

**MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT THE EAST BEDLINGTON COMMUNITY CENTRE  
ON MONDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022 AT 1PM**

**Actions arising from minutes are highlighted in blue and collated in the actions table at the end of the document.**

**PRESENT: NIFCA Members:**

Mr L Weller (Chair), Mr F Armstrong (FA), Mr B Burdis (BB), Mr P Dent (PD), Mr P Gray (PG), Mr C Hardy (CH), Dr M Kitching (MK), Mr S Lowe (SL), Professor P Moore (PM), Mr S Moss (SM), Dr C Scott (CSc), Mr J Stephenson (JS), Mr M Swinbank (MSw), Mr I Thomas (IT), Mr A Wallace (AW) and Dr J Wood (JW).

Also in attendance from NIFCA was the Chief Executive Officer Mr M H Hardy (CEO), the Chief IFCO Mr M Southerton (MS) and the Lead Environmental IFCO Ms A Aitken (AA). Minutes were taken by the NIFCA Administrative Officer, Emma Stiles (ES).

In attendance by Microsoft Teams was Ms A Henderson (AH).

**3.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Mr G Renner-Thompson (GRT), Mr P Rippon (PR) and Mrs C Seymour (CSe).

There were no declarations of interest given at this point in the meeting.

The Chair then welcomed Phil James (PJ) from Defra in connection with the Defra consultation for a pilot HPMA at Lindisfarne. PJ joined the meeting via Microsoft Teams for a question-and-answer session with the membership. Overall, members made their concerns about the Defra proposal very clear, and PJ confirmed that a final decision upon whether a pilot designation proceeds will be made by the appropriate Minister in Defra.

PJ was thanked for attending the meeting and after he left, there was a discussion amongst members which the Chair summed up by saying regarding the Authority consultation, we would take all points of view which are put to the Authority into consideration in finalising our response. This will include what is received by Sarah Coulthard, as well as all fishing, historical, scientific and ecological evidence and it is not a case of the Authority taking sides. The Authority will maintain a balance and endeavour to record everyone's concerns. The draft response of the Authority will be prepared by Officers and forwarded to members in good time before the deadline for the consultation, so that members responses can be taken into account.

### **3.2 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS QUARTERLY (ANNUAL GENERAL) MEETING HELD ON 25 APRIL 2022 AND MATTERS ARISING THEREFROM**

- MH**
- Amendment on page 6 where SM asked for clarification on how prosecutions are decided upon at NIFCA. Need to add wording to confirm that these discussions are undertaken “on a strictly anonymised basis”.

PM proposed acceptance which was seconded by BB.

### **3.3 MEETINGS ATTENDED THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER**

This report was accepted by the meeting.

### **3.4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT ON SECOND QUARTER OF NIFCA 2022-23 (MEMBERS ONLY)**

- LW**
- Some fantastic work so sincere thanks to Officers, and to members for attendance.

### **3.5 NIFCA LEASE OF 8 ENNERDALE ROAD (MEMBERS ONLY)**

- LW**
- The lease is up for renewal. Ennerdale Road is a good premises at a reasonable rate and a good landlord who took a good amount off the rent during COVID. Having made the move from Cramlington, changing office is a large undertaking with a high cost. We are now beginning negotiation with the landlord for a new lease, including factors such as carbon footprint (insulation, gas boiler, bulbs etc) to try and future proof the office and room layout. It is felt we could make better use of the space to create a better meeting room. Seeking member feedback.

- MSw**
- Location of the office is an important factor. The carbon footprint of the building will be a small part of the overall NIFCA footprint. The geographical location is more important, so we should consider if County Hall would be beneficial as an inland location meaning Officers have to do additional travel (increasing our footprint) to work on the coast and might also counteract a reduced cost in premises.

- PD**
- Should also consider solar panels which would make it greener and could support financing other things in the long run.

- MH**
- **Like to now go to Gavin Black and partners to look at our options/start negotiation. That was noted by the meeting.**

- SL**
- Found it hard to work at the EBCC today – it’s been hard to hear people talking. Not sure about it for future meetings in this set up. Perhaps sitting around the table in the old way might be better.

### **3.6 HPMAS**

- See 3.1 above.

### **3.7 BYELAW UPDATE INCLUDING MAKING NEW NIFCA BYELAW 2 DREDGING AND FIXED ENGINE BYELAW CONSULTATION**

- MH**
- Defra officials confirmed on Friday that they will be placing the byelaw before the leading Defra official to sign the byelaw and bring it into law tomorrow. As soon as that's done, they will confirm with us. **NIFCA will immediately put a press release out on the website and social media and send to local media (Northumberland Gazette, Journal and FN). We will also notify the 3 individuals who have dredge permits.**
  - Regarding the Fixed Engine byelaw review – agreed to hold back on this consultation as there's so much going on for stakeholders at the moment.

### **3.8 CLIMATE CHANGE, NIFCA AND INSHORE FISHERIES**

- LW**
- This has become an important part of NIFCA policy.
  - Quick wins have been implemented (bottles/paper/inks etc.)
  - Potential for going more paperless for meetings.
  - Anyone has any suggestions, let the office know.
  - Lease of vans/Ranger etc. can be looked at as they expire (currently two years left). Can discuss charging points with landlord.
- MSw**
- This is everyone's responsibly. Consider how to integrate climate change into decision making and it must be considered in all decisions, filtering right down and for the long-term.
- IT**
- Potential new vessels – look at the fuel use compared to St Aidan which will be significant in the decision-making process.
- PD**
- Building a new boat for use in the North Sea now has to include filters and other considerations with blue carbon in mind.

### **3.9 CRAB AND LOBSTER STOCKS SUBCOMMITTEE**

- AA**
- The Environmental team has been collecting data for monitoring crab/lobster stock by looking at catch and effort from shellfish permit returns. We also carry out biometric sampling work on fishing vessels, at wholesalers and on the quayside. This feeds into local stock assessments and ultimately NIFCA Fisheries Management Plans. Andrew Boon brought this approach over from NEIFCA which was initiated by JW. Although there are caveats to the conclusions, both species are came out as being fished above, or close to, sustainable levels. The method was questioned and it was suggested to **set up a subcommittee to develop how this is monitored in the future as the validity of the data was queried.**
- LW**
- Would like to ask SM or PD to join this subcommittee. SM to join.

### **3.10 RISK MATRIX**

- MH**
- Originally adopted the risk matrix from NCC with their support and it is reviewed every 6 months. Looks at all potential risks and plans further action where required. Considers H&S of staff, financial risk, environmental and enforcement risks etc. and can be found in the Annual Plan/on the website.
  - Provides a good point of reference for arising issues: in the last few years, we have added climate change, COVID, Brexit etc.
  - Next review in September.

- If any members come across anything they feel should be included or checked, please let us know.

### 3.11 CORRESPONDENCE

- LW**
- LW has asked for a copy of the Authority response to netting consultation. **Members can be given a link/copy of responses.**
- PD**
- Went on course to go into a pool at 1 degree above the North Sea temperature with full gear on – after a certain amount of time, a diver gets you out. It was an absolute eyeopener. Everyone needs to wear a life jacket and all fishers should attend/see this course.
- MS**
- This sea survival training was also discussed at NIMEG and seems to be a very valuable course for seafarers. Sessions are being planned in north Tyneside and **NIFCA can promote it to spread the word in the industry.**

### 3.12 SUMMARY REPORTS OF WATCH & FINANCE COMMITTEES BY CEO (ORAL)

- MH**
- Finance Committee:
- Minutes approved.
  - Accounts (3 parts – estimates/actuals, budget summary, reserves) received. Thanks to JuS, well managed financially.
  - Reserves fall into two parts: General Reserves (usually 10% of turnover although currently more) and PV Reserves.
  - Authority accounts were accepted.
  - Precepts: have to submit every 6 months to the Councils. Every December, we have a Budget Planning meeting where all members are invited to look at the budget, which then goes to the QM in January for approval. Precepts are sent to Councils in January and July, signed by Chair, Vice and CEO.
  - A discussion about vessel replacement took place: for a number of years there has been concern about this. MS presented an excellent paper to aid future planning and which was approved.
  - Confirmed additional Defra funding next year.
  - Recruitment for replacement CEO. There have been a number of interests expressed. Hope to be interviews in August. LW, GRT, SL (and MH in advisory capacity) will make up the panel.
- LW**
- Reserves are very healthy.
  - FLIR to be delivered and installed on St Aidan.
  - £1.8m to be shared by 10 IFCAs.

- MH**
- Watch Committee:
- Minutes of the meetings were approved.
  - MS's report on infringements/prosecutions/FAPs and on H&S were received and accepted.
  - AIFCA report from Chair was received.
  - Congratulations were extended to the Chair for being re-elected as Vice Chair of AIFCA. Rob Clark has been instrumental in securing the funding for IFCAs. He also visited NIFCA last week to discuss the proposed HPMA.

- Discussed the request from a fisher in Berwick Bay asking for help to remove ghost gear. This was discussed with consideration given to how/when this will be done.
  - **It was requested that the PV paper is forwarded to all members.**
- LW** • Where does NIFCA stand on reoffenders? What can NIFCA/the MMO do to stop reoffenders, as NIFCA/MMO cannot take away licences?
- MH** • MACAA is clear that we can have someone's permit withdrawn through the court process, as done once with a recreational. This is different with commercial as it's their livelihood and Magistrates may not be willing. With FAPs, they must be doubled if a reoffence occurs within 2 years.
- PD** • Can see that NIFCA are doing their bit but need to know more about what MMO are doing. It is frustrating watching it happening. The sensible ones are suffering.
- PG** • **Would love to give a presentation on the MMO's strategy and successes so it can be fed back to the industry.** The MMO has a penalty points system which can result in licences being taken away.
- MS** • MMO do have an intelligence system which is fed into by NIFCA. We work together on this as well as with the EA and Marine police.
- LW** • In the process of making infringement decisions, we do take into consideration past convictions.
- IT** • Everyone can contribute to the intel project and it can be anonymous.

### 3.13 IFCO REPORTS

#### 3.13.1. Chief IFCO Report on activities for quarter ending 30 June 2022

- AW** • Of all the papers, this report was the best one. The table was beneficial. **An additional column which allows us to compare the fisheries in the district and how it changes year on year would help.**
- MS** • A small netting fishery started to develop last quarter.
- Mobile fishing: no activity for scalloping
  - Nephrops: transitioned from daytime to dusk fishery
  - Intertidal fishing has increased
  - Wildlife: avian flu had a high impact on birds – contact Defra if seen in the district
  - Diving activity has increased
  - Open water swimming has increased
  - iVMS: funding of +£250k has been paid out. iVMS gives much better picture of the activity in the district.
  - Said goodbye to Darren. Welcomed TN and EO who have been undertaking training to get fully trained Officers. Both settled in extremely well.
- LW** • Reports of people taking huge amounts of fish from the piers.
- SM** • An occasion of serious gear damage to pots. Need to reiterate to divers that it is an offence to interfere with gear.
- MH** • Has to be borne in mind that anyone damaging gear is criminal damage, it's not for NIFCA but the Police.
- PM** • If Officers see divers they can make them aware of the situation to ensure that information is being shared.
- LW** • **Code of conduct for divers could be considered.**
- PG** • Had issues between scallop and potting fleet further south with gear being towed. Involving the police.

### **3.13.2. Environmental IFCOs Report for quarter ending 30 June 2022**

- This report was received with thanks.

### **3.13.3. Maintenance Report and Engineering Log for quarter ending 30 June 2022 and Cabin RIB Report**

- This report was received with thanks.

## **3.14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **a) Date of next meeting 24 October 2022 at venue TBC**

MH  
CH

- **We will consider what is the best place to meet.**
- The sound tech is available to use for meetings at EBCC.
- MK supports using this venue.

MH

- **Meeting of the Authority to approve the final response to HPMA consultation is proposed for 15<sup>th</sup> September.** Gives us a couple of weeks to amend before we send if needed.

LW  
MH

- Will NIFCA attend the Defra HPMA meeting as an IFCA or people as individuals?
- We are very much positioned on the consultee side of this.

IT  
MH

- High number of acronyms in the papers – **include a glossary at back of papers.**
- Glossary available for reference in the annual plan. Could be a considerable piece of work to add in the back of the papers, but will endeavour to do at next QM.

### **b) Commercial tag winners:**

- Thanks to everyone who returned their tags:
- They will be contacted and receive £100 fuel voucher.
  - o Winning numbers are 11, 64, 68, 115 and 119.

Meeting closed at 15:55

## **ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>
3.5	To begin negotiations with Gavin Black and Partners regarding lease at 8 Ennerdale Road	MH
3.7	Upon creation, put press release on the website and social media and send to local media regarding dredge byelaw	MH
3.7	Upon creation of the dredge byelaw, refund 3 dredge permit holders	JuS
3.9	Arrange a subcommittee to develop monitoring of lobster/ crab stock assessment data.	AA/MH

3.11	Copy of consultation responses to go to members (or in members area of website).	ES/AA
3.11	NIFCA to promote sea survival course online, when it is available	MH
3.12	PV paper to be shared with all members	MH
3.12	PG to give presentation on MMO Strategy and successes at a future NIFCA meeting	MH/PG
3.13.1	Add a column comparing fisheries in the district and how it changes over time	NW
3.13.1	Consider code of conduct for divers	AA/NW
3.14	Consider options for next QM venue/set up of current venue	MH
3.14	Meeting on 15 <sup>th</sup> September to discuss consultation response	MH
3.14	Glossary at end of QM papers	MH