Agenda item B5

By:	Deputy Chief IFCO
To:	Kent and Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority – 25 November 2025
Subject:	Strategic vessel update
Classification	**Unrestricted**

Summary:
This report provides an update for members regarding the planned refit works on Tamesis and Nerissa as well as an update regarding the build of the new 10.5m cabin RIB, Nemo.

Recommendations –

This report is for **NOTE** and **COMMENT** only

Introduction

In December 2023, Workboat Code 3 came into force. This has presented significant challenges to workboat operators across the country as vessels are required to conform to tighter regulations than were in place under Workboat Code 2. Most KEIFCA vessels are still currently operating under Workboat Code 2 and are starting to transition to Workboat Code 3 as detailed below.

Over the upcoming winter, there are several aspects of our vessel operations will require attention or modification. Nerissa and Tamesis require refit works in boatyards, and our entire vessel management and auditing system will be updated. These workstreams are for compliance with Workboat Code 3.

In order to facilitate this, a proposal was set out in the Annual Plan 2025/2026 to carry out these works over the winter period when less survey and monitoring works are required from the two vessels. This also made provision for the busy summer period, especially related to the re-establishment of the Thames Estuary Cockle Fishery as well as the Manila Clam trial. The aim is to have both vessels refitted and ready for the spring survey period in 2026.

Nerissa

Nerissa came into service in 2015 and is therefore now ten years old. The vessel was constructed with flexible hoses throughout the vessel including through the machinery spaces, however section 6.4 of Workboat Code 3 requires that these be replaced almost completely with solid pipe. The scale of the works required to code Nerissa under Workboat Code 3 is significant, with approximately 250 metres of various size hose requiring replacement with solid pipe. This includes the lines for the hydraulic rams for ramps and lifting equipment as well as steering hydraulic lines, in addition to fuel feed and return lines and where required bilge pump lines. These works require significant disruption of the vessel, not least of which is that part of the deck requires removal to allow the hydraulic tank to be removed for inspection and installation of these solid pipes that, as the name suggests, lack the same flexibility of the old ones.

Officers met with the MCA surveyor and have been working through the list of other items required, some are just the question of buying in a replacement of upgraded part or piece of equipment to meet new or amended rules, but there are also some changes in the way of working, logging and reporting on how the vessel operates.

There are some additional jobs that will be attended to at the same time, including inspection of all and replacement of at least two seaward valves, looking into the best options to tackle and monitor electrolysis in and around the vessel going forward and the installation of the newly acquired steering rams whilst the hose and lines are being attended to.

To undertake these works officers attempted to obtain quotations from several yards, however only Diverse Marine based on the Isle of Wight came back with the required information. Diverse Marine have worked on Nerissa several times in the past, including the initial remedial works conducted when the vessel was first commissioned. As such they are familiar with the vessel and our requirements. Diverse have the ability to attend to all aspects of works on the vessel including machinery, fibreglass works, stainless welding and if required repair to any damage to the antifoul as this requires specialist application in an indoor or tented environment which they have applied before.

The vessel is currently scheduled to transit to Diverse in late November with works expected to be completed by January. The vessel will be brought fully up to Workboat Code 3 specification and will be surveyed and signed off accordingly by the Surveyor.

A quotation has been supplied for the works to be carried out on Nerissa however, some additional works may be required and will only come to light once work is commenced. Expected expenditure at this time for the works required aboard Nerissa is approximately £65,000. Funds for this will be taken from the capital reserves as detailed in other papers.

Tamesis

Tamesis is about to enter into her 15th year of service and is no exception to the requirements of Workboat Code 3. With her coding due to expire in early

February it was deemed prudent if not necessary to have the surveyor attend the vessel to conduct a gap analysis to have advance notice of remedial works required. This analysis was conducted, and the completed report was received from the certifying authority, MECAL, in October.

Many of the items on the list concern portable equipment carried by the vessel which require minor amendments or additions to comply with the new code. These include items such as spray hoods to be fitted to the solid-state lifejackets, a spare DSC handheld VHF to be carried, Personal Locator Beacons for deck crew etc. These are potential defects which can be easily rectified and not at great cost.

More concerning however, are articles covered by section 6.4 of the code concerning pipework in machinery spaces. This is the same issue as requires rectification on Nerissa. This requires that all the existing fuel and hydraulic lines passing through the engine bays are replaced with solid lines. Furthermore, as the vessel is coded to Category 2, and the sea inlet valves are located within the engine bays, the inlet hoses are also required to be solid. Other lesser but not inconsequential modifications include additional fire suppression systems and sensors, replacement transducer or transducer cofferdam, and fuel filler cofferdams.

It is clear that a considerable amount of work is required (in addition to normal winter maintenance) and it is hoped that this can be carried out in late January to enable the vessel to return to service in late February. Work is currently underway to obtain a schedule of costs and identify suitable boatyards and contractors to carry out the works. Anticipated expenditure for works is in the region of £30,000 - £50,000. Again, the funding for these works will be taken from capital reserves

SeaFlux – fleet management

A significant component of WBC3 is that all vessels are now required to operate a safety management system (SMS). A SMS for a workboat is a structured, documented system that outlines how the vessel operates safely by identifying risks, implementing procedures, and ensuring crew training. It includes policies, risk assessments, emergency procedures, accident reporting, and maintenance schedules to ensure compliance with safety regulations and protect personnel, the environment, and the vessel itself. KEIFCA already has the vast majority of the required documentation for this system however pulling it all together into a stand alone document is a significant piece of work. Any SMS also requires that a comprehensive audit system is also put in place to monitor the usage of the safety procedures and systems in place.

Through the IFCA Vessel Operators Group (VOG) which shares best practice amongst the maritime professionals responsible for operating IFCA vessels, a system called SeaFlux was highlighted. This system is a cloud-based vessel management software for the commercial marine industry. Its software helps digitise safety management systems (SMS), track maintenance, manage crew scheduling and certifications, ensure regulatory compliance and provide digital logbooks. It is accessible online and offline via web, iOS, and Android

applications. To date, over half of the ten IFCAs have signed service level agreements with Sea Flux.

Over the winter, officers will be setting the system up to best fit our vessels and the requirements we have of them. The aim is to have this completed by early February which will support both Nerissa and Tamesis transitioning to WBC3. It will also be established from day one of Nemo operations and be retrofitted to Vigilant which is already coded under WBC3. The annual cost for SeaFlux for all five vessels and our shore assets is £4,590.

Nemo

Construction of FPV Nemo began in late 2024 following finalisation of contract details. The contracted delivery date for Nemo was 29 May 2025. By February of 2025 the hull had been built up to deck level, and the cabin had been built and prepared for mounting. The surveyor, Rob Perry had inspected the hull and bracing and once the fuel tanks had been installed was happy for the deck to be laid. Progress on the build however was beginning to fall behind schedule.

By 1st May with only 1 month to go until the scheduled delivery date, significant work remained to be done and progress had slowed considerably. A number of meetings and discussions took place with Ribcraft but much of the equipment necessary for completion was not ordered or delivered. In mitigation for the anticipated late delivery, Ribcraft agreed to a suite of additional items for the build at no extra cost to KEIFCA.

Work on the build continued sporadically through the summer, with the engines being mounted, the tubes manufactured and mounted, and the posts and rails manufactured and powder coated. Again, further visits to the boatyard to monitor progress and to discuss additional concerns took place. These meetings also included conversations with the surveyor to discuss issues raised following an inspection of a sister vessel. Solutions have been proposed to address these concerns (mostly regarding water freeing and bilge pumping arrangements to comply with Workboat Code 3).

The delivery date has been once again delayed, however following correspondence between officers, our legal team and the yard, the parts to complete the build are now arriving and in many cases have already arrived at the factory. Build should therefore be continuing at pace with sea trials proposed to take place in January. Further visits to the factory by officers are planned to ensure that progress is continuing at the rate that has been promised.

Over the build of the vessel so far, officers have visited Ribcraft on no less than five occasions and have held multiple meetings online and over the phone, in addition to regular correspondence in the form of letters and emails to maintain pressure on the yard to complete the vessel as soon as possible but also to the best possible standard.

Recommendations:

This report is for **NOTE** and **COMMENT** only