

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT NORTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL, THE QUADRANT
ON MONDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2016 AT 2 PM**

PRESENT: NIFCA Members:

Mr G R Arckless (Chairman), Mr L Weller (Vice Chairman), Mrs C Hedley (CH), Mr D Herriott (DH), Mr M Kitching (MK), Mr J Lang (JL), Mr S Lowe (SL), Professor N Polunin (NP), Mr S Ritchie (SR), Mr N Robinson (NR), Mr J Stephenson (JS), Mr I Thomas (IT), Mr D Thompson (DT), Mr D Watkin (DW).

Also in attendance were the NIFCA Chief IFCO Mr AB Browne (AB), DCIFCO (Operations) Mr M Southerton (MS), DCIFCO (Environmental) Mr J Green (JG), EIFCO Ms N Wallace (NW), IFCO/ Engineer Mr J Cooke (JC) and NIFCA Admin Officer Mrs E Stiles (ES).

3.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies: Mr M Bould (MB), Mr B Burdis (BB), Mrs J Fearon (JF), Mr B Pidcock (BP), Mr J Woodman (JW), Mr M H Hardy (CEO)

There were no declarations of interest given.

3.2 MINUTES OF THE QUARTERLY MEETING HELD ON 25 JULY 2016 AND MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM

The minutes were received and accepted as an accurate record.

3.3 MEETINGS ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AUTHORITY

This report was received and accepted by the meeting.

3.4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT ON SECOND QUARTER OF NIFCA 2016-17 (members only)

This report was received and accepted by the meeting. AB explained that he attended a meeting in October to discuss iVMS and potential EMFF bids as Defra are considering iVMS for all under 12 metre registered charter vessels. He confirmed that another meeting will take place in November to see if Defra decide to make this a Statutory Instrument.

The Chair gave thanks to the Officers who have helped with the lobster hatchery bid in Amble which has now been funded.

The Chair asked if members had any suggestions regarding meeting venues for 2017. LW suggested that the Amble Development Trust office (Fourways) could be a good venue, however explained that there could be limited parking. JL suggested the Maritime Centre in Newbiggin which he believed to have good parking facilities. This was agreed by the meeting and the Chair confirmed that the Newbiggin Maritime Centre would be recommended for the July 2017 quarterly meeting.

3.5 BYELAWS – REVIEW OF BYELAW 7

This report was received by the meeting. AB confirmed that the Authority has amended the current version of the byelaw which is now ready to go to the MMO for approval. He explained that the Authority needs approval from the members for amendments to byelaw 7 “Mobile Gear” before sending it to the MMO which will result in the opening of some soft grounds with restrictions upon the use of equipment. The Chair suggested that this should be formally approved and which was confirmed by the meeting.

AB explained that the Authority are currently waiting for the amendment to byelaws 7 and 8 coordinates to be signed off, at which point NIFCA can then re-issue the byelaws with the amended co-ordinates.

3.6 REPORT ON PROGRESS OF PROJECTS DURING 2016-17

a) Newcastle University Projects in NIFCA district

The Chair gave thanks to NP for his report. LW commented that the Authority will be obliged to look at bait digging next year and asked when Ashleigh Tinlin’s report is likely to be complete to which NP said his understanding is that her report is to be finished within the coming weeks.

b) Lobster Survey and Escape gaps

NW explained that the escape gap project has been running for 2 months now and the data is showing that pots fitted with escape gaps are catching fewer velvets but are catching larger crabs and lobsters, reducing the quantity of catch that cannot be landed.

c) Shellfish Management Plan

The Chair explained that NW has taken on this job and gave his thanks. NW explained that the lobster management plan is now at draft stage and said that she hoped there will be a draft for members to see at the next quarterly meeting.

3.7 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY

This report was received by the meeting. LW explained that he, VR and CS attended the bait digging event in Peterborough earlier this month which he found to be a little disappointing due to the lack of progression which has so far been made nationally. He said that at this point, the IFCA’s plan to continue on with their own reviews to which JG confirmed that NIFCA has started this process. NW explained that the team have created an interactive map which will allow Officers to mark areas in which they see bait digging activity.

3.8 MPAs UPDATE

JG explained that NIFCA are expecting to complete the review of angling activity (excluding information regarding bait digging) by the end of the year and do not anticipate any additional management measures to be put into place. He confirmed that there is only one tranche 2 site, Coquet to St Mary’s, which needs to be “maintained” so the Environmental team do not anticipate any additional management measures in this area either.

3.9 NORTH EAST MARINE PLAN

JG explained that there will be two different plans put in place by the MMO, one for the inshore (12 nautical miles) and one for offshore. He explained that there have been no suggestions of additional management measures so business should continue as normal, although the MMO are likely to be watching activity more closely.

3.10 RISK ASSESSMENT

AB explained that a meeting was held in September to review the risk assessment matrix which was attended by MH, AB, MS, JS and ES. AB confirmed that the matrix has been revised and can now be found on the Authority website.

3.11 CORRESPONDENCE

The report was received by the meeting. DW commented that NIFCA no longer have a member working for the Marine Nature Partnership and asked if another person would be appointed. CH explained that she was appointed as an individual rather than a representative of the partnership and if a seat became available on the committee, a person would have to be appointed by the MMO in the usual way as the seat would not automatically go to someone in the partnership. SL commented that he attends the partnership meetings as does LW. The Chair said that it appears that the Authority will still have a strong link with the partnership.

SL commented regarding the Blyth Offshore Development (BOD) that there are some issues regarding cetaceans which have not been indicated in this report to which JG confirmed that cetaceans were considered in the BOD documentation and work will be timed to minimise cetacean impacts.

SL asked if in page 15 there could be an amendment to “no MCZ in area” by adding the word “currently” at the end of the sentence and that was approved by the meeting.

LW asked if there was a list regarding the “OSPAR Threatened and Declining Species” to which JG confirmed that there is and said he will forward it out to LW.

3.12 SUMMARY OF WATCH AND FINANCE COMMITTEES BY THE CIFCO

Watch:

AB explained that the minutes from the July Watch meeting were approved. He confirmed that the new vehicle has been delivered and passed a photograph of it around to the members – it was also explained that a new trailer has been ordered for Bravo 1 and that it is hoped for a part-exchange on the old one. DW suggested that the Authority should consider putting off-road tyres onto the new vehicle and suggested that if there is no part-exchange for the old trailer, it could be taken to auction. AB explained that the Health and Safety report was received by the Watch committee and that there was a discussion regarding the new lone-worker trackers which have been purchased by the Authority. He also confirmed that the current prosecution case will be heard at the magistrates court on 16 December. AB gave an update about the Authority solicitor Noel Dilks who is no longer doing criminal prosecutions and confirmed that Andrew Oliver has been recommended, which the Watch committee approved subject to a review after 1 year and information

regarding his travel expenses. Finally, AB explained that there was a discussion regarding IFCO powers and cross warranting, but there has been a lot of successful joint working with the MMO; he confirmed that Defra have committed to reinstating the powers in a Statutory Instrument soon.

Finance:

AB confirmed that the minutes from the July Finance meeting were approved as was the updated Risk Matrix. He explained that the meeting discussed the cost of living increase and have recommended to the general committee to accept a rise of 1% on all NIFCA salaries. AB also explained that it was accepted to change the Skipper IFCO's grading from E to D in the Grading Structure.

The recommendation of a 1% cost of living increase on all salaries was seconded and approved by the meeting.

3.13 IFCO REPORTS

3.13.1 Chief IFCO Report

This report was received and accepted by the meeting. AB confirmed that it has been a busy quarter with the Tall Ships taking place in August and gave thanks to all IFCOs and Members who got involved.

3.13.2 Environmental IFCOs Report

This report was received and accepted by the meeting. MK confirmed that the cetacean event was in fact a joint venture between the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and the charity Marinelife.

3.13.3 Maintenance Report/ Engineering Log

This report was received and accepted by the meeting

3.14 MISCELLANEOUS

a) The Chair explained that the Authority gets extremely good value from the national Association and commented that it is very good for us to be involved. He continued to say that it is great for all of the IFCAs to be able to work together on a national level and said that he is very pleased to see this report from John Lamb. LW commented that Defra see the IFCAs in a good light which is a very positive things to hear.

b) The Chair commented that the Sea Scouts report is a lovely read and it is great to see the Authority involving members of the local community in this kind of work which is important as we are locally funded and helps to strengthen the Authority's local profile. He said that he is pleased to hear that the Scouts will continue with their involvement with NIFCA and gave his thanks to all of the staff involved.

AB explained that NIFCA was approached by the North Shields Fisherman's Centre and asked to donate a prize to their raffle; NIFCA offered a trip out on St Aidan and the winning bid for this prize was £306.

3.15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

LW explained that the bait digging conference asked for funding but as IFCA's are locally funded, he felt that they shouldn't be funding national projects. JG explained that the Authority has deliberately not yet put additional work into these areas for this reason.

DW mentioned that the Authority should consider the use of drones if ever an opportunity arises to which AB explained that NIFCA would consider using them for surveys but not for enforcement due to RIPA.

There being no further business the meeting was closed by the Chairman at 3pm.

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