

**DEVON & SEVERN
INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
held on 18 June 2015 at Brixham Laboratory, Brixham**

Present: Mr John Butterwith (Chair)
Cllr Jim Knight (Devon)
Cllr Stuart Hughes (Devon)
Mr David Rowe
Mr Mike Williams
Mr Simon Pollentine
Mr Andrew Knights (NE)

Also Present: Mr Tim Robbins (Chief Officer)
Mrs Karlien Bond (Finance DCC)
Mrs Angela Stirland (Finance DCC)
Mrs Hazel Mitchell (D&S IFCA)

Apologies: Ms Elaine Hayes

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were noted

2. **Minutes of meeting held on 20 March 2015**

That the minutes be approved and agreed true and accurate.

Proposed: Cllr Jim Knight Seconded: Cllr Stuart Hughes

Resolved

3. **Matters Arising**

5. **Enforcement Costs/Recovery** – paper at Agenda Item 9

6. **Letter to MMO reference cost of appraisals for MMO Appointees** has not yet been sent as regular negotiation meetings were still taking place. Cllr Knight recommended that an official letter should be sent to start a paper trail of IFCA's standing/options.

**ACTION
T ROBBINS**

- **DEFRA Funding** – update provided in that a bid of £50,180 from the DEFRA pool of money of £300,000 and indications show that the full amount will be issued. The money will be for work on the MPAs.

4. **Matters brought forward by the Chair**

- a. **Single Tender Action** – A request to use Common Seas CIC to work with the IFCA to be the project manager for the iVMS implementation scheme through a Single Tender Action was discussed and proposed. Devon County Council will act as the finance department for the project on behalf of the D&S IFCA.

Proposed: Mike Williams Seconded: Cllr Stuart Hughes

All in favour

5. **Budget Monitoring Report**

Indications at this early stage of the 2015/16 financial year show the budget is on target.

6. **Statement of Accounts**

2014/15 produced an end of year budget underspend of £20,336 due primarily to reduction in employee and training costs from either retirement or leaving and from a late confirmation that a grant of £15,000 from DEFRA did not have to be paid back. Recommendation that this underspend be transferred to the General Reserve Account.

The outturn report and statement of Accounts for 2014/15 signed off by the Treasurer Mary Davis were audited by Devon Audit Partnership and signed off. A recommendation from the Committee that the main Authority approve Section 1, Accounting statements and Section 2, Annual Governance Statement of the Small Bodies Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2015 was proposed:

Proposed: Cllr Jim Knight Seconded: Mike Williams

All in favour

The General Reserve Account total balance as at 31 March 2015 was £710,561.

As part of the process the Devon Audit Partnership produced an internal audit report of the Authority which resulted in scoring high standard on all points with no recommendations for any changes to our practices and policies. The Chief Officer expressed his thanks to the Finance team.

7. **General Reserve Account Policy**

A paper was created to look at a Reserves Policy on how the reserve funds should be considered, primarily based around the financial security of the IFCA. Taking into account the IFCA has no ability to borrow money and with no set reserve level the IFCA would have to resort to obtaining additional finance by placing a demand upon its funding bodies.

The Reserves Projection along with the projected funding shortfalls included in the paper and the points below were put up for recommendation:

- That it includes planned spend to replace fixed assets as well as the income from disposing of the old assets
- A contribution from budget to reserves every year from 2016/17 of £10,000

- To include a total risk element of £175,400 which represents 25% of the annual budget, figure made up of £40,000 representing a cash flow buffer in place of an overdraft and £135,400, a risk buffer in place of loan funding.
- That the paper produced be included within the Standing Orders of the Authority
- That the General Reserve is held at no less than 25% of the revenue budget.
- That purchase and lease options are explored for each asset required.
- Within paragraph 3c the word 'subsistence' should be inserted within the officers' travel heading

Proposed: Cllr Jim Knight

Seconded: Mike Williams

All in Favour

8. **Appointment of Treasurer**

Mary Davis, County Treasurer for Devon County Council has been Treasurer to the D&S IFCA since the IFCA was created and has indicated that she is happy to stand again at this annual appointment review.

A recommendation to appoint Mary Davis as Treasurer for the next 12 months was made:

Proposed: David Rowe

Seconded: Cllr Jim Knight

All in Favour

9. **Enforcement Cost Recovery**

A paper summarising the cases taken during 2013/14 that were dealt with either by Fixed Administrative Penalty (FAPs) or court action highlighted that the FAP offered or court fine awarded generally did not cover the prosecution costs. This also does not include officer time to compile the case.

Deputy Chief Officer Mander informed the Committee that there were currently 5 significant cases being processed and that legal fees could exceed any costs recovered.

It was highlighted that the timescale of a FAP having to be paid in full within 28 days of receiving the notice if the amount was significant some defendants were opting to choose court proceedings. One of the reasons being that they would have significantly longer to pay any fine and cost associated. It was suggested by the Committee to approach DEFRA for them to consider introducing staggering FAP repayments to try and reduce the amount of cases going to court.

**ACTION
T ROBBINS**

10. **Staffing Issues**

- a. **Enforcement Officers** – 2 posts have been advertised and 35 application forms have been received. Short listing to take place and interviews are scheduled for Friday 3 July 2015. The Committee agreed for the Chief Officer to use agency temporary contracts to fill any gaps for the season if no suitable interview candidates are appointed.
- b. **Communication Officer** – A paper to recommend the appointment of a part time Communications Officer based in Brixham on a 21 hour week, for a 2 year

contract and for it to be funded from the General Reserve Account was put to the Committee for discussion.

The ideal being to be more effective in getting the message/work of the IFCA across and to relieve some of the work load from the current officers. Various options were looked at but the employment of a dedicated officer to work with the teams planning consultation work, updating the website and responding to questions was considered the best scenario. It was requested that Devon County Council be approached to find out what the cost of taking out a Service Level Agreement to fulfil these requirements would cost to compare to a new fixed contract prior to advertising externally.

**ACTION
T ROBBINS**

It was recommended that Strategy and Plans be added to the job specification title and the role be increased to a full time fixed term contract post.

Proposed: David Rowe Seconded: Simon Toms

All in Favour

- c. **Environment Officer** – Lauren Parkhouse is due to end her 12 month rolling contract at the end of October 2015 and a recommendation to offer her a full time contract at the end of this period was made:

Proposed: Cllr Jim Knight Seconded: Mike Williams

All in Favour

The Chief Officer confirmed that the recruitment of the proposed apprentice had been delayed until the Enforcement Team were up to full working strength.

11. **Health & Safety**

There were no incidents to report.

12. **Any Other Business**

There was no any other business raised.

13. **Date of next meeting**

Thursday 24 September 2015 at Exeter Racecourse, Exeter