

**MINUTES OF THE QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE
SUSSEX INSHORE FISHERIES & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
on 23rd October 2025**

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

PRESENT

Members

Prof. Peter Jones (Chair)
Councillor Noel Atkins (Deputy Chair, West Sussex County Council)
Councillor Theresa Fowler (Brighton & Hove City Council)
Councillor Deborah Urquhart (West Sussex County Council)
Councillor Steve Murphy (East Sussex County Council)
Dr Paul Driver (MMO Appointee)
Mark Bennett (EA Representative)
Kim Matthews (MMO Appointee)
Danni Barrett (NE Representative)
Dr Corina Ciocan (MMO Appointee)
Prof. Paul Leonard (MMO Appointee)
Shaun Brewer (MMO Appointee)
Yasmin Ornsby (MMO Appointee)
Paul Johnson (MMO Appointee)
Marcus Griffiths (Substitute MMO Representative)

Staff

Rob Pearson (Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer)
Angharad Purcell (Deputy Chief Fisheries & Conservation Officer)
Rebecca Belleni (Committee & Communications Manager)
Dr Geroge Balchin (Fisheries & Conservation Manager)
Ruth Harrison (Finance Manager)
Dr Sol Lucas (Senior Conservation & Research Officer)
Jamie Milling (Compliance & Enforcement Officer)
Hannah Gibbs (Compliance & Enforcement Officer)
Martha Webb (Compliance & Enforcement Officer)

Guest

Sarah Coulthard – Presenting / guest

1 CHAIR & CHIEF OFFICER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Prof. Peter Jones welcomed members, staff and guest to the third Sussex IFCA Principal Committee meeting for 2025.
- 1.2 Prof. Peter Jones gave a particular welcome to new member Yasmin Ornsby from Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society as an MMO appointee. He also welcomed Cllr Steve Murphy from ESCC as newly appointed in

replacement of Cllr Julia Hilton. He welcomed Paul Johnson back to the committee, now as MMO Appointee for recreational angling. He also welcomed Sarah Coulthard who is today presenting to the committee on the 'Inshore & Small Scale Fisheries Consortium.' The Chair also welcomed the three new IFCO's to their first SxIFCA committee meeting.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Emma Evans
Sally Ashby
Julian Seaman
Gary Edwards
Gordon Chittenden

Absent

Councillor Tom Liddiard (East Sussex County Council)
Councillor Sam Adeniji (East Sussex County Council)

3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 3.1 Prof. Peter Jones advised that due to there being no decision items on today's agenda, there is no requirement for declarations of interest from members.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 4.1 Prof. Peter Jones asked members for any comments and corrections on the minutes from the previous quarterly committee meeting. None were raised.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

5. MATTERS ARISING

- 5.1 Prof. Peter Jones further asked if there were any matters arising from the minutes.
- 5.2 Prof. Paul Leonard questioned whether there had been any update or clarification on the Brighton Marina dredge disposal, as discussed at the previous meeting to the July Q2, as the current status of the dredging remains uncertain to members who were unable to attend the last meeting.

- 5.3 Rob Pearson informed that SxIFCA had received a detailed response from the MMO regarding the formal consultation on the licence. At that time, the decision communicated was that the licence would be approved, representing the most official update received to date.
- 5.4 Shaun Brewer added that the Brighton Marina Harbour Master had told him that the licence appeared to have been withdrawn after initially being approved.
- 5.5 Prof. Peter Jones reported that the Wildlife Trust had run a campaign regarding the Brighton Marina dredging licence, and the indication was that a challenge to the licence would be upheld. However, this had not been officially confirmed. It was noted that Brighton Marina tenants had reportedly been informed of the same outcome, though this also remained unofficial and reiterated that, as of now, there has been no official confirmation received — only informal reports and when we have formal information it will be circulated to members.
- 5.6 Marcus Griffiths stated that he would follow up on this matter before the next meeting. He confirmed that no official communication had yet been received from the MMO licensing team, which may be partly due to the current position and workload of the team.

INFORMATION ITEMS

6 Shellfish Permit Byelaw Review

- 6.1 Dr George Balchin provided an update on the Shellfish Permit Byelaw review, noting that it is the next management review in the Authority's four-year planning cycle. Shellfisheries are important to the district, and the team is currently collating data to inform the process, including a literature review, catch return analysis, and semi-structured interviews with permit holders.
- 6.2 Dr George Balchin explained that communication tools, including tailored reports and a YouTube video presenting statistics by ICES square sub-sections, have been developed to support the project and assist fishers in understanding data relevant to their business practices. Dr Balchin highlighted the review as an opportunity to further develop co-design and co-management approaches, emphasising the importance of incorporating fishers' perspectives at an early stage of the process.
- 6.3 Dr George Balchin added that, to facilitate this, a thematic analysis of interviews is being conducted. Following a competitive tender process, the work was awarded to Sarah Coulthard's research group at Newcastle University, selected for their expertise, experience and understanding of the IFCA and fisheries. He confirmed that he and Dr Sol Lucas are conducting the semi-structured interviews, which aim to capture fishers priorities while helping to build trust, ultimately supporting more collaborative and informed management outcomes. He described this

important qualitative analysis as forming part of the broader Shellfish Permit Byelaw review process.

- 6.4 Dr George Balchin also highlighted the use of quantitative data, including shellfish permit catch returns. He noted that Sol is developing a more sophisticated analysis using generalized additive modelling (GAM), which is well-suited to the highly seasonal nature of fisheries, where activity varies throughout the year. The modelling incorporates extraneous environmental variables, such as sea surface temperature, rainfall, and chlorophyll, to help explain variations in landings per unit effort (LPUE). This approach allows the team to better distinguish trends driven by environmental factors from those arising from fishing activity, improving the robustness and explanatory power of the analysis.
- 6.5 Dr George Balchin further stated that incorporating environmental variables into the analysis will allow the team to more accurately determine trends in LPUE. This approach helps to account for and explain a greater proportion of the variability in the data. He added that the analysis may help identify causes of observed trends by incorporating broader-scale variables to see if potential causes of trends nationally may be reflected at a local scale in Sussex.
- 6.6 Dr George Balchin stated that the next stage of the Shellfish Permit Byelaw review will involve completing and reviewing the three streams of data collection and conducting a more technical review of the byelaw. He emphasised that any outcomes will be informed by the data from the interviews. If changes are deemed necessary, an informal consultation, similar to previous workshops such as Beachy Head East MCZ, may be held. For changes beyond flexible permit conditions, a statutory formal consultation, including an updated impact assessment, may be required. The extent of work involved will depend on the outcomes of the data streams, and no assumptions will be made until that analysis is complete.
- 6.7 Kim Matthews asked about the reliability of the data, noting that catch returns may not accurately reflect fishing activity within specific quadrants. He highlighted that a vessel whelk fishing might have pots both inside and outside a six-mile limit, making it unclear how he would report catches within a given quadrant.
- 6.8 Dr George Balchin explained that data submission is partly self-led by fishers, who judge when pots cross ICES subsquare boundaries. While this introduces some variability, seven years of data help balance inconsistencies. He noted that accuracy relies on fishers' compliance.
- 6.9 Angharad Purcell noted that the database allows for multiple submissions, so if a fisher has operated across two different ICES subsquares, they can submit separate returns for each area.
- 6.10 Paul Johnson suggested conducting a minor audit comparing catch return data with MMO sales notes, particularly for larger vessels fishing inside and outside the six-mile limit, to identify discrepancies. He noted past

experience with Southern IFCA revealed numerous errors, highlighting the value of such checks.

- 6.11 Dr George Balchin asked whether the MMO catch app required specifying if the catch was from inside or outside the six-mile limit.
- 6.12 Paul Johnson explained that sales notes would be better in providing the total landings figure for vessels fishing inside and outside of the district. This could be cross referenced with the shellfish permit catch returns from a specific vessel. For fishers fishing both inside and outside of the district, you would expect to see a difference between the total landings from sales notes reflecting shellfish landed from both inside and outside of the district, compared to the shellfish permit catch returns reflecting the shellfish taken from only inside of the district.
- 6.13 Rob Pearson noted the suggestion regarding use of sales note data. He commended Dr George Balchin and the wider C&R team for prioritising fishers' views at the start of the evidence-gathering process. He highlighted that invitations to interview have been sent to all permit holders, acknowledging that not all may respond, but emphasising that this approach sets a benchmark for how future management reviews should be approached.
- 6.14 Prof. Paul Leonard agreed with this approach but expressed concern about broader water quality issues, particularly sediment loading from rivers, as well as nitrates and phosphates, which may affect shellfish waters. He noted that extreme climate events, such as droughts followed by floods, can rapidly alter sediment inputs. He suggested liaising with the Environment Agency, potentially with Defra funding, to obtain relevant data and better understand the impacts of agricultural practices on water quality and shellfish habitats.
- 6.15 Dr George Balchin acknowledged Prof. Leonard's point, noting that while he is conscious of not pre-empting the process, interviews with fishers indicate they often have a strong understanding of water quality and sediment impacts. He emphasised the need to remain focused on what changes or improvements can be made within the confines of the byelaw, while recognising the value of this broader contextual information.
- 6.16 Dr Paul Driver asked whether a multivariate analysis is being conducted on the environmental criteria.
- 6.17 Dr George Balchin confirmed that the team is integrating these variables with the catch return data using generalized additive models. The dependent variables include LPUE and total landings, while explanatory variables include fishing effort, sea surface temperature, chlorophyll, rainfall, and other relevant environmental factors. He added that they are very close to having more formed outputs from the models and expect to have a clearer picture for the next committee meeting, though the exact outcomes are not yet known.

- 6.18 Dr Corina Ciocan suggested including the health and status of zooplankton larvae as a variable, noting that previous discussions considered running a program to evaluate zooplankton associated with shellfisheries. She highlighted that this assessment could provide valuable insight into future juvenile shellfish availability, complementing other environmental data such as water temperature.
- 6.19 Dr George Balchin agreed, acknowledging that this information is currently limited but noted it could align with Prof Paul Leonard's earlier point on water quality. He added that while a plankton survey would provide valuable data, it is costly and likely beyond the current review scope, though there may be future opportunities to seek funding for such work.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the report and appendices.

7 FPV Osprey

- 7.1 The Chief Officer, Rob Pearson, reminded members that at the January quarterly meeting an update was provided on the procurement of the new fisheries patrol vessel Osprey. Today's report provides a further update on the vessel's operational readiness. He explained that FPV Delta One, the previous 5.5m RIB, had served as a daughter vessel to FPV Watchful for over 20 years, facilitating at-sea boardings of commercial and recreational vessels. FPV Delta One had reached the end of its service life due to obsolete parts and mechanical failures, and although a second-hand engine had prolonged its use temporarily, this was unsustainable in the longer term.
- 7.2 Rob Pearson informed that a procurement strategy for a replacement commenced in 2023 under the oversight of the Financial Subcommittee, supported by £150,000 in Defra capital delivery funding, and conducted in line with financial and public procurement regulations. The tender was awarded to MST and Osprey was designed as a modern, fully compatible replacement for Delta One, able to operate in the same manner and dock and launch from FPV Watchful. He said that construction was completed in February 2025, with delivery to Shoreham in April 2025. Post-delivery snagging issues were resolved with MST engineers. He said that FPV Osprey has now passed all sea trials, is fully coded (Workboat Code 3), licensed, insured, and equipped for operations up to twenty nautical miles from a safe haven, including FPV Watchful. Crew have been trained on the new systems and procedures and standard operating procedures have been updated to suit the new vessel.
- 7.3 Rob Pearson continued to advise that FPV Osprey completed her first operational patrol earlier this quarter, officially entering service. She features a 30-knot top speed, advanced health and safety measures including shock-absorbing seats, a reinforced hull, and modern radar

navigation systems. These upgrades enhance safety, efficiency and enforcement capability. Members who visited the pontoon at lunchtime had the opportunity to view the vessel, and the team expressed satisfaction with her performance. He highlighted the asset brochure included in the report detailing her full specifications.

- 7.4 Dr Paul Driver commented on FPV Osprey being a very impressive asset from his visit today.

All RESOLVED to approve the report and appendices.

8 Compensatory Marine Protected Areas

- 8.1 Rob Pearson provided a brief informational update on Defra's Compensatory Marine Protected Areas programme. He highlighted that, while members may already be aware of the proposals, the programme could have significant implications for SxIFCA and the district, potentially requiring careful consideration for planning, resourcing and any additional work streams to ensure compliance and effective management. He then explained the programme is related to work at government level under Defra's Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package, which aims to balance environmental protection with the accelerated delivery of renewable energy infrastructure.
- 8.2 Rob Pearson emphasised that a key objective of the Compensatory Marine Protected Areas programme is to significantly reduce consenting times for offshore wind developments, thereby helping to meet national renewable energy targets to meet the 2030 clean power action plan.
- 8.3 Rob Pearson informed that one of the delays in the current consenting process often occur when proposed sites impact Marine Protected Areas. He added that this summer, the government consulted on proposed reforms to compensatory measures, intending to allow developers more flexibility by enabling compensation to benefit the wider UK MPA network, rather than being limited to directly impacted features or habitats.
- 8.4 Rob Pearson continued to explain that to support this, Defra is identifying potential MPA sites that could serve as a library of compensatory seabed habitats for designation. The process is currently underway, initially in collaboration with statutory nature conservation bodies. Defra intends to consult industry stakeholders, including IFCAs, to create a shortlist of sites for public consultation and Defra have published a set of principles in July outlining considerations in site selection.
- 8.5 Rob Pearson updated members that the IFCAs have provided feedback via their Chief Officer (COG) Representative on the published principles, which

emphasise MPA network coherence and the best use of ecological evidence. He emphasised the potential concerns, particularly the risk of marine spatial squeeze affecting inshore fishers and the displacement effects if offshore development is compensated by inshore site designations. He highlighted that, under the Authority's statutory duties in the Marine and Coastal Access Act, any newly designated inshore sites would require IFCAs to assess fisheries activities, evaluate impacts on conservation objectives, and develop and implement appropriate fisheries management measures.

- 8.6 Rob Pearson concluded by adding that there is not yet a shortlist of potential sites published, but timelines indicate public consultation on shortlisted sites is expected next year, with designations anticipated in 2027. He said that this programme could initiate significant additional work streams for Sussex IFCA.
- 8.7 Kim Matthews expressed his shared concern on spatial squeeze and the disproportional impact on the inshore fleet.
- 8.8 Prof. Peter Jones agreed with this concern and potential impacts on the inshore fleet, adding that geographically it is disproportionate, especially if inshore compensatory MPAs are designated to mitigate the impacts of offshore wind farm developments.
- 8.9 Shaun Brewer raised the point that increasing spatial squeeze impacts would also create an issue of increased gear conflict as a further effect of this.

ALL RESOLVED to approve report and appendices.

PRESENTATION:

Sarah Coulthard – Inshore and Small Scale Fisheries Consortium

9 Financial Performance Report Q2 2025-2026

- 9.1 Ruth Harrison presented an update on the Authority's financial performance for the previous quarter and provided a forecast for the end of the financial year. She reported that a more detailed version of the report had been reviewed and approved by the Financial Subcommittee previous to this meeting.
- 9.2 Ruth Harrison informed members that the Authority had produced a small surplus of just under £4,800 for the quarter. Income was reported to be below budget by approximately £3,500, while expenditure was also below budget by just under £18,000. Overall, this placed SxIFCA in a stronger

financial position than anticipated, in achieving a surplus where a small deficit had been expected.

- 9.3 Ruth Harrison reported that, for the year-end forecast, income is expected to be approximately £11,500 below budget, while expenditure is anticipated to be around £53,000 under budget. This results in an overall positive variance of approximately £41,500, meaning the Authority is now projected to end the financial year with a small surplus rather than the more significant deficit that had originally been forecast.

ALL RESOLVED to approve report and appendices.

10 Conservation and Research Update

- 10.1 Dr George Balchin provided an update on the Conservation and Research workstreams, beginning with Habitat Regulation Assessments. He explained that these assessments are conducted to evaluate fishing activity across European Marine Sites. Three HRAs are being progressed this year — Chichester Harbour; Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay; and the Solent and Dorset Coast. The Chichester assessment is in the final stages and awaiting sign-off by Natural England, with thanks extended to Danni Barratt for her support and input. The other two assessments are at earlier stages but progressing well. He noted that no significant conflicts have yet been identified between designated features and fishing activity, though this may change as assessments continue.
- 10.2 Dr George Balchin informed members of the successful trials of the flying array, which was used to conduct towed video surveys in early October under excellent visibility conditions. Thirteen towed video sites have been completed, alongside eleven new survey sites in Beachy Head East MCZ, selected in collaboration with fishers, compliance staff and Senior Skipper Chris Hubbard. These include repeat surveys from 2021 conducted with ZSL to continue building a baseline for the Beachy Head East Marine Conservation Zone.
- 10.3 Dr George Balchin reported that two baited remote underwater video systems (BRUVs) have been purchased, now becoming a standard tool for fisheries and habitat monitoring. Their deployment is compatible with enforcement patrols, making them a practical long-term solution. An annual BRUV survey plan is under development.
- 10.4 Dr George Balchin confirmed that small fish surveys have continued successfully in Chichester Harbour, where nearly all sites have been completed. However, surveys in Rye were prevented by adverse weather and will be rescheduled for next year. The fifth year of potting surveys with the Blue Marine Foundation has been completed successfully.

- 10.5 Dr George Balchin updated members on the district-wide habitat mapping project, which recently went through a tendering process. The Channel Coastal Observatory was selected to lead the work and is currently conducting a scoping study to review existing data, identify gaps, and plan how to fill them in line with Sussex IFCA's monitoring capabilities. A recent meeting with CCO indicated strong progress, providing optimism that the project is on track to achieve a EUNIS level 3 habitat map for the district.
- 10.6 Dr George Balchin concluded by informing members on ongoing work on marine conservation measures and consultations on licence applications, highlighting a recent MMO consultation on licensing fees. He noted the MMO's intention to move towards a cost-neutral model, which Sussex IFCA supports, particularly if it enhances monitoring capabilities associated with licence applications.
- 10.7 Dr Sol Lucas introduced the MMO Stage 3 consultation, explaining that it proposes new management measures across 42 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), with the majority relating to bottom-towed fishing gear. Two MPAs partially overlap the SxIFCA district — Beachy Head East MCZ and Offshore Overfalls.
- 10.8 Dr Sol Lucas informed members that Offshore Overfalls lies mostly beyond the six-mile limit but includes a small inshore area. The MMO proposes a site-based approach here, prohibiting bottom-towed gear throughout the site. For Beachy Head East, a feature-based approach is proposed, prohibiting bottom-towed gear only where designated features occur — covering most of the MMO's section of the site.
- 10.9 Dr Sol Lucas confirmed that SxIFCA is generally supportive of both proposals, noting the Authority typically applies a feature-based approach rather than a site-wide approach, in keeping with the Revised Approach, though it is appreciated that implementing this further offshore is more complex. He added that SxIFCA had raised a technical query regarding some of the Beachy Head East coordinates, where discrepancies were identified, and clarification was requested from the MMO.
- 10.10 Dr George Balchin thanked Dr Sol Lucas for the update and provided further information on recent activities. He noted Dr Sol Lucas attending an IUCN workshop on skates and rays, highlighting the growing importance of skate fisheries in the district. Secondly, he noted his attendance to 'Sharkademy', supporting training for individuals interested in shark research. The Authority assisted the University of Sussex with their eDNA fieldwork, marking the fourth consecutive year of this data collection, maintaining the time series. He also noted that staff completed training on the new towed video array, with successful and safe trials and minor updates to standard operating procedures completed. He congratulated Em Denton-Smith on completion of their drone license, enhancing the Authority's drone-based monitoring capability, particularly for hand-gathering projects which are planned to resume soon.

- 10.11 Dr George Balchin confirmed that the Shellfish Permit Byelaw review is progressing well and welcomed Sarah Courtard's team's assistance with the thematic analysis of stakeholder interviews, expressing confidence in their expertise. Finally, he reported that one or two independent potting surveys were conducted in Sussex, outside of the Blue Marine Foundation-funded surveys, noting that this monitoring work is gaining momentum.
- 10.12 Dr Paul Driver queried the report, noting it referred to one potting survey and asked whether more surveys had been planned. They questioned if the two surveys mentioned were sufficient and whether it was too late in the year to conduct additional surveys.
- 10.13 Dr George Balchin explained that the survey referred to was conducted before the Blue Marine Foundation survey. He was unsure exactly how many surveys Dan had attended to date. He added that the team is still building capacity for additional surveys but acknowledged that summer is a busy period for fieldwork and progress has been slower than he would like.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the report.

11 Compliance and Enforcement Report

- 11.1 Angharad Purcell took time to highlight compliance and enforcement activities over the last quarter, stating that activity remained steady, following a risk-based and intelligence-led approach, with patrols active both on land and at sea, supported by drone patrols, particularly around the Chichester Harbour area. She further informed on some downtime with patrol vessels due to mechanical issues with FPV Merlin and the ongoing commissioning of FPV Watchful's new boarding vessel, Osprey, which had been discussed earlier in the meeting. Despite these challenges, coverage was maintained through flexible deployment and shore-based patrols.
- 11.2 Angharad Purcell advised that the main focus had been enforcing the Shellfish Permit Byelaw, Hand Gathering Byelaw, and national bass measures. She said that at Chichester Harbour hand gathering activity remained relatively high, with several verbal warnings issued for breaches of the new byelaw. Recreational bass angling also increased during good weather periods, and officers carried out compliance checks on size and catch limits.
- 11.3 Angharad Purcell informed members that a total of twelve offences were recorded during the quarter, the majority dealt with through verbal warnings and advisory letters, while two investigations remain ongoing.
- 11.4 Angharad Purcell said that priorities will remain focused on shellfish and bass fisheries, marine protected areas, and intertidal activity.

- 11.5 Angharad Purcell highlighted significant progress in officer training, with several staff completing key maritime and enforcement qualifications, thereby strengthening the operational capability going into the winter period.
- 11.6 Shaun Brewer raised concerns, on behalf of local fishers, about the lack of visible enforcement of recreational angling at Newhaven Marina, noting anglers were often seen returning with large quantities of fish, potentially breaching catch or size limits. The member asked what measures are being taken to address and increase enforcement of recreational angling activity in the area.
- 11.7 Rob Pearson explained that the Authority's intelligence led enforcement model relies on good reports from stakeholders, allowing us to direct activity accordingly with limited resource, but anecdotal reporting from fishers has not matched what the Authority had received through intelligence reporting, or field observations from officers. He added that over July and August, officers engaged with more than 250 recreational fishers, recording very few offences. At Newhaven Pier, night inspections of twenty-five fishers led to two offences, while a marina patrol resulted in a single offence for an undersized bream. He stressed that active patrolling continues, but better intelligence and increased reporting from stakeholders would improve enforcement.
- 11.8 Shaun Brewer further informed on anglers at Newhaven pier taking boxes of fish and likewise at the Overfalls, noting anglers taking fish above catch limits and some openly selling bass online and these activities are largely going undetected, causing frustration among the local fishing community.
- 11.9 Rob Pearson requested assistance with encouraging better reporting from the fishing community and would be happy to come and meet fishers in Brighton and Newhaven, as this would greatly assist SxIFCA in targeting enforcement more effectively.
- 11.10 Angharad Purcell explained that the Authority now has a dedicated illegal fishing reporting page on its website, including the option for anonymous reporting, providing an effective mechanism for stakeholders to submit information.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the report.

12 Vessel Maintenance Log

- 12.1 Rob Pearson reported a catastrophic engine failure on Merlin, the Authority's eight-metre RIB. As a commercial vessel incident, a Marine Accident Investigation Branch report was submitted. The vessel is currently out of the water at Ocean Marine, Chichester, for a replacement engine.

The repair cost is largely covered by insurance, with an excess of £1,500 and the remaining approximately £30,000 funded by the insurer. Aside from this, the vessel maintenance log was generally in order and was happy to be accepted as read.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the report and appendices.

13 Communications Report

- 13.1 Angharad Purcell informed members that the report covered communications and engagement activities over the previous quarter, as well as priorities for the next quarter. She noted that work had continued to strengthen transparency, compliance, conservation, and positive stakeholder relationships, a key theme of today's meeting.
- 13.2 Angharad Purcell advised members that the new "Report Illegal Fishing" page on the website provides clear guidance on the details required for reporting, allows submission of photographs, and is designed to be direct and accessible for fishers. She highlighted steady growth in digital engagement across the website, social media, and the online permit database. Publicity work focused on raising awareness of byelaws, particularly hand gathering and minimum size regulations, supported by outreach at angling clubs and tackle shops, including distributing minimum size stickers.
- 13.3 Angharad Purcell further added that Officers and staff have produced step-by-step video guides to assist permit holders in submitting hand gathering catch returns, available on the YouTube channel and accessible via the website and database.
- 13.4 Angharad Purcell highlighted that social media collaborative posts with partners, including the Angling Trust, MMO, Chichester Harbour Conservancy, and the Living Coast Biosphere, continue to expand the Authority's digital reach, while enforcement and conservation highlights continued to be shared online.
- 13.5 Angharad Purcell noted that community engagement remained strong, with officers attending numerous partnership meetings and public events, as detailed in the report.
- 13.6 Angharad Purcell concluded that upcoming focus would remain on supporting byelaw awareness and maintaining strong engagement with industry and the wider community. She finally noted that the 2024–25 Annual Report is currently available for preview with a printed copy available at today's meeting, with a full print run expected for the next committee meeting.
- 13.7 Prof. Peter Jones thanked the Deputy Chief for this informative update.

ALL RESOLVED to approve the report and appendices.

14 Chief Officers Update

- 14.1 Rob Pearson advised in the interest of time he was happy to take this report as read.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

15 Chief Officers Group

- 15.1 Rob Pearson stated he was happy for this item to be taken as read and highlighted the minutes from the recent COG meeting as an annex.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

16 Association of Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities

- 16.1 Rob Pearson stated that the majority of the report could be taken as read, but he wished to highlight the appointment of a new Communications and Engagement Manager for the Association, Emily Bulled. Rob emphasised that her appointment is a positive step, and having a national Communications and Engagement lead at the AIFCA will be of significant benefit.

ALL RESOLVED to accept the report.

17 AOB

- 17.1 Rob Pearson reminded members of the previous update on the Sussex Kelp Recovery Project (SKRP) and a developing situation involving a potentially fraudulent carbon credit scheme. After ongoing discussions with SKRP, and in consideration of strategic priorities including the upcoming initial

Nearshore Trawling Byelaw review and intention of remaining objective within this process, SxIFCA has decided to formally step out of the SKRP steering group, whilst continuing to maintain an involvement in research and communications activities.

- 17.2 Rob Pearson noted that Sussex Yacht Club had been efficient in serving lunch in recent meetings, leaving some spare time. He proposed bringing the Principal Committee meeting forward to 1:30pm; no objections were raised.

ALL AGREED to accept the proposal to adjust the meeting time to 1:30pm as an action for the next meeting, noting that the Standard Orders will need an amendment at the AGM next year.

- 18 To confirm no requirement for the Technical Subcommittee meeting in December.**

19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 19.1 22nd January 2026 at the new start time of 1:30pm.

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

Prof. Peter Jones, Chair Sussex IFCA.