1 MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW SUB-COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 5TH AUGUST 2025 AT TRUCKHAVEN, CARNFORTH 10AM

PRESENT MEMBERS

T. Jones	Chair	MMO Appointee
S. Brown	Vice Chair	MMO Appointee
G. Pidduck		MMO Appointee
N. Baxter		MMO Appointee
K. Thompson		MMO Appointee
L. Stainton		MMO Appointee
G. De Jong Cleyndert		MMO Appointee
S. Johnston		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), H. Thinnesen (SIFCO [Master]), I. Dixon (SIFCO), A. Brownrigg (SIFCO), S. Reid (Admin Officer).

OTHERS PRESENT

M. Rowlings, S. Manning, D. Coward

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

B. Leigh, P. Capper

3 ELECTION OF CHAIR (Agenda Item 1)

The CEO welcomed members. Nominations have been received for the appointment of Chair of the TSB. There was only one nomination for the position of Chair and that was to reappoint T. Jones.

Proposed: K. Thompson, Seconded: L. Stainton, all in favour, Carried

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

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 2)

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. The Chair requested that if members had a pecuniary interest in an item, please could they inform members of the nature of the interest.

5 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR (Agenda Item 3)

Nominations have been received for the appointment of Vice-Chair of the TSB. There was only one nomination for the position of Vice-Chair and that was to reappoint S. Brown.

Proposed: N. Baxter, Seconded: K. Thompson, all in favour, carried

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

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 4)

T. Jones declared an interest in all Items.
Mr. Pidduck declared an interest in Item 7.

6 MINUTES OF TSB MEETING 29th May 2025 (Agenda Item 5)

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Proposed: K. Thompson, Seconded: L. Stainton, all in favour, carried

7 MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES (Agenda Item 6)

Before the meeting, P. Capper noted that his name has been missed from the list of members present. S. Johnston commented that J. Parr is listed as a MMO Appointee and this needs to be amended to Statutory Member.

8 SURVEY AND INSPECTION SCIENCE REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The HOS referred to the Survey and Inspection Science Report. An overview was given to the mussel surveys and inspections which had taken place and the findings from each bed. The HOS explained that further surveys had been conducted on South America and Heysham since the report had been produced and a verbal update would be given on these locations. The HOS drew attention to the criteria on page three which must be met for a seed mussel fishery to be considered for opening. Heysham will likely be recommended for opening as a hand gathered seed mussel fishery, subject to HRA and further assessments, as there is an area of thick, dense mussel sitting on mud. The fishery at South America has changed with an increasing amount of sand being observed. HOS stated that South America is not a suitable location for a seed mussel fishery in its current state. T. Jones declared an interest in Item 7 and requested that the Vice-Chair lead the discussions on this Item. T. Jones asked for further information on South America. The HOS presented the most recent inspection report which shows the area of mussel as not being the appropriate condition for it to be recommended as an open fishery.

L. Browning questioned if the Heysham mussel fishery was being proposed as opened as it is not mentioned in the proposal. The HOS responded by explaining that yes the Science Team are proposing that Heysham is opened as a seed fishery and she would provide further reports on this location. The HOS explained that Sabellaria is present at the Heysham Fishery and further discussion would be required with Natural England. The HOS suggested that an email vote takes place regarding the opening of a Heysham fishery once further details have been made available.

Discussion took place around the areas in which the dredge would be used and how to balance the needs of both hand gatherers and dredge fishermen in the area of Perch and Black Scar. There is a small scale interest in hand gathering but discussion around access would need to take place with Wyre Council. It was decided that due to the different fishing methods requiring different tides, both a dredge fishery and hand gathering fishery could run simultaneously.

The HOS referred back to the report for Agenda Item 5 and gave an overview of cockle surveys which had taken place in the last quarter. The HOS led discission on the amount of size, undersize and total biomass of cockle at each location surveyed. Further explanation was given to how the data had been used to develop recommendations c and d.

The HOS gave a summary of the Byelaw 3 stakeholder consultation which had taken place. The consultation asked for opinions on the recommendations set out. 17 people responded to the survey and the HOS felt that engagement was something the Authority needed to continue to explore.

Discussion took place around the TAC suggested for the Flookburgh fishery and the reasons to open the fishery at Aldingham and Newbiggin. Members of the Authority and members of industry felt that only a small number of fishers would prosecute Aldingham and Newbiggin. L. Browning explained that the Science Team are required to give a confident prediction of the number of fishers who will prosecute a fishery when they produce a HRA and this must be based on a realistic figure. The HOS explained that if it was decided that a fishery at Aldingham and Newbiggin did open, fishing would need to be limited using a TAC. Members supported a TAC being placed on Aldingham and Newbiggin if the fishery was opened. Further discussion took place around increasing the frequency of returns to ensure the amount of cockles being removed from the fishery stayed within the TAC. Members asked questions about sanctions placed on fishers for return non-compliance.

The Chair invited members of industry to share their opinions on the recommendation. The members of industry support the opening of Aldingham and Newbiggin and felt it supported local communities.

RESOLUTION A: TO RECEIVE THE REPORT AND RELATED SURVEY AND INSPECTION NOTES
Proposed: L. Stainton, Seconded: S. Brown, all in favour, carried

RESOLUTION B i: NWIFCA PROPOSE A SEED MUSSEL FISHERY IN THE SPECIFIED AREA OF PERCH AND BLACK SCAR (FIGURE 1.4) SUBJECT TO HRA AND EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FROM INDUSTRY.
Proposed: S. Brown, Seconded: G. Pidduck, 1 Abstention, carried

RESOLUTION B ii: NWIFCA PROPOSE TO OPEN PERCH SCAR AND BLACK SCAR BEDS TO SEED MUSSEL FISHING, SUBJECT TO HRA AND AMENDMENT OF THE PERMITTED FISHING AREA TO EXCLUDE THE INTERSECTION OF SAND AS SHOWN ON FIGURE 1.3
Proposed: L. Browning , all in favour, carried.

RESOLUTION C: FLOOKBURGH COCKLE BED IS OPENED 5 DAYS A WEEK, ONE TIDE A DAY, WITH AN 800 TONNE TAC, UNDER BYELAW 3 FLEXIBLE PERMIT CONDITIONS AND SUBJECT TO HRA.
Proposed: S. Brown, Seconded: L. Stainton, 1 Against, carried.

RESOLUTION D: ALL OTHER DISTRICT COCKLE BEDS, INCLUDING MIDDLETON, LEVEN, ALDINGHAM AND NEWBIGGIN, LEASOWE AND SOUTHPORT, REMAIN CLOSED FOR THE REST OF THE CLOSED SEASON, AND FROM SEPTEMBER 1ST 2025 UNDER PARAGRAPH 15 OF BYELAW 3.
Proposed: L. Browning, Seconded: J. Turner, 5 Against, 1 Abstention, not carried

AMENDED RESOLUTION Di: ALDINGHAM AND NEWBIGGIN COCKLE BED IS OPENED 5 DAYS A WEEK, ONE TIDE A DAY, WITH A 300 TONNE TAC, UNDER BYELAW 3 FLEXIBLE PERMIT CONDITIONS AND SUBJECT TO HRA.
Proposed: L. Stainton, Seconded: S. Brown, 1 Against, 1 Abstention, carried

AMENDED RESOLUTION D ii: ALL OTHER COCKLE BEDS IN DISTRICT TO REMAIN CLOSED FOR THE REST OF THE CLOSED SEASON AND FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER.
Proposed: K. Thompson, Seconded: G. Pidduck, all in favour, carried

9 SCIENCE REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

The HOS explained that the majority of the Science Team's time has been spent conducting mussel and cockle surveys and processing the data. Drone work has been progressing well and Officer Love has been continuing his work on QGIS.

10 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 9)

The date of the next meeting was set at Tuesday 4th November.

11 <u>AOB (Agenda Item 10)</u>

The CEO noted that he had received a letter from a member of industry requesting that the Authority considers opening the Pilling fishery, all tides. In a previous consultation, members of industry stated that they preferred a Monday to Friday fishery. The Members of the Authority decided to keep the Pilling Fishery Monday to Friday, one tide a day for the time being. S. Manning expressed his concern that cockle beds will be closed in February before they become Class A. K. Thompson made members aware that it is world Oyster Day and Oyster Heaven have released a short video showing the work being done with native oysters. The CEO said this would be passed on to the Comms Officer to share on the NWIFCA Facebook Page.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending – meeting closed at 12:17.