

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting:
16 September 2021: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
8**

Chief Officer Report: June to August 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**

i. Overview

1. Carnforth and Whitehaven Offices were open throughout the quarter with 2-3 officers most days at each while others continued working from home. The Patrol Boat programme was significantly reduced in July and August by the Crew having cases of moderately severe covid symptoms.
2. Measures to control the spread of covid continued throughout the quarter with some return to normal working. The slightly postponed June Authority Meeting was held in person on 6 July at Stonecross Manor Hotel, Kendal and TSB took place as normal in August at County Hotel Carnforth. Unfortunately the Morecambe Town Hall continues to be unavailable having been commandeered for covid testing duties.
3. All the key objectives of the Authority are progressing as shown in the Annual Plan report despite some officers having covid symptoms and self-isolating for various periods.
4. Science team worked exceptionally hard to complete early a full survey programme of cockle and mussel stocks in the District in summer 2021. The surveys were brought forward by around 2 months this year in case cockle and/ or mussel fisheries needed additional management as a result of covid and/or Brexit.
5. Cockle stocks proved disappointing after 5 years of good fisheries in Morecambe Bay. Most beds in the District are closed, however work with Natural England is continuing to decide if the Habitats Regulations Assessment will allow a limited fishery this year on Pilling sands.
6. Conversely Mussel stocks have been better than recent years. Morecambe Bay hand-worked fisheries have continued including the usual seed fishery at Heysham Flats. Dredge fisheries in the middle of the Bay have proved productive and valuable and are continuing.

ii. HR, Health & Safety

7. **Members:** There were no changes to MMO appointees or Council membership in the quarter.
8. **HR:** Following the departure of the Senior Scientist in December, the post was advertised in February but unfortunately no appointment could be made. Following further recruitment in

June an offer has been made and a new Senior Scientist is expected to start as soon as possible. Senior IFCA, Mr Jon Haines continues as Depute Senior Scientist until an appointment is made.

9. **Health and Safety** There have been no notifiable incidents up to end of July 2020. The H&S policy continues to be 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.

10. **Complaints:** there are no outstanding complaints against the Authority.

iii. **Communications and byelaws**

11. The database and website are up to date.

12. Issuing of all permits is up to date with no delays to any permits as a result of covid restrictions.

13. Four draft byelaws continue in development with MMO:

- I. Byelaw 3 Cockle and mussel permit scheme: A further set of comments from MMO on the draft byelaw and RIA were addressed in July and the documents returned to MMO. In August MMO informed the Authority that they had no further comments. We await notification that the byelaw and RIA will now be sent to Defra for further checking and scrutiny. Cockle and Mussel permits are being issued as usual in August 2021 under the 2012 byelaw 3, in the absence of confirmation of the new byelaw 3.
- II. Byelaw 1 Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS): This byelaw was submitted to MMO for confirmation in early 2021. There has been further discussion with MMO IFCA byelaws section to bring the NWIFCA draft byelaw in line with other IFCA MCRS byelaws which have now been confirmed. A new version with MMO comments addressed will be returned to MMO as soon as possible.
- III. Byelaw 2 North Wirral Foreshore Byelaw. MMO comments received in June have been addressed and the byelaw and RIA are ready to be returned to MMO.
- IV. Byelaw 4 Potting permit byelaw: There are outstanding comments on the draft byelaw and RIA received from MMO in March. With the summer survey programme largely completed further progress should be achieved in the next quarter. The existing system of potting permits is continuing pending confirmation of this byelaw.
- V. Netting byelaw: Following receipt of a report by the August TSB, further internal drafting of the byelaw is continuing.

iv. **Association of IFCA**

14. As reported to the July meeting, the members Forum of AIFCA met online on 7 June 2021. NWIFCA Chairman and CEO attended. Draft notes for approval by AIFCA members at the next meeting on 7 September are at Annex A. Any further update on AIFCA business will be tabled on 16 September.

v. **Defra**

15. **MAFCO and Fisheries Management plans.** The agenda for the meeting which took place on 23 June is attached at Annex B. Minutes of this meeting are expected to be available in time for the next MAFCO meeting on 8 September. Meetings are classified sensitive so some papers cannot be shared, however an update may be tabled at the September NWIFCA meeting containing any further information from Defra.

16. Government spending review SR21 IFCA Chief Officer's group at short notice in response to a request from Defra in June prepared a submission for this spending review expected to take place in 2021-22. IFCA as a group have bid for increased staff to carry out work to deliver Government policy priorities including 2 officers to assist designation for each proposed HMPA (Highly Protected Marine Areas) however, it now looks unlikely that any HMPA will be proposed for the NWIFCA District. The submission also includes a proposal for 1 additional officer per IFCA to assist with preparation of Fisheries Management plans and IFCA have asked for recovery from the continued loss of new burdens funding which has accrued in recent years as a result of inflation. Full details of the submission will be released for publication when cleared by Defra.

vi. RPA review of NWIFCA Policies, Procedures and Governance

17. The draft review report was received by NWIFCA on 19 August. A meeting of the Review Sub-committee with RPA to discuss the report has been arranged for Friday 10 September. A report of this meeting is expected to be tabled at the NWIFCA September quarterly meeting on 16 September.

Meetings and key dates June-August 2021

8-6-21	AIFCA Members Forum
15-6-21	New members training session
27-6-21	AIFCA Directors quarterly meeting
18-6-21	Online meeting with MMO re priority categories for new members
21-6-21	New members training session
23-6-21	Defra Marine & Fisheries co-ordination meeting (MAFCO)
30-6-21	Extraordinary TSB
9-7-21	RPA contract update
29-7-21	Senior Scientist Interviews
5-8-21	COG extraordinary meeting re SR21
10-8-21	MMO Regional Fisheries Group
18-8-21	IFCA Chief Officer's Group

CEO NWIFCA 6 September 2021

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 meeting

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

