



Consultative Committee Meeting

Tuesday 17th November 2020

Minutes

Present

Tim Glover (Chair), Mandy Wolfe (Secretary), Charles Clover, David Tudor, Gavin Ziemann, Sarah Clark, Ted Hook, Jerry Percy, Emma Sheehan, Cllr Mark Roberts, Ed Baker, Gerry Irwin, Maxine Chavner, Aubrey Banfield, John Worswick, James Radcliffe, Matt Kujawski, Simon Pengelly, Simon Pittman, Adam Rees, Martin Sutcliffe, Mike Spiller, Ian Jones, Felicity Sylvester, John Shuker, John Hughes

Apologies

Clare Brook, Ian Hendy, Matt Maunder

1. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

2. Updates

SIFCA Update from Ian Jones

Ian has been in the IFCA for 10 weeks now as Chief Officer, really looking forward to joining this group. Trying to understand what roles & responsibilities are and possibly extending jurisdictions. COVID 19 has been an issue for us, exciting stuff about reviewing management measures and potting reviews.

SIFCA Update from Simon Pengelly

We are having a pot review, but we will talk about that later. At last meeting minimum reference sized bylaw for the district. First, to reintroduce restrictions on undersized fish and shellfish, for all fishers and people involved in the supply chain. This was a result of changes made by Europe. 2. We wanted to make a couple changes to minimum sizes ahead of schedule review. The species this applies to is Grey Mullet increased from 30cm to 42cm for thick lip and thin lip grey mullet and 36cm for golden grey mullet and for crawfish we are increasing the size, to fall align with other neighbouring IFCAs in Devon & Cornwall. In addition, introducing statutory sizes for Wrasse species which fell under fishery guidance measures. June authority meeting we made the bylaw and it was formally consulted on during the summer. The authority is now seeking confirmation of the bylaw from the secretary of

state. We anticipate measure won't be in place before end of year. We are pushing to prioritise the bylaw with DEFRA. There are other IFCA's following similar sort of route with minimum sizes.

We have five-year legislative forecast that we are working towards and in the period between 2021-2023, were scheduled to start review of minimum sizes, that's looking at all species, all sizes, trying to go heavy on evidence, looking at biology of species and the economic value of species in the district and where possible we are trying to align the minimum sizes more closely with the sizes of maturity in the species. Some species don't even have a minimum size. Some species there is little evidence of size of maturity, where there is a lack of evidence, we are trying to work with partners to try and gather additional data.

Netting bylaw still on horizon. Part of reason why it wasn't made in 2020, undertook a second period of informal consultation with the community. Planning to press ahead and make a bylaw in the new year.

Devon & Severn IFCA update from Sarah Clark

Potting permit bylaw, from the 1st of November the minimum conservation reference size for Whelks went up to 65mm. Under the potting permit, doing work on Wrasse fishery. Each year permit condition changed to adapt to the research outcomes from the work done with a range of minimum conservation reference sizes, voluntary closed areas and fully monitored fisheries.

All will be aware a call for information was put out for scallop closed seasons. That ended on 9th October 2020. We sent out consultation info to over 12,000 people. We only had 34 responses. With calls for info, we normally have one to one but with COVID unable to do that. 10 commercial divers, 3 from rec divers. 6 from mobile at sea vessels, 1 from mobile, vessel in estuaries and 5 from conservation groups, 9 from others including static gear. We have 25 commercial diver permit holders in our district, so that was a 40% response. All the information is going into a paper that will go to our sub-committee in January. Then looking to have any changes to closed season introduced next summer.

We have formed a governance working group. Felicity Sylvester is here today and sits on that group. We are looking at our visions and develop a five-year strategy. This is an important change in the IFCA, and a member led working group.

We are still looking at hand working bylaw and that is being delayed due to COVID and the other work streams taking priority. We have just completed a survey this summer of all the crab tiles in all the estuaries in Devon. This was using drones, only a couple of areas we had to do on foot. Working up the data now and we have also done a lot of hand working surveys on our five tranche three MCZs (estuaries) in Devon.

Marine Pioneer project has come to an end, one part that continues until Jan, we have officer in place to undertake fishery research and management plans, we created plans for 5 species in North Devon and looking to extend across all species in the district. At moment looking at what management plans will look like nationally.

Undertook a survey of seagrass in Torbay this year looking at impacts of pots and analysis still needs to be done. We also have a few investigations going on, some of which involved infringements reported in the Lyme Bay & Torbay part of the SAC.

MMO update from Gerry Irwin

Pushing for the catch recording app to be fully in use and get the data updated as quickly as we can to see what's been caught, when & where; it gives us a proper picture. There are things in place with workshops with industry to inform of changes and new policy, should be getting informed on those soon.

MMO update from Ed Baker

Opportunity to chip in about MMO/DEFRA update briefly. Some will be aware that collectively, the MMO & DEFRA are looking to create regional fisheries groups, they will expand on the quota management groups that Ed holds, and will be able to discuss all elements of new fishery policies and management. Hoping to get invites out in next few weeks to industry members as a test group and discussion with DEFRA inshore working group. Process is still moving, and we hope to have a meeting by the end of this year.

Dorset Council update from Cllr Mark Roberts

Thanks for welcoming me. I Chair the Harbours Committee for Dorset Council and of course we are transitioning from what was originally the Weymouth Harbour Board and the other two Harbours that were part of West Dorset and this is consolidating that move. We have recently appointed a new Harbour Master Jamie Joyce who started on the 1st of November.

West Bay & Lyme Regis Harbour Master update from James Radcliffe

Looking forward to working with us on the Fisherman's store and ice plant in Lyme Regis and to start building in the new year.

Plymouth University update from Simon Pittman on ROPE project

We have been making progress regardless of COVID. The overall project is to get a better understanding of the movements of Bass, Crab & Lobster in the Lyme Bay area and especially connectivity with estuaries and offshore mussels. We do this using acoustic transmitters that are attached to animals and then we deploy hundreds of listening stations underwater that we call receivers. We can listen to the movements when they get close to the receiver, there is a unique code that is sent to the receiver and its stored. We come back and download the data and it gives us huge information. So far, we have put 38 receivers at the mussel farm, a couple at an offshore wreck, the Dart River, at Salcombe, Exmouth & Teignmouth. In July & August, we tagged 49 Lobster, 22 Brown Crab and couple of Spider Crabs, all at the mussel farm, and then released them. Soon will download data and see what they are doing out there.

So far, we have tagged 50 Bass in the Exe, 12 in the Teign, and recent download showed at least 4 fish have made it out to the mussel farm. There is a connection, they are probably feeding out there. One of the fish tagged recently in Teignmouth, was picked up by a receiver 4 days later in Salcombe. 40cm fish that is moving maybe 50-60km in a few days. We still have 17 tags left for Bass and are going to do that in next few weeks and as soon as results ready, we will share information. We have had great help from the Harbour Master. Final project report should be ready to distribute in a month or so.

Plymouth University update from Emma Sheehan

We were very lucky to get last minute funding from DEFRA & Natural England to do the long-term annual surveys using towed and baited videos. We are now talking to BLUE, DEFRA & Natural England to get a formal long-term commitment for funding to keep project going. We are now

analysing data and at next meeting will do update on data we have been collecting from long time surveys.

NUTFA update from Jerry Percy

We have a new website (nutfa.co.uk). At January committee meeting, I updated that I was going to have meeting with head of MMO. Met with John Tuckett; he then resigned. His successor Tom McCormack, I've now met with as well. Mainly talking about Brexit and getting data up to date.

I am involved together with Aubrey on steering group for future of inshore fisheries. Its important that you are aware of what people are saying on your behalf. Don't hesitate to drop me an email or give me a ring.

Tim queried if he knows anything about the requirement for fishermen to register as food business. Jerry pointed everyone to Seafish website, they have a lot of information on website, as does the MMO. And that deal or no deal, the requirements will remain the same.

Recreational Angling update from Mike Spiller

The Coronavirus has affected recreational sea angling as well. In first lockdown, not allowed to go fishing. In the second one, the angling trust has negotiated limited fishing, no competitions allowed. When we could get out, there was good fishing in Lyme. Nice amounts of Rays and Bream, but this year they seem to be a lot smaller.

The angling trust Have taken part in the D&S IFCA hand gathering & bait gathering surveys but heard just now they have been suspended for now, until we get the other side of the Covid restrictions. We are trying to educate the anglers that the Bass will be back to catch and release from the 1st of December again.

Local funding update from Martin Sutcliffe

So much has changed since last meeting. MFF has long since been swallowed up by support to the industry for the COVID crisis. MMO did release a small amount of EMFF funding. £800,000 in total and is focusing on two sectors, one is ports and harbours, infrastructure projects and the second one is health and safety on board commercial fishing vessels. Deadline is 29th November 2020. Any port and infrastructure projects are limited to total spends of £100,000 and only £500,000 in that pot in total. And for health and safety on board fishing vessels limited to £50,000 per project and there is a remaining £300,000 in that pot. Here to help with anyone who wants to apply. Caveat is that the project must relate to recovery from the COVID crisis.

Still keen to move things forward from a FLAG perspective. We are aware that the new scheme to replace the European funding will be online early next year. Yet to know whether or not that is going to include any FLAG mechanism, and so I have been working on a survey to go out to FLAG board members initially to figure out what a FLAG 2 strategy would look like and ask them to distribute to their networks. Short survey, three questions, would appreciate your response and happy to engage by telephone.

AST update from Mandy Wolfe

At our last meeting we were diagnosing 9 faulty phones and trying to fix with new batteries. We estimated new phones would cost approx. £180 each and £35 charge per phone for uploading the AST tracking app. The battery replacements didn't work. However, we were able to source the new handsets @ £129 each and I uploaded the AST tracking app eliminating those charges.

We now have a total 33 vessels that have functioning phones and use the AST app to transmit when landing fish to the 4Ports Transport service.

Reserve Seafood update from Mandy Wolfe

The ASP Toxin Testing kit for scallop divers was purchased and match funded 50% by BLUE, so that divers can register with Environmental Health and comply with regulations.

4Ports Transport totals for year two, from July 2019 – June 2020, we transported 1941 boxes. Even under the current circumstances, for the 1st quarter of our 3rd year running (July 2020- Sep 2020), we have already transported 662 boxes.

As we are entering our 3rd year, it is now time to discuss forming cooperative so that the business can get registered. This will be raised at our next Man & Van meeting on Wednesday 16th December 2020.

In post Brexit, any fish or shellfish exported off fishing boats have to be registered with environmental health. I don't know if any have done yet? Who knows how much fish goes to Europeans markets, so if you are in agreement, I will get in touch, what they inspect, how they inspect and I'll email fishermen with the answers? Maybe he can arrange to come down one day and do all fishermen at the same time. Now you don't have to do this but if you don't do this people buying your fish can't export it.

Charles asked Gerry Irwin about progress on catch certificates and interpreting weights that must go on certificates. Charles read about this 18 months ago in the Fishing News and has heard from Rodney Anderson that it hasn't been resolved yet. Gerry confirmed that from discussions yesterday they are getting things up and running. It's a big uplift and work to be done, but really need to get all the data in place to help assist us; the catch recordings and sales notes input, and log sheets sorted out. Charles stated that the catch reporting problems that were raised 18 months ago have not been resolved according to Rodney Anderson and maybe Gerry could pass that along. Gerry confirmed any published information that came out would be passed to Mandy.

3. Codes of Conduct review

Tim raised the issue of the amended codes of conduct with the additions of the Crab Crusher item. Everyone should have received a copy and it would be great if we could approve that change and get it re-published unless anyone has any objections.

With the codes of conduct in general, how is compliance to the codes is monitored? Tim stated that auditing the codes is something we have wanted to do for a long time, and that he personally feels that if we are happy with the codes, we should put them into regulation and then the auditing to the adherence to the codes would be a matter of regulation rather than the need for any voluntary measures. Aubrey stated that the codes of conduct and amount of nets used was committed to by the Fishermen. The MMO should be the compliance and penalty organisation, they don't manage anything. The Fishers have committed to this project. It's an amount of net that an individual or a pair on one of the smaller boats can physically manage and the larger net at 8000 yards is because they become 3 day soak nets, they're the Skate nets, so it gives them opportunity to do 2 days fishing have a day off and then go back to it. So, what we have committed to, its not a case to seeing if they are complying with the code, obviously you will get bigger vessels who will go out there and work more net. As far as terminology for the crab crusher, you're quite right, terminology used to describe it is a "net moving device", but you will find that basically there isn't a vessel that is involved in this project that has one, so it should be signed off.

A.P. Mandy will amend codes to include the approved “crab-crusher” wording and have re-issued.

4. Regulatory Consultations

SIFCA Consultation on Pot Fisheries

Simon Pengelly spoke about the SIFCA consultation on the review of management measures on the inshore pot fisheries. We have a new strategy, the consultation is aimed at supporting the development of potential management options within the districts pot fisheries including and focuses particularly on Whelk, Crab, Lobster and Cuttlefish. Looking at potential measure for both commercial and recreational fisheries. It is a 10-week consultation, we have extended to really enable and maximise engagement. It runs until the 15th January 2021. You can email or print off and send in post, you can ring us or arrange virtual meetings.

One thing we have spoken to this group in the past about how this group can engage directly into this review. Its an opportunity to input some of the learnings of this group and what has been done with sustainable pot fishery management through code of conduct and how we could possibly input some of the research. We would like to arrange a specific meeting with Fishermen from this group.

John Worswick asked Simon, bearing in mind the massive Whelk size differences between SIFCA and D&S, how do you see the Whelk fishery in Lyme Bay going with the massive influx of Whelk gear coming in from the west? Simon replied that we need to make sure we manage the fishery sustainably and ensure that we do not have a massive influx of Whelk gear from west and the mega under 12s that are Whelking the whole time. What SIFCA want to try and do is work with neighbouring IFCA's to make sure we are developing measure that the other IFCA's have developed. John Worswick responded that when D&S brought in the scallop closed season, probably the whole Devon scallop fleet decamped to West Bay & Lyme Regis. By the time you get this all done, it's going to be the same time next year if we are lucky.

Sarah Clark knows that there is frustration with the lack of harmonisation from D&S to SIFCA and wondered if there is any move, if any measure doesn't tie up, can it be added to the voluntary code? Tim Glover responded that he thinks that would be a wonderful first step towards harmonising.

John Shuker spoke up about dive scallop boats going over to netting and this is purely because of the closed season and he believes within the MPA there doesn't need to be a closed season for the dive boats. If you have unification, it should come from D&S. There should be more flexibility. There is a boat in Brixham that feels like packing in purely due to closed season and COVID has been nail in the coffin for dive boats/ all the IFCA's should be using the same evidence from DEFRA, it seems they pick and choose and each say they have different evidence.

Sarah Clark stated that they do a lot of research and it is an ongoing process, just finished consultation and it will go to bylaw sub-committee. The other thing about harmonising is a tough call. D&S have introduced management that may be tighter than SIFCA in terms of increase of crawfish, crab and lobster and those management measures are conservation measures. And when it comes to crab and lobster stock assessments, the south west has the best stock assessments around the country for crab and lobster. For D&S to go for less in terms of conservation, less sustainable would not be a way forward. In the first instance, you could utilise in the interim. Charles Clover spoke up and welcomed Sarah's suggestion on the disparity between the IFCA's and would propose there is a levelling up wherever which one has a better conservation code. It would be marvellous to take this forward.

Aubrey Banfield said to Sarah Clark, Crab stocks are horrible around the whole of the Southeast and Southwest coasts. You brought in your increase in sizes and we are seeing depletion in the stock. Can you come back down to SIFCA MLS? No Fishermen in any district will agree with you.

Tim Glover spoke up that what is most valuable is the proposal from Sarah Clark that there should be harmonisation. It is incredibly valuable, let's work from that and work through the challenges, it won't be easy but I'm sure we can do something.

Simon Pengelly spoke up that you need to look at the difference between the two areas. The size of the vessels operating in the Devon district are far greater than the size of the ones operating in Southern, vast majority of our vessels are under 10m, no vessels over 12m in length and Devon go up to 15.8m or something like that. Those are vessels that will dwarf our inshore vessels. Simon thinks its worth getting the input from the Fishers on this and doing an exercise on looking at what the differences are between the two districts down this imaginary line. I think you will find they are closer than you think, just different bylaws.

DEFRA consultation on fishing opportunities 20/21

Tim Glover spoke on the Lyme Fishermen's response to consultation that DEFRA put out. DEFRA will be responding by the end of the year and when that happens, we will get together on a Zoom call to discuss.

5. BLUE policy update from Charles Clover

The Fishermen of Lyme will be getting a briefing from Tom Appleby on the Fisheries Bill, after the Lyme Bay Film premiere. Every single Lords amendment was cut out. We have only managed to prevail on our principle campaigning objective of making offshore marine reserves, that means something to inshore Fishermen. We have pushed government to review mobile gear in offshore reserves. We have got the government to admit that the right to fish is a public asset owned by the crown on behalf of the people, so why is 55% of the fishing opportunities in England owned by foreign companies and why is it so unfairly distributed between industrial fleets and fleets like yours. We have raised all these issues during the fisheries bill, we are bloodied and bowed from having a pretty horrible time and have threatened to sue the government over the offshore marine reserves. We have a law that says you are supposed to protect these things and they haven't. We have huge areas like the Dogger Bank, where they are still quite considerable biodiversity assets and assets important to inshore Fishermen. We teamed up with Greenpeace and the inshore fleet called "Reef" in the east of England, they have had all their 6-12, 12 & beyond trawled by electric pulse trawls. They are the remnants of the large fleet we used to have in the east of England, and they are passionate that they want beam and pulse beam trawling banned. We are going into a situation where government has not undertaken to uphold the law in these areas after 1st January 2021. If they don't, they will find themselves in court.

6. Communications

CBBC Filming in Lyme update from Mandy Wolfe

On 20th November, Callum Webster from BBC and Megan McCubbin to join Jim Newton aboard his boat. Film of retrieval of nets and maybe some pots. Jim to tell Megan about the sustainable approach to fishing that is benefitting fishermen and the local marine environment. Hopefully we can see some dog fish in the nets being pulled out and put back. Then more shots of pulling pots and discussing the effect of MPAs etc.

Lyme Bay Film Premiere

Tim Glover stated that the upcoming “virtual” Lyme Bay film premiere is the story of Lyme Bay and we want to share it with all the communities, Fishermen and stakeholders and try to promote as much support of inshore fishermen and fisheries as we possibly can. We think this film can help promote the sustainable fish for our Fishermen.

Charles Clover spoke of the success of the project over the last 10 years and what we all have achieved. It is designed to appeal to communities to support our fishermen.

A.O.B.

Gavin Ziemann asked about the catch app; has there been any movement on putting in landing weight and it will automatically convert to live weight, or do we still have to manually calculate it before we enter it. Gerry is not sure but will check on that and update. Gavin also asked about the dumping of the boulders on Dogger Bank. Has there been any movement on that because Gavin thought it was being investigated whether it was a legal or illegal act? Garry confirmed it is being investigated but cannot comment further. The information has not been passed to him yet.

Gavin Ziemann, I don't know who to address this next comment to, whether it is to Charles or whether it is to BLUE, I was quite disturbed when I read about the dumping of the boulders on Dogger bank. For the last 3-4 years I have worked on behalf of the inshore fleet here in Lyme Bay within the Reserve going around the schools to promoting our efforts in trying to become sustainable Fishers and for a company that fights against removal of waste from sea, marine litter and all that sort of thing, and how important it is that we don't allow anything to be dumped into the sea, and then low and behold, I hear that Greenpeace are actually dumping these boulders, putting waste into the sea as far as I am concerned until such time that it comes to light that there has been a licence granted to do it, I am absolutely gutted. I have stood up in front of hundreds of children, wearing a BLUE Marine t-shirt, talking about the litter in Oceans and we mustn't do it. Could someone from BLUE please explain to me how this works.

Charles Clover, these are all on Navy charts, they are not litter. They are a direct action because the government is not obeying their own law, Fishermen in industrial vessels are not obeying their own laws. We are trying to do what you have got in Lyme Bay for the Fishermen of the East Coast, who largely support us. Because this has not happened, if you were still facing the destruction of your fishing grounds by Scallopers, you might resort to the same thing. Over there they have had a law for 10years that nobody has applied. This is direct action by Greenpeace, it was not done by BLUE, it was supported by me personally, because I do support it, I passionately support it. If I may tell you, it is the responsibility of the PO's, who have these large industrial vessels, most of which are Dutch, German & Danish, abut there are some British ones, but it is the responsibility of these PO's, as well as the member states, not to fish there, according to our peer reviewed analysis, that these vessels should not be there and they also fish there with their AIS switched off. Which is a greater risk to life than rock which has been put on a chart, people know where they are, they can be taken out again. This is a very deliberate piece of direct action, very few rocks and made an enormous point and it's probably got the government to do for those Fishers what they've already done for you, so I don't understand your position.

Tim Glover asks if Charles and Gavin can take this offline. But one thing is for certain, this is not BLUE policy, this is not a BLUE action, Charles got involved in his own right and I think you both should continue to speak if there is an issue.

Gavin replied that if that is the case, maybe BLUE should go to the Fishing Daily and do some type of retraction as it mentions Charles Clover Executive Director of BLUE. That shouldn't be on there if Charles has done this by himself, BLUE shouldn't be mentioned in the article.

Charles responds that he will happily correct them.

Simon Pengelly spoke up that we should recognise Dave Sales for his British Empire medal for services to the marine environment in Lyme Bay. This was warmly supported by the committee and Tim Glover prompted a round of applause.

Tim Glover promised minutes will be circulated sooner rather than later and then closed the meeting.