



Sussex
Inshore Fisheries
and Conservation
Authority

Annual Report 2023-2024





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Foreword

I am happy to present the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) Annual Report for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The report attempts to summarise the broad and diverse work streams delivered in line with Sussex IFCA's ongoing mission to manage, protect, and enhance the inshore marine environment and the sustainable use of its resources within the Sussex district.

Since joining the IFCA in May 2023, and working with the Sussex IFCA team through the majority of this reporting period, I can appreciate how lucky we are to work within a marine environment of extraordinary ecological and economic significance. Supporting a diverse array of marine species and habitats, providing livelihoods and benefitting our coastal communities through a range of ecosystem services. Managing the delicate balance between our fishery management and marine conservation duties, in the face of emerging challenges and increasing pressures on the marine environment, remains our primary objective.

In order to best achieve this balance, we remain guided by our core principles; including taking evidence-based decisions, adopting an ecosystem-based approach in regard to fishery and habitat management, and importantly, fostering effective co-management through robust and consistent engagement with stakeholders.

Ensuring we maximise the reach and impact of our engagement is a challenge we constantly remain alert too. The introduction

of the Fisheries Act 2020, and subsequent Joint Fisheries Statement, paved the way for increased industry and stakeholder engagement towards the sustainable management of UK fisheries, through the development of Fishery Management Plans (FMP's). As organisations seek to meet the positive co-management objectives promoted through the Joint Fisheries statement, we are finding that our engagement for District specific management is effectively competing for stakeholder time and attention, with an increasing number of public consultations, engagement events and evidence seeking activities taking place across the marine sector. We also must engage with an ever wider and more diverse range of stakeholder groups, to ensure fair and equitable representation.

Whilst the IFCA's have a track record of delivering effective engagement, we have to adapt to these changes, understanding what we are already doing well and then building upon it. For example, through this reporting period we have worked to adopt and increase our use of new communication channels, including increasing our digital presence on various social media platforms, to ensure we remain 'seen and heard'. Equally, we must continue to collaborate effectively with partnership organisations and understand how to meet the needs of specific demographics, effectively capturing and understanding their needs. In many cases, active engagement on the ground, or water(!), is most appropriate, and we continue to commit resource to

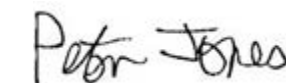
ensure our officers are out in the district, actively engaging with communities.

We should also thank our members, each dedicating their own time to bring distinct technical knowledge and routes of engagement from different sectors across the District. Helping us engage directly with those who are most affected by our decisions, the membership of the Authority ensures that our policies are informed by a broad spectrum of knowledge and experience, fostering a spirit of co-management. Influencing and directing IFCA management means they are empowered to make decisions to serve the needs of the diverse stakeholders and sectors within our district.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to our efforts this year, from the dedicated staff of Sussex IFCA, our partners, and the stakeholders who have engaged with us on our mission to deliver healthy seas and a viable, sustainable industry within the Sussex District.



Robert Pearson MIFM M.Sc. B.Sc.
Chief Fisheries and
Conservation Officer



Professor Peter Jones
Chair

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Executive Summary

The Sussex IFCA Annual Report for 2023 to 2024

This Annual Report summarises the key activities of Sussex IFCA over the period from April 2023 to March 2024. The activities and achievements are considered against the objectives set out in our Annual Plan, developed in recognition of our duties under the Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009. We assess these activities in context of our IFCA High Level Objectives and our five key success criteria on page 8. This is the final Annual Report within the Authority's 2020 to 2024 four-year planning cycle, which aims to provide a medium-term forward view of key objectives. A new, 2024 to 2028 four-year plan, was published in February 2024 and is publicly available on Sussex IFCA's website. The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority continued to successfully deliver against our planned objectives throughout the reporting period, through the range of work streams detailed within this report.

As our primary tool for applying fisheries management measures within the District, the review and development of Byelaws remained

a key focus for Sussex IFCA. A significant step forward was taken in the development of appropriate management for Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), as work continued apace towards the submission of the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023. Beachy Head East is the final MPA within the District requiring protection through introduction of fishery management measures, which will be introduced through an additional schedule in the updated Marine Protected Areas Byelaw.

Attention also returned to the Authorities Netting Permit Byelaw 2019, after receiving further instruction in late 2023 from Defra, on the need to re-consult on amendments to the proposed Byelaw. Development of this re-engagement process continued through early 2024. A further two Sussex IFCA Byelaws remain in the quality assurance process with Defra and the MMO, the Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea and Mollusc) Byelaw 2021 and the

Hand Gathering Byelaw 2021. Work was undertaken to ensure that we are prepared to widely communicate the introduction of these regulations, through appropriate guidance and engagement, to ensure good compliance once these Byelaws are confirmed by the Secretary of State.

A further focus for the reporting period was engaging and contributing fully to the development of Fishery Management Plans

continued overleaf

(FMPs), not least because all six of the frontrunner plans, five of which were published in late 2023, were on fisheries of key strategic importance to the District. Ensuring effective engagement and encouraging stakeholders to actively participate in the development of FMPs, is essential in enabling the plans to fully realise the objectives of the Joint Fisheries Statement. As well as promoting this engagement to stakeholders, Sussex IFCA directly responded to each of the FMP consultations, Officers participated in various FMP subgroups, supported calls for evidence for forthcoming plans, and attended every relevant FMP engagement event hosted within the District.

The continuing development of our evidence base, including monitoring of our existing Byelaws, is detailed in the Conservation & Research chapter of this report, including monitoring of the impact of the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw 2019. Building and maintaining this evidence base through a suite of in-house and collaborative efforts, provides the ability to make informed decisions about management measures within the District, ensuring we can perform against our high level objective of being an evidence-based organisation. We also report on our extensive partnership work and collaborative projects, statutory consultee duties and our ongoing programmes of education and engagement.

Compliance within the District remained good, with regular, risk-based enforcement activities taking place throughout the year, including shore and sea based patrols facilitated through our well maintained and

capable Fishery Patrol Vessels. Officers had plenty of opportunity to engage directly with recreational and commercial fishers, and wider stakeholders, as well as working in partnership with fellow regulatory authorities. Our continued liaison across local and national intelligence groups, including the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and Joint Tasking and Coordination Group, helped ensure we remained abreast of emerging issues and applied an intelligence led enforcement regime. Whilst achieving compliance is always our first priority, that we aim to encourage through effective engagement, education and guidance, where infringements were encountered, we applied appropriate sanctions according to our objective of applying a fair and proportionate enforcement regime.

Staffing levels were exceptionally stable throughout the reporting period, with little turnover to report. The one significant change was the retirement of Tim Dapling, from Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer. Happily, the Authority is still able to take advantage of his extensive experience in the fisheries sector, as Tim stayed on in a part time role as Strategic Advisor to the committee, as well as supporting some additional Defra grant funded work streams.

Staff continued to work towards professional and personal development objectives, including internal and external training, maintaining professional membership, and attendance at industry conferences and engagement events. The Deputy Chief Officer has supported compliance training needs at a national level, as well as holding the role of

accredited training quality assessor for Sussex IFCA; overseeing progression of compliance and enforcement staff through their Level 3 Certificate in Fisheries and Marine Enforcement. As per our outlined success criteria, we remain committed to maintaining clear and effective performance management systems and giving Sussex IFCA staff the opportunity to develop professionally.

The Financial Summary shows that Sussex IFCA remained in a relatively healthy and stable financial position, with additional Defra grant funding providing support against new work streams, including contributing to FMPs. Staff costs remain the biggest expenditure to the Authority, followed by the operation and maintenance of our Fishery Patrol Vessels.

Sussex IFCA continued to build on its existing communication channels. In an increasingly digital world, we have adapted by successfully increasing our digital communication footprint across various social media channels to maximise stakeholder engagement. We continue to maintain a highly informative and accessible public facing website, that provides stakeholders full access to all our published information, including regulations and associated guidance, published reports, plans and minutes of Authority meetings.

Sussex IFCA continues to remain integrated with existing and emerging stakeholder groups and networks and seeks to identify and engage new opportunities for partnership and collaborative working. Key partners and relationships, including those for which we have formalised memoranda of understanding (MoU's) with, are identified within this report.

Introduction

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, from which the Sussex IFCA District and Authority was created in 2010, was a landmark step by government to establish a holistic marine legislation framework capable of delivering modern management of United Kingdom seas. As well as enabling the establishment of new marine management bodies including the Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities and the Marine Management Organisation, it provided legislation to create a network of Marine Conservation Zones, the first sites being designated in 2013. With provisions

for the development of marine planning, the legislation is central to the commitment to the Government's vision of *clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas* as defined in the UK Marine Policy Statement.

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) has clearly defined duties to manage sustainable fisheries and protect the marine environment within the coastal waters off Sussex.

This annual report for the Authority provides a detailed account of the year's work against the published work plan for April 2023 to March 2024. The Authority continues to make significant strides toward the Government's Marine Policy Statement and defined High Level Marine Objectives.

High Level Marine Objectives:

- Achieving a sustainable marine economy: IFCAs are recognised and heard, whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society: IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime

- Living within environmental limits: IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their Districts
- Promoting good governance: IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional
- Using sound science, responsibly: IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives.

Achieving good management

By its very nature, the management of marine fisheries and the marine environment is a complex process. Legislative drivers occur at a European, National and local level and involve a significant number of public bodies with both management and science functions.

Wherever possible the Sussex IFCA endeavours to work in partnership with others, particularly with all IFCAs and national marine and conservation advisors to find best practice for the delivery of ever improving management.

Vision

The vision for Sussex IFCA is:

“Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry.”

The Vision is a shared statement between all ten Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities in England.

Duties

Domestic Legislation

The duties for Sussex IFCA set out within the Marine and Coastal Access Act, 2009 sections 153 and 154 are:

- 1) Sussex IFCA must manage the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in its district, in doing so it must:
 - a) seek to ensure that the exploitation of sea fisheries resources is carried out in a sustainable way.
 - b) seek to balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting the sea fisheries resources of the district with the need to protect the marine environment from, or promote its recovery from, the effects of such exploitation.

- c) take any other steps which in the authority's opinion are necessary or expedient for the purpose of making a contribution to the achievement of sustainable development.

- d) seek to balance the different needs of persons engaged in the exploitation of sea fisheries resources in the district.

- 2) Sussex IFCA must also seek to ensure that the conservation objectives of any MCZ in the district are furthered.

European Legislation

As defined as a 'Competent and Relevant Authority' the Sussex IFCA is required to perform its duties in regard to:

- **The 'Habitats Directive'**

Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

- **The 'Water Framework Directive'**

Council Directive 2000/60/EC of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for community action in the field of water policy

- **The 'Marine Strategy Framework Directive'**

Council Directive 2008/56/EC of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy.

List of Members 2023-2024

Cllr Sam Adeniji

East Sussex County Council

Cllr Julia Hilton

East Sussex County Council

Cllr Tom Liddiard

East Sussex County Council

Cllr Pieter Montyn

West Sussex County Council

Cllr Noel Atkins**

West Sussex County Council

Cllr Emma Evans

West Sussex County Council

Cllr Theresa Fowler

Brighton & Hove City Council

Prof. Peter Jones*

MMO Appointee
*Professor of Environmental
Governance*

Prof. Paul Leonard

MMO Appointee
Environmental Consultant

Dr. Paul Driver

MMO Appointee
*Fisheries Research &
International Environmental
Conservation*

Ms Sally Ashby

MMO Appointee
*Expert in Marine Ecosystems &
Documentary Film Production*

Mr Mark Bennett

EA Representative

Ms Paula Daghish

Natural England Representative

Mr Paul Johnson

MMO Representative

Mr Andy Read

MMO Appointee
Editor of the Fishing News

Mr Garry Walker

MMO Appointee
Commercial Fisher

Mr James Partridge

MMO Appointee
*Commercial Wholesaler
(Shoreham-by-Sea)*

Dr Corina Ciocan

MMO Appointee
*Principal Lecturer,
University of Brighton*

Mr Gary Edwards

MMO Appointee
*Commercial Fisher/
Recreational Charter
Skipper*

Mr Graham Furness

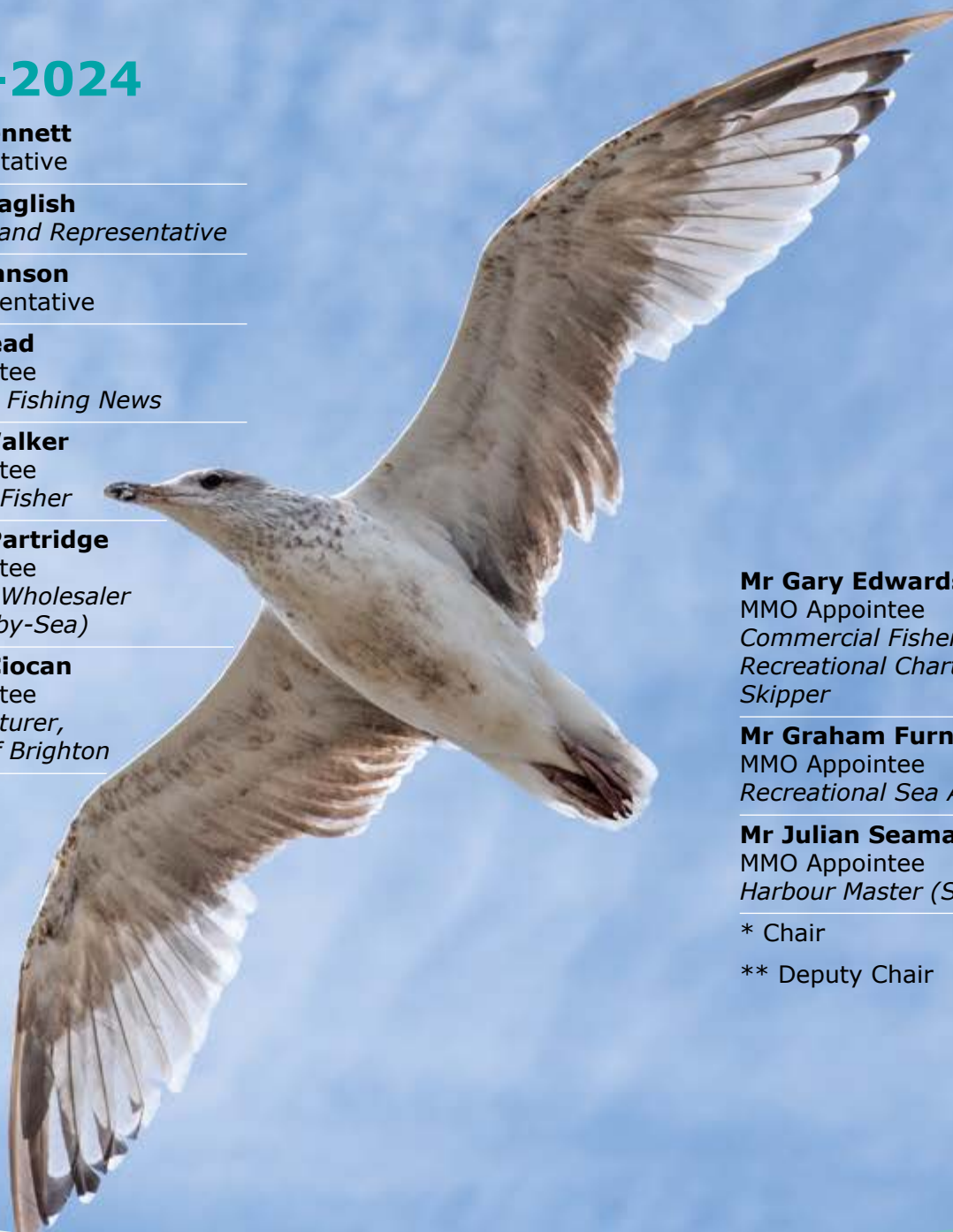
MMO Appointee
Recreational Sea Angling

Mr Julian Seaman

MMO Appointee
Harbour Master (Shoreham Port)

* Chair

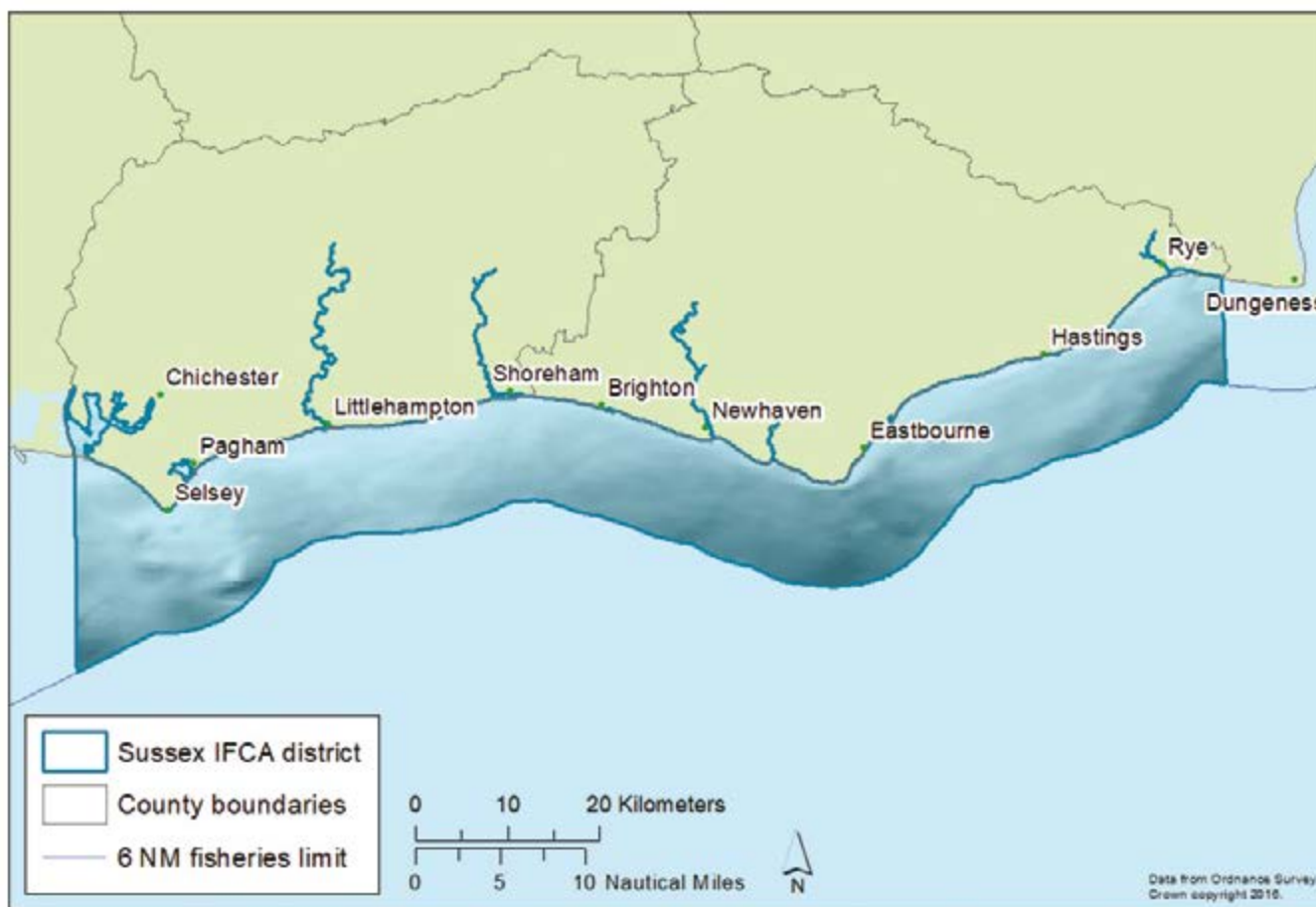
** Deputy Chair



The Sussex IFCA District

The Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Order 2010, section 3 defines the extent of both the landward and seaward elements of the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District as summarised.

- the combined areas of the relevant councils (the “basic area” of the district); and
- the sea adjacent to the basic area of the district within the boundaries specified to a distance of 6 nautical miles from the 1983 baselines.



The western boundary of the district

| Points | Latitude | Longitude |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | 50° 46.62N | 0° 55.92W |
| 2 | 50° 33.93N | 0° 55.92W |

The eastern boundary of the district

| Points | Latitude | Longitude |
|--------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | 50° 55.32N | 0° 51.16E |
| 2 | 50° 49.06N | 0° 51.16E |

Sussex IFCA key priorities for delivery of duties in 2023 to 2024

Focus and priorities for the year, schedule of activities commencing April 2023

The 2020 to 2024 Four Year Plan contained the Authority's intended programme of work. The activities were framed within the IFCA's five nationally agreed success criteria for which there were a range of high-level objectives. During this year the Sussex IFCA has either completed or made progress toward all these objectives.

The following tables and their contents, one for each success criteria, both describe and illustrate the extent to which targets were met.

The final column of each table indicates the status of achievement using a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) colour coding.

- **Insignificant or no progress**
- **Significant progress but not completed**
- **Objective completed**

Success Criterion 1: IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders

Definition: IFCAs will be visible, respected and trusted regulator within coastal communities and will maintain and deliver a strategy to communicate their vision and duties effectively. IFCAs will engage with policy makers, industry, Non-Governmental

Organisations (NGOs), recreational and commercial users; and other regulators. They will work jointly and collaboratively with partner organisations across boundaries; will participate and contribute to the development and implementation of regional and national

marine policy, including the marine planning regime; will take long-term strategic decisions and manage risks effectively. IFCAs may maintain a national body to co-ordinate the activities of authorities that are party to arrangements.

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|--|---|---|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy. The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the District, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published. The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level. The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained nationally. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible. | <p>SC1A: The IFCA will maintain a database of stakeholder contacts that will have been reviewed and updated by 31 March each year.</p> | <p>Create a database of stakeholders in the commercial fisheries, recreational sea angling, NGO and public sectors.</p> <p>Maintain a database of permit holders.</p> <p>Maintain list up to date and review data quality annually before 31 March.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC1B: The IFCA will have completed a review of its communication strategy and implementation plan by 31 March each year.</p> | <p>Continuously develop mechanisms and opportunities for engaging stakeholders and educating communities about sustainable management of the marine environment.</p> <p>Adopt and adapt to new digital communication channels, including maintaining an online digital presence.</p> <p>Development and displaying communication material.</p> <p>Ensure enquiry responses meet the code of conduct and Service Plan.</p> <p>Log enquires and responses.</p> <p>Maintain use of brand in uniform and communication materials.</p> <p>Engage with community stakeholders in media and meetings to inform and consult with interested parties.</p> <p>Ensure accessibility of communications materials.</p> <p>Review plan by 31 March.</p> | Ongoing |

Success Criterion 1 continued: IFCAs are recognised and heard, balancing the economic needs of the fishery whilst working in partnership and engaging with stakeholders

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|--|---|---|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will maintain and implement an effective communication strategy. The IFCA will maintain its website, ensuring public access to current fisheries and conservation information for the District, including management requirements and byelaws. Non-reserved IFCA Committee papers will be published. The IFCA will contribute to co-ordinated activity at a national level. The IFCA and its principal partners will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. Memoranda of Understanding with MMO, Natural England, Environment Agency and Cefas will be maintained nationally. Opportunities for greater efficiencies, effective joint working and collaboration will be explored and implemented when feasible. | <p>SC1C: The IFCA will have reviewed its website by the last working day of each month.</p> | <p>Review website by the end of each month and update as required.</p> <p>Ensure all information is up to date, with particular reference to regulations and changes in regulations and associated guidance.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC1D: The IFCA will have reviewed its website and ensured it meets the objectives of its communication strategy, by 31 March each year.</p> | <p>Review website in the context of the communication strategy by the end of the year.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC1E: The IFCA will have reviewed all of its Memoranda of Understanding by 31 March each year. There will be a clear plan in place to update MoUs where necessary, to an agreed timescale.</p> | <p>Review MoU and partnership agreements by 31 March.</p> <p>Implement agreements with actions and meetings.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC1F: By 31 March each year, the IFCA will have participated appropriately, proportionately and at the right level of delegation, in regional and national fisheries and conservation activity identified in the annual plan.</p> | <p>Actively participate in external meeting group partnerships such as the Sussex Marine and Coastal Forum, Marine Protected Area Implementation Group, catchment partnerships and Biosphere meetings. This participation will influence decision makers with regard to prioritising sustainable fisheries and protection of the marine environment.</p> <p>Provide evidence-based advice to decision makers on blue growth agenda, marine recreation, sustainable tourism and aquaculture.</p> <p>Actively support the Chief Officers Group and the association of IFCAs.</p> <p>Provided timely responses to consultations on significant plans and licences.</p> <p>Implement the Authority Service Plan in respect to defined objectives and targets.</p> | Ongoing |

Success Criterion 2: IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime

Definition: The IFCA enforcement regime is risk-based, makes appropriate use of intelligence, meets legislative standards and complies with the Regulators Code. It should make effective use of the resources

available to regulators; complement and align, if possible, with the regimes in adjacent IFCA Districts and management by other organisations including the MMO and Environment Agency. Consistency and fairness

is important. Regulatory compliance is promoted. Enforcement action is carried out by trained, professional officers working to clear standards of conduct.

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|--|--|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences. The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations. The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g. through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations. Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity. | <p>SC2A: The IFCA will ensure its enforcement risk register and strategy are published and available on its website from 1 April each year.</p> | <p>Analyse enforcement information, producing and disseminating reports through committees and the annual report.</p> <p>Review and update the risk register as required.</p> <p>Include enforcement risk based approach information in the annual plan.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC2B: The IFCA will demonstrate in its Annual Report how it has worked with other regulators to achieve consistent quality, application and enforcement of management measures.</p> | <p>Work with and report on involvement with Regional Fisheries Enforcement Group, Tactical Agency meetings (with MMO, EA and Police), NIMEG, links to National Enforcement Agencies (Gangmasters Licencing Authority and Food Crime Unit).</p> <p>Participate in Government Agency Intelligence Network (GAIN).</p> <p>Build agreed regulations (i.e. byelaws) that enable fair and effective management of fisheries activities. Use voluntary codes where appropriate.</p> <p>Promote education and awareness of regulations and voluntary agreements.</p> <p>Collaborate with partners and report on intelligence sharing agreements.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC2C: The IFCA will compile records of enforcement activity in a standard format; provide them to the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) and publish them on its website.</p> | <p>Develop a standard format.</p> <p>Report record of enforcement to NIMEG.</p> <p>Utilisation of MCSS to share compliance information with MMO and IFCA partners.</p> <p>Collate and publish a record of enforcement on website.</p> | Ongoing |

Success Criterion 2 continued: IFCAs implement a fair, effective and proportionate enforcement regime

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|--|--|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will publish its enforcement risk register and strategy, clearly setting out its approach to achieving regulatory compliance and potential sanctions that may be applied for infringements and/or offences. The IFCA will have developed consistency in regulations (byelaws) with other organisations. The IFCA will manage operational activity (e.g. through a Tasking & Co-ordination Group) and capture, record, evaluate and disseminate intelligence that is compatible with partner organisations. It is engaged in joint working with partner organisations. Warranted Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers (IFCOs) will be trained and accredited to nationally agreed standards. They will maintain professionalism and make appropriate interventions to deliver efficient, effective enforcement activity. | <p>SC2D: The IFCA will adopt the national Code of Conduct for IFCOs, which will be reviewed annually and published on its website by 1 April.</p> | <p>Work with NIMEG to produce a code of conduct and review.</p> <p>Publish the code on the website.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC2E: The Code of Conduct for IFCOs is reflected in work objectives and annual appraisals for all Warranted Officers.</p> | <p>Officer performance plans incorporate code of conduct objectives.</p> <p>Appraisals carried out accordingly.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC2F: Warranted Officers attain accreditation. All undertake Continuing Professional Development.</p> | <p>Officer performance plans incorporate accreditation objectives.</p> <p>Officer performance plans incorporate development targets.</p> | Ongoing |

Success Criterion 3: IFCA's use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts

Definition: The IFCA's were created as statutory inshore regulators by the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. They are relevant authorities for implementing international environmental commitments including the Birds, Habitats, Water and Marine Strategy Framework Directives and make an

important contribution to securing a network of well managed marine protected areas, including European Marine Sites and Marine Conservation Zones. Fisheries Management Plans identify local management measures which should be based on evidence: be timely, subject to appropriate consultation and in step

with national initiatives and priorities. An IFCA should balance the social and economic benefits of exploiting sea fisheries resources with the need to protect the environment. It should make a contribution to sustainable development.

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|---|---|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFCA District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions. The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria-based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans. The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development. | <p>SC3A: The IFCA will record site-specific management considerations for Marine Protected Areas and report progress to the Authority.</p> | <p>Work with partners to promote sustainable management and further the objectives of MPAs and MCZs.</p> <p>Utilise community engagement strategies to involve stakeholders.</p> <p>Work with Natural England to understand and meet conservation objectives and site conditions.</p> <p>Gather evidence to support engagement and management decisions. To include fishing activity and impacts, habitat information, species information and climate change information.</p> <p>Develop fair and effective management measures. Implement regulation.</p> <p>Adhere to reporting mechanisms for MPAs and MCZs, and report back to the Authority meetings.</p> <p>Support partnership initiatives to work towards a good marine environment and ecology for i.e., Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Habitats Directive and MACCA.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC3B: The IFCA will publish data analysis and evidence supporting new management measures, on its website.</p> | <p>Maintain a records system that demonstrates the best available, quality assured evidence is used in engagement and decision making.</p> <p>Publish consultation materials and Impact Assessments on the website.</p> | Ongoing |

Success Criterion 3 continued: IFCAs use evidence based and appropriate measures to manage the sustainable exploitation of sea fisheries resources and deliver marine environmental protection within their districts

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|---|--|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will identify issues likely to affect sustainable management of the marine environment in the IFCA District; undertake risk assessment and gap analysis; review appropriateness of existing measures; evaluate management options and develop and implement proportionate marine management solutions. The IFCA will support implementation of a well-managed network of marine protected areas by: developing a range of criteria-based management options; implementing management measures to ensure that inshore fisheries activities comply with the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 and the revised approach to managing commercial fisheries in European Marine Sites; and that local management contributes to delivery of targets for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Water Framework Directive and Marine Plans. The IFCA will develop Fisheries Management Plans for priority species where appropriate. Shared objectives will be developed with identified partners; actions identified and best practice reflected so that management makes a contribution to sustainable development. | <p>SC3C: Management information (e.g. sampling and/or survey results) will be collected periodically after new management measures have been implemented, to demonstrate the extent of effectiveness of the intervention.</p> | <p>Maintain in-house capability to collect, analyse and interpret evidence to inform management decisions and meet minimum standards set out in government guidance.</p> <p>Target evidence collection at extant management measures, and report on their effectiveness.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC3D: The IFCA will have developed a range of criteria-based management options that are explained to stakeholders through the IFCA website, and reviewed by 31 March each year.</p> | <p>Existing 'Review of Management' process translated into 4 year and annual planning and Byelaw development needs</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC3E: New IFCA management measures selected for development and implementation are delivered within agreed timescales.</p> | <p>Set appropriate timescales for management measures.</p> <p>Meet management measure timelines and targets.</p> <p>Development of byelaws and non-regulatory management measures in accordance with the Authority's 'Review of Management Measures' public consultation to inform management priorities.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC3F: The IFCA will include shared agreed objectives and actions from Fisheries Management Plans in its own Annual Plan, which will be published by 31 March each year.</p> | <p>Incorporate management objectives and actions in annual plans.</p> | March 2024 |
| | <p>SC3G: Progress made in relevant Fisheries Management Plan areas, including Maximum Sustainable Yield commitments, will be noted in the IFCA's Annual Report.</p> | <p>Annual Report will contain information on district fisheries management plans including reference to MSY for key species, and ecosystem metrics.</p> <p>IFCA will inform significant developments and marine licences with regard to sustainable fisheries management and the protection of the marine environment.</p> | Ongoing |

Success Criterion 4: IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional

Definition: IFCAs are statutory authorities and sit within the local government family. Authority members may be either general members or local councillors. They comply with Codes of Conduct and the Standing Orders that apply to meetings of local government committees. General members

are appointed on merit, through open competition and for a term. They are subject to an annual performance appraisal.

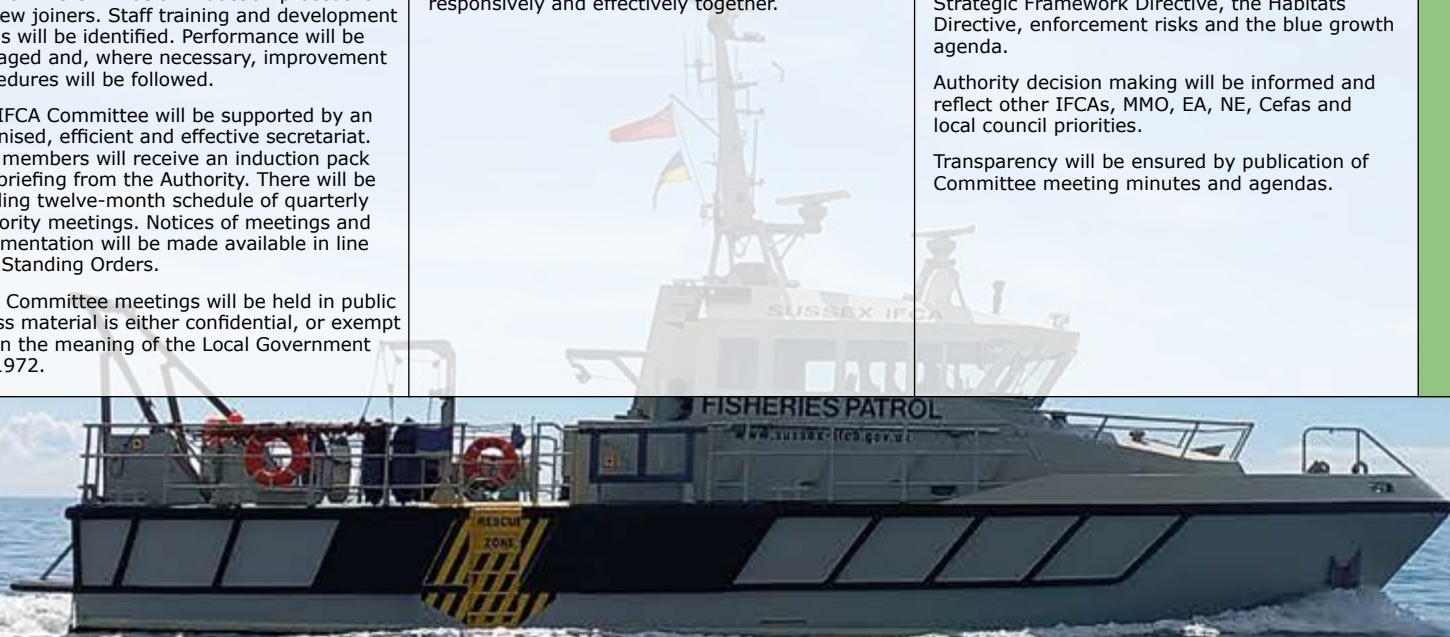
An IFCA is funded by levy, charged to its member councils. Funding originates in local taxation. An IFCA is accountable for its use

of public resources and should ensure that a proper auditing regime provides confidence in its commitment and spend of public money. It should make effective use of its resources, including staff and assets. An IFCA has a statutory obligation to prepare and publish Annual Plans and Annual Reports.

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|--|--|---|---------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan-making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year. Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed. The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve-month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders. IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential, or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972. | <p>SC4A: The IFCA will publish a Plan on its website by 31 March, setting out the main objectives and priorities for the next financial year. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.</p> | <p>Priorities and objectives are discussed and agreed by staff and the Authority.</p> <p>Priorities for the plan will use evidence and be risk based.</p> <p>Priorities will include provision for the operational assets that underpin IFCA activities.</p> <p>Actions will be value for money.</p> <p>Create and publish a plan for each financial year. This will be a four-year plan with an annual review cycle.</p> <p>A copy of the plan will be sent to the Secretary of State.</p> | March 2024 |
| | <p>SC4B: After the end of each financial year, the IFCA will publish a Report on its website describing its activities, performance and a summary of audited financial information in that year, by 30 November. A copy will be sent to the Secretary of State.</p> | <p>Create and Publish an annual report on the website by November.</p> <p>Report to include performance metrics.</p> <p>Report to include annual finance summary.</p> <p>Appropriate financial management controls and audits to be maintained.</p> <p>Administrative processes are in place to ensure control over expenses, procurement and time recording.</p> | November 2024 |
| | <p>SC4C: IFCA staff will have annual performance management plans in place. Annual appraisals for all staff will have been completed by 31 May each year.</p> | <p>Individuals have performance plans that link to the IFCA annual plans.</p> <p>Objectives are discussed and set for individuals.</p> <p>Manager's objectives will include good internal communication to all staff.</p> <p>Personal development requirements for individuals are planned and completed.</p> <p>One-to-one meetings are held regularly and appraisals are carried out in the fourth quarter of the year.</p> | Ongoing |

Success Criterion 4 continued: IFCAs have appropriate governance in place and staff are trained and professional

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|--|---|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IFCA will demonstrate its long-term strategic approach to sustainable marine management by having appropriate plan-making, review, update and amendment procedures in place. The IFCA will record its performance against corporate outcomes and indicators as soon as practically possible following the end of the financial year. Staff performance management systems will be in place that link to the IFCA success criteria. There will be an induction procedure for new joiners. Staff training and development needs will be identified. Performance will be managed and, where necessary, improvement procedures will be followed. The IFCA Committee will be supported by an organised, efficient and effective secretariat. New members will receive an induction pack and briefing from the Authority. There will be a rolling twelve-month schedule of quarterly Authority meetings. Notices of meetings and documentation will be made available in line with Standing Orders. IFCA Committee meetings will be held in public unless material is either confidential, or exempt within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1972. | <p>SC4D: An efficient secretariat of IFCA staff support IFCA Authority meetings which are held quarterly and are quorate. Meeting documentation will meet Standing Orders.</p> | <p>Authority meetings are supported with timely and appropriate agendas and paperwork.</p> <p>Minutes are recorded and issued.</p> <p>Standing orders and terms and conditions for members will be adhered to.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC4E: The IFCA will have demonstrated, in its Annual Report, how marine, land and water management mechanisms in the Inshore Fisheries & Conservation District have worked responsively and effectively together.</p> | <p>Authority decision making will be informed and reflect marine management mechanisms including the MACCA obligations, the South Marine Plan, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategic Framework Directive, the Habitats Directive, enforcement risks and the blue growth agenda.</p> <p>Authority decision making will be informed and reflect other IFCAs, MMO, EA, NE, Cefas and local council priorities.</p> <p>Transparency will be ensured by publication of Committee meeting minutes and agendas.</p> | Ongoing |



Success Criterion 5: IFCAs make the best use of evidence to deliver their objectives

Definition: IFCAs are statutory regulators for their Inshore Fisheries and Conservation District. Decision-making should be based on evidence. All IFCAs are supported by

officers who pool their expertise and share best practice as a Technical Advisory Group (TAG). A programme of research activity and monitoring is planned, developed and updated

in consultation with partners. The programme informs management decisions and supports justification for additional research and evidence gathering.

| Outcomes | Indicator | Actions | RAG status |
|---|--|--|------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A strategic research plan that contributes to greater understanding of the marine environment and delivery of cost-effective management of sea fisheries resources. Standard Operating Procedures describe how data is captured and shared with principal partners. A list of research databases held by the IFCA and the frequency of their review. Non-confidential meta-data collected through the IFCA research programme should be recorded in a database available to the marine research community. | <p>SC5A: The IFCA will demonstrate progress that has made towards identifying its evidence needs by publishing a research plan each year.</p> | <p>Create and publish a strategic 4 year and Annual Research Plan.</p> <p>IFCA evidence collection capability will be maintained.</p> <p>Ecosystem services evidence will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p> <p>Climate change trends and impacts will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p> <p>Fisheries activity, landing, economic values and impact will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p> <p>Species distribution, seasonality, life-cycle patterns and habitat information will be part of the evidence portfolio.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC5B: The IFCA will publish a research report annually that demonstrates how evidence has supported decision making.</p> | <p>Create and publish an annual Research Report.</p> <p>Communicate research findings through accessible education and awareness strategies.</p> <p>Use evidence to inform IFCA decision making and influence others decision making.</p> | Ongoing |
| | <p>SC5C: The IFCA's contribution to TAG and progress that has been made towards a national evidence needs programme will be recorded in the IFCA's Annual Report.</p> | <p>Support the IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and its work streams.</p> <p>Describe in the Annual Report the contribution towards building a national evidence needs programme.</p> | Ongoing |

Risk management strategy

In accordance with good management practice and government guidance, the Authority produces an annual risk strategy. The strategy is published within the Authority's Annual Plan and its contents are under constant review by the Senior Management Team who report on risks to the Authority through the governance structure. The strategy takes the form of a risk matrix which is a 'live' document that develops as the Authority increasingly understands future work, this may in turn lead to deployment of organisational resources, the reallocation of resources and the development of capabilities.

Government reporting guidance requires that new risks identified for intervention should be highlighted in the Authority's Annual Report. A fully reviewed risk matrix is incorporated into the Annual Plan.

A tabulated summary of new and priority risks and interventions is provided for information.



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| New or Priority Risk Description | Intended Intervention 2023 to 2024 | Residual Risk |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Failure to retain/recruit staff due to pressures associated with inflationary/living costs</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue with flexible and hybrid working arrangements adopted over Covid 19. ▶ Managers support and motivate staff, management through regular 121's and Individual Performance Plans. ▶ Salaries reviewed through benchmarking process to best ensure competitiveness. ▶ Support staff professional and personal development though providing opportunities including, internal/external training, professional membership, chartership. ▶ Maintain modern employment terms and conditions that promote effective service delivery. | <p>Small organisation so internal progression limited.</p> <p>Salaries perceived as uncompetitive with larger organisations or private sector.</p> <p>Cost of living factors, e.g. locally high housing costs in SE England.</p> |
| <p>Unable to meet new Sussex IFCA Duties and high level objectives</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to provide best available evidence to Defra and local government to secure future funding. Support the AIFCA in efforts to communicate needs to Defra and other relevant departments. ▶ Maintain and develop IFCA/Defra standard MPA reporting processes that highlight level of risk and actions required for delivery of MPA network e.g., provision of evidence and conservation advice to enable development of effective management. ▶ Seek to develop MPA related research initiatives in partnership with relevant statutory bodies, marine industry sector and wider community. Support Sussex Natural Capital Strategy. ▶ Ensure continual development of all staff and engage with national training initiatives. ▶ Seek to develop joint working with the Marine Management Organisation and other relevant organisations. ▶ Support IFCA Chief Officer Group and National Enforcement Group to develop strategic shared approaches to training, intelligence, MCSS development and fisheries data acquisition to support local management needs. ▶ Continually evaluate and accommodate administrative implications of managing paid permit schemes for shellfish management. | <p>Possibility that although progress will have been made Sussex IFCA could fail to fully meet all its new objectives.</p> <p>That defined objectives are impacted upon by external factors beyond management control.</p> |
| <p>Failure to maintain effective financial management and control.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to develop financial management systems and opportunities for administration efficiencies. ▶ Increase role of financial support in the development and support of project work. ▶ Robust processes and separate bank account for the management of paid permit schemes for shellfish and oyster management. ▶ Following changes to Audit Commission oversight maintain external independent auditing processes that report to Chief Financial Officer & Authority. ▶ Annual independent financial examination and internal audit and reporting process conducted by independent accountants. ▶ Maintain detailed reporting and required approval with Finance subcommittee on budgetary and key financial matters. ▶ Adoption of management accounts that include depreciation, prepayments, accruals to ensure effective annual and quarterly budget management of income and expenditure. ▶ Maintain financial planning on a four year cycle to inform constituent authorities of planned annual levies. ▶ In event of future Finance Manager change utilise agency recruitment process to minimise period and ensure adequate handover. | <p>Negligible scope for large scale fraud or corruption.</p> <p>Small scale misuse of resources is still possible.</p> |

| New or Priority Risk Description | Intended Intervention 2023 to 2024 | Residual Risk |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Failure of vessel assets</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Implementation of ten year operating and service plan for Watchful. ▶ Develop opportunities for Watchful and Merlin to undertake income related activities that support a sustainable Sussex marine environment. Look at strengthening further relationships with MMO, Environment Agency and Brighton University. ▶ Seek appropriate funding and procurement strategy for scheduled Delta 1 vessel replacement as asset reaches 'end of life'. ▶ Vessel capital expenditure and depreciation to be fully accounted through balance sheet deductions. ▶ Appropriate valuation of marine assets to ensure adequate depreciation figure. ▶ Keep insurance under review and maintain mechanical insurance for significant unanticipated maintenance. | <p>Unforeseen events may still cause disruption to activities.</p> <p>Multiple simultaneous failures of available vessels.</p> |
| <p>Failure to effectively monitor and enforce legislation</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintain risk-based compliance register and associated policies and procedures. <p>As far as possible seek MCSS access and shared intelligence tools and processes with national partner MMO and fully engage with National Intelligence model.</p> <p>Continue to maintain and develop collaborative MMO/EA/NE/IFCA approaches toward compliance.</p> <p>Engage in national training initiative 'Skills for Justice' accredited compliance training scheme and appoint relevant training leads as required.</p> <p>Assign specific officer to RSA related liaison/communications to minimise compliance risks in sector.</p> <p>Production of detailed guidance on all new Byelaw regulations.</p> | <p>Full time District coverage is not possible to achieve.</p> <p>Small minority of fishermen will continue to breach legislation due to short term gain.</p> <p>Lack of financial deterrent.</p> <p>Some legislation difficult to enforce effectively.</p> |
| <p>Failure to maintain survey/sampling programme</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Seek opportunities to run surveys/programmes through further partnership projects and the use of volunteers and student placements. ▶ If available secure capital grants for research equipment. ▶ Optimise use of IFCA shared research equipment assets. ▶ Seek to develop opportunities for studentships and placements with Brighton & Sussex University. ▶ Prioritise key research and ensure new projects are achievable in the context of existing research plans. ▶ Maintain an adequate research budget. | <p>Planned surveys lost due to poor weather or vessel breakdown.</p> <p>Research programme continues to expand year on year.</p> <p>Additional unanticipated requirements for surveys.</p> |
| <p>Failure to fully engage with stakeholders</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As appropriate continue public engagement with MCZ and fisheries regulation introduction. Where necessary, support with additional stakeholder meetings to refine management measures. ▶ Develop communications for both informal and formal consultations in respect to the making of reviewed management byelaws. ▶ Maintain a communication plan that is regularly reviewed. Increase digital footprint and adopt social media communication channels, on top of existing, effective engagement. | <p>Engagement affected by factors outside of IFCA control such as 'consultation fatigue'.</p> <p>Some stakeholders unable or unwilling to engage with some forms of media or communications.</p> |

Resources

Employees & Organisational Structure

The Authority employs a specialist team of multi-disciplined professionals to undertake its work. Individually they have extensive skills, knowledge and experience in their respective roles. The organisation comprises: compliance and enforcement, marine operations, conservation and research, finance and administration functions. Staff are overseen by a senior management team (SMT); the Chief and Deputy Chief Officers, which in turn reports to Authority members.

The current organisational structure is shown in the adjoining figure. All staff are based at 'Riverside', a centrally located coastal office base in Shoreham-by-Sea.

All Officers carry the status of 'Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer'. Enforcement officers are issued with an Inshore Fisheries & Conservation warrant card. Officers may also be joint warranted with relevant authorities that manage the marine environment.

Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer

Mr. Robert Pearson MIFM M.Sc. B.Sc.

- Head of Service for Authority and lead within the Senior Management Team
- Management of the IFCA and Reporting Officer to Committee
- National policy liaison role and media contact
- Chief Officer in respect to financial management
- Strategic development of policies and plans.

Deputy Chief Fisheries and Conservation Officer

Ms. Angharad Purcell B.Sc.

- Member of the Senior Management Team
- Development of policies, plans and research and implementation of review of management measures
- Oversees sector/operational managers
- Strategic lead on fisheries compliance and training.

Committee Manager & Personal Assistant to SMT

Ms. Rebecca Belleni B.A.

- Provide full secretarial and administrative service to SMT and administration support to Sector Managers
- Service the Principal Committee and other meetings by preparing, collating, and distributing agenda papers and minutes
- Support Members through the distribution of Authority guidance and direct liaison
- Responsible for establishing and maintaining office systems, records and processes
- Management of office space and its maintenance including office H&S
- Maintain social media communications, acting as central support.

Strategic Advisor & Clerk

Mr. Tim Dapling MIFM M.Sc. B.Sc.

- Advisory role on governance, constitutional and procedural matters to the Authority
- Maintain appropriate governance policies, standing orders and codes of conduct for members
- Strategic support on fisheries and environmental management.

Finance Manager

Mrs. Lucy Francis FCA CPFA LLB

- Manage, monitor and maintain budgetary and financial information
- Plan and monitor the financial position of the Authority as directed by the Senior Management Team
- Responsible for implementation of Annual Audit and implementation of financial regulations
- Payroll and pension payments.

Marine Operations Manager & Master of Vessels

Mr. Charlie Hubbard

- Manage all aspects of the Authority's vessels' operations
- Marine operations budget management
- Master on the Authority's vessels
- Manage crew during marine operations.

Conservation & Research Managers (Job Share)

Dr Jen Lewis PhD. MRes. BSc.
and **Dr George Balchin** PhD. MRes. BSc.

- Team lead into SMT on conservation and research activities
- Support and assist the SMT/Authority in the development of MPA policy and management.
- Participate and facilitate community meetings in respect to Marine Protected Area management.
- Participate in the research & environmental activities in support of MPAs and other marine management functions.

Senior Research Officer

Dr George Balchin PhD. MRes. BSc.

- Support development of the Authority's Annual Research Plan
- Design and inform the methodology of research projects undertaken by the Authority
- Implement the practical aspects of the Authority's research projects as identified in the annual Research Plan
- Support the development of research partnerships with other organisations
- Operational support for vessel and research activities.

Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Operations, Intelligence and Investigation)

Dr. Alberto Kavadellas PhD. B.Sc.

- Lead on operational compliance activities & risk-based enforcement
- Operational support for vessel and research activities.
- Lead on compliance activities in the field.

Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer (Research, Intelligence and Investigation)

Mr. Nick Rogers B.Sc.

- Support on evidence (research) collection, reporting and assessment
- Support and lead on small fish survey work throughout the district
- Support on operational compliance activities & risk-based enforcement
- Operational support for vessel and research activities
- Lead on compliance activities in the field.

First Mate of Patrol Vessels

Mr. Matt Wiseman B.Sc.

- Act as Deputy Marine Operations Manager & Vessels Master
- Supervise and direct crew members of the vessel in the delivery of marine operations and research support
- Act as designated helm on the Authority's semi-rigid inflatable boats (SRIBs) and as Navigator and Radar Operator
- Conduct fisheries and conservation compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with risk-based enforcement process.

Marine Technician

Mr. Andrew McCallum

- Manage the Authority's workshop facilities.
- Maintain the Authority's patrol vessels, vehicles and ancillary equipment.

Fisheries and Conservation Officers (Research) (x2)

Mr. Jake Wilson B.Sc.

and **Ms. Vanessa Simons** M.Sc. MRes. B.Sc.

- Conduct fisheries and conservation research activities in accordance with the conservation and research plan
- Carry out fisheries compliance activities in support of the compliance and enforcement team
- Facilitate consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders
- Operational support for vessel and research activities.

Fisheries and Conservation Officers (x2)

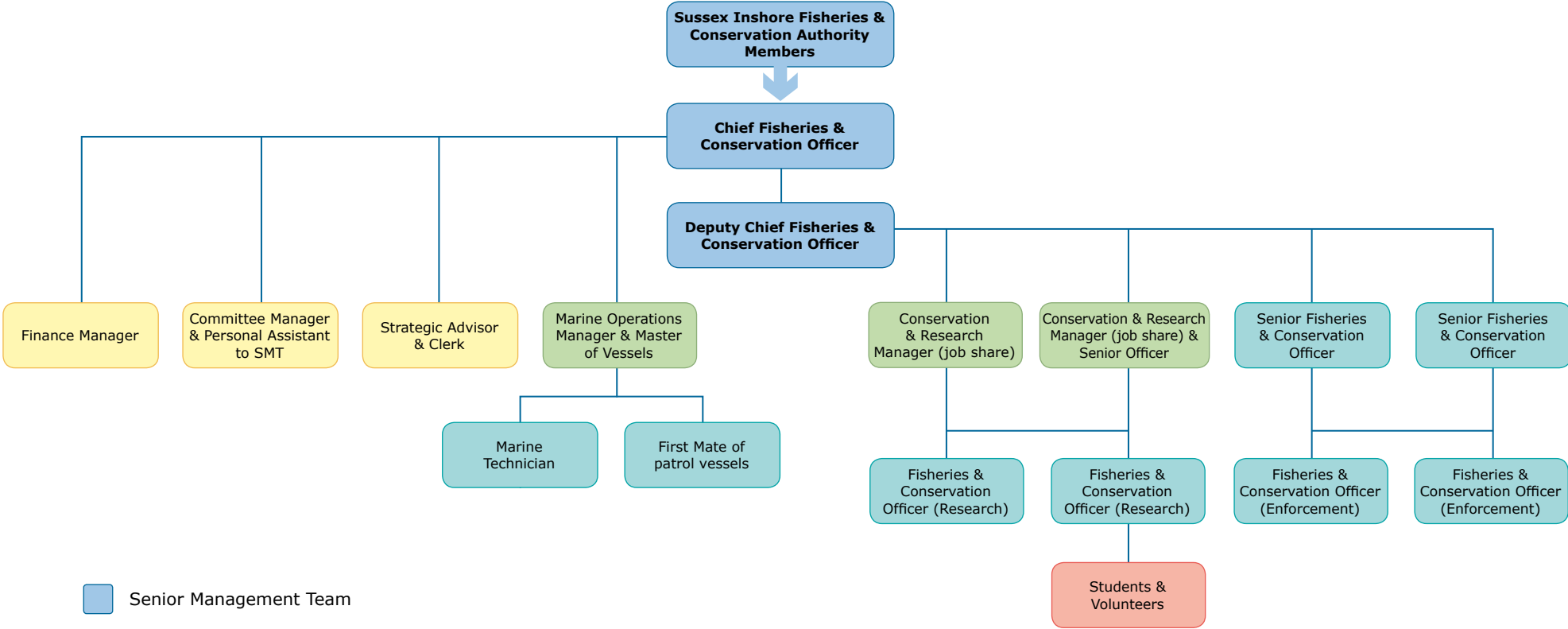
Mr. James Tapley B.Sc.

and **Ms. Laura Wallace** M.Sc.

- Conduct fisheries and conservation compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with risk-based enforcement process
- Carry out fisheries research activities in support of the conservation and research team
- Facilitate consultation and dialogue with relevant stakeholders
- Operational support for vessel and research activities.

Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority

Organisational Structure 2023-2024



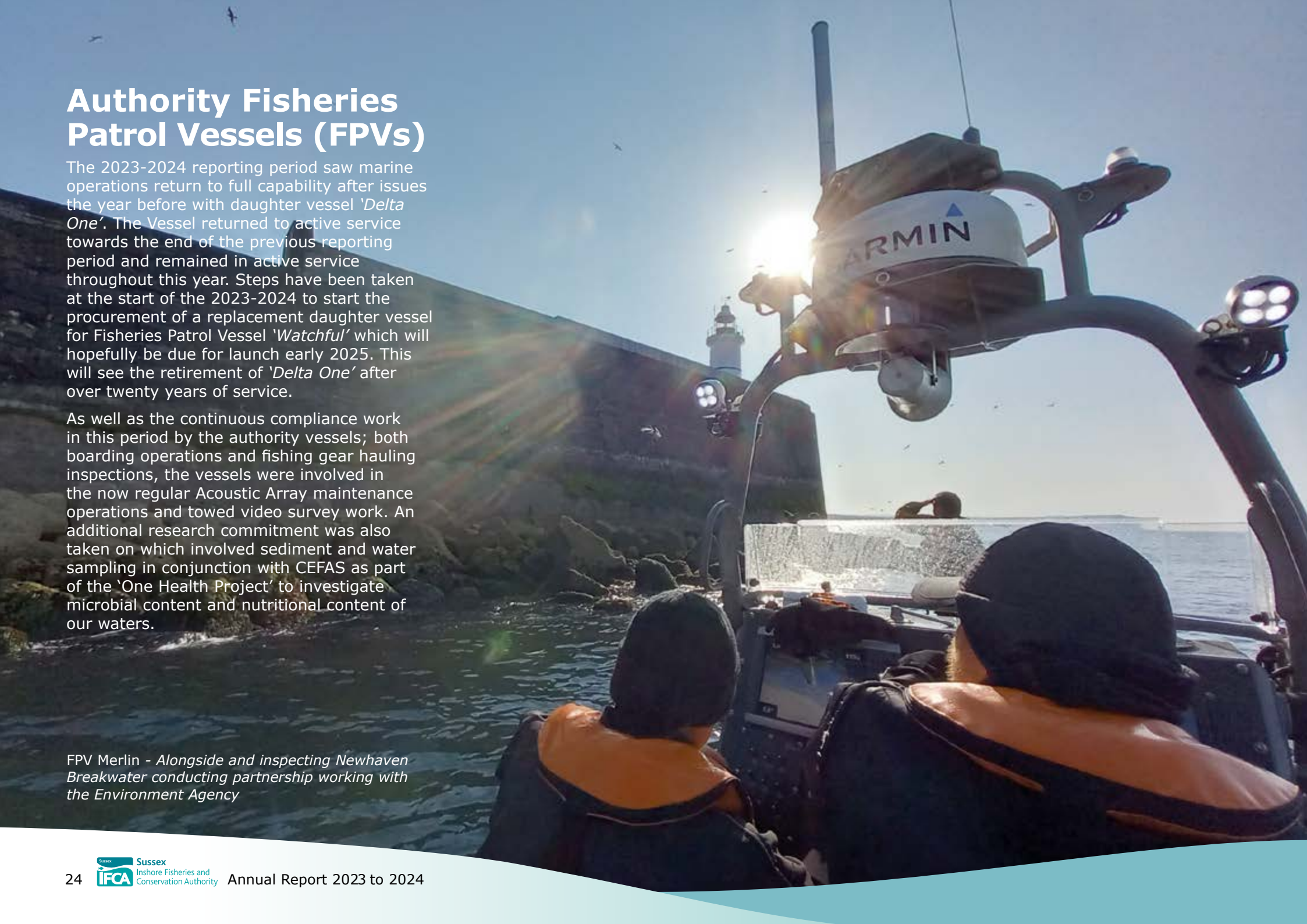
- Senior Management Team
- Sector Managers
- Operational Fisheries & Conservation posts
- Finance & Admin posts
- Temporary/Non-employed

Authority Fisheries Patrol Vessels (FPVs)

The 2023-2024 reporting period saw marine operations return to full capability after issues the year before with daughter vessel 'Delta One'. The Vessel returned to active service towards the end of the previous reporting period and remained in active service throughout this year. Steps have been taken at the start of the 2023-2024 to start the procurement of a replacement daughter vessel for Fisheries Patrol Vessel 'Watchful' which will hopefully be due for launch early 2025. This will see the retirement of 'Delta One' after over twenty years of service.

As well as the continuous compliance work in this period by the authority vessels; both boarding operations and fishing gear hauling inspections, the vessels were involved in the now regular Acoustic Array maintenance operations and towed video survey work. An additional research commitment was also taken on which involved sediment and water sampling in conjunction with CEFAS as part of the 'One Health Project' to investigate microbial content and nutritional content of our waters.

FPV Merlin - *Alongside and inspecting Newhaven Breakwater conducting partnership working with the Environment Agency*



FPV Watchful

Fisheries Patrol vessel 'Watchful' is the primary sea going asset for Sussex IFCA, designed specifically for operation within the Sussex district. The 18-meter vessel is capable of operating both in and offshore. The integrated ramp allows for 'Watchful' to carry a 5.5-meter daughter vessel which is primarily used for conducting boarding operations as part of our compliance work. The daughter vessel can also be removed, and decking put in its place to provide a large open deck area.

The deck area is a huge advantage to the Sussex IFCA in delivering both research and compliance objectives – the additional space allows for longer strings of fishing gear to be hauled and inspected, as well as allow for the safe deployment of research equipment such as our ROV and towed video sleds.

FPV Merlin

Fisheries Patrol vessel 'Merlin' was launched in 2013, built by MST with funding support from the Environment Agency. The vessel is owned

and operated by Sussex IFCA, and boasts a waterjet propulsion unit which allows the vessel to be operated in extremely shallow waters. This is extremely valuable for both research, compliance and charter operations both near shore and within the Sussex district's many rivers. The vessel is capable of safely operating at high speeds with a relatively long operational range which allows it to be used at short notice to rapidly respond to any potential compliance issues.



FPV Watchful – conducting an inspection of whelk pots south of Fairlight to the east of the Sussex IFCA district

Officers aboard Delta One preparing to launch and conduct inspections

Financial Summary 2023/2024

Levy income

The Authority is predominantly publicly funded, by means of annual statutory levies on its constituent Authorities (West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council) to undertake its Marine & Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA 2009) duties. The Authority's levy funding is essential for the implementation of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) defined High Level Objectives and the associated work programme described in the Authority's Annual Plan. The Authority sets the levies ahead of the financial year to ensure that budgeted expenditure is fully funded. The total amount of Levy income for the financial year 2023/24 was £1,095,360.

The constituent Authorities fund the levies from the financial resources which are available to them, predominantly council tax receivable from local taxpayers; non-domestic rates payable by businesses in the area; and Government grant. The MaCAA 2009 had introduced new fisheries and conservation management duties including the management of fishing activities within Marine Conservation Zones that lie within the Sussex IFCA's District. In recognition of the additional costs that would be incurred by Sussex IFCA in responding to these new duties, the Government has provided additional annual grants to its constituent Authorities each year through to 2023/24 in order to mitigate the impact on levies.

Charter, Project, Permit and Other income

12% of income, £146,795, was derived from grant receipts for projects, as well as income from permits issued in accordance with the local Shellfish Byelaw and other income, including investment income. This year, additional grants were received from Defra to support the delivery of the Fisheries and Management Plan (FMP) programme. The income derived from each commercial shellfish permit is accounted for evenly over its two-year validity period, rather than as a single amount at the date that it is received. The total income from all permits in 2023/24 was £11,019.

£4,250, 0.3% of income, was generated from charter of the Authority's vessels.

Expenditure

Expenditure on employees in 2023/24, including employer statutory and contractual contributions, training and development, represented 69.2% (£858,879) of total expenditure. The increase year on year, results from the national pay award and additional headcount to support the FMP requirements. Other notable categories of expenditure were the operation and maintenance of vessels, £115,437, and compliance, research and project costs, £29,219. In addition to support and administrative costs, an annual depreciation charge is made in order to account for the reduction in value of vessels and other equipment as they age.

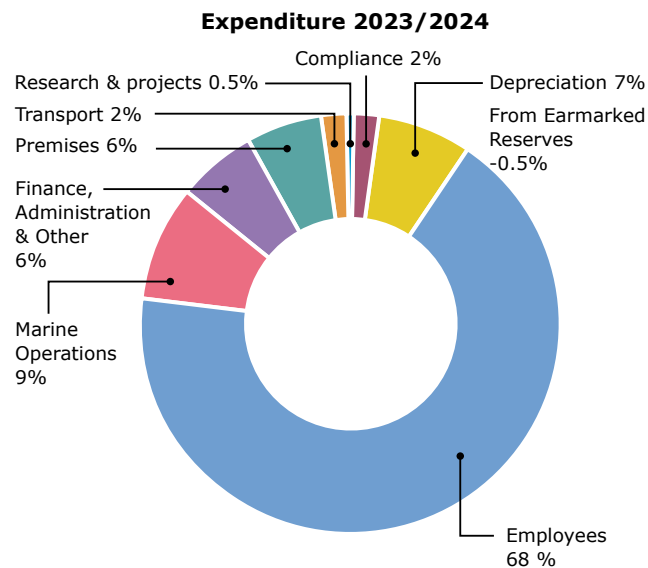
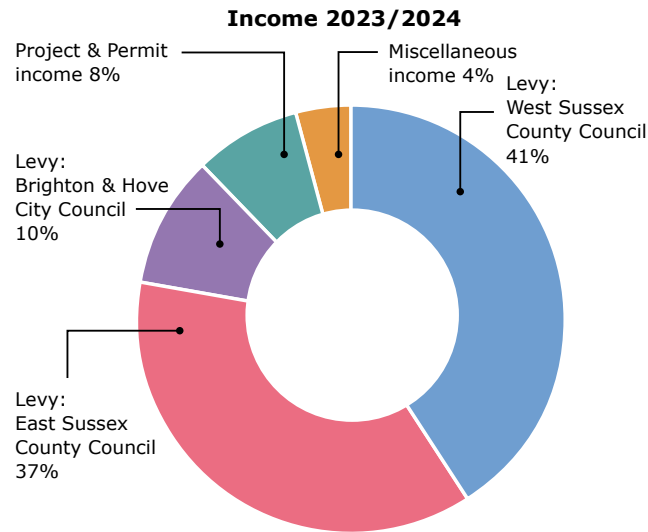
Premises and administrative costs are higher than previous due to significant increases in utilities costs, as well as cost inflation across most expense categories. At the end of the year a surplus of £5,168 was added to reserves.

Examination of accounts

In the interest of public assurance and accountability, the Authority has chosen to put in place an independent assurance review of its annual accounts. In 2023/24, this review was undertaken by James Todd & Co, who concluded that they had no cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept as required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014
2. the financial statements do not accord with those records.

Statement of Income and Expenditure 2023/2024



Statement of Income and Expenditure 2023 to 2024

| | £ |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| INCOME | |
| West Sussex County Council | 512,190 |
| East Sussex County Council | 461,790 |
| Brighton and Hove City Council | 121,380 |
| Total Levies | 1,095,360 |
| Project, Permit & Grant income | 105,856 |
| Miscellaneous income | 45,189 |
| Total Income | 1,246,405 |

| | £ |
|--|------------------|
| EXPENDITURE | |
| Employees | 858,879 |
| Marine Operations | 115,437 |
| Finance, Administration & Other | 70,278 |
| Premises | 69,748 |
| Transport | 21,984 |
| Research, Projects & Donations | 5,498 |
| Compliance | 23,721 |
| Depreciation | 80,787 |
| Contribution from Earmarked Reserves | (5,095) |
| Total Expenditure | 1,241,237 |
| Surplus for year transferred to Reserves | 5,168 |
| Total | 1,246,405 |

In accordance with Statutory Instrument 2010 No. 2199, Article 16

- (1) The expenses incurred by the Authority must be defrayed by the relevant councils in accordance with paragraph (2)
- (2) The percentage of those expenses to be defrayed by each relevant council is as follows:

| | 2023/24 Levy | £ |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| West Sussex County Council | 46.7% | £512,190 |
| East Sussex County Council | 42.2% | £461,790 |
| Brighton and Hove City Council | 11.1% | £121,380 |
| | 100.0% | £1,095,360 |

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024

| | £ | £ |
|--------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| LONG TERM ASSETS | | |
| Historic cost or value | | |
| : Vessels | 1,140,000 | |
| : Office Equipment | 117,410 | |
| : Vehicles | 7,395 | 1,264,805 |
| Accumulated depreciation | | |
| : Vessels | (416,000) | |
| : Office Equipment | (68,658) | |
| : Vehicles | (7,395) | (492,053) |
| | | 772,752 |

| | £ | £ |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| SHORT TERM ASSETS | | |
| Debtors | 3,097 | |
| Prepayments | 47,166 | |
| VAT reimbursement due | 10,768 | |
| Cash | 1,374,690 | 1,435,721 |

| | £ | £ |
|-------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| SHORT TERM LIABILITIES | | |
| Creditors | (40,581) | |
| Income in advance | (299,736) | |
| Deferred income | (11,643) | |
| Fixed Asset Penalties | (11,000) | |
| HMRC and Pension Fund | (28,782) | (391,742) |
| Net Assets | | 1,816,731 |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Revenue Reserve at 1 April 2023 | 861,085 | |
| Surplus for year | 5,168 | |
| Revenue Reserve at 31 March 2024 | | 866,253 |
| Earmarked Reserves | | 59,910 |
| Revaluation Reserve | | 890,568 |
| Total Reserves | | 1,816,731 |

Our Conservation and Research Work

Work conducted by the Conservation and Research (C&R) Team over the 2023-2024 financial year continued to provide essential evidence to inform and monitor the Authority's management decisions, and further our understanding of the inshore marine environment and fisheries. There was a wide range of C&R work undertaken over this period, across multiple workstreams in the Annual C&R Plan, drawn from the strategic Four-Year C&R Plan 2020-2024.

Embedded within the Four-Year C&R Plan is the Authority's move towards an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management, in alignment with Government policy as stated in the Fisheries Act 2020. The teams evidence collecting activities provide information that underpin the development of sustainable fisheries management, whilst protecting natural capital assets and associated ecosystem services.

Sussex IFCA's commitment to partnership working and community engagement is illustrated in the work that is supported and conducted in collaboration with our partners and volunteers. Such collaboration is central to the way Sussex IFCA operates; sharing and employing skills and data to provide mutual benefits for all stakeholders and an effective service with limited capacity and resources.

Research and analysis were conducted to provide evidence for the development of new byelaws, and the review of existing byelaws, which aim to protect the marine environment

whilst balancing the social and economic benefits of fishing. The following summarises highlights of priority workstreams in 2023-2024:

Marine Conservation Zone management development

Beachy Head East MCZ

Beachy Head East MCZ was a priority workstream for 2023-2024; iterative consultations with stakeholders and statutory bodies were completed ensuring that the management proposed is fit for purpose and achieves its objectives. Specific progress includes:

- Following informal consultation, an Impact Assessment (IA) was produced, this was amended to address concerns from Natural England (NE) around historical evidence of features
- Zonal management of bottom towed gears was proposed and taken to statutory consultation
- NE's statutory consultation response provided new evidence of features vulnerable to towed gears within the non-managed zone
- The byelaw, and associated MCZ Assessment and IA, were updated with new management zones that incorporated the new evidence
- A second statutory consultation was conducted to gather stakeholder views on the extension of the management zone



Conservation and Research Officers identifying and measuring fish during a small fish survey in Chichester Harbour

Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) management monitoring and reviews

Pagham MCZ/SPA

The management review for Pagham Harbour MCZ/SPA was completed and the associated decision item was approved at the April 2023 Committee Meeting. The next review of Pagham Harbour MCZ/SPA is anticipated in 2027-2028.

Kingmere MCZ

Sussex IFCA has been assessing fishing activity within the site. We will continue to conduct fisheries activity research during the black seabream nesting season to collect informative quantitative and qualitative data, and further analysis and assessments will be conducted as required to inform the review.

Solent and Dorset Coast SPA & Dungeness, Romney March and Rye Bay SPA: extensions for tern foraging areas

Solent and Dorset Coast SPA and Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SPA HRAs are in progress for the 2017 tern foraging extension. Currently, demersal trawling, fixed netting, drift netting, potting, and dredging have been taken to the appropriate assessment stage.

Byelaw monitoring

Fishing Vessel Effort

Fishing sightings data is collected on routine sea patrols, date, time, vessel name and PLN (port letters and numbers), latitude and longitude location of the fishing vessel, and fishing method (gear type) are recorded. These data are then used to produce fishing

effort maps, the 2019-2023 analysis can be viewed on the website.

Shellfish Permit Byelaw

Sussex IFCA continues to collect and analyse shellfish permit catch returns to monitor and support the fishery and the latest annual report can be viewed on the website.

Nearshore Trawling Byelaw

Towed video surveys were successfully conducted for the fifth consecutive year in all 24 sites. Towing the ROV (over soft ground) was also trialled, with a view to enabling monitoring of the previously excluded 25th transect in Kingmere MCZ, however further testing will be conducted before attempting this at the site. Sussex IFCA are also in talks with the main SKRP partner for this project, Zoological Society London, to work up the videos collected so far for analysis and subsequent production of a report.

Minimum Size (Fish, Crustacea, and Mollusc) Byelaw

The MMO/Defra QA process is ongoing.

The Elasmobranch Code of Conduct, which includes suggested minimum sizes and guidelines to reduce post-release mortality, and which will be published alongside the Minimum Sizes Byelaw, has been updated to reflect a new collaborating input from the Shark Trust, alongside the inclusion of pictures to species ID by the renowned elasmobranch illustrator Mark Dando.

Hand Gathering Permit Byelaw

The MMO/Defra QA process is ongoing for this Byelaw.



Tagging tope off Selsey for the Angling for Sustainability project with the University of Plymouth

Fisheries Management Plans

General update

Sussex IFCA have inputted significantly to discussions, evidence gathering, and consultations for the first and second tranche of FMPs with this continuing into the third and fourth tranches. Offshore fisheries management is intrinsically linked to the success and sustainability of those inshore, therefore the C&R team have endeavoured to provide productive and effective contributions to the process.

Front runner FMPs

Sussex IFCA submitted a thorough response to the statutory consultation for the frontrunner FMPs, which included detailed Sussex-specific information on the crab, lobster, and whelk fisheries garnered from analysis of data submitted via the Shellfish Permit Byelaw catch return system.

Officers and Committee Members attended an AIFCA workshop to identify and prioritise common themes in the responses of each individual IFCA to the development of the six frontrunner FMPs. This in turn informed the statutory consultation of the response made by the AIFCA.

Skate and Ray FMP

Sussex IFCA attended all Skate and Ray Working Group (WG) meetings, and an engagement event. The Sussex district (7d) was recognised as a hotspot for the critically endangered undulate ray and its association with their reproductive behaviours. This was highlighted in the short-term evidence requirements of the draft FMP proposal, specifically to “explore the efficacy of existing



Measuring European lobsters during a potting survey with Blue Marine Foundation and local fishers

and potential management options (i.e. gear, effort, spatiotemporal) to protect potential juvenile/breeding assemblages whilst allowing for continued high-value recreational fishing and commercial bycatch”.

Whelk FMP and Crab and Lobster FMP

Sussex IFCA responded to the FMP consultation survey and participated in a follow up interview to feedback on the effectiveness of the consultation process for the Crab and Lobster and Whelk FMPs. Data obtained from Shellfish Permit Byelaw Catch

Returns was analysed ahead of Defra’s formal FMP consultation.

Partnerships and collaborative projects

Fish telemetry

The ongoing work to maintain and download data from the acoustic telemetry array in Sussex has continued with great success. The first full year of data showed some interesting results, including:

- 64 bream were tagged in 2022. 29 of these (45%) of black seabream tagged in 2022 were redetected in 2023
- Redetection rates varied by location tagged
 - Boulder Bank fish: 30 tagged, 13 redetected (43%)
 - Kingmere: 25 tagged, 14 redetected (56%)
 - Indiana Wreck: 9 tagged, 2 redetected (22%)
- Return rates of bream to receivers at tagging location (site fidelity)
 - Boulder bank: 10 returned (33% of tagged, 76% of Boulder bream detected in 2023)
 - Kingmere: 11 returned (46% of tagged, 84% of Kingmere Bream detected in 2023)

Officers continue to engage with the Acoustic Telemetry Working Group to discuss field operations, data, results, and future opportunities. Officers are collaborating with academics at the University of Plymouth to use this data in scientific publications.

Sussex Kelp Restoration Project (SKRP)

See "Nearshore Trawling Byelaw" above, towed surveys continue to be conducted to monitor the effect of this byelaw on nearshore habitats.

The relationship between local freediver, and kelp habitats in Sussex, as well as the decline of recovery of these habitats was captured in a short documentary by Sarah Cunliffe of Big Wave Productions titled "Our Sea Forest". It aired as part of the BBC "Our Lives" series in September. Officers attended a screening event in October and the Chief Officer sat on the Q&A panel alongside filmmakers, conservationists and researchers involved in the project.

The SKRP 2023-2024 Impact Report has been finalised and published, available at <https://sussexkelp.org.uk/news/reports-publications>. The C&R Team was involved in reviewing the report and contributed updates on the towed video surveys, shellfish catch return analysis, MMO landings analysis, the presentations section, and the Enforcement team provided a 'day in the life' piece summarising compliance and enforcement related to the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw.

The Barrier and Optimum Conditions report commissioned by Blue Marine Foundation, written by researchers at the University of Newcastle, and reviewed by Sussex IFCA

and Zoological Society London is also being finalised. The report is a detailed account of the life history, ecology, and historical distribution of kelp species in the UK, as well as a review of barriers to and optimum conditions for kelp recovery, and methods for monitoring and habitat restoration with recommendations for future efforts.

Sussex IFCA assisted with potting surveys conducted by Blue Marine Foundation (BMF) in Selsey and Brighton. The surveys measure the abundance, size, weight, sex and condition of Edible Crab, European lobster and Spider Crab caught in the pots at sites in and outside the Sussex Nearshore Trawling Byelaw



© Felix Reitze de la Haye

area. Following the completion of potting surveys over the summer, Sussex IFCA has consulted on the associated data analysis and report write up.

Small Fish Surveys (SFS)

Officers continued their extensive assistance of SFS in Chichester Harbour led by researchers associated with the Solent Seascape Project throughout June – September. Sites included Cobnor Point, Copperas Point, Winner Bank and Pilsey Island.

Sussex IFCA has collated data from all 2023 Chichester Harbour SFS into an annual juvenile fish survey report. The report identifies which species were most common on these surveys, which included sand smelt (*Atherina presbyter*), European seabass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*), and herring (*Clupea harengus*).

The Authority is currently in the QA process for uploading Sussex IFCA SFS data from 2010 onwards to the online MEDIN data portal.

Technical Advisory Group (TAG)

Sussex IFCA continues to engage with TAG to discuss current and future considerations for research efforts that drive inshore fisheries management. In 2023-2024 this included discussion of the Cefas stock assessment, and possibility of incorporating data from animals below MCRS. The production of an Environmental Officer training pack for new Officers is now in development, and resources previously compiled by Sussex IFCA have been shared with the group.

Environment Agency (EA) Pevensey to Eastbourne Scheme

Sussex IFCA has informally consulted with the EA on this large infrastructure project, specifically on the use of artificial reefs. This involved highlighting the ReMeMaRe project, which conducted national habitat suitability modelling for several relevant species, and suggesting that any artificial reef design should consider the designated features of Beachy Head East MCZ.

Rampion 2 consultation

Sussex IFCA provided a response to the Rampion 2 Environmental Statement Consultation. The proposed array falls outside (but closely borders) the Sussex IFCA District, and the cable route passes through. Therefore, the construction and maintenance phases of the array and, in particular the

cable route will affect Sussex IFCA fishers, fisheries and habitats within the District. Sussex IFCA will continue to liaise with the Offshore Consents Manager throughout the consultation process.

Sussex Marine and Coastal Forum (SMaCF)

After a lull in activity the Steering Group has come together to rejuvenate the project and establish a Terms of Reference for both the Steering and Member Groups. A discussion on future priorities is ongoing with supporting the Ocean Symposium and establishing a media presence to communicate SMaCF's structure and background were highlighted as two likely projects.

Measuring sea bass on a small fish survey in Chichester Harbour for the Solent Seascape project



© Felix Reitze de la Haye

Crustacean Habitats and Sediment Movement (CHASM)

Sussex IFCA continued to attend and contribute to the Steering Group and consulted on the formation of the Sussex Sediment Working Group. CHASM has also focused on funding and consulting on the use of Sondes to answer relevant to crustacea declines. This is led by the University of Southampton who are investigating associations with data from the Coastal Monitoring Programme and Met Ocean Sensors.

Monitoring seabed recovery on a towed video survey following the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw



Sussex Sediment Working Group

This group was established after the Sussex Sediment Monitoring and Adaptive Response Workshop in May 2023. A diverse range of interests and organisations were represented, and the meeting sought to identify the working group's shared purpose and priorities to inform funding proposals to support an action plan. The group carried out a data and research gap analysis, explored potential for research and monitoring collaboration, and discussed existing policy and decision making.

The Living Coast Biosphere

Sussex IFCA continues to maintain its position on the Board for The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere, with a key role in advising on marine conservation and sustainable fisheries, in light of the United Nations sustainable development goal 'Life below water'.

Education and engagement work

Wild Coast Sussex

Sussex IFCA have continued their strong support with three Officers completing Wild Beach Leader training, supporting Wild Beach School and the Wild Coast Sussex Beach Camp, hosting interns, and participating in their Hackathon.

Shoresearch

Sussex IFCA continue to support Sussex Wildlife Trust with their Shoresearch monitoring throughout the district, including supplying Officers to survey intertidal habitats and species. Officers engaged with other volunteers to educate them on the IFCA's role in the district.

Interactive map

Sussex IFCA has been working with Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre for several years to develop an online interactive map which shows seabed habitats (including video clips), bathymetry, Sussex IFCA spatial byelaws, marine protected areas, fishing activity, wrecks and ecosystem services.

Universities

Presentations on the role of IFCA's in fisheries management were given at Brighton and Sussex University and Officers support University of Brighton fieldwork.



Workshops and conferences

Coastal Futures Conference

Conservation and Research Managers attended the Coastal Futures conference in January. This conference brings together regulators and researchers in fisheries and marine issues from across the UK. The conference was an excellent opportunity to network with colleagues and be updated on various sectors relevant to the work of Sussex IFCA.

European Elasmobranch Association (EEA) Conference

Sussex IFCA's Conservation and Research Manager attended the EEA conference in October, which was held in Brighton. The updated Elasmobranch Code of Conduct was presented in poster format.

Sussex Sediment Workshop

Officers attended the Sussex sediment monitoring and adaptive response workshop funded by The Rewilding Network and hosted by Blue Marine Foundation and CHASM in May. The purpose of the workshop was to develop a framework to target monitoring, future research and adaptive coastal management actions on priority areas that will achieve maximum effect to balance and manage sediment levels and optimize the conditions for natural kelp recovery and healthy habitats to support inshore shellfish populations.

Officers onboard Watchful hauling receivers for maintenance in partnership with Fish Telemetry

IFM IFCA Briefing Series

Multiple online sessions for all IFCA staff and members were organised by the IFM and AIFCA, topics covered to-date have included Decision Making for IFCAs, Marine Natural Capital, and Marine Licensing and Planning.

Sea the Value

This Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) funded project is based at Plymouth Marine Lab. An Officer attended a Mapping Workshop, held by the University of Portsmouth, in November. The workshop aimed to demonstrate how the practical applications of natural capital could potentially benefit communities in the Solent through future restoration initiatives using Native Oysters and Saltmarshes.

Ocean Symposium

United Nations Association of Climate and Oceans hosted the annual Ocean Symposium in Bexhill in November. There was a talk from the Chief Officer, and a stall staffed by Research Officers. It was a multi-stakeholder event that addressed critical marine issues, showcased international and local projects, provided important networking opportunities, and created thought-provoking discussions led by expert speakers and panellists.

Common cuttlefish being measured as part of our small fish surveys in Chichester Harbour



Partnership & Memoranda of Understanding

The Sussex IFCA endeavors to develop and instill a culture of cooperation and partnership throughout the organisation to achieve good outcomes, value for money and a high standard of service.

The Authority establishes agreed national and local memoranda of understanding (MoU's) with key organisations including the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), the Environment Agency (EA), Natural England (NE) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), Sussex Wildlife Trust, and the University of Brighton. The national MoUs are facilitated by the Association of IFCAs. MoUs are supported by a series of national and local partnership groups that meet regularly throughout the year.

The Authority has a range of service level agreements with local authorities and higher education that offer mutual benefits in respect to each organisation's work. Close cooperation with local authorities such as the Sussex Police and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Services offer unique benefits for the community, and support situations that require a multiple agency approach.

Nationally, the Sussex IFCA supports the Association of Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities (AIFCA) to develop national communications and provide a collective voice for all IFCAs. Where possible, the Association's Chief Executive represents the needs of IFCAs as a single voice in respect to the development and interpretation of government policy concerning marine fisheries and conservation.

Through professional structures including the IFCA Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Chief Officers Group (COG) and the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG), the Authority promote and develop best practice, share knowledge, data and expertise to contribute toward sustainable marine management, both within its District and the wider marine environment.

In Sussex, the IFCA is a member of various community structures that bring greater coherence to marine management, including Local Nature Partnerships, Chichester Harbour Conservancy Advisory Board, Catchment Partnerships, Sussex Marine & Coastal Forum, Sussex Kelp Recovery Project, The Living Coast UN Biosphere reserve, The Heritage Coast, Solent Forum, Solent European Marine Sites Management Group, Crustaceans Habitat and Sediment Movement, and Hastings Fisheries Local Action Group.



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Maintenance of an acoustic receiver for the Fish Telemetry project with the University of Plymouth



Service Plan and Performance Standards

To promote increasing standards and a high level of customer satisfaction the Authority has developed and adopted a 'Service Plan'. The Service Plan enables stakeholders, customers and the wider public to easily understand the level of service they should expect.

The Service Plan, alongside other planning commitments, contributes towards the Authority delivering its high-level objectives, as defined in central government guidance provided to IFCAs, concerning their service delivery.

The Service Plan is subject to review and reflects the specific needs of those the Authority serves. These include individuals involved in the marine fishing and food sector, among other stakeholders.

Customer Charter

Once the Sussex IFCA was established, we introduced a 'Customer Charter' which states that:

We are committed to being a transparent and accountable organisation, we want you to know what you can expect from us and the level of service we will provide.

Our Promise

The six-point promise shows what you can expect from us.

1. We will be polite and respectful in all our dealings with you.
2. We will respond to you via the communication channel that you specify whenever we can (in person, the telephone, by email or letter).
3. We will serve you in a timely manner.
4. We will own your enquiry by taking responsibility for resolving it.
5. We will listen to your point of view.
6. We will provide you with accurate information that you can rely on.

Sussex IFCA's new Service Plan includes the following topics:

- Practical ways of working to maintain our commitments
- The staff
- Where we operate
- Complaints and compliments: Sussex IFCA's commitment
- How do I make a complaint?
- What if I'm not satisfied?
- How do I give compliments and make comments on Sussex IFCA's work?

Our new Service Plan and Performance Standards document can be found on our website, please follow this link:

<https://www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/about-us>

Compliance and Enforcement

By using a risk-based approach to fisheries compliance management, which considers the stock, method of fishing and impacts on conservation sites, we are able to assess current enforcement activities and/or develop alternative initiatives. In general terms, if there is a major threat to the marine environment or stock and the likelihood is that it is a common occurrence, it is categorised as high risk and action would be necessary. For a risk where there is no immediate threat to the marine environment or stock, but it could occur as low or even low to medium risk, light touch approaches are considered, such as education, self-regulation or even simply monitoring the situation.

Continued enforcement of the Sussex IFCA Nearshore Trawling Byelaw, Shellfish Permit Byelaw, Marine Protected Areas Byelaw, and National European Seabass regulations were key tasks for the reporting period. The marine operations team conducted patrol activity targeting compliance risks, such as unmarked and untagged potting gear at sea. Regular patrols in the inshore area ensured compliance by the fishing industry with regards to the new Nearshore Trawling Byelaw. The enforcement team leading patrols on land continued to conduct successful



Senior Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer Nick, helming the Sussex IFCA marine asset Delta 1. Delta 1 is the daughter vessel of Fisheries Patrol Vessel 'Watchful', and is used by Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officers to conduct fisheries inspections and boardings at sea off the coast of Sussex



Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer James conducting fisheries inspections in the port of Newhaven.

premises inspections and both commercial and recreational vessel landing inspections. Particular attention was also given to bass regulations and prohibited fishing methods such as drift netting, as well as enforcement of Sussex IFCA Scallop Closed Season Byelaw.

As part of our enforcement duties, we inspect fishing gear at sea. Using powers under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, officers can inspect unattended fishing gear to look for infringements. Officers have powers to seize fishing gear for evidential purposes should this be required. Sussex IFCA also engages in the collection of lost gear and ghost gear, including strings of



Overwatch of the Beachy Head West MCZ during a Sussex IFCA drone patrol. Drone patrols are used to monitor fishing activity in the 'no trawl zone'.

parlour pots, whelk pots and fishing nets found at sea. These are returned to fishers if ownership can be identified. Lost gear and ghost gear pose a pollution risk to the environment and are a threat to wildlife; when they are found we try to retrieve it and enable safe disposal of the items.

The Sussex IFCA officers also use a Small Unmanned Aircraft (SUA). The drone used by Sussex IFCA for fisheries enforcement and management is the DJI M300 RTK, fitted with a Zenmuse H20T camera. The quad-sensor camera features 20MP zoom, 12MP wide angle capabilities, a laser rangefinder, thermal

2023-2024 Compliance Statistics

| Category | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|
| Sea Patrols | 17 | 25 | 13 | 16 | 71 |
| Vessels inspected at sea | 45 | 34 | 14 | 12 | 105 |
| Vessels monitored at sea | 196 | 189 | 173 | 205 | 763 |
| Shore Patrols | 18 | 23 | 11 | 15 | 67 |
| Port Visits (on shore patrols) | 48 | 42 | 39 | 45 | 174 |
| Shore Inspections | 16 | 12 | 11 | 7 | 46 |
| Drone Patrols | 3 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 17 |
| Verbal Warnings | 3 | 7 | 2 | 6 | 18 |
| Official Written Warnings | 11 | 14 | 2 | 12 | 39 |
| FAPs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| Court Prosecutions | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Offence Reports | 14 | 14 | 4 | 21 | 53 |
| Information Reports | 73 | 62 | 28 | 39 | 202 |

imaging, zoom and wide-angle functions, which in addition to GPS technology, assists the detection and evidencing of fisheries offences. The drone is also used for management and policy functions, to observe and monitor Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and other areas of environmental concern. The enhanced capability the Sussex IFCA drone offers to record evidence of possible offences, from perspectives not previously possible, is used to aid in the collection of intelligence, act as a deterrent, and improve the prevention and detection of fisheries offences.

Publicity and Communication

Our challenge is to engage individuals, forums and organisations to break down any barriers that may exist; to involve and raise awareness of our work, and ultimately to inform people about the inshore marine environment and its fisheries.

To support needs, we have a communications plan which identifies key messages and appropriate methods to communicate with others.

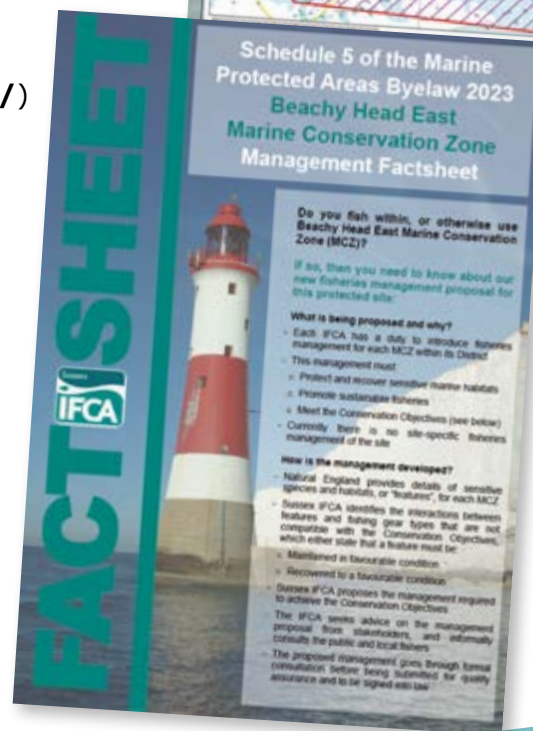
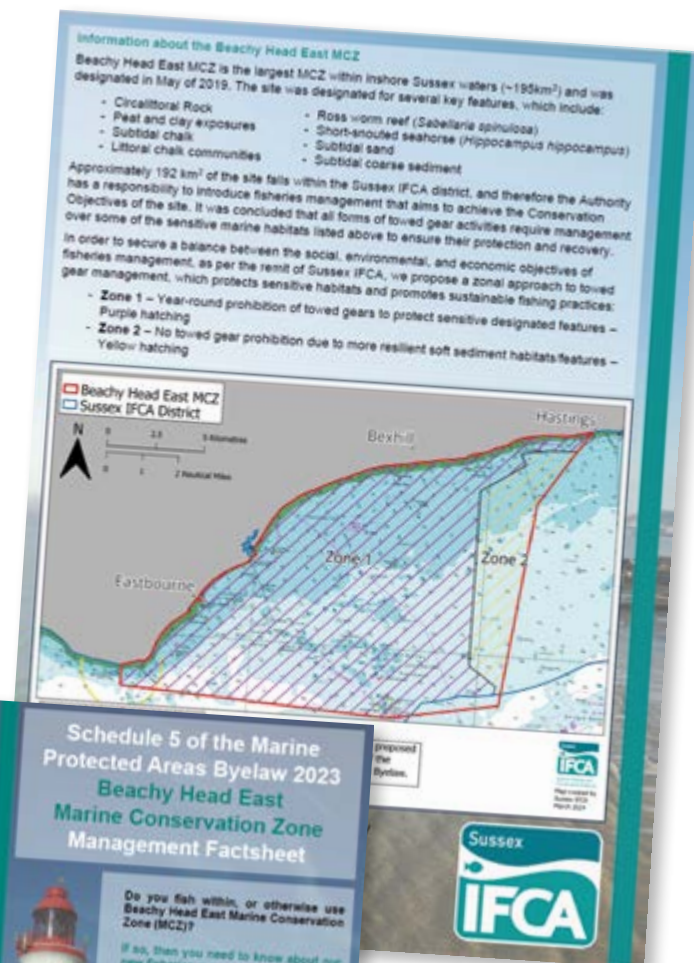
Our online presence through our website and social media continued to be vitally important forms of communication with our stakeholders throughout the year. Social media posts have become key platforms to update on the work of Sussex IFCA.

These social media platforms are utilised regularly and provide an essential forum for dissemination of information to stakeholders alongside the Sussex IFCA website.

The Sussex IFCA website (www.sussex-ifca.gov.uk) is regularly reviewed and maintained with the purpose of seeking to improve stakeholder engagement and accessibility of information. There were over 11200 visits to the website in the reporting year.

The Permit Database (<https://permits.sussex-ifca.gov.uk/>) allows permit holders to log in and access a portal which features their personal information related to any permits held. Permit holders can update their data, input catch returns, and apply for and renew permit applications, including making required payments.

We understand that online material may not reach or suit everyone. Officers that were active on the ground through road patrols, events, partnership meetings, and conservation and research work, and active at sea remained important as direct contacts within the fishing community.



Example of public engagement

Sussex IFCA endeavour to attend a range of stakeholder group meetings across the district, ensuring representation is balanced across all sectors of the community and is of specific relevance to its' duties and responsibilities.

In addition to the multitude of stakeholder group meetings officers attended throughout the reporting year, Sussex IFCA continued the development of a schedule for the Marine Protected Areas Byelaw 2023 for management for Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone.

The Authority undertook an initial formal consultation which included drop-in sessions for stakeholders to understand management proposals. Further evidence was provided to Sussex IFCA through the first consultation, consequently management proposals were amended, and a second formal consultation was launched towards the end of the reporting report. A comprehensive package of Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone consultation documents, including the proposed Schedule 5, impact assessment and factsheet, were released on the Sussex IFCA website and signposted on social media platforms. At the commencement of the consultation a generic email raising awareness of the consultation was also circulated to angling clubs, tackle businesses and key commercial fishers and fisheries organisation contacts.

Poster created to advertise Sussex IFCA formal consultation process for the Marine Protected Areas 2023 Schedule 5 for management of Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone



Chief Officer Rob Pearson presenting at the 2023 Ocean Symposium with officers Van and Jake conducting public engagement

Access to Information

We are committed to promoting and actively developing a culture of openness, transparency and accountability embodied in the various access to information legislation.

This refers to the general right of access that the public have to the information held by us and other public authorities. Rights of access to environmental information exist under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Requests for other types of information are dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, individuals may also request a copy of any personal data that we hold about them. These requests should be sent in writing to:

Data Protection Officer
Sussex IFCA and Conservation Authority
12A Riverside Business Centre
Brighton Road
Shoreham-by-Sea
West Sussex
BN43 6RE



Glossary of Terms

| | | | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|--------|---|
| AIFCA | Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities | IFCA | Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority | NIMEG | National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group |
| BHCC | Brighton and Hove City Council | IFCO | Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Officer | OWW | Official Written Warning |
| CEFAS | Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquatic Science | IFM | Institute of Fisheries Management | PI | Performance Indicator |
| CFP | Common Fisheries Policy | IRs | Intelligence Reports | PR | Public Relations |
| CHASM | Crustacean Habitats and Sediment Movement | JNCC | Joint Nature Conservation Committee | RSA | Recreational Sea Angling |
| COG | Chief Officer's Group | LAT | Lowest Astronomical Tide | SAC | Special Area of Conservation |
| CPUE | Catch per unit of effort | MaCAA | Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 | SC | Success Criteria |
| CZM | Coastal Zone Management | MCA | Maritime and Coastguard Agency | SKRP | Sussex Kelp Restoration Project |
| Defra | Department of Environment, Food and rural Affairs | MCRS | Marine Conservation Reference Size | SLA | Service Level Agreement |
| EA | Environment Agency | MCSS | Monitoring, Control and Surveillance System | SMACF | Sussex Marine and Coastal Forum |
| EEA | European Elasmobranch Association | MCZ | Marine Conservation Zone | SPA | Special Protected Area |
| EHO | Environmental Health Officer | MEDIN | Marine Environmental Data and Information | SSSI | Site of Special Scientific Interest |
| EMS | European Marine Site | MHWS | Mean High Water Springs | SUA | Small Unmanned Aircraft |
| ESCC | East Sussex County Council | MLWS | Mean Low Water Springs | SWT | Sussex Wildlife Trust |
| FAP | Financial Administrative Penalty | MMO | Marine Management Organisation | SxIFCA | Sussex IFCA |
| FMPs | Fisheries Management Plans | MoU | Memorandum of Understanding | TAC | Total Allowable Catch |
| FO | Fishery Officer | MPA | Marine Protected Area | TAG | Technical Advisory Group |
| FPV | Fishery Patrol Vessel | MSY | Maximum Sustainable Yield | TCG | Tasking and Coordination Group |
| GIS | Geographical Information System | NE | Natural England | VMS | Vessel Monitoring System |
| GPS | Global Positioning System | NERC | Natural Environment Research Council | VW | Verbal Warning |
| HAT | Highest Astronomical Tide | NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations | WSCC | West Sussex County Council |
| HLO | High Level Objective | | | | |
| HR | Human Resources | | | | |
| HRA | Habitats Regulations Appraisal | | | | |
| IA | Impact Assessment | | | | |
| ICES | International Council for the Exploration of the Sea | | | | |



Contact

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Call: 01273 454407

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Instagram: [sussex_ifca](#)

LinkedIn: [Sussex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority](#)

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