

Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

AUTHORITY – 18 March 2021

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting of the Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority held by remote conference at 1400 on Thursday 18 March 2021

Present

Prof J Humphreys (Chairman, MMO Appointee)
Cllr Mrs A McEvoy (Vice Chairman, HCC)

Cllr Mr S Hastings	(IOW Council)
Cllr Mr R Hughes	(Dorset Council)
Cllr Mr M Roberts	(Dorset Council)
Cllr Mr R Rocca	(BCP Council)
Cllr Mr J Savage	(Southampton City Council)
Cllr Mr M Winnington	(Portsmouth City Council)
Dr S Cripps	(MMO Appointee)
Dr A Jensen	(MMO Appointee)
Mr N Fisher	(MMO Appointee)
Mr T Legg	(MMO Appointee)
Ms L MacCallum	(MMO Appointee)
Mr R Stride	(MMO Appointee)
Mr G Chatterton	(MMO)
Dr R Morgan	(Natural England)

The Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officers Bateman and Richardson, the Treasurer, the Finance and Administration Officer and IFCOs Birchenough, Small, Smith and Pengelly attended. Mr A Deeming, Dr A Butterworth, Mr S Matthews, Mr R Kane, Mr J McClelland (NE) and Ms E Rance attended in the public gallery.

Apologies

1. Apologies for absence were received from: Mr P Rudd (EA), Mr G Wordsworth, Mr L Stantiford, Cllr Mr P Miles (BCP) and Cllr Mr M White (Hampshire)

Declaration of Interests

2. Members declared the pecuniary interest in the following Minutes: Mr Legg (23), and non-pecuniary interest in the following Minutes: Dr Morgan (9g, 19), Mr Stride (13, 23), Mr Legg (9g)

Minutes

3. Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2020. The Minutes were confirmed and would be signed at a later date.

Chairman's Announcements

4. The Chairman reported to Members that Cllr Michael White would be standing down from the Authority this year. He formally thanked Cllr White for his commitment to the Authority, especially his guidance and advise as a Member of the Executive committee.

The Chairman confirmed that the Chief Officer, Ian Jones had completed his six month probationary period and was confirmed a permanent member of staff. The Chairman told Members that he was delighted with the results of Mr Jones for the first six months and congratulated him on taking on the duties of the Chief Officer so smoothly.

Executive Committee

5. Members considered the Minutes of the Executive Committees held on 10 December 2020.

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Resolved

6. That the Minutes of the Executive Committees held on 10 December 2020 were received and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

7. Members considered the Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee held on 4 February 2021. Dr Jensen worked through some of the decisions made at this meeting for Members who had not been present.

Resolved

8. That the Minutes of the TAC held on 4 February 2021 be received and the recommendations contained therein be adopted.

Progress Report on Outstanding Matters

9. *Chief Officer Reports.*

a. **COVID-19** The Chief Officer updated Members on the working arrangements during the third COVID-19 lockdown. Working in team bubbles, in accordance with risk assessments and recognised joint protocols, officers were continuing with patrols to support the fishing industry and provide intelligence to DEFRA.

b. **EU Exit.** The Chief Officer explained that officers continued to support and provide information for fishers, including signposting the Seafood Response Fund to help aquaculture business affected by the export changes. He reported that licences were being issued to existing commercial EU and UK vessels between the 6-12nm limits that meet strict eligibility criteria. These licences were time restricted to give both sides time to adapt to the new arrangements. Authority patrol vessels were operating within the 6-12nm under an agreement with MMO to provide intelligence.

c. **Changes to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.** The Chief Officer reported that DEFRA had published a new policy document to explain the changes made to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The main points and processes of the new 2019 Regulations was to make them operable from 1 January 2021. The changes covered England and Wales including their inshore waters up to 12 nautical miles and explained how the amendments to the legislation work. It did not cover offshore waters beyond 12nm but similar processes were expected to be applied.

d. **Anchoring in MPAs** The Chief Officer updated Members of the issue reported within Lyme Bay. He reported that the vessels had now moved from the MPA. The MMO were involved in a process of education.

e. **Drones** The Chief Officer updated Members on the procurement of the drone, the training scheduled and possible survey opportunities. He thanked Dr Cripps for his involvement in the addition of the Trident ROV which had arrived and had already been tested in Poole Harbour.

f. **Angling Trust Virtual Sea Angling Forums** The Chief Officer explained the upcoming event of a virtual evening with an IFCA Chief Officer. Cornwall Chief Officer had already taken part and the feedback had been very good. The Southern IFCA evening would be 22 April 2021.

g. **Netting Update.** Dr Jensen reported for Members that the proposals for a draft byelaw had not been supported at the last Technical Advisory Committee meeting. The working group would re-convene to look at the outstanding matters and discuss a way forward.

Resolved

10. That the reports be noted.

Budget Control Statement

11 Mr Ratsey explained to Members the figures in the Budget Control Statement. He presented the budget statement to February 2021. He reported that he was satisfied with the budget. Due to COVID-19 restrictions there was a surplus at month 11 and also as the proposed patrol vessel had not been purchased the depreciation of assets had been reduced. He gave Members explanations of the notes.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ratsey for the details in the statement and he asked Members to agree the reports under general consent. All Members agreed.

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Resolved

12. a. That the Budget Control Statement to date 28 February 2021, as set out in Annex “A” to these minutes, be approved.

Inshore Potting Review

13. IFCO Smith gave Members an update on the progress of the review. Members of the TAC had already had sight of the update. The public consultation period concluded on 15 January 2021; a summary of responses had been provided to Members and published on the website. She asked Members to follow the process map in the paper and explained that the next stage was to draft a byelaw and associated reports, further consultation, obtain legal advice and take findings back to the TAC. Members agreed the recommendation under General Consent.

Resolved

14. That a draft potting byelaw be developed.

Draft Annual Plan and Team Strategies

15. The Chief Officer reported that the Marine and Coastal Access Act, sets out that the Annual Plan should set out the authority’s main objectives and priorities for the coming year. He asked Members to consider the 2021-2022 plan that would be sent to the Secretary of State. The Annual Plan would include a Fisheries Management and Policy strategy and a Fisheries Protection strategy.

He asked Members to consider the Fisheries Management and Policy Team strategy for the coming year. DCO Bateman asked Members if they had to comments to forward them to her for inclusion. Members felt both plans were ambitious and challenging and they were happy to agree them. The CO explained the Fisheries Protection strategy should be available by the end of March 2021.

Resolved

16. a. That the Annual Plan be received.
- b. That the FMP Team Strategy be received.

Solent Scallop Code of Conduct

17. DCO Bateman reported to Members that the code of conduct (COC) had been developed following requests from industry; a call for information was conducted late 2020 and a working group considered the information gathered. Working group members had agreed that this important growing fishery within the district was valuable to the fishers who had asked for intervention to ensure the future sustainability of the scallop fishery. Officers had drafted the COC that was tabled for the TAC for comments. Further engagement with fishers would be undertaken to communicate the measures for a closed season from 1 April to 31 October and the gear specifications for the season from 1 November 2021 to 31 March 2022. Compliance with the COC would be monitored and outcomes of this would inform on the future management of the fishery. DCO Bateman asked Members to consider the proposed timeframe that would lead to the management of the fishery being incorporated within the Solent Dredge Permit. Members agreed the recommendation under General Consent.

Resolved

18. That the Scallop Fishery Code of Conduct be implemented for the coming season.

Poole Harbour Dredge Permit HRA 2021

19. IFCO Birchenough asked Members to consider the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for the forthcoming season of the Poole dredge fishery. She asked Members to agree the number of permits that would be issued and that officers be authorised to make any amendments to the HRA following feedback from Natural England (NE). She explained that there were no changes to the permit conditions or any other management measures for the 2021 season. Dr Morgan added that NE were in the process of completing the feedback, he was not aware of any significant amendments. He reported that the information provided by IFCO Birchenough was

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excellent, including the historical landings and effort data. Concern was raised over incursions into the saltmarsh areas. DCO Richardson explained that incursions had been dealt with as they happened. Fishers were all aware of the areas to avoid. Some of the buoys had disappeared over the winter and these would be replaced. Permit holders would be invited to a pre-season meeting and all details would be explained to them again then. The Chairman thanked IFCO Birchenough for the very thorough precise reports. Members agreed the recommendations under General Consent.

Resolved

20. a. That 45 permits be issued for the 2021-22 season.
- b. That any NE amendments to the HRA be made by Officers.

Poole Clam and Cockle Fishery Partnership Project

21. DCO Bateman gave Members an overview of the Project which had come together after the introduction of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification of the Poole Clam and Cockle fisheries. A condition of maintaining the certification was monitoring the potential interactions between fishing and species identified as endangered, threatened or protected (ETP). A partnership consisting of Poole and District Fisherman's Association (PDFA), marine consultant Noctiluca Marine, Dorset Wildlife Trust and the Authority was developed to manage the ETP conditions. The aims of the project which would run from March 2021 to February 2022, were to support fishers to minimise interaction with ETP, increase awareness of the species and fishers as sentinels for recording sightings etc, demonstrate a model of best practise for MSC fisheries management and successful fisheries management within a Marine Protected Area (MPA). The project would also be used as a template to support attainment of MSC certification within an MPA.

Resolved

22. That the project details be noted.

MCRS Evidence Review 2020

23. Conservation and Research Officer (CRO) Small presented to Members the progress and overview of her work completed over the last year in preparation for the start of the Minimum Conservation Reference Size (MCRS) byelaw review due to begin summer 2021. The presentation provided background information on the MCRS byelaw drafted last summer to address changes in legislation at an EU level in which powers to enforce minimum sizes only applied to commercial fishing. The new byelaw would rectify the change in legislation to apply minimum sizes to all fisheries and supply chains in the Southern IFCA district. CRO Small explained that the Authority would formally review its minimum size byelaws between 2021 and 2023. She explained how she had undertaken extensive literature reviews based on size at maturity for 50 commercial and recreational species in the District. Species Profiles had been created for 25 key species where best available evidence for reproductive biology, social and economic value and associated management was highlighted alongside a review on size at maturity. An example of the profiles was provided using whelk. CRO Small also provided an overview of the primary research projects currently taking place to address maturity knowledge gaps. Primary data collection was currently taking place for grey mullet species and gilthead sea bream with whelk and skates and ray data collection to commence summer 2021. The next steps of the byelaw review were highlighted with a 'Call for Information' planned to be launched between April and July followed by the establishment of an Authority Working Group in September to develop draft measures before an informal community consultation on the proposed draft measures would be launched in November. The Chairman thanked CRO Small for her involvement in the project. He told Members it was important conservation primary research that would be useful for all IFCAs and the partner organisations.

Resolved

24. That the details of the review be noted.

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Southern IFCA Website Launch

25. IFCO Smith briefed Members on the work so far to review and redesign the Authority website. The new version would be mobile friendly and more secure making it easier to use on the go. The updates included a wider range of topics for recreational and commercial stakeholders. She encouraged Members to explore the new site and provide her with any feedback. Members thanked IFCO Smith for all the work involved in creating the new website and their initial feedback was all good.

Resolved

26. That the new website be received.

Mr Matthews left the meeting.

Compliance Risk Register

27. DCO Richardson explained to Members that the Register identifies compliance risk priorities and is updated and brought before them annually to be agreed. He reported that there were no changes to last years register; no new legislation had been introduced.

Resolved

28. That the compliance risk register be noted.

Compliance and Enforcement

29. DCO Richardson reported to Members the activities over the months of November 2020 to January 2021. He explained recent court cases and working with partner organisations. Officers had operationally continued with socially distanced and inspections were conducted when restrictions had been lifted.

Resolved

30. That the report be received.

SIFCA Quarterly Report

31. Members considered the latest report which covered proceedings from November 2020 to January 2021. The Chairman thanked the officers for the reports that illustrated some of their varied daily activities. The Chief Officer explained to Members that he was looking at updating the format of this report in future to illustrate the development of the Fisheries Management and Policy team and the Fisheries Protection team and would bring to the next Authority meeting.

Resolved

32. That the report be received.

South Coast Fishermen's Council (FMC)

33. Members considered the Minutes of the South Coast Fishermen's Council meeting held in the last quarter. Mr Stride worked through some of the items. He reported that meeting virtually had introduced the benefit of accessing officials who may not have been able to attend a meeting in person.

Resolved

34. That the Minutes of the 349th meetings held on 16 December 2020 and the 350th meeting held on 10 February 2021 of the South Coast Fishermen's Council be received.

Date of Next Meeting – 10 June 2021

35. The next meetings of the Full Authority would be held on 10 June 2021.

Exclusion of the Public

Resolved

36. That under section 100(A)(7) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely

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disclosure of exempt information as defined in Para 7 part 1 of the Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act.

All members of the public left the meeting.

Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015 – Transfer of Lease

37. DCO Richardson reported that over time companies owning the leases change hands and when this happens the change of ownership had to be agreed by the Authority. The company involved had changed hands and the lease would transfer to the new owners. He reported that there were no legal costs to be incurred by the Authority. The new owner was already a lease holder and fully understood the requirements of the lease, business plan and bio security plans.

Resolved

38. That the lease be transferred

The Vice Chairman took the chair for the next item.

Election of Chairman

39. The Vice Chairman asked for nominations for the post of Chairman for the last quarter of this session. The Chief Officer said he had received one nomination for Cllr M Roberts. Cllr Hughes who said he had worked with Cllr Roberts for some time now on Dorset Council, seconded this proposal. There were no further nominations and Cllr Roberts was confirmed Chairman until the end of the Authority year.

Cllr Roberts thanked Members for their support and briefed them on his maritime background. He thanked Prof Humphreys for his contribution to the Authority over the last eight years.

Resolved

40. That Cllr Mark Roberts be elected Chairman of the Authority

Prof Humphreys opened his gift and card from the Members and staff. He thanked them for the impressive, decorated fish dish. He told Members it had been a privilege to be part of the IFCA, doing important work rooted in the local community. He had found his time with the Authority rewarding, working with the Members, stakeholders and staff. He thanked the Chief Officer for taking on that post and thanked the previous Chief Officer, Robert Clark.

41. There being no further business the meeting closed at 16.30.

Chairman:

Date: