

NWIFCA Quarterly Meeting

13th March 2015: 11.00 a.m.

AGENDA
ITEM NO.

7

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT

Purpose of Report: Update and Information

Recommendations:

1. **The report be received**
2. **The draft annual plan for 2015-16 be received**

Contents

- I) Defra
- II) Health and safety policy
- III) Officer and member changes
- IV) Association of IFCA
- V) Procurement of a replacement main patrol vessel
- VI) Byelaw progress
- VII) Boughton Estate claim of fishing rights in Morecambe Bay
- VIII) Annual Plan for 2015-16

I) **Defra**

1. There have been significant staffing changes in Defra which are continuing. Senior Officers leading EMS work have moved to other roles. While there has been no explicit change of policy, and deadlines are still in place, EMS work may now be lower priority.
2. Nigel Gooding, at the last Association meeting committed to send IFCA a statement of national priority work and delivery expectations. Mr. Gooding has since moved to another role. CEO will attend the next meeting of the Defra Marine Protected Areas Project Board on 26th March when more information may be forthcoming.
3. Government consultations launched recently include 2 'Tranche 2' MCZ sites in the NWIFCA District (Allonby Bay and West of Walney) and a Marine Strategy framework Directive Consultation. These are detailed in the Science report.
4. The 4 year report on IFCA conduct and operation is not yet published. CEO and Chairman returned comments on a draft NWIFCA section in January. There were no apparent concerns for NWIFCA.

II) **NWIFCA Health and Safety policy**

5. The policy has been checked for breaches and reportable incidents in the last quarter (December 2014 – February 2015). None have been recorded. The register of NWIFCO training is maintained.

III) **Officer and Member changes**

6. The failings in the appointment and re-appointment of IFCA members are not yet resolved. A new recruitment was launched by MMO in January, and closed on 2nd February. Applications were invited from potential new members, and members whose appointments expire on 31st March 2015.

7. NWIFCA has 9 vacancies including 5 existing members eligible to reapply. We have been informed that 4 applications were received by MMO so there will be 5 vacancies in 2015 until a further recruitment is launched.
8. A 'trainee' IFCA has been recruited to fill the vacancy left by the departure of Mr. Burdekin in November. The new officer will start on 9th March and will commence training.

IV) **Association of IFCA (AIFCA)**

9. The AIFCA Members' Forum met on 3rd December at the Port of London Health Authority. The Chairman and CEO attended. Items considered included:

- I) Reaction to the proposed drift net ban which may not now go ahead.
- II) An update on proposed measures for recover of Bass
- III) Minister's attendance at the March Meeting
- IV) Defra priorities
- V) IFCA member appointments.

10. Mr. Nigel Gooding (Defra) attended and provided a verbal update on EMS and MCZ work. He thanked IFCA for work so far recognizing the burden placed on science officers and the delay to local priorities. His concern for 'amber' work was to ensure that reporting showed progress with EMS and MCZ management. At present reporting is not giving Ministers the information they need to be confident that the project is on track. He announced the timescale for tranche 2 of MCZ including consultation in early 2015 which is now underway.
11. Mr. Gooding agreed to write to IFCA and Chief Officers to clarify Defra's expectations for EMS and MCZ work over the next 2 years but having moved posts in February these letters may not now be sent.
12. There was concern that the MMO member appointment process is not working well and is not user friendly for applicants. Suggestions for improvements were made including a simpler appointment process, a 'light touch' performance appraisal system, a clearer statement on the roles of MMO appointees and a handbook for members.
13. Further discussions took place at a tripartite meeting (MMO, Defra and IFCA) in January. MMO presented new draft terms and conditions for members which will be further considered. Another meeting of this group took place in February.
14. The AIFCA budget for 2015-16 was agreed with no increase over 2014-5
15. A meeting of the AIFCA Directors was held at 15.00 on the same day. CEO attended.
16. The next AIFCA meetings will be on 10th March. Chairman and CEO will attend and report matters of importance verbally at the meeting on 13th March.

V) **Procurement of main patrol vessel replacement**

17. In December a new specification was prepared for a vessel of overall length of 20m which was agreed with members. This specification was passed to Lancaster County Council procurement section in mid -January for preparation of tender documents. LCC were asked to keep us up to date with progress.

VI) **Byelaw progress**

18. **Byelaw 8** Prohibition of foul hooking of fish: This has been on the website for several weeks and fishing organisations informed of the intention to combine and renew the 2 very similar legacy byelaws. The byelaw is also currently with MMO for legal scrutiny.

19. **Byelaw 2** Vessel size limits for fishing in the District: An informal consultation has been started and a number of new comments received. Officers will review these and undertake further consultation in the form of a public meeting to consider the byelaw more widely.

VII) **Boughton Estate claim of fishing rights in Morecambe Bay**

20. In February CEO met the new factor for Boughton Estate in Morecambe Bay – Mr. Mark Oddy. The issue of a possible private fishery was discussed. Mr. Oddy provided NWIFCA with new legal advice claiming an ancient right of fishery. This advice was based on the 1994 report by a Historical consultant, Mr. Alan Crosby. NWIFCA obtained legal advice from solicitor Peter Scott in 1996 that the Crosby study did not provide strong evidence of a private fishery. Similar questions arise in the new advice. Mr. Scott has again agreed to consider if there is new evidence and advise on whether the NWIFCA should recognize a private fishery on Boughton Estate.

VIII) **Annual Plan for 2015-16**

21. The plan for next year is due by 1st April 2015 and a draft is presented to this meeting. Members are invited to receive the plan. The main objectives are copied below. Members are invited to comment on these objectives and on the full plan which will be put on the website for reference and updated as necessary during the year.

Summary of priorities and objectives for 2015 – 16 in addition to routine survey and enforcement programmes.

1	Work to support Defra revised EMS management: Assessment of impacts of 'Amber' activities to meet 2016 deadline.	
2	Work to support designation of MCZ tranche 2 sites and SPA extensions in the NWIFCA District.	
3	Development of cross sectoral Bivalve Working Group and a new Morecambe Bay mussel management plan.	
4	Continue survey and monitoring as required in support of mussel and cockle fisheries	
5	Complete and obtain sign off of Byelaw 8 (prohibition of foul hooking)	
6	Complete and consult on Byelaw 2 (Vessel size restrictions)	
7	Continue byelaw review: Priorities being the hobby byelaw, shellfish byelaw, cockle and mussel Byelaw 3 and netting byelaw.	
8	Procurement of new main patrol vessel	
9	Development of and consultation on a NWIFCA angling strategy	
10	Enhance IFCO skills with further training in evidence gathering, interviewing and intelligence handling.	

22. The plan is structured to comply with the Defra framework set out in 2011. More detail on the objectives listed above is provided in the work programme at Annex C.

Chief Executive Officer
3rd March 2015