01 MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW SUB-COMMITTEE (TSB) ON TUESDAY 4th AUGUST 2026 AT TRUCKHAVEN, CARNFORTH 10:00

PRESENT MEMBERS

T. Jones	Chair	MMO Appointee
S. Brown	Vice-Chair	MMO Appointee
G. Pidduck		MMO Appointee
L. Stainton		MMO Appointee
P. Capper		MMO Appointee
B. Leigh		MMO Appointee
G. De Jong Cleyndert		MMO Appointee
Y. Tordoff		MMO
J. Turner		Environment Agency
L. Browning		Natural England

NWIFCA OFFICERS ATTENDING

M. Taylor (CEO), J. Moulton (Head of Enforcement), A. Plumeridge (Head of Science), I. Dixon (SIFCO), J. Haines (Senior Science Officer), S. Reid (Admin Officer).

OTHERS PRESENT

M. Juarez, M. Rowlings, S. Ward, M. Wilson, R. Porter, W. F. Benson and S. Manning.

02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

N. Baxter

03 ELECTION OF CHAIR (Agenda Item 1)

The CEO welcomed members. The CEO invited self-nominations for the position of Chair of the TSB; T. Jones was the only self-nomination and was reappointed

Proposed: T. Jones, Seconded: P. Capper, all in favour, Carried

T. Jones was re-elected to stand as Chair.

04 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 2)

The Chair extended a welcome to all members present and to M. Juarez from Bangor University.

The Chair welcomed all other members of industry and explained that they would be invited to ask questions or make comments but requested that they introduce themselves before speaking.

The Chair reminded members to sign the attendance register and complete declarations of interest slips if required.

05 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR (Agenda Item 3)

The Chair invited self-nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the TSB. S. Brown was the only self-nomination and was reappointed.

Proposed: S. Brown, Seconded: B. Leigh, all in favour, Carried

S. Brown was re-elected to stand as Vice Chair.

06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 4)

G. Pidduck declared an interest in Item 6.

07 MINUTES OF TSB MEETING 5th MAY 2026 (Agenda Item 5)

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: B. Leigh, Seconded: L. Stainton, All in Favour, Carried

08 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 6)

G. Pidduck raised concerns around the changing EU legislation on lobsters and the classification of shellfish. The CEO clarified that the Authority was not consulted over the amended legislation. The CEO explained that an audit had taken place and as a result, the EU has requested that legislation around classification is amended. The FSA is now implementing the changes to legislation. The Authority has been liaising with local Environmental Health teams to encourage a more streamline workflow. Nationally NWIFCA has informed the other IFCAs of the legislation changes and as a collective they will present their concerns to the SAGB. B. Leigh offered supported from the sub-committee and requested that officers act proactively and efficiently to facilitate negotiations around the new legislation. He requested that the Authority approach the Association of IFCAs to make representation to the appropriate bodies.

Legislation around exports of lobster to the EU was discussed and the CEO explained that the SAGB communication around this was that it was only relevant to French boats landing in French ports.

L. Stainton enquired on the number of pollack which can be caught per day. The HoE said that no new legislation had been passed on the number of pollack with can be caught and kept per day recreationally. Official communications on this will be posted once the information is released from DEFRA or the MMO.

09 SURVEY AND INSPECTION REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The HoS provided a summary of mussel and cockle survey results. Surveys showed that there are no mussel beds suitable for seed dredging at this moment in time. However, there is a patch of seed mussel in Heysham which could provide an opportunity for a hand gathered fishery, which will brought to the TSB for a possible recommendation. A further survey of the Falklands will take place mid-August.

Penfold and Leasowe have a low total cockle biomass and sized cockle biomass. Morecambe Bay total cockle biomass exceeds the Authority's threshold set out in the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan however the sized cockle biomass is low. S. Brown raised concerns around the lack of fishing opportunities for local fishing communities. L. Browning emphasised that bird food requirements are important for the management of cockle fisheries as they make up SPAs. He further expressed that the members need to focus on the biomass presented during the surveys, not what it could grow on to, as this will keep data collection comparable to previous years.

Discussion took place around members with pecuniary interests taking part in discussions. The Authority can issue a dispensation for a member to take part in debates but they will not be able to vote on recommendations. A member with a dispensation cannot take part in a debate that seeks to provide benefit to the member financially however they may provide useful information to other members to enable them to make an informed decision. The Chair granted G. Pidduck an informal dispensation to take part in the discussion.

The CEO led discussion around some of the possible factors to why the sized cockle biomass has decreased. There is potential for fisheries next year as the undersize biomass has increased especially on Warton and Middleton.

The Chair invited questions and comments from members of the public. S. Manning enquired about the additional considerations in Report 1 Page 9. The HoS said the report will be amended to remove parameter number 4. M. Wilson expressed his frustrations as he feels local fishers could make a living on the sized cockles which are available. M. Rowlings enquired if individual quotas could be given to fishers. Discussion took place around individual quotas, and this is something the Authority could look at pursuing in the future. However, the minimum thresholds this year have not been met. J. Turner supported the recommendation because it follows the guidance set out in the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan and provides the Authority accountability. S. Ward asked for clarity on the accuracy of the total cockle biomass. The HoS explained how surveys are conducted and how the Authority only surveys commercial beds. The CEO emphasised that the Authority's priority is to manage a sustainable fishery.

B. Leigh provided an amendment to recommendation b.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

RECOMMENDATION: ALL DISTRICT COCKLE BEDS, INCLUDING THOSE IN MORECAMBE BAY, RIBBLE ESTUARY AND LEASOWE, REMAIN CLOSED FOR THE REST OF THE CLOSED SEASON, AND FROM SEPTEMBER 1ST 2026 UNTIL 31ST AUGUST 2027, SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AUTHORITY TO MANAGE ITS FISHEREIES IN AN ADAPTIVE MANNER.

RECOMMENDATION: THE TSB SUB-COMMITTEE, PENDING THE REVISION OF THE CONSTITUATION AND STANDING ORDERS THERE UNDER, RESOLVES THAT MEMBERS OF TSB MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEBATES ON AN ISSUE WHICH THEY HAVE A PECUNIARY INTEREST SUBJECT TO THE CONTRIBUTION NOT BEING DESIGNED TO ADVANCE THEIR OWN PERSONAL INTEREST AND MOREOVER THE MEMBER MAY NOT VOTE ON THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUE.

Proposed: B. Leigh, Seconded: P. Capper, Against 0, Abstention 1 (G. Pidduck), Carried

10 SCIENCE REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

The HoS reported that worked had continued on the shrimp project and Science Officer Lucy Loud had been to Salford University to analyse samples for pathogens and contaminates. Further work had been undertaken looking at the washup of smooth-hounds on the North Wirral Foreshore. A clam survey had been conducted at Leasowe as part of the review of Byelaw 2.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 9)

The date of the next meeting is 3rd November 2026.

12 AOB (Agenda Item 10)

The CEO gave an update on Byelaw 7. The Byelaw is still with DEFRA because they have concerns around the bass entitlement element. The Science Team are drafting a small fisheries management plan to illustrate how the bass entitlements will be managed. If DEFRA reject the bass entitlement element of the netting byelaw, it would need to be removed and the Authority would then be required to go through the consultation and quality assurance process again.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending – meeting closed at 12:11.