

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

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

PRESENT

Members

Dr. Paul Driver (MMO Appointee)
Dr. Corina Ciocan (MMO Appointee)
Paul Johnson (MMO Representative) - online
Councillor Noel Atkins (West Sussex County Council)
Prof. Paul Leonard (MMO Appointee)
Sally Ashby (MMO Appointee)
Gary Edwards (MMO Appointee)
Jim Partridge (MMO Appointee)

Staff

Tim Dapling (Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer)
Angharad Purcell (Deputy Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer)
Erin Lawes (Conservation & Research Manager)
Nick Rogers (Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer)
Jake Wilson (Fisheries & Conservation Research Officer)
Stephen Jump (Finance Manager)

1 CHIEF OFFICER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Tim Dapling welcomed all to the 2nd Quarterly Committee meeting of 2022. This was a hybrid meeting using Zoom 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 explaining that the Chairman, Professor Peter Jones had given his apologies and was unable to attend as he was on holiday. Under normal circumstances the Deputy Chair would take over, however Cllr Leo Littman (Deputy Chair) had unfortunately tested positive for Covid earlier in the week and could therefore not attend and Chair.
Reverting to the Standing Orders it was therefore necessary for members to appoint a Chair for the meeting. Cllr. Leo Littman has already nominated Dr. Paul Driver as the interim Chair and Paul was kindly prepared to do so. Tim Dapling sought any further nominations for Chair from members, but none were forthcoming.
It was unanimously agreed by members that Dr. Paul Driver chair the meeting. Tim Dapling thanked Paul for stepping in at such short notice.

- 1.3 Tim Dapling introduced new meeting attendees to the members. He confirmed that Christie Brown was undertaking a temporary role as administrative support since Rachel Griffin retired in early July. Rebecca Belleni will be taking on the Committee Manager role on a permanent basis from mid-August. To avoid any confusion, it was explained that emails from Christie (admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk) had changed from appearing as 'Rachel Griffin' to 'Rebecca Belleni' as this had been set up in advance of Rebecca's starting date.
- Diana Alcroft from Wayford Consultancy was introduced. Diana is involved in the Adur and Worthing District Council, Sussex Bay Project Sustainable Fish Project, reported on within the agenda. As part of Sussex IFCA's involvement, Crick Carleton from Nautilus Consultants would be giving a presentation along with Diana under Information Item 7.
- Tim explained that there was one decision Item on the agenda concerning the Hand gathering Byelaw, the remaining items were for information.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Prof. Peter Jones (Chair)
Councillor Leo Littman (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Pieter Montyn (West Sussex County Council)
Graham Furness (MMO Appointee)
Mark Bennett (Environment Agency)
Paula Daghish (NE)
Andy Read (MMO Appointee)
Garry Walker (MMO Appointee)

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 3.1 Gary Edwards and Jim Partridge declared an interest

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Dr. Paul Driver, asked for any comments and corrections from members on the minutes from April's Quarterly Committee Meeting.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

5. UPDATE ON STAFFING and OFFICER APPOINTMENTS

- 5.1 Tim Dapling confirmed that he had previously sent an update email out to all members confirming the ongoing employee changes. As per the email, Rachel Griffin, Committee Manager retired in early July, Rachel had been with the Authority for over 10 years since it was established. As previously mentioned, Rebecca Belleni will be starting on the 15th of August as the new Committee Manager. In the meantime, Christie Brown will be covering administrative elements of the role.

- 5.2 Tim Dapling informed members that Stephen Jump, Finance Manager will be retiring also. Tim confirmed that Stephen's last working day will be on the 15th of August. On behalf of the Authority, Tim sincerely thanked Stephen for all his excellent work in diligently undertaking the Authority's financial affairs over the past years. He wished him well and to enjoy his retirement. All expressed their sincere thanks with a round of applause. Tim explained that something suitable had been arranged as token of the Authority's gratitude and would be presented later with the staff.
- 5.3 In respect to the Finance manager and recruitment, an experienced and highly qualified individual, Lucy Francis was expected to start in the role from early September. Stephen would be conducting a one-to-one handover beforehand, in August.
- 5.4 Josh Pannu, Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Officer was also leaving the Authority in mid-August to take on a new role in uniformed services training at a Sussex college. Tim wished him well in his new role and explained that recruitment for a replacement was underway.

6 DECISION ITEMS

6.1 Hand Gathering Byelaw

- 6.2 Dr. Paul Driver confirmed that the only item to discuss in decision items was the Hand Gathering Byelaw. He reminded all that this is the final stage before the byelaw is sent to central government for examination and this is now the final version for approval. PD asked for any comments or questions.
- 6.3 Before members questions and comments, Tim Dapling provided an overview of the report's contents. He explained that development of the Byelaw had been an extensive process involving both informal and formal consultations, extensive evidence gathering. The formal consultation and responses had been taken back to the Technical Subcommittee on the 12th of June and considered in depth. Amendments were approved by the Technical Subcommittee and the amended Byelaw referred to the Principal Committee for approval. Subject to approval by the members, the Authority's officers would then submit the Byelaw and associated documentation to the MMO for quality assurance, after which it would be passed to Defra for confirmation.
- 6.4 CC commented on the provisions concerning polluting materials. Tim Dapling explained that the Authority would produce some very clear guidance to accompany the Byelaw which can reviewed accordingly in respect to polluting materials and the terminology used. He emphasised the need for education to accompany enforcement of the regulation.
- 6.5 Tim Dapling confirmed that proxy support for the Byelaw received from Prof. Peter Jones (Chairman), Cllr. Leo Littman (Deputy Chair) and Paula Daghish from Natural England.

- 6.6 Jim Partridge advised we shouldn't be wasting our time talking about a this and that we should be more concerned regards the loss of crabs and lobsters in the Sussex area and we should spend time looking into that.

Erin Lawes read PD's accompanying statement provided with her supporting proxy vote:

Natural England additional comments to raise in committee meeting in relation to agenda item (decision item) 6 – Hand Gathering Byelaw:

"Natural England are supportive of the implementation of this district wide byelaw. As with our response to the formal consultation, Natural England advise that a 2-year review of the data received from the surveillance and receipt of hand gathering catch returns, implemented through this byelaw, is undertaken; this is made all the more necessary given the increase in bag limit for crabs and worms since the original consultation. We advise that this data gathered be used to update the underpinning MPA assessments as required. This will help to inform a potential prioritisation of sites, identifying any areas of high intensity hand gathering and therefore develop adaptive management for those sites whilst updating MPA assessments (as legal documents) to ensure activity impacts have been adequately assessed and management in the site is appropriate.

Natural England are looking forward to, and are committed to supporting the IFCA on this work as statutory nature conservation advisers."

Proxy vote: to vote in favour of the Byelaw being approved.

- 6.6 Further to no more questions or discussion, the Chair asked that the report recommendations be put to a vote:

- 2.1 That, members approve the amended Hand Gathering Byelaw 2021 and associated Flexible Permit Conditions (Appendices 1 & 2) for submission to the MMO and Defra for quality assurance and confirmation.**
- 2.2 That, members approve the Hand Gathering Byelaw 2021 Impact Assessment.**
- 2.3 That, as appropriate Senior IFCA officers liaise with MMO and Defra officials to progress the Byelaw through to final confirmation, and as needed support any necessary amendments agreed with MMO & Defra legal advisers.**

- 2.4 That, subject to the Authority's Byelaw approval consultees are provided with a written response, explaining how the Authority has considered their response and what, if any amendments have been made in respect to their issues.**

MEMBERS RESOLVED TO APPROVE all the recommendations with a majority vote

10 votes for (including proxy votes)

1 vote against

1 abstention

INFORMATION ITEMS

7. Nautilus Consulting Presentation

- 7.1 Tim Dapling introduced Diana Alcroft from 'Way Forward' – a consultant working for Adur and Worthing District Council supporting the 'Sussex Bay' Project.
- 7.2 Tim Dapling explained that last year he was involved in conversations and development of a 'Fisheries and Seafood Scheme' project proposal submitted by Adur and Worthing District Council. The Council were exploring the opportunity for local branding for sustainable inshore fish in Sussex, in conjunction with the wider Sussex Bay initiative. As part of that process and project the Council worked with Authority Officers to provide a report on Sussex Fisheries and its management in the context of sustainability and potential branding.
- 7.3 Diana Alcroft then made a presentation on AWDC's report and findings on the Sussex Bay Project.
- 7.4 Tim then introduced Crick Carleton from Nautilus Consulting adding that Sussex IFCA already have a long-standing working relationship with Nautilus Consulting who undertook 'Navigating the Future' in 2010. Crick then presented his report on 'Assessment of Sussex IFCA fisheries' to inform a potential local seafood brand'.

8 Conservation and Research Update

- 8.1 Erin Lawes provided an update on the Conservation and Research Team's work progress over the 1st quarter of this financial year and reported on the preceding financial year's work 2021-2022.

- 8.2 Erin Lawes referred to the detailed reports provided in the meeting pack and the associated annexes, all of which were well received by members.
- 8.3 The Annual Conservation and Research Report within Annex I describes the progress made on the workstreams set out in the team's annual plan. Each workstream within the report is listed with a brief description, the purpose, as well as the progress that has been made during the financial year from April 2021 to March 2022.
- 8.4 A wide range of conservation and research work has been undertaken to inform decision making and to further our understanding of the coastal marine environment and fisheries. The highest priorities for the year were: the development of, and consultation on, minimum size management, followed by district-wide hand gathering management; Tranche 3 MCZs management development - Selsey Bill and the Hounds and Beachy Head East; Nearshore Trawling Byelaw monitoring; research furthering understanding around natural capital and an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management in Sussex; and Tranche 1 MCZs management reviews – Beachy Head West and Kingmere MCZ, with associated angler's activity monitoring for the latter.
- 8.5 The appended report demonstrates the great range, volume and quality of evidence work conducted over the last financial year. Collaborative working with partner organisations continues to be a great strength, providing mutual benefits in the sharing of resources, experience, skills and data.

In relation to Section 4.3 of this report and Beachy Head East MCZ Annex II contains the Agents of Change proposed two-stage holistic approach for supporting community input into the informal consultation process. Six workshops are planned for October 2022, two in each of the following proposed locations: two main fishing stations within BHE MCZ, Hastings and Eastbourne, and Bexhill.

9. Website Update

- 9.1 Angharad Purcell provided a presentation of the new website which is now live. It has been an ongoing project with the overall objectives being that its far easier to navigate, more user friendly and engaging.
- 9.2 Links to the interactive map as well as the permit database are located on each page and easily accessible. There is an environments section where you will find all the conservation and research related information, a fisheries section where regulations can be located, as well as permits and a member's section where a handbook can be printed. Social media platforms will link you directly to the relevant site.
- 9.3 Angharad Purcell also requested for those Authority Members that hadn't already done so to please send their short biographies and photographs to: admin@sussex-ifca.gov.uk.

- 9.4 Tim Dapling thanked Angharad and colleagues for all their efforts in producing the new website, about which he'd already received some very complementary feedback from another IFCA's Chair.

10 Communications Report

ALL agreed to be taken as read.

11 Permit Database Report

- 11.1 Nick Rogers thoroughly presented the new database to the members. He explained that this is an alternative method to uploading catch returns required for the Shellfish Permit Byelaw, and to provide permit holders with summary records of their own catch data and a full analysis of all the inshore catch data reported to us.
- 11.2 Nick added that by logging into the database a permit holder will be able to view all their catch returns and data relevant to their boat. This in turn streamlines the process our end and from a compliance view allows officers to view all data relating to permits and gives an overview of all species which we collect information on.
- 11.3 Tim Dapling explained that 'catch per unit effort' and 'temporal' graphics will be available to view as a permit holder, therefore, all the information uploaded on shellfish and timeframe can be interrogated and used as a resource for both the Authority and Permit holders.
- 11.4 Tim Dapling added that the existing method for submitting catch returns and applying for permit renewal/tags etc will remain in place for those who do not wish to use the online system. Emails will be sent out to all permit holders with confidential login information.

12 Compliance and Enforcement Report

ALL agreed to be taken as read.

13 Financial Statements 2021/2022 Financial Performance Report Quarter 1 2022/2023

- 13.1 Stephen Jump presented the report for the 1st Quarter of 2022/2023. He confirmed that the Finance Subcommittee was held on Tuesday 26th July. Unfortunately, the Finance subcommittee hadn't been quorate, therefore some information has been deferred to be considered in a meeting to be held in two weeks time.
- 13.2 Stephen stated that the Internal Auditors have now completed their work therefore, everything reported from a financial perspective for last year was correctly reported and the surplus of £57,000 which was achieved had

now been added into the Authorities reserves. Stephen referred to Appendix 1 in the report and stated that when the Finance subcommittee does convene, he expected it to be approved and subsequently published as part of the Authority's Annual Report.

- 13.3 Looking at the Current Financial Year, there has been a surplus of £17,000 achieved against the budget for the quarter. This was largely a result of the Authority's salary costs in the first three months of the year being under budget due to vacancies and staff changes.
- 13.4 The forecast for the whole of the Current Financial Year Performance is expected to slightly deviate away from the proposed budgets. The income made from investing surplus cash is now on the increase so approx. £6,000 more than budgeted from investment returns.
- 13.5 Due to staffing changes, employee costs are forecast to be £25,000 less than budgeted. However, since writing this report The Local Authority employers have suggested the pay increase for the year which is suggested as a £1900 across the board increase for all pay grades so there is unlikely to be a surplus in terms of employee costs.
- 13.6 Finally, looking at fuel costs Stephen expected costs to be £5,000 more than budgeted, but could go a lot higher. In summing up his final advice Stephen explained that, at the end of the year he expected the Authority to be at a break-even position.

ALL sincerely thanked Stephen and wished him the very best in his retirement.

14 Vessel & Vehicle maintenance log

Taken as read.

15 Chief Officers Group

ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

16 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

- 16.1 Tim Dapling said that the national issues presently at the forefront in Defra are development of fisheries management plans. The front runners included Bass and Non-Quota Channel Stocks. Tim said that he had invited the MMO to make a presentation today on fisheries management plans, however it was decided this should be rescheduled to October to provide more information as the planning engagement develops. Tim Dapling said that he is pleased to say that Defra is seeking to help fund the Authority's engagement and support for the plan.

16.2 Tim Dapling confirmed that we are hosting the post of a Senior Technical Officer on behalf of the Association adding that this will be fully externally funded through a DEFRA funding programme. This role is currently in the process of recruitment and yet to be finalised.

17 A.O.B.

17.1 The Chair asked members if they had any other business to raise.

17.2 Tim Dapling confirmed that Jim Partridge would be reappointed to the Technical Subcommittee, having recently been reappointed to the Authority.

17.3 Jim Partridge said that there were too many pages per the meeting pack and that this is unnecessary. Tim Dapling acknowledged that it was a large set of quarterly papers. However, it was explained that in respect to the Byelaw item, it had been necessary to include all associated documentation to ensure due Byelaw making process was followed.

17.4 Tim Dapling noted that Watchful made a quick flyby today on the river today following its lift out at Eastbourne for an MCA inspection and annual maintenance work. He added that he would like to arrange a date for members to spend some time aboard Watchful in September. The members were very supportive of the suggestion.

18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18.1 27th October 2022.

Acting Chair: Dr. Paul Driver