

16 AT A MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW SUB-COMMITTEE held at Morecambe Town Hall on 6th November 2015

PRESENT – MEMBERS

Dr E. Baxter	MMO appointee (Marine Environment)
Mr T. Jones	MMO appointee (Aquaculture)
Mr B. Leigh	MMO appointee (Anglers and Recreation)
Mr C. Lumb	Natural England (Officer)
Mr S. J. Manning	MMO appointee (Commercial)
Mr K. Thompson	MMO appointee (Commercial/Aquaculture)
Mr D. Ward	MMO (Officer)

OFFICERS

Dr S. M. Atkins	Mr. J. Haines
Mrs I. V. Andrews	Ms M. Knott
Ms A. Carroll	Ms S. Temple
Mr A. Deary	

APOLOGIES

Mr C. Booth	MMO appointee (Marine Science/Environment)
Mr R. Graham	MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – Cumbria)
Councillor A. J. Markley	Cumbria County Council
Mr S. Mounsey	Environment Agency (Officer)

In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman, Mr Jones, took the Chair

17 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Chief Executive and Head of Enforcement are attending a meeting with David Morris, MP and will join the TSB at the conclusion of that meeting.
2. The Chairman welcomed visitors Ms C. Pullen, Ms C. Oliver and Ms S. Tapp from Cumbria Wildlife Trust.
3. Tabled correspondence. Agenda Item 10. Ministerial letter and Guidance from Defra on Marine Licensing.

18 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS (Agenda Item 2)

Agenda Item 5. Bivalve Mollusc Working Group – 4th September meeting. Mr K. Thompson
Agenda Item 6. Science Summary Report. Mr S. J. Manning
Agenda Item 7. Heysham Flat Mussel Management. Mr S. J. Manning.

19 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE TSB COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH AUGUST 2015 (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED

Minutes of the TSB meeting held on 11th August 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

20 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 4)

Minute No. 11. Byelaw Review. A verbal report will be provided at Agenda Item 9.

Minute No. 14. NWIFCA Standing Orders. Following discussion at September Authority meeting, CEO was asked to refer standing orders to the Chairman's Committee to set up a process for review. This will be progressed as soon as possible. .

21 BIVALVE MOLLUSC WORKING GROUP – 4TH SEPTEMBER MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

The group considered updates on: Heysham Flat hand-gathered fishery, Ribble mussel fishery, and constraints on removing mussels from Morecambe Bay, in relation to bird feeding requirements,

Research proposals on bird requirements and larval dispersal were discussed. Current proposals include an application in conjunction with Bangor University for a three year PhD project on bird food requirements. NE is also doing some review work nationally on this. Bangor University is currently advertising a three year PhD project on larval dispersal in the Menai Strait.

Members RESOLVED to

1. Receive the report
2. Approve the work of Officers in the continuation of the BMWG.
3. Approve the ongoing drafting of a mussel Management Plan.
4. Approve extending the remit of the BMWG to incorporate cockle management should increased stocks be recorded in spring surveys.

22 SCIENCE REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The report covered:

Cockle and Mussel Fisheries in the NWIFCA District,
Survey and Fisheries Work,
Assessment of Fishing Activities in European Marine Sites,
Routing options for cables from Moorside nuclear power station.
Moorside Power Station
Cumbria Wildlife Trust Marine Trainees Partnership
IFCA National Technical Advisory Group (TAG) agenda
Irish Sea Maritime Fourm/Celtic Seas Partnership Marine Strategy Framework Directive Workshop
Halite development proposal for Gas Storage in underground Salt Caverns near Fleetwood.
Seal Deterrents in the Ribble Estuary

The Senior Scientist introduced two new members of the Scientific team, Mr Jon Haines and Ms Abi Carroll and provided some background to their appointments.

A limited hand gathering seed mussel fishery was authorised at Lytham from 15th October. At Perch Scar the mussels have washed out or gone hard in. A survey of the Falklands observed no seed mussel apart from tiny spat which was very sparse. There was some size mussel which is hard in. There is still a lot of mussel on Foulney of mixed size. Officers propose the area at the bottom end be left to grow on to size. A low level of hand gathering is being carried out for size mussel in the area between Foulney and the ditch. Officers will monitor effort. An inspection of Ellisons Scar in Cumbria was carried in early October. There was patchy, old and barnacled mussel, with *Sabellaria alveolata* present. The middle bed held a denser, cleaner mix of size of mussel. An inspection of the outer

bed was not carried out due to time limitations. Officers will continue to monitor the stock next spring when tides and daylight is more favourable.

A settlement of cockles has been noted on the north Wirral foreshore at Leasowe and Morecambe Bay. Officers will survey the areas in the spring. No settlement has been observed in the Ribble. There are no reports of spat in the Solway. Members will be kept informed of the situation as it develops.

Re concerns about crab tiles interfering with mussel beds in the Barrow area, IFCOs will inspect and report back. IFCOs will also investigate the extent of crab tiling in the Mersey

Problems with seals ruining catches have been experienced by fishermen in the Ribble and NWIFCA Officers have been asked for advice on how they can deter the seals. Various methods of seal deterrents are detailed in the report, along with culling. The fishermen had also contacted MMO and Mr Ward reported they were legally required to try other methods first including acoustic deterrent before the culling option would be considered.

Members RESOLVED to Receive the report

23 HEYSHAM FLAT MUSSEL MUSSEL MANAGEMENT (Agenda Item 7)

Heysham Flat skear has been fished in recent years as a seed mussel fishery. Reports from fishermen suggest that prior to 2005 the bed was fished as a size mussel fishery. Officers checked back in NW&NWSFC reports and confirmed that it was only in 2006 that a seed fishery was authorised. Inspections over the past 12 months have found large quantities of size mussel on the skear indicating that the bed is not an ephemeral seed bed at the moment. The dredge industry had requested authorisation to harvest seed from the bottom skears and had offered to draft an HRA to assist the Authority. The Senior Scientist has investigated this and found it would be acceptable under the Habitats Directive for industry to provide information to assist with the assessment. It will be the Authority's responsibility as competent authority as to whether it accepts the findings of that information.

Members RESOLVED to Receive the report.

24 USE OF DRONE FOR PRE-SURVEY (Agenda Item 8)

Officers have been investigating the practical uses of a drone to assess mussel fisheries. A trial was carried out at Heysham Flat Skear at low tide with an RSPB drone. Members were shown video of the trial, and costs, advantages and disadvantages of two models. No disturbance to birds was observed during the trial. Other applications of the use of a drone to assist NWIFCA work were discussed.

Members RESOLVED to

1. Receive the report.
2. Approve the purchase of a drone for the use in assessments of fisheries, subject to finances.

25 BYELAW REVIEW (Agenda Item 9)

Defra has not yet confirmed progress with amendments to IFCA byelaws to meet the landing obligations. No further progress has been made with Byelaw 2 (Vessel Size). Amendments are awaited from Defra on Byelaw 8 (Foul Hooking). Byelaw 9 (Fishing for Shrimp and Prawn) has been put in abeyance pending further investigation. Clarification on the deeming clause in respect of Byelaw 10 (Measures for the Protection of Lobster) is

still awaited from Defra and MMO. Officers are carrying out a review of Byelaw 3 and hope to submit a report on proposed changes to the NWIFCA meeting on 11th December.

It was RESOLVED that Officers should progress work on a review of Byelaw 3.

26 A.O.B. (Agenda Item 10)

1. Marine Licensing: Recovery of Applications for Determination by the Secretary of State. A Ministerial letter and Guidance from Defra had been tabled. Members were asked to let the Chief Executive know of any developments in the District where NWIFCA would want to consider asking for the recovery process to be enacted. Information on marine licensing was available through MMOs new Marine Information System (MIS). Mr Ward agreed to send members information on this.
2. Meeting with David Morris, MP. The Chief Executive reported on a meeting with Mr David Morris earlier that morning. Discussion included cockle fishery and its impact, funding of IFCA's in the event of a possible cockle fishery. Mr Morris had also expressed interest in the National Grid routing options and proposed new nuclear power station at Heysham.
3. Update on Landings Obligations. Mr Ward agreed to circulate members with information on the next tranche of the landing obligations

There being no further business the Chairman thanked members for attending and declared the meeting closed at 1335 hours.