

**NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting:
28 September 2022: 11.00 a.m.**

**AGENDA
ITEM NO.
9**

Chief Officer Report: June-August 2022

Purpose of Report: Information

Recommendation: Receive the report

Offices

1. The Authority June and TSB August meetings were held at Truckhaven, Carnforth. The Morecambe Town Hall continues to be unavailable.

Personnel, Health & Safety

2. The Authority welcomes Mr Jonathan Turner newly appointed as Environment Agency member and Mr. Steve Johnston newly appointed as the MMO Officer member. We look forward to the wealth of technical knowledge and experience they will bring to NWIFCA.
3. 2 new members of staff have been appointed. The Authority welcomes Grace Edwards starting as a patrol vessel crew member on 22 August. Grace has an MSc in Applied Aquatic Biology from the University of Portsmouth in 2018 and was previously a Fish house specialist with Scottish Sea farms based on the Island of Eday in Orkney. Grace also has boat handling skills which will be valuable to the Authority.
4. Gemma Grose as a science officer also starting on 22 August. Gemma has a 1st class honours degree in Marine biology and zoology from Bangor University and previously worked at Menter Mon on Anglesey as an Environmental projects trainee..
5. IFCO Matthew Thompson resigned in March after 1 years' service to take up a promoted post with the Environment Agency leaving a vacancy which will be filled as soon as possible. In his short period of service Matt made important developments to the Authority's intelligence management system.
6. IFCO Alan Forster has resigned from the Authority after a long period of sickness. We wish him a long happy and healthy future.

Communications

7. The database, website and social media are updated by the Administration team. Social media is updated and moderated by the Clerk. Industry, members and officers are all encouraged to send material of interest to assist development of our external

communications. Please let us know what information would be useful to users of these facilities.

8. Issuing of permits and dispensations is kept up to date by the Administration team. Contact the Clerk for specific information. Progress with introduction of new potting and wheelk permits is reported in the science report.
9. The Annual Plan 2022-23 is now published in a colourful paper version and has been distributed. Further printed copies can be obtained if required.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Report

10. In 2021, a complaint was made to the Ombudsman against the Authority. The complaint related to a prosecution of the complainant by the Authority which was withdrawn before a conclusion was reached on the advice of the Authority's legal counsel.
11. The Ombudsman's investigation of the complaint was concluded in July 2022. The decision letter is available to members from the Clerk on request. In summary the Ombudsman found no fault in the Authority's investigation or decision to prosecute. He did find that the Authority had failed to acknowledge 3 emails from the complainant in the correspondence relating to the case. The ombudsman suggested the Authority should apologise to the complainant for the oversight which it has now done and the complaint is concluded.

Association of IFCA

12. The members Forum of AIFCA was held online on 5 September 2022 in in person in Fishmongers Hall London at 10.30-12.00. NWIFCA Chairman and HOE attended in person CEO attended on line. It was followed by a short symposium in the afternoon. The meeting papers are at Annex A.
13. The symposium included the following presentations:
 - i. Rob Clark; CO AIFCA. The importance of inshore Fisheries Management,
 - ii Anne Freeman; Depute Director Defra. UK Fisheries Policy and the Fisheries Act, 2020.
 - iii. Emma Bean, Jason Lowther, Mike Williams and Rob Clark; Specialist Advice to IFCA's and IFCA Decision Making.
 - iv. Les Weller; Chairman Northumberland IFCA What it means to be an IFCA member.
14. **IVMS:** MMO recently issued a public announcement that a new phase of independent testing of IVMS units would shortly commence to ensure full compliance with type approval. This would extend implementation timelines with full 'roll out' now expected to be completed early May 2023.
15. Further information on the work of the AIFCA can be obtained from the AIFCA Chief Officer Mr Rob Clark. The website is <http://www.association-ifca.org.uk/> IFCA. Members can sign into a password protected members area.

Defra

16. **MAFCO.** Last met 27 July 2022. Papers are marked sensitive by Defra. The CEO was unavailable to attend as was on leave. Defra continued the series of reports focusing on each IFCA. Northumberland, Cornwall and Eastern IFCA described their priority work and key issues they face.
17. **Conduct and Operations report:** Further instructions were given at the meeting on the format and content of the Conduct and Operations report to be prepared in autumn 2022. The review has been separated into key sections. IFCA COS will be asked to write a self-reflection report structured around defined questions. Wider stakeholders will be consulted through quayside questionnaires and IFCA member consultations in 6 regions of which NW is one. Defra plan to write to IFCA Chairs outlining the process. There will also be a public consultative process currently held up awaiting Ministerial approval.
18. **HPMA:** There was discussion of the forthcoming consultation on Highly Protected Marine areas but Defra could not at that stage release the candidate sites. The consultation is now in progress and ends on 29 September. See the science report for more information. Few comments have been received in NWIFCA in response to the Allonby Bay site while the Lindisfarne and Farne Deep sites on the east coast are proving more controversial. An Authority response to the consultation on the candidate HPMA proposed for Allonby Bay North Cumbria is being prepared by the Science team.
19. **SR21:** The processing of the additional Defra funding for IFCA through the next three financial years has not yet been completed. The process has been paused pending the new Prime Minister taking office. How the additional funding might be utilised is still unclear.
20. **English Territorial Waters Changes/ IFCA District Limits:** Minor changes to English territorial seas limits arising from BREXIT may carry associated implications for IFCA district limits and byelaw regulations. At present the focus remained on those IFCA districts most affected (Eastern, Kent and Essex, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly) although the changes carried implications for all. The proposed changes could increase the Isles of Scilly district by 20-30%.

CEO Leaving NWIFCA: Reflections

21. As I am leaving the Authority on 30 September 2022, this will be my last report as CEO. I was appointed CEO of North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee in May 2005 when Morecambe Bay fishing communities were in the shadow of the cockle fishing tragedy in 2004. It took 2 years and the support of Defra and partner bodies to develop and implement an effective Cockle and Mussel Byelaw to regulate these important fisheries. That byelaw (now byelaw 3) has undergone revisions and developments in the last 15 years but has stood the test of time. It provided the Authority with the powers to control much illegal and anti-social activity associated with cockle fishing at that time. Ben Bradshaw, the then Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, sent a personal commendation for the introduction of the byelaw and improvement to the regulation and safety of these fisheries.
22. In 2009, North West and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee faced upheaval as Wales left the SFC so that the Welsh Government could manage Welsh fisheries. Welsh officers had to be transferred to the Welsh Government and assets were split by

order of Defra. NW&N Wales SFC patrol vessel 'Aegis' was assigned to Wales together with ATVs and vehicles.

23. The following year the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MACAA) of 2009 was implemented to abolish SFC and create IFCA. The now North Western SFC was merged by Defra with Cumbria SFC to create NWIFCA. This resulted in a further year of change management to combine the 2 organisations and their officers, which had different working conditions, culture and byelaws. MACAA strengthened English inshore fisheries management with new IFCA byelaw powers duties and resources.
24. Since 2011 a significant part of the NWIFCA resources has been directed at the continuing work of revising and replacing legacy byelaws inherited from predecessor bodies.
25. MACAA introduced a new marine conservation protected site designation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZ). Over subsequent years NWIFCA assisted Defra in site identification and designation of MCZ in the Districts and has a continuing duty of care and enforcement for these sites.
26. In around 2012, Defra faced a legal challenge to the way the Habitats Directive had been implemented in the UK. Defra did not fight the case but commenced a multi-year project to assess the impacts of all fishing activities on all the EMS (European Marine sites) in English waters to ensure there was no adverse impact on conservation features. IFCA were required to make the assessments for all fisheries on Habitats Directive sites which cover more than 80% of NWIFCA District. Now all new and continuing activities on all EMS are subject to HRA (Habitats Regulations Assessments) before they can take place. The survey and documentation required for these assessments continues to be a large part of the statutory duties of NWIFCA.
27. The NWIFCA main patrol vessel 'Solway Protector', inherited from Cumbria SFC on the merger in 2011, reached 30 years of age in 2015 and required replacement. In 2018, after a long period of tender, design and build, the Authority took delivery of MV 'Camaes Head' renamed 'FPV North Western Protector'. The vessel is a refurbished 20m aluminum twin hulled wind farm supply vessel. The launching ceremony for 'North Western Protector' took place in Whitehaven in June 2018 and was a happy occasion presided over by the Duke of Gloucester.
28. Lastly, I want to thank and pay tribute to the highly talented, trained, skilled and dedicated work force of officers who have serviced the Authority during my time as CEO. They continually go beyond their duty to keep the Authority delivering services to the fishing industry. This was exemplified in the 'Covid' years 2020-21 when the Authority maintained a functional service in Whitehaven and Carnforth offices and throughout the district. Officers continued to issue all the many types of fishing permits required and carry out on the ground survey, monitoring and regulation of fishing activities and protection of the marine environment. Many of us worked from home under difficult conditions to keep administrative and financial services fully functional during government restrictions, and to cover all the health and safety requirements.

I wish you all great health, wealth and success in your future careers.
Stephen

CEO NWIFCA 14^h September 2022

ANNEX A



Chairman: Tony Tomlinson MBE

Vice Chairman: Les Weller

Chief Officer: Robert Clark

Dear Member

MEETING OF THE AIFCA MEMBERS FORUM

A meeting of the Members Forum will be held on the **5th September 2022 at 10:30 at Fishmonger Hall, London** to discuss the business on the under mentioned Agenda.

This meeting will take place in person but may also be accessed via Microsoft Teams for those attending virtually, a link to the meeting will be included in the calendar invite attached to the meeting (once it is available). Please note that the Members Forum Meeting will be followed by a Symposium. Details of the Symposium will be send via separate correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Robert Clark

Chief Officer

Robert.clark@association-ifca.org.uk

07736509725

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Chairman's Announcements
4. Minutes of the previous meeting.
 - 4a [To APPROVE the minutes of the previous Members Forum Meeting](#)
 - 4b [To NOTE the minutes of the previous Directors Meeting](#)
 - 4c [To NOTE the minutes of an AIFCA Management Group Meeting](#)
5. Updates
 - 5a Recruitment update
 - 5b Conduct and Operations Report
 - 5c Business Continuity Planning
 - 5d IFCA Chairs letters (Defra handshake)
 - 5e The AIFCA symposium

ITEMS FOR DECISION

6. [Budget Control](#)

To receive a report from Cllr Paul Williams on the AIFCA Budget with the recommendation that the members approve the Budget control statement.

7. [Draft Communications Plan](#)

To receive a draft Communications Plan from the Chief Officer with the recommendations that the members comment on the plan prior to the adoption of the plan

8. [Training Group Draft Terms of Reference](#)

To receive a report that recommends a Draft National IFCA Training Group Terms of Reference.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

9. [Specialist Advice to IFCA's and IFCA Decision-Making](#)

To receive a note which provides guidance to IFCA's as to the treatment within their decision-making processes of specialist advice provided to IFCA's by statutory bodies.

10. [Chief Officers Report](#)

To receive a report by the Chief Officer

AGENDA ITEM 4a

DRAFT AIFCA MEMBERS FORUM MEETING MINUTES

9th June 2022 @ 10:30



MSTeam Videoconference

The meeting started at 10:32

In attendance

Cllr John Lamb
Dr Steve Axford
Pia Bateman
Tony Tomlinson MBE (Chairman)
Les Weller (Les Weller)
Cllr Tom FitzPatrick
Samantha Davis
David McCandless
Mark Southerton
Tim Dapling
Dr Will Wright
Jon Butler
Sam Davis
Cllr Mark Roberts
Cllr Paul Williams
David McCandless
Dr Stephen Atkins (part)

Also in attendance

Robert Clark (Chief Officer)
Louise Farmer (Defra)
Charlotte Burnham (MMO)

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence

Julian Gregory
Mat Mander
Tom Hooper
Cllr Andy Guy
Prof Mike Williams
Mike Hardy

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Tony Tomlinson MBE and Les Weller were nominated as Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively. By way of ordinary vote, with all in favour and in turn, Tony Tomlinson MBE was elected Chairman and Les Weller was elected Vice Chairman for the forthcoming year.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting

4a The minutes of the meeting of the AIFCA Members Forum from March 2022 were **APPROVED**

4b The minutes of the meeting of the AIFCA Directors meeting from March 2022 were **NOTED**

5. Updates

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

The Chairman welcomed Charlotte Burnham, Head of Corporate Governance with the Marine Management Organisation to the meeting. Ms Burnham presented to the members on the recent IFCA general members round. Ms Burnham was thanked for the work of the MMO in improving the recruitment process and the progress made with the understanding of the respective roles in that process.

Dr Atkins joined the meeting.

b) Defra Update

Members received a verbal report from Louise Farmer Head of Arm's Length Body Governance & Relationship Management Team, Marine & Fisheries Directorate – Business Management, Defra. Ms Farmer explained that the Spending Review outcome had been decided internally in Defra (subject to final confirmation). The IFCA's new burdens funding of c. £3million has been agreed, and the £1.65 million has also been agreed, subject to the final signoff and the development of IFCA specific 'handshake letters'.

c) Progress Reports

The Chief Officer reported on the funding received from Defra (via Eastern IFCA) and recruitment progress on the MNCEA role and the Senior Policy Officer role.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

6. Budget Control and Draft Annual Accounts

Members received a report from Cllr Paul Williams on the AIFCA Draft Annual Accounts and the members **APPROVED** the Draft. A draft budget control statement was presented and it was **AGREED** that Cllr Williams forward the Income and Expenditure Account, Balance Sheet and Balance Sheet.

7. The AIFCA Annual Report

The members **NOTED** and **APPROVED** the Annual Delivery Report. The Chairman thanked the Chief Officers and members for the delivery of the work and the significant progress made.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

8. Annual Training Plan

Members received a report from the National Lead Training Officer (NLTO). The plan was **NOTED** and it was **AGREED** that the Chief Officers Group review the plan with the NLTO.

9. **Chief Officers Report**

Members received a copy of the Chief Officers Report.

The meeting concluded at 12:55

AGENDA ITEM 4b

AIFCA DIRECTORS DRAFT MINUTES

16th June 2022 @ 11:00 AM
Meeting held on MStTeams



AGENDA

Directors Present

Tony Tomlinson
Les Weller
Mike Hardy
Tim Dapling
Sam Davis (part)
Dr Will Wright
Robert Clark
Dr Stephen Atkins

Also in Attendance

Cllr Paul Williams
Pia Bateman

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Julian Gregory, Mat Mander, Tom Hooper, David McCandless

2. Declaration of interests

none

3. Minutes Directors Meeting (March 2022)

The minutes of the March Directors meeting were **APPROVED** by general consensus.

4. Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Tony Tomlinson and Les Weller were appointed Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively, following unanimous vote.

5. Chairman's announcements

Pia Bateman was welcomed to the meeting.

6. Progress Report

6a. Recruitment update

The Chief Officer gave an update on the recent advertisement of the Senior Technical Officer and Senior Policy Officer recruitment process.

7. AIFCA The AIFCA Review of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022

Cllr Paul Williams presented the draft Income and Expenditure Account and Balance sheet as at 31 March 2022, and provided a narrative description of the variation from the budget and actual expenditure where relevant. The Directors considered the Annual Draft Annual Accounts and by way of unanimous vote the Directors **APPROVED** the Draft Annual Accounts

8. AIFCA Budget Control Statement

The Directors received the Budget Control Statement. It was AGREED that Cllr Williams circulate the Budget Control statement to the end of June.

9. The AIFCA Annual Delivery Report

The Annual Delivery Report was NOTED.

10 Appointment of Director

Following the appointment of Pia Bateman as the Chief Officer of Southern IFCA, Ms Bateman is eligible to appointed as a Director of the Association. The Directors, by way of unanimous vote **APPROVED** Ms Bateman's appointment. The Chief Officer undertook to complete the necessary process with Company's House and thanked Ms Bateman for her support to the AIFCA.

The meeting concluded at 12:30

AGENDA ITEM 4c

AIFCA Management Group DRAFT MINUTES

15th July 2022 @ 13:00 AM

MSTeam Videoconference



Attendees

Tony Tomlinson (Chairman)
Les Weller (Vice chairman)
Sam Davis
Mike Hardy
Tim Dapling (in attendance)
Robert Clark (Chief Officer)
Paul Williams (Co-opted member)

AGENDA

10. Apologies for absence

none

11. Declaration of interests

Tim Dapling noted his interest as the Chief Officer of Sussex IFCA the employer of the Senior Technical Officer.

ITEMS FOR DECISION

12. The mNCEA contract

The Chief Officer reported on the recent round of recruitment for the two vacancies with the AIFCA; the Senior Technical Officer and the Senior Policy Officer. The members were advised that in accordance with the agreement at the previous meetings of the AIFCA the AIFCA had advertised for the two positions for 1 year and for 2 years respectively. Five applicants in total were interviewed for the two positions and two candidates were successful. Both successful applicants were of a very high standard and both wished to be considered for either of the positions. Given the skills and experience of the applicants there was a clear preference from on the employer's side for which role each should undertake. The one-year contract for the Senior Technical Officer however was not a sufficiently long period of employment for the most suitable applicant for that position to accept the role.

The members were asked to consider whether both roles could be considered for two-year contracts and presented with the benefits and risks of such an approach. With respect to the Senior Technical Officer role the members heard that the external funding from NE/EA (through the mNCEA programme) was only secured until the end of the financial year, therefore even on a one-year contract the AIFCA could, if the mNCEA role was not extended into year two, require the post to be funded by the AIFCA itself. Notwithstanding this risk, since the decision to appoint was made, Defra through the SR21 settlement has earmarked £150k per year additional for the AIFCA, and that this would require the AIFCA to appoint staff. Noting that this money was still making its

way to the IFCA through the IFCA 'handshake letters' settlement process, there would be a delay before the IFCA received the additional support. It was discussed therefore that a) when the IFCA receives the additional Defra funding, and when this funding reaches the AIFCA the AIFCA will be in a position to need to recruit more staff and b) it would therefore seem logical that, upon completion of the mNCEA project the Senior Technical Officer would undertake the works committed under the SR21 settlement. The benefits of this being that the experienced candidate would be retained for the programme and that the position be more attractive to the applicant.

Mr Dapling discussed the Senior Technical Officers position with respect to the role of Sussex IFCA, who will be the employer, he stated that he was content and supported the approach outlined to extend the duration of the appointment for 2 years. Noting that it would be beneficial to have an MoA with the AIFCA setting out the arrangement. This was agreed by the members.

Paul Williams was asked to consider the financial risks to the AIFCA and after a detailed discussion the members of the Management Group **AGREED to recommend that the Senior Technical Officer position contract be extended to two years.**

The meeting concluded at 14:05

AGENDA ITEM 6

Budget Control

Purpose of the Report

To receive a report from Cllr Paul Williams on the AIFCA Budget. To receive the Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet and Freestanding Budget until 31st July 2022

Recommendation

that the members approve the Budget control statement.

Background

June We continue to spend well below budget - 39% this month and 52% last month, largely because we have not staffed up as yet and also because expenditure on the comms project has not yet been incurred.

General overheads too are running behind what was anticipated. We continue to search for a temporary home for our funds to enable us to earn at least something on them.

July 'see previous month's comment' as all points are relevant. Cash flow is significantly below budget, partially because we have not paid any Vat this month although we are due to do so no later than the end of the first week in August.

We also have one IFCA which has not yet paid their subscription and another with a Science Direct sub outstanding.

We continue to receive a very small amount of interest.

We have managed to extend our profit by another £2,800 this month, giving us a very commendable £30k surplus for the year to date.

Attachments

Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet



4 months to 31 July
2022.xlsx

Freestanding budget until 31st July 2022



Copy of
Freestanding budget

AGENDA ITEM 7

Draft Communications Plan

Purpose of the Report

This report introduces a draft communication to refresh the existing plan. This draft sets out how the AIFCA will approach communication and aspects of engagement with the community and stakeholders. This plan focuses on getting our engagement and communication right for the AFCA. It aims to ensure that people understand how as an organisation we plan to engage with others to help us to make the right decisions for delivering our objectives.

Recommendation

That the members comment on the plan prior to the adoption of the plan

Background

- 1.0 The AIFCA communicates widely to provide information about the work and services of IFCAs. We promote the organisations, handle enquiries about the IFCAs and advertise the organisations. The AIFCA Annual Plan includes objectives associated with the Promotion and Awareness of IFCAs. In our plan we have set out to produce Regular News Items for relevant press, produce a newsletter quarterly and undertake a communication and engagement capacity building project, for which we have set aside a budget and resources.
- 1.1 So as to set the AIFCA communications in their strategic context we agreed to refresh the AIFCA communications plan. Accordingly, a draft plan is attached. This plan identifies the key strategic objectives for our engagement, these objectives are to;
 - raise awareness,
 - identify issues, and to
 - seek shared solutions.
- 1.2 The draft plan considers our influence, the stakeholder landscape, the case for engagement, our key messages and how we will implement the plan.
- 1.3 Members are asked to review the document and provide comments, to the Chief Officer, by the end of September 2022 for their adoption (in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman).
- 1.4 Appended to the end of the report is the outline of the communication and engagement capacity building project, to be delivered this year. The Communication Plan providing the strategic setting of this project.

Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities



Communication Plan

Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

Communication Plan

“The AIFCA campaigns to influence the agenda and secure funding and powers on behalf of IFCAs and we promote and defend the reputation of effective inshore management”

The IFCA Vision

Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry

Purpose of the Document

This document sets out how the AIFCA will approach Communication and aspects of engagement with the community and stakeholders. This plan focuses on getting our engagement and communication right for the AFCA. It aims to ensure that people understand how as an organisation we plan to engage with others to help us to make the right decisions for delivering our vision.

Publication Schedule

First draft published September 2022

Copies of this plan can be downloaded from

www.association-ifca.org.uk

Communication Plan

Contents

1. Purpose of this plan

- 2. Aims & Objectives
 - 2.1 Overall Aim & Vision
 - 2.2 Success Criteria
 - 2.3 Engagement objectives
 - 2.4 AIFCA Key Outcomes
 - 2.5 Guiding principles for all communications

3. Influence

- 3.1 The Community and Stakeholder Landscape
- 3.2 What can be influenced?
- 3.3 What cannot be influenced?
- 3.4 Role of Officers and Members and monitoring delivery
- 3.5 Role of National Groups and Associations

4. Key messages

- 4.1 Purpose of key messages
- 4.1 Headline messages
- 4.2 Detailed messages
- 4.3 Timescale

5. The case for engagement

- 5.1 Why we need to work with others
- 5.2 Why we need to work with the community and others, and how we want them to respond?
- 5.3 Why will the community and others want to work with us, and how do they want us to work?

6.0 Making It Happen

- 6.1 How we will deliver the plan

1. Purpose of this Plan

The AIFCA is the National voice of IFCA's and promotes IFCA's value

We campaign to influence the agenda and secure funding and powers on behalf of IFCA's and we promote and defend the reputation of effective inshore management

The Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (AIFCA) must communicate effectively with national stakeholders to promote the value and role of the IFCA's if we are to support our collective vision, which is to "lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry".

This plan focuses on getting our engagement and communication right for the AIFCA. It aims to ensure that people understand how IFCA's engage with others to make the right decisions for delivering our vision.

The plan describes how we will go about delivering our high-level objectives as they relate to communication, but more than that it also guides our ways of working throughout all aspects of our tasks and duties. This plan identifies the key strategic objectives for our engagement, these objectives are to;

- 1) raise awareness,
- 2) identify issues, and to
- 3) seek shared solutions.

The plan also establishes guiding principles for engagement. These principles have been established to underline our commitment to creating and maintaining an honest, open and transparent culture of engagement.

This plan describes context of the AIFCA and considers the sometimes-complex stakeholder and community 'landscape': whereby there are sometimes competing demands upon the same resources. This is particularly interesting as within this complexity there are both challenges and opportunities.

In this plan some more detailed messages are presented; these will guide officers to deliver consistent communication. These detailed messages will be used when developing annual actions: actions which will be monitored and updated annually.

This report therefore forms a resource for members, officers and partners. Indeed, the diverse IFCA membership is a key strength of the Authority and this plan will ensure that members and officers have access to resources to engage with stakeholders and communities they serve.

Throughout this communication plan we refer to stakeholders and communities, and we consider these to be any individual or group who is, or could become, interested in, involved in or affected by, or have an effect on, our policies and activities. This plan therefore also outlines the communities and groups we serve and how we may be able to engage effectively.

2 Aims & Objectives

2.1 Overall Aim & Vision

The overall aim of this plan is to support effective engagement and to participate effectively with regional and national stakeholders so as to deliver the collective Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities vision which is to:

“lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry”.

The IFCAs were formed in 2011 and whose duties are wide ranging. The vision for IFCAs encapsulates the core role of the Authority and is shared by the 10 IFCAs in England. This vision translates the legal duties placed upon the IFCA which are (largely) contained in the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009.

To support the delivery of the IFCAs vision and duties the AIFCA will:

“campaign to influence the agenda and secure funding and powers on behalf of IFCAs and we promote and defend the reputation of effective inshore management”

The AIFCA will assist and promote the ten regional IFCAs to ensure that the authorities develop a leading and effective national role in fisheries and conservation management in line with the IFCA vision.

The AIFCA will promote the importance of regional decision making in inshore fisheries and conservation management through the democratically accountable structures of IFCAs.

2.2 Success Criteria

Each IFCA has a number of ‘success criteria’, these criteria outline the types of activities which may be expected of IFCAs in their pursuit of their vision. Success criteria are the tangible aspects that underpin the vision. To be successful, the AIFCA must strive to engage in the delivery of all aspects of work and the success criteria which most strongly emphasise the importance of communication are:

IFCAs are recognised and heard

- “Each IFCA, and IFC authorities as a group, have a vision and plan for future management of inshore fisheries and conservation. This will help them to be a recognised ‘brand’, managing their public voice so that they are respected and trusted for the expertise they offer.”

IFCAs work in partnership and are engaged with their stakeholders

- “IFCAs will work across boundaries, engaging effectively with local and central government, other government bodies, other delivery bodies, industry and other NGOs, recreational users and individuals in the work that they do. Through this partnership approach to working IFCAs will deliver the socioeconomic and environmental outcomes they were created under the Marine and Coastal Access Act to deliver.”

The AIFCA is committed to a series of high-level objectives, which include to.... develop a strategy and corresponding plan for promotion of the work of IFCAs and the benefits that they offer to the local community, and demonstrate implementation....

By developing and delivering aspects of this strategy now, we recognise the importance of engagement and that it underpins our high-level strategies. Without effective engagement it will not be possible to effectively develop or implement our duties and responsibilities.

2.3 Engagement objectives

We consider the engagement objectives to be;

Raise Awareness

- Stakeholders and communities have an understanding of the role and duties of the IFCA
- Stakeholders and communities have a greater understanding of the types of fishing and the value of marine fisheries (both commercial and recreational) in the IFCA Districts.
- Stakeholders and communities have a greater understanding of the marine environment and are able to perceive tangible improvements to their local environment.

Identify Issues

- Stakeholders and communities add value to the shared understanding of issues and they feel empowered to engage with the IFCA to take action where it is needed.
- More local communities are interested in local fisheries and engage with us and the fishing communities to improve their coastal marine fisheries and environment.

Seek Shared Solutions

- Stakeholders and communities know how and when to input into IFCA planning and delivery and can do so in an open and constructive way.
- Wider environmental, social and economic improvements are integrated into delivery when appropriate.

These objectives are continuously being updated and as such this plan will be a working document.

2.4 AIFCA Key Outcomes

Funding for IFCAs

Fair and sustainable funding enables IFCAs to plan and deliver essential public services beyond the short term, to raise more funds locally and to promote greater collective working across local public services.

Local communities at the heart decisions

IFCAs locally accountable decision making ensures that local communities are at the heart of fisheries and conservation decision making. The AIFCA supports members and promotes awareness of fisheries and their management, to develop and promote integration with the work of local government and others in regional planning.

Sustainable inshore fisheries management

IFCAs have a strong and effective voice in ensuring that a system of world leading inshore fisheries and conservation management enables coastal communities to prosper and our coastal waters are protected effectively.

Building and Nurturing relationships

The AIFCA maintains effective relationships with key stakeholders, to learn not only their perspective, to gather insights on issue and seek solutions, but also to aid effective decision making, to build trust, to drive efficiencies, to manage risks and to ensure accountability.

Promotion and Awareness

IFCAs deliver! The AIFCA communicates widely to provide information about the work and services of IFCAs. We promote the organisations, handle enquiries about the IFCAs and advertise the organisations.

2.5 Guiding principles for all communications

The IFCA will:

- Be generous in sharing our data and information
- Use information and learn from others
- Be open to including community action that may not directly contribute to the IFCA's objectives
- Be open to exploring what might need to be done, even if we cannot pin down costs and actors
- Develop relationships with key stakeholders
- The AIFCA will listen to the IFCAs and seek to promote and be guided by their needs whilst also leading on strategic engagement in agreed areas.

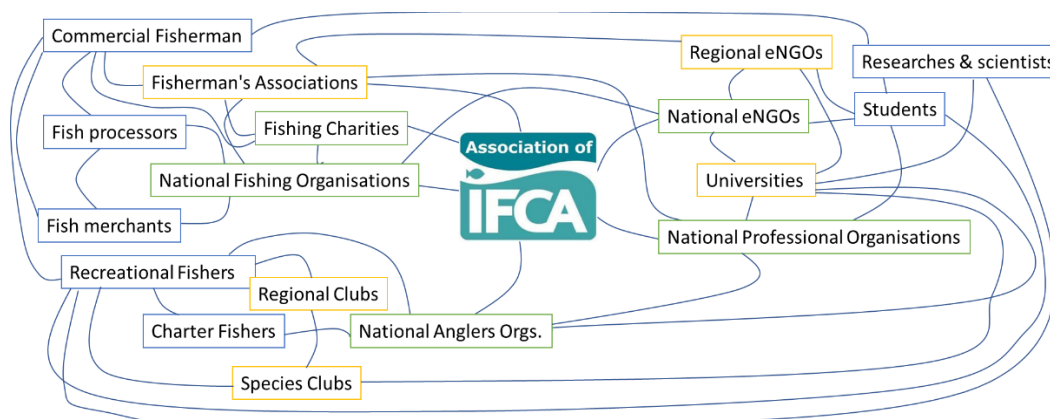
3.0 Influence

3.1 The Marine Fisheries and Conservation Community & Stakeholder Landscape

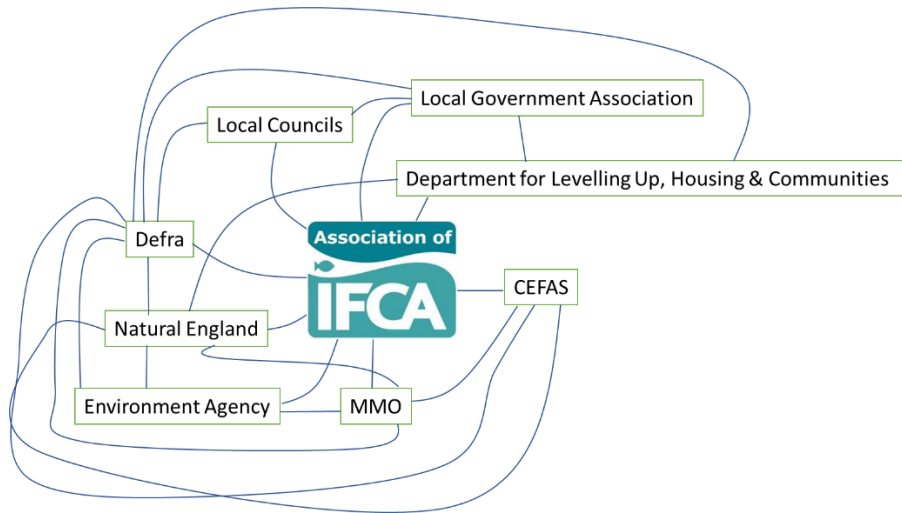
In developing our communication strategy, it is essential to examine the wider stakeholder environment. Well established and functioning networks exist and we should aim to work within and respect those networks engaging where appropriate.

The marine sector can be broadly categorised as being comprised of commercial, recreational, environmental and public interests. Naturally within this context there are some shared and collective issues and some issues where there is tension between interests. There is also often significant diversity within each sector. In this environment it is the role of the IFCA to seek shared solutions and to make sometimes tough decisions in an appropriate and timely manner.

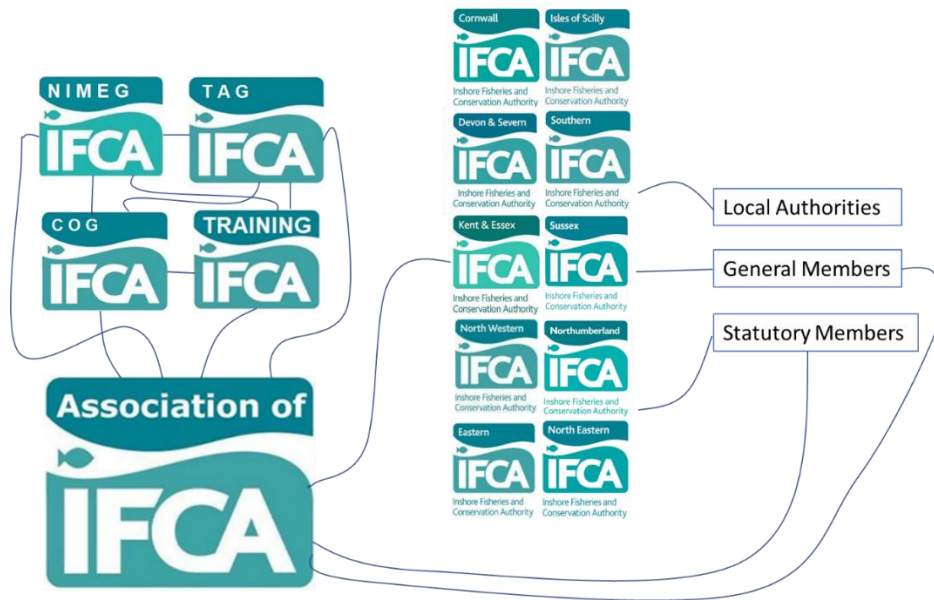
There is an inherent challenge for the AIFCA and the IFCAs; fisheries and conservation policy is generally set nationally against national objectives, whilst IFCAs are key to implementing many of the national marine fisheries and conservation policies we are remote from the central decision making. The challenge in this context is great as the organisation has extensive powers, responsibilities and duties, however the inherent tendency in complex systems is that resources tend to be centralised. We must therefore seek to make ourselves known, to send out our message, and to ensure that we listen to others and we are able to constructively receive their feedback.



Stakeholder and Community Web



Key Policy and Resources Landscape for IFCAs



IFCA Internal Policy Landscape

3.2 What can be influenced?

The scope of influence of the IFCA is wide and through engagement with the community and our stakeholders we can influence a range of decisions and activities. In the coming months and years the AIFCA shall be putting in place a series of strategic plans which will form part of our plan to deliver our vision. Communities and stakeholders have a unique opportunity to shape those plans and in doing so the plans will be most effective.

One of the challenges facing inshore managers is that of the transboundary nature of many (but not all) of the marine fisheries resources which are only within the District from time to time, thus the IFCA may contribute to, but not have full control, over the management of many stocks. Previously regulation by the IFCA must be consistent with The Common Fisheries Policy and the Directives of the European Union, but the IFCA influenced policy through engagement.

Following the withdrawal from the European Union the UK is now an independent coastal state. The UK Government has set out ambitious plans to develop and deliver world class fisheries management (principally through the Fisheries Act, 2020) and “it is this Government’s ambition to leave our environment in a better state than we found it” the framework for delivering this is found in the 25 Year Environment Plan and the Environment Bill. It is essential that the role of local governance and the IFCAs are fully recognised in these Plans and legal frameworks.

3.3 Role of Officers and Members and monitoring delivery

To deliver the objectives detailed the AIFCA members shall oversee actions and progress against which shall be reported at AIFCA quarterly meetings. Members should also expect to guide officers on the most pressing issues, shaping the plan and monitoring progress against the plan.

3.5 Role of National Groups and Associations

The IFCA Chief Officers Group and The IFCA Technical Advisory Group are both important routes to exchange information and engage with other IFCAs, and partner organisations: we will support their development and their role in coordinating national activities. With IFCA’s key partners, Natural England, Environment Agency, CEFAS and Marine Management Organisation we will ensure that we proactively engage, listen and feedback into the regional and national policy development process. The AIFCA shall see to support and promote these national IFCA groups ensuring that their role is understood in the national fisheries and conservation processes.

4. Key messages

4.1 Purpose of key messages

These key messages must be consistent in all communications, internal or external, including press releases, letters to stakeholders, engagement materials, display panels, newsletters, website, interpretation boards and informal engagement with stakeholders and communities, however initiated. These messages need regular review to remain accurate, and care should be taken to target the right messages at the right people.

4.1 Headline messages

1. The AIFCA is the national voice of the ten IFCA's in England. IFCA's aim is to lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment. and inshore fisheries.
2. The AIFCA is the national membership body for IFCA's. Our core membership is made up of ten IFCA's in England. We work on behalf of IFCA's to give local fisheries managers a strong, credible voice.
3. The AIFCA provides membership services the IFCA's and our partners and through our training programme.
4. The IFCA's work with the community to secure the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits
5. IFCA's work to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.
6. Through our local management and funding structures, the IFCA's help to put local authorities, local communities, local businesses and individual citizens in the driving seat, allowing them to play a bigger part in the protection and enhancement of their inshore marine environment.

4.2 Detailed messages

1. There are ten IFCA's whose jurisdictions cover the entire coastline of England. The marine element of the IFCA District extends 6 miles seaward and the terrestrial element covers the constituent local Authority areas.
2. IFCA's were created in 2011. IFCA's are committees or joint committees of the Councils which fund the Authority. IFCA's are tasked with the sustainable management of inshore sea fisheries resources their Districts.
3. IFCA's are funded through its constituent local authorities by an annual levy. That levy is supported by central Government to enable the Authority deliver on national management objectives. We will as a public service, deliver our duties in a cost effective and professional manner.
4. IFCA's sets out its priorities for the year in an annual plan, and reports upon progress against that plan in the following year.
5. The duties and powers of the IFCA's can be principally found in the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009. The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 has modernised the way that inshore sea fisheries resources are managed in England.

6. IFCAs have a diverse membership. IFCA members are representatives from the constituent local authorities (who provide funding for the IFCA) along with people from across the different sectors that use, or are knowledgeable about the inshore marine area, such as commercial and recreational fishermen, environmental groups and marine researchers, who offer their time voluntarily. The Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency and Natural England also each have a statutory seat on the IFCA. Through this structure the IFCAs help to put local authorities, local communities, local businesses and individual citizens in the driving seat, allowing them to play a bigger part in the protection and enhancement of their inshore marine environment.
7. IFCAs have a duty to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and take necessary steps to balance socio-economic considerations with the need to protect and promote the recovery of the marine environment.
8. IFCAs have a duty to ensure that the conservation objectives of Marine Conservation Zones are furthered and we will develop management measures to support and further the conservation objectives of Marine Protected Areas (including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, European Marine Sites and Ramsar Sites).
9. The IFCA Districts extend to 6 nautical miles to sea. These shallow coastal seas are diverse and productive and inshore fisheries in England are the largest component of the commercial fishing fleet and where the recreational fishing sector operates.
10. IFCAs, by their very nature are committed to working in partnership and we will cooperate with neighbouring IFCAs and other public authorities that are involved with research, monitoring, regulation or enforcement in the sea within our Districts.
11. The IFCAs recognise that fisheries management for many transient species within the IFCA Districts is delivered at a stock level through national and international policies (i.e. through the emerging Fisheries Management Plans), but is committed to using appropriate local management measures that may augment those national/international measures to protect those stocks whilst in the inshore areas and in so doing secure access to fisheries for the coastal communities and beyond.

4.3 Timescale

We will establish Annual Targets, in our Annual Plans, which will be monitored and reported.

5.0 The case for engagement

5.1 Why we need to work with others

The AIFCA needs to work with others in order to:

- **Inform.**
To let others, know about progress.
- **Gather Information.**
To gather knowledge and community views to inform our work.
- **Involve.**
To work closely with others to allow an opportunity for genuine discussion about the management of the inshore marine environment.
- **Inspire.**

To promote the value of improving local fisheries and a sustainable marine environment; the win-win outcomes that can be achieved for local amenity and nature conservation.

- **Form Partnerships.**
To share decision-making and responsibility with others.
- **Deliver Efficiency.**
To deliver cost effective public service with limited resources

5.3 Why will the community and others want to work with us, and how do they want us to work?

- In order to help to deliver more sustainable fisheries and an environment for marine life, for recreation or enjoyment or the value of nature.
- We are a potential source of funding or resource - to achieve their personal or professional objectives, plans and aspirations or to deliver joint goals within the inshore marine environment.
- To identify other opportunities for work and to undertake joint projects. In order to have influence in their community, and over the way their local environment is managed. To be listened to, give ideas and options, to have their say, and in order to know what is happening.
- In order to have confidence that options proposed will work, and that we are competent and confident in planning and delivery.

6.0 Making It Happen

6.1 how we will deliver the plan

Through our business and delivery plans we will set out annual activities and specific objectives, and also seek to ensure that effective communication of our activities is built into to our work.

The following pathways for engagement will be the main routes to deliver the communication plan.

- **AIFCA Members Forum**
We will produce timely papers, agendas and minutes for the AIFCA meetings so as to enable effective engagement with our members and to enable the IFCA's to keep up to date with the work of the AIFCA. We will publish our minutes on the AIFCA website so others can understand the work of the AIFCA.

We will support our Members by;

- **Joint positions statements**

The AIFCA provides a forum which identifies where it is necessary to develop collective positions. The work of the members, through joint position statements, is to set the direction on national policy and issues of collective benefit to all IFCA's, as well as the management of and sustainable inshore fisheries and conservation"

- **Briefings**

The AIFCA provides regular briefings to members to enable a collective understanding of issues and opportunities.

- **Support to IFCA members and national groups**

The AIFCA provides advice and information to members and to IFCA national groups, maintaining regular engagement and sign-posting information to support resilience, collaboration and driving a coordinated approach which respects local diversity.

- **Branding**

We will consistently use logos and apply 'styles' to our communication and seek opportunities to ensure that the IFCA logo communicates ownership, quality, and the values of the IFCA's

- **National Fora**

We will maintain and where necessary create fora through which to engage with key stakeholders. We will use these fora to maintain and or create relationships with our key stakeholders to ensure we have a clear understanding of our respective roles and points of view and use these for a to breakdown boundaries and seek collective outcomes (where possible), but also to ensure that our differences are respected and understood.

- **Social Media**

We will use social media platforms to promote the work of the IFCA's and raise awareness of the work of IFCA's. We will seek to increase our use of interactive media and 'tell the stories from the coast' using video and case studies.

- **Website**

We will maintain our website to ensure that it remains relevant and contains up to date information on the activities of the AIFCA and highlights the good work of the IFCA's around the country.

- **Traditional Media**

We will produce press releases which highlight the work of the IFCA's and relevant national issues, we will promote these press releases in traditional print and online press. To assist in this we will maintain effective relationships with key media outlets and identify new and emerging opportunities to promote our work.

- **Conferences**

We will aim to be represented at all relevant national conferences to promote the work of IFCA's and provide perspectives to inform policy. We will also learn from the wider perspectives and provide feedback to the IFCA's via this route. We will also seek to provide opportunities for the IFCA's more generally to attend and present at these conferences to support wider engagement.

- **Newsletters**

We will produce a quarterly newsletter to provide up to date information on the collective work of the IFCA's.

- **Support & Capacity Building**

We will support IFCA through training to develop communication capacity and provide frameworks for the promotion of case studies from around the coast.

Communication and engagement capacity building project

Content identification and creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing content and comms strategy • Liaison with IFCA's to identify content, including case studies • Creation of messaging and content calendar • Creation of templates for social media content • Creation of supporting social media strategy • and light-touch strategy refresh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A desktop review of existing content to inform the creation of a content calendar prioritising content to share over the next 12 months. A review of the current comms strategy will also be necessary to extract key messages and priorities for informing the content calendar.</i> • <i>Light-touch liaison with IFCA's to identify their current content and priorities to inform the content calendar, and to determine case studies for promotion throughout the following 12 months</i> • <i>Production of a structured calendar setting out content and key messages over a 12-month period, in line with the priorities identified by IFCA's and the critical messages set out in the strategy</i> • <i>Creation of simple graphic designed templates for social media use, in support of the calendar to facilitate in-house content creation in line with suggested outputs</i> • <i>Creation of a social media strategy to accompany the content calendar, providing a strategic overview of how best to implement the calendar for greater reach and engagement via social media channels. Suggested revisions to the broader comms strategy will also be provided to ensure the two align effectively and support one another.</i>
Case study production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a style guide • Creation of templates for case studies • Production of 2 case studies per quarter to sit on the website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creation of a simple style guide setting out guidelines to produce case studies for the website that will be impactful, and which align to the light-touch design refresh proposed</i> • <i>Creation of a simple case study template in alignment to the style guide, to facilitate in-house case study production for use on the website</i> • <i>Creation of two fully designed and populated case studies per quarter, as identified in the content calendar in support of additional in-house produced case studies</i>
Website and design refresh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website design modernisation - look and feel, bespoke page structure, imagery • Image asset purchase (if required) • Website structuring and content copy-editing and loading of content onto the website • Website rebuild and page development • Development of branding guidelines • Development of branded presentation deck 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Design time to apply a refreshed look and feel to the website, and to develop the structure for each page 'type' within the site. Development of navigation, wire-framing.</i> • <i>Purchase of high-res image assets to apply across the site, to be transferred into IFCA's ownership (if required)</i> • <i>The website structure will be revised to enhance navigation, usability, and engagement, alongside a refresh of existing content, with copy (produced by the client) copy-edited, and loaded onto the refreshed website.</i> • <i>The website will be rebuilt according to the revised site structure, hosted on the preferred platform</i> • <i>Creation of guidelines to ensure consistency across all communication outputs. These guidelines typically include basic information such as: an overview of your brand's history, vision, personality, and key values. It will also include branding colours, fonts and sets out how you use your logo and design graphics.</i> • <i>Creation of a presentation deck incorporating the fresh look and feel, high quality graphics.</i>

**Capacity
building**

- Design & delivery of capacity building
- workshops
- *Planning and presentation of 3x half-day training workshop for staff to build capability in the use of effective communications. E.g. One workshop will focus on the use of the content calendar, one on engaging effectively across stakeholder groups, and one on general communications skills including ways to use various communications channels including social media most effectively.*

AGENDA ITEM 8

National IFCA Training Group Terms of Reference

Purpose of the Report

This report introduces a proposed Draft National IFCA Training Group Terms of Reference (ToR) and asks members to consider their adoption. The refreshed ToR are intended to ensure effective engagement with the national training programme, ensure two-way communication between the NLTO and the 10 regional IFCA and ensure awareness of the training opportunities.

Recommendation

That the members DISCUSS on the ToR prior to their adoption

That members AGREE the ToR and

That members nominate a staff member to represent their IFCA on the training group.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Recent feedback has led the AIFCA Chief Officer and the NLTO to conclude that greater and more formalised communication between the 10 IFCA and the NLTO is necessary. Whereas previously a training group was established for the purpose of establishing the NLTO position, participation in that group has diminished and the ongoing engagement with the training programme requires greater and wider engagement.
- 1.2 Whilst the strategic context of the NLTO objectives should remain with the Chief Officers Group (COG) and the Members Forum more frequent and direct engagement with the IFCA training leads in each IFCA organisation would be beneficial, particularly so as to ensure that all IFCA are aware of the training opportunities.
- 1.3 Whereas the training decisions and discussions at the Members Forum and COG will remain important, their frequency and the competition for space on agendas reasonably means that the opportunity for discussion of more operational matters is inevitably limited by the time available.
- 1.4 Members are asked to discuss the need for the ToR and decide whether they are able to agree the groups being established. If so to nominate a representative from their IFCA to attend the meetings.

National IFCA Training Group Terms of Reference

Aim and Objectives

The overall aims of the National IFCA Training Group are to ensure:

- Effective communication between IFCAs and IFCA Training.
- High quality, effective and suitable training is in place and available so that staff are equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications to appropriately deliver the functions of their parent IFCAs.

On this basis the group is therefore responsible for meeting the following objectives:

1. Act as a hub for the dissemination of training information.
2. Ensure that all training needs are identified throughout the IFCA family.
3. Investigation of the development and delivery of training solutions and interventions using IFCA resources and where appropriate external partners/providers.
4. Developing and maintaining a valid and reliable system of reviewing training delivery, and a commitment to ensure that future training is improved wherever possible.
5. Developing and maintaining a central recording system of IFCA CPD. and the identification of suitable opportunities of interest to us.
6. The Identification and production of policies and/or procedures for any identified training needs, skill gaps and new equipment or procedures.
7. Reviewing Health & Safety incidents or issues to identify any areas of weakness or best practice for adoption nationally.

Chairpersonship and Membership

The group is to be chaired by the National Lead Training Officer, who has lead responsibility for training.

Membership of the group will be as follows:

- Stevie Travis NLTO (Chair)
- The AIFCA Chief Officer.
- Northwestern IFCA Representative.
- Northumberland IFCA Representative.
- Northeastern IFCA Representative.
- Eastern IFCA Representative.
- Kent & Essex IFCA Representative.
- Sussex IFCA Representative.
- Southern IFCA Representative.
- Devon & Severn IFCA Representative.
- Isles of Scilly IFCA Representative
- Cornwall IFCA Representative

Membership of the group can be varied dependent on priorities and tasks; however, all participating representatives must have sufficient knowledge as a Subject Matter Expert (SME) or of training needs, processes and supporting functions to enable them to make informed contributions to the

development and evaluation of the training strategy.

Responsibilities

Members are expected to support the Training group through:

- Regular attendance at meetings, ensuring their parent IFCA is adequately represented in the event of protracted absence.
- The timely dissemination of training information and opportunities within their parent IFCA.
- Assisting with the development of training through discussion and participation in subgroups as necessary.
- Identifying learning opportunities and suggesting areas for CPD where appropriate.
- Identifying and suggesting staff that could bring value through their experience and expertise and would be willing to support and assist with training delivery.

Schedule

The meetings will take place on a monthly basis.

Logistics

The Group will be facilitated via the MS Teams platform. Where a face-to-face meeting is required, then a suitable venue will be identified by the Chair. It is the responsibility of the NLTO to organise the meeting appointments, circulate the agenda, any supporting papers and take and circulate the minutes in a timely manner.

AGENDA ITEM 9

Specialist Advice to IFCA's and IFCA Decision-Making

Purpose of the Report

To receive a note which provides guidance to IFCA's as to the treatment within their decision-making processes of specialist advice provided to IFCA's by statutory bodies. The report has been prepared by Prof. Mike Williams & Dr. Emma Bean of Devon & Severn IFCA and Jason Lowther Associate Professor in Law School of Society and Culture, University of Plymouth.

Recommendation

That members NOTE the Report

That the members record their thanks to the Report Authors.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 A note has been prepared on specialist advice to IFCA's and IFCA decision-making, by the afore mentioned authors, which is intended to assist members, both existing and new, when coming to a decision based in part of specialist advice provided by other regulators or advisors.
- 1.2 The note includes an examination of the application of the 'precautionary principle' and considers the application of this principle in decision making.
- 1.3 This note, adds to the collection of advice and information that the AIFCA holds and will, it is hoped, be of use to the membership. A full list of advice and guidance held by the AIFCA will be distributed to the membership via correspondence.
- 1.4 The Note will be presented by Dr Emma Bean at the AIFCA conference which follows the Members Forum and Prof Williams and Mr Jason Lowther will be in attendance virtually to answer any questions.



SpecialistAdviceIFCA
ADecisionMaking.Fi

AGENDA ITEM 10

AIFCA Chief Officers Report

Summer 2022

Consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) – Defra

Defra have launched a 3 month consultation on HPMAs which can be accessed [here](#). This includes the candidate sites, Allonby Bay in Cumbria and Lindisfarne, Northumberland. A factsheet is provided in relation to each site. Defra are planning public meetings in relation to each site. Interested parties are encouraged to respond to the consultation.

The Chief Officer has supported engagement by the IFCA's into the HPMAs consultation, including attending a meeting in Northumberland IFCA.

UK Gear Forum

The AIFCA has accepted a position on the UK Gear Forum. The UK Gear Forum discusses and advances sustainability (economic, environmental and social) in all (mobile and static) wild capture fisheries, through the lens of selective gear innovations. The Forum's work programme will be guided by four principles: Principle 1 - Bycatch: gear innovations which minimise bycatch. Principle 2 – Minimising seabed impacts: gear innovations which advance the elimination of benthic impacts and/or sedimentary carbon disturbance. Principle 3 - Net-zero transition: gear innovations which advance greater energy efficiency in wild capture fisheries. Principle 4 – Production and use of fishing gears: innovations which advance the sustainable production and use of fishing gears.

Advancing Knowledge Award

The Chief Officer was awarded [Bournemouth Universities Advancing Knowledge Award](#). The judges summed up Robert's achievements by saying: "Robert has demonstrated a significant impact on his industry and on leading environmental issues in the sector. He has enjoyed a very interesting and successful career and is a tremendous role model for BU students"

Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme

The Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme, part of the £100m UK Seafood Fund, will open on 1 August. Bidding will be open until midday on 5 September. A final round is also planned for later in the year opening 21 November and closing at the end of December.

The UK Seafood Fund has been extended to 2025 so applicants will be able to apply for funding for two-year projects with a maximum value of £1 million (or £500,000 per year). A separate opportunity to bid for projects up to £150k, as has been offered in both previous rounds has also opened and Defra have also expanded our list of eligible research projects to include research on wider factors which impact fish stocks, such as offshore wind farms and climate change.

You will be able to access the opportunity through the gov.uk page once the scheme opens. For further details on the scheme, please visit [here](#).

Bycatch Mitigation Initiative Published by Defra

The Bycatch Mitigation Initiative (BMI) has now been released. Building on existing work such as that of the UK Bycatch Monitoring Programme and Clean Catch UK, the BMI will provide a framework for monitoring wildlife bycatch; and for working to minimise, and where possible eliminate, the problem in UK fisheries.

UK Seafood Fund to be Extended to March 2025

The government's £100 million UK Seafood Fund will be extended until March 2025. The announcement was followed with details of new sustainability projects which have been

funded by two of the Fund's streams - the Fisheries Industry Science Partnerships (FISP) scheme and the Seafood Innovation Fund (SIF).

Consultations

It is proposed that the AIFCA respond to the following consultations. Any IFCA wishing to contribute to the consultations, please advise the Chief Officer.

19 Sept 2022: Defra consultation on managing quota in 2023 and beyond.

28 Sept 2022: Defra consultation on Highly Protected Marine Areas.