

NWIFCA Technical, Science and Byelaw Sub-Committee

17 May 2013: 10:00am

**REPORT
NUMBER
10**

AGENDA ITEMS WITHOUT FULL PAPERS

Agenda Item 10: Razor clam update

Abigail Leadbeater

Summary: Members will be aware that work has been on-going with the industry to set up a study into fishing for razor clams in our district. Officers have recently been made aware that a project idea, centring on the assessment of the feasibility of a sustainable razor clam fishery in our district using electrofishing, which was submitted by the NFFO to the CEFAS Fisheries Science Partnership Fund, has been successful. Officers were contacted by the NFFO at the time of submission and our active role was stated in the application. A tender has been put out by CEFAS for this work with a deadline of 7th June. The NWIFCA was not contacted by CEFAS about this project and thus the details known are limited. It is disappointing that NWIFCA seems not to have been considered and Science Officers are currently seeking to find more information and become involved in the development of this project.

Agenda Item 12: Catch returns for hand gathered shellfish (Trevor Jones)

Summary: I think it would be prudent to receive an update on how or if this information is gathered with particular reference to mussels. We are all familiar with how cockle stocks are assessed and how catch data is gathered but no such system seems to be in place for mussels. Given that we are meant to be managing fisheries from a conservation and sustainability perspective it would appear that we aren't fulfilling our duties with regard to this fishery.

Agenda Item 13: Morecambe Bay Several and Regulating Order (Trevor Jones)

Summary: An update on progress of the Hybrid Order in light of the Boughton Estate land ownership issues.

Agenda Item 14: Fishermen's cockle forum

Alasdair Lindop

Summary: For some time several cockle pickers have been asking for an arena in which they can share their opinions and experience and contribute their expertise to the process by which the IFCA makes decisions. It would be a non-decision making forum, but a vital place for IFCA officers to hear the represented opinions of the cockle industry.

It is important that the membership of such a forum would cover the whole district, and also that members would be representative of the whole industry, so that as far as possible a balanced and impartial industry opinion could be obtained. How a balanced membership can be achieved is a complex question and something for the TSB to give guidance on.

Agenda Item 15: Communications update

Alasdair Lindop

Summary: One of the main points of feedback from the stakeholder meetings in March was the need to improve lines of communication between the NWIFCA and industry. Whilst email is the preferred form of communication, barely a third of permit holders have submitted email addresses, and other forms, such as letters, notices, or newspaper adverts, also have many weaknesses. In order to add another level of communication, and reach as many stakeholders as possible, we are implementing a text messaging service, enabling us to send short messages about fisheries, consultations and meetings and minimal cost.

Alasdair Lindop
Science and Communications Officer
13th May 2013