

## **SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025**

Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), held in the meeting room at the Southern IFCA office in Poole at **14:00 on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025.**

### **Present**

Dr Antony Jensen	Chairman, MMO Appointee
Mr Richard Stride	Vice Chairman, MMO Appointee
Dr Simon Cripps	MMO Appointee
Mr Gary Wordsworth	MMO Appointee
Mr Mark Cornwell	MMO Appointee
Mr Colin Francis	MMO Appointee
Mr Stuart Kingston-Turner	Environment Agency
Mr Connor Reid	Natural England
Ms Pia Bateman	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Principal Deputy Chief Officer (PDCO) Sam Dell, Deputy Chief Officer (DCO) Dr Sarah Birchenough, Senior Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer (SIFCO) Ms Emily Condie, IFCA's Ms Hester Churchouse, Mr Kyle Payton and Mr Jay Bedwell, Project Officers Ms Imogen Wright and Ms Chelsea Perrins were also present. Cllr Paul Fuller, Chairman of the Authority also attended.

Mr Simon Pengelly (Association of IFCA) attended in person.

### **Apologies**

**55.** Apologies for absence were received from Mr Neil Hornby (MMO Appointee), Ms Elisabeth Bussey-Jones (MMO Appointee), Dr Heidi Guille (MMO Appointee), Dr Richard Morgan (Natural England), Mr James Morgan (Marine Management Organisation).

### **Declarations of interest**

**56.** The following non-pecuniary interests were declared: Mr Connor Reid (Agenda Item 6), Mr G Wordsworth (Agenda Item 5c & 9). Mr M Cornwell declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6 & 8.

### **Minutes**

**57.** Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> May 2025 (Marked A) and consideration of the following matters outstanding.

- a. **Resolved: Recommendation 45:** that the Catch Zone Map for the PHDP fishery be updated for the 2025 fishing season to reflect the boundary of EA dredge fishing management at the entrance to the Rivers Frome and Piddle.

The minutes were approved by mutual consent.

### **PROGRESS REPORTS**

#### **58. Emergent Updates**

The CEO outlined to Members that the updates for this meeting were mainly administrative for Members awareness as well as to provide a brief overview on some national consultations which may be relevant to Members.

The CEO informed Members that she, PDCO Dell, Dr A Jensen and Cllr P Fuller would be on

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the Isle of Wight on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2025 for the fourth Community Forum. The CEO invited any General Members who wished to attend to inform PDCO Dell. The CEO also informed Members that the September Authority Meeting would be the AGM and that she would be in touch with Members prior to the meeting to seek nominations for Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority.

The CEO outlined that General Member Appraisals are due to take place next week, with Members in post during 2025 having received paperwork on this. All Members were invited to attend a Compliance & Enforcement Training Session in the Solent with correspondence on this having been sent to Members by email, the CEO outlined that this is a first come first served session due to capacity on the vessel Callista which is being used for the training.

The CEO provided information on a number of national consultations that are currently underway. Firstly, a call for evidence running until 5<sup>th</sup> September which is seeking stakeholder views, encompassing the fishing industry to the general public but not regulators, primarily on how the new Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund should be used and also incorporating a question on how fishing communities have been impacted by recent policy announcements including the EU-UK deal, the proposed ban on bottom trawling in offshore MPAs and the roll out of FMPs. The CEO outlined that if Members are keen to participate, a link to the consultation will be shared after the meeting. Secondly, the CEO covered the MMO Stage 3 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) Consultation on the impacts of fishing in 43 MPAs and on proposed management measures for 42 MPAs. The CEO outlined that the consultation has been extended and is now open until 29<sup>th</sup> September 2025. The CEO referenced a third public consultation launched by Defra on proposed reforms to environmental compensatory measures for offshore wind developments. The consultation, which closes on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025, aims to gather feedback on a more flexible and pragmatic approach to managing environmental impacts on MPAs. The reforms seek to clarify requirements for compensation when offshore wind projects cause unavoidable harm to MPAs. The CEO outlined that, according to Defra, the changes are designed to accelerate the UK's transition to net zero and support the Government's "Clean Power by 2030" mission, while also contributing to nature recovery goals. Stakeholders involved in environmental conservation are encouraged to respond with feedback to inform both the legislative framework and accompanying guidance. The CEO stated that she would be happy to circulate links to any of these consultations if Members would like.

The CEO stated that her final update would lead into the next agenda item, informing Members that the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear (BTFG) Byelaw 2023 has now been signed by the Secretary of State. The CEO outlined that PDCO Dell and DCO Birchenough will provide additional updates on how this had directed their relevant teams work in recent weeks but stated to Members that it would be nice to hypothesise that there was a link between the proactive nature of the Southern IFCA in releasing the BTFG Position Statement following the Authority meeting in Winchester and the subsequent ratification of the BTFG Byelaw 2023 by Defra, recognising that inshore fisheries management is a key quantifiable consideration to the UK Government's objectives to achieve 30% protections in the marine environment by 2030.

The CEO drew Members attention to Items 7 & 8 on the agenda which either discuss work which is currently ongoing, as is the case of the REM & AI interim report, or proposed work as per the proposal paper which is looking at gear trials in the Solent Scallop Fishery, both areas of work relying on working with industry in novel ways to help facilitate understandings of sustainable fishing practice and inform management in the inshore environment. The CEO outlined that working with industry in this manner reinforces the importance of using the expertise embedded in the community to find collective solutions to maintaining a viable industry whilst achieving conservation priorities, emphasising that this is also relevant to the

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updated on Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles discussed in agenda item 6.

Dr S Cripps stated that the UK Government had been outspoken against bottom trawling at the recent UN meeting but that a new position paper on fishing in MPAs had been published by the WWF which was well balanced and looked at how MPA management can consider communities and impacts through a pragmatic approach. Members briefly discussed legal duties in relation to feature-based management within MPAs.

### **59. BTFG Byelaw 2023: Byelaw Implementation**

PDCO Dell stated to Members that the BTFG Byelaw 2023, ratified by the Secretary of State on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025, introduced a mix of new and extended prohibition areas for BTFG, as well as maintaining the requirement for gear to be inboard and above the sea whilst a vessel is transiting through a prohibited area.

PDCO informed Members that since the ratification of the Byelaw, Officers have been carrying out port visits, drone flights and sea patrols across the District, boarding and engaging with towed gear operators. PDCO outlined that conversations have been challenging in some instances, and gave credit to the Officers in their approach to engagement during this time. PDCO Dell outlined that IFCO Payton has assisted the industry by getting the new prohibited area coordinates onto fishing vessel plotters electronically, responding to a previous request from industry and a previous Authority Member that assistance be provided in this regard.

PDCO Dell outlined that Officers have continued to access I-VMS to monitor Byelaw areas and have been engaging with static gear fishers operating on these fishing grounds, noting that since the implementation of the Byelaw static gear operators have extended fishing operations into new prohibition areas.

PDCO Dell stated that the enforcement of the BTFG Byelaw 2023 remains a priority for the Compliance & Enforcement Team and Officers will continue to work to ensure compliance with the new regulation.

The Chairman expressed thanks to the Officers involved in the implementation on behalf of the TAC and echoed the benefits of assisting fishers in having new management areas on their plotters.

### **60. BTFG Byelaw 2023: Southern IFCA BTFG Position Statement**

DCO Birchenough outlined to Members that at a national, and subsequently local level, there has been an increase in attention placed on BTFG activity and associated management, particularly within MPAs. DCO Birchenough informed Members that this has been related to a number of factors, including the proposal for two Private Members Bills, the first of which was withdrawn following a second reading in September 2024, the second titled the 'Marine Protected Areas (Bottom Trawling) (England) Bill' having undergone a first reading in the House of Commons and being timetabled for a second reading in May 2026, the release of the film 'Ocean' with David Attenborough which covered, as one of its topics, the debate on bottom trawling and dredging within MPAs and additional information appearing online including the Blue Marine Foundation #TheBottomLine Campaign and a contextual article from Seafish in response to the 'Ocean' film. DCO Birchenough also outlined that the MMO Stage 3 MPA consultation, as previously referenced by the CEO, had been launched on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 relating to BTFG management.

DCO Birchenough stated that in response to the conversation on BTFG and associated management, the Authority had been consulted on the development and publication of a

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Southern IFCA position statement to provide local context on BTFG management in the Southern IFCA District, the role of fishers as key custodians of sustainable marine environment and how well managed fisheries can continue to co-exist alongside the attainment of conservation objectives in the inshore waters, harbours and estuaries across the District, in turn supporting local coastal communities. DCO Birchenough informed Members that the position statement 'Providing some local context on the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear debate' had been published on the Southern IFCA website and social media platforms on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025, the statement having then been further updated to reflect the ratification of the BTFG Byelaw 2023, a copy of the updated statement having been provided to Members as part of this agenda item.

Mr R Stride queried whether the calculated percentage coverage of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) by BTFG prohibitions included the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA and if so whether excluding this SPA from the calculations, based on its large spatial footprint, the percentage coverage for SPAs increases. DCO Birchenough confirmed that the calculations did include this SPA and confirmed that if this SPA is excluded from the calculations the percentage coverage of SPAs by BTFG prohibitions increases to c.80%.

### **61. Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery 2025 season catch data**

IFCO Churchouse provided a progress update to Members on the monthly analysis of Manila clam Landings Per Unit Effort (LPUE) data under the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery Monitoring & Control Plan (M&CP) for the 2025/26 season. IFCO Churchouse provided a brief overview of the introduction of the M&CP and outlined that this monthly analysis formed part of the In-Season Monitoring Programme under the M&CP and aims to track catch data to assess the status of the fishery during the season. The in-season monitoring is not linked a control mechanism but provides information to supporting ongoing monitoring and information to inform any Authority decisions in the event that a control mechanism is activated under either the On-Site Monitoring Programme or the SPA Monitoring Programme.

IFCO Churchouse provided detail on the LPUE values for the months of May and June 2025 as outlined in the paper and verbally provided detail of LPUE values for July 2025 as the most recent month in the fishing season, reporting an LPUE of 91.48 kg/day which represents a 22.2% increase on the same month during the 2024 season. For all three months the LPUE values for 2025 are higher than the corresponding months in the previous years, they remain lower than those for the period 2020-2023 but above those for 2016-2019. IFCO Churchouse informed Members that there had been high catches of cockle at the beginning of the 2025/26 fishing season. IFCO Churchouse outlined that Southern IFCA will continue to monitor the trends of harvested stocks throughout the 2025/26 fishing season in line with the M&CP and provided an overview of the Pilot Mid-Season Stock Observer Programme which had been carried out in August 2025 where CPUE data was collected from fishers to be compared to annual stock survey data. Permit Holders had been very supportive of this process and had assisted Officers in obtaining the relevant samples.

Mr G Wordsworth raised that comparing catch rates to those seen in 2016-2020 needed to account for that data being up to 10 years old and that harvesting methods in the fishery have become more sophisticated over time and therefore catch levels would be expected to be higher. Mr Wordsworth stated that the comparisons to 2021-2023 data would be more representative on this basis. It was discussed that mortality had been reported in the Manila clam in 2025 as well as in 2024 by stakeholders undertaking hand gathering and therefore it should still be considered that the stock is declining despite an uptick in catch levels. It was also discussed that from observations there appears to be only one year class coming through as a smaller range of sizes are being seen with many individuals just over the MCRS of 35mm.

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DCO Birchenough commented that whilst some Permit Holders have developed fishing gear for increased efficiency this is not universal across all Permit Holders and that those engaging in the fishery are fishing at different levels. PDCO Dell added that there are restrictions on the fishing gear through the Permit Conditions which achieve high levels of compliance.

Dr S Cripps queried the use of kg/day as a metric. It was discussed that during reporting of catch data during the 2024 season, it was highlighted by Permit Holders that the calculation of Landings Per Unit Effort (LPUE) as kg/m of dredge/hour was not easily understood and to be able to relate data to their fishing practice kg/day was preferred. Southern IFCA reported in 2024 using both kg/day and kg/m of dredge/hour and use the latter in internal calculations when considering seasonal analysis of data.

The Chairman commented that from the Southern IFCA Poole Harbour Bivalve Survey Report 2025, the size frequency distribution suggested the fishing gear was well tuned to fishing Manila clam at MCRS and commented that it was positive to see Manila clam at or above MCRS in the samples despite the targeted fishery. Mr R Stride queried whether the same dredge was used in the Southern IFCA Poole Harbour Bivalve Survey each year, it was confirmed that as much as possible the same vessel and same equipment is used each year although this is based on skipper availability. Mr S Kingston-Turner asked whether juvenile samples are taken, it was confirmed that samples of undersized Manila clam are also sought using a second methodology using sediment samples but that this was not exhaustive, the ability to fully survey juvenile populations requires significant resource input.

Members discussed the need for a separate Working Group to discuss data gathering and analysis in the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery in more detail and further explore potential impacting factors on the trends in stock data.

### **Recommendation**

**62.** That a Working Group of interested TAC Members be held to discuss data gathering and analysis in the Poole Harbour Dredge Permit Fishery.

### **63. Live Wrasse Fishery 2025 season**

Senior IFCO Condie informed Members that, in line with information received ahead of the usual start of the District's Live Wrasse Fishery Season on 1<sup>st</sup> July, there had been no active Live Wrasse Fishery take place in 2025. Senior IFCO Condie outlined that this was due to live wrasse being sought from the Scottish live wrasse fishery which opened in May.

Members discussed whether the absence of a live wrasse fishery in 2025 would potentially change perceptions from other sectors of a lack of wrasse species being found in Dorset.

### **ITEMS FOR DECISION**

#### **64. Black Seabream Co-Developed Principles Consultation Outcome**

DCO Birchenough provided Members with a summary of outcomes following the conclusion of a Black Seabream (BSB) Consultation which proposed a number of Co-Developed (CoD) Principles which collectively seek to provide additional protections for BSB during the recognised breeding season across three Dorset Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), in addition to supporting increased understandings of the Black Seabream fishery.

Senior IFCO Condie detailed the consultation which had taken place and that both in-person and online engagement options had been made available to stakeholders including coastal drop-in sessions, a targeted industry workshop, coastal engagement, community forums,

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stakeholder group meetings, an online meeting and an online questionnaire. Senior IFCO Condie informed Members that the consultation received 128 responses, the highest number ever received by Southern IFCA during an informal consultation. DCO Birchenough stated that the overriding message from the consultation is that the BSB community are engaged and are supportive of the CoD approach and want to continue to work with Southern IFCA to ensure the future health of the BSB population.

Senior IFCO Condie summarised the specific consultation outcomes for each of the Co-Developed Principles. DCO Birchenough reiterated that there had been majority support through the consultation for each of the CoD Principles which had been very positive. DCO Birchenough outlined that some Member Discussion Areas had been identified from specific points raised through a few consultation responses, covering Maximum Conservation Reference Size (MaxCRS), the recreational bag limit and the data collection scheme as detailed in the report with contextual information and potential mitigations also provided for Members consideration.

Members discussed MaxCRS and that the potential for an increase in the number of smaller fish being removed as a result, with it being felt that this would be mitigated by having the CoD Principle of a recreational bag limit of 6 fish per person per day. Members also discussed that for the commercial sector having a MaxCRS would not result in more fishing being caught for in a single trip, for example using a net, as methods of fishing are set up to already support preferred harvesting practices. PDCO Dell provided context on the three relevant commercial fishers who have expressed a willingness to provide data to Southern IFCA to help inform understandings on catch composition. DCO Birchenough outlined that, in implementing any measures, it will be important to provide education as to the rationale for the CoD Principles and the ability of the Principles collectively to support the sustainability of the population.

Members supported proceeding with the CoD Principles for MCRS and MaxCRS considering the consultation outcomes.

Members discussed a recreational bag limit of 6 fish per person per day and the potential risk of grading. DCO Birchenough outlined that, as previously discussed, CoD Principles collectively complement one another with the MaxCRS providing a mitigation to the risk of removing breeding males if grading were to occur.

The Chairman suggested that the 6 fish per person per day is carried forward and that information is sought from stakeholders following implementation as to the response to this CoD Principle and how it is being received and complied with, noting the potential to review in future years. Members also discussed that if appropriate handling practices are followed and fish are maintained in good condition then even if grading did occur the fish that are returned should be in good health. DCO Birchenough outlined that these elements are being explored for inclusion in the Guidance CoD Principle along with elements such as returning breeding males which would help offset breeding males being kept on vessels rather than being returned, further illustrating how the CoD Principles are designed to work together to achieve an overall beneficial outcome. Members reiterated the importance of education to accompany the CoD Principles.

Members supported proceeding with the CoD Principle for a recreational bag limit.

Members discussed the CoD Principle of a data collection program and the positive outcome of the consultation with a consensus that a data collection program should be implemented, recognising the need to deconflict where possible with existing sources of data collection.

Members supported proceeding with the CoD Principle for a data collection program.

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Mr R Stride queried whether the issue of CoD Principles being proposed to be voluntary rather than statutory had been raised through the consultation. DCO Birchenough outlined that the opportunity had been provided through the consultation for participants to raise any points they wished in relation to the proposals and that 6 out of the 128 responses had referenced that the CoD Principles should be statutory rather than voluntary. It was discussed that there was a steer from the Seabreams FMP to suggest that initial outcomes in the short to medium term would most likely be explored as non-statutory based on evidence gaps which exist for the species and that guidance from Defra for IFCAs in developing management is to explore non-statutory measures first. Members discussed that voluntary measures are appropriate at this stage and, in the event that further data gathering indicates this is not suitable then the Authority has the ability to introduce statutory measures.

The recommendations in the paper were proposed by Mr C Francis and were seconded by Mr G Wordsworth. All Members were in favour, with the exception of Mr M Cornwell who abstained.

### **Resolved**

**65.** That the Co-Developed Principles are finalised to take forward as one of the management tools to be implemented in the BSB fishery.

**66.** That Officers prepare a BSB Management Intervention Package in accordance with Section 5.0.

### **67. Southern IFCA Solent Scallop Research Programme**

IFCO Churchouse provided Members with an overview of current research carried out within the Solent Scallop Fishery, and a proposal to create the wider Solent Scallop (SCE) Research Programme, aiming to further the understandings of the fishery by collectively providing data to inform local management and contribute at a national level to the King Scallop FMP and UK King Scallop Fishery Improvement Project.

IFCO Churchouse outlined that based on existing research and discussions with the external Environmental Assessment of Scallop Innovation Gear (EASIG) Fisheries Industry Science Partnership (FISP) Project, it had been determined that there was the potential for wider research in the Solent SCE Fishery which could be carried out by Southern IFCA. IFCO Churchouse detailed that the Solent SCE Research Programme would bring together current research and three new research projects to deliver a holistic programme that aims to answer key questions and facilitate improved understandings. IFCO Churchouse outlined that the delivery of the Programme would span the 2025/26 and 2026/27 financial years, with the new research projects covering 1) additions to the current Solent SCE Survey to quantify empty shell, bycatch and assess SCE condition, 2) a desk-based study to identify key fishing areas in the Solent across both the SCE fishery and other Solent fisheries to identify areas of overlap and inform marine planning and 3) a gear trial research project to compare different dredge types specifically within the small-scale Solent SCE Fishery to complement national research.

DCO Birchenough outlined that if Members resolved to recommend the establishment of a Solent SCE Research Programme, then relevant budgetary considerations would be fully detailed and discussed with the Executive Sub-Committee and the Authority at the appropriate meetings.

The CEO thanked IFCO Churchouse for her work in developing this programme and highlighted the importance of carrying out research to complement that being carried out at a national level to ensure that the small-scale inshore sector continues to be represented and can provide input to national level discussions such as through the King Scallop FMP.

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The recommendations in the paper were proposed by Mr R Stride and were seconded by Mr S Kingston-Turner. All Members voted in favour.

### **Resolved**

**68.** That Members recommend the establishment of a Solent Scallop Research Programme incorporating the research projects detailed in Annex 1.

### **GUEST SPEAKER:**

#### **69. The Inshore and Small Scale Fisheries Consortium**

Members received a presentation from Mr Simon Pengelly, Senior Technical Officer at the AIFCA. Mr Pengelly presented on 'Securing sustainable inshore fisheries in the UK: a vision for thriving small-scale coastal communities' covering the aim and composition of The Inshore and Small Scale Fisheries Consortium (ISSF), as a group of organisations spanning academic, environmental NGO, fishermen organisations and regulators who share a collective concern about the decline in the inshore fishing fleet. Mr Pengelly described engagement events aiming to understand the causes of decline and to co-create solutions to maintain thriving and sustainable inshore and small-scale fishing livelihoods in England and the seven priorities which had emerged. Mr Pengelly covered further engagement intentions and ongoing policy engagement opportunities, including a National ISSF Conference scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026 in Newcastle with the aim of agreeing feasible actions for a viable, diverse, accessible inshore fleet and to have broader engagement with the fishing community, policy makers and the public.

Members discussed the positive direction of the ISSF and the benefits/concerns which can come with a Consortium comprising regulators and NGOs as well as industry recognising that ultimately this approach allows for different approaches to be discussed and opportunities for collective working. Members discussed the National ISSF Conference and highlighted the importance of Defra attendance as well as the need to progress identified actions with a collective consensus. The Chairman suggested the Dorset Coast Forum as an avenue for further engagement.

### **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

#### **70. REM & AI Project Interim Report**

Members received a presentation from IFCO Payton and IFCO Bedwell on the interim report for the REM & AI Project. IFCO Bedwell reviewed the five overarching objectives of the report and described to Members how Southern IFCA have been working with companies to secure technology delivery. The presentation reviewed two pilot fisheries under the project, the first looking at BTFG and the second looking at netting and potting fisheries. IFCO Bedwell described to Members how the technology operated on each vessel and the data outputs which could be achieved. An overview of project costings to date was provided and IFCO Bedwell summarised the next steps in the project including engagement Defra on outcomes and process and aligning work with other IFCA through a proposed National IFCA REM Strategy.

Members discussed the AI element of the technology and the need for high resolution footage and compatible camera systems. IFCO Bedwell explained that the development of AI is ongoing, and discussion is proposed with Marine Scotland to look further at how AI can be used. PDCO Dell commented that developments were being made to improve the quality of video capture which can then be used to teach an AI, looking to achieve this collaboratively at a national level.

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Dr Cripps emphasised the importance of looking at where REM/AI is being used in other fisheries including internationally to determine lessons learned and share knowledge. IFCO Bedwell identified that this had formed part of the literature review for the Project and learning from other projects was ongoing through this workstream.

Mr R Stride stated that the project needed to learn from the VMS process and the benefits of using REM/AI across all groups (regulators and industry) needed to be well understood to ensure the cost effectiveness of any wider roll out. PDCO Dell outlined that the testing which is being achieved through this project is informing these discussions and allowing for costs and benefits to be fully understood.

### **71. Poole Harbour Bivalve Survey Report 2025**

Senior IFCO Condie provided Members with an overview of the Poole Harbour Bivalve Survey Report 2025, outlining the survey process and detailing key points from the analysis.

Senior IFCO Condie informed Members that whilst Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) data and landings data showed some fluctuations for both common cockle and Manila clam, statistical analysis showed no significant differences in the total CPUE and total landings across Poole Harbour as a whole over the last three years, indicating that stocks currently remain stable and the fishery continues to operate sustainably under current management.

Senior IFCO Condie outlined that Southern IFCA had monitored the sustainability of Manila clam stocks through the Monitoring & Control Plan for the fishery for the first time ahead of the 2025 season with analysis under the On-Site Monitoring Programme on landings data from the 2024 fishing season and data from the 2025 Poole Harbour Bivalve Survey. For the 2025 fishing season the Authority resolved that no additional management intervention was required to support a sustainable fishery.

Members discussed the increase in landings of common cockle and that the price per kg had increased as well as the levels of Manila clam declining which had focused effort on the common cockle fishery. Mr G Wordsworth stated that the increase in cockles may have come from areas where fishing has resulted in ground being clearer from weed and thus allowed for increased spat settlement.

The Chairman commented on the size frequency data and that this indicates the fishing gear has become well-tuned to the MCRS of the target species and is minimising bycatch.

### **72. Fisheries Management Plans**

Project Officer Wright provided an overview of the matters captured in the Executive Summary. PO Wright also informed Members that the King Scallop Implementation Group (SCIG) was seeking representatives from the <15m sector.

The Chairman asked whether the request by the KSIG had been disseminated, DCO Birchenough confirmed that the information had been passed to relevant stakeholders who are invited to contact Defra directly if they are interested in sitting on the group.

### **73. New Southern IFCA Byelaw Book**

Senior IFCO Condie showed Members the newly formatted Southern IFCA Byelaw Book, available on the Southern IFCA website, outlining the updates that had been made and the improvements to formatting to aid stakeholders in using the Byelaw Book to quickly and easily find information on Southern IFCA regulations.

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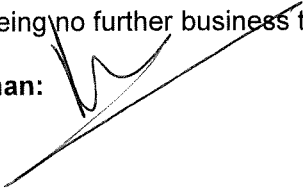
Members discussed whether a link could be added to the Byelaw Book to download closed areas, whether there can be a physical copy made available as well as the digital version and whether stakeholders have provided any feedback on the accessibility of the newly formatted version. DCO Birchenough outlined that providing a link to download closed areas is not currently possible but, as described by PDCO Dell earlier in the agenda, Officers are progressing new methods of providing coordinates of closed areas to industry for inclusion on plotters. DCO Birchenough outlined that there is the potential for relevant sections of the Byelaw Book to be made available in hard copy on request and that as part of general engagement on the coast, Officers will pick up on any stakeholder thoughts on the updated Byelaw Book and ease of use.

**74. Date of Next Meeting**

To confirm the date of the next meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at Southern IFCA, Unit 3 Holes Bay Park, Sterte Avenue West, Poole Dorset BH15 2AA.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 16:48.

**Chairman:**



**Date:** 6/12/25