

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
SUSSEX INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
on 27th October 2022**

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

PRESENT

Members

Prof. Peter Jones (Chair)
Councillor Leo Littmann (Deputy Chair, Brighton & Hove City Council)
Dr. Paul Driver (MMO Appointee)
Councillor Noel Atkins (West Sussex County Council)
Councillor Sam Adenji (East Sussex County Council) Online
Councillor Pieter Montyn (West Sussex County Council)
Prof. Paul Leonard (MMO Appointee)
Andy Read (MMO Appointee)
Jim Partridge (MMO Appointee)
Garry Walker (MMO Appointee) Online
Gary Edwards (MMO Appointee)
Marcus Griffiths (MMO Appointee) Online

Staff

Tim Dapling (Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer)
Erin Lawes (Conservation & Research Manager)
Alberto Kavadellas (Senior Fisheries and Conservation Officer)
George Balchin (Senior Conservation and Research Officer)
Rebecca Belleni (Committee Manager and Personal Assistant to SMT)
Jake Wilson (Fisheries & Conservation Research Officer)
Vanessa Simons (Fisheries and Conservation Research Officer)
James Tapley (Fisheries and Conservation Officer)
Laura Wallace (Fisheries and Conservation Officer)
Lucy Francis (Finance Manager) Online

1 CHIEF OFFICER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Prof. Peter Jones welcomed all to the 3rd Quarterly Committee meeting of 2022-23, including Marcus Griffiths substituting for Paul Johnson via Zoom.
- 1.2 Tim Dapling started the meeting by introducing the new employees present at the meeting. Lucy Francis joining online was introduced as the new Finance Manager. James Tapley was then introduced as a new IFCO appointed in May. Laura Wallace was then named as the latest IFCO to join the compliance team. Vanessa Simons who started in early October as part of the Conservation and Research team.

1.3 Tim Dapling continued by taking time to highlight Erin Lawes leaving Sussex IFCA for a national role with the Environment Agency, after nearly 10 years with the Authority. The achievements and work Erin contributed to Sussex IFCA around MPAs, education, research and leadership was commended. She was presented with leaving gifts from the Authority and given thanks for her work over the years whilst wishing her the best in her new role.

1.4 Tim Dapling then introduced Rebecca Belleni who had been in post since early August. This was her first quarterly meeting as the new Committee Manager and Tim explained Rebecca had settled in well to the role.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Graham Furness (MMO Appointee)
Mark Bennett (Environment Agency)
Councillor Julia Hilton (East Sussex County Council)
Councillor Tom Liddard (East Sussex County Council)
Councillor Emma Evans (West Sussex County Council)
Corina Ciocan (MMO Appointee)
Sally Ashby (MMO Appointee)

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

3.1 Gary Edwards, Jim Partridge and Andy Read declared an interest.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

4.2 Jim Partridge advised that he couldn't remember where in the last meeting but he made a statement that we shouldn't be wasting our time talking about a particular topic that had been raised, 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.

4.3 Tim Dapling recalled this being mentioned as a concern and proposed officers look back over minutes and include words to reflect the concerns.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

5. Matters Arising

- 5.1 Tim Dapling confirmed the Hand Gathering Byelaw had been submitted to the MMO for QA and DEFRA process. This will be ongoing in terms of communications until an outcome is reached.
- 5.2 Jim Partridge raised an issue with the acronyms in the papers. Tim Dapling sympathised on the number of acronyms and suggested that a glossary is included or circulated for members' benefit.
- 5.3 Tim Dapling informed members that the Shellfish Permit Database was now live online and a good proportion of permit holders were utilising this new feature to input data and a record of their details which in turn will allow us to evaluate catch per unit effort.
- 5.4 Paul Leonard requested a figure as to how many were using the database as it was not clear in the pack.
- 5.5 Tim Dapling advised that there are typically in the order of 120 commercial and recreational shellfishers in total and a good proportion were already using the system, although he didn't have the latest figure to hand.

6 DECISION ITEMS

6.1 DEFRA Consultation

- 6.2 Prof. Peter Jones introduced the one item to discuss in decision items; Defra's consultation on the potential management of flyseining activity targeting demersal non-quota species and the proposals for introducing technical measures in English waters.
- 6.3 Tim Dapling provided an overview of the report's contents. He explained the use of flyseines as a major issue for inshore fisherman in the eastern channel and further elaborated on this method. He stressed that these vessels were not operating inside the district but out from 6 nautical miles seaward. This has caused considerable concern to inshore fleets due to the scale and expansion of this method. DEFRA has responded with a series of proposals to manage the flyseine fleet. He continued to elaborate on these management proposals.
- 6.4 Alberto Kavadellas then provided a first-hand account on a flyseiner from an IFCA boarding a vessel earlier this year during an MMO charter of Watchful. Describing it as a very high tech, industrial scale fishing process.

- 6.5 Tim Dapling referred the committee to supporting landing and catch composition pages of the report, key species being red mullet, whiting squid and pouting. Highlighting that although this is meant to be a targeted fishery it does have a wide catch composition, he then asked members if there were any questions regarding the consultation.
- 6.6 Gary Edwards referred to the catch landing and highlighted that the targeted fish was not the predominant percentage caught. He questioned technicalities in the flyseine method and nets being used legally for the targeted species.
- 6.7 Marcus Griffiths confirmed the non-quota species regulations within the channel is 80mm mesh size in codends and 40mm when targeting squid. Gary Edwards questioned why if the quota species whiting is caught the 80mm codends are permitted.
- 6.8 Tim Dapling raised his concern from the report regarding species in the catch composition which would be expected for fishing in this area that are absent from the catch data.
- 6.9 Jim Partridge mentioned he didn't disagree with anything discussed so far but he is concerned that things are prohibited for being new which therefore impacts development. He continued to voice that flyseining is not conducted within the Sussex IFCA area but when there was sand dredging within the Kingmere MCZ this was not managed nor objected and posed the question as to if this meant the Authority was now proactive in managing neighbouring areas.
- 6.10 Prof. Peter Jones responded advising that a strong response expressing major concerns was submitted by the Authority with regards to the dredging in Kingmere MCZ. Furthermore, he added that various IFCA's, government bodies and fishers were acutely concerned on the flyseine situation. This is not due to being a new method but around the points made by Gary Edwards and Tim Dapling.
- 6.11 Tim Dapling highlighted in agreement with Gary Edwards that, this is not a new method but the concern is the scale at which it has become and the controls are not in place to reflect the advanced technology and fishing capacity.
- 6.12 Garry Walker added to the debate providing his understanding of the technical regulations with regards to trawling and cod end mesh sizes, the use of square mesh panels and the landing obligation.
- 6.13 Jim Partridge questioned the merit of the current landing obligations and the need to return unwanted catch.

- 6.14 Garry Walker responded, advising that flyseining activities were permitted due to satisfying the criteria laid out in the landing obligation.
- 6.15 Tim Dapling further explained the landing obligation and the need for each individual vessel to meet the requirements. Those who are obliged to land should record the species landed and this data ought to be made available to the MMO, using cod as an example as not accounted for. He followed on from this by bringing the members focus back to the draft letter which highlights this as a question. He said that it is imperative the existing legislation is well enforced prior to starting a new process for legislation. Dr. Paul Driver pointed out that the draft would benefit from further checking in respect to grammar and had suggested corrections for officers.
- 6.16 Prof. Peter Jones then summarised the flyseine discussion with agreement on this as an offshore fishery of concern and a need to better manage and regulate. He advised we move to discuss the draft letter response from Sussex IFCA to the consultation, with members asked to consider and approve.
- 6.17 Tim Dapling took time to deconstruct and explain the draft letter in sections. Highlighting obligations from the Fisheries Act to raising concerns from inshore fishers on the decline in fish within the inshore area consequence to the offshore industrial scale fishing. The letter then looks at flyseine management with advice on more inspections, which Sussex IFCA are happy to support. Catch composition is then addressed with the absence of specific species expected to be accounted for. Finally, it looks at the compliance and fisheries management plans currently prior to implementation of new requirements.
- 6.18 Prof. Peter Jones opened the meeting room to any questions or comments with regards to the draft letter.
- 6.19 Gary Edwards questioned the 15% leeway on shooting lines which is a lot and from a vessel with high tech equipment to measure exact lengths.
- 6.20 Cllr Leo Littmann raised that this 15% control margin was not in the new proposed management it states 'restrict the rope length'.
- 6.21 Prof. Peter Jones advised we can make reference to this and assume that 15% margin in rope length is no longer permitted.
- 6.22 Marcus Griffiths added in relation to the 15% margins with his experience onboard these vessels it's very difficult to monitor hence this margin.

- 6.23 Paul Leonard gave feedback to the first paragraph and advised that they need to give reference to this committee meeting and the concerns listed. He spoke from experience with work at DEFRA and gave comment on making fundamental statements initially as to set the tone. He also added that there is no mention of Brexit.
- 6.24 Tim Dapling concluded that we would seek to address all comments and include bullet points at the start of the letter on the salient issues.
- 6.25 Andy Read gave a technical account on flyseiner as a positive method in relation to carbon footprint, habitat and fish quality compared to beam trawling. The problem is the quantity of vessels operating which results in inshore fishers landing less. Andy continued with comments that this method done by smaller fleets is a low impact way to fish and should not be excluded from inshore. He also flagged the law of unintended consequence if fishers are forced to move to smaller areas to fish and cause more damage.
- 6.26 Tim Dapling thanked Andy and suggested we make specific reference to proposed restrictions on the eastern Channel fleet as opposed to elsewhere within territorial waters and the positive aspect for small flyseiners.
- 6.27 Prof. Peter Jones continued and agreed we could add this to the opening section to inform it is not the flyseine method that is the issue but the scale of it and the way it is regulated. Further to no more questions or discussion, the Chair asked that the draft letter be amended as per comments made and in due course sent to DEFRA.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the following Recommendations:

- i. To approve the final draft response letter to Defra on Managing Flyseine vessel pressure on demersal Non-Quota Species. (Subject to any final amendments agreed during the meeting)

INFORMATION ITEMS

Presentation Marine Management Organisation (MMO)

Non Quota Species Channel Fisheries Management Plan

Presented from Nicholas French

- Prof. Peter Jones Thanked Nicholas and invited members to ask questions.
- Jim Partridge stated that there is no point in having FMP's without a fleet plan.
- Nicholas French advised he was not aware of any fleet plans for this but will take this comment back to the working group.
- Jim Partridge continued by voicing concern at the Scottish overseeing this management in the south coast.
- Nicholas French responded to inform Jim Partridge that, the Scottish are not involved in this management. It is the MMO with no Scottish involvement.
- Paul Driver asked if it was one FMP per area or if for each FMP there would be an offshore and inshore with different recommendations for each.
- Nicholas French replied to the best of his knowledge it was one FMP per area that will encompass both inshore and offshore. As this is a new policy this could be with subdivisions which could be informed and lead by the IFCA's.
- Gary Edwards spoke regarding cuttlefish traps which he had invested in and is now subject to an effort restriction through the Sussex IFCA Shellfish Permit Byelaw. Gary made reference to the west country trawl fishery having no restrictions and to advise on considering this when looking into the FMP for this area.
- Gary continued to stress the data inconsistency for Cornish fishers and inshore fishers in Sussex in regards to cuttlefish being caught there as juveniles and therefore decimating adult cuttlefish migrating to Sussex inshore. He asked to look at data from prior to the past 10 years for evidence of this and historic trends.
- Jim Partridge further asked for all aspects to be looked at with the decrease of crabs in the eastern channel. He believes 95% mortality is caused by other methods such as beam trawling, dredging, fixed nets.
- Nicholas French responded with reference to a previous slide stating Seafish were the leading body for the crab FMP.

- Paul Leonard highlighted his marine science work at DEFRA in which he has experience with policy customers and drawing all aspects together.
- Nicholas French agreed with Paul's comments and explained the first point will be encompassing all of these wider elements to initially pass to the FMP processes.

Tim Dapling summarised by expressing the urgency for appropriate measures to be implemented given the lack of non-quota stock available to inshore fishers within the district. He Thanked Nicholas for his presentation on behalf of the MMO.

7 Conservation and Research Update

- 7.1 Erin Lawes provided an update on the Conservation and Research Team's interim report and work progress over the first half of this financial year. She referred to the detailed reports provided in the pack and associated annexes.
- 7.2 Erin Lawes highlighted in reference to discussions from today's meeting, the continued research carried out in relation to crab and lobster. The potting surveys that have extended throughout the district, the measurement data to aid CEFAS stock assessment and continued work with the Crustacean Habitat and Sediment Movement (CHASM) project.
- 7.3 Jim Partridge interjected the update from Erin Lawes to advise that Corina Ciocan who was not present at today's meeting had agreed with Jim Partridge that they would collect samples from live crustacea. Jim stressed to the members that if something is not done there will be no crabs or lobsters caught in West Sussex.
- 7.4 Dr George Balchin added in response that there was a significant work focus on crab and lobster currently within the Conservation and Research team and this would continue to be a priority.
- 7.5 Erin Lawes mentioned the importance of the technical advisory group and working with other IFCA'S collaboratively, further explaining one of the work streams is looking into a parasite within crustacea. Jim Partridge stated this parasite theory is discounted and the problem is pyridine. Prof. Peter Jones advised this was one theory but further work is being undertaken.

- 7.6 Paul Driver asked how he can gain access to the potting report. Erin advised to request from officers and in due course will be available on our website.
- 7.7 Paul Leonard questioned another report's availability on nearshore trawling byelaw monitoring with Blue Marine Foundation and Plymouth University on page 47. Erin Lawes informed this was not yet completed and should be finalised by the end of the month. Paul further asked regarding our current relationship with Blue Marine Foundation. Prof. Peter Jones advised they are a partner and collaborate on research whilst providing funding and support.
- 7.8 Tim Dapling stated how vital our diverse range of partnerships are with regards to Conservation and Research. Erin Lawes seconded this by directing members to the extensive list of partnerships and projects Sussex IFCA are involved in and stressing that without this we would not have the capacity to cover as much research as we currently do.
- 7.9 Gary Edwards wished to raise the issue of oysters and asked the committee if it was best time to do so.
- 7.10 Erin Lawes advised there was a section in the reports regarding Chichester Harbour Oyster Fishery Season Closure due to stocks being below the threshold with an associated appendix with data.
- 7.11 Gary Edwards raised concern on this with regards to the wild population not being an accurate statement. He also argued that this was a cultivated wild population before measures were brought in. He would like the management reviewed due to continual decline and no change.
- 7.12 Tim Dapling appreciates the concerns raised and agreed that there has been a continuous decline of stock. He further explained positive work being done by the Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHAPRON) and elsewhere by Solent Oyster Restoration Project. Tim also added the issue around sediment in Chichester Harbour. This was discussed with Gary Edwards and he did not fully agree this was the issue. Tim Dapling continued to conclude there was momentum gathering to readdress the oyster stock issue and would like Gary Edwards involved in these groups moving forward.
- 7.13 Jim Partridge questioned GRP micro fibres in oysters within Chichester Harbour and the effects on failing to reach sexual maturity due to this.

- 7.14 Prof. Peter Jones explained this is a factor that requires more research and potential exposure and evidence to support it causing an ecotoxicological effect. Tim Dapling further agreed and advised of areas where there are known oyster beds in coastal waters, outside the Harbour. The management of these areas can positively impact inside the harbour.
- 7.15 Prof. Peter Jones concluded the Conservation and Research update with highlighting the extensive research work that industriously continues in the background and gave another Thanks to Erin Lawes for her monumental work and commitment over the past 10 years at Sussex IFCA.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the report and appendices.

8 Compliance Report

- 8.1 Alberto Kavadellas provided a brief update on the past Quarter with regards to enforcement of mainly shellfish permit and marine protected area byelaws. He further highlighted the good weather allowed for a high number of patrols (sea, road and drone). Alberto Kavadellas then went through each district area with a summary report on activity.
- 8.2 Alberto Kavadellas then directed members to look at the activity enforcement table prior to summarising this breakdown on inspections, patrols, offence reports and current investigation.
- 8.3 Prof. Peter Jones thanked Alberto for the compliance summary.

ALL RESOLVED to note the report.

9 Communications Report

- 9.1 Tim Dapling briefly ran through the report in the absence of Angharad Purcell.

ALL agreed to be taken as read.

10 Financial Performance Report Quarter 2 2022/2023

- 10.1 Tim Dapling introduced Lucy Francis the new Finance Manager who unfortunately was unwell but presenting via Zoom.

- 10.2 Lucy Francis presented an overview of the report for the second Quarter of 2022/2023, income being £269,380 against a budget of £275,075. This reduction was mainly due to the absence of income from charters for the vessels. There was also netting permit income which was delayed. This was offset by cash reserves which are generating income.
- 10.3 Lucy Francis stated total expenditure for the quarter was £291,029 against a budget of £275,825 which left a £20,899 deficit. The majority of this was due to Marine Operations annual boat lift which happened at the end of the last quarter. Staffing costs were also a factor due to vacant positions for a period of time which was a saving, though an annual pay award is currently under consideration which will increase staff costs.
- 10.4 The forecast currently has a net gain of £21,400, though if the final agreed staff pay award is 5.5% this will be eliminated. Lucy Francis advised that this would be clear by the next Quarter.
- 10.5 Prof. Peter Jones thanked Lucy Francis and told members that this was discussed in more detail and agreed at the Finance Subcommittee earlier today.
- 10.6 Jim Partridge raised question as to why FPV Watchful was lifted in and out the water various times. Tim Dapling explained the technical issue around the alignment of one of the shafts.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the report and expenditure to date.

11 Vessel & Vehicle maintenance log

- 11.1 Paul Driver stated with reference to the members trip in September that he was extremely impressed by the vessel and crew.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

12 Chief Officers Group

- 12.1 Tim Dapling introduced this agenda item with a brief overview, highlighting main items which were funding, fisheries management plans and Sussex IFCA'S support with appointing a new Senior Technical Officer on behalf of the Association to support and participate in the Marine Natural Capital & Ecosystem Assessment Program run through DEFRA.

- 12.2 Tim Dapling informed that this has been a particularly busy quarter in regard to recruitment and employment matters. There is a meeting scheduled in the coming weeks to focus on fisheries management plans.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

13 Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities

- 13.1 Tim Dapling spoke of Rob Clark as Chief Officer for the Association whom previously worked for Sussex IFCA as Deputy Chief. Tim further explained Rob's work to develop the relationship with DEFRA and specifically funding. He advised the members that the funding we solely receive from DEFRA has been unchanged in 12 years which equates to 1/5th of our funding.
- 13.2 Tim Dapling continued to explain the escalation on funding discussions with DEFRA due to the request for Sussex IFCA to implement fisheries management planning.

ALL RESOLVED to note the report.

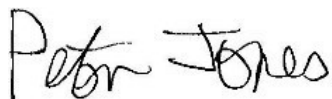
14 A.O.B.

- 14.1 Prof. Peter Jones asked members if they had any other business to raise.
- 14.2 Jim Partridge has two items. Firstly, he informed he intends to commence fishing at Dolphin Head HPMA due to the scarcity of crab and lobster which has forced to look at potting this area.
- 14.3 Prof. Peter Jones advised we can note this but hopes this information is in a response submitted to the HPMA consultation.
- 14.4 Jim Partridge secondly spoke of Natural England's letter in response to angler's fishing bream at Kingmere. Jim raised concern on gear conflict between anglers and fishers. Jim Partridge stated it would be better to ban anglers from this MCZ for the duration of the breeding season.
- 14.5 Paula Daghish responded advising zonal management is preferable to no management and therefore supported. NE have concerns that angling may be causing disturbance to Black Bream when they are most sensitive as set out in our response to the Guiding Principles.

- 14.6 Tim Dapling said that we are looking at Kingmere but priority is Beachy Head East at present due to having no MPA management measures in place.
- 14.7 Gary Edwards added to this topic with concerns on charter fishing boats income if removed from Kingmere and Rampion Windfarm's planned cable route through the bream breeding.
- 14.8 Jim Partridge asked if there was any scientific evidence on effects of electromagnetic fields on bream breeding grounds?
- 14.9 Prof. Peter Jones responded that there is no evidence.
- 14.10 Erin Lawes informed with regards to Rampion II there is an expert topic group to focus on noise impact and the cable route.
- 14.11 Prof. Peter Jones advised this was an item which would be covered in detail within a future agenda when we are looking at the environmental impact assessment of Rampion II.
- 14.12 Tim Dapling lastly showed members the first draft of the Sussex IFCA Annual Report for 2021-2022. This will be circulated via PDF on email and hard copies in the post.

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 15.1 26th January 2023.

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

Prof. Peter Jones, Chair Sussex IFCA.