

NORTH EASTERN INSHORE FISHERIES AND CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

05 MARCH 2026

Present

Prof Mike Elliott (Chair)
Cllr David Chance (Vice Chair)
Mr Graham Collins
Cllr Tracey Henry
Mr Stephen Axford
Cllr Neil Swannick
Cllr Rachel Creevy

Representing

MMO Appointee
North Yorkshire Council
MMO Appointee
Hull City Council
MMO Appointee
North Yorkshire Council
Hartlepool Borough Council

Clerk Stephen Hunt, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Treasurer Liz Smith, East Riding of Yorkshire Council and David McCandless, NEIFCA Chief Officer attended the meeting.

The meeting took place in County Hall, Beverley, the meeting commenced at 9.30am.

29.	APOLOGIES
	No apologies received.
30.	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS
	Resolved – The Chair asked Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests with respect to items on the Agenda and the nature of such interests. No such interests were declared.
31.	TO TAKE NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 04 SEPTEMBER 2025 AS A CORRECT RECORD
	Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 04 September 2025 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
32.	NEIFCA ANNUAL PLAN 2026/2027
	The Chief Officer, David McCandless presented a report for members to review the Annual Plan for the year 2026/2007. Key areas of work for the year ahead detailed in the plan included the full operational commissioning of the new main fisheries vessel, supporting the implementation of the new shellfish permit byelaw regulation and further development of NEIFCA's fisheries permitting database to support the implementation of the byelaw. Members were informed that the Shellfish Permit Byelaw had been officially signed off by the Fisheries Minister and discussions held on its implementation. Due to the timing and current circumstances with the high cost of fuel, a decision was taken not to charge for permits in the first year but to commence in the second year of issue from 2027. The first year to focus on getting the online permit application processes up and running and encourage the industry to focus on gear marking and aligning their pot numbers inside the NEIFCA district. Pot tagging to commence in 2027.

	The Chief Officer also reported that officers had commenced work on a new mobile fishing gear byelaw and had invited informal comments on such via the NEIFCA website. More discussions on this to go through the SAG committee. Members were informed that NEG IV had been formally accepted on 31 January 2026 and the new boarding RIB successfully delivered during February 2026.
	Resolved – The annual plan for 2026/2027 was reviewed.
33.	BUDGET REPORT 2025/2026
	The Treasurer presented a report to advise Members of the budget position at the end of month 10 (January) 2025/2026. At the end of January 2026, the Authority had net expenditure of £1,066,739 against an expected £1,226,993 underspending by £160,254. The forecast outturn underspend was £454,142. The majority of the underspend derived from slippage in the completion of the build of the new patrol vessel which had now been formally accepted by both ERYC and NEIFCA. The delay had resulted in forecast underspends of £201,000 on the finance lease with East Riding of Yorkshire Council for the full financial year, a projected £23,600 underspend on vessel fuel, a forecast £23,240 underspend on vessel repairs and maintenance and £65,935 surplus on bank interest as the balance in the Renewals Fund is higher than budgeted to allow for the one-off payment towards the new vessel. The forecast underspend also included £130,000 Defra 'grant in aid' made up of £50,000 allocated to support the Marine Protected Area and delivery towards 'good environmental status', £30,000 towards Marine Sustainable Development and £50,000 towards preparation and development of Fisheries Management Plans (FMP). The FMP grant is forecast to be fully utilised in the 2025/26 financial year.
	Resolved – (a) That the budget monitoring forecast outturn underspend at 31 March 2026 of £454,142 is noted. b) That forecast £163,963 remaining underspend at outturn be transferred to the Renewals Fund.
34.	REVENUE BUDGET 2026/2027
	The Treasurer Liz Smith presented a report to provide members with a detailed operational budget for 2026/2027. At its meeting on 6 February 2026, the Authority set the levy for the North Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority at £1,763,870 for 2026/27. The 3% levy increase had been incorporated into the budget, along with provision for a 3% 2026/27 pay award. Due to the delays in the completion of the patrol vessel, the annual cost of the finance lease with East Riding Council had not yet finalised. The budget remains at £201,000 for 2026/27 but will be reviewed, along with other vessel related budgets in future years. The additional costs had been offset by savings of £28,560 from a reduction in employers pension contribution rates from 17.6% to 13.6% following an actuarial review and a £11,000 saving on ill health pension fund insurance. It was proposed, in the January 2026 budget monitoring report, that any residual underspend from 2025/26 financial year is transferred to the Renewals Fund along with the planned set aside of £102,900 for future vessel replacement. The 2026/27 draft budget proposes that the authority continues to set aside £102,900 each year into the Renewals Fund to plan for the replacement of the soon to be commissioned patrol vessel at the end of its useful life in 2045. Members discussed risks involved due to the ongoing developments in the Middle East, with Liz Smith keeping an eye on the budgetary implications of this.
	Resolved – a) That the draft budget for 2026/27 is approved. b) That the level of general reserves is maintained at £228,450 (13%) of the annual levy.

35.	RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY & STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER REVIEWS
	The Chief Officer presented a report to inform members that in accordance with the Authority's Risk Management Strategy, a six-monthly review of the Strategic and Operational Risk Registers has been undertaken and is reported for information. Members discussed ongoing issues with low stocks of edible crab. The Chief Officer provided assurance that the situation was being closely monitored. No formal action was considered necessary at present but might be in the future. The Chief Officer informed members that NEIFCA was now fully staffed after recruitment onto the offshore team. Future risks associated with the age demographic of the NEIFCA senior management team were also discussed which carried the potential for 4-5 members of the current team to retire within the next 5 years. It was recommended that the associated risk score should be changed to reflect this. Members discussed the development of existing staff into key roles, with members informed that all current management level staff have been promoted from lower positions. Members also discussed fuel prices and the potential risks of increase on the budget.
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
36.	HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY & SAFE WORKING PRACTICES 2026/2027 - REVIEW
	Chief Officer David McCandless advised members of the completion of the six-monthly review of the Authority's Health & Safety provisions. Since the last review reported to the Executive Committee on 4th September 2025 there had been no notable incidents or accidents to report to members. The Chief Officer also advised that a significant amount of work had been invested to meet the new maritime safety Workboat Code 3 for NEG IV and the other existing NEIFCA vessels with the offshore operations team undertaking additional training to support this. All revised safety documentation would be circulated to NEIFCA operational staff for review and acceptance.
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
37.	CHIEF OFFICERS OPERATIONAL UPDATE
	Chief Officer David McCandless provided members with an operational update covering the period December 2024 to February 2025. The main items being the acceptance of the new vessel NEG IV and the work being undertaken to support FMP's and MPA's. The Chief Officer discussed the issues with the delayed acceptance of the main patrol vessel, which had now been fully signed over. Discussions were held on the Whitby swing bridge opening times and effect on NEIFCA operations. Cllr Neil Swannick advised that he currently held a seat on the Whitby Harbour Users group.
	Resolved - Members noted the report.
38.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS
	The Chair, Prof Mike Elliott highlighted some new videos produced by AIFCA which provided an insight on what the IFCA's do. Due to be released in the Spring, it was recommended that these should be added to the NEIFCA website, once available.

	The meeting closed at 11:30am

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