

1 AT A MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL, SCIENCE AND BYELAW COMMITTEE (TSB) held at Morecambe Town Hall on 11th August 2015

PRESENT – MEMBERS

Ms H. Ake	Natural England (Officer)
Ms E. Baxter	MMO appointee (Marine Environment)
Mr R. Benson	MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – North West)
Mr C. Booth	MMO appointee (Marine Science/Environment)
Mr R. Graham	MMO appointee (Fishing Industry – Cumbria)
Mr T. Jones	MMO appointee (Aquaculture)
Mr B. Leigh	MMO appointee (Anglers and Recreation)
Mr S. J. Manning	MMO appointee (Commercial)
Mr D. Ward	MMO (Officer)

OFFICERS

Dr S. M. Atkins	Mr A. Deary
Mrs I. V. Andrews	Ms M. Knott
Mr S. Brown	Ms S. Temple

IN ATTENDANCE

Ms L. Robinson, Ms S. Kochalski

APOLOGIES

Mr C. Lumb	(Natural England)
Councillor A. J. Markley	Cumbria County Council
Ms S. Mounsey	Environment Agency (Officer)

2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN (Agenda Item 1)

Mr Graham was proposed by Mr Jones and seconded by Dr Baxter.

Members RESOLVED to appoint Mr R. Graham Chairman of the TSB Committee for the forthcoming year.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (Agenda Item 2)

1. The Chairman welcomed new members Messrs C. Booth, B. Leigh and S. J. Manning (MMO appointees) and Mr D. Ward (MMO Officer).
2. In attendance: Ms L. R Robinson and Ms S. Kochalski to give a presentation at Agenda Item 14, and visitor Mr K. Mould.
3. Tabled correspondence. Agenda Item 7. Supplementary Report on Cockle Management Closures and Mersey Mussels. Agenda Item 9. Correspondence from Dee fishermen. Further comments from Defra on Byelaw 10. Agenda Item 10. Byelaw 2. Correspondence from IFCOs.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN (Agenda Item 3)

Mr Jones was proposed by Mr Benson and seconded by Dr Baxter.

Members RESOLVED to appoint Mr Jones Vice-Chairman of the TSB Committee for the forthcoming year.

5 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS (Agenda Item 4)

Agenda Item 7. Science Summary Report. Mr S. J. Manning

Agenda Item 8. Bivalve Mollusc Working Group. Mr R. Benson, Mr T. Jones, Mr S. J. Manning

Agenda Item 9. Byelaw Review – Byelaws 9 and 10. Mr T. Jones, Mr S. J. Manning

Agenda Item 10. Byelaw Review – Byelaw 2. Mr R. Benson, Mr T. Jones, Mr R. Graham

Agenda Item 13. NWIFCA Standing Orders. Mr R. Benson, Mr R. Graham, Mr T. Jones.

6 TO RECEIVE MINUTES OF THE TSB COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH MAY 2015 (Agenda Item 5)

Mr Jones queried comments made by Ms Knott regarding sustainability of the mussel dredge fishery in Morecambe Bay and said his recollection of the comments did not include the caveats mentioned. (N.B. *Following a subsequent check, the recording of the 11th August meeting verified that the minutes were a correct record of the Senior Scientists' comments.*)

Members RESOLVED

Minutes of the of the TSB held on 12th May 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record subject to verification of the comments made by Ms Knott.

7 MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 6)

Mr Jones queried Chief Executive's comments at a previous meeting concerning sustainability of seed mussel dredging in Morecambe Bay. The Chairman said that seed mussel authorisations are not given without the activity being first considered by Natural England. He commented on the difficulty in reaching agreement between sectors on the impacts of fishing.

8 SCIENCE SUMMARY REPORT (Agenda Item 7)

The report covered:

Cockle and Mussel Fisheries in the NWIFCA District

Survey and Fisheries Work

Assessment of Fishing Activities in European Marine Sites

Byelaw Review

Cumbria Wildlife Trust Marine Trainees Partnership

Project Inshore final reports

Routing options for cables from Moorside nuclear power station

West Cumbria Tidal Lagoon development proposal

Halite Gas Storage overturned decision on proposal at Preesall near Fleetwood.

A supplementary report on Cockle Management closures in the District was tabled. No cockle stocks in commercial quantities having been observed or reported, Officers' recommended closure of all cockle beds within the District from 1st September 2015 to 30th April 2016. Mr Booth proposed approval, seconded by Mr Leigh, with no objections. Closures may be reviewed by the Authority if any change in the circumstances is observed.

A Peel Ports capital dredging of a shingle bank in the Mersey Estuary proposal brought to light an area of juvenile mussel. Peel Ports agreed to removal of the mussel prior to commencement of dredging. Members agreed to authorise dredging if interest is received.

Members RESOLVED to:

1. Receive the report.

2. Close all cockle beds in the District from 1st September 2015 to 30th April 2016 inclusive under CSFC Byelaw 18 (north) and NWSFC Byelaw 13A (south).
3. Approve the recommendation to authorise removal of juvenile mussel from the Mersey subject to consent from the Harbour Authority.

9 BIVALVE MOLLUSC WORKING GROUP (Agenda Item 8)

The second meeting of this group held on 13th July considered management of mussel resources in Morecambe Bay in 2015 following surveys of South America and Falklands, Heysham, Fleetwood, Wyre End, north Morecambe and Foulney. Recommendations were amended to remove the words "made by BMWG".

Approval of the recommendations taking into account the amendment to recommendation 3 was proposed by Chairman, seconded, by Mr Jones, with no objections.

Members RESOLVED to:

1. Approve the work of the BMWG.
2. Approve the recommendation to authorise hand-gathering of seed mussel at Heysham Flat skear, subject to HRA.
3. Approve the recommendation that the next BMWG meeting should review hand-gathering effort and possible authorisation of dredging the bottom skears at Heysham.
4. Approve the recommendation to survey seed mussel stock on Fleetwood beds and if possible authorise a limited dredge fishery, subject to HRA.
5. Approve the recommendation to authorise seed mussel hand-gathering from Seafield Road slipway beds, Ribble Estuary, subject to HRA.

10 BYELAW REVIEW – BYELAWS 9 AND 10 (Agenda Item 9)

Consultation on uniform measures across the District for shrimp and prawn with officers, industry, MMO and NRW since the May TSB meeting indicate this may not be achievable. Further consideration of the byelaw is underway. Correspondence from a Dee fisherman on Byelaw 9 was tabled.

Further comments from Defra on Byelaw 10 (Crab and Lobster protection) were tabled and guidance on deeming clause is awaited.

Members RESOLVED to:

1. Receive the report.
2. Leave the draft Byelaw 9 (Shrimp and Prawn) unchanged pending clarify on landing obligation, review of netting regulations and technical developments in size selectivity of gear.
3. Approve Byelaw 10 (Protection of Lobsters) to be made subject to approval of the wording from MMO and clarification from Defra on the deeming clause.

11 BYELAW REVIEW (BYELAW 2) (Agenda Item 10)

Chief Executive outlined proposed measures to be included in a new vessel size byelaw: a vessel length of 15m, engine size of 221KW, possible exceptions for static gear fishing, seed mussel dredging and angling, gear restrictions and provision of a sunset clause.

Members RESOLVED to:

1. Receive the report
2. Prepare a new version of Byelaw 2 for discussion at the next TSB meeting.

12 BASS UPDATE (Agenda Item 11)

Recently introduced bass regulations include a short term ban on pelagic trawling, a 3 bass per person per day limit for non-commercial fishing and an increase in the MLS from 36cm to 42cm. Bass will not be included in the 2016 discard plan but will be subject to landing obligations by 2019.

It was RESOLVED to:

Receive the report.

13 BLACK FISH PROPOSAL (Agenda Item 12)

Members discussed the proposal from 'the Black Fish', an international conservation organisation to provide NWIFCA with additional monitoring capacity through the use of "citizen inspectors". The CE and HoE had met with a representative from the organisation in May and had suggested a centralised approach through the Association of AIFCA.

It was RESOLVED to:

Receive the report

14 NWIFCA STANDING ORDERS (Agenda Item 13)

Proposed changes to NWIFCA Standing Orders were considered and members invited to make further comments by the end of August.

It was RESOLVED to:

Prepare a further draft of Standing Orders for the September meeting.

15 PRESENTATION BY Ms S. KOCHALSKI (Agenda Item 14)

Ms Kochalski provided a presentation on her PhD to provide a means to assess the sustainability of fisheries in the North West and members were asked to complete a questionnaire. She suggested it may be useful to talk through the questions with those members who wished to remain.

Members thanked Ms Kochalski for her interesting presentation.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked members attending and declared the meeting closed at 1510 hours.