

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SUSSEX INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
on 28th April 2022**

at Sussex Yacht Club, 85/89 Brighton Road, Shoreham-by-Sea

PRESENT

Members

Prof. Peter Jones (Chair)
Councillor Leo Littman (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Pieter Montyn (West Sussex County Council)
Corina Ciocan (MMO Appointee)
Graham Furness (MMO Appointee)
Paul Johnson (MMO Representative)
Prof. Paul Leonard (MMO Appointee)
Dr. Paul Driver (MMO Appointee)
Mark Bennett (Environment Agency)
Paula Daglish (NE)

Staff

Tim Dapling (Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer)
Angharad Purcell (Deputy Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer)
Erin Lawes (Conservation & Research Manager)
George Balchin (Fisheries & Conservation Research Officer)
Steve Jump (Finance Manager)

1 CHIEF OFFICER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tim Dapling welcomed all to the Annual Committee meeting of 2022-23. This was a hybrid meeting using new equipment to enable any members not available to attend in person but wishing to join the meeting, to do so remotely.
- 1.2 Tim Dapling started the meeting by welcoming Paula Daglish, the new NE representative on the committee and explaining that Alice Hall would later be giving a short presentation of 'Fish Intel Stakeholder Engagement' to members. Tim Dapling introduced George Balchin to members, who was the newest Fisheries & Conservation Research Officer. George Balchin would be covering for Jen Lewis during her maternity leave. Fisheries & Conservation Research Officer, Jake Wilson who was joining the meeting remotely was also introduced to the members.
- 1.4 Tim Dapling explained that in accordance with standing orders the Chair and Deputy Chair would be elected by members at this meeting for the forthcoming year. Tim Dapling announced the nominations received: four

nominations for Prof. Peter Jones to be re-elected as Chair had been received and members unanimously voted him in as Chair for a second year. Two nominations had been received for Cllr. Leo Littman as Deputy Chair, Cllr Littman was duly voted in and appointed as Deputy Chair, also for a second year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sam Adeniji (East Sussex County Council)
Councillor Julia Hilton (East Sussex County Council)
Councillor Tom Liddiard (East Sussex County Council)
Councillor Noel Atkins (West Sussex County Council)
Councillor Emma Evans (West Sussex County Council)
Sally Ashby (MMO Appointee)
Gary Edwards (MMO Appointee)
Andy Read (MMO Appointee)
Garry Walker (MMO Appointee)

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 3.1 The Chair requested notification of any declaration of interests, there were none from members. Prof. Peter Jones declared that he was currently working with the MMO, on fisheries co-management strategy development, and with Defra, advising on and participating in workshops for progressing HPMAs.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 4.1 The new re-appointed Chair, Prof. Peter Jones, asked for any comments and corrections from members on the minutes from January's Quarterly Committee Meeting.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- 5.1 Tim Dapling explained that there had been a discussion around shellfish fisheries and the decline of lobsters at the last meeting, subsequently Tim Dapling had attended the Crustacea Committee at the Shellfish Association of Great Britain. There had been a presentation by Cefas on crab diseases, during which a newly identified pathogen was discussed which had affected crabs in the Selsey area. The presentation was available to any interested members.

- 5.2 At the latest Association of IFCAs (AIFCA) meeting there had been continued discussion regarding working in collaboration with Rob Clark on strategic development of the Association's role with the Marine Natural Capital Eco-System Assessment Programme which Defra was currently running. Sussex IFCA were looking to act as a host IFCA for the Association and employ a Senior Technical Officer to support this engagement with the programme, Tim Dapling said.
- 5.3 Prof. Paul Leonard gave an update on the continuing testing of water quality and explained that he had set up a programme whilst working at Defra on how sediment dredging might impact fisheries, particularly long-lived pollutants, which he said was a complex subject. Prof. Paul Leonard was delighted that Sussex IFCA were taking such a role with the AIFCA regarding the programme and offered his expertise should it be required.

6. UPDATE ON STAFFING and OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

- 6.1 Tim Dapling updated members on the successful recruitment of two new Fisheries Officers: George Balchin and Jake Wilson. Their recruitment was in part intended to cover Jen Lewis' maternity leave. Tim Dapling was happy to inform members that Jen Lewis had recently given birth to a healthy baby boy, Felix.
- 6.2 Following internal staffing moves, another Fisheries & Conservation Officer vacancy had also been filled and James Tapley would be starting work in late May.

7. DECISION ITEMS

7.1 Appointments to Subcommittees

- 7.2 Tim Dapling ran through the structure of the Authority's subcommittees, explaining that subcommittees were the governance structures for detailed examination of relevant issues, in particular this applied to The Technical Subcommittee. He pointed out that both the Chair and the Deputy Chair were ex-officio members of all subcommittees except the Appeals Subcommittee. The subcommittee appointments were made every 2 years, Tim Dapling explained.

- 7.3 **The Finance Subcommittee's** function was to consider expenditure reports and specific financial decisions requiring Committee approval, to make necessary recommendations to the Principal Committee. The finance Subcommittee was delegated (*Art. 17*) with the authority to approve various financial matters and was currently comprised of representatives from the three contributing local authorities:

West Sussex County Council
Cllr Pieter Montyn, Cllr Noel Atkins

East Sussex County Council
Cllr Sam Adeniji, Cllr Julia Hilton

Brighton and Hove City Council
Cllr Leo Littman (Deputy Chair).

Cllr Leo Littman would Chair the meeting.

Other members with specific finance qualifications could always be considered for inclusion, Tim Dapling said.

- 7.4 **The Technical Subcommittee** had a large membership, Tim Dapling expressed regret that Gary Edwards was not present as he was sure he would make valuable contributions to the subcommittee, his name had been included as a proposed new member. Tim Dapling asked Corina Ciocan if she would like to join this Subcommittee, to which she agreed she would.

Membership:

Dr Paul Driver
Garry Walker
Graham Furness
Paula DGLISH
Mark Bennett
Paul Johnson
Prof. Paul Leonard
Sally Ashby
Andy Read
Prof. Peter Jones
Cllr Leo Littman
Corina Ciocan
Gary Edwards

- 7.5 All current members expressed their desire to remain on the Technical Subcommittee.

- 7.6 **The Compliance Subcommittee's** function was to provide input and support officers on delivery of sustainable fisheries through the application of management intervention including regulatory advice and enforcement activities.

Membership: (minimum 4 members)

Mark Bennett (EA)
Paul Johnson (MMO)
Paula DGLISH (NE)
Graham Furness
Prof. Paul Leonard
Prof. Peter Jones (Chair)

7.7 **Staffing Subcommittee (ad hoc)**

Function:

Staffing matters support e.g. senior' officer recruitment process

Constitution

3 members:

Chair, Deputy Chair & Cllr Pieter Montyn.

7.8 **Appeals Subcommittee (ad hoc)**

Function:

Issues relating to employment appeals procedures
(knowledge and experience with a public service could be considered desirable)

Constitution

3 members:

Graham Furness, Cllr Pieter Montyn and Prof. Paul Leonard.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the recommendations and new appointments proposed.

8 Affirmation of Standing Orders

- 8.1 The Chair introduced this Item by explaining that the Affirmation of Standing Orders was required annually and was a form of due process. Tim Dapling said that these Standing Orders remained unchanged since last year. Prof. Peter Jones requested a show of hands by those wishing to affirm the Standing Orders.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the recommendation and reaffirm the Standing Orders.

9 Progress of the Hand Gathering Byelaw 2021

- 9.1 Tim Dapling introduced the item by explaining that the next steps in the Byelaw process had been approved at the October 2021 Authority meeting, namely that the formal public consultation should take place, and, after a short delay due to Covid, the consultation had commenced on 11th March 2022. Advertising had taken place in five local, coastal papers and in the nationally published magazine, '*Sea Angler*'.
- 9.2 Tim Dapling said that a range of information and fact sheets had been produced to supplement the consultation. All guidance and supporting information had been included on the website.

- 9.3 Angharad Purcell described where the public consultation meetings had taken place. The Shoreham and Chichester meetings had been run by Tim Dapling and Erin Lawes and the Eastbourne and Rye meetings by herself and Nick Rogers. All had been fairly well attended, Angharad Purcell reported, and the feedback had been quite good with some interesting points raised. There had been seventeen attendees recorded at booked appointment times, a system which had been successful.
- 9.4 Regarding next steps, Angharad Purcell informed members that, supported by Senior Officers, George Balchin and Jake Wilson would initially be analysing all the responses received which would then be discussed at the next Technical Subcommittee meeting in late May/early June.
- 9.5 Tim Dapling added that the team would categorise the individual responses and consider the evidence supplied, an appropriate report would then be written and presented at the next Technical Subcommittee meeting, with any recommended changes included. Each individual responder to the formal consultation would be replied to once the process was concluded.
- 9.5 Prof. Peter Jones explained that there would be more detailed responses available to members at the next Quarterly meeting following in depth discussions at the Technical Subcommittee meeting in early June.
- 9.6 Prof. Paul Leonard queried whether the Authority was in contact with adjacent IFCAs, who would also be affected by hand gathering. Tim Dapling replied that both adjacent Authorities knew of Sussex IFCA's progress. There was some overlap nationally and other IFCAs were interested in the progress of Sussex IFCA's proposed Byelaw, but were not directly involved. An IFCA working group on handgathering had been developed by the IFCAs with Sussex playing a key role in the Chair.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the following Recommendations:

- i. That the Authority notes the actions taken to deliver the Hand Gathering Byelaw 2021 statutory consultation.**
- ii. That the Authority approves the next steps. Specifically for officers to prepare a report including the consultation responses received and recommendations for a Technical Subcommittee meeting, with a view to deciding upon the final byelaw text incorporating any agreed amendments.**
- iii. That once the Technical Subcommittee has concluded the process it makes specific recommendations to be reported to the next quarterly Authority meeting in July. Subject to approval by the Principal Committee, the Authority would submit to the MMO and Defra the Byelaw and supporting documentation for confirmation.**

10 BEACHY HEAD EAST MCZ MANAGEMENT

- 10.1 Erin Lawes introduced this item, which was to provide an update on Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) with regard to the MCZ Assessment conducted, associated evidence collection and to agree on next steps with management development and the associated formulation of informal consultation proposals.
- 10.2 Erin Lawes explained for newer members' benefit that this MPA area was the largest by far in Sussex IFCA's District and had been designated on 31st May 2019. Erin Lawes also explained briefly the results of the MCZ assessment which had been undertaken to ascertain whether fisheries management measures were required to protect the site's designated features.
- 10.3 To address the need for further surveys to improve feature confidence within the site, and the lack of success of an NE local team bid for such work, Sussex IFCA had conducted video surveys over the summer of 2021. The aim of these had been to gather additional evidence to improve the scientific data certainty for subtidal chalk and reef features within the site. Sussex IFCA consulted with the NE local team and national specialists around the details of these surveys and secured funding for subsequent analysis.
- 10.4 The Zoological Society of London had been commissioned to conduct the analysis of the footage captured.
- 10.5 It was proposed that officers proceed in accordance with the Authority's agreed 2022-2023 Annual Plan, and move forward with the informal consultation process around site management, taking informal consultation suggestions and supporting documentation to the next Technical Subcommittee meeting for further discussion. Erin Lawes said that it was intended that the process would involve the Marine Conservation Society to support facilitation.
- 10.6 Tim Dapling said that it was important to develop and present a range of viable management options for consultees as this MCZ management would be the most challenging to process to date and would likely involve zoning of the large area it encompassed.

Recommendations:

- i. That members note the MCZ Assessment conclusions.**
- ii. To proceed in accordance with the Authority's agreed 2022-2023 Annual Plan, and move forward with the informal consultation process around site management.**
- iii. For officers to work with the Technical Subcommittee on the formulation of informal consultation proposals.**

ALL RESOLVED to accept the recommendations.

11 SELSEY BILL AND THE HOUNDS MCZ MANAGEMENT

- 11.1 Erin Lawes provided an update on Selsey Bill and the Hounds Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ) management with regard to the MCZ Assessment conducted and associated management requirements.
- 11.2 The MCZ Assessment had concluded that, based on current available evidence of potential impacts on rock and sediment features, no additional management to that already in place within the District was proposed for potting or fixed netting. Erin Lawes added that a voluntary Code of Conduct had also been proposed. The Nearshore Trawling Byelaw had addressed the fisheries management measures and had included a prohibition of trawling throughout the MCZ area.
- 11.3 Erin Lawes said that, subject to Authority approval at this meeting, required fisheries management for Selsey Bill and the Hounds MCZ would be formally concluded and then reviewed in four years' time. Jake Wilson had assisted Erin Lawes with compiling the MCZ Assessment.
- 11.4 Dr. Paul Driver requested that the two navigational buoys in the Looe Channel (*Street* and *Boulder*) be added to the chart supplied, which would make orientation easier, members agreed this would be helpful and Jake Wilson confirmed he would add them to the chart.

Recommendations:

- i. To note the Selsey Bill and the Hounds MCZ Assessment.**
- ii. To approve the proposed voluntary code of conduct for the site.**
- iii. To approve the conclusion that no further fisheries management is required for Selsey Bill and the Hounds MCZ.**

ALL RESOLVED to approve the recommendations and annexes.

12 ELASMOBRANCH VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT

- 12.1 Erin Lawes introduced this item before handing over to George Balchin who would explain how the Code had been formulated. Fisheries Officers had been working towards the proposed Code of Conduct over the last year, since the July Technical Subcommittee meeting in 2021.
- 12.2 Once the Code had been agreed by members it would provide support to the Hand Gathering Byelaw, Erin Lawes said. The formulation of elasmobranch voluntary management measures would provide an opportunity to engage with stakeholders on the particular vulnerability of some elasmobranch species and voluntary measures to support their sustainable management.

- 12.3 Erin Lawes pointed out that the introduction of the Code of Conduct would enable stakeholders to understand more about identification of species and their vulnerability. Species-specific minimum size recommendations for named sharks and rays aimed to assist successful reproduction by reducing the landings of immature individual sharks, skates & rays. The benefit of this would be to improve recruitment into populations and, in turn, benefit the role these species play in the inshore marine ecosystem.
- 12.4 Erin Lawes handed over to George Balchin, who was a previous volunteer with elasmobranch expertise having recently completed his PhD on the subject, and was now a full time Fisheries & Conservation Officer. George Balchin explained to members in detail the methodology used in the creation of the proposed Code of Conduct.
- 12.5 The aim was for photos to be included in the final version to aid species identification, George Balchin added.
- 12.6 Graham Furness welcomed the report, and requested that all measurements of minimum sizes be rounded up to the nearest 5 or 10cm as measuring these species often proved difficult. Graham Furness also suggested that certain species listed should be removed because they were no longer found in the District.
- 12.7 Tim Dapling and Prof. Peter Jones both agreed that rounding up the measurements to the nearest 5cm was a good idea and Tim Dapling said that rays were often measured wingtip to wingtip to aid ease of measurement. Members of the Technical Subcommittee would discuss the details of the proposed Code of Conduct at the next meeting.
- 12.8 Paul Johnson recommended referring to the MMO's licence conditions to keep in line with their species minimum landing sizes. There was some further discussion concerning undulate rays and specific licence conditions on quantities that could be currently landed.

Recommendations:

- i. That members approve the provisions within the Elasmobranch Code of Conduct.**
- ii. That officers work with the Technical Subcommittee on final refinement, next steps and roll out of the Code of Conduct with the community.**

ALL RESOLVED to approve the recommendations.

13 ANNUAL PLANNING: FOCUS AND PRIORITIES 2022 TO 2023

- 13.1 Tim Dapling explained that the purpose of this report was to provide members with the final agreed annual planning priorities for the

forthcoming financial year 2022/23. These priorities had already been discussed with members at the January Quarterly Committee meeting. Prior to 31st March 2022 the priorities had been submitted to Defra as part of the Authority's four-year plan and associated objectives for 2020 to 2024 and these planning priorities had been adopted and were now being implemented.

- 13.2 By virtue of the reports and recommendations planning objectives were well progressed or completed in respect to Marine Protected Area Management and Tim Dapling thanked Erin Lawes for her hard work on these, which included a report on Selsey Bill & the Hounds MCZ fisheries management measures. Tim Dapling said that the most significant expected workload would be associated with Beachy Head East MCZ.

Recommendations:

- i. That members note the legal requirements and guidance concerning IFCA annual plans and reports.**
- ii. That members agree to implementation of the management priorities as described and submitted.**
- iii. That members note Defra's receipt of the annual planning priorities as part of the Sussex IFCA's four-year planning cycle, 2020 to 2024.**

ALL RESOLVED to approve the recommendations.

A short comfort break took place.

INFORMATION ITEMS

14 Conservation and Research Update

- 14.1 Erin Lawes provided an update on the Conservation and Research Team's work progress over the 4th Quarter, January to March 2022, and planned work commitments 2022-2023.
- 14.2 The Conservation and Research Manager explained that the report demonstrated the great range, volume and quality of evidence collection work planned within the next financial year.
- 14.3 The Authority's move towards an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management aligned with Government policy and was an integral part of the Annual Conservation and Research Plan. The team's evidence collection activity would continue to support this approach, providing information to

assist the development of management measures that both ensured fisheries were exploited sustainably and best protected natural capital assets and associated ecosystem services.

- 14.4 Erin Lawes highlighted the Fish Intel Project, a presentation of which, by Dr Alice Hall, was scheduled to follow this Item. Sussex IFCA were working with the University of Plymouth and Sussex Wildlife Trust to set up an acoustic array between Selsey and Shoreham. This study aimed to investigate habitat use and connectivity for tagged species, Erin Lawes added.
- 14.5 This work would help provide evidence on essential fish habitat and contribute to commitments under a number of Conservation and Research workstreams including Natural Capital and ecosystem services, ecosystem approach to fisheries management, kelp restoration and monitoring work associated with the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw.
- 14.6 Erin Lawes informed members that Sussex IFCA had continued to support the Wild Coast Sussex partnership project over the last quarter, in particular the Wild Beach, ghost gear and net recycling scheme elements.
- 14.7 Members had been informed at the January Committee Meeting about a net recycling survey being conducted as part of the partnership project. The aim of this was to generate a better understanding of the amount of fishing gear disposed of in Sussex. The information gathered would help ascertain what was needed to set up a self-sustaining, long term net recycling scheme in Sussex which could benefit both the fishing community and the environment. The survey had now been inputted into the online survey tool, Survey Monkey. Erin Lawes encouraged members to circulate the survey link to their networks.
- 14.8 Erin Lawes also highlighted The Sussex Bay Fish Brand Project which aimed to establish if there was a business case for a brand that supported the marine environment, supported fishers and could support itself financially in the long term. Officers had supported the project through the provision of expertise, data and contacts within the fishing community.
- 14.9 Tim Dapling explained in further detail to members about the Sussex Inshore Fisheries Sustainability Project "Navigating the Future" project report which had been conducted in 2010, and in summary provided an audit of Sussex IFCA fisheries at that time. The outputs of the study would be reviewed during the latest Fish Brand Project and an associated report commissioned by Sussex IFCA would inform the inshore fisheries management improvements that have been made of the last decade.
- 14.10 Erin Lawes concluded her report by giving updates on the Sussex Kelp Restoration Partnership, Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management and the Shellfish Permit Byelaw catch returns analysis. The new Shellfish Permit Database, which had been developed with Nick Roger's assistance over the last two years would be nearing completion in coming months.

ALL RESOLVED to note the report and associated annexes.

Dr Alice Hall, from the School of Biological and Marine Sciences at University of Plymouth, gave a short presentation titled 'Fish Intel Stakeholder Engagement' and fielded questions from members.

15 Compliance and Enforcement Report

- 15.1 Angharad Purcell was happy to introduce the Item by confirming that there was currently a full complement of Fisheries Officers employed within the Authority, and continued by highlighting several points throughout the report. The Vehicle Report was now included at the end of this document and all future Compliance Reports. A new Training and Development section had also been added, Angharad Purcell explained, which demonstrated the work Fisheries Officers were contributing to complete their accredited training. The Deputy Chief Fisheries Officer herself was a Quality Assessor and believed in the importance of monitoring the progress of the three FOs involved.
- 15.2 Dr Paul Driver expressed how impressed he was that the Authority would now have fully trained drone pilots on the staff. Angharad Purcell reported that roughly 50% of IFCAs now owned a drone. Sussex IFCA now had three pilots, herself included, and had pre-empted public response by preparing information documents for distribution once work had commenced with the drone.

ALL RESOLVED to note the report.

16 Communications Report

- 16.1 Angharad Purcell introduced this Item, mostly to be taken as read, but with one request with regards to the new website which was currently under construction: could any members who had yet to do so, please send their short biographies and photographs to admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk
- 16.2 Tim Dapling drew members attention to the large number and breadth of community engagement and partnership meetings which staff members attended.

ALL RESOLVED to note the report.

17 Financial Performance Report Quarter 4 2021/2022

- 17.1 Steve Jump presented the report for the 4th Quarter of 2021/2022 and the year as a whole. Total income in the Quarter had been £10,998 below the budgeted amount, a net shortfall against the budget of £824.

- 17.2 The cost of essential training had brought the total expenditure to above the budgeted amount, Steve Jump reported. The Hand Gathering Byelaw consultations had also increased expenditure.
- 17.3 Steve Jump explained that there was an overall gain of £57,422 against the budget for the year as a whole after contributions to and from Reserves earmarked for specific purposes. This underspend was consistent with his previous forecasts over the year. Income was £33k lower than budgeted mainly because there had only been ad hoc hires of 'Watchful' and lower fees received from the MMO than had been budgeted for. The Netting Byelaw was yet to be approved therefore no income had been generated from permit fees.
- 17.4 Steve Jump highlighted the most significant variation in expenditure which had been the salary, pension and National Insurance costs. These costs were almost £64k lower than had been budgeted, and reflected vacant posts during the year, changes in grade following recruitment and the annual pay award being 0.25% lower than budgeted.
- 17.5 In conclusion, Stephen Jump reported the total value of Reserves to date was £904,890, this excluded the Revaluation Reserve which was associated with the value of the Authority's vessels. This significant figure would provide a buffer against any particular overspends in the coming year due to inflation and unforeseen costs.
- 17.6 Tim Dapling added that the AIFCA and COG had been working hard to make a case to Defra for additional secure long-term funding. Defra's funding had remained at the same level for ten years with welcome support from local authorities. It was hoped new workstreams would increase funding levels from Defra, Tim Dapling said, in particular the work associated with the development of fisheries management plans flowing from the Joint Fisheries Statement, HPMa consultations and ongoing MCZ management.

ALL RESOLVED to note the budget monitoring report and financial performance for the year.

18 Vessel & Vehicle maintenance log 1st January to 31st March 2022
was taken as read.

19 Chief Officers Group

- 19.1 Tim Dapling introduced this Item by explaining that he had included minutes from one particular meeting over the last Quarter although there had been several meetings during this period. These minutes were representative of the variety of discussions which took place at COG meetings.

- 19.2 Current topics covered in this COG meeting included funding as had previously been discussed and the NIMEG conference.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

20 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

- 20.1 The Association represented all 10 IFCAs, Tim Dapling informed members; its Chief Executive Officer, Robert Clark, was working hard on developing planning of the Association's approach to strategic planning with Defra, on a national level.
- 20.2 Tim Dapling had included a letter of 7th April which gave the IFCA's response to The Fisheries Statement and proposed fisheries management plans. He explained that the successful implementation of the proposed management was central to the success of future fisheries management and sustainable fisheries.

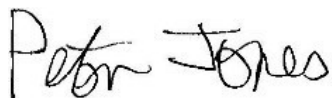
ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

21 A.O.B.

- 21.1 The Chair asked members if they had any other business to raise, but none had.

22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 22.1 Thursday 28th July 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Jones".

Prof. Peter Jones, Chair Sussex IFCA.