

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT THE NIFCA OFFICE, 8 ENNERDALE ROAD, BLYTH, NE24 4RT
ON MONDAY 24th APRIL 2023 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/LW), Mr G R Thompson (GRT), Mr F Armstrong (FA), Mr P Dent (PD), Mrs L Dunn (LD), Mr P Gray (PG), Mr C Hardy (CH), Mr S Lowe (SL), Professor P Moore (PM), Mr P Rippon (PR), Dr C Scott (CS), Mr M Swinbank (MS), Mr I Thomas (IT) and Mr A Wallace (AW). Mr J Wood (JW) who attended on MS Teams.

Also in attendance from NIFCA was the Chief Officer Mr M Southerton (MS) and the Lead Environmental Officer, Ms A Aitken (AA), Lead Enforcement Officer Mr N Weir (NW) and Senior Environmental Officer Mr A Boon (AB). Minutes were taken by the NIFCA Administrative Officer, Emma Stiles (ES).

The meeting was also joined by Mr M Nugent (MN) commercial fisher and soon to be appointed NIFCA member, Dr S Coulthard (SC) from Newcastle University, Ms J Templeton (JT) and Ms L Tann (LT) from the MMO.

3.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WELCOME

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Brian Burdis
- Martin Kitching
- Jim Stephenson
- Amelia Henderson

No declarations of Interests were received at this point in the meeting.

- MS**
- LW unanimously voted as Chair
 - GRT unanimously voted as Vice Chair

3.2 DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS QUARTERLY MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2023

- Minutes accepted by members – LD/IT
- LW**
- Monthly members roundup on the members section of the website
 - If you would like to see anything else on the members section, let us know.
- MS**
- HPMA consultation result was announced in late Feb – the HPMA was not designated in Lindisfarne.
 - NIFCA attended the celebration at Holy Island where NIFCA was acknowledged.
 - Member appraisals have been completed and submitted to MMO.
 - **ES to place Annual plan on the members section**

3.3 MEETINGS ATTENDED THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER

Report accepted by the meeting.

3.4 UPDATE ON PROJECTS IN NIFCA DISTRICT

Sarah Coulthard (SC) gave a presentation on her work with NIFCA.

- SC
- SC started working with NIFCA during the HPMA consultation.
 - Current project: SC and team are visiting all harbours/meeting with fishers to hear about issues specific to that harbour to then be fed back to the MMO RFGs – these groups cover such a large area and can't capture the specific local harbour issues.
 - Had 41 interviews so far with fishers. Many hadn't heard of FMPs, let alone to feed into them.
 - Gives NIFCA greater legitimacy with upcoming management when we've really spoken closely with fishers.
 - Had additional funding from Blue Marine to go further up the coast beyond the Anglo-Scottish border to discuss management issues.
 - Areas of agreement between fishers:
 1. Enforcing berried hen ban better,
 2. Licence suspension,
 3. Increasing fines.
 4. NIFCA has a well-managed system already, don't need more, just need to manage what we've got.
 5. Lobster MLS proposal from 87mm to 90mm. Industry feels the increase would disproportionately affect the smaller boats.
 - **NIFCA need to identify and evidence the impact this will have on the smaller boats.** Those going beyond the 6 don't want but could manage the change. The smaller boats think it will put them out of business.
- GRT
- How long to reach 87-90mm?
AA: Not certain, but suggestions it takes a year (one moult) to grow 1mm. This comes from Cornwall IFCA study.
MN: Not sure about this suggestion.
- PD
- Feel the v-notch system was the best system we ever had. Raising the MLS gives people more chance to sell smaller lobster illegally. The issue of scrubbing lobsters which will never stop unless they're notched.

3.5 MEMBER MATTERS (ORAL)

- MS
- Leanne and Julia join us from the MMO governance and support team.
 - The MMO carried out a national IFCA recruitment campaign, resulting in 2 commercial fishers applying. Hope to welcome MN soon.
- LW
- Thanks to the MMO for their work in recent years.
- MS
- MMO appraisals have been completed and submitted to the MMO.
 - Two members reach end of their membership – IT and MK this year. It is hoped both will be renewed.

3.6 SUMMARY REPORTS OF WATCH & FINANCE COMMITTEES (ORAL)

Finance:

- The minutes of the last finance were approved by members.
- Budget forecast, movement of reserves and forecast were approved.
- Members were briefed on the 1st tranche Defra RDEL funding grants to support IFCAs in national policy: FMPs, MPAs & Sustainable Developments.
- The NIFCA office lease has now been agreed for 10 years with a rental increase in year 3 and lease break in year 5. A schedule of repairs and improvements were approved with the landlord.
- Members discussed/approved the re-grading of one admin post.
- The Authority will immediately begin recruitment of a successor to Beth Harvey who will leave the Authority in early June to start a PHD.
- Wayne Mitchel has settled into his new role as the Authority's Engineer.
- Emma prepares to begin her maternity leave at the end of June.
- Members approved a proposal regarding communications and engagement strategy provided by Amy Maughan as well as social media training to be provided to admin and key management staff.

Watch:

- The minutes of the last watch meeting were approved by members.
- Members discussed the Infringement report and agreed a course of action of Court relating to a berried lobster offence detected in Blyth harbour.
- The vessels/equipment and health and safety reports were accepted.
- Members had updates of the AIFCA highlighting key areas including additional Defra RDEL funding.

3.7 IFCO REPORTS

3.7.1 Chief Officer's Report (Members only)

- Received with thanks.

3.7.2 Enforcement Report

- Received with thanks.
- NW
- Regarding the boats at Newbiggin by the Sea: two are based there but don't fish from there.

3.7.3 Environmental Report

- MS
- MMO MCZ consultation has now closed – NIFCA did respond to say closures could have impact on the mobile fleet. There are three areas which border our district, MMO have discussed some potential

boundary changes within those areas proposed for bottom towed prohibition .

- AA • Thanks to fishers who let us onto their boats to conduct surveys to gather statistics.
- AB • Regarding MMO Marine Licences, we have started a process on when to include members.
- LW • Think this is another thing which could be placed on the members area – those felt members need to see.
- Thank you for your work on this Andrew.

3.7.4 Maintenance Report

- AA • Received with thanks.
- LW • WM is an excellent addition to the team.
- Vessel goes back in the water tomorrow.

3.8 ACRONYMS TABLE

- Received with thanks.

3.9 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- LW • **Catchwise:** is the largest RSA data collection ever done. Going to have 250+ volunteers. LW sits on committee for Catchwise.
- Goes live in June.
- **Quarterly Meetings:** Will be hosting these around the district again with the next proposed for the Hub in Seahouses.
- PD • **Windfarm:** there is a new one due to be coming into the district through Cambois. Going to be disruption to the local fleet.
- Went to the meeting – said they’re going to be burying the cable – last time, this didn’t happen and instead they were covered by non-local stone which then damaged local fishers gear.
- Think this should go on the website for everyone to be able to access.

The meeting was closed by the Chair at 15:05.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING:

Item	Action	Who
3.2	To place Annual plan on the members section	ES

3.4	NIFCA to identify/evidence the impact of increased lobster MLS will have on the smaller boats.	Enviro
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