

July 2016

## **CONSTITUTION**

The Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (NIFCA) is a joint committee of Northumberland County Council and North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council. It was set up on 1 October 2010 under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (“The Act”). The purpose of this Constitution is to govern the working of the NIFCA, whose purpose is to regulate and manage sea fisheries and the marine environment in the district of the NIFCA and as laid down in The Act. The NIFCA district is described in the Order establishing the NIFCA (The Northumberland Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010 no. 2197).

### **NIFCA Membership**

There are 21 members of the NIFCA, six of whom are appointed by Northumberland County Council, one by North Tyneside MBC and twelve by the Marine Management Organisation (“MMO”) (one of whom must be an employee of the MMO). The Environment Agency and Natural England must each also appoint one member to the NIFCA. Members are appointed for a 4 year term with the possibility of the appointment up to a maximum of 10 years including the first 4 year term served. The role of the members is to attend the regular meetings of the NIFCA and such other meetings as may be called from time to time in accordance with the NIFCA Standing Orders and to undertake any agreed duties on behalf of the NIFCA as may be requested by the Chief Executive Officer on behalf of the NIFCA.

### **Management and Regulatory Function of the NIFCA**

NIFCA has a Chief Executive Officer based at the Authority office at 8 Ennerdale Road, Blyth, NE24 4RT (or such office where NIFCA may be based from time to time) who is supported by an Administrative Officer, Finance Officer and secretarial staff to manage the work of the IFCA. The IFCA has Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officers (IFCOs):- a Chief IFCO, a Deputy Chief IFCO (Operations), a Deputy Chief IFCO (Environmental), 2 Environmental IFCOs, an IFCO/Engineer and other IFCOs currently 4 in number of whom 2 are part-time. The number of IFCOs from time to time is based on the operational commitments of NIFCA. The Chief IFCO (Operations) oversees and supervises the work of the other officers and is skipper of the NIFCA patrol vessel “St Aidan”. 2 other IFCOs are qualified to skipper St Aidan. IFCOs operate both from the Patrol Vessel and ashore.

### **Meetings**

Meetings of the NIFCA are usually held on the fourth Monday of the months of January, April, July and October although the July meeting may be held on a Saturday, which is decided at the January meeting each year. The April meeting is the annual meeting when the office holders, subcommittees i.e. the Watch and Finance Committees, are elected. The Watch and Finance Committees are private meetings. Otherwise, the meetings of the NIFCA are public meetings and the press

normally attend the main meeting when a report is delivered on the Watch and Finance Committee meetings.

### **Finance**

Financial contributions are provided as to 83.37% by Northumberland County Council and 16.63% by North Tyneside MBC. The NIFCA accounting year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March and the Accounts are subject to audit (internal).

Financial regulations are in place and these are kept up to date by the Authority's 2 Finance Officers and kept under review by the Authority Finance Committee.

Prior to the January meeting of NIFCA an estimate of expenditure expected to be made during the following year is prepared and placed before the Finance Committee meeting. This will also recommend the amount to be called for from the constituent Authorities which may, in some cases, be different from the actual amount of the estimate. Once the estimate is approved the Councils are informed what their contributions will be during the following financial year.

Money from the constituent Authorities is received in two parts, normally two equal parts, the first during the half year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April and the second contribution during the half year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> October.

### **Sub-Committees**

There are two main sub-committees, the Watch Committee and the Finance Committee. The maximum number of members appointed to each is twelve and it is usual for the same members to be appointed to both Committees. In order to avoid expense, meetings of the Watch and Finance Committees are held on the same day as the main meetings but prior to them, and reports of these meetings are submitted to the main meeting for approval.

The duties of the Watch Committee concern the enforcement of the Bye-laws and other applicable legislation including prosecutions and the maintenance and running of the patrol boat.

Occasionally it is helpful in connection with the supervision of the patrol boat to set up a Patrol Boat Committee.

Other subcommittees are also established and constituted at a quarterly or other Members meeting of the Authority and as the business of the Authority may require.

### **Members' Allowances**

The members of the Authority are entitled to be reimbursed their reasonable expenses in connection with attendance to Authority business and in particular the cost of travel to committee meetings based on the local government mileage rate or the standard rate of public transport fare and reasonable costs of accommodation and subsistence where that is required.