

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting:
18th March 2021: 10.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
9**

Chief Officer Report: December 2020 to February 2021

Purpose of Report: Information

Recommendation: Receive the report

Contents:

- i. Covid**
- ii. Personnel, Health & Safety**
- iii. Communications**
- iv. Association of IFCA**
- v. Defra**

i. Covid

1. Regulations continued throughout the quarter. There are prospects of relaxations in March and beyond.
2. NWIFCA has continued delivery of duties in the context of the regulations. Patrols and shellfish sampling have continued. Some officers have had to self-isolate for periods.
3. Carnforth and Whitehaven Offices were open with 1-2 officers at each while following Government guidance that office staff continue working from home if they could do so.
4. Government guidelines were followed and virus related Health and safety risk assessments continued in use.
5. The December Authority and February TSB meetings took place on line on line. The March Authority and May TSB are planned to be held on line.

ii. Personnel, Health & Safety

6. **Members:** Mr Derek Clarke resigned as MMO Appointee in January 2021. The Authority extends grateful thanks to Mr Clarke for 10 years' service to the NWIFCA.
7. There are now 3 MMO appointee vacancies on NWIFCA with more expected in 2021 with the ending of terms of office. Following completion of 10 years' service and in response to application by the CEO to MMO, Mr Trevor Jones was granted an extension to June 2021 to complete his work on the Review of Policies Procedures and Governance of NWIFCA.
8. MMO conducted interviews for new appointees in February to fill the large number of vacancies which have arisen in all IFCA. There were 4 interviews for membership of NWIFCA. Notification of the outcomes of these interviews is awaited.
9. **Officers:** Science Officer Dr Melanie Hartley resigned in December to take up a post in Natural England for which she has specialist qualifications. The Authority extends grateful

thanks to Dr Hartley for 2 year's service to the Science team of NWIFCA and wishes her every success in Natural England.

Recruitment

10. The departure of MS Knott in December and Dr Hartley in January left a significant gap in the science team. A quiet period of planned survey work in the months of December, January and February helped with overcoming the impacts and actions described below were taken in mitigation.
11. Depute senior Scientist Jon Haines, first appointed in 2015 was promoted to acting Senior Scientist in December. He is fully experienced in the science programme and regularly presents aspects at internal and external meetings. Since December Mr. Haines has ensured that essential shellfish sampling has continued so that fisheries would not be affected by covid restrictions.
12. IFCO Elliott Waltho requested and was given a transfer from enforcement to Science team in December 2020. Mr Waltho has MSc Marine Biology from University of Southampton, 4 years IFCO experience and has had regular involvement in the science and survey programme.
13. The Science team welcomes Mr Matthew Carrol, appointed Science officer in February. He started work in the Carnforth Office on 1 March. Mr Carrol comes from the South Cumbria Rivers Trust (3 years) and previously the Environment Agency (5 years). He has M.Sc (Distinction) in MSC Aquatic biology and resource management from Exeter University.
14. The Authority is pleased to welcome Mrs. Alison Nicholson as Clerk. Mrs. Nicholson has worked in a Council and private sector firms including many years with the national builders suppliers Travis Perkins as a senior manager. Mrs. Nicholson starts full time work on with the Authority on 15 March. She will be based in the Carnforth office with some home working to fit with ongoing covid regulations, government guidance, other work and activity in the office.
15. After this meeting Mr Graham's temporary clerk role will transfer to Mrs. Nicholson. Mr Graham has requested and will move to the Enforcement Team. He is already Warranted IFCO having completed the IFCA Officer Training Course and will continue to carry out the digital communication role alongside the IFCO job.
16. The vacant post of Senior Scientist is now being advertised. The closing date is 15 March.
17. **Health and Safety:** There have been no notifiable incidents up to end of November 2020. The H&S policy has been developed and amended to take account of changing circumstances and with the advice of the retained H&S consultant. The Authority has one member of staff on extended sick leave.
18. **Complaints:** there are no ongoing complaints.

iii. Communications

19. Work has continued on Permit development and for potting byelaw now expected to be signed off by Defra in early April at the earliest but could be later. Due to the Byelaw not coming into force prior to the New Year, recreational renewals under CSFC Byelaw 26 and NWSFC Byelaw 30 have continued and will have to be transitioned to the new scheme when the byelaw is signed off.
20. Consultations for the North Wirral Foreshore Bivalve Mollusc Byelaw and Minimum Size Byelaws were launched. The closing date for responses is 5th March after which comments and objections will be addressed.

21. In January 2021, A false allegation was made widely on social media by the NGO 'Save Our Sea Bass' (SOSB) that the Authority had secretly lobbied government to allow netting for Bass from the shore. This was untrue and without foundation. The allegation was quickly picked up by officers and members and a rebuttal statement was issued on the Authority's website and social media pages to clarify that no such representations had been made. Over 40 emails expressing concern about the allegations were received by NWIFCA as a result of the campaign and answered individually stating that this Authority has not had meetings with Defra on this matter or ever had a policy to allow increased netting.
22. Save Our Sea Bass acknowledged the mistake, apologised and removed the reference to NWIFCA. As the Authority continued to receive critical emails a fuller correction from SOSB was requested by the Authority which was provided. The incoming emails have now stopped but there is continuing lack of clarity about why SOSB attacked NWIFCA, why they target other IFCA or what they were trying to achieve.
23. SOSB have a track record of attacking IFCAs in recent years with allegations that IFCA work against conservation aims by promoting netting and fishing for seabass. The SOSB approach is difficult to understand because IFCA and SOSB appear to have a common objective to prevent over exploitation of seabass. All IFCA affirm their vision and statutory duty to make fishing of all species sustainable. The letter sent to SOSB attached at Annex B appears to have so far led to a satisfactory outcome for the Authority and hopefully good relation with SOSB in the future.

iv. Association of IFCA

24. AIFCA last met 8 December 2020. Draft notes of the meeting are at Annex A.
25. The next AIFCA members Forum meeting is scheduled for 9 March. A new draft Business Plan and Annual Delivery Plan 2021-22 will be presented. CEO and Chairman will attend and report verbally to NWIFCA on 18 March
26. AIFCA welcomes Mr Steven Travis as the IFCA National Lead training Officer. Mr Travis commenced work with AIFCA on 2 Feb 2021. This appointment follows the move of Mr Ian Jones to Chief Officer of Southern IFCA. Mr Travis sent an email to introduce himself which is copied at Annex A

v. Defra and Brexit

27. **Brexit:** A major Brexit issue which was predicted by this Authority prevents export of all live shellfish which are not from Class A waters from UK to Europe. This immediately had and continues to have a devastating impact on shell fisheries. Prior to Brexit, most cockles and mussels from this District were exported to Europe without problems. Up to end December live shellfish could be sent from this District for purification in Europe. On leaving the EU UK became non-EU and a '3rd country' from which such exports into Europe are prohibited.
28. NWIFCA was aware of the problem and alerted Defra in early 2020. There have been discussions with the EU for many months. EU had given assurances that the problem would be solved by April 2021 but has now withdrawn that assurance. There appears to be no solution in prospect. A wide range of other shellfish are also impacted in other areas. The Authority asks members to report any developments with this problem urgently.
29. **UK territorial limits:** After transition, UK reverted to UNCLOS baselines for UK 0-12 nautical miles zone and informed EU. Changes are now in UKHO maps and charts used by UK and EU vessels fishing in UK waters. UKHO and MMO will publish changes on websites and in newsletters on the 5th March. After the Fisheries Act 2020, baselines of UK 0-12 fisheries limits are updated from 1983 baselines under the CFP to Territorial Sea (Baselines) Order 2014 in accordance with UNCLOS. This will align the UK's 0-12 nautical

mile fisheries limits with the seaward limit of the territorial sea as defined by the 2014 Order. UKHO ADMIRALTY Charts showing the UK's, Overseas Territories' and Crown Dependencies' territorial sea limits, exclusive economic zone limits and international maritime boundaries are available from distributors in paper and electronic format.

30. To date, IFCA districts are unaffected. IFCA The legislation calculating IFCA boundaries by reference to 1983 baselines has not been amended. Defra should liaise with IFCA to determine any future change.
31. **MAFCO and Fisheries Management plans:** A meeting of the Defra IFCA liaison committee 'MAFCO' was held on 24 Feb 2021. Meetings are classified sensitive so some papers cannot be shared. The main topic was Fisheries management plans. Defra indicated an intension to have plans in place for all fisheries in English waters and would like IFCA to contribute to their development: No specific targets have been set as yet.
32. The Government is committed to supporting the fisheries and seafood industry and has delivered on its manifesto commitments to maintain funding for the seafood sector across the UK and to support the regeneration of our coastal communities.
33. At the Spending Review the Government allocated £32.7m to support the seafood sector across the UK. This funding will support data collection, control and enforcement activities, and enable each nation of the UK to run their own funding schemes, tailored to the needs and make up of their sectors.
34. In England, we intend to open a new funding scheme to provide financial assistance in the catching, processing and aquaculture sectors, and to enhance the marine environment.
35. At its launch, the scheme will provide stability and continuity to the sector, focusing on helping businesses adapt to the new conditions and opportunities of leaving the EU, and support industry's recovery from Covid-19. Longer term funding will incentivise and drive meaningful change to support sustainability and protect the marine environment.
36. We expect the scheme to open in April and will be delivered by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) On 24 December the Prime minister also announced a £100 million investment to rejuvenate the industry and coastal communities across the UK. Further detail on this funding will be set out in due course
37. **Future of Inshore Fisheries** The most recent quarterly Steering Group for the Future of Our Inshore Fisheries project was held in February. Defra colleagues on the Steering Group explained what was in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, what it means for inshore fisheries and the FOIF project. The priorities and 5 main themes of the project Action Plan were discussed and reaffirmed by the Steering Group.
38. The Defra team gave a presentation on Fisheries Management Plans explaining that the purpose of FMPs is to ensure we have sustainable stocks in the future. This is about long-term planning for different stocks. These plans are meant to be flexible and not a one size fits all approach, will allow bespoke planning to individual situations and will encourage transparency
39. FMPs will have strong ties with the Harvest Strategy Standard (HSS) being developed by the Future of Our Inshore Fisheries (FOIF) project. The HSS will provide a framework to guide the development of Harvest Strategies for individual fisheries. The Steering Group will nominate fisheries to pilot the Harvest Strategy Standard allowing the project team to refine the approach and make sure it can work across different inshore fisheries (data rich and data poor). FOIF has commissioned Heriot Watt University to undertake a project to map inshore fisheries data. The project will create a single standardised database that can be maintained and updated regularly as new information becomes available.
40. **EU/UK fisheries Negotiations** Negotiations with the EU on 2021 fishing opportunities and access to waters are continuing. Information exchanged includes technical measures in the West of Scotland, Irish Sea and Celtic Sea; on discards exemptions and TAC deductions and on special conditions, footnotes and flexibilities. Progress has been slower than hoped. The UK is ready for further negotiations. EU should be ready soon.

Main meetings attended November to February 2020

Chief Officers Group	16 December 6 January (Brexit), 13 January 17 Feb
Defra (MAFCO)	24 March
TSB	9 Feb
AIFCA	8 December
NWIFCA	Review Policies, Procedures and Governance inception 2 December, Finance and HR 9 December, 10 Dec

CEO NWIFCA 12 November 2020

Annex A

AIFCA

Members Forum Meeting notes

Date & Time: 8th December 2020 10:30

Venue: Videoconference

Members Present

Dr Tom Hooper
Cllr John Lamb
Dr Will Wright
Julian Gregory
Dr Stephen Axford
Les Weller (vice Chair)
Dr Stephen Atkins
Cllr Paul Williams
Tony Tomlinson MBE (Chair)
Sam Davis
Prof Mike Williams
Prof John Humphreys
Ian Jones
Stewart Harper
Mat Mander

Officers

Robert Clark

1. Apologies for absence

Mike Hardy
Cllr Andy Guy

2. Declarations of Interest

None

4. Minutes of the previous meeting.

Proposed by Paul Williams and Seconded by John Lamb. **The minutes were AGREED as a true record.** All were in favour. Thanks, were recorded to Sam Davis for production of the minutes.

5. Progress Reports

a) Progress on the appointment of members to the IFCA's

The Forum heard from the Chief Officer that the national campaign to recruit IFCA members had commenced. Les Weller provided an overview of engagement with MMO in the process, and some of the frustrations experienced. Following a debate;

The chairman asked the chief officer to draft a letter to the MMO highlighting that the chairs of the IFCA's needed to have greater involvement in the process of recruitment to ensure the needs of the authorities are met.

Prof. Williams agreed to assist with the drafting identifying the IFCA's legitimate expectations and the possibility of extension beyond 10 years.

b) National Lead Training Officer

The Forum received an update on the recruitment progress; a second round of interviews are to be held shortly.

c) Spending Review update

The Forum received an update on the spending review. The Forum heard how a bid into the SR20 had been submitted and that bid had been reportedly put forward to treasury. The treasury announcement on the spending review, which is for one year, had identified that Defra's fisheries funding and s.31 funding would be maintained at current levels. Defra is considering its internal budgets spend and engagement continues. The matter will be raised at forthcoming AIFCA / Defra liaison meetings.

The IFCA's discussed their 2021/22 budgets.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

6. 'Evaluation of the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities commissioned by Defra' - an AIFCA position statement.

The Forum received a draft statement. It was proposed by John Humphreys, seconded by Mike Williams and all members **AGREED that the statement be adopted and published upon release of the evaluation.**

7. Budget Control

The Forum received a report from Cllr Paul Williams on the AIFCA Budget figures for the AIFCA until the end of November 2020. The positive position presented described as being as a consequence of savings associated with employment and reduced travel. The members expressed their thanks to Paul Williams for his work. **The budget control statement was APPROVED** following a proposal from Les Weller, as seconded by Cllr Lamb and with all in favour.

The chairman asked the Chief Officer to put in place suitable arrangements for future minute recording.

8. Reserves Policy

The Chief Officer and Cllr Williams provided a summary of the Reserves policy and after a debate Cllr Lamb proposed and Prof Humphreys seconded, and all members **AGREED that the reserves policy be adopted.**

9. The AIFCA 2021/21 Subscriptions -

The Forum considered the AIFCA financial position. It was proposed by Paul Williams and seconded by Mike Williams that:

- a) The 2021/22 subscription for the AIFCA be £12,000
- b) That a one off payment of £500 per IFCA be made in current financial year to develop AIFCA strategy

All were in favour and **the subscriptions were AGREED**

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

10. **The IFCA funding arrangements a discussion paper.**

The members received a report on the IFCA's funding, from origin to today. Forum members debated the future of IFCA's funding.

The chairman asked the Chief Officer to draft a letter to Defra to establish a common understanding of the New Burdens arrangements in the context of the ongoing demands upon Local Authorities.

11. **Chief Officers Report**

The Chief Officers report was taken as read and he was thanked for the detailed report.

12. EU Exit & Covid-19

The members received an update from Will Wright on EU Exit and the role of IFCA's in the Covid response. Dr Wright was thanked for his report.

ACTION TABLE

Who	What	When
Chief Officer	To draft a letter to the MMO highlighting that the chairs of the IFCA's needed to have greater involvement in the process of recruitment to ensure the needs of the authorities are met.	immediate
Chief Officer	the AIFCA statement on the 'Evaluation of the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities commissioned by Defra' be adopted	published upon release of the evaluation.
Chief Officer	to put in place suitable arrangements for future minute recording.	Next Forum meeting
Directors	that the Reserves Policy be adopted.	Next Directors meeting
Chief Officer	The 2021/22 subscription for the AIFCA be £12,000	March 2021
Chief Officer	That a one-off payment of £500 per IFCA be made in current financial year to develop AIFCA strategy	January 2021
Chief Officer	to draft a letter to Defra to establish a common understanding of the New Burdens arrangements in the context of the ongoing demands upon Local Authorities.	immediate

Note on future meetings

It was agreed at the Oct. 20 meeting that the meetings of the AIFCA Members Forum shall be held on the following dates:

9th	March	2021
8th	June	2021 (AGM)
7th	September	2021
7th	December	2021
11th	March	2022

It was agreed that for the foreseeable future that the meetings shall be held remotely using video-conferencing. Notwithstanding it is desirable to meet in person if possible and the situation will remain under review.

IFCA National Lead training Officer

From: Steven Travis [<mailto:steven.travis@kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk>]

Sent: 02 February 2021 07:42

Subject: New NLTO Steven Travis - Introduction

Good morning all,

Yesterday I took up post as the AIFCA National Lead Training Officer, so thought I would take this opportunity to introduce myself.

Firstly, I would like to start by saying how thrilled I am to be taking up this position, and to be joining the IFCA family. My role will be home based in Filey North Yorkshire, but I hope to get out and about to see you all when the current situation and restrictions allow.

I thought it may be useful to give you a little background about myself, immediately before joining AIFCA I was a Fisherman's Training Advisor with Seafish with responsibility for the management of mandatory & additional safety training delivery through a network of Training Providers. This included the updating of course material, quality assurance of delivery, instructor CPD and also the administration and maintenance of the national e-learning system. Recently I was heavily involved in the creation of appropriate risk assessment and procedures to facilitate delivery of "face to face" training in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to this, I have been involved with the commercial fishing industry for most of my working life, as a commercial fisher out of Scarborough and as a Maritime Safety Trainer delivering Seafish & STCW short courses, in addition to elements of both the Fishing and Workboat Diploma to students at Whitby Fishing School.

I also spent 20 years with the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, where I held various management and operational roles ranging from the delivery of Technical Rescue Training through to the Survey & Inspection of fishing vessels.

I am really looking forward to meeting and working with you all in the very near future, but in the meantime my "virtual door" is always open, so feel free to make use of the contact details below if I can be of any assistance, or even for a chat!

Best regards,

Stevie

Steven Travis | National Lead Training Officer, Association of IFCA's

Email: steven.travis@kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk

Web: www.kentandessex-ifca.gov.uk

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Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority
Paragon House, Albert Street, Ramsgate, Kent. CT11 9HD
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AIFCA Members Forum and Directors Meetings

(Draft) Meeting Notes

Date & Time: 1st October 2020 10:30

Venue: Videoconference

Members Present

Dr Tom Hooper
Cllr John Lamb
Dr Will Wright
Julian Gregory
Dr Stephen Axford
Les Weller (vice Chair)
Dr Stephen Atkins
Cllr Paul Williams
Tony Tomlinson MBE (Chair)
Sam Davis
Prof Mike Williams
Mat Mander
Prof John Humphreys
Ian Jones
Stewart Harper

Officers

Robert Clark

Apologies for absence

Tim Dapling
Mike Hardy
Cllr Andy Guy

1) Election of Chairman

Tony Tomlinson was nominated by Les Weller and following a vote duly elected as Chairman. Les Weller was nominated for vice chairman by Tony Tomlinson and following a vote duly elected. There were no other nominations for either position.

2) Declarations of Interest

None

3) Minutes of Previous Meeting (March 2020)

Proposed by Les Weller and Seconded by John Lamb. The minutes were agreed as a true record. All were in favour. Thanks were recorded to Sam Davis for production of the minutes. The actions from the minutes appear in the item updates in the agenda.

4) Progress Reports

a) Progress against the 3KQ report

Members received a verbal report from the AIFCA Management Group Chairman. The Chairman briefly outlined the process to date noting thanks to the 3KQ consultants. The Chairman welcomed and thanked Devon and Severn for re-joining the AIFCA; noting the importance AIFCA members placed on their return. Looking forward the AIFCA role and aims will be revisited now the organisation has made changes to the officers. The new Chief Officer has also been asked to bring forward updated and refreshed policies and procedures. Prof. Humphreys was thanked for his work in this regard.

The roles of the Management Group was described and it was highlighted that this would be ratified at the Directors meeting. The action to review the structure of the limited company will commence and seek to conclude in 18 months. The Chairman thanked all the members who had played such an active part in the review. In particular the review group were thanked. Mat Mander, Les Weller,

Sam Davis, Julian Gregory and Paul Williams. The work of Paul Williams in the preparation of the accounts was highlighted.

Prof. Humphreys expressed his thanks to the group and to the Chairman on behalf of the Members. He felt that the very positive and optimistic about the work undertaken and the role of the AIFCA. The Members resolved to formally record their thanks to Tony Tomlinson and the review group for the work in reviewing the AIFCA.

Members NOTED the UPDATE

b) Appointment of Chief Officer

Members received a verbal update from the Chairman on the appointment of the AIFCA Chief Officer. Members heard how there had been a strong list of candidates for the role of Chief Officer. Following the interview process Robert Clark had been appointed, from the 1st of September. The Chairman thanked the Chief Officer for his work in the interim period prior to appointment.

Members NOTED the UPDATE

c) IFCA member's appointments

Members received a verbal report from the AIFCA Vice-chairman. Les Weller described the process to date, and how very recently, and following a rather delayed process, the MMO had finally written to the IFCA members who were due to expire at the end of their 10 year term advising them of whether an extension to their appointment was to be granted. Julian Gregory enquired as to whether the letters had gone to both the successful and unsuccessful candidates. It was confirmed that in the first instance the letters had been sent to the successful candidates with letters to the other members to be sent shortly. Les Weller further described his discussions with the MMO on behalf of the AIFCA on the proposed national recruitment campaign for new members. The campaign timelines had already slipped. The advertising is likely to commence in November and run til January with a 3-week sifting process with interviews in March.

Prof Williams described how he had had extensive discussions with the MMO regarding the loss of experience as a result of the 10-year expiration policy. he issue of local elections was highlighted by Cllr Lamb whereby local elections have been rolled over to May. The IFCA's faced the issue of losing experience from their Council appointees. Julian Gregory agreed that this supported the case for retention of General Members. Cllr Williams advised that he had written to the MMO requesting a meeting but had received no reply and Dr Atkins advised members that he had submitted requests for extensions for two members, but the correspondence had apparently been lost. Les Weller described how he had minutes and correspondence going back over two years, trying to get action on the matter. Les described his frustration with the entire process.

Stewart Harper described how he had sought and been granted the extension of 5 members; the members appointment will now however all expire in April 2022 and consequently no staggering of appointments has been built into the extension process. The Chairman described how he had written endlessly to the MMO on the matter and it had been raised with Defra. The MMO Chief Executive had previously promised a root and branch review of the process of members appointments. It was agreed that the process was very unsatisfactory to date and the General Members have not been given the support their hard work and dedication deserves.

Members NOTED the UPDATE

It was further agreed that Les Weller would circulate his letter to the MMO describing the issues with the process and that the Chief Officer should highlight the issues to the Defra and seek to work with the MMO to improve the situation.

d) SR20 IFCA COG response

Members received a report from the Chair of the Chief Officer Group. The Chief Officer provided the background to the report which was circulated previously. The Chief Officer also advised that he had been engaging with the Local Government Special Interest Group on the matter. A marine fisheries and conservation group of the SIG has been established. Cllr Lamb welcomed the

engagement with the SIG and advised of the significant pressures on the Local Authorities budgets, asking that Defra be made aware of the severe funding pressures that the Local Authorities and IFCA's will be under for funding.

Dr Axford welcomed the excellent report by the Chief Officers Group and enquired as to whether the indicators could be reported in the individual IFCA's annual reports. The Chief Officer advised that the AIFCA and the COG would be engaging with NIMEG and TAG as to the methodology to gather the metrics under the COG SR20 response.

Prof Williams advised that Plymouth Council had indicated that they are facing a very significant deficit as a consequence of the Covid pandemic and this compounds the more general pressures that their IFCA are under. More generally Devon and Severn IFCA wished to discuss the matter of whether the IFCA's should be funded by central government directly as opposed to the current funding model. Cllr Lamb highlighted that this issue has been raised and debated previously. He highlighted that there is also consideration of the amalgamation of Local Authorities to create combined authorities; this has a potential impact on several IFCA's. David McCandless highlighted the importance of local communities and local / regional delivery because of the IFCA model. The model of both local and central government funding was appropriate in this context, but the failure of the central government funding to increase to reflect not only inflation but also the increased demands on the service was the key issue.

Prof Williams stated that he would support central government funding with local input. Cllr Williams recognised the concerns regarding funding but noted the importance of the local decision making whereby with local funding comes the ability to define local priorities. Prof Humphreys urged caution because of the vulnerabilities that could result from removing the local authority funding. Adding that the local authorities bring democratic accountability and legitimacy. It is necessary to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages very carefully. In his opinion the model is correct but requires greater central government funding.

Dr Ashworth raised caution over the reliance on central government funding. Adding the oversight that local councillors is very important to the committees, they provide stability and continuity and the ability for the authorities to set their agenda according to their local priorities.

Prof Williams highlighted that his experience is because of the issues faced in the D&S Authority whereby several of the local authorities have withheld funds and do not wish to contribute to the IFCA. In his opinion the AIFCA should take a position on the issue on whether IFCA's should be centrally funded. Julian Gregory highlighted that Eastern IFCA were at the other end of the spectrum in comparison to the position outlined by Prof Williams when it comes to the local authorities; the Eastern IFCA enjoy a very productive relationship with the finance teams in their constituent authorities.

Prof Humphreys supported the points made by Julian Gregory that local fisheries are important to local communities and the local communities should be able to shape the direction of management. The priorities for local communities may be very different from the priorities for central government.

Members NOTED the UPDATE

Tony Tomlinson thanked members for their constructive debate, and it was agreed that that the matter be referred for reports at the next meeting.

AGREED that the IFCA funding model be debated at the next AIFCA meeting and reports be prepared.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

6. AIFCA Accounts 2019/20

Members approved the final accounts for the AIFCA for 2019/20. Cllr Williams provided members with a comprehensive overview of the AIFCA's financial position and the actions taken to prepare the end of year accounts. A detailed explanation of the treatment of the capital equipment grant, MPA project and £9k of earmarked reserves was provided. The legal and professional costs associated with the personnel changes were also noted. It was noted that the fixed assets had been fully written off. The Net Asset situation was described and details of the cash at bank provided.

Looking forward from the out-turn to a review of future costs the review of insurances was noted. The IT and website costs were identified and would be subject to review this year. The phone contract costs were explained and have been reviewed. There will be savings made in the venue and conference hire costs. The proposal is not to recruit an assistant immediately and payroll and assistance will be provided.

Prof Humphreys thanked Cllr Williams for his detailed explanation and was happy to propose that the Accounts be approved, before doing so he requested further details of the Science Direct costs. It was explained that the costs were offset by income from the IFCA's to the same amount, whereby the central procurement enabled savings to be made. Prof Humphreys requested that the service be reviewed because he felt the access provided by the subscription was limited. However, others who used the service, felt that it represented good value for money. Prof Humphreys will enquire with his IFCA.

Les Weller enquired as to the phone contract costs. These were described and the direct debit had now been cancelled. Stewart Harper thanked Cllr Williams for report and the preparation of the accounts. He asked if the title of the accounts could be corrected to remove the capital A from and. This was agreed. The chairman asked that the Accounts be approved. The motion was proposed by Prof Williams and seconded by Prof Humphreys. All present were in favour.

The final accounts of the AIFCA for the financial year 2019 to 2020 were APPROVED

7. Training position

Members received a report from Will Wright on the appointment of a National Training Officer with recommendation(s) of the Chief Officer. Dr Wright provided the background to the report. The Chief Officer provided a breakdown of the costing and benefits of the post. Cllr Lamb spoke in favour of the continuation of the position and the value of training to the IFCA's. Cllr Lamb thanked Ian Jones for his work to date in the role.

Mat Mander gave his apologies and left the meeting taking no further part in the debate.

The Chief Officer summarised the position with regards to Kent & Essex as the employer and the AIFCA providing management support. Julian Gregory enquired as to the basis for the salary. It was explained that the role had been subject to a job evaluation under the host IFCA's scheme. After a debate it was AGREED that the job specification be reviewed. The position with regards to the individual members providing subscription to the position was clarified as per section 3.1.1. of the officer's report. On the basis of the explanation Prof. Williams could support the recommendations.

Subject to the review of the Job Description, Les Weller proposed and Julian Gregory seconded **that the AIFCA;**

- 1) AGREE to record thanks to Ian Jones (ex AIFCA NLTO) and Kent and Essex IFCA for the work of the NLTO to date.**
- 2) NOTE the grant award under the EMFF.**
- 4) AGREES to commence a recruitment process for an NLTO with a revised job description that links the duties, responsibilities and IFCA training programme that has been developed in the last 18 months**
- 5) NOTES the budgetary implications of the appointment of a new NLTO and agrees in principal (subject to individual IFCA ratification) to provide ongoing support for the role.**
- 6) RECOMMENDS that the COG revisit the membership of the national IFCA training group**

All were in favour.

At 13:15 there was a 15-minute break.

BREAK

At 13:30 the meeting reconvened

8. Budget Control

Members received a report from Paul Williams on the AIFCA Budget with the recommendation that the members approve the revised budget.

Cllr Williams described the budget assumptions, noting where variance is expected. He described the cash budget, the contents in the notes to accompany the budget and provided detail on aspects of the notes. He reported that the bottom line is that at the end of Aug. we are £21k ahead, but with anticipated VAT yet to pay of £14k.

Sam Davis thanked Cllr Williams for his detailed explanation of the accounts. Cllr Williams said that he was very happy to support the AIFCA and the new Chief Officer

Prof Williams proposed and Les Weller seconded the recommendation that members **note the budget control statement and approve the AIFCA budget.**

Members thanked Cllr Williams.

9. The Defra IFCA Evaluation Report

Members received a report from the Chief Officer. The Chief Officer gave the background and context to the report. Prof. Williams expressed his frustration that the draft report has not been circulated to the Chairs and he was minded to complain to the Secretary of State if that were to happen again. Both the Chairman and Cllr Lamb supported such an approach.

There was a debate about the adequacy of the report's methodology and an explanation that certain of the inaccuracies in the drafting were being addressed.

It was **AGREED** that the Chief Officer should draft a response to the report in anticipation of the report's eventual publication and that the draft response be circulated for comment.

10. EU Exit

Members received a report from Will Wright of the Chief Officers Group on preparation for EU Exit and the role of IFCA's. Dr Wright's briefing described the process of coordination with partner organisations, referring to the role of JMOCC, the IFCA./MMO intel system, the Intel Cells into Defra.

Dr Wright detailed the vessel charter agreements with MMO for vessel sharing. He provided an overview of preparations ahead of the end of the transition period and the role of IFCA's.

Members debated the implications for IFCA's and thanked Dr Wright for his update and the officers involved in the preparations.

11. Dates of, and arrangements for the Next Meetings

It was agreed that the meetings of the AIFCA Members Forum, to be followed by a meeting of the AIFCA Directors, shall be held on the following dates:

8th	December	2020
9th	March	2021
8th	June	2021 (AGM)
7th	September	2021
7th	December	2021
11th	March	2022

It was agreed that for the foreseeable future that the meetings shall be held remotely using video-conferencing. Notwithstanding it is desirable to meet in person if possible and the situation will remain under review.

AIFCA DIRECTORS MEETING

(Draft) Minutes

1st October 2020 at 14:27

Via video-conference

Directors Present

Tony Tomlinson (Chairman)
Les Weller (Vice Chairman)
Robert Clark (Chief Officer)
David McCandless
Sam Davis
Tom Hooper
Stephen Atkins
Will Wright
Julian Gregory

Also in attendance

Ian Jones (Chief Executive Officer – Southern IFCA)
Cllr Paul Williams (Chairman – North Western IFCA)

1. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman for 2020/21

Tony Tomlinson was nominated for Chairman by Les Weller and the nomination was seconded by Stephen Atkins. Les Weller was nominated for vice Chairman by Tony Tomlinson and the nomination seconded by David McCandless. There were no other nominations. All present were in favour and;

Tony Tomlinson was elected Chairman
Les Weller was elected vice Chairman

2. Apologies

Apologies were accepted from;
Tim Dapling
Mike Hardy
Mat Mander

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meetings on the 21st of January and the 20th of March were accepted as a true record. The minutes were proposed as a true record by Les Weller and seconded by Tom Hooper. All agreed. The Directors thanked Sam Davis for the production of the minutes.

DECISION ITEMS

5. To approve the AIFCA Accounts 2019/20
Les Weller proposed that the Accounts be approved and this was seconded by Sam Davis. All agreed. The Accounts were approved.

The Directors resolved to formally record thanks to Cllr Paul Williams for his work in the production of the AIFCA accounts.

6. To approve the appointment of new members

In accordance with the articles of Association, the Directors approved the appointment of Ian Jones as a Director of the Association. The motion was proposed by Les Weller and seconded by David McCandless.

It was agreed following a verbal report from the Chief Officer that the Chief Officers roles as a Director be reviewed.

7. To approve the Budget

Cllr Williams provided a breakdown of the budget, noting that whilst there will likely be significant variation and cost savings in certain areas, (due to new ways of working), this is being closely monitored and he recommended and it was agreed; the budget was approved by the Directors.

The motion was proposed by Les Weller and seconded by Sam Davis.

8. To ratify the creation of the management group

The Directors agreed to ratify the creation of a management group to run the day-to-day oversight of the AIFCA business. The composition of the group to be;

The Chairman

The Vice-Chairman

The Chair of the Chief Officers Group

Cllr Paul Williams (as finance advisor)

Mike Hardy (as Human Resource Advisor)

Les Weller proposed the recommendation and seconded by David McCandless. All Directors were in favour.

INFORMATION ITEMS

9. To receive a verbal report on the progress of the AIFCA revised work plans and the development of an AIFCA strategy.

The Chief Officer set out plans to develop a strategy, welcoming input from members.

The Chairman asked the Chief Officer to present to the next members forum.

The Chief Officer thanked the Directors for their support.

The meeting ended at 14:45

Annex B emailed letter from NWIFCA to 'Save our seabass' February 2021 responding to false allegations

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for correcting the statement on your website.

However NWIFCA is still listed in the mailing list provided on your website. This may be why we continue to receive communications alleging secret meetings with government lobbying for removal of netting restrictions. My officers have responded to over 40 such e-mails so far.

It is clear that your false allegations were received by a wide audience. NWIFCA Authority members were informed of the error and its consequences at a meeting on February 9th. They and officers were most concerned about the reputational damage to NWIFCA caused by this false allegation and resolved that the Authority should complain to you in the strongest terms.

The Authority is concerned that the false accusation has undermined the positive effects of our efforts to protect bass. In recent months we have prosecuted six individuals for offences relating to Bass fishing restrictions resulting in fines totalling £8,376. We hope these prosecutions act as a strong deterrent to those who wish to break the rules but your false allegations may have the opposite effect.

To address our concerns, we request that a retraction of the allegations is placed on your website and all social and any other media where you posted the allegations. Please let me know in writing what you are doing to make the necessary corrections. Also please explain why the error occurred and what you were trying to achieve. I would have thought our respective organisations were working to a common objective.

This email will be posted on our website, copied to NWIFCA members and officers, other IFCA, Defra and partner organisations.

We look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Dr Stephen M Atkins

CEO NWIFCA