

26 MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW SUB-COMMITTEE (TSB) ON TUESDAY 5th MAY 2026 AT TRUCKHAVEN, CARNFORTH 10:00

PRESENT MEMBERS

T. Jones	Chair	MMO Appointee
S. Brown	Vice-Chair	MMO Appointee
N. Baxter		MMO Appointee
K. Thompson		MMO Appointee
L. Stainton		MMO Appointee
B. Leigh		MMO Appointee
G. De Jong Cleyndert		MMO Appointee
C. Proud		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), S. Reid (Admin Officer).

OTHERS PRESENT

Y. Tordoff (MMO), M. Rowlings, S. Ward.

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

P. Capper and G. Pidduck

28 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 1)

The Chair extended a welcome to all members present.

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.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

T. Jones declared an interest in Items 6, 7 and 8.

L. Stainton declared an interest in Item 9, subject to Byelaw 7 Bass Netting Bycatch being discussed.

30 MINUTES OF TSB MEETING 10th FEBRUARY 2026 (Agenda Item 3)

J. Turner noted an error on Page 5. The 31st April requires amending to 30th April.

Proposed: K. Thompson, Seconded: N. Baxter, All in Favour, Carried

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

31 MINUTES OF ETSB MEETING 19th MARCH 2026 (Agenda Item 4)

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Proposed: K. Thompson, Seconded: B. Leigh, One Abstention (G. De Jong Cleyndert), Carried

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

32 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 5)

The CEO wanted to extend condolences to the family and friends of local fishermen Mr Martin Diggle, who recently passed away. S. Brown asked if the Authority would be sending a representative to the funeral. The CEO said further discussion would be required.

33 SURVEY AND INSPECTION REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The HoS gave a verbal update on surveys undertaken by the Science Team. The HoS explained that the Science Team had surveyed Bare, Foulney and Heysham Mussel beds and reports that there is minimal spat and mussel on the beds, however, it is still early in the year. There has been a decrease in mussel biomass and this will be resurveyed later in the year.

Byelaw 2 Clam survey has been undertaken on the Wirral coastline. The surveys will be used as evidence in the review process of Byelaw 2. Further work has included Wirral Gill Netting which is exploring Smooth-hounds being caught and the catch composition of the gill net fishers. The surveying of Shrimps in the Morecambe Bay area is ongoing as part of the shrimp project.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

34 SCIENCE REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The HoS verbally gave key updates. Science Officer Lucy Loud attended a workshop in Grange Over Sands. During the workshop Salford University presented their preliminary results to some of the reasons why there has been a decline in the Shrimp population in Morecambe Bay. The workshop was well attended by stakeholders. The work will continue with Lucy Loud working in the laboratories at Salford University to analyse contaminants which can be found in Shrimps.

A new vessel side scan has been procured, and this will assist with Mussel surveys. The equipment will improve survey data and outputs. Work on Mergin Maps continues and has started to produce shore and vessel data.

The CEO requested for the Byelaw 2 review to be presented to the TSB committee in the November meeting. He further requested that Science Officer Robin Love presents a demonstration of Mergin Maps at the November TSB meeting if the agenda allows for it.

The Morecambe Bay Shifting Sands film has now been released and can be found on the NWIFCA website. This project explored the oral histories of the Morecambe Bay fisheries and the output was a film and a report. The report was produced by Exeter University and explores the values of coastal communities.

THE REPORT WAS RECEIVED

35 COCKLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT PLAN (Agenda Item 8)

The Chair introduced Agenda Item 8 by reading the recommendation. L. Browning said that outstanding comments had been discussed and a resolution has been reached. The Chair enquired how the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan fitted in the national Cockle Fisheries Management Plan. The HoS and the CEO explained that the national Cockle Fisheries Management Plan collates the management of the different fisheries across England and determines that fisheries should be managed on a local level. It has identified further areas of research and the need for a National Cockle Forum. The HoS highlighted key areas of the NWIFCA Cockle Fisheries Management Plan. As part of the consultation process, a series of short videos were made to help inform stakeholders of the plan's contents, and stakeholders were contacted by email and text, and information was available on the NWIFCA website and Facebook page. Seven people responded to the consultation which closed on 31st March. The HoS reported on the consultation feedback and gave a summary on how the Management Plan had been adjusted to reflect the feedback given. A tracked changed document was also provided. If an amendment had not been made, reasons had been provided along with evidence to support the reasons for why the amendment had not been made.

The HoS discussed key points from Part One of the Management Plan and invited questions. Discussion took place around the benefits of having an MSC accreditation.

The HoS discussed key points from Part Two of the Management Plan and invited questions. There were no comments or questions from members.

The HoS discussed key points from Part Three of the Management Plan and invited questions. Discussion took place around how the Authority can quantify the Socio-Economic aspects with a fishery alongside conservation. Further talk covered if the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan gave consideration to the changing coastline and some of the issues which the Authority might face in the future. The CEO felt that the points raised were outside the scope of the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan and would be more relevant to the Byelaw 3 review which has started but will be a lengthy process. The issues raised would come under Compliance and Enforcement and the Enforcement Team have Operational Plans which cover multi-agency approaches and respond dynamically to individual fisheries.

Some discussion took place around a tractor dredge fishery. The HoS explained that a tractor dredge fishery had not been included in the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan

and currently we do not have this method of fishing. For it to be a viable fishery an extensive amount of work would need to be undertaken.

The review process for the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan will take place yearly but it will also be revised at any point throughout the year if a critical piece of information is presented. Reviews will be made by Officers and by the TSB Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: MEMBERS TO ACCEPT THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE CFMP FOR ADOPTION IN GUIDING THE AUTHORITY'S COCKLE FISHERY RECOMMENDATIONS WITH A COMMITMENT TO REVIEW ANNUALLY.

Proposed: L. Stainton, Seconded: N. Baxter, 1 Abstention (K. Thompson), 1 Against (S. Brown), Carried

36 AOB (Agenda Item 9)

B. Leigh asked for an update on Byelaw 7. The CEO said that he is in communication with Defra. The provision of a Bass bycatch entitlement is holding up proceedings.

M. Rowlings referred to there being no mention of a boat fishery in the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan. The HoE said it was feasible under the current Byelaw, and it would require a multi-agency approach and access would be stipulated. Locations such as Foulnaze, the Solway and other future fisheries can be added to the Cockle Fisheries Management Plan when appropriate.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending – meeting closed at 11:37.