



Consultative Committee Meeting

Tuesday 14th March 2023 at 6:00pm

Lyme Regis Football Club, The Davey Fort, Charmouth Road, DT7 3DW

Minutes

Present:

Tim Glover (interim Chair, independent)
Sam Fanshawe (Secretary), Blue Marine Foundation
Mandy Wolfe, Chief Executive, Lyme Bay Fishermen's CIC
Angus Walker, Axmouth Fisherman, Asst Harbour Master
Dave Hancock, Axmouth Fisherman
Gavin Ziemann, Axmouth Fisherman
Aubrey Banfield, West Bay Fisherman
Matt Toms, West Bay Fisherman
Rob King, Lyme Regis Fisherman
Gerry Irwin, MMO
Sam Dell, Southern IFCA
Sarah Birchenough, Southern IFCA
Jerry Percy, NUTFA
Gavin Black, Natural England
Jon Sherrington, Natural England
Cllr Mark Roberts, Dorset Council
Mike Spiller, Angling Trust

Apologies for absence

Martin Sutcliffe (Chair)
Charles Clover, Blue Marine Foundation
Sarah Clark, Devon & Severn IFCA
Marianne Rixson, East Devon District Council
Emma Sheehan, University of Plymouth
Toni Powell, Dorset Coast Forum

Summary of actions / agreements

- **Agreed: Sam F to be appointed Committee Secretary**
- **Action: Sam F/Mandy to organise a meeting of port reps/LBFCIC and Blue Marine to review the MoU and propose modifications ahead of the next Committee meeting.**
- **Agreed: To trial three meetings a year: March / end June / November**

- **Action: Mark to follow up with the relevant Councils and clarify: if there is a clear winter moorings policy; when the crane will be working again at West Bay; and ask whether any testing is being done on dredge sediment.**
- **Action: Sam to invite University of Plymouth to present on the Fish Intel results at next meeting**
- **Action: Any issues relating to challenges facing the fishing industry to be sent to NUTFA.**
- **Action: Mark to raise the issues about medical certificates and disproportionate regulation on small vessels with Chris Loder MP.**
- **Action: Mike to promote the opportunity for recreational representatives to sit on the SIFCA Committee.**
- **Action: LBFCIC to draw up a list of potential research projects to investigate some of the issues raised.**

1. Introductions

Tim Glover introduced himself as chair of the meeting on this occasion as Martin was away on work. Tim had been proposed by the Lyme Bay port reps to chair the meeting and was present in an independent capacity. Tim welcomed Sarah Birchenough and Sam Dell from SIFCA, Gavin Black and Jon Sherrington from Natural England who were attending for the first time, or the first time in several years.

2. Approval of minutes from last meeting

Tim tabled the minutes of the last meeting held on 11th October 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

- *Mandy to approach Beer to put forward a representative for the Terms of Reference Working Group. Mark Newton had agreed to represent Beer.*
- *Mandy to set up a shared document and circulate details to the Terms of Reference Working Group. Completed.*
- *Mark to raise concerns raised about dredged material with the dredging company. Mark reported that dredging is underway and provide an update later in the agenda.*
- *Mark to follow up with the relevant Council colleagues to set up a meeting about the lease of the Cobb shed. Sam F confirmed that progress was being made in drawing up an extension to the lease of the Cobb unit and the Council had agreed that this would run through to March 2024.*
- *Mandy to circulate invitation to the Crab and Lobster Symposium. Completed.*
- *Sarah Clark to share the report from the Project UK FIP with the Committee once published. Report had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.*
- *Anyone interested in joining the South Coast Fishermen's Council should contact Richard Stride.*

Noted.

- *Mandy/Martin to identify potential venues for the next meeting.* Completed.
- *Sam to circulate a summary of the key points and requirements for the Blue Park Award.* Summary had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.
- *Anyone receiving information on the MCA consultation to share with Mandy for circulation.* No responses had been received.

4. Appointment of Committee Secretary

Sam Fanshawe had taken on the role of Interim Committee Secretary following Mandy's change in position to the Lyme Bay Fisherman's CIC. No additional proposals had been received. Mark Roberts proposed Sam F to be appointed Committee Secretary, Rob King seconded.

Agreed: Sam F to be appointed Committee Secretary

5. Future Priorities for the Committee and Committee MoU and Terms of Reference

Tim opened the discussion by asking the port reps whether they wanted to share their thoughts on the MoU and Terms of Reference and how the Committee should move forward.

Angus said he felt that depended on what relationship Blue Marine planned to have with the Committee. Sam outlined that Blue is very open to how the relationship between Blue Marine and the Committee developed. Blue Marine was still very much committed to maintaining support for and facilitating the open forum that the Committee provided, but would like to know whether the Committee was still serving its purpose from the participants perspective.

Angus said he would like to see Blue Marine continue to support the LBFCIC in the same way and to provide the access that Blue Marine has to the higher echelons of government and continue to support the opportunity for fishermen to put across points to statutory authorities in a verbal forum.

Mark said it was very useful to get views from people that wouldn't usually meet and report back to the Council. Would welcome the Committee continuing with quarterly meetings.

Matt asked how Blue Marine and CIC activities align in terms of the range of fishing activities that are represented under the LBFCIC.

Sam F responded saying that Blue Marine is supporting the LBFCIC in its first year in the knowledge that it includes members that use trawlers, but those trawlers are still small scale and do not fish within the MPA. The objectives of the CIC align with those that Blue Marine supported through the MoU and the activities that the CIC were undertaking in the first year align closely with the activities that Blue Marine has been involved with over the years, such as the education programme. As the LBFCIC became established and planned other activities, Blue Marine may need to take a different view, but for now Blue Marine was very happy to be providing funding for the first year.

Gerry Irwin said he was keen to continue dialogue.

Sam D noted that one of the IFCA's key objectives is to discuss measures with the inshore fleet and whatever form that takes the SIFCA would welcome the opportunity to be in the room.

Sam D noted that the IFCA has to be careful about voting rights as they cannot vote on anything that might diverge from their statutory duties. A less formal forum would not be contentious.

Jerry noted that he was not aware of any forum that has statutory authorities with voting rights.

Mark asked if there could be some structure to the Committee or group, even if this were less formal than the existing Terms of Reference.

Angus said he is happy with the status quo of voting rights for 8 fishermen and 3 Blue Marine. This is useful for the fishermen to feel that they can outvote anything and be in control for once.

Sam F noted that Blue Marine would not be able to use 3 votes as it was likely to only be one representative from Blue Marine attending on most occasions.

Rob said there was not likely to be any voting except on Committee admin/management processes as any lobbying would be carried out through the LBFCIC now.

Sam F asked if the Code of Conduct would be something that would or should be voted on in future, or just agreement around the table.

Aubrey noted that the Code of Conduct had previously been agreed by consensus of those in the room.

Mark asked about the use of proxy votes to ensure that there was representation from all four ports, even if they were unable to attend a meeting at which a vote was taken.

Sam F noted that it would be useful to update the MoU to reflect the new way of working in terms of votes for port reps (8) and Blue (number tbc), bring it up to date in terms of the area (which is currently still noted as a candidate SAC), what the group is called and if the same objectives apply ten years on from when it was created.

Aubrey noted that votes need to stay with the four ports and the format of the current forum should continue to provide a place where fishermen are heard.

Dave said that he would sooner be at the table rather than on the outside looking in. Should maintain the status quo with fishermen having a voice. Axmouth Fisherman's Association had recently approved his continued attendance at Committee meetings.

Sam D asked for clarification on where the IFCA's engagement should be focused – should it be through the LBFCIC or through this Committee. SIFCA is happy to engage with both.

The fishermen agreed that the LBFCIC and the Committee are two very different groups. The LBFCIC will hold their own meetings and invite who they want on any particular occasion, whereas the Committee is always open to regulators and Councils to attend.

Jerry noted that the group had been very valuable and was a good model for co-management. It may need some tweaks but should recognise its core strength.

It was agreed that the next step would be for representatives from the four ports and the LBFCIC to meet with Blue Marine to discuss some modifications to the MoU to reflect what had been discussed and to bring this back to the Committee at the next meeting.

Action: Sam F/Mandy to organise a meeting of port reps/LBFCIC and Blue Marine to review the MoU and propose modifications ahead of the next Committee meeting.

The group discussed the frequency of future meetings. This was dependent on the capacity and resources available from the Secretariat (Blue Marine). Sam noted that managing four meetings a year would be a challenge, in terms of capacity but also in terms of finding a time in the summer when people were available. The options proposed were every quarter or every six months. A show of hands was given with four in favour of two meetings a year and four in favour of four meetings a year. A compromise of three meetings was agreed with two key meetings in March and November and a third meeting in late June, which might be more informal and focus on keeping people informed rather than discussing key items.

Agreed: To trial three meetings a year: March / end June / November

6. Committee Member updates

Southern IFCA

Sarah Birchenough, Deputy Chief Officer – Research and Policy Team, reported on several work streams currently underway. The Pot Fishing Byelaw is still going through the Quality Assurance process with MMO and no timeline can be confirmed for introduction of the byelaw as it is dependent on sign off by the Sec of State. The Net Fishing Byelaw is also with MMO for Quality Assurance.

The review of the Bottom Towed Fishing Gear Byelaw is underway, but there are no live consultations on this at present. SIFCA will make the Committee aware if and when any consultations on any proposed changes are taken forward.

Devon and Severn IFCA

Sarah Clark had sent her apologies to the meeting.

MMO

Gerry expressed a note of thanks from the MMO FMP teams for the level of engagement from the fishing community at FMP meetings and port visits. A consultation on fishing within offshore MPAs is open until 28 March and another consultation is looking at the impact of fishing gears in MPAs.

Gerry noted that following the roll out of iVMS last year, concerns raised in the functionality of some of the units had resulted in a further independent review. No report from this review has been received yet. Four units had originally been proposed with type approval. MMO are planning on extending the funding period to provide support for necessary modifications and installation.

Catch recording – small eyed ray is prohibited as targeted catch, but evidence from catch recording shows higher numbers being caught as bycatch indicating that their numbers are increasing. Gerry will pass on concerns raised by the fisherman.

Councils

Mark reported that assistant Harbour Masters have been appointed in both Lyme Regis and Weymouth and a new Harbour Master appointed at Weymouth. He noted that the Heras temporary fencing at West Bay is cracking. The business plan for the Cobb works has been approved by the EA and is due to start in Winter 2024. Dredging will start on 26 March.

Gavin asked what the situation was regarding Winter commercial mooring for visiting boats at Lyme Regis. Rob noted that winter moorings are sensitive as a winter mooring recently morphed into a permanent mooring. Matt asked about the crane not working at West Bay.

Aubrey noted that Lyme Regis Town Council had said they would pay for water testing of the dredged material. It was considered more than coincidental that as soon as dredging started cuttlefish disappeared and mussels are not settling on the seabed due to black sediment. Time of year when dredging is done is key in terms of impact on cuttlefish – May is the worst time of year. Harbour used to be a self-cleaning harbour but no longer since sand was imported to create the beach at Lyme Regis.

Action: Mark to follow up with the relevant Councils and clarify: if there is a clear winter moorings policy; when the crane will be working again at West Bay; and ask whether any testing is being done on dredge sediment.

Harbour Master

Angus reported that things were going well in Axmouth and on a good foundation for the season ahead.

University of Plymouth

Representatives from the University were unable to attend as the funders of the Fish Intel project were visiting. Rob King reported that they will be monitoring again this summer. Rob had attended a recent Fish Intel study presentation. The recent focus has been on monitoring bass and pollock and tagging bream in Kingsmere in Sussex and tagging crawfish and lobster in Scilly Isles.

Over 1.5 million records had been picked up on receivers from 2-300 bass tagged in the English Channel. This has indicated that bass travel east-west along the Channel but do not move north-south.

Action: Sam to invite University of Plymouth to present on the Fish Intel results at next meeting

NUTFA

Jerry noted that Defra were still considering their response to the consultation on fly seine fisheries, but they are likely to remove derogation and move up to 80mm. Net zero plans are going to take priority. NUTFA continue to put pressure on government to better manage fly shooters that are spreading up through the North Sea and working inside the limits. NUTFA have made proposals for a limit on engine power to 221 KW limit within 12 nm.

NUTFA are also raising concerns with Defra on the levels of deprivation in coastal communities, which have lost hundreds of fishermen – 700 just between 2019 and 2021.

Jerry also noted that all fishermen will require a medical certificate by 30 November 2023 under new MCA regs in order to get insurance. NUTFA has made a Freedom of Information request to MCA to ask how many fishermen have been taken ill and incapacitated at sea. NUTFA are pursuing the MCA over this process which is failing fishermen to pass their medical on grounds including BMI and slight colour blindness. It was noted that you only need the ML5 unless you run day trips in which case an ENG1 is needed.

It was noted that the MCA surveyors come from big boat backgrounds and are not adapting the regulations to small vessels.

Jerry asked fishermen to send any issues to NUTFA.

Mark also noted that Chris Loder MP for West Dorset who had attended a previous Committee meeting, was now Parliamentary Private Secretary to Therese Coffey, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Action: Any issues relating to challenges facing the fishing industry to be sent to NUTFA.

Action: Mark to raise the issues about medical certificates and disproportionate regulation on small vessels with Chris Loder MP.

Angling Trust

Mike Spiller reported a good season for gurnard and an early showing of black bream in February. Good bookings for Beer. Sam Dell noted that SIFCA are looking for recreational reps to sit on the SIFCA Committee.

Action: Mike to promote the opportunity for recreational representatives to sit on the SIFCA Committee.

Natural England

Gavin noted that their absence from recent meetings had been due to a lack of capacity, but they hoped to attend again regularly now. Natural England's role in Lyme Bay is through their duty to monitor the status of MPAs and their support will continue for annual monitoring undertaken by the University of Plymouth.

Dorset Coast Forum

Dorset Coast Forum were unable to attend the meeting, but their latest newsletter can be read here: [DCF eNews March 2023 \(mailchi.mp\)](mailto:mailchi.mp)

Blue Marine

Sam F reported that Blue Marine was providing input on a number of the Fisheries Management Plans, notably the Crab and Lobster, Whelk and Channel Non-Quota Species FMPs to be covered later in the agenda. Much of her time was currently focused on monitoring of the Sussex seabed recovery following introduction of the Nearshore Trawling Byelaw in 2021 which had closed 300km² to trawling. Similar approach being taken as in Lyme Bay to monitor changes in the ecosystem and inshore static gear fisheries following the trawling ban. There were early signs of kelp returning, along with reports from fishermen and freedivers of fish not seen for years and in greater abundance.

Similar concerns were being raised in Sussex to those raised by Lyme Bay fishermen facing significant challenges to maintaining a viable business. Blue Marine was scoping out the potential for a manifesto to safeguard inshore low impact fishing communities with a view of gaining support from one or other of the main political parties ahead of the general election campaigns. If this progresses, Blue Marine would be seeking partners and input from the fishing community to ensure their priorities were reflected.

Lyme Bay Fisherman's CIC

Mandy reported that the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme funding bid had been approved by the MMO. This funds a full-time position and an education programme which will be supported by Gavin and Rowena and reach 25 schools. A website will be created including pages on where to buy and where to eat local seafood. The CIC had advertised the post of Chief Executive and Mandy had started in January. She will be reaching out to the IFCA's shortly. There had been lots of interest in the CIC from other groups around the country. A further MMO funding bid is being submitted to produce six short films on 'a day in the life', scavenger hunts and trails to engage local communities and visitors.

Several meetings had been held with MMO reps on Fisheries Management Plans at various ports, which was very welcome. Mandy thanks the many people who had supported the bid with letters of support including the IFCA's, and Blue Marine for match funding, with additionally funding contributed from all the fishermen.

7. Policy developments affecting Lyme Bay

a. *King scallop 7d and Lyme Bay closures – call for evidence* - deadline 19 March

The MMO call for evidence on proposals for king scallop fishery closures in ICES 7d and Lyme Bay area of 7e in 2023. Group were asked if there were any issues they wished to raise regarding this consultation.

It was proposed that there should be a limit on the number of dredges per side rather than closing areas. The proposals are considering excluding the 12 m and under vessels. SIFCA noted that there is a limit on 6 dredges per side within their District.

b. *Sole management*

Aubrey reported that there had been ongoing dialogue with the MMO regarding management of sole within Lyme Bay. The limited data set collected by the MMO had shown that the make up of the stock is changing. The Gentleman's agreement hadn't worked, so a consultation has been sent to the Lyme Bay Sole Management Group and LBFCIC to ask what measures are needed within 6nm.

c. *Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs)*

Sam F noted that FMPs for six frontrunners will be published for consultation quite soon. These will include proposals for measures for implementation, not just the objectives and evidence base that initial FMPs are required to include. Blue Marine had recommended that an additional goal be added for all shellfish FMPs and the Channel NQS FMP to assess and address non-fishing pressure that may affect stocks including damage to essential fish habitats, pollution and sediment. Seafish had confirmed that this had been added as a shared shellfish goal and the MMO had confirmed it was to be considered for inclusion in the Channel NQS FMP.

SIFCA have hired a new officer to keep abreast of FMPs who will attend and feed into meetings. A dedicated page has been set up on the SIFCA website and is a good place to find out what is going on. [Fisheries Management Plans: Southern IFCA \(southern-ifca.gov.uk\)](https://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk/fisheries-management-plans)

8. AOB

Gavin asked port reps to seriously engage in the questionnaire about the sole management consultation and in the Fisheries Management Plans.

Fishermen, noted the lack of crabs and raised the question of whether anyone had linked this with the discard ban. The storms in 2013/14 storms had badly knocked crab populations and then this was followed by enforcement of the discard ban in 2015. As discards form the base of the food chain, the removal of this source of food for crabs may have affected their ability to return after the storms. It was also noted that whereas crab shells used to be disposed of at sea, these are now taken to landfill which could have a localised impact on water acidity.

Sam suggested that some of these would form good questions for MSc or PhD students and perhaps a list of such research could be drawn up.

Mandy noted that the LBFCIC planned to draw up a list of research projects.

Action: LBFCIC to draw up a list of potential research projects to investigate some of the issues raised.

9. Next meeting date and agenda items

Sam will review resources and capacity for hosting three meetings a year, with the preferred option of a meeting at the end of June.