

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

**Minutes of the Authority Meeting
held on 15 September 2016 at The Bristol Port, Avonmouth**

Present: Elaine Hayes (Chair)
Cllrs. Chris Clarence (Devon), Cllr Eileen Wragg (Devon),
Jim Knight (Devon), Stuart Hughes (Devon)
Jonathan Hawkins (Devon), Robert Griffin (South Gloucestershire),
Terry Napper (Somerset), Cllr Stan Waddington (Gloucestershire),
Cllr Nick Kelly (Plymouth)
Natasha Barker-Bradshaw, John Butterwith, John May, David Rowe,
Mike Williams, Simon Pollentine Stephen Gledhill, Richard White,
James Marsden
Simon Toms (EA), Andrew Knights (NE), Rachel Irish (MMO)

Also Present: Tim Robbins, Chief Officer
Libby Ross (D&S IFCA) Sarah Gall
Mat Mander (D&S IFCA) Simon Excell
Hazel Mitchell (D&S IFCA) Phil Higgingbottom
Angela Stirland (DCC Finance)

Apologies: Cllrs: Vic Ellery (Torbay), Fi Hance (Bristol), Jim Portus, David Murphy,
Michael Cominetti, David Morgan, Kathy Derrick, Brian Glasson, Martin
Hutchings, Kevin Mowat,

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of Interest

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were noted

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2016

Paragraph 13 – Torridge ‘City’ Council should read Torridge ‘District’ Council

That the minutes be approved

Resolved

4. Matters Arising

10 – The Review of Financial Regulations and Standing Orders was still ongoing. The Audit Report has suggested some amendments and these were currently being incorporated. A paper with amendments and full review will be put to the next Authority meeting.

11 – Attempts at approaching the Welsh Government to consider joint funding of an Enforcement Officer have failed as yet to gain a response. An alternative contact has been suggested and will be approached.

11 – Funding options to employ 3 new Enforcement Officers will be discussed under Agenda item 12.

Stephen Gledhill expressed his thanks for the Authority to hold a meeting at Bristol but wished for it to be recorded that he was disappointed that no representation from Bristol was attending.

5. Matters brought forward by the Chair

There were no matters brought forward by the Chair

6. Patrol Vessel Update

Issues over EMFF reported at the last quarterly meeting are still ongoing. A 5 week window to submit a bid for a vessel against a 1 million pound pot of money has been sent out. The Devon & Severn IFCA wishes to enter an expression of interest to bid for a covered rib costing around £200,000. As the priority is to try and secure EMFF, only recommendation 1 was put to the Authority for approval. Recommendations 2 and 3 would be deferred until the outcome of EMFF was known. The following proposal was put to the Authority for recommendation:

That the D&S IFCA applies to EMFF for the purchase of a new purpose built patrol vessel.

Proposed: Cllr Jim Knight

Seconded: Mike Williams

All in favour, none against

7. Byelaw Update

The formal consultation period on the proposed Netting Byelaw was extended from the required 28 days to 56 days to give everyone the ability to respond. This follows a recommendation from the Authority at the quarterly meeting in June 2016. There was a short delay in putting out the consultation due communication confusion between the MMO and DEFRA regarding the principle of permitting byelaws. Though this has now been resolved the delay means the consultation period does not end until 22 September 2016 for responses to be received. Up to this meeting 36 responses have been received most of which are objecting to some elements of the proposal. These are being logged and acknowledged.

Due to past criticism of how proposed byelaws were publicised when following the DEFRA statutory guidance of advertising in regional papers, a roadshow over 2 weeks covering 10 areas within the district was undertaken to increase public awareness of the proposed byelaw. A display trailer was equipped to provide information around the proposed byelaw and other issues of interest, this was accompanied by Officers who recorded 163 visitors to the display. A thank you to David Rowe who also took part in 8 of the visits in his capacity as Chair of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub Committee was made and well received.

8. Bass Update

a. IFCA Bass Plan Update Aug 16 by Dr Libby Ross - Reported that 2015 bass catches did not reach the limits required to give additional protection to bass and that 2016 figures look unlikely to meet the limits put forward by scientists. Scientific advice for 2017 is for 0 catch for both commercial and recreational. The response to new management measures on the fishery has resulted in a decline in trawl and gill net landings but an increase in rod and line landings.

The Devon & Severn IFCA currently have a PhD student, Tom Stamp, looking at whether additional measures implemented locally could be brought in for long-term sustainable inshore fisheries, in particular based on landings of large-juveniles over 36cm which could be landed before the new MCRS of 42cm was implemented. An application for EMFF of £250,000 to do some acoustic tracking of Bass inside and outside Bass Nursery Areas (Dart, Salcombe, Taw Torridge) is about to be submitted.

Other projects, ie: CEFAS, looking at large scale spatial movement of Bass are all in early stages and further development will be reported back to the Authority.

b. Bass Information by Mr John May – Commented that he was aggrieved that the D&S IFCA has not supported anglers, as a major stakeholder, allowing them to be unfairly penalised by the changes to the catch regulations for bass currently in force. Mr May was also disappointed that the IFCA did not push for a larger mesh size to be introduced as a result of the 36 to 42cm MCRS increase for bass. The target to reduce bass landings by 80% to bring stock to a sustainable level had not occurred with no obvious management plan produced to measure this. He considers the catch levels between commercial fishermen and recreational anglers unbalanced and needs to be brought back to acceptable levels.

Having listened to both sides of the argument, commercial and recreational and agreeing that Bass are in real danger the Chair tasked John to state what he wants from the Authority. The IFCA is not in a position other than the Bass Nursery Areas to do more as the situation is currently controlled by Europe and at National Level. It was suggested that actions could be taken through the proposed Netting Permit Byelaw, ie: restrictions/catch limits.

It was also suggested a regional plan be put together to achieve a sustainable bass fishery and submitted to DEFRA to which Mr May pledged his support.

9. Presentation by Sarah Gall on her PhD Research

Sarah presented her completed thesis ‘Evaluating the Impacts of Integrating Fisheries and Conservation Management’ to the Authority.

A copy of her report will be sent to the IFCA on finalisation.

10. Quarterly Report

- The deadline to submit the completed Habitat Regulation Assessments by the end of December 2016 will be met with only 5% left to go.
- Joint working with the MMO is going extremely well, undertaking several joint patrols
- There are currently 40 cases being worked on by the Enforcement Team

- Currently 2 ivms units have reached type approval. Talks with the Suppliers and MMO to try and get EMFF to fit units to all vessels inside the districts to help with management using the permit byelaws.

11. **Tidal Lagoon, IFCA Position**

Devon and Severn IFCA submitted a response to the Hendry independent review of tidal lagoon feasibility. Officers are concerned about the potential impacts of lagoons at Cardiff, Newport and Bridgwater Bay on fish and fish habitats in the Severn Estuary, especially given the important nursery function played by the Severn Estuary.

Any further information on Hinckley Point and the Barriers in the Channel will be fed back to the Authority as either an item or an information paper.

12. **Pioneer Project**

DEFRA have identified and agreed on 4 different areas for this project. A 'Marine' pioneer project has been identified for our region (the North Devon Biosphere area which includes Lundy Island) after recommendation by the NGOs who have been impressed by D&S IFCA management. No additional funds have been allocated to undertake this project by DEFRA. The Chief Officer has responded that though important the IFCA will not be able to undertake this work unless totally funded. DEFRA have taken this on board and are now seeking funds.

13. **Report on the F & GP Committee meeting and minutes of the previous meeting of 16 June 2016**

- The budget monitoring report indicated a projected underspend at year end due mainly to staff costs.
- A draft audit report though not a legal requirement any more will be continued to show a transparent and open approach to the IFCA financial dealings. They proposed some minor amendments which would be picked up.
- It was agreed that the Chief Officer should submit a bid to EMFF for a covered rib costing approximately £200,000.
- Enforcement Officers – Concerns since the June 2016 quarterly meeting when it was approved for 3 new enforcement officers to be recruited and how these posts were to be funded has continued. The Chair voiced her opinion of serious and significant concerns going forward about the IFCAs ability to continue to meet the Statutory Objectives and also about the welfare of the staff with the increasing amount of work being placed on them.

The F&GP Committee discussed this item at length, mindful of reaching a balance insuring the IFCA genuinely meets its statutory objectives whilst not damaging the staff trying to do that work and being mindful and aware that the Funding Authorities are under ever increasing pressures on their own resources to achieve what they need to achieve.

The outcome of the discussion was approval for the following proposal to be put forward to the main Authority for recommendation and approval:

One additional enforcement officer is employed starting from 1 April 2017 but that a provision is made in the 2017/18 budget setting to review

recruitment of a further officer within 6 months from this date subject to full Authority approval.

Proposed: Cllr Jim Knight

Seconded: James Marsden

All in favour, none against

14. **Any Other Business**

Jim Portus wished to express his thanks to the D&S IFCA for their attendance and presentation at Brixham Fishstock.

15. **Date of next meeting**

Friday 9 December 2016 – Exeter Race Course, Exeter