

# Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

Full Authority AGM – 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025

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The AGM the Full Authority was held at 2pm on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025 at the Portsmouth Guildhall, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, Hampshire, PO1 2AB.

## Present

Cllr. Paul Fuller	Isle of Wight Council (Chairman)
Cllr. Matthew Winnington	Portsmouth City Council
Cllr. Rod Cooper	Hampshire County Council
Dr Antony Jensen	MMO Appointee
Dr Heidi Guille	MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	MMO Appointee
Mr Gary Wordsworth	MMO Appointee
Mr Mark Cornwell	MMO Appointee
Dr Richard Morgan	Natural England
Mr Stuart Kingston-Turner	Environment Agency
Mr Tom Havelock	Marine Management Organisation
Ms Pia Bateman	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Mr Sam Dell	Principal Deputy Chief Officer (PDCO)
Dr Sarah Birchenough	Deputy Chief Officer (DCO)
Mrs Jennifer Carr	Chartered Accountant
Ms June Furlonger	Facilities & Administration Officer

Mr Connor Reid (Natural England) was present in the public gallery.

## Election of Authority Chair and Vice Chair for 2025-2026

1. The CEO informed Members that for the role of Chairman, three nominations had been received for Cllr. P Fuller. In accordance with Standing Orders, the CEO asked Dr A Jensen to seek a seconder to support the nomination. Cllr. R Cooper seconded the nomination. All Members were in favour.

The Chairman, Cllr. P Fuller stated that Cllr. R Hughes had put himself forward for the role of Vice Chairman and invited any other nominations from the Membership. No further nominations were proposed, and as such the Chairman invited a seconder. Cllr. M Winnington seconded the nomination, all Members were in favour.

## **Resolved**

2. That Cllr. P Fuller be elected as Chairman of the Authority for the year 2025-2026.
3. That Cllr. R Hughes be elected as Vice Chairman of the Authority for the year 2025-2026.

## Appointment of Sub-Committee Membership for 2025-2026 (Executive)

4. The Chairman invited Council Members to sit on the Southern IFCA Executive Sub-Committee for the period December 2025 to December 2026. Cllr. C Goodall sought to be re-appointed to the ESC. Cllr. R Cooper expressed an interest in being appointed to the ESC to represent Hampshire County Council. The appointment of Cllr. C Goodall and Cllr. R Cooper was seconded by Dr A Jensen, all Members were in favour.

## **Resolved**

5. For two or more Council Members to be appointed to the Executive Sub-Committee for the year 2025-2026.

## **Appointment of Sub-Committee Membership for 2025-2026 (Audit and Governance)**

6. The Chairman invited Council Members to sit on the Southern IFCA Audit and Governance Sub-Committee for the period December 2025 to December 2026. Cllr R. Hughes, Cllr M. Winnington and Cllr K. Wheller sought to be re-appointed to the AGSC. Recognising that Cllr. R Cooper had been appointed to the ESC, in Cllr. B Dunning's absence, the Chairman proposed he be elected to the AGSC. The appointment of Cllr. R Hughes, Cllr M. Winnington, Cllr K. Wheller and Cllr B. Dunning was proposed by Cllr. R Cooper and seconded by Dr A Jensen, all Members were in favour.

### **Resolved**

7. For three or more Council Members to be appointed to the Audit and Governance Sub-Committee for the year 2025-2026.

## **Apologies**

8. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Rob Hughes (Dorset Council), Cllr. Barry Dunning (Hampshire County Council), Cllr. John Savage (Southampton City Council), Cllr. Crispin Goodall (BCP Council), Cllr. Kate Wheller (Dorset Council), Dr Simon Cripps (MMO Appointee), Mr Colin Francis (MMO Appointee), Ms Elisabeth Bussey-Jones (MMO Appointee) and Mr James Morgan (MMO Member).

## **Declarations of Interest**

9. There were no pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests declared.

## **Minutes**

10. Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The CEO provided an update on Recommendation 78: that this was an administrative matter that has been resolved.

The CEO provided an update on Recommendation 80: that all feedback received from Members on the Southern IFCA BTFG Statement was incorporated into the final position statement which was uploaded to the Southern IFCA website and social media channels. The position statement has subsequently been updated again following ratification of the BTFG Byelaw 2023.

The Chairman proposed that the Minutes be recorded as accurate, seconded by Mr R Stride, all Members were in favour.

## **Chairman's Announcements**

11. The Chairman stated it was fantastic news that the BTFG Byelaw 2023 had been ratified and thanked the Team for their hard work in delivering the new Byelaw.

The Chairman referenced attendance at the most recent meeting of the AIFCA earlier this month and discussed the positive appointment of a Communications and Engagement Officer in order to raise the national profile of IFCAs. The Chairman outlined he has extended an invitation to the new Officer, Ms Emily Bulled, to attend a future Southern IFCA meeting.

The Chairman stated that he continued to be involved in signing off enforcement cases and works closely with PDCO Dell on these matters.

The Chairman outlined that he supported the recent Member Appraisals which took place in August, recognising the breadth of knowledge and enthusiasm brought by all Members in contributing to the value of Southern IFCA's work and enabling the Membership to work together. The Chairman extended his thanks to all Members for their work on the Authority.

The Chairman referenced attending the meetings of the TAC, emphasising that this provided an opportunity for knowledge sharing and understanding the technical work of the Southern IFCA.

The Chairman concluded by stating that he would be attending the next Community Forum meeting with the fishing community, due to take place on the Isle of Wight. He expressed his grateful thanks to all those involved in organising the Community Forum meetings, recognising that benefits gained from talking to stakeholders and welcomed any Members to attend future Community Forums.

### **Sub-Committees**

**12.** Members received minutes of the Executive Sub-Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025 and the Technical Advisory Sub-Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

### **Chief Executive Officer Updates**

**13.** The CEO referenced the Minister's letter annexed to this item, stating that it was now slightly out of date based on recent changes in Government, but that it was hoped that the position and intentions of the letter reflect the way the Government are going to continue to move forward, in particular recognising the work that IFCAs achieve and the way in which the Government Policy intention is not to restrict fisheries unnecessarily. The CEO outlined that this position is further supported by the Government's recent response to the Environmental Audits Committee Report 'Governing the Marine Environment', which has recently been published and states that, in response to the report, Government Policy is not to introduce whole site bans on BTFG in MPAs, the approach being to only restrict fishing which is assessed as damaging to the specific protected features of each MPA.

The CEO confirmed that Daniel Zeichner had now been replaced by Dame Angela Eagle, MP for Wallasey, as the Minister of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the post of Secretary of State, as previously held by the Rt Hon Steve Reed, was now held by the Rt Hon Emma Reynolds, MP for Wycombe. Emma Reynolds has come from The Treasury where she previously served as Economic Secretary and Dame Eagle has most recently held the post of Minister for Border Security and Asylum at the Home Office.

The CEO provided an overview of the Fish, Trace, Ship campaign, run by the MMO which launched in early September, which is set to help support the UK seafood supply chain ready for major changes in how the UK export to EU businesses from 10<sup>th</sup> January 2026. The MMOs campaign aims to make clear the actions that will need to be taken by each sector of the supply chain from fishers to merchants, to processors and exporters, and the MMO are calling for those likely to be affected to sign up for online updates and planned engagement events.

The CEO outlined that the Great British Inshore Fishing Survey was published in Westminster two weeks ago, which raised concerns from inshore fishers across over 50 ports on matters concerning access to fishing opportunities, increased operating costs, MCA inspections and IVMS. This initiative was run by the Lyme Bay CIC, with over 103 responses received. Relevant to IFCAs and the MMO, one of the questions posed what whether inshore fishers felt that national management and enforcement worked well, 84% responding that they did not, and whether local management by IFCAs worked well, 78% saying it didn't. The CEO outlined that this remains a protected document at present but will be shared with Members once publicly available.

The CEO covered staffing matters, introducing June Furlonger as the new Facilities and Administration Officer, who joined Southern IFCA in mid-August. The CEO thanked the TAC Members for making June feel welcome at her first meeting in August. The CEO also stated that, in other positive news, Project Officers William Meredith-Davies and Chelsea Perrins have both been promoted to IFCOs in the Research & Policy Team, stating it was an exciting opportunity to create permanent contracts for these staff members and that we will look forward to seeing how they can help Southern IFCA go from strength to strength. The CEO outlined that the Senior

Officer in the RPT Team, Emily Condie has left Southern IFCA in recent weeks to travel, wishing Emily the best and thanking her for her work at Southern IFCA.

The CEO thanked all Members who attended their annual appraisals in August, outlining that this had been a hugely beneficial exercise and welcoming Members constructive input. The CEO asked Members to look out for correspondence seeking sign off on the appraisals in the forthcoming weeks, prior to submission to the MMO Governance Team.

The CEO concluded by stating that the Member away day opportunity in September had been cancelled due to poor uptake, noting that the training will go ahead for the Officers but that it is a disproportionate use of resource to undertake the additional preparations required for an away day when there are only a small number of Members confirming attendance. The CEO outlined that she would continue to look for opportunities for the Members to engage with Officers in a less formal manner.

Mr R Stride commented on the Great British Inshore Fishing Survey, stating that it was likely that fishers who had issues with fisheries management would be more likely to respond. It was commented that the survey had not been widely publicised and the nature of the questions requiring yes/no responses had not left room for providing context of any additional information to be included with answers. Mr R Stride stated there was other work ongoing at the University of Gloucester looking at the cultural and social value of fisheries which seemed to be framing questions more appropriately for targeted the fishing industry. The Chairman outlined that face to face engagement is often the most beneficial. Mr G Wordsworth commented that the survey had not provided opportunities to support regulators.

Cllr M Winnington commented that it was positive that the new Minister is the MP for Wallasey which is a coastal area.

### **Budget Control Statement to July 2025**

14. The CEO confirmed that the BCS was the first of the current financial year, capturing the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025, and that the accompanying paperwork provided a summary of major budget headers as well as more detailed notes to provide an understanding of all positive and negative variance equal to or greater than 1k.

The CEO summarised that the BCS showed a deficit of c.106k, outlining that this was expected, as at this stage of the financial year, income is yet to be received from Defra for specific projects, in the region of 140k. The CEO outlined that in all Major Budget Headers, a positive variance is being seen at this stage of the year, and therefore the deficit reflects the anticipated income yet to be received. The CEO provided a summary of the Major Budget Headers, as outlined in the Executive Summary.

Mr G Wordsworth asked a question about Southern IFCA's insurance, stating that the amount paid appeared expensive. Mr Wordsworth asked if the IFCA reviews its insurance provision. The CEO outlined that a review was carried out two years ago by the Officer Manager, supported by PDCO Dell. PDCO Dell outlined that the review resulted in a change of broker and that all insurance provisions had been amalgamated under a single broker.

Members discussed the AIFCA subscriptions payment of 14k, requesting clarity on what Southern IFCA receives for that money, reflecting on the need for the AIFCA to keep their subscriptions at a steady level. Members asked that this question be posed direct to AIFCA. Members discussed that a letter could come from the Executive Sub-Committee on behalf of the Authority.

Dr H Guille referenced the appointment of the new Communications and Engagement Officer at AIFCA and queried whether this new post would help support communications for individual

IFCAs as well as at the AIFCA level. The CEO commented that it was hoped the new Officer would help alleviate some of pressures along the coast for individual IFCAs as well as allowing for a joined-up approach nationally which would be beneficial. The Chairman reflected on the need to raise the profile of IFCAs nationally and the good work that is achieved.

A recommendation was proposed by the Chairman that the Executive Sub-Committee writes a letter to the AIFCA, on behalf of the Authority, requesting information on the use of Southern IFCA's subscriptions, in addition to clarity on the role & funding of the Communications and Engagement Officer. Members agreed that this recommendation be put to a vote. Cllr P Fuller proposed the recommendation, seconded by Dr A Jensen, all Members were in favour.

### **Recommendation**

**15.** That the Executive Sub-Committee write to the AIFCA on behalf of the Authority requesting information on the use of Southern IFCA's subscriptions as well as clarity on the role & funding of the Communications and Engagement Officer.

## **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

### **Final Statement of Accounts for the Financial Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. Annual Return from PKF Francis Clark**

**16.** Mrs J Carr introduced the item, explaining that Members had previously received these papers in draft form at the June 2025 meeting, where it was resolved that they be sent to PK Francis for an Independent Assurance Review. This Review has now been completed with no changes made to the Statement of Accounts; PK Francis has provided sign off for the accounts and the annual return.

The Members agreed the recommendations by general consent.

### **Resolved**

**17.** That Members note the outcomes of the external audit for the financial year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

**18.** That Members formally accept the Annual Return and that the document be signed at the meeting by the Chairman, the CEO and the Accountant on behalf of the Authority.

## **19. Annual Reporting 2024-2025**

### **a) Draft Southern IFCA Annual Report 2024-2025**

The CEO stated that the 2024-2025 Annual Report was very positive and demonstrated the extent of what has been achieved during a 12-month period, recognising that the work continues over these timeframes and is constantly evolving. The CEO outlined that huge strides have been made this year with a focus on community engagement and co-development, with numerous examples presented through the report. The CEO outlined that she was proud of the team, including the Officers, staff and the Members and that Southern IFCA are achieving a great deal.

The CEO outlined that the Annual Report is prepared in response to a legal requirement on IFCAs to report to the Secretary of State. The length of the document is directly correlated with the work that has been achieved and reflects all aspects of Southern IFCA's comprehensive delivery.

The CEO encouraged Members to read the Executive Summary and stated that a copy of the Chairman's Executive Summary has been provided in hard copy at the meeting. The CEO referenced the case studies included in the report as a highlight of the work being carried out.

The CEO stated that the report has branched out this year to present work that is being delivered at the community level, which will be covered in the next agenda item.

The Chairman commented that it was a fantastic report which improves year on year and thanked the CEO for producing it. Mr G Wordsworth supported this and reflected the high quality of the report.

Mr S Kingston-Turner proposed the recommendations, seconded by Dr A Jensen, all Members were in favour.

**Resolved**

20. That Members consider and provide comment on the draft Annual Report.
21. That Members approve the Annual Report for submission to the Secretary of State.

**b) Draft Constituent Council Reports Initiative**

The CEO outlined that six Local Authority reports have been produced to enable Southern IFCA to demonstrate clearly the work that is being achieved in the inshore marine environment on behalf of the Southern IFCA's funding authorities. The reports demonstrate 'value for money' specific to each Local Authorities remit.

The CEO stated the intention to communicate these reports with the relevant persons within each of the Local Authority's to help provide context when considering the work of the IFCA and, to be of use for the Elected Members when championing the role of the IFCA in wider remits and when informing annual budgetary discussions.

The CEO ran through the Isle of Wight Council and Portsmouth Council reports, recognising the Local Authority representation in the meeting, detailing that all of the reports are presented in the same way. Visuals were provided via a presentation, and the CEO outlined that each report details background information on fisheries in the Local Authority area, including numbers of vessels, main target species and sightings information; background information on MPAs in the Local Authority area, presenting the relevant MPAs and the reason for designation; the work of the team in management fisheries and conservation as well as research delivery, covering data collection, survey work and monitoring programmes; policy development in each area, capturing work which is often managed through the TAC including outcomes of new legislation, the development of management and how each Local Authority is contributing to wider Government targets; the work of the CET, capturing compliance work, focus areas for compliance and enforcement outcomes in line with the C&E Framework specific to each Local Authority; and finally a focus on engagement achieved in each area, whether this be via meeting attendance, partnership working, industry collaboration or marine licence responses, providing an overview of what Southern IFCA is doing for the community in these areas.

The CEO outlined the intention to produce these reports annually as a good method of capturing work achieved across the District and to emphasise relevance of work in each Local Authority area, with the information being of interest to local communities.

The CEO invited input from Members on this initiative, thanking the Elected Members who were in attendance for their support and welcoming their feedback.

Cllr M Winnington commented that this was an excellent initiative and provided a lot of information in an accessible format. Cllr Winnington commented that the reports show the level of work at the Local Authority level which is important and is going to be very helpful at illustrating Southern IFCA's work, capturing what the Local Councils support financially and thus do not have to directly resource themselves.

Members agreed the Recommendation by general consent.

**Resolved**

22. That Members consider and provide comment on the draft initiative.

## **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

### **Compliance and Enforcement Report**

23. PDCO Dell provided an overview of the work undertaken by the Compliance and Enforcement Team for the reporting period May to July 2025. The data provided in the report is aligned to national IFCA metrics that are reported to the AIFCA and Defra on an annual basis, in addition to the provision of district specific metrics which capture how the CET's work is working to deliver the Southern IFCA Annual Strategy 2025-2026.

The Chairman thanked the CET Officers for their work.

### **Behind the Scenes**

24. A Behind the Scenes report was provided by all staff at Southern IFCA covering the period of June to August 2025.

Dr A Jensen commented that the reports were very informative and illustrated a great range of work being carried out by Officers. The Chairman stated that it was clear the Officers were growing in their roles and thanked PDCO Dell and DCO Birchenough for supporting the Officers.

### **Marine Licencing**

25. DCO Birchenough delivered an update report on marine licencing applications (MLAs) received by Southern IFCA during the last quarter. DCO Birchenough identified that 16 MLAs had been received between June and August 2025, 9 of which required a response, and 7 MLAs identified as not requiring a response. The number of MLAs requiring a response from April 2025 to August 2025 represented a 31% increase on the same period for the previous year. DCO Birchenough outlined that the report provided a summary of MLAs where a response was required for the last quarter.

### **Sector Group Meetings**

26. The Chairman invited Members to receive the minutes from recent meetings of The South Coast Fishermen's Council, the Dorset, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Marine Conservation Group and the Recreational Angling Sector Group.

Mr R Stride commented that the South Coast Fishermen's Council meets 8 times per year rather than quarterly as stated in the report. DCO Birchenough confirmed this would be updated in future reports.

### **AIFCA Annual Report 2024-2025**

27. Members were invited to receive the AIFCA Annual Report for Members interest and to provide an opportunity to report any comments back to the AIFCA via the CEO or Chairman.

Members thanked the CEO for circulating the report.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

28. Members considered the date of the next meeting to be held at 14:00 on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December at RNLI College, West Quay Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 1HZ.

#### **Resolved**

29. The date of the meeting was confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 15:41.

