



**Consultative Committee Meeting
Tuesday 11th October 2022 at 6:00pm
The Royal Lion Hotel, Lyme Regis**

Minutes

Present:

Martin Sutcliffe, (Chair)
Mandy Wolfe (Secretary), Sam Fanshawe (Note taker), Blue Marine Foundation
Steve Postles, Director Lyme Bay Fishermen's CIC
Angus Walker, Axmouth Fisherman, Asst Harbour Master
Dave Hancock, Axmouth Fisherman
Aubrey Banfield, West Bay Fisherman
Matt Toms, West Bay Fisherman
Jamie Smith, West Bay Fisherman
John Worswick, West Bay Fisherman
Rob King, Lyme Regis Fisherman
Sarah Clark, Devon & Severn IFCA
Simon Pengelly, Southern IFCA
Cllr Mark Roberts, Dorset County Council
Peter Tinsley, Dorset Wildlife Trust
Peter Daly
Alice Hall, University of Plymouth
Thomas Stamp, University of Plymouth

Apologies for absence

Charles Clover (Blue Marine Foundation)
Gerry Irwin (MMO)
Mike Spiller (Angling Trust)
Dorset Coast Forum

Summary of Actions

- **Mandy to approach Beer to put forward a representative for the Terms of Reference Working Group.**
- **Mandy to set up a shared document and circulate details to the Terms of Reference Working Group.**
- **Mark to raise concerns raised about dredged material with the dredging company.**
- **Mark to follow up with the relevant Council colleagues to set up a meeting about the lease of the Cobb shed.**
- **Mandy to circulate invitation to the Crab and Lobster Symposium**
- **Sarah to share the report from the Project UK FIP with the Committee once published.**
- **Anyone interested in joining the South Coast Fishermen's Council should contact Richard Stride.**

- **Mandy/Martin to identify potential venues for the next meeting.**
- **Sam to circulate a summary of the key points and requirements for the Blue Park Award.**
- **Anyone receiving information on the MCA consultation to share with Mandy for circulation.**

1. Introductions

Martin opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He noted that due to a change of management at the Royal Lion Hotel, there would be no sandwiches, just chips. Given the temperature of the room and layout are not ideal, potential venue alternatives would be discussed later in the agenda.

Introductions were made around the table.

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting held on 1st March 2022

Martin tabled the minutes of the last meeting held on 1st March 2022 for comment or approval. No comments were raised. The minutes were confirmed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

3. Review of actions from the last meeting

- *BLUE to review the minutes from early Working Group / Committee meetings to clarify the voting membership of the Committee*
- *Terms of Reference to be tabled at the next meeting.*

Martin noted that there did not seem to be a way forward to agree on what had previously been agreed with regard the Terms of Reference and voting rights. Martin proposed a way forward was to establish a working group should be set up to discuss the Terms of Reference for how the Committee could work moving forwards. Martin asked for thoughts from around the table. Sam asked for clarification whether it was just the Terms of Reference that was in question or the MoU as well. Angus noted that the MoU had been signed by two representatives from each port and three from Blue Marine Foundation and that should determine who has voting rights. Sam noted that the MoU that is published on the Lyme Bay Reserve website, as it currently stands doesn't mention voting rights, these are only captured in the Terms of Reference and that the previous merged document was just a suggestion to try and bring the two documents together. Sam confirmed that that merged document was no longer being discussed and instead clarification on both the existing documents was now being sought.

Martin said that there was an opportunity to revisit both the MoU and the Terms of Reference which are currently separate documents and from the point when the Working Group refines the documents, have an understanding for the Committee that everyone agrees to and move forward. Current ambiguity amongst those around the table that is causing issues when making decisions. Martin asked what the best way forwards, was it a Working Group, circulate the documents and have a show of hands? Angus said that the Working Group could go through the documents and decide what is relevant now compared to what was relevant then.

The fishermen agreed that they would review both documents. Martin summarized that the Working Group would look at the Terms of Reference and the MoU and make suggested refinements, additions, subtractions and present to the next Committee meeting.

It was agreed that the Terms of Reference Working Group would comprise of one representative from each port and two independents. The following offered to sit on the group: Angus Walker (Axmouth), Matt Toms (West Bay), Rob King (Lyme Regis), Mark Roberts and Martin Sutcliffe. A representative from Beer would be invited to join. The Working Group doesn't have to meet in person, it can be done online with a shared platform and Mandy can help with computer access.

Action: Mandy to approach Beer to put forward a representative for the Terms of Reference Working Group.

Action: Mandy to set up a shared document and circulate details to the Terms of Reference Working Group.

- *Gerry to feedback concerns about the Catch App and iVMS to MMO colleagues.*

Gerry was not present to report back.

- *Cllr Mark Roberts to raise issue about lack of space to store gear at Lyme Regis.*

Mark confirmed that he had raised this with the harbour team but was not aware if anything had progressed. Fishermen said that they felt the situation had got worse regarding overflowing litter bins. Mark noted that he was going to meet with someone in Waste Services to try and get more bins and separate bins for the compostable packaging.

- *Alice to share map of locations and photos of receivers and invite any comments on locations.*

This was covered in the presentation later in the agenda.

- *Martin to circulate notes about projects from previous Fisheries Industry Science Partnership rounds.*

A link had been included in the minutes: [FISP projects: grants and contracts awarded in round 2 of the scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/fisp-projects-grants-and-contracts-awarded-in-round-2-of-the-scheme)

- *Mandy to circulate revised Minister's letter by Friday with comments to be received by 11th March.*

As consensus on the letter could not be reached, Blue Marine had sent an independent letter to the Minister.

- *All to inform Mandy of any agenda items they would like included.*

4. Committee Member updates

Southern IFCA

Simon Pengelly reported that the SIFCA [Pot Fishing Byelaw](#) went out to formal consultation earlier in the year and following a review of responses a draft Byelaw is undergoing Quality Assurance by the MMO before being sent to the Secretary of State for approval. QA process can be slow, so don't expect the Byelaw to be introduced until later in the Spring. The Byelaw would if approved introduce a permitting system for recreational and commercial potting. Pot limits and bag limits would apply with a 5 pot limit per recreational fishermen with a named vessel, 2 lobsters per day per permit and 3 crabs (all species) per day per permit – in line with D&SIFCA.

Under the Byelaw, Permit conditions will specify a 600-whelk pot limit for all commercial fishing vessels. For the first two-year period Commercial Potting Permit holders will be able to apply to use an additional 300 whelk pots, provided they can demonstrate a track record of using 900 or more pots during a defined period. After two years, the limit will be 600 whelk pots.

Escape gaps will be required for any pot used to catch lobster, crawfish, or species of crab for both recreational and commercial fishermen. There are three different escape gap sizes to choose from to accommodate the sizes set in the Sussex IFCA and D&SIFCA districts. The start date for the required fitment of crab and lobster escape gaps for commercial fishers will be set 12 months following the byelaw coming into force. There would be a requirement for recreational vessels to fit escape gaps and comply with the berried lobster ban.

The proposed Byelaw includes a requirement for gear marking.

Rob King noted that marking pots at both ends is fine for big boats with long strings, but marking pots for small boats with strings of 10, because they are not that heavy, the string ends up in a tangle, with lots of gear ghost fishing. Simon said he would look at the wording on that aspect.

Potting Permits would last for two years at a cost of £15 per permit. There is a policy that sets out how permits will be awarded and while there is a facility in the Byelaw to limit the number of permits that can be awarded, that facility has not been implemented in the Byelaw at this time.

No limits on crab pots were to be introduced at this time, but if there is evidence to indicate that it is required there is the facility under the Byelaw to introduce limits on the number of traps and within specific areas. Cuttlefish traps will need a permit but there are currently no limits on the number of cuttlefish traps. Permits will be required from the time the Byelaw is introduced and SIFCA will contact all fishermen to make them aware at that time. Simon envisaged the Byelaw being approved sometime in Spring 2023.

Simon reported on the informal consultation on a review of the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw to reflect new evidence and new designations. Not much additional area has been proposed in Lyme Bay itself, just a few small areas off Burton Bradstock and Stennis Ledges. SIFCA also hope to include some sensitive habitats such as seagrass that sit outside of MPAs in Portland Harbour and Weymouth Bay. The [Summary of responses](#) has been published and the Authority is in the process of considering a Byelaw.

SIFCA have also just started a review of shore gathering activities - bait digging, shellfish collection, seaweed harvesting.

Simon noted the conversations in relation to netting and discussions from recent meetings. As the MMO were not present and quoted from the MMO note of that meeting:

“The MMO has responded to concerns from fishermen that increases in sole quota have led to conflict and potentially overfishing in Lyme Bay. The MMO and IFCA have been investigating the issue and have created a steering group which includes fishermen and scientists to oversee the investigation. At a recent steering group meeting, a best practice, Code of Conduct, for sole fishing with gill nets was agreed:

- 1. A minimum mesh size 5 inches for gill nets targeting sole.*
- 2. All fixed nets should be marked with a buoy showing the PLN of the vessel at both ends of the net.*
- 3. Flags and radar reflectors are used where possible and practical to mark the location of nets.*

Note that these are best practice recommendations and not law.

The first recommendation is to support the sole population by letting smaller soles increase their opportunity to breed. The second is to help prevent or limit gear conflict by increasing the visibility of nets to prevent them being caught up in trawl gear and so that other netting vessels can avoid setting nets that cross over nets already set in the water.

The MMO is working with Cefas and other organisations to develop a scientific investigation into what impact increased fishing in Lyme Bay may be having on sole populations and the potential socio-economic impacts on fishermen. This work involves the use of MMO data from logbooks, the Catch App and observers at sea and in fish markets to analyse catches made by different vessels as well as other possible work to look at the wider sole population.”

The Fishermen noted that this was a step in the right direction but was not enough.

Devon and Severn IFCA

Sarah Clark reported that following consultation D&SIFCA had opened up the scallop season to [scallop diving](#) in July, August and September within the District. The measures implementing this include a requirement to use VMS, a daily catch limit and an increased MCRS to 110mm. A Masters student is studying the size of maturity of scallops, involving three commercial scallop divers, which started in May and will continue until November. Records indicate peak spawning at end May / early June and potentially another peak in August, so the closed season is partially protecting the spawning stock and recovery of scallops after spawning.

D&SIFCA have reviewed the Size of Vessel Byelaw to reduce the maximum from the current 15.24m to 14.99m. No current permit holders in the district have a vessel larger than 14.99m. The Byelaw has been drafted and presented to the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee who will make the Byelaw which will then go out to consultation before being sent to the MMO for Quality Assurance.

The Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw and permit conditions associated with that have been reviewed. The cost of a permit under the new proposed Byelaw will be increased from £20 to £40 for two years. This will apply only to towed gear, but as other Byelaws are reviewed this may also apply to other gear.

Under the Byelaw, exemptions to come into the District without a Permit will be extended to apply to vessel maintenance and scientific research. There will be conditions set out in the schedule of the Byelaw on sandeel trawling included in the consultation for the Byelaw, including areas of seagrass for protection from sandeel trawling.

Permit conditions under the Byelaw would apply to protect coastal mariculture sites which have had damaging interactions with mobile gear and protection of a scheduled wreck off Lundy.

A [Court case](#) to prosecute a vessel for fishing within a closed area was finally heard after 6 years, with an appeal by the defendant. Judge stayed the appeal on the grounds of the ill health of the defendant. An article would appear in this week's Fishing News.

The use of cameras and gear-in gear-out on one scallop vessel is being trialled with a report to be presented to the Authority. Similar technology has been rolled out on scallop vessels in Scotland. The cameras are on deck filming the gear whilst gear-in gear-out technology records the deployment of the dredges.

Sarah noted that crab stocks appear to be in decline in D&SIFCA, Southern and Cornwall IFCA this year and asked what the fishermen thought about the stocks and any concerns. Crab and Lobster Management Group had discussed concerns about more efficient vessels designed to work offshore with vivier tanks, potentially moving inshore due to TCA tonnage limit which is 12,000 tonnes on all NQS of shellfish and finfish. Fishermen noted that the catch had declined 2014 to 2017, with the storm in 2013 doing a lot of damage and then the discard ban coming in in 2015. The cause of the decline in stocks could be from climatic changes or overfishing, or both or potentially other issues.

Fishermen noted that supercrabbers and increased net from visiting boats is a concern, with a lot of claws being landed – 28kg of claws landed = 200kg of whole crab removed. Crab bait use in whelking was also an issue. General view was that a combination of factors has caused the decline.

Rob King asked about protection zones around mariculture sites. Sarah confirmed that only towed gear would be prohibited from these mariculture sites and the sites would be added to their charts. Rob noted that the sites are not always fully lit and they should have lights on their operations.

MMO

No representative from MMO was in attendance to give an update.

Dorset County Council

Cllr Mark Roberts noted the delay to dredging at West Bay and Lyme Regis harbours due to licence issues. The licence process is underway and is for a 5 year period and should be approved in December and dredging in both harbours will take place in March/April each year.

The Council had secured £2.5 million for improvements to the Cobb and work will start in 2024. Start of the work will be on the seaward side to strengthen this. Meetings will be held to discuss how best to achieve a workable solution while the works are underway.

Rob King noted that the cuttle season had been half decent this year for the first time in four years, could this be due to timing of dredging harbours – as dredging was later in the year this year and had therefore missed the cuttle season. Aubrey suggested that a different way of dredging needed to be considered to protect the cuttlefish.

Aubrey noted that issues had been raised about dredged material with many regulators, and that samples may not be taken from the right places. Black slime is being found on rocky ground off Golden Cap.

Action: Mark to raise concerns raised about dredged material with the dredging company.

Steve Postles noted that the Lyme Regis chiller unit is now being managed by a new Chiller Group. The lease on the chiller shed is due for renewal, but both the Chiller Group and Blue Marine who hold the existing lease are not receiving any responses to their requests to discuss renewal of the lease with the Council.

Action: Mark to follow up with the relevant Council colleagues to set up a meeting about the lease of the Cobb shed.

Harbour Masters

Mark noted that the new Harbour Master at Weymouth had had to return to Australia and so they are recruiting for a new Harbour Master for Weymouth and an Assistant Harbour Master at Lyme Regis.

Angus reported from Axmouth Harbour that the west side of the harbour will be dredged starting in December. An additional solar array is being installed on the lobster store with funding from MMO and work will start in the next 10 days.

University of Plymouth

Alice Hall, Dr Tom Stamp and Peter Davies from University of Plymouth gave a presentation on the [FISH INTEL project](#) which tags fish around the Channel and is a joint partnership with organisations in France and Belgium. Five species are being tagged and tracked using acoustic telemetry – bass, bluefin tuna, pollack, crawfish. In Lyme Bay the focus is on bass with 18 acoustic receivers in place. 27 bass have been tagged in Lyme Bay earlier in the summer. Initial findings show that bass are moving offshore in the winter and aggregating around large reefs. The tags have a lifespan of 4 years so the fish can be tracked for some time. The receivers have picked up fish that are migrating down the Channel from the Netherlands to Devon.

A social aspect of the project included a survey with 16 fishermen, mostly recreational anglers. Many reported that fishing supported their mental and physical health. Questions were asked about their support for management measures implemented by the two IFCA's. Bass Nursery Areas and Minimum Conservation Reference Size were supported by the majority of respondents. The information gathered will feed into the D&SIFCA bass fisheries management plan. The survey noted distrust between commercial and recreational fishermen as well as within the sectors and between fishermen and regulators.

The presentation can be shared on request.

The acoustic receivers have a battery life for 12 months, so they will need to be replaced to ensure continued tracking during the 4-year life span of the tags.

Matt asked what the data would be used for. Plymouth noted that it would clarify bass movements and identify how much individual populations overlap and how this varies over time linked with different environmental variables. How are they establishing what causes the migrations. The project will show where spawning grounds are and if this is why the bass are migrating. Simon noted that data will help identify what the key parts of the life cycle and essential fish habitats that might need protection. Protecting a small but important area to a key life stage can make a big difference. Better understanding of how the fish use these areas and for how long will inform more targeted future management. Simon asked if there was an opportunity to work with local fishermen to extend the project. Alice confirmed that maintenance of the receiver could be an opportunity for the fishermen to take some ownership of the project. Fishermen might be interested in carrying out an ongoing survey which would involve checking the recordings periodically, if funding could be secured for their time. South West Water may be a potential source of funding for this.

Dorset Wildlife Trust

Peter Tinsley reported on a project using drifting hydrophones combined with baited cameras which had met with partial success as the cameras didn't capture much and the hydrophones picked up a lot of background noise. DWT are also trialling photogrammetry to map seabed habitats using divers taking thousands of overlapping photographs along a transect along the seabed to create a single scaled image. Divers then re-mapped the area after 7 months to record any changes over time e.g. growth rate and survival rate in Ross coral colonies, pink seafans and sponges.

Blue Marine

Sam Fanshawe reported on Blue Marine's correspondence with the outgoing Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis. Charles had raised the issue of the sole quota again asking for all regulators, MMO and IFCA's to take into account all the objectives of the Fisheries Act – including social and economic and environmental – before making decisions. A letter was received the day before Victoria moved to the Dept of Work and Pensions, setting out the actions that the MMO were taking to address the sole quota allocation. These have been taken forward through the Lyme Bay Sole Management Working Group. Blue Marine is now building new relations with the new Defra Fisheries Minister Mark Spencer.

Blue Marine is organising an online Crab and Lobster Symposium on 16 November – everyone very welcome to attend. There will be an open forum as there was for the Cuttlefish and Whelk events to bring open engagement to the development of the Fisheries Management Plans. This is a key time to input with the Crab and Lobster Fisheries Management Plan being developed and .

Action: Mandy to circulate invitation to the Crab and Lobster Symposium

There is a lot of interest among fishermen in Sussex in Lyme Bay and a number of fishermen would be visiting Lyme Bay in early November.

Sarah noted that the report from the Project UK Fisheries Improvement Plan for crab led by Marine Stewardship Council. Workshops had been held with the fishing industry in the south west to gather their views and the report from that was to be presented to the Crab and Lobster Management Group soon.

Action: Sarah to share the report from the Project UK FIP with the Committee once published.

Four ports

There were no updates from the port representatives.

Lyme Bay Fisherman's CIC

Steve Postles read out the following on the recently formed Lyme Bay Fishermen's Community Interest Company (CIC).

"A workshop was held on 17th January 2022 hosted by Dorset Coast Forum and was well attended by many Fishermen. At the workshop, the Fishermen decided to form a community interest company that covers the four ports of Lyme Bay (Beer, Axmouth, Lyme Regis & West Bay) and created a list of short, medium and long-term goals for the CIC.

Short term – 12 months

- *Get the CIC set up and running.*
- *Secure funding the next 1-3 years.*
- *Open lines of communication with regulators/policy makers, sharing Terms of Reference with those agencies and welcoming further discussions.*
- *Advertise and recruit for the role of Operations Manager/CFO/COO*
- *Set up the website*
- *Set up and deliver schools education programme*
- *Engage with local Government as a CIC i.e. Dorset Council and East Devon Council*

Medium Term – 2- 3 years

- *Promote low impact sustainable fishing and start to challenge some of the negative press for the sector*
- *Lobby UK Government for regional control to ensure regulations are relevant to local area*
- *Provide a direct voice from the fisherman to UK Government departments*
- *Be able to provide evidence or seek funding to provide own evidence that will impact on local by-laws.*
- *Look to expand beyond the area but without impacting on original values of CIC*
- *Have a positive impact on fisheries management*
- *Help to recruit new young people into the industry.*
- *Establish strong links with local community*

Long-term – 3 years +

- *Lobby on behalf of members to impact on by-laws.*
- *Improve the fishery of the area*
- *Realise habitat improvements in line with UK Government guidelines*
- *Initiate re-stocking of key shellfish species working with local partners*
- *Start to create a long-term legacy for the CIC*
- *Have a positive impact on the wider marine environment through the work of the CIC*

The CIC was incorporated on 4th May 2022. Currently we have 5 Directors for the CIC, a minimum of one Director per port, and we have a total of 47 members that are commercial fishermen. Vessels vary from 5 metres to 11.99. On 30th August 2022, the CIC submitted an application to the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS) for funding under M25, supporting cooperative activities, to provide running costs for the CIC up until December 2023. We are waiting to hear back from the MMO on whether the bid was successful or not.

Thank you to Sarah Clark & Simon Pengelly for writing letters of support for the CIC. The CIC plans on submitting another bid to the FaSS to help with the Man & Van scheme. The bid will include the purchase of calibrated scales, temperature sensor data loggers and insulated fish boxes for each of the four ports. This bid should be submitted by end of next week, so hopefully, we will receive an answer by end of November 2022 at the latest.

The CIC has held one general meeting and three Directors meeting to date. The CIC is liaising with the other CICs (i.e., REAF & Plymouth Fishing & Seafood Association). The CIC has been invited to join the Lyme Bay Sole management working group. There have been a few meetings so far.

In addition, the CIC has been invited to sit on the Channel NQS FMP working group. One initial meeting so far (20th September) and the next meeting is scheduled for 31st October 2022.

Finally, thank you to BLUE Marine Foundation and Mandy for their support over the years and especially for help with the formation of the CIC. In addition, as Chair of the Lyme Regis Chiller facility, thank you for your continued support with our ice room and the new 1.2T ice machine that is due to be installed next month."

Aubrey reported on the Sole Management Working Group. MMO have started collecting data, but at the last meeting data had been presented indicating there was not a problem. The Group agreed to a voluntary mesh size of 5 inch, marked at each end with a flag wherever possible. 98% of respondents to the Survey Monkey agreed to a limit of 1,000 metres of net, but this was on the basis of marking each end of the net which the boats from the west were unlikely to do. Size of sole being caught in Lyme Bay is decreasing. Increase in otter trawls over last four years and increase catch rate of the small vessels.

MMO representatives will be meeting with Lyme Bay fishermen on 24 / 25 October to understand how the fishery works and where the fish are moving.

Simon noted previous requests to the MMO to undertake a socio-economic assessment and whether anything had happened. The Fishermen reported that the MMO had sent someone to do a socio-economic survey, but they only stayed for 2 hrs in the afternoon and then left because their parking ticket was running out.

It was noted that at the first meeting with the MMO about the Channel Demersal Non-Quota Species Fisheries Management Plan they had used figures based on 2020 data and not the up to date information available from Catch App. MMO use figures on the number of vessels in the area had been broken down by static gear, otter trawls, beam trawls but doesn't recognise the increased efficiency and capacity of those vessels.

Steve finally noted that South Coast Fishermen's Council had asked if a member of the Committee or from one of the harbours to join the Council.

Action: Anyone interested in joining the South Coast Fishermen's Council should contact Richard Stride.

Simon welcomed the establishment of the CIC and their goals to provide a forum for the IFCA's to reach out to input to byelaws.

5. Future Priorities for the Committee – roundtable discussion

This was postponed to a future meeting as it was likely to be considered as part of the Terms of Reference and MoU Working Group.

6. Funding opportunities

Sam reported on the following current funding opportunities:

[UK Seafood Innovation Fund](#) – Deadline 7 December. Supports the research and development of innovative ideas that will benefit the future of the UK seafood sector.

[Fisheries Industry Science Partnership](#) – has to be a partnership between a research institute and a fishing entity such as the CIC. Up to £150k to be spent over 2 years. Next and final round opens 21 November with a 5 January deadline. Previous grants awarded: [FISP projects: grants and contracts awarded in round 2 of the scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Devon Environment Foundation Fund](#) – Application deadlines 1st Nov, 1st Feb and 1st May. Funding of £5k- £20k, focused on community engagement and collaboration. Could be a good fund to apply for additional support for the CIC education programme in Devon.

Sarah Clark noted that D&SIFCA through the Crab and Lobster Management Group had identified concerns about soft shell crab which is being landed and going straight to processors and often used for whelk bait. Shouldn't be used for anything else, but very difficult to enforce. A proposal to investigate how to determine what soft shell crab is has been submitted to the Fisheries Industry Science Partnership funding scheme, with Bangor University, South Devon Channel Fishermen and Seafish.

7. Communications update

Mandy noted that Mary Berry joined Lyme Bay scallop fishermen John and Sam Shuker in July and were featured in a recent programme Cook and Share with Mary Berry (BBC 2 on 28 September). Sam noted that Mary Berry had referred to the day as one of her highlights of the entire series (extract from Mary Berry's webpage): *"I loved the Jurassic Coast scalloping trip and meeting a young man, Sam, and his father, who were both so dedicated to fishing. I like people who have a passion for something and I loved seeing Sam making a living out of what comes naturally after spending time with his dad and scalloping as a youth."*

8. AOB

Martin raised the venue and the change in management which meant sandwiches could no longer be provided. Open to suggestions for alternative venues. Mandy mentioned the Seaton Football Club and could alternate between Seaton and West Bay to even out the distance for various members travelling to meetings from the east and the west.

Action: Mandy/Martin to identify potential venues for the next meeting.

Sam outlined the [Blue Park Award](#) which is an award administered by the Marine Conservation Institute that recognises "outstanding Marine Protected Areas" based on a scientific standard. Blue Parks are MPAs "in the right places with the right rules and the right management to safeguard marine wildlife". There are 24 Blue Parks around the world, but none in the UK. It would be great if Lyme Bay Reserve was the first UK to achieve this status given the effort that everyone has put into it. The Award has no

direct monetary gain but provides funding leverage. Sam asked the Committee for their thoughts and if they would support a nomination for this Award.

Rob King noted that the amount of static gear that has been towed away within the box means that it could not be said to be well managed. VMS data is not being used by MMO to stop this. IFCAs noted that VMS or AIS data can be used to identify if a vessel is fishing within the area. D&SIFCA noted that any fishing within the protected area should be reported to the MMO and the IFCAs who should then investigate. D&S IFCAs use not only IVMS but other evidence in its investigations.. MMO are not following up on reports due to lack of resources and funding, so people are giving up reporting. Fishermen emphasised the importance of continuing to raise the reports of illegal fishing. D&SIFCA had undertaken 48 investigations since 2018 when iVMS was introduced. 25 cases could not be taken forward due to lack of evidence but 23 had met evidential requirements and resulted in a conviction or a financial penalty. Sarah said it is always worth reporting any infringements and in some cases where pots are lost the court has awarded costs.

Returning to the Blue Park Award, John Worswick asked what the benefit to the fishermen would be of the Blue Park Award. Sam noted that whilst there's no direct financial gain, the award raises the profile and provides leverage for funding and recognises the area as a prime MPA that works collaboratively with fishermen. Simon added that it could potentially give weight to any legal cases against illegal fishing within the MPA.

It wouldn't involve any additional work as the application does not require anything new to be added to existing management, the Award judges either think the existing management is good enough or they don't.

The nomination process is in depth but we have most the answers. There wouldn't be any additional management measures or restrictions, just a summary of existing measures and plans affecting the MPA. The plans already in place would be submitted including the Site Improvement Plan managed by Natural England, the Lyme Bay Reserve Fisheries Management Plan produced by D&SIFCA and SIFCA in 2019 and the voluntary Code of Conduct.

It was agreed that a summary of the key points on the Blue Park Award would be circulated.

Action: Sam to circulate a summary of the key points and requirements for the Blue Park Award.

Steve Postles noted that a Consultation would be out in Dec/Jan on the Maritime and Coastguard Agency taking over training and certification from Seafish and a requirement for any skipper of a boat over 7m to take a course. Steve noted that it was important for as many people as possible to respond to the consultation.

Action: Anyone receiving information on the MCA consultation to share with Mandy for circulation.

9. Next meeting date and agenda items

It was agreed that the next meeting should be in March and to start at 6pm.