

SOUTHERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE – 31 AUGUST 2017

Minutes of the Technical Advisory Committee held in Poole Harbour Commissioners at 1300 on Thursday 31 August 2017.

Present

Dr A Jensen (Chairman, MMO Appointee)
Mr R Stride (Vice Chairman, MMO Appointee)

Dr S Cripps	(MMO Appointee)
Mr N Horsman	(MMO Appointee)
Prof J Humphreys	(MMO Appointee)
Mr S Kershaw	(MMO Appointee)
Mr T Legg	(MMO Appointee)
Dr R Morgan	(Natural England)
Dr K Sims	(Environment Agency)

The Chief Officer, Deputy Chief Officer Richardson, Finance and Administration Officer, IFCOs Cooper, Gravestock and Pengelly and Ms R Nicholl, 2017 intern were also present. Ms E Rance (Dorset Wildlife Trust) and Mr G Wordsworth (Othniel Oysters) attended in the public gallery.

Election of Chairman

Resolved

41. That Dr Jensen be elected Chairman for the year 2017 - 2018.

Election of Vice Chairman

Resolved

42. That Mr Stride be elected Vice Chairman for the year 2017 – 2018.

Apologies

43. Apologies for absence were received from Ms L MacCallum (MMO Appointee) and Mr P Johnson (MMO).

Declarations of interest

44. Members declared the pecuniary and non-pecuniary interest in the following Minutes: Mr Legg (48), Mr Stride (54)

Minutes

45. Members considered the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 May 2017. Mr Horsman asked if the description 'micro species' could be revised on item 29 Wrasse Fishery Guidance. The Chairman removed the word micro and the Minutes were then confirmed and signed.

Progress Report

46. **a. MCZ Assessment and Management Update.** IFCO Gravestock gave Members an update on the assessment of the fishing activities and associated management measures for the Marine Conservation Zones within the district. She worked through the process to be taken.

b. Solent Oyster Survey. IFCO Cooper updated Members on the survey that had been completed in the summer. For the third year the project had been part of the intern

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programme. Daniel Buss from the University of Southampton undertook the project this year and contributed significantly to the data collection, analysis and report writing. A new methodology had been used; visiting new stations and over time this should provide a better resource when determining stock levels over a longer period of time.

Resolved

47. That the updates be noted.

Solent Oyster Season 2017/18

48. IFCO Cooper explained for Members the findings of the survey and the current state of the oyster beds. The reports accompanying the officers report provided evidence that the oyster beds or part of the beds were depleted and he asked Members to debate whether they felt it justifiable to apply the temporary closure of shellfish beds byelaw. He explained the results of the stock survey that provided the best available evidence. He reported that officers intended to consult with oyster fishermen in the next couple of weeks and present the TAC decision and stakeholder comments to the full Authority in September. The Chief Officer explained that the areas surveyed all showed depleted stock; the survey area covered the known and historic extent of oysters beds and the survey was extensive but could never cover all the areas in the Solent. Members considered other sources of information and discussed further anecdotal evidence; nothing in that anecdotal evidence indicated anything other than a depleted bed, however the differentiation of 'beds' when the fishery had collapsed was more challenging. Members discussed the issues, the results of the survey, whether they could consider the whole of the fishery or just beds within the fishery, whether buffer zones would need to be included and the relaying work of the Blue Marine Foundation which was still in the early stages. Members were advised that the byelaw could not apply to a fishery, but to beds. Members were asked to decide if the survey results were sufficient evidence for them to confidently apply the byelaw on the basis of severe depletion of beds. Members felt that the best available evidence was there were no oysters in the Solent in numbers that form beds. Where oysters were found they were depleted. Members agreed that the objective of the byelaw was to restore shellfish; when oyster beds and part thereof were depleted it was necessary to take a wide view of their range or bed. In this regard the oyster habitat of the Solent and Harbours and the fact that oysters are broadcast spawners led Members to consider a wide geographic definition of oyster beds as necessary to restore oysters to achieve the objective of the byelaw. Members asked if the socio-economic impact of closing or leaving open the beds could be included; it was agreed that this be achieved by an accompanying Impact Assessment to the full Authority; the purpose of the TAC, in this instance, being to consider the status of the oyster beds. Mr Horsman asked if handgathering would be affected by a closure and the Chief Officer explained that it would, noting that some of these areas were already restricted or prohibited by the environmental health classification.

The Chairman summarised the discussion and asked Members to agree the recommendations. Mr Kershaw proposed and Dr Cripps seconded the proposal. All Members able to vote agreed and Mr Legg, who had expressed an interest did not take part in the vote.

Recommended

49. That the oyster beds in the Solent, Southampton Water and Harbours (Portsmouth, Langstone) are severely depleted and require closure under the Temporary Closure of Shellfish Beds byelaw to aid their recovery.

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Dredge Permit Byelaw Consultation

50. IFCO Pengelly asked Members to consider the development of a Dredge Permit Byelaw for the management of the dredge fishing within the District. He explained that dredges were used to fish for a range of bivalve shellfish species. Given the similarities between these fisheries there was an opportunity to review the existing byelaws and harmonise the development of new management for the dredge fisheries under one byelaw. A permit scheme had been introduced for the Poole shellfish fishery and a similar scheme would be considered. Members discussed the draft byelaw and asked for further details to be added. The Chairman asked Members to send comments to IFCO Pengelly for inclusion in the next draft. He asked Members to agree the recommendations. Mr Horsman proposed and Mr Kershaw seconded the proposal. All Members present agreed.

Resolved

51. a. That the Dredge Permit byelaw be developed.
- b. That an informal consultation be undertaken with stakeholders.
- c. That legal advice is obtained on the draft byelaw.

The Needles MCZ – Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Assessment

52. IFCO Gravestock updated Members on the progress of the assessment for the Needles MCZ which had required a part B assessment. Members and Natural England had provided comment and this was the updated version including those comments and advice from Natural England. The next process was to formally consult with Natural England. Mr Horsman said he was impressed with the report but had not realised Member feedback had been requested to be sent before the meeting. He asked if a summary could be provided in future reports. Members discussed the validity of evidence used within the assessment. Dr Morgan, in response to a query from Mr Horsman, said that some of the data was still being quality assured by DEFRA. IFCO Gravestock explained that with continued monitoring updates would be made. The Chairman asked Members to agree the recommendations. Mr Legg proposed and Mr Stride seconded the proposal. One Member voted against the recommendation, all others present agreed the proposals.

Resolved

53. a. That the updated draft Bottom Towed Fishing Gear part B assessment be approved.
- b. That formal consultation be undertaken with Natural England.

Near Shore Netting Review

54. IFCO Pengelly updated Members on the review. Additional evidence had been gathered and he asked Members to consider the recommendations for an informal consultation on recreational netting and repeat of the seine net survey. Working through the Byelaw Working Group he asked Members to look at activities within estuaries and harbours to protect nursery areas and migratory species and to include the different social and economic benefits to users that exploit these fisheries. Mr Horsman was concerned that the paper only covered estuaries and harbours not the wider area. And there was no mention of other users only the commercial sector. IFCO Pengelly explained that the first area of review would be the estuaries and harbours, dealing with the review in manageable chunks. Members generally supported the paper but asked for revised

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wording and more detail of the evidence to support these management measures. The Chairman asked Members to agree the recommendations under general consent.

Resolved

55. a. That an informal consultation be undertaken with stakeholders.
- b. That the seine net surveys be repeated as part of the small fish survey programme.
- c. Instruct the Byelaw Working Group to develop netting regulations.

Poole Harbour Bivalve Stock Assessment 2017

56. IFCO Pengelly asked Members to receive the report that had been completed by IFCO Birchenough and Rosie Nicoll, a student from the 2017 Authority intern programme. Members agreed it was splendid piece of work and thanked Ms Nicoll for her involvement. The Chief Officer concurred and reported that the assessment data would be used for the Marine Stewardship Councils certification sustainability standard Mr Kershaw asked why the particular styles of sampling had been adopted and IFCO Pengelly explained that this was the best method available to the Authority for determining the juvenile population.

Resolved

57. That the correspondence be noted.

Date of Next Meeting

58. That the next meeting of the TAC would be held on 23 November at Purbeck District Council in Wareham.

Exclusion of the Public

Resolved

59. That under section 100(A)(7) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Para 7 part 1 of the Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act.

Mr Wordsworth, Ms Rance and Ms Nicoll, being the only member of the public at the meeting left the room for the next item.

Poole Lease Management Plan

60. The Chief Officer explained the circumstances that required the new management plans from the two existing lease holders, Branksea Oysters Ltd and Oakford Oysters Ltd. Changes to both businesses had taken place since the leases had been agreed in 2015. Therefore they had been required to update their business, biosecurity and safety plans. Dr Cripps queried the liability for accepting a safety and biosecurity plans; the Chief Officer reported that Southern IFCA had duties for biosecurity under the Poole Harbour Fishery Order 2015 and the Authority had required that leaseholders, as a condition of a lease to provide evidence that they have a safety plan. As regards to the safety plan, the IFCA was not the competent authority to assess the effectiveness of the safety plan, but required leaseholders to demonstrate that they have controls in place as required by the relevant authority's (i.e. Harbour Master and Marine and Coastguard Agency), but that the Authority accept no liability in this regard and this is detailed in the lease. Members discussed the use of triploid oysters in this environment and asked that there would be

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future monitoring of the species. Mr Kershaw asked if the Management Plan (2017 edition) could be amended to reflect the changes he had requested; updates to personnel and contact details. The Chief Officer thanks IFCO Birchenough for managing the amendments to these leases.

Resolved

61. a. That the updated Business, Biosecurity and Safety Plan for Branksea Oysters Ltd be received.

b. That the updated Business, Biosecurity and Safety Plan for Oakford Oysters Ltd be received.

62. There being no further business the meeting closed at 15:50

Chairman:

Date: