

31. AT A MEETING OF THE NORTH WESTERN INSHORE AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
HELD AT TRUCKHAVEN, CARNFORTH, 4th December 2025

PRESENT – MEMBERS

Mr. P. Capper	Chair	MMO Appointee
Cllr. A. Markley		Cumberland Council
Cllr. T. Bloomer		Westmorland and Furness Council
Cllr. S. Brookes		Blackpool Council
Cllr. P. Norris		Liverpool City Council
Cllr. D. Shaw		Lancashire County Council
Cllr. H. Deynem		Chester and Cheshire West
Mr. L. Browning		Natural England
Mr. C. Proud		MMO Statutory Member
Mr. N. Baxter		MMO Appointee
Mr. S. Brown		MMO Appointee
Mr. L. Stainton		MMO Appointee
Mr. K. Thompson		MMO Appointee
Mr. R. Benson		MMO Appointee
Mr. T. Jones		MMO Appointee
Mr. W. Friend		MMO Appointee

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms. Y. Tordoff	MMO
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NWIFCA OFFICERS ATTENDING

Mr. M. Taylor	CEO
Mr. J. Moulton	Head of Enforcement
Mr. J. Haines	Acting Head of Science
Ms. C. Silverwood	Admin Officer
Mr. I. Dixon	Senior IFCO

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. A. Jones	Lancashire County Council
Cllr. C. Richards	Sefton Council
Cllr. B. Woolfall	Halton Council
Cllr. G. Davies	Wirral Council
Mr. S. Johnston	MMO Statutory Member
Mr. G. Pidduck	MMO Appointee
Dr. M. Tupper	MMO Appointee
Mr. J. Turner	Environment Agency
Mr. R. Lomax	MMO Appointee
Ms. G. de Jong Cleyndert	MMO Appointee
Mr. B. Leigh	MMO Appointee

32. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Chair extended a welcome to Christian Proud and Yasmin Tordoff from the MMO who are attending as Steve Johnston is on secondment for the next three months.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Mr. L. Stainton declared an interest in Byelaw 7, intertidal nets and bass entitlements, should it come up, and Mr. T. Jones declared an interest in Items 8, 9 and 10.

34. MINUTES OF AUTHORITY MEETING 25th SEPTEMBER 2025 (AGENDA ITEM 3)

Cllr. D. Shaw commented on item 30.2 stating that the application has been refused but requesting that further discussion takes place around the consultation process.

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Proposed: Mr. K. Thompson, Seconded: Mr. T. Jones

15 in Favour, 0 Against, 1 Abstained

RESOLVED

35. MATTERS ARISING (AGENDA ITEM 4)

It was reiterated that the current application for work to be undertaken around Jubilee Quay has been refused.

The MMO will check that the compulsory consultees are correct, include the local planning authority email addresses and disseminate wider if necessary.

With regards to responding to marine licensing consultations the NWIFCA responses are limited to fisheries impacts and not structural implications, pollution or toxicity as we do not have the remit or expertise. Members, and their expertise, could possibly play a role in formulating the Authorities responses to consultations where appropriate.

Discussion took place around the use of the MCMS system where members of the public can search the marine licence public register.

Extensive discussion took place around planning applications and marine licencing applications being two separate regimes.

On this occasion, the consultation process has served its purpose and there has been a positive outcome.

36. FINANCIAL REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 5)

CEO reviewed the contents of the Financial Report for Quarter 2. Overall, we are running a surplus at the moment. There are some current restraints on IT expenditure as that has gone slightly overbudget.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

37. FINANCE AND PERSONNEL REPORT 20th NOVEMBER 2025 (AGENDA ITEM 6)

The Chair of the Finance and Personnel Sub-Committee provided a brief overview of the meeting.

CEO explained that, subject to ratification at the meeting today, there is to be a 4.4% levy increase for next year. This is to include a fulltime member of staff moving over from Defra funding to inclusion in the operational budget; facilitated by a reduction in a few budget headings and a willingness to include a conservative estimate of income from both interest and sampling charges for next year.

The report for the Finance and Personnel meeting is included here.

Cllr. P. Norris drew attention to the increase of 110% to the Capital Asset Replacement Fund. This fund is utilised to purchase vehicles and vessels. There is a healthy reserve to purchase the vessel.

Recommendations:

1. Members vote in favour of the new budget headings
All in favour
CARRIED
2. Members vote in favour of the proposed 2026/2027 budget and levies
14 in favour, 0 against, 2 abstentions
CARRIED

CEO clarified that Stephanie Reid, Admin Officer, has been made permanent and Robin Love, Science Officer and Health and Safety Competent Person has also been made permanent. There are still 22 members of staff.

38. TSB SUMMARY 4th NOVEMBER 2025 (AGENDA ITEM 7)

The TSB Chair provided a brief summary of the meeting held on the 4th November 2025.

A detailed discussion took place around answerphone provision in the office due to a member having difficulty contacting the office outside of office hours. The office is manned from 7.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. Alternative methods of contacting the IFCA are available such as the contact form on the website, email and mobile phones are also available. There was limited demand for answerphone provision and there are cost implications. CEO explained that we are not an emergency service. For marine emergencies there is a North West Standing Environment Group. Head of Administration to investigate the possibility of reinstating the answerphone, amending the constitution and altering the automated message.

Proposed: Mr. R. Benson, Seconded: Mr. W. Friend
15 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstained

39. CEO REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 8)

CEO reviewed the contents of the report explaining that there are still three outstanding MMO appointee vacancies on the Authority.

NWIFCA are still waiting to receive the RDEL funding for 2025 and the Association of IFCA's has submitted a funding bid to Defra on behalf of all IFCA's, but this has not been approved yet. If the funding is approved a discussion will take place on how this funding will be defrayed.

The Whitehaven office will hopefully be moving in to the Fish Hall shortly. Discussions over the ownership of Duncan Square are ongoing. Carnforth based staff were unanimous in a decision to stay in the current office. The lease was automatically extended until 2030. Discussions are underway with regards to improvements to the Carnforth Office. A radon gas sump has been installed.

Both RIBs have now been sold, and we are moving towards the procurement of a 9m catamaran. HOE has been exploring interim measures and RIB hire options for survey work or specific enforcement purposes.

There are a number of consultations currently running.

IFCO (Intel) Anthony Graham's Intelligence role has been made permanent following a three-month trial.

CEO provided a summary of the recent cyber-attack experienced by NWIFCA. Support was received from our recently appointed Data Protection Officer at Blackpool Council and IT support provider Lake District National Park Authority.

CEO briefly introduced the key performance indicators from the Admin Team.

An update was provided on the progress of the Netting Byelaw and the Dee Estuary Cockle Fishery Regulatory Order.

CEO clarified that Science Officer Robin Love is our Competent Person for Health and Safety. This fulfils a statutory requirement.

Discussion took place around the location and storage of historical documents and data. Officers and members recollect information being divided between Cumbria Sea Fisheries Committee, Welsh Government, Lancashire County Archives and Lancaster Museums. Some documentation is also still held with NWIFCA.

Cllr. P. Norris queried the savings being made in the Estates budget. CEO explained that the rent for Carnforth will now stay the same. As there will be no move, there will be no need for the budgeted increase in rent costs. There are no costs associated with Duncan Square.

Cllr. T. Bloomer asked about the amount of personal data held by NWIFCA. The Data Protection Officer will assist with an audit of information held. The external permit database holds the majority of the stakeholders' data. Assurances need to be sought that this is secure. Staff data is also held externally on third party databases.

Cllr. S. Brookes queried how quickly replacement vessels could be procured and if there was a more preferable time to buy. Timeframes for builds are possibly more favourable than previously anticipated and there may be a vessel *in situ* for next summer. It would then need to be brought up to operational capacity. Costs to hire a RIB are approximately £1,000 per day.

Cllr. H Deynem questioned the Carnforth office move and the decision to stay in the current office. Regarding the alternative office in Morecambe that was considered, CEO explained that the area, parking, access and lack of natural light were raised as concerns. It was a unanimous decision from all Carnforth-based staff to stay. Alterations to the current Carnforth office include improvements to the kitchen and lunch area, improved storage and utilisation of the attic space are currently being considered.

Proposed: Cllr. H. Deynem, Seconded: Mr. W. Friend
All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

40. SCIENCE TEAM REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 9)

The Acting Head of Science provided a brief summary of the content of the report, updating on surveys and inspections undertaken in the quarter, the Mergin Map project,

whelk fisheries research, shrimp fisheries research, the processing of data collected using the drone work in the spring, the two Marine Conservation Zone assessment that have been completed, the two consultations completed, the five dispensations that have been issued, and the completion of the first draft of NWIFCA Cockle Fisheries Management Plan which is out for consultation.

Cllr. S. Brookes asked for clarification of the dispensation requests. AHOS clarified that NWIFCA issues scientific dispensations to gather data such as taking grab samples, fish trawls or collecting undersize fish, usually on a small scale.

Cllr. H. Deynem asked how the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan was being advertised and promoted. CEO explained that it is on the website and Facebook and all stakeholders have been emailed and text. A page has been created on the website for all consultations. It is open until March. There have been a couple of completed responses, and a few have started their responses but are yet to complete and submit. There is an executive summary and overview videos to support fishers with accessing the information.

In the new year, stakeholder events are planned to be held in Grange-over-Sands, Wallasey and Rhydymwyn, North Wales. These dates will be added to the website. Councillors and members are welcome to join us.

Proposed: Mr. R. Benson, Seconded: Cllr. A. Markley
All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

41. ENFORCEMENT TEAM REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 10)

HOE explained that the quarterly updates from the senior officers can be found at the beginning of the report.

HOE updated members on the introduction of Seaflux, the safety management system for our vessel operations. It is proving to be very effective for collating all information in to one place providing CEO and HOE management oversight with easy access. Staff members have access. External bodies can be given limited access to view any necessary documentation. Staff training in place for Friday 5th December 2025.

Walker Marine Design, a naval architecture consultant, have been appointed to design a twin hulled catamaran to the specification provided by NWIFCA and will also assist with the tendering process for the build.

As previously mentioned, IFCO Anthony Graham has been appointed as a full time Intelligence Officer assisting with operational outputs, partnership working and developing information sharing agreements with Lancashire Constabulary.

HOE reviewed the returns, sanctions and infringement data, full details can be found in the report.

Mr. L. Stainton queried the lack of returns for shrimping with tractors. Currently, there is no requirement for returns to be completed for shrimping in the intertidal area, but this will be looked at in the future with the mobile gear byelaw.

Discussion took place around liaison, enforcement and working partnerships with Cheshire Rural Police, Merseyside Rural Crime Team and North Wales Police.

Adjourned for lunch 12:00pm. Meeting recommenced 12:40pm

Mr. S. Brown requested that the patch headings on the report are updated to reflect the new patch areas.

Mr. W. Friend drew attention to North Western Protector patrols stopping at Barrow-in-Furness and explained that the area between Barrow and the Wirral is probably one of the busiest areas for recreational angling vessels. Discussion took place around responding to intelligence received, operational requirements and limitations, priority areas, the suitability of NWP, suitability of an asset for working in shallower water and issues in this area. A regular presence provides a deterrent.

Mr. T. Jones asked for the dimensions of the vessel, the hull material, the cost of the consultancy and the final build price. The vessel will be circa 9meters. The overall price is dependent on mouldings that are available and build materials. The cost associated with the maritime consultant was approximately £800 and the naval architect is approximately £4000.

Proposed: Mr. N. Baxter, Seconded: Cllr. P. Norris
All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

42. HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 11)

CEO reviewed the contents of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report covering training undertaken, the introduction of the safety observation form and the resulting actions, the purchase of the licence for the use of the HSE's Safety Climate Tool to be rolled out in early 2026, the introduction of the return to work process, and the fitting of the radon gas sump at the Carnforth office.

Cllr. H. Deynem queried if the new safety observation form allows for trend analysis and tracking. CEO confirmed that it does, but a concerted period of data is required. HOE

confirmed that H&S/accident information is exchanged with other IFCA's at the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG).

Proposed: Cllr. H. Deynem, Seconded: Mr. W. Friend

All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

43. DATES OF 2026 MEETINGS (AGENDA ITEM 12)

The dates are to be considered for information.

TSB dates are to be considered as provisional as there may be some tweaks. There may be an additional meeting between February and May to discuss the cockle season.

Cllr. P. Norris requested that dates were planned for the Finance and Personnel meeting to give councillors more notice. Head of Administration to set dates in May and November and communicate these dates with the F&P members.

44. AOB (AGENDA ITEM 13)

Cllr. A. Markley informed members that he had attended the Solway Firth Partnership / Solway Coast National Landscape Joint Conference in November and that it had been a very informative event.

NWIFCA Communication Strategy is going on the website and will be shared with members.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed at 1:15pm.