

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT COUNTY HALL, MORPETH
ON MONDAY 22 JANUARY 2018 AT 1PM

PRESENT: NIFCA Members:

Mr L Weller (Chair), Ms W Pattison (WP), Mrs C Hedley (CH), Mr D Herriott (DH), Mr S Lowe (SL), Mr G Renner-Thompson (GRT), Mr P Rippon (PR), Mr S Ritchie (SR), Mr N Robinson (NR), Mr J Stephenson (JS), Dr C Scott (CS), and Mr D Thompson.

Also in attendance were Aurelie Bohan from the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and Zoe MacKay from the MMO. NIFCA attendance also comprised Chief Executive Officer Mr M H Hardy (CEO), Chief IFCO Mr A B Browne (AB), IFCO NA Weir and the NIFCA Administrative Officer Mrs E Stiles (ES).

3.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies: Ms E Cartie (EC), Mr M Kitching (MK), Mr I Thomas (IT), Mr G Roughead (GR), Ms L Dunn (LD) and Professor N Polunin (NP).

Declarations of interest: None

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the new IFCO Nick Weir (NAW) to the Authority. The Chair explained that NP is currently taking some time off as he is unwell; the Authority offers him best wishes and a full and speedy recovery.

The Chair gave thanks to VR for her service with the Authority and sends best wishes to her in her new job in Athens. He explained that CB has given notice and plans to begin her retirement at the end of February 2018.

3.2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS QUARTERLY MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2017 AND MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM.

These minutes were received by the meeting and one change was requested by the Chair where it should read "the Angling Trust are not encouraging...".

The CEO confirmed that the byelaw 7 amend is ready to advertised in Fishing News and the local papers which will begin the 28-day consultation.

The CEO also noted that the EA consultation regarding Salmon is due to end shortly and asked if PR had any update; PR confirmed that the only information at the moment does not add to what is already known regarding the closure of the drift net fishery.

In relation to Gear Marking, the CEO confirmed that AB is now reviewing this and will set up a working group meeting to consider how to improve this. The Chair commented that it could be useful to invite someone from "Sea Shepherd" to an upcoming meeting to which SL confirmed that they are active within the community in the aim of promoting the use of old gear. The Chair asked if SL could liaise with AB about getting someone here to give a presentation on their organisation.

3.3 MEETINGS ATTENDED THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER

This report was received by the meeting. The Chair confirmed that the Devon and Severn IFCA have withdrawn from the Association of IFCAs. He explained that this is understood to be down to funding and saving money; County Council funding is not ringfenced for the IFCAs and the D&S IFCA have struggled to get any funding from Severn Councils since inception, so are taking steps to reduce their outgoings.

3.4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT ON THIRD QUARTER OF NIFCA 2017-18 (MEMBERS AND CHIEF IFCO ONLY)

The CEO gave thanks to JG for taking on the role of TAG Chair in place of VR. He confirmed that eIFCO recruitment continues with the closing date for all applications on 4th February.

The CEO confirmed that the document from Stephen Bolt regarding EU Exit and the IFCA position needs to be considered and members then need to decide if the Authority is happy to accept this paper. The Chair said that he is happy to accept this paper. SL agreed but added that there should be some mention of cross-border issues in the document and where funding is mentioned, he suggested it should say "adequate funding". SL also suggested that it could be beneficial to seek a contribution where appropriate from North of the border.

The members approved this document.

3.5 REPORT ON PROGRESS OF PROJECTS DURING 2017-18

JG confirmed that progress continues to be made on projects by University students including the report by Anna Blaylock who worked with NIFCA over the summer which will soon be available to the members. He explained that Ashleigh Tinling has passed her PhD and will release her report on lugworm shortly. JG confirmed that other University projects include work by Paula Lightfoot on intertidal and subtidal reef mapping and explained that the Authority will be joined by second year student Emily Henderson on an internship analysing the responses from the recreational permit holder questionnaires. The CEO commented that this highlights the strong and successful working relationship between the Authority and Newcastle University. SR explained that there is a project called "SIFID" currently being carried out north of the border and he will send details of this to JG.

3.6 RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

The CEO confirmed that IFCOs attended the Amble Open in January which was a good opportunity for Officers to interact and strengthen awareness of the Authority with the RSA community. The Chair agreed, commending the great engagement from NIFCA and commented that the main issue with the Amble Open is the large amount of litter which is created because of it. SL asked if next year the Officers could also hand out fliers to the anglers to promote responsible disposal of litter with which the Chair agreed and also suggested that an advert can be placed in the Amble Open brochure. PR explained that "cart bait" wrapped in clingfilm is being used more regularly and is seeing a rise of plastics being disposed of into the sea. AB confirmed that the Authority knows of some cart suppliers and can educate people on littering. AB also explained that there has been good take up on the steel gauges which we are selling and questionnaires continue to be completed and returned to the office. The

Chair also confirmed that the Authority is looking into the possibility of sponsorship from a company for NIFCA stickers.

3.7 MPAS UPDATE

The CEO confirmed that the Technical and Scientific meeting minutes were approved at the Watch Committee. He explained that a paper regarding MPA management has been drafted and it was believed by the Watch Committee that this represents the view and position of that meeting; the paper is now for approval. PR commented that the paper says “the current level of activity is not harming...” which is fine at the moment but questions how this will change in the future. CS explained that there will be ongoing monitoring of the site and one part of this is to watch out for new or emerging fisheries. The Chair confirmed that the Authority can make an emergency byelaw if the situation ever calls for it. The CEO said that it would be good to be able to put this paper, or some similar wording about this, onto the website to which CS explained that not all of the monitoring and control plans are complete yet, including the one regarding mobile gear. She suggested that NIFCA put the MPA document onto the website with an explanation as to why this decision has been made plus an example monitoring and control plan. This was agreed by the meeting.

3.8 MEMBERSHIP MATTERS INCLUDING MMO APPOINTED MEMBER APPRAISALS DUE IN THE CURRENT QUARTER

The Chair confirmed that DT’s membership is due for renewal in April which will be supported by himself and the Authority if DT wishes to renew. The Chair explained that he is happy to continue as last year with a “light touch” approach to the member appraisals and only carry out a full discussion if a member wishes to. He confirmed that there is now a spreadsheet holding details of membership dates and meeting attendance which will support the renewals process going forward. Finally, the Chair confirmed that the MMO will soon be advertising for MB’s replacement on the Committee and if any Member knows of someone (particularly a commercial fisher) who would be interest in becoming a Member, please let the CEO know.

3.9 STAFFING UPDATE

The CEO welcomed new IFCO NAW to the meeting. He informed the Members that NAW will be attending the Torquay training course at the end of January along with himself and AB. The CEO also confirmed that following VR’s departure at the start of the month NW has taken on a lot of her former responsibilities. Finally, it was explained that CB has given notice and plans to begin her retirement at the end of February.

3.10 RISK ASSESSMENT

The CEO confirmed that the Risk Assessment Matrix is due for renewal in March 2018 which will be carried out by the regular working group consisting of himself, AB, ES, MS and JS. It was also confirmed that the new GDPR would need to be discussed during this review with all risks considered and noted at the meeting. The CEO confirmed that members are able to view the matrix on the Authority website and are welcome to give feedback about this. Thanks were again given to Barbara Mackie at NCC for introducing this format to NIFCA.

3.11 CORRESPONDENCE

This report was received by the meeting. The Chair asked for more information about the “North Sea Link Debris”, specifically asking what is this waste and where is it being relocated to? JG confirmed that it is industrial type, manmade fishery debris including cabling and nets; JG will research more into this to report back to members. The CEO also explained that in the Epitome he has tried to give a “roundup” of EU Exit as reported regarding fisheries but as circumstances change daily, this goes out of date very quickly.

The CEO confirmed that the Authority has been asked by Per Berggren at Newcastle University to take part in a project related to acoustic monitoring. He explained that the project has been awarded some funding and on occasion the University would like to charter St Aidan in relation to the project. CS asked where it is intended for the transponders to be placed to which AB confirmed that they will be put near the wind farms with plans to start next spring. CS also asked if they are using St Aidan to research which cetaceans are around and if not, how do they know which cetaceans they are monitoring to which AB confirmed that they can tell because of the “pings” they pick up. SR asked what the project is trying to achieve and AB confirmed that the aim is to find out if windfarms are having any impact on cetaceans. SR commented that finding this information out about all cetaceans would cost millions to which AB confirmed that NAREC are working with the University to test the equipment and its effect on the local species. SL commented that it was agreed by the National Trust that the equipment would not be erected if it would have a negative impact on cetaceans so it is a shame that this research is being conducted retrospectively. He also noted that any costs for this should be fully reimbursed as this should be being covered by EDF. The CEO confirmed that Per Berggren will be invited to a future meeting to discuss this.

3.12 SUMMARY REPORTS OF WATCH AND FINANCE COMMITTEES BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Watch: The CEO confirmed that the previous Watch and the Technical and Scientific meeting minutes were accepted as a true record and the PV and Health and Safety reports were both received by the meeting. He confirmed that the Infringements Report was received by the Watch Committee and updates regarding the publicity of the successful Bankhead case were given. He explained that the Authority has contacted a national diving magazine with the aim of publicising the prosecution and advertising the byelaw requirements. It was confirmed that 2 FAPs were discussed with one having been paid in full and the other proceeding to court due to non-payment.

Regarding the new cabin RIB, the CEO gave thanks to the NCC Procurement team who have confirmed we have received good interest so far and it is hoped that the process should be complete by the summer. The Chair confirmed that it is proposed that the Authority name the vessel the “Robert Arckless MBE”.

It was confirmed that the Torquay report was received by the Watch Committee and the Member Matters discussed as recapped in item 3.8 of the General meeting. The CEO confirmed that he and the Chair will be reviewing the Standing Orders and adding provision for them both to be able to vote on national matters at meetings where required. The amended document will be submitted to the committee for approval. CS commented that the possibility of making the quarterly meetings 4 monthly has been raised before and could also be considered whilst reviewing the Standing Orders; this was noted by the CEO.

The CEO also confirmed that the question of whether to proceed with CVM will be revisited once the new eIFCO is recruited.

Finance: The CEO confirmed that the previous Finance meeting minutes were accepted as a true record and the accounts were received by the members. The CEO explained that there is currently a surplus to the budget but this is due to the loss of 2 IFCOs. He gave thanks to JuS who has been working hard to generally cut costs where possible and confirmed that the Authority will be running a small and very reasonable deficit budget next year. It was noted that the precepts and audit were discussed by the Finance Committee and the Annual Audit meeting was confirmed as taking place in June 2018. The CEO confirmed that the £4,000 contribution to the Marine and Nature Partnership was agreed by the Finance Committee and explained that following a change to the Authority i-phone contract, there are a few i-phone 5S handsets available to buy at the cost of £100.

Regarding precepts, the CEO confirmed that the Finance Committee are recommending a 2% increase; this was agreed and carried by the General Committee.

Finally, the CEO confirmed that there has been recent increase in chartering the PV including some work with MEO training for the MMO at a cost of £3,500 per day. Any money raised through chartering the PV is being placed into the PV fund.

3.13 IFCO REPORTS

3.13.1 Chief IFCO Report and Reports on Areas 1 and 2 for the quarter ending 31 December 2017.

This report was accepted by the meeting. The Chair commented that it is great to hear that the Authority is also working with the Marine Police.

3.13.2 Environmental IFCO Report for quarter ending 31 December 2017

This report was accepted by the meeting.

3.13.3 Maintenance Report and Engineering Log for quarter ending 31 December 2017

This report was accepted by the meeting. The Chair asked if there was any progress with the oil sampling to which AB confirmed that the Authority is continuing to monitor but there are no concerns with this. Regarding the failure of the mounting lugs, the Chair asked if this needs to be replaced with the original to which AB confirmed that it was the original which failed and was replaced; the replacement now needs to be changed to a bespoke fitting.

3.14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

GRT confirmed that the Seahouses Harbour has now had funding approved by NCC. The Chair asked if there has been any funding allocated regarding the Demersal Landing Obligation and pelagic species infrastructure? CS said that she was not aware of it but that some FLAGS in the south of England have been putting freezers in place to be able to get and store more pot bait.

Zoe MacKay from the MMO confirmed that there are 3 Planning meetings coming up shortly including 20th March in Seahouses and 21st March in Newcastle. She explained that if anyone wishes to attend and give feedback, tickets are available on Eventbrite

or contact the MMO. It was confirmed that LW and SL will be attending the event in Seahouses and JG and NW will attend in Newcastle.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was closed by the Chair at 14:50

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