

**17. AT A MEETING OF THE NORTH WESTERN INSHORE AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
HELD AT TRUCKHAVEN, CARNFORTH, 25th September 2025**

PRESENT – MEMBERS

Mr. P. Capper	Chair	MMO Appointee
Mr. B. Leigh	Vice 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. C. Richards		Sefton Council
Mr. L. Browning		Natural England
Ms. Y. Tordoff		MMO Statutory Member
Mr. J. Turner		Environment Agency
Mr. N. Baxter		MMO Appointee
Mr. S. Brown		MMO Appointee
Mr. L. Stainton		MMO Appointee
Mr. R. Lomax		MMO Appointee
Mr. K. Thompson		MMO Appointee
Mr. R. Benson		MMO Appointee
Ms. G. de Jong Cleyndert		MMO Appointee

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. M. Rowlings	
Dr. S. Coulthard	Newcastle University

NWIFCA OFFICERS ATTENDING

M. Taylor	CEO
J. Moulton	Head of Enforcement
A. Plumeridge	Head of Science
C. Silverwood	Admin Officer
I. Dixon	SIFCO
A. Brownrigg	SIFCO
J. Haines	Senior Science Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. A. Jones	Lancashire County Council
Cllr. B. Woolfall	Halton Council
Cllr. G. Davies	Wirral Council
Cllr. H. Deynem	Chester and Cheshire West
Mr. S. Johnston	MMO
Mr. G. Pidduck	MMO Appointee
Mr. T. Jones	MMO Appointee
Mr. W. Friend	MMO Appointee
Dr. M. Tupper	MMO Appointee

18. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (AGENDA ITEM 1)

The Chair extended a welcome to Yasmin Tordoff who is attending in Steve Johnston's absence and Dr. Sarah Coulthard from Newcastle University.

Apologies have been received from Mr. Trevor Jones, Mr. Steve Johnston, Dr. Mark Tupper, Mr. Wayne Friend, Mr. Garry Pidduck, Cllr. Hugo Deynem and Cllr. Alice Jones.

The Chair also reminded members to sign the attendance register and declare any items of interest.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (AGENDA ITEM 2)

Mr. L. Stainton declared an interest in Byelaw 7, intertidal nets and bass entitlements.

20. MINUTES OF AUTHORITY MEETING 26th JUNE 2025 (AGENDA ITEM 3)

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr. P. Norris, Seconded: Cllr. A. Markley
14 in Favour, 0 Against, 2 Abstained

RESOLVED

21. MATTERS ARISING (AGENDA ITEM 4)

There were no matters arising.

22. FINANCIAL REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 5)

The CEO reviewed the financial report for Quarter 1 of this financial year.

All levies have been received from the funding councils. Permit fees for Byelaw 3 have been received. The shellfish sampling fees have been revised and were introduced on 1st September 2025. A flat rate has been introduced. Tier 1 is two officers for one day charging £500 and Tier 2 is two officers for half a day charging £250. The income received from sampling could possibly fund the appointment of an additional officer.

Expenditure is broadly on track of where it is expected to be. Employee expenditure is lower than expected due to reduced unsocial hours costs and employee expenses in Q1. The CEO approved an additional expenditure of £8,000 under corporate costs to cover the cost of a consultant on an IT development project.

The auditors recommended that depreciation is removed from expenditure as it is not a cash expenditure. The accountants have addressed this by adding the depreciation back in separately, underneath the expenditure headings. The audit was very encouraging advising that an ancillary asset register including IT, specialist scientific and enforcement equipment register is created. The Chair suggested that a threshold minimum level of £250 was set for the asset register. The HOE has already created an asset register for insurance purposes.

Cllr. P. Norris queried that there had been no expenditure from the capital asset replacement fund (CARF). CEO responded that the CARF was to fund the future purchase of replacement vessels and vehicles. A more routine replacement cycle is in place, and no purchases have been made in this quarter.

Proposed: Mr. B. Leigh, Seconded: Mr. A. Markley,
All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

23. TSB SUMMARY 5th AUGUST 2025 (AGENDA ITEM 6)

Mr. S. Brown (Vice Chair) provided a verbal summary of the TSB meeting held on 5th August 2025, in the absence of Mr. T. Jones (Chair).

Mr. S. Brown summarised the modifications to the recommendations and the resolutions made at the TSB meeting.

HOS provided clarification on the Total Allowable Catches at Newbiggin and at Flookburgh and the loss of resource on the mussel beds at Black Scar and Perch Scar. CEO added that in the future partner agencies will be contacted pre-emptively to hopefully facilitate a smooth opening of fisheries.

Cllr. A. Markley queried if it was possible to have an agreement with all the councils already in place and how the TACs are monitored. CEO responded that some land is privately owned, councils have different requirements and the contacts at councils often change. The TACs are monitored by the SIFCOs collecting the weights from the buyers.

The Chair thanked Mr. S. Brown for providing the verbal report.

24. CEO REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 7)

CEO provided a verbal summary of his report, expressing his thanks to Mr. R. Donnan for his service.

There are currently three vacancies for MMO Appointees on the Authority. There is an active national recruitment drive for MMO Appointees.

£50,000 has been received from Defra to support our work towards the national fisheries management plan. Defra have set more stringent requirements on their funding provision. Defra are pursuing an exemption for IFCAs to be paid directly by local authorities and not through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

CEO provided an update on the proposed estates moves in Whitehaven and Carnforth. A consultation with staff in Carnforth was undertaken and the decision was made to stay at the Carnforth office. There is six months left on the current lease.

Discussion took place around the continuing lack of clarity around the ownership of Duncan Square in Whitehaven. Currently, no party can provide definitive proof of ownership.

Progress is being made with the vessel asset replacement plan. Following consultation with officers, consideration is being given to the refurbishment of North Western Protector and procurement of two catamarans. Currently consulting with staff over specifications of the catamarans and a fully costed list of potential refurbishments of NWP has been requested from the crew.

CEO provided an update on Byelaw 7. It is still with the MMO for quality assurance and Defra will then scrutinise the Byelaw. Applications for the permits have been launched. Industry and applicants are aware that the Byelaw is currently not in place.

CEO briefly summarised the results from the staff survey explaining that the engagement scores had increased from last year. Areas for improvement include culture, inter-team cooperation, SMT communication and decision-making. There will be more integration across teams including admin, a working group to look at values has been created, and an anonymous staff suggestions form has been introduced. Mr. B. Leigh suggested that quality kitemarking can be a driver for change.

IFCO Anthony Graham is currently on a three-month trial as a full time Intel Officer.

Further discussion took place around the consultation response to the MMO regarding their Stage 3 MPA proposals for the prohibition of all forms of bottom-towed gear in the four MPAs in the Eastern Irish Sea. Cllr. D. Shaw requested to be kept up to date on the progress. The importance of balancing the environmental and economic impact was reiterated.

Coffee break taken from 11.30am to 11.50am.

HOS will be taking one month leave followed by a three-month sabbatical from November 2025 to February 2026. Senior Science Officer Jon Haines will stand in her absence.

Proposed: Mr. S. Brown, Seconded: Mr. B. Leigh,
All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

25. SCIENCE TEAM REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 8)

HOS reviewed the content of the science report briefly covering the work that Science Officer Robin Love is leading on developing an app for the collection, storage and interpretation of data. Drone survey work is ongoing including developing a methodology for analysing mussel beds in the district. The PhD project has commenced looking at cockle dispersal in the North West. The oral histories project will be available to members once published by Defra. The NWIFCA cockle fisheries management plan will be shared with members and wider stakeholders for review later this year.

Science Officers attended the Technical Advisory Group conference in Folkstone and presented on their current projects.

Discussion took place around the future possible use of drones and whether they would reduce the use of ATVs. The data would still need to be ground truthed to ensure its accuracy. Other IFCA's are interested in the work and methodology used. It has been proposed that a drone group is created where information and good practice can be shared.

Proposed: Mr. R. Benson, Seconded: Cllr. A. Markley

All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

26. ENFORCEMENT TEAM REPORT (AGENDA ITEM 9)

HOE reviewed the content of the Enforcement report.

Following consultation with SIFCOs there have been amendments to the areas of operation and staff covered by each SIFCO. SIFCO Ian Dixon's patch will be extended to cover the whole of Morecambe Bay.

HOE has been exploring introducing a Safety Management Systems as it is a requirement under Workboat code 3, providing management oversight of compliancy and record completion.

We are currently half way through the trial of IFCA Anthony Graham being a full time Intel Officer and it is going very well, allowing for tasking to be informed by the intelligence reports. A number of productive joint working patrols have been undertaken in the North West with colleagues from the Environment Agency, MMO and Lancashire Constabularies Rural Crime Team.

Officers have been involved in a national trial run by the Joint Maritime Security Centre called Sirius Insight to aid in the enforcement of the proposed management of the Allonby Bay HPMA.

A review of the Pilling fishery was provided. The price offered for cockles was extremely low at £1 per kilo resulting in the Pilling fishery being underutilised.

North Western Protector has been present across the district with a number of inspections and closings undertaken.

Discussion took place around intelligence reporting, its effectiveness, the focus of resources, strategy, compliance and the dynamic responses that are required when multiple fisheries are open concurrently.

Proposed: Mr. N. Baxter, Seconded: Mr. S. Brown

All in favour.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

Adjourned for lunch 12.30pm. Meeting recommenced 1.00pm

Cllr. C. Richards left the meeting over the lunch break.

27. DR. SARAH COULTHARD: INSHORE/SMALL SCALE FISHERIES (AGENDA ITEM 10)

Dr. S. Coulthard presented her report on Securing Sustainable Inshore Fisheries in the UK. It is a national piece of work supported by the AIFCA with input from all IFCAs.

A heat map has been generated from the Seafish Fleet Survey to evidence the decline in the UK fishing fleet.

Dr. S. Coulthard also presented her report on Conversations with the IFCAs which was commissioned to learn from the IFCAs, including information from both officers and members, collecting insights and lived experiences of delivering the management of our inshore seas.

Mr. S. Brown congratulated Dr. S. Coulthard on the reports and suggested she contacts Dr. J. Andrews.

Cllr. S. Brookes expressed an interest in the Pride in Our Seas II exhibition being hosted in Blackpool.

A national symposium is to be held in February.

Discussion took place around the content of the reports with general agreement of the findings and support of the work undertaken.

Cllr. P. Norris left the meeting at 2pm.

Cllr. A. Markley left the meeting at 2.15pm.

The Chair thanked Dr. S. Coulthard for attending and presenting her reports.

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

CEO reviewed the contents of the Health, Safety and Wellbeing report.

CEO informed the members that we need to be compliant with Workboat Code 3 by September 2028. An external consultant has reviewed the SOPs for NWP and made recommendations mainly with regards to the safety management system.

CEO highlighted that Officer Robin Love was making great progress following his appointment as the competent person. A Safety Observation Form has been introduced, a gap analysis is underway and manual handling training is booked for October.

CEO drew attention to a paragraph in the new Health and Safety Policy which details the responsibilities of the members with regards to Health and Safety.

Authority Members

Whilst the CEO has overall accountability for health, safety and wellbeing, the Authority's committee members play a key role in setting the strategic direction, scrutinising plans, and influencing the overall culture for safety management.

While not in day-to-day control, members of the authority need to satisfy themselves that risks are considered as part of their decision-making processes and are sensibly managed.

Decisions made by members could impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, stakeholders, contractors and members of the public.

Mr. B. Leigh recommended that 'members' were added to the scope section of the policy and the 1974 Act is added to Applicable Legislation.

Proposed: Mr. S. Brown, Seconded Mr. L. Stainton
All in favour

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

29. ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025

CEO noted that the website needs amending to 2024/2025.

Proposed: Mr. S. Brown, Seconded: Cllr. S. Brookes
10 in Favour, 0 against, 1 Abstention

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

30. AOB

30.1 PILLING

CEO explained that two Byelaw 3 permit holders have requested that the open days for Pilling are amended to Wednesday to Sunday due to their buyer arrangements. It has already been proposed and rejected at the August TSB.

SMT thought it was appropriate to bring the decision back to the Authority as the next TSB is in November. A brief addendum needs to be made to the HRA.

HOS reiterated that a consultation with fishers has already been undertaken in July, and the preference was for Monday to Friday.

Discussion took place around the additional staffing costs for unsocial hours, the time scale of a consultation process and the possibility of a precedent being set.

The proposal is to consult with all stakeholders to amend the flexible permit conditions to a Wednesday to Sunday fishery.

Proposed: Mr. S. Brown, Seconded: Mr. B. Leigh
10 in favour, 0 against, 1 Abstention

30.2 MARINE LICENCE FOR DREDGING OF FLEETWOOD DOCK

Discussion took place around the marine licence for dredging of Fleetwood Dock. Case reference number 2025 00320. NWIFCA responded to the consultation in August.

MMO to provide an update at the next meeting.

Mr. B. Leigh left the meeting at 2.55pm

Cllr. T. Bloomer left the meeting at 2.55pm

30.3 CONSTRUCTION OF GROYNES ON BLACKPOOL COAST

Cllr. S. Brookes raised awareness to the current consultation on the construction of groynes on the Blackpool Coast.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting closed at 3pm.