

PRESENT – MEMBERS

Councillor A. J. Markley	(Chairman)	Cumbria County Council
Dr J. Andrews		MMO appointee (Marine Environment)
Dr E. Baxter		MMO appointee (Marine Environment)
Mr C. Booth		MMO appointee (
Councillor K. Brown		Lancashire County Council
Mr D. Clarke		MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – Cumbria)
Mr B. Crawford		MMO appointee (Anglers and Recreation)
Mr D. Harpley		MMO appointee (Marine Environment)
Mr T. Jones		MMO appointee (Commercial/Aquaculture)
Mr B. Leigh		MMO appointee (Anglers and Recreation)
Mr. M. Oddy		MMO appointee (Marine Environment)
Miss C. Salthouse		MMO appointee (Marine Environment)
Mr K. Thompson		MMO appointee (Commercial/Aquaculture)
Mr D. Ward		MMO (Officer)
Councillor P. Williams		Cheshire West and Chester Council

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms L May	Natural England
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COUNCIL OFFICERS ATTENDING

Mr D. McAleavy	Sefton Council
Mr C. Clayton	Wirral Council

NWIFCA OFFICERS ATTENDING

CEO, Head of Enforcement, Finance Officer, Senior Scientist, Clerk, Digital Communications Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor L. Beavers	Lancashire County Council
Councillor K. Little	Cumbria County Council
Councillor B. Mooney	Wirral Council
Councillor J. Noakes	Liverpool
Councillor B. Woolfall	Halton Council
Mr R. Graham	MMO appointee (Commercial)
Mr S. J. Manning	MMO appointee (Commercial)
Mr M Johnston	Natural England
Mr P. Wright	Halton Council (Officer)
Mr I. Hesketh	Cheshire West and Chester Council (Officer)

105 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 1)

1. The Chairman welcomed Ms Lucy May (Natural England), Mr Anthony Graham (Digital Communications Officer) and visitors
2. The Authority's website has been extensively redesigned. Comments are welcome and should be sent to the Carnforth office.

106 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

Agenda Item 8. Science Report. Mr T. Jones

107 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE NWIFCA MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016  
Agenda Item 3)

Minute No. 92. Permit to Dredge Byelaw. Mr Oddy said the reference in the last paragraph to disturbance of the sea bed surface should be disturbance to foreshore. He also said that attaching an Annex to minutes of a meeting was unusual. The legal advice could have been presented under Matters Arising.

Proposed Mr Crawford; seconded Ms Salthouse.

RESOLVED

The minutes of the NWIFCA meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record with amendment as above.

108 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)

Minute No. 89 (Standing Orders). Mr Leigh said he planned to have a draft of the revised Standing Orders for the March meeting

Minute No. 92 (Permit to Dredge Byelaw). Dr Andrews said that TSB members had provided comments on the latest draft for discussion at today's meeting but the item was not on the Agenda. The CEO reported that Defra has not yet responded on the issue of the charging regime so progress had been delayed. Comments received from Mr Ward, Mr Thompson and Dr Andrews will be discussed at the next TSB meeting. The CEO has applied to MMO for an extension to the emergency byelaw.

In the context of the legal advice on access to public fisheries, Mr Oddy asked if land owners' consent is required to use the Authority's motor vehicles on private foreshore property. He asked for further legal advice which the CEO will request this.

Minute No. 94 (Vessel Procurement). Mr Oddy said this was not on the Agenda. The Chairman said an update would be given in Agenda Item 6.

Minute No. 96 (Science Report). Rossall Sea Defences. Mr Crawford reported that he had a meeting with the Assistant Site Engineer on 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Fishing platforms, ramps and access points with steps have been provided for recreational sea anglers.

Minute No. 103 (Any Other Business)

1. MMO vacancies. Mr Oddy asked for an update. Mr Ward said MMO is currently reviewing the recruitment process around all IFCA's.
2. Charging for time spent on consultations. The CEO said charges would be made when consultants requested work which would not be done otherwise as part of IFCA duties. In one case already a request for work was rescinded because a charge was proposed.

109 REPORT ON FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016  
(Agenda Item 6)

A verbal report on this meeting was given by the new Chairman of the Finance Committee, Councillor Paul Williams.

The Budget and Levy for 2017-18 and Budget Review to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 had been approved. It was agreed to investigate with other IFCA's the feasibility of commissioning joint insurance.

Vessel Procurement tenders will be assessed by a Tender Appraisal sub-committee of the Vessel committee on 12<sup>th</sup> December consisting of Mr T Jones, Mr R. Blackhurst (Consultant Seafish) and Mr H Thinnessen (Master Solway Protector). If vessels are considered potentially suitable further details may be requested from the supplier and the vessels visited for visual inspection by the sub-committee. The Vessel Committee (and wider membership) will be updated when a recommendation to proceed with a vessel is made by the sub-committee.

Proposed Mr Oddy; seconded Dr Baxter and Miss Salthouse. Voting: unanimous in favour;

RESOLVED

The Finance Committee be given delegated powers to approve commissioning the purchase of a vessel following a recommendation to purchase a particular vessel by the Vessel Committee.

110 FINANCIAL REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The Finance Officer asked members to formally approve the four recommendations.

Relating to income in the 2017/18 budget, Dr Andrews asked firstly why there was reduced income from shellfish sampling and secondly why the increase in income expected from permit fees was more than the addition of 10 permits from the waiting list. The Finance officer said that sampling had been decreasing for several years and had therefore been reduced, while the trend in permit fees was slightly upwards due to the prospect of a possible cockle fishery. This is also complicated by the current system allowing fishers to apply for permit renewal any time from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> August the following year, which crosses 2 financial years.

Mr Oddy asked about the increase in the Transport budget for 2017/18. The Finance Officer said that this was due to the current annual addition of a 2% vessel levy increase which goes into the Transport budget to build up a vessel replacement fund. Finance Officer said that for clarity this could be listed as a separate Vessel Replacement budget.

Proposed Mr Leigh, seconded Councillor Williams. Voting unanimous in favour.

RESOLVED

1. The Budget Review to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 is approved.
2. The Budget and Levy for 2017-18 is approved.
3. The effectiveness of independent audit is reviewed and approved and Moore & Smalley LLP is again appointed as independent auditor.
4. The risk assessment is reviewed and approved.

111 PATROL AND ENFORCEMENT (Agenda Item 7)

HOE said the new format of this report includes all previous information and is intended to be more accessible.

Three IFCOS are to start training through the pilot accreditation scheme run by MMO.

Two seed mussel fisheries were open during the quarter: 1. South America and Perch Scar dredge and 2. Heysham Flat handworked. Both have now finished. Leven and Pilling cockle fisheries opened on 9<sup>th</sup> November. MLS alleged non-compliance was reported in respect of 8 individuals, 5 at Pilling, 3 at Leven.

Reference Landing Obligations Dr Baxter asked about comments that catch of Nephrops from trawls can be discarded. Mr Ward (MMO) thought the wording was incorrect and agreed to check the wording with Defra.

Proposed Dr Andrews, seconded Mr Crawford. Voting unanimous.

RESOLVED. The new format of the Enforcement report be approved.

112 SCIENCE AND SURVEY UPDATE (Agenda Item 8)

The Senior Scientist reported.

Heysham Flat Exclusion Zone. Some mussel on the lower areas at Heysham persisted through winter 2015-16 and is growing to size. A size mussel fishery is now likely where damage to Sabellaria reef is possible. Size mussel fisheries are unrestricted so a new exclusion zone is needed to protect Sabellaria. The extent has been agreed with NE and WT approved by TSB in October. Approval was sought for a proposed Byelaw 13A closure to come into force as soon as possible after the meeting until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

Small Fish Surveys. The senior scientist said that the Authority would benefit from developing in house survey techniques, skills and undertaking surveys in collaboration with EA. Surveys would provide better understanding of how juvenile fish use bays, estuaries and rivers in the District. Sustainable management would be enhanced. The work will contribute to WFD requirements. Time and resources are available from the reduction in EMS work

Dr Andrews said he had raised concerns at the TSB on the need for the surveys and staff resources required to carry out these out. He agreed the Authority has a deficiency in knowledge and needs to develop a programme for rectifying that deficiency but that needs to be weighed against the resource allocation.

Mr Oddy asked how officers will coordinate with EA on this work. Ms Knott said EA use the data for WFD purposes and EA have shared their data with IFCA. Officers will work collaboratively with EA without duplication. The EA data set will help identify key areas and assist targeting of surveys.

Mr Leigh supported the development programme saying recreational sea anglers have a wealth of data and could play a role. Ms Knott reported that officers are putting together a recreational angling strategy and developing a database of contacts within the angling sector to look at the data they have and how it can be used.

Dr Andrews referred to the Defra review of BNA mentioned in the report. He felt that if the surveys were to include more data on BNA being obtained then developing a programme seemed sensible.

Cockles. Stocks at Flookburgh and North Penfold have not yet reached size and beds are not recommended for opening. Further surveys will be carried out in the spring.

Mussels. "Solway Protector" surveys of subtidal mussels in the Solway estimated 3,000 tonnes present. A separate Solway Bivalve Working Group (BWG2) group is proposed to meet in January 17 allowt stakeholders and interest groups to discuss fishery options.

Consultations. Two consultations have been announced for SPA extensions to protect seabirds. No concerns will be raised about Liverpool Bay pSPA extension. Solway Firth pSPA is a cross border site shared with Scotland. Concerns about a lack of information on the English side have been sent to Scottish National Heritage.

NW Coast Connections. Public consultation is being carried out on the proposed route for the high voltage cables. Ongoing discussion with fishermen shaft is being encouraged

around the position of the islet in Morecambe Bay which is a ventilation shaft, emergency escape for maintenance crew and will draw in cooling waters.

Moorside Power Station – NuGen. Mr Crawford asked for a copy of the report on the circulating water system relating to migratory fish which Ms Knott will provide.

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Byelaw 13A closure at Heysham Flat; proposed Councillor Brown. 12 in favour; none against; 1 abstained.
2. To approve the development of a Small Fish Survey Programme; proposed Dr Andrews, seconded Miss Salthouse. Voting Unanimous in favour.

113 REPORT ON TSB MEETING HELD ON 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2016 (Agenda Item 9)

In the absence of the TSB Chairman, Mr Jones, Vice-Chairman, reported.

Byelaw 11 – Permit to Dredge Byelaw. Members agreed that Defra should be requested to extend the emergency byelaw by 6 months.

Cockle and Mussel Fisheries. Proposals to open Pilling Sands and Leven Sands were agreed. All other cockle beds within the District to remain closed under Byelaw 13A, subject to review in the spring.

Heysham Flat – Protection of *Sabellaria alveolata* reef. Protection of the reef is required to make the fishery HRA compliant. It was agreed to include an exclusion zone in the HRA and this be also written into the Mussel Management Plan. It was further agreed to close the reef area under Byelaw 13A as soon as possible.

A.O.B. Mr Jones had offered to assist with ground discrimination survey of mussel stocks within the district. Senior Scientist offered thanks and said this would be discussed at the January Solway meeting. Representatives of mussel fishermen, NWIFCA, NE, WT, RSPB and other interested stakeholders will be invited.

RESOLVED: To receive the report.

114 ANNUAL PLAN 2017-18 (Agenda Item 10)

New non-statutory guidance on the content and structure of the plans was published last year and used in this plan. Members were asked to consider the plan and tables and provide comment by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017. A revised draft with any comments to be resolved will be provided to the March meeting.

RESOLVED. Comments on the Annual Plan to be sent to the CE by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

115 PROPOSED CHANGE OF START TIME TO 10 A.M. FOR FUTURE NWIFCA QUARTERLY MEETINGS (Agenda Item 11)

The Chairman proposed a change to the start time of NWIFCA meetings to 10 a.m. Following discussion 11 a.m. was agreed as the most appropriate start time.

Voting 12 in favour

RESOLVED

Start time for NWIFCA quarterly meetings in future remain at 11 a.m.

116 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 12)

1. CEO Report. Mr Oddy said there had been no CEO report on the Agenda and asked that this be made a standing item. Dr Andrews said members should be kept informed on IFCA Association meetings. The CEO agreed to provide both these items and pointed out that minutes were available on the AIFCA website.

Dr Andrews said he had noted a report on the COG meeting in September written for North East IFCA that NWIFCA officers were undertaking an HRA relating to shrimp fishing which might result in the development of a byelaw regulation. Ms Knott said a HRA has been submitted to Natural England for the Morecambe Bay shrimp fishery and their response is awaited. Ms May confirmed that NE has no objections so no new management measures for Morecambe Bay shrimp fishery are likely to be required.

2. NWIFCA website

Mr Oddy said the new NWIFCA website only contained minutes from June 2016. The Digital Communications Officer said he is in the process of putting earlier minutes back on the website. Mr Oddy suggested the Authority should have a policy on the time period for retaining minutes on the website.

The Chairman closed the meeting by wishing members compliments of the season.

Meeting ended 1300 hours.