.

169 APPOINTMENT OF TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW SUB-COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)

The Chairman introduced the report and reminded members of the current membership of the TSB Sub-Committee. Standing Orders allow for any member of the Authority to attend and vote at TSB meetings.

Mr Richard Littleton (MMO) informed members he is replacing Neil Robinson on the NWIFCA this year. It was agreed the current membership be reappointed as printed, with Mr Littleton replacing Mr Robinson as MMO Officer.

RESOLVED

1. The report be received.
2. The following persons be appointed members of the Technical, Science and Byelaw Sub-Committee for the forthcoming year.

Mrs J. Butler	Councillor B. Crawford
Prof C. Frid	Mr R. Graham
Mr T. Jones	Mrs M. R. Owen
Mr C. J. Woods	

Ex-officio:	Mr W. Darbyshire (EA)
	Mr C. Lumb (NE)
	Mr R. Littleton (MMO)

Chairman, NWIFCA	Dr J. A. Clark
Vice-Chairman, NWIFCA	Councillor A. J. Markley

170 REPORT ON TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 MAY 2013 (Agenda Item 8)

The report on the meeting of the Technical, Science and Byelaw Sub-Committee held on 18th October 2011 was presented by its Chairman, Mr. R. Graham who drew particular attention to the following priority issues:

Increased protection for EMS by end of 2013;
Progress with a new District wide netting byelaw including regulation of recreational netting;

Development of sustainable fisheries for razor clam in the District using electromagnetic pulse gear technology

RESOLVED:

The report be received.

171 FINANCIAL REPORT (Agenda Item 9)

The Financial Report this quarter included six items, all of which will need a minute recorded for audit purposes. The Finance Officer took members through each of the items in turn.

1. The Final Budget Review for the year ended 31 March 2013 shows an operational surplus of £91,802, some of which the Finance Sub-Committee has approved in principle can be used to purchase a patrol vessel for Southern part of the District. Approval of the Final Budget Review for the year ended 31st March 2013 was proposed by Mrs Owen and seconded by Councillor Byram.

It was RESOLVED

The Budget Review for 2012-13 be approved.

2. Annual Return and Audit for the year ended 31st March 2013. This is the official audit document, which the Chairman and Chief Executive will need to sign, once approved. The Internal Auditor has checked the figures in Sections 1 and 2, which need the Authority's approval. Approval of the Annual Return and Audit for the year ended 31st March 2013 was proposed by Mrs Butler and seconded by Councillor Markley.

It was RESOLVED

The Annual Return for 2012-13 Sections 1 and 2 be approved for signature by the Chairman and Chief Executive

3. Internal Audit for the year ended 31 March 2013. This was carried out on 23rd May. Approval of the Internal Audit was proposed by Councillor Byram and seconded by Councillor Markley.

It was RESOLVED

The Internal Audit Report for 2012-13 be approved.

4. Updating of NWIFCA Bank signatories. The current bank signatories are the Chief Executive, Clerk and Finance Officer and the only change proposed is to add the current Chairman and remove a previous Chairman. Councillor Markley voiced concerns about the need for Finance Sub-Committee meetings and his role as Chairman of that sub-committee when all financial matters were brought to the full Authority for approval and signed by the Chairman of the NWIFCA. The Chief Executive agreed that although full Authority approval is required to sign off the accounts, the Finance Sub-Committee, which is comprised of all local authority members, still has an important function. At least two meetings of the Finance Sub-Committee are required each year to discuss and approve the budget for the following year. Meetings are usually arranged two days before Authority meetings but these meetings have not been well attended.

The Chairman proposed that Finance Sub-Committee meetings should continue in order to provide an opportunity for all Councillors to discuss budget proposals. The Chief Executive and Councillor Markley should liaise over suitable dates.

The Finance Officer said the resolution for approval of bank signatories needs to be specifically as outlined in paragraph 4(b) of the report. Approval to update NWIFCA bank signatories was proposed by Councillor Brown and seconded by Ms Reed.

It was RESOLVED

That the Authorised Signatories in the current Mandate, for the Accounts detailed in section 2, be changed in accordance with section 5, and the current Mandate will continue as amended.

5. Financial Report on the start of 2013-14. Mrs Atkins reported that only one annual levy remained to be paid for 2013-14, all other levies having been received. Approval of the Financial Report was proposed by Councillor Markley and seconded by Mr Lumb.

It was RESOLVED

The Financial Report on the start of 2013-14 be approved.

6. Purchase of large RIB patrol vessel. Mrs Atkins reported that further quotes have been received from the two cheapest suppliers. Final approval from the Authority is required for the transfer of £70,668 from the Revenue Reserve to purchase the lowest price RIB from Humber.

Questions were raised on the overall length of the RIB and when the old boat had been commissioned. Members were informed that the new vessel is 7.5M and that the old boat, which was first commissioned in 1999, will be retained as a training vessel but will not be used operationally in future.

Approval of the transfer of £70,668 from the Revenue Reserve and the purchase of a large RIB patrol vessel was proposed by Mr Jones and seconded by Mrs Owen.

RESOLVED

The transfer of £70,668 from the Revenue Reserve and the purchase of the RIB patrol vessel be approved.

172 QUARTERLY REPORT (Agenda Item 10)

The Head of Enforcement started by thanking Officers for their effort during the quarter. Mr Deary provided an update on vessels going through the coding process. 'Protector Alpha' cannot be coded and will be retained as training vessel. 'Protector Bravo' will be fully coded and operational shortly. 'Protector Gamma' is fully coded now and the Zodiac is being inspected on Monday. 'Solway Protector' has had regular problems but is operational again. There had been a slow start to most spring fisheries due to the weather. The only enforcement issue has been the mussel fishery at Foulney where a number of breaches of Minimum Landing Size were detected. Better compliance of MLS is now being observed. Other spring fisheries have not started. 'Protector' should be available to carry out enforcement of the nephrop fishery when it starts in the Northern part of the District. The shrimp fishery has seen low catches and poor prices and commercial and hobby potting has started but has been hampered by poor weather. The new Byelaw 5 for the Heysham Bass Nursery Area is now in force and early indications are that compliance is very good. Officers will conduct regular patrols to ensure that compliance continues.

Members raised a query about the costs of maintaining 'Solway Protector'. It was pointed out that the object of a patrol vessel is to be operational. The vessel has had a lot of mechanical downtime and is costing IFCA money. The vessel needs to be crewed up and operational to justify the current spending on her. Mr Dobson pointed out there were times when Officers have to work on risk based enforcement. If the risk is that more enforcement

effort is required on intertidal fisheries then the requirements at that time will be to target that risk. The Chief Executive assured members that crewing levels will be maintained and will not be a limiting factor over the next few months.

RESOLVED

The report be received.

173 CHIEF OFFICER REPORT (Agenda Item 11)

The Chief Officer's report covered Health and Safety Policy, staff changes, byelaws, AIFCA and procurement of undersea survey equipment.

Byelaws. The new Byelaw 5 for the Heysham Bass Nursery Area is now in force. Further discussion on the new Byelaw 6 (Protection for EMS features) will be held at the TSB with a view to making the byelaw at the September meeting. Work is continuing on the District-wide netting byelaw.

AIFCA. The Chairman reported that the Minister, Richard Benyon, had attended the last AIFCA meeting. Mr Benyon is being lobbied to designate all 127 Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ) areas but he is adamant that to do so would be irresponsible as there was not enough evidence to designate them all, and there were already many other designations and protection measures in place all around the country. A letter had recently appeared in the Sunday Times from RSPB, Wildlife Trust, WWF and one of the marine conservation agencies urging the Minister to designate all 127 MCZ. The Chairman thought Members should be aware of this and asked if IFCA should be more proactive in its approach to advising the Minister and Defra.

Mrs Owen proposed that IFCA should write to the Minister urging caution in moving forward with the designations.

Mr Woods said many people feel conservation zones will address and solve all the problems. Most people who campaign for these zones see through the very narrow window of trying to stop commercial fishing but say very little when nature is responsible for depleting the stocks.

Mr Lumb said NE advice to the Minister is based upon best available evidence on how the proposed sites meet the selection process; therefore NE is not advocating designation of all 127 sites but only those with good available evidence. If there are activities taking place in those sites which are not consistent with maintaining the quality of those sites then MMO and IFCA should be taking management action in discussion with stakeholders. Councillor Markley said that IFCA is the voice of the North West and the point should be made strongly to the Minister not to ruin these fishermen's livelihoods. He suggested that the evidence base needs to come from people on the ground.

The Chairman reminded members of Mrs Owen's proposal that the Authority should write a formal letter in response to the Sunday Times letter and asked for views as to where the letter should be sent. Councillor Byram proposed a letter to the Minister together with a press announcement and this was agreed.

The Chief Executive agreed to draft a letter and send this round to all members for comment.

RESOLVED

1. The report be received.

2. The Chief Executive draft a letter to Minister together with a press announcement in response to the Sunday Times letter from the conservation agencies on Marine Conservation Zones.

174 SCIENCE REPORT (Agenda Item 12)

Silloth Mussels. A size mussel fishery has operated in the past at Silloth, managed by the old Cumbria SFC permitting a dredge fishery under byelaw. A request to permit a dredge fishery at Silloth again this year has recently been received. The fishery is within an SAC and is included in the proposed byelaw for protection of EMS features. A Habitats Regulations Assessment will be required before authorising a fishery in that area and discussions are being held with industry on how the fishery can be accessed in order to carry out a survey of the area.

Shore Crab Collection – Dubmill Point to Beckfoot Flats. IFCO E. Thinnesen has drawn attention to growing concerns with shore crab collection in this area. There has been a large influx of people from the North East who seem to be causing potential damage to this unregulated fishery. Ms Knott said she has been in contact with other IFCA's to find out how they regulate their fisheries and she has tabled a paper for discussion at the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting in London next Tuesday. Fishery Officers are working on obtaining more up to date data on this fishery. Mr Lumb supported the proposal for more evidence around shore crab and suggested it is important to ensure that exploitation of shore crabs is done sustainably. NE is happy to provide experience and collaboration to obtain that evidence.

Foulnaze Cockle Survey. A full survey of this bed will be done at the end of June. A meeting with the multi-agency group is being arranged to alert them to a possible summer opening of the bed if a commercial stock is found. Any fishery at Foulnaze will be run and managed in the same way as last year.

Morecambe Bay Cockle Beds. There are no signs of a spat settlement in Morecambe Bay but surveys will be carried out if any settlement is reported.

Mussel Beds. Heysham Flat. There has been a good settlement of mussel on Heysham Flat. A further survey will be carried out in August to see if there is potential for a hand gathering fishery there for seed mussel. The skear has been fully mapped for EMS work and is one of the areas that will be covered under byelaw.

South America. Ms Knott took part in a helicopter overflight of the area and early indications are there is a good settlement on the bed. A mass aggregation of starfish was observed and in the past starfish has wiped out large amounts of stock. A further survey of the bed is planned for the end of June. Officers have discussed the possibility of charging for authorisations this year with the operators who are willing to pay a fee based on charges within the draft Morecambe Bay Hybrid Fishery Order.

Morecambe Bay Hybrid Fishery. A further draft of the Statutory Instrument has been received. Progress is very slow but is moving in the right direction.

National Grid North West Coast Connections Consultation. Officers have provided National Grid with contact details for fishermen. NG will conduct specific fisheries consultation with stakeholders if either of the options for Morecambe Bay or from Moorside out to sea and then back again are likely to go forward. Special issue groups have also been set up and Ms Knott has signed up for three of those groups.

In response to a question from the Chairman as to whether NG are listening to concerns, Ms Knott said she has raised concerns with them which have been taken into account and she does feel that NG are listening. She will alert the Authority if that situation should change.

Mr Crawford raised concerns that the MoD firing range at Eskmeals is dumping shells 38 miles out at sea and recently 100 shells have been washed ashore. He asked if the new underwater equipment could be used to survey the area to see what was under the water surface there. Ms Knott said NG had looked at that area as an option but after discussions with the MoD it was found not to be practical.

Mr Woods asked if reports in future could place more emphasis on the reasons for the decline in the cockle and mussel fisheries. This year all fisheries up the coast, not just the North West, have had a disastrous year as a result of nature. Without that emphasis it leads the general public, who have access to the reports, to the conclusion that the resource has been badly managed or overfished and that is not the case.

RESOLVED

1. The report be received.

175 PROPOSED BYELAW 6: PROTECTION FOR EUROPEAN MARINE SITE FEATURES (Agenda Item 13)

The Chief Executive reported that progress has been made towards making a byelaw to protect EMS features within the District but not enough data is in place to enable it to be made at today's meeting. The draft byelaw will need to be made at the September meeting if it is to be in place in time to meet the Defra deadline of the end of December.

Ms Leadbeater reported progress by area where protection is considered a requirement:

Area I – Solway Firth SAC. Includes subtidal boulder and cobble reef, also an adjoining intertidal area where *Sabellaria alveolata* reef can occur. Officers have met with shrimp fishermen in the area who raised concerns that the data for the subtidal boulder and cobble reef are inaccurate and out of date. The IFCA is working with NE and the fishermen to obtain more up to data information and re-draw the box so it does not impact on the shrimp fishermen.

Area II – Lune Deep cSAC. Features include boulder, cobble and bedrock reef. The TSB Sub-Committee approved a variable buffer as shown with the proviso that enforcement must be sensitive to actual boat and gear positions dependant on wind and tide. Consultation will be carried out with fishermen who work the Lune Deep before the byelaw is finalised.

Area III – Morecambe Bay EMS Seagrass (*Zostera spp*) beds. The byelaw will prohibit bottom towed gear and bait collection and vehicular access to protect seagrass. Boxes have been drawn to enclose all the features and for ease of enforcement. Mr Lumb suggested discussions with all stakeholders to provide the best possible evidence base for the levels of activity in the seagrass area. The Barrow and Wildlife Heritage Committee may be able to help advise on contacts. Ms Leadbeater said she will be attending the Barrow Wildlife and Heritage meeting next week and will make them aware of the work being carried out on seagrass

Area IV – Morecambe Bay EMS Boulder and Cobble Reef. Mrs Butler asked whether MoD dredging in Walney Channel has been investigated. Ms Leadbeater said dredging in an EMS is subject to assessment by the MOD and this is unrelated to the IFCA work. Mr Lumb said NE is working closely with Associated British Ports (ABP), who carry out the maintenance dredging. .

Ms Leadbeater indicated that in the Walney Channel boulder and cobble reef area a fairly large buffer was provided in order to encompass any of the features that had not been mapped sufficiently.

Area V – Morecambe Bay EMS Honeycomb worm (*Sabellaria alveolata*) reef on Heysham Skear. Mr Lumb raised a query on why the boundary on the southern end of the closed area has been drawn to exclude part of the buffer. Ms Leadbeater said that as the entire skear was enclosed to protect any area where *Sabellaria alveolata* could occur as shown by the orange box, a further buffer was not considered necessary. Mr Lumb suggested that the concept of the buffer is to make sure the habitat has a buffer to it to prevent mobile gear accidentally damaging the habitat for which the site is being proposed. It would be logical to include all that buffer in exactly the same way as for all the other proposals.

Members agreed that the boundary should be extended to include the buffer as long as fishermen are in agreement with this.

Area VI – Dee Estuary EMS Honeycomb worm reef at Hilbre Island. Mr Lindop had visited this site last month and the NE mapping matches quite closely his findings. The buffer for this area is smaller because the feature is clearly defined and shrimping has historically taken place in this area.

The Chairman drew attention to the recommendations. Members' agreed the proposals with the proviso that all meetings should have taken place and all fishermen were in agreement with the proposals before they were finalised.

It was RESOLVED

1. The report be received.
2. Members agree the closed areas as set out in the draft byelaw with any amendments as required.
3. The proposed byelaw and impact assessment be prepared and made at the September meeting and implemented by the end of 2013 to meet the Defra deadline.
4. The proposed stakeholder consultation plans are agreed.

176 BYELAW 13a – CLOSURE OF MUSSEL FISHERY AT FOULNEY TWIST (Agenda Item 14)

Two options for a size mussel fishery at Foulney throughout the summer were presented in the report. Officers were seeking a decision from the Authority on those options. The first option is to close the fishery under Byelaw 13A until 31st August to manage the fishery, the second to maintain the status quo. There is a stock of size mussel available at the bottom end of the skear that can only be accessed on bigger tides and there are only a few of those tides during the months of June, July and August. It is a very confined area and the spat in that area could be sacrificed if it were to be damaged by fishing activity if need be as there is spat across the rest of the bed and also around Morecambe Bay.

Mr Lindop reported on a meeting with fishermen held on 10th June. The meeting had been called to discuss potential future management options following feedback from industry fishing the bed that the Minimum Landing Size (MLS) is not the most effective management measure. The large majority of fishermen at the meeting were in favour of keeping the fishery open, with the justification that mixed size would be harder to fish out if the bed was closed and then re-opened. Discussion of potential management options focused mainly on various zoning of the bed to allow it to be cleared out in patches with the theory being that the spat would then grow in single year classes making it easier to enforce MLS. However, zoning proposals would have to be researched before discussion at the TSB Sub-Committee. Of the 22 fishermen there, 18 were in favour of zoning as a potential management option.

Ms Owen proposed the bed should be kept open on a small scale at the lower end with 1.5M tides and not 1M on the basis that the FOs and science team can shut it if at any time any problems with the fishery are observed. With regard to the proposal for access on 1.5M tides, Dr Atkins said there had been issues with the taking of undersized mussels and fishing on tides between 1 and 2M. With tides of less than 1M you get a higher quality mussel with little undersize amongst the mussels taken from the bottom of the shore. The recommendation is for fishermen to operate on 1M tide or below during the summer months and see how the fishery develops for the autumn/winter. IFCA is not putting a regulation in place at this stage but it could be an effective voluntary measure.

Councillor Byram asked what would happen to the winter stock if fishing continued during the summer and whether there is any element of danger in winter fishing. Ms Knott said there is a vast amount of stock just under size that will grow on throughout the summer to create the winter stock. Any winter fishery would take into consideration stock available for the bird resource as well as fishermen.

Mr Lumb said the paper put to TAG around the zoning programme was helpful, also the Morecambe Bay Hybrid Fishery Order Management Plan has had stakeholder input. He supported the discussions as part of developing that Management Plan to achieve sustainable management. The Chief Executive said it was the intention to bring a report to the TSB in August on zoning proposals.

The Chairman asked for a show of hands on the proposals and recommendations and option A(ii) was agreed. Mr Jones suggested that for clarity the resolution should read only tides of 1M or less are fished and this was agreed.

It was RESOLVED

1. The report be received.
2. The fishery remains open for size mussel with the recommendation that only tides of 1M or less are fished.
3. That a further survey in late summer be carried out to inform ongoing management of the fishery.
4. Officers conduct a review of fisheries management practice based on minimum landing size for Foulney mussels in conjunction with Foulney mussel fishing stakeholders, NWIFCA, TSB and Natural England.

177 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 15)

1. Article 17 reporting under Habitats Directive

Mr Jones informed Members that under Article 17 of the Habitats Regulations all member states are required to make a report to the EU on the status of various designated or non-designated sites in their areas every six years. England, Scotland and Wales report to JNCC who in turn submit the report to the EU. The report was out for consultation until 10th May but he understood that none of the IFCA or other conservation agencies had been made aware of the report or the consultation. He requested that the Authority should hold earlier liaison with JNCC or NE in future in order for IFCA to have the opportunity to provide comments on the report.

Mr Lumb said he was unaware the national report was out for consultation. He understood the Article 17 report had been prepared by conservation agencies on this occasion but the intention is that before the next report is due the IFCA will have had six years to build up the evidence base of the state of the environment within the North West.

The Chairman pointed out that Mr Jones was asking members whether they felt the IFCA should make a complaint to JNCC or NE about the fact it had not been made aware of the consultation and the report had been submitted on the ecology of the status of the marine environment in the North West without any input from this Authority.

Mr Lumb agreed to investigate how the consultation was carried out and provide officers with the link to the consultation.

2. Byelaw 3 (Commercial Cockle and Mussel Permits)

Mr Woods asked if the same conditions applying to Byelaw 3 whereby permits need to be renewed by 31st August each year in order to maintain a historic record would also apply to permits for the Dee Estuary and whether those fishermen who had not yet applied for a permit for the Dee should do so before 31st August. The Chief Executive confirmed Mr Woods understanding of the permit scheme and that permits for the Dee Estuary should also be renewed each year.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed at 1305 hours.