

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting:
6 July 2021: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
10**

Chief Officer Report: March to May 2021

Purpose of Report: Information

Recommendation: Receive the report

Contents:

- i. Covid**
- ii. Personnel, Health & Safety**
- iii. Communications & Byelaw update**
- iv. Association of IFCA**
- v. Defra**
- vi. RPA review**

i. Covid

1. Regulations to control the spread of the virus continued throughout the quarter. Government guidelines were followed and virus related Health and safety risk assessments continued in use. The March Authority meeting was held on line
2. On 7 May, legislation expired which had permitted IFCA to hold meetings on line for the previous 12 months. Therefore from 7 May until the date when virus regulations were scheduled to be lifted (21 June), meetings where public attendance must be provided had to take place taking account of covid regulations. TSB on 18 May was cancelled as a no suitable venue could be found in time. The June quarterly was postponed to 6 July, the earliest date when members could attend.
3. On 14 June, the government further extended covid restrictions for 4 weeks from 21 June to 19 July. NWIFCA Members agreed by email against Government advice and advice from officers that the TSB meeting planned for 30 June at Truckhaven, Carnforth and the Annual quarterly meeting on 6 July at Stonecross Manor Hotel Kendal should take place with covid measures applied. Health and safety advice included seating with 2m spacing, wearing of masks and provision of negative lateral flow tests by all attendees before the meeting. It was noted that MMO policy was that no in person meetings would be attended by MMO officers while government advice to minimize travel and operate covid regulations continue..
4. NWIFCA has continued delivery of duties during the covid regulations with enhanced Health and Safety precautions. Patrols and shellfish sampling have continued. Some officers have had to self-isolate for various periods.
5. Carnforth and Whitehaven Offices were open with 1-2 officers at each with others following Government guidance to continue working from home where possible.

ii. HR, Health & Safety

6. **Members:** The Authority is pleased to welcome new members. Three members were appointed following interviews for MMO appointees in February, These are Dr Cristina Steliana Mihailovici; Mr Richard Donnan and Mr Richard Lomax.

7. Mr Trevor Jones reached the 10 year statutory limit for membership of NWIFCA on 30 June and is therefore no longer an MMO appointee. The Authority extends grateful thanks to Mr Jones for 10 years' service to the NWIFCA. Mr Jones is replaced by Mr Phil Capper, also appointed in the February 2021 recruitment. Mr Capper in a long serving (more than 34 years) Fishery Officer in the SFC and IFCA in NWIFCA.
8. Following elections in May 2021, both Council Members for Lancashire have been replaced. The Authority is pleased to welcome Cllr Stephen Clark and Cllr Jean Parr to the Authority.
9. Thus for the first time for many years, the Authority has a full complement of members. All 6 new members are invited to attend this, their first meeting of the Authority.
10. All new members attended IFCA introduction presentations by the CEO and HOE held online in June.
11. **HR:** Following the departure of the Senior Scientist in December, the post was advertised in February. 4 applications were received of whom two candidates were interviewed and one selected. Unfortunately after appointment he did not take up the post for personal reasons. The senior Science post has been advertised again. Senior IFCA, Mr Jon Haines continues as acting Senior Scientist until an appointment is made.
12. **Health and Safety** There have been no notifiable incidents up to end of May 2020. The H&S policy has been developed and amended to take account of changing circumstances with the advice of the retained H&S consultant. The Authority has one member of staff on extended sick leave.
13. **Complaints:** there is one outstanding complaint against the Authority arising from a discontinued court case earlier in the year. This complaint is being addressed.

iii. **Communications and byelaws**

14. The database and website have been maintained up to date throughout the period of covid restrictions.
15. Issuing of all permits has been kept up to date with no delays to any permits as a result of restrictions.
16. Four draft byelaws are now with MMO for confirmation, all outstanding comments from MMO have been addressed and we hope they are now in a final state.
17. Plans are in place to issue cockle and mussel permits as usual in August 2021 under the 2012 byelaw 3, in the absence of confirmation of the new byelaw 3.
18. Similarly, the Authority cannot yet issue potting permits under the new Byelaw 4 expected to be confirmed imminently. The existing system is kept operational until the byelaw is confirmed.
19. Following statutory consultations, the MCRS byelaw and Leasowe fishing byelaw have been sent to Defra for confirmation

iv. **Association of IFCA**

20. The members Forum of AIFCA last met by conference call on 8 June 2021. NWIFCA Chairman and CEO attended. Draft notes for approval by AIFCA members at the next meeting are at Annex A.

v. Defra and Brexit

21. **Brexit:** There has been no resolution to the problem reported in March of the prohibition of the export of Live Bivalve mollusks (LBM) into the EU. This prohibition continues to have a very deleterious impact on the cockle and mussel industries of NW England. The Authority wrote to David Morris MP in January who replied promising to investigate. And to Defra in March. No response has been received.
22. **MAFCO and Fisheries Management plans:** The agenda for the meeting on 23 June and CEO notes of the April meeting are at Annex B. Meetings are classified sensitive so some papers cannot be shared.

vi. RPA review of NWIFCA Policies, Procedures and Governance

23. The review has made good progress since the March meeting. Data gathering and research has been largely completed. Some further interviews with members, officers and stakeholders remain to be done. All data will then be analyzed and the report prepared.

Meetings and key dates February 2021 to May 2021

| | |
|----------|--|
| 9 -2-21 | TSB |
| 17 2-21 | COG |
| 24 -2-21 | MAFCO |
| 9-3-21 | AIFCA Members Forum |
| 11-3-21 | AIFCA Directors |
| 18-3-21 | NWIFCA |
| 23=3=21 | COG Fisheries Management Plans |
| 8-4-21 | Defra Fisheries management plans |
| 26-4-21 | Defra NW Regional Fisheries Group |
| 28 -4-21 | MAFCO |
| 7-5-21 | Legislation permitting Council meetings on line expired. |
| 18 5-21 | TSB cancelled. Venue with covid compliance could not be found. Quarterly (Annual) meeting postponed to 6-7-21. |
| 26-5-21 | COG |
| 21-6-21 | Scheduled date for ending covid restrictions postponed by Government to 19-7-21. TSB 30-6-21 and Quarterly (annual) 6-7-21) continuing under covid restrictions. |

CEO NWIFCA 12 November 2020

Annex A

AIFCA Members Forum 8-6-21 On line meeting notes

In Attendance

Tony Tomlinson MBE (chairman)
Cllr. Paul Williams (part)
Les Weller (Vice Chairman)
Cllr. Paul Skinner
David McCandless
Cllr. Mark Roberts
Mike Hardy
Prof. Mike Williams
Ian Jones
Dr Will Wright
Samantha Davis
Dr Steve Axford
Tim Dapling
Dr Stephen Atkins
Julian Gregory
Dr Peter Jones
Tom Hooper
Mat Mander
Steven Travis (National Lead Training Officer) (part)
Robert Clark (Chief Officer)

Agenda

Cllr Mark Roberts and Dr Peter Jones newly appointed Chairs of Southern IFCA and Sussex IFCA, were welcomed to their first meeting of the AIFCA.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr. Lamb
Cllr. Guy

2. Declaration of Interests

Dr Axford declared his interest as a member of the RYA conservation committee.
Tony Tomlinson asked members to declare any other interests as they became apparent under any agenda item during the meeting as necessary.

3. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman for FY 2021/22.

Robert Clark was asked by the outgoing Chairman to Chair this agenda item he advised members that Tony Tomlinson had been nominated as Chairman, and there had been no other nominations.
Cllr Williams proposed Mr Tomlinson for chairman, Dr Atkins seconded the proposal and all members were in favour. Mr Tomlinson was duly **ELECTED** as Chairman.
Robert Clark advised members that Les Weller had been nominated for vice chairman and there had been no other nominations. Mike Hardy proposed that Mr Weller be appointed as vice chairman and Mr Dapling seconded the proposal. All members voted in favour of the appointment and Mr Weller was duly **ELECTED**

Tony Tomlinson took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

4. Minutes and actions AIFCA Members Forum Meeting (March 2021)

The minutes of the draft March AIFCA members forum meeting were considered and Sam Davis proposed that the minutes be accepted as a true record and this proposal was seconded by Dr Axford. All members voted in favour of the proposal and the minutes were **ADOPTED**.

5. Minutes Directors Meeting (March 2021)

The draft minutes of the March AIFCA meeting were considered and **NOTED** by members

6. Chairman's announcements

The chairman announced that agenda items 9 & 10 (as they appeared on the meeting agenda pack) would be considered next on the agenda to allow Cllr Williams to leave the meeting early.

7. AIFCA Budget control statement

Cllr Williams introduced the budget control statement and noted the variations in budget in the period April and May.

Members discussed the budget and **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the budget control statement, as per a proposal by Prof. Williams, the motion having been seconded by Tim Dapling; all members were in favour and the statement was **APPROVED**.

Cllr Williams was thanked for his continued support to the AIFCA and he left the meeting due to a prior commitment.

8. AIFCA Annual Return

Robert Clark introduced the draft annual return. Providing background, to the annual out-turn and the reasons for the surplus. Mr Clark advised that the Directors would be asked to approve the Annual Return at their forthcoming meeting, subject to any amendments required as a result of feedback from the members forum.

Mike Hardy proposed that the Draft annual return be **NOTED** and this proposal was seconded by Dr Atkins. All were in favour of the proposal and the Annual Return was **NOTED**.

Sam Davis enquired generally as to whether the Chief Officer (CO) was satisfied that the budget would meet the needs of the organisation for the current financial year (given the exceptional year prior). The CO responded that the decisions of the members to re-allocate the administrative support and to co-opt a member for finance, was working and was sustainable and moreover the support provided by the Policy Officer would enable the AIFCA to develop further.

9. Progress Reports

7a. Member's appointment process (verbal)

The Forum heard 1) how Belinda Franks had taken over from Beverly Morton as the responsible MMO officer for IFCA members recruitment. Andrew Wareing has left the MMO and until his replacement is appointed there is no single responsible Director, but that the MMO Board have overall oversight. 2) That the AIFCA has held a series of meetings with Ms Franks and with Defra on the matter of IFCA members appointments. Following an exchange of correspondence with MMO and Defra, with the support of Prof. Williams, and the vice chairman, the CO understands the following principles have been agreed (but have not been committed to writing);

- that upon a situation becoming vacant on an IFCA, the MMO will discuss with the Chairman and Chief Officer the needs of the balance of the IFCA prior to advertising for a replacement;
- That upon 10 years a member of an IFCA will (continue to) not be eligible for renewal, but shall be able to re-apply for membership of an IFCA. That there is (in accordance with their duty) a determination to be made (by the MMO) on the balance between enabling and promoting new members to be appointed (with the new ideas and skills they will bring) with the need to retain inimitable skills and experience on an IFCA; in accordance with the needs of the balance of the IFCA;
- That the MMO will commence engagement with the IFCAs to develop localised recruitment plans, according to the forthcoming vacancies, in an attempt to be more proactive so as to avoid national generic recruitment campaigns;
- That those on the 'reserves list'; i.e. those who have previously 'passed interview' but were not appointed, shall not be automatically appointed to the IFCA, unless their skills and knowledge meet the needs of the balance of the IFCA, as determined by engagement with, amongst others the IFCA itself.

7b. Survey Equipment Ownership (verbal)

The CO reported that the survey equipment owned by the AIFCA will remain in the ownership of the AIFCA until the current insurance expires (September); whereupon it will transfer to the relevant individual IFCA, as per the agreement at the last meeting. Mr Trundle of Cornwall IFCA was thanked for his support in facilitating this arrangement.

7c. Temporary re-allocation of AIFCA post - Policy Officer

By general consent, the members **NOTED** the report. Prof. Williams proposed and Les Weller seconded the motion and the members **APPROVED** a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the Isle of Scilly IFCA to second Tom Hooper to the AIFCA as Policy Officer. Subject to the draft MoA being amended to include; that the work by IoS IFCA shall equate to one day per week averaged over the duration of the agreement. All were in favour.

7d. 10-year Anniversary & Newsletter (verbal)

The CO advised the members that the materials and event will be launched after the meeting, for circulation to members and to officers. Members thanked the CO and Chairman for the work. The CO advised that work had commenced on the production of an AIFCA newsletter.

Items for decision

10. National Angling Strategy

Dr Axford proposed and Dr Atkins seconded a motion and duly the AIFCA **NOTED & ENDORSED** the National Angling Strategy and **APPROVED** that a representative for the AIFCA, Tim Dapling, be appointed to the National Angling Strategy partnership board. The motion was carried by way of a unanimous vote.

11. Towards Regional Fisheries Management Plans; crustacea and molluscs in England.

Prof. Williams recommended the motion that members **SUPPORT** the development of a project entitled; Towards Regional Fisheries Management Plans and members **AGREED** to release up to £6,000 in reserves to contribute towards the project. Motion was seconded by David McCandless and all members were in favour.

Items for note

12. Chief officers report

The report was **NOTED**

13. Training officer report

Stevie Travis, having joined the meeting gave a comprehensive narrative report to support the paper and his report was **NOTED** and Stevie was thanked for his work.

14. Seafish byelaw mapping project

The report was **NOTED** and it was agreed that the progress to map the byelaws was positive.

There was a discussion on anchoring and Cllr Roberts and Dr Jones updated members on issues concerning damage caused by cruise ships anchoring in MPAs. The CO agreed to contact the Seafish team to enquire as to the provision of scheduled wrecks on the Kingfisher charts.

15. Any Other Business

The CO was asked to convene a meeting of the IFCA's to respond to the terms of reference for the Regional Fisheries Management Groups.

It was agreed that the CO should circulate details of the Environment Agency's habitat restoration project.

The Chairman and vice chairman were thanked for their work in improving the performance of the AIFCA.

The meeting closed at 13:30

Annex B IFCA / Defra Liaison committee (Marine & Fisheries Chief Officers MAFCO) Agenda June 21 and meeting notes April 21

Marine and Fisheries Chief Officer (MAFCO) monthly call

Wednesday 23rd June 21 13:00-15:00

| | Agenda Item | Lead | Time Slot | Timing |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 | Welcome and introductions | Tim Robbins/ Sam Davis | 5 minutes | 13:00-13:05 |
| 2 | Meeting note and review of actions | Ann Harkness- Moore | 5 minutes | 13:05-13:10 |
| 3 | IFCA Spotlight IFCA Annual Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they written? • How are they used? | Sam Davis | 50 minutes | 13:10-14:00 |
| 4 | 2 nd Generation Marine Plans | Eden Hannam | 10 minutes | 14:00-14:10 |
| 5 | Angling Strategy | Ruth Allin | 10 minutes | 14:10-14:20 |
| 6 | Aquaculture | Ruth Allin | 10 minutes | 14:20-14:30 |
| 7 | HPMA Update | Jen Ashworth | 15 minutes | 14:30-14:45 |
| 8 | Defra Updates: Spending Review Statutory Instruments Byelaws comms New Burdens | Tim Robbins | 10 minutes | 14:45-14:55 |
| 9 | AOB: Lobster pot grant Fisheries and Seafood Scheme Update Next meeting date | All | 5 minutes | 14:55-15:00 |

Official sensitive Information must not be communicated outside NWIFCA

Note of Marine and Fisheries Chief Officer (MAFCO)

Wednesday 28th April; 13:00 – 15:00

Attendees

| | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Sam Davis (Chair) | Cornwall IFCA | Mat Mander | Devon and Severn IFCA |
| Will Wright | Kent & Essex IFCA | Stephen Atkins | North Western IFCA |
| Tom Hooper | Isles of Scilly IFCA | David McCandless | North Eastern IFCA |
| Julian Gregory | Eastern IFCA | Tim Dapling | Sussex IFCA |
| Kieran Hyder | Cefas | Mike Hardy | Northumberland IFCA |
| Rob Clarke | Association of IFCAs | | |

Various officers from Defra teams attended

- Louise Farmer is the new Team Leader of the ALB Governance and Relationship Team in Marine and Fisheries.

1. Review of actions since previous meeting.

- Ongoing action: meeting attendance:

Ed Hind-Ozan attended the Northumberland IFCA's annual meeting and provided an overview of Defra relations with IFCAs.

- Ed Hind-Ozan is waiting to receive a grid spot to share the IFCA Evaluation report. Update:
- The ALB Governance and Relationship Team are working with Rob Clark to develop a series of teach-ins, Contributions from IFCA Chiefs are welcome.
- Ed Hind-Ozan has developed a "lessons learnt" paper regarding the evaluation framework for discussion at a future MAFCO.
- Send Defra Policy Teams any relevant meeting invitations going forwards.

2. Fisheries Management Plans and Environmental Principles Update (Jon Davies)

Environmental Principles Policy Statement (EPPS)

- The consultation is currently open.
- Ministers will consider the Environmental Principles as they relate to central policy making across all government departments to integrate environmental decisions into wider decision making.
- Defra will consider how the EPPS will interact with local decision making, regarding IFCAs byelaws. decisions
- Tim Dapling noted that this seems consistent with the principles of sustainability that are part of IFCA duties. Focus on direct legislation that sets out duties and the connection between strategic and local level is now needed.

Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)

- Defra provided an update on three work areas for FMPs Sustainability Team:

1. internal exercises with other M&F Policy Teams to consider which stocks should be prioritised. They are keen to hear others' views on this. Team recently met with Rob Clark and other ALBs.
 2. making a list of FMPs to take forward with the DAs by Autumn. This will then go to consultation.
 3. developing a timetable for FMPs and taking forwards pilot plans over the coming months. Ideas include bass, shellfish and crayfish. The team may set up meetings to discuss this.
- Sam Davis added that the IFCAs are trying to form a more coherent view of how they can meet this process.
 - Tim Dapling welcomed FMPs, queried whether FMPs will look beyond single species fisheries management focused on the TAC species quota management and asked how other factors are being considered e.g. effects on other fisheries and socio-economics.
 - Defra confirmed that other issues are being considered as well such as scale and granularity, focus on non-quota species, effect on the environment.

3. **iVMS Update**

- Mat Mander raised IFCA concerns about the imminent rollout by MMO. The IFCAs consider it doesn't meet IFCAs' expectations for the project
- The IFCAs may be excluded from accessing the live data within their districts which may reduce their ability to fulfil enforcement duties and protect vulnerable species and habitats. Enforcement by IFCAs will use a mix of technology and vessels. iVMS will help enhance protection of MPAs and HPAs.
- Defra and the MMO may be missing an opportunity to reform enforcement methods to the benefit of regulators and the industry (which do not want multiple monitoring systems on board). A service user approach is needed that considers both. MMO appear to reject IFCAs concerns because the proposed system will meet Minimum Viable Product (MVP) standard.
- Julian Gregory said that in 2012 Defra asked the MMO and the IFCAs to find a cost-effective enforcement solution. Historically it has been a joint partnership between the IFCAs and the MMO but the IFCAs have noticed a shift in focus away from inshore. The project is now more focused on what the MMO needs to deliver. For the IFCAs, iVMS is a fisheries management and MPA tool as well as a compliance tool.
- IFCAs may have to introduce their own specification for monitoring systems if the current iVMS proposals are not upgraded.
- Sam Davis flagged that the IFCAs will be writing to the MMO to outline their concerns surrounding the current project.
- Defra reported that there are two key strands to the project in Defra: agreeing the specification of devices and the legislation underpinning the requirements. MMO's aim is to have a final business case ready by July. Defra is finalising policy sign off which includes consideration of the requirements on Defra's side. The legislation is not fully finalised Defra is happy to facilitate a conversation with the appropriate colleagues in MMO.

4. **Update on returning to working in office and future public engagement**

- Sam Davis advised that the IFCAs are reviewing the processes surrounding home working, online meetings and engagement.

- The challenge by the Local Government Association against repealing Covid 19 regulations that will prevent local authority meetings taking place online is causing concern. The IFCAs are hopeful that the local authority meetings can remain online while national Covid restrictions are in place. The IFCAs will consider what engagement with the industry might look like in the future.
- Mike Hardy advised that Northumberland IFCA has maintained an office presence whilst complying with social distancing restrictions. The main concern is about the future of meetings and whether we can have these virtually.
- Tim Dapling said that coming out of lockdown presents challenges. Government roadmaps out of the pandemic in terms of relaxing restrictions are helpful however an internal roadmap for the IFCAs is needed that is consistent with the approach that the MMO and Defra group colleagues are taking? Local variation must be considered. Sam Davis added that the IFCAs are keen to provide a consistent approach on the coast.
- Stephen Atkins said that the legislation enabling public meetings to be held online expires on 7th May. However he has not been able to find a suitable venue for the full sized quarterly meeting and is unsure how to advise members.
- David McCandless echoed what has been said and welcomed the opportunity to learn from this year. Virtual meetings have been a positive that have helped us connect more and in different ways.
- Tim Robbins said that the ability to do video conferencing has meant people don't have to travel which may be a way to get more members of industry involved and engage a wider variety of stakeholders. Project Horizon is ongoing which is considering how Defra will operate in the future.
- Tim Dapling observed that at a regional meeting there were about fifteen public organisations, three people from industry, only one of whom fished. There needs to be caution about the ability of people/sectors to participate in virtual meetings. We also need to consider inclusivity-does everyone know how to attend virtual meetings.

6. Spending Review and New Burdens Funding

- Defra updated on what is expected to be a multi-year spending review although this is to be confirmed.
- Mat Mander advised that D&S IFCA wrote to the Minister highlighting concerns regarding the situation with their funding. Defra acknowledged the correspondence and confirmed that discussions are ongoing and we will respond as soon as possible.
- David McCandless asked if there has been an update on New Burdens/ Central funding for 2021/22 year. Tim Robbins confirmed that £3 million has been allocated to New Burdens for the IFCAs and will be reassessed after 2022.
- Tom Hooper asked what Defra's expectation is for the multi-year review. Is there an appetite to change the way funding comes from Defra to the IFCAs? Tim Robbins advised that support from Defra to the IFCAs is through the New Burdens funding currently. Discussions around exact amounts are needed and we need to think about metrics for reporting. Defra has to report to Treasury and we want to work with the IFCAs on the spending review process. We need to consider how can we bring a better mechanism into place to prove value for money.
- Rob Clark stated that Defra and the IFCAs need to have further discussions regarding New Burdens funding to ensure we have a shared understanding.

7. Strategic Policy Update

- Defra is working to manage a dynamic policy environment and dealing with the realities of leaving the EU, whilst conscious about the impacts on industry. It would be helpful to hear about the stakeholder feedback the IFCAs have received.
- Annual negotiations are ongoing, aware that this is creating a feeling of uncertainty for industry as there is no official outcome at this stage. We need to work out how we manage non-quota stocks with the EU.
- Sam Davis flagged that non-quota stocks will have a knock-on effect for the IFCAs. Sam has also received feedback from the Regional Fisheries Management Group about stakeholder concerns about the inability of the sector to respond to a massive increase in quota.
- The under 10s and inshore fleet are keen to have as much flexibility surrounding quota as possible. Any intelligence surrounding this would be helpful;
- Defra is keen the additional quota is maximised, with sustainability also being taken into account.

8. Bass Nursery Areas report (Lewis White and Kieran Hyder (Cefas))

- Defra received an EIR recently and subsequently released the Bass Nursery Report to one stakeholder. This has led to needing to share the report more broadly. Defra has made recent updates to the Report to make clear that this Report relates to views and data of 2016 and is not current. The abstract has been updated recently to provide reflection on current views.
- Defra is concerned stakeholders feel the Report has deliberately been held back, which is not the case. The report is due to be shared on 13th May 21.
- The bass team would like to support the IFCAs if they are challenged from industry as a result of the release of this document. Sam Davis added that challenge will most likely be from the recreational sector.
- Defra mentioned bass is one of the pilot FMPs. Defra is committed to looking at how to engage commercial and recreational stakeholders. Further updates with regards to developing bass FMPs are planned for the next month. Defra confirmed that the IFCAs will be brought into discussions once early drafts are prepared.

9. AOB

- Defra asked IFCAs to submit Annual Plans if they have not done so. Policy teams will discuss the best way to provide feedback on the plans to the IFCAs.