

Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

MINUTES of a meeting of the Authority held in the Marconi Room, Chelmsford Borough Council, Duke Street, Chelmsford, Essex. CM1 1JE at 10.00am on Tuesday 22 May 2018

Present: Cllr J Lamb (Southend BC), Mr J Nichols (MMO), Mr A Rattley (MMO), Cllr P Channer (Essex CC), Cllr M Steptoe (Essex CC), Mr E Hannam (MMO), Ms B Chapman (MMO), Cllr A Bowles (KCC), Cllr R Binks (KCC), Cllr T Hills (KCC), Ms R Korda (NE), Ms B Perkins (MMO) Ms E Dixon-Lack (MMO), Mr S Abbotson (MMO), Dr L Fonseca (MMO)

Apologies: Ms S Allison (MMO), Mr C Hazelton (EA), Mr P Wexham (MMO), Cllr S Walsh (ECC), Cllr H Tejan (Medway Council), Cllr A Wood (ECC)

In Attendance: Mr J Cook (Clerk, KCC), Mrs B Gibbs (Financial Advisor), Dr W Wright (Chief IFC Officer), Mr D Bailey (Assistant Chief IFC Officer), Mrs D O'Shea (Office Manager), Mrs K Woods (Admin Assistant)

The following information was laid around the table:

- Revised agenda order
- Email from Natural England regarding Agenda item B1

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN (A1)

The Clerk to the Authority was in the Chair for this item.

Members were advised that they were required each year to nominate and select a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Cllr Steptoe nominated Cllr John Lamb as Chairman and Mr John Nichols as Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Penny Channer and Mr Simon Abbotson. No other candidates were proposed so Cllr Lamb was elected unopposed as Chairman and Mr John Nichols elected unopposed as Vice Chairman.

Cllr Lamb and Mr Nichols thanked the Authority. Cllr Lamb resumed the Chair.

2. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS (A2)

The Chairman requested Members to declare any interests on the Agenda item prior to it being dealt with and advised that those with a disclosable prejudicial interest may not vote on that Agenda item.

The following Members declared interests:

Cllr P Channer – agenda item B1 – personal interest (Maldon DC representative and Crouch Harbour Advisory Board representative for KEIFCA)

Mr A Rattley – agenda item B2 & B3 – personal interest (shellfish processor)

3. MINUTES (A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2018 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman

The Chairman advised Members that he proposed to take the agenda in a different order as he had to leave before the end of the meeting to attend another meeting. In addition, he had been made aware that Mr Richard Haward who wished to speak on agenda item B1 had been delayed in traffic. As a result, he intended to delay the hearing of that item until he had arrived.

4. COCKLE TECFO LICENCED FISHERY MANAGEMENT (B5)

Members were advised that surveys had been undertaken over the Easter bank holiday to take advantage of the low ebb spring tides. These had been positive with total stock size and spat survival over the winter very good. Survival rates were at 83% compared to 43% from the previous year. Stock on the Maplin and Foulness Sands had significantly increased and as a result the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) would rise from the previous year's level. Members were advised that a precautionary approach had still been taken on the TAC for 2018 as the stock was at a young age and had still not fully recovered. TAC would be set at 5390 tonnes which equated to 35 trips per boat with the provision that the TAC could be revisited later in the season should additional stock be located or, should catch rates fall, required areas to be closed. Members were informed that Area 3 which had been closed in 2017 had recovered and would be opened this year. Officers had met with Licence Holders on 9 May and had discussed the proposed management of the fishery with them.

In response to a question from a Member as to whether the Appropriate Assessment (AA) had been approved, the Assistant Chief Officer stated that this had been completed and passed to Natural England (NE) for approval. Ms Korda (NE representative) informed Members that she could verbally confirm that the Assessment had been accepted and that this would be formally confirmed by the end of the week.

A Member stated that they were concerned that the AA was built on evidence/research that was inconclusive or contradictory. Some research suggested that there was a lot of damage to the wider bio-diversity not just cockles. Time and effort was spent on surveying the cockle beds, but were officers aware of any plans to survey the wider biodiversity as well or whether that research was being done elsewhere to allow the AA to be built on firmer evidence. The Assistant Chief Officer stated that the Industry was in the process of undertaking MSC accreditation which involved looking at the impact of fishing on any bycatch and the sea bed. In terms of impact, all cockle boats had VMS installed which for this fishery "pinged" every 5 minutes. This enabled the IFCA to be able to look at the area covered by the fleet. The site was 450 km² in total, of which, last year 10.5km² was impacted. This information was in the AA.

Members requested that if the management of the fishery were to be altered that they be notified of this decision.

2018 Fishery Management

Members **AGREED** the following management measures:

- (i) The Total Allowable Catch (TAC) should be set initially at 5390 tonnes and that information related to the stocks will be continually reviewed throughout the season to ensure future sustainability;
- (ii) Allocation of additional TAC, and therefore extension of the fishing season, may be made in the event of previously unknown or un-surveyed stocks of cockles being located, conversely if by monitoring of catch rates stocks in individual areas are shown to be falling then those areas may have to be closed;
- (iii) That the Chief IFCO be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to implement changes to fishing controls within the limitations of the agreed TAC. Members would be notified of any changes made;
- (iv) That the fishery will commence at 21:00 hrs on 17th June 2018;
- (v) Provisional fishing allocations will be as follows – 35 trips per boat, giving 385 tonnes per licence holder over the course of the season. This will be subject to further amendment should better than average growth be shown to have occurred during the pre-season yield survey;
- (vi) The fishing season will be divided into weekly specified fishing periods which will run from 21:00 hrs on Sunday to 12:00 hrs on Friday and during these periods licence holders will be permitted to make the following specified numbers of landings (Reg. No. 7). This will maximise production when meat yields and quality are at their best.

17 th June – 20 th July (5 weeks)	2 specified landings per period
22 nd July – 24 th August (5 weeks)	3 specified landings per period
26 th August – 28 th September (5 weeks)	2 specified landings per period;
- (vii) The maximum quantity of cockles that may be landed or carried on board will remain at 13.6m³/500 baskets per fishing trip (approx. equivalent 11 tonnes); and
- (viii) As is usual it is recommended that sections of Areas 1, 2 and 3 should be closed at all times during the period June - September inclusive. These areas are defined as inshore sections of Areas 1, 2 and 3 from Two Tree Island at Leigh-on-Sea in the West to The Coastguard Station at Shoeburyness in the East and also within the area of Shoeburyness East Beach. (This closure applies only to the area inside the moorings and where there are no moorings closer to the shore than a distance of 300 metres measured from mean high water mark).

Licence Fees

Members were advised that the licence fee had not been increased for the previous two years. Due to increased fuel costs and additional work required for the AA process it was proposed to increase the fee to £6,244 per licence.

Members **RESOLVED** that the licence fee be increased to £6,244

Consideration of issuing Cockle Fishery Licences

Members were advised that five written requests had been received requesting an additional licence if available. Members considered these requests.

Members **RESOLVED** the following:

- (i) The number of licences be restricted to 14; and
- (ii) These 14 licences be granted to those existing licence holders who held a licence in 2017

5. PERMITTED COCKLE FISHERY MANAGEMENT (B6)

Members were advised that surveys had been carried out in April 2018 by the patrol vessels on the main production areas of cockles within the permitted cockle fishery. Beds within Area 7 were found to have sufficient quantities to allow the fishery to be opened to the 35 people who had applied for a permit under the terms of the Byelaw. It was proposed that the TAC would be set at 535 tonnes which equated to one trip per boat.

In answer to a question for a Member regarding if the AA had been agreed, the ACIFCO advised that AA would be carried out prior to the fishery opening in October.

Members **RESOLVED** the following, subject to the Appropriate Assessment being approved:

- (i) The TAC should be set at 535 tonnes which based upon the number of permits being applied for being 35, resulted in 1 trip per vessel of a maximum of 13.6m³;
- (ii) All areas apart from the Dengie, Buxey and Ray Sands within Area 7 to be closed to fishing;
- (iii) The fishery would open on Tuesday 2 October 2018 and would close on Thursday 4 October 2018. Fishing would be permitted between 0900 on the Tuesday until 1200 on the Thursday; and
- (iv) That the Chief IFCO be authorised, after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman, to implement changes to fishing controls within the limitations of the agreed TAC. Members would be notified of any changes made

6. INSHORE VESSEL MONITORING (B7)

The CFO informed Members that currently Vessel Monitoring Systems (VMS) were required to be fitted and operated on all vessels over 12m in length. These units reported at a two-hourly rate. Defra intended to introduce a Statutory Instrument (SI) to make it a requirement for all licenced fishing vessels under 12m to have inshore Vessel Monitoring Systems (iVMS) fitted, with a suggested reporting rate of every 10 minutes if fishing within the IFCA district. IFCAs had worked with the MMO and Defra for the last five years on this concept. There was now an immediacy to the project connected to leaving EU and the need for transparency when selling to the EU. As a result, the Government were prioritising this project to a significant degree. Initially the IFCAs had been told that the SI would be published for consultation at the beginning of May. This had not yet happened, however once it had been published a copy would be provided to Members to enable them to feed back if they wished. It appeared that the Government required the SI to be implemented by the end of the year.

The CFO advised that if the reporting rate for the under 12m vessels were to be every 10 minutes then it may be necessary for the IFCA to make a byelaw to replicate the requirements of the SI for the over 12m vessels.

The Government intended that the Industry would not pay for the purchase of the iVMS units or their installation. This would be paid for via the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) which would cover 90% of the cost with the remaining 10% paid for by Defra. EMFF control fund rules required that applications were made by public bodies which meant that the individual IFCAs would be expected to make the claim. In addition, funding could only be applied for retrospectively, so it would be necessary for the IFCA to pay for the cost of the unit and its installation from its reserves before reclaiming the amount from the EMFF.

The MMO had appointed a project manager and were due to appoint two project coordinators to liaise with the iVMS suppliers and the Industry regarding the delivery and installation of the systems. However, there would be an impact on the IFCA with staff required to be involved in the administration of the project and claiming from the EMFF.

There were estimated to be 147 under 12m fishing vessels in the Kent and Essex district. It was estimated that the cost to the IFCA from its reserves would be £193,000 with the reclaim from EMFF taking no longer than 8 weeks according to the MMO.

Members were advised that there were some risks in undertaking this project. Financially an overspend was considered to be a low risk, however as the EMFF was an EU funding stream an EU exit introduced a risk as it would occur during the lifetime of the project. The Treasury had agreed to underwrite the project, but all IFCAs had to agree to the project by the end of June. Legally the IFCA would be classed as the owner of any equipment purchased using EMFF and the terms and conditions of the grant would apply to them. The EMFF team had approved an agreement which would transfer the ownership and compliance with the terms and conditions to the vessel owners following installation of the equipment.

Members were advised that if they were to agree to participate in the project they would be able to withdraw should insurmountable difficulties arose, although this was not anticipated.

In response to a question from a Member asking if there would be funds set aside to pay for any upgrades and if the vessel were to be decommissioned would the unit need to be returned, the CFO advised that although the IFCA would buy the unit it would then be legally given to the fisherman, so that the IFCA did not own it. The fisherman would be required to sign up to a contract with the supplier so would be subject to that supplier's terms and conditions.

A Member expressed concerned at the way that the project was being run. He felt that it was very bureaucratic and that to reduce the risk of being subject to state aid assessment a voucher system where fishermen chose the supplier they preferred would be preferable. The CFO advised he would take that suggestion to the MMO project board.

In response to a question from Members requesting a trigger process for withdrawing, the CFO stated that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would initially be briefed. If they considered the risks as specified within the report were no longer manageable then a Technical Panel would be held which would discuss in detail the consequences and issues involved.

Members **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The content of the report be noted;
- (ii) KEIFCA would continue to participate in the project and barring unforeseen developments to make this inadvisable, submit a bid to the EMFF for the requisite overall funding as soon as possible and in any event by the end of June 2018. Monies likely to be required to fund the project to be expected to be circa £193,000;
- (iii) the Chief and Assistant Chief Officers would continue to manage the project for KEIFCA and that any urgent decisions required to progress with the relevant activities agreed by the Authority be delegated to the KEIFCA Chief Fishery Officer, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman. Members would be notified of any decisions made; and
- (iv) Should a decision be made that the risks as outlined in the report to Members be considered to be no longer manageable then a Technical Panel would be held for Members to discuss the possibility of withdrawing from the project.

In making this resolution Members noted that by submitting such a bid they were not locked irreversibly into the process. They acknowledged that a decision to withdraw from the project after 30th June could be made if insurmountable difficulties arose.

7. CONSULTATION PAPER- REVIEWING VESSEL LENGTH AND ENGINE POWER BYELAWS (B8)

Members were reminded that at the last meeting they agreed to develop a new byelaw that had one constant overall vessel length for the whole District.

Officers had developed a consultation document that had been included with papers. It was intended to send this document to all fishermen and their Associations within the district and to those at Rye Harbour. The document would also be handed out by officers while on patrol. The consultation period would be 10 weeks after which a Technical Panel meeting would be held in October to go through the details of the feedback. It was also proposed that legal opinion would also be obtained by that stage to establish how grandfather rights and sunset clauses could be incorporated into any byelaw.

Members **AGREED** to the consultation process as laid out in the paper

8. BLACKWATER, CROUCH, ROACH AND COLNE ESTUARIES MARINE CONSERVATION ZONE NATIVE OYSTER FISHERY FLEXIBLE PERMIT BYELAW (B1)

The Chief Officer informed Members that the Native Oyster fishery within this MCZ was one of the most complicated fisheries in the UK. It involved a fishery on a multi layered MPA system which was looking to fish and remove protected species with the additional challenge of trying to establish what stock could be currently or was historically present.

In the last 18 months officers had tried to answer the question of at what point was stock deemed to have recovered and how it could be exploited once accepted as recovered. A lot of work had been carried out by all stakeholders as well as the IFCA. Eight meetings had been held over the last 18 months with the most in-depth consultation process with the community that the IFCA had ever undertaken. In addition, draft byelaws had been sent out to stakeholders as part of this process, which was something that rarely happened. The IFCA had tried its best to bring the community along and to have them at the heart of the process.

The byelaw provided to Members tried to find the way through a very complex problem. It created one of the most specific fisheries that could be found virtually anywhere in the world with almost no management measure not applied to it and there was not a process that could be had in developing a management measure that had not been included. In talking about a fishery that was not happening there would always be a challenge and talking about a fishery which had no planned activation timetable compounded the difficulty. As Members would be aware from their papers, up to two weeks ago this was a byelaw that had been approved by all those involved in the previous 18 months and had reached the goals everyone had agreed to. A lot had been done to address the issues raised by Natural England (NE) in the last two weeks before the meeting and the Chief Officer believed that it would be sensible that the byelaw should be made today.

A Member made the following comments:

She had sat on the Technical Panel meetings and attended the stakeholder meetings and commended the IFCA on the scope and frequency of its consultation which was something that she had requested should happen. She felt there had been adequate opportunity for all stakeholders to be involved in the 15-month process. She was very disappointed by the very late submission and comments by NE given that they had been involved at the beginning of the process and specifically the written consultation which was circulated two months ago. She felt that to give 48 hours' notice was very unfortunate and hoped that this did not reflect a change of attitude since the 15 months of consistent and involved discussion that had occurred and which they (NE) had participated in. On the particular issue of the shadow Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA), she questioned that NE had referenced that they first raised this in October 2017; there had been two Technical Panels and written consultations since then, yet it was being raised now. This meant that Members had not had the opportunity to consider the potential impact of officers having to undertake both a shadow HRA and/or ongoing annual reviews. She would like to know what the impact would be for the IFCA of that decision on the HRA.

In addition, in respect of the management plan and the need for it to be seen as ongoing and an iterative process and an outline management plan; she felt that it had always been seen as flexible and needed to be so in light of changing environmental and other pressures. However, she would want to make sure that it was being entered into with positive intent as it had been

throughout. She would absolutely speak against the splitting of the byelaw and the management plan as this would ride roughshod over the interests and contributions of all stakeholders throughout the process where it has always been considered to be an integral part.

In response, the Natural England representative advised that they also agreed that the byelaw was taking significant steps to achieve conservation objectives. They had been party to the process and enthusiastically so. She had spoken to the IFCA and all the issues that had been raised had been resolved and so they were content the process was legally compliant and would be able to positively vote on it today. In terms of timing they had responded to the consultation in a timely fashion. They had been made aware of the Sweetman II Vs. People Over Windfarm ruling, which was where the issue over the HRA had come up, only the previous week. She apologised it had come so late but NE had acted as quickly as it could. The ruling had been made in April and they had only received an interpretation the previous week. However, this matter had been resolved and was now no longer a problem. With regard to the HRA, NE stated that this was an admin exercise; they required the IFCA to undertake a paper exercise to say the byelaw did not currently exist and that there would be no impact on the MCZ as it was not open and therefore there would likely be no significant effect. This would be updated when the fishery was due to open. She advised that this was now required as a result of the ruling as mentioned above.

The Member requested that it be minuted and noted that assurances had been made by officers that had met the needs of NE and that it was not a requirement for a full HRA plus LSE to be undertaken.

NE advised that they were very supportive of the byelaw. The ruling had meant they needed to ensure the HRA would be in place to be legally compliant. They had now received assurances that this would be done and as a result were very happy to positively back the byelaw today.

Mr Richard Haward from Mersea Oystermen's Association addressed Members. He provided Members with details of the work undertaken by the Industry since 2009 to attempt to increase the diminishing stocks within the BCRC MCZ. He considered that the byelaw and management plan was acceptable as it was and that the suggested changes by NE as described in the report would mean that the opening of the fishery may never happen.

Mr Tom Cameron from Essex University informed Members that he understood the concerns of Mr Haward. He had spoken to oystermen, NE and officers over the last few days and felt that having read the document from NE and taking into account what had taken place to get to this stage today then with a little more work on the management plan to get the wording right these issues were not as extreme as they could be. He felt that given the spirit that had got them to this stage, with an adaptive flexible approach, then it was possible to achieve changes to the wording without much difficulty.

The Chairman thanked both Mr Haward and Mr Cameron for their comments.

The Chairman informed Members that they were being asked to approve a flexible byelaw. It appeared the management plan still required some work but considered any dispute could be resolved. He was pleased to say that the IFCA had an opportunity to reintroduce and open a Native Oyster fishery which was a significant move forward. He acknowledged the hard work of all involved in this process.

A Member asked officers to correct a typo on page 5 of the byelaw where the numbering was not correct – 29 (a) (a) (b)

The Clerk to the Authority clarified that following discussions with NE and to provide reassurance, the minutes would reflect the agreements that had been made to allow the byelaw to progress in terms of an HRA being undertaken together with clarification that the management plan was flexible in terms of the fact that it was due for review by the IFCA in the future and could be reviewed should the need arise

The Chairman requested that Members vote to approve the making of the Byelaw taking into account the Impact Assessment.

Members unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Blackwater, Crouch, Roach and Colne Estuaries Marine Conservation Zone Native Oyster Fishery Flexible Permit Byelaw be made.

11:30 Cllr Lamb left the meeting. Mr J Nichols took the Chair

9. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2017/2018 AND INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2018/2019 (B2)

Members were provided with a report from Kent County Council Internal Audit service providing details of the work undertaken by them on behalf of the IFCA in 2017/2018. This report provided details of key issues and findings raised by them and, where applicable, the steps taken by the IFCA to resolve them.

In addition, the report provided details of the planned work for 2018/2019.

In response to a question from Members asking whether the findings had been addressed, the Financial Advisor stated that all issues raised were being or had been attended to.

Members **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The 2018/2019 Annual Internal Audit Plan be approved; and
- (ii) The findings of the Internal Audit report be noted

10. 2017-18 FINAL BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN REPORT AND ANNUAL RETURN (B3)

Members were provided with details of the financial position for the Authority to 31 March 2018. The Financial Advisor informed Members that the underspend for the year was £64,106.78 which had resulted from savings in fuel on Tamesis, salary costs and a lack of expenditure on other support costs. It was recommended that £10,641 of the underspend be transferred to the Renewal Reserve with the remainder transferred to the General Reserve.

Members were advised that £43,676 had been spent on capital expenditure in 2017/2018 in respect of two quad bikes, a trailer and a Toyota Hilux. This had been offset by £7,750 received from the sale of the oldest Toyota Hilux.

Total reserves, including Renewals, General and Specific totalled £1,452,400.

Members were also provided with the Annual Return for 2017/2018 which, if approved, would be sent to external auditors for their review.

Members **RESOLVED** that:

- i) the underspend of £64,106.78 be approved;
- ii) the underspend of £10,641 be transferred to the Renewal Reserve;
- iii) the underspend of £53,465.78 be transferred to the General Reserve;
- iv) the Annual Return and Governance Statement be approved; and
- v) that a vote of thanks be recorded to the Financial Advisor in respect of the clarity of the reports provided by her.

11. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/2019 (B4)

Members were provided with details of the treasury management strategy for 2018/2019, which mirrored Kent County Council's (KCC) strategy. They were informed that the Authority currently had £1,571,924.10 invested with KCC. In 2017/2018 the interest received from this investment was £3,798.35.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve KEIFCA monies remaining on deposit with Kent County Council.

12. MARINE PLAN UPDATE (B9)

The CFO reminded Members that he had spoken at previous meetings regarding this issue and that they had also received presentations from the MMO on the matter. Officers had engaged with the MMO through both statutory and individual meetings and had tried to facilitate meetings with the Industry and MMO licensing. This had been useful and productive in part. Officers had researched best practice both nationally and internationally to consider the spatial needs of fish and the in combination impacts of major marine projects.

The CFO advised Members that the concept of Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) had been in use in North America for the last 20 years. This concept had helped to maintain productive fisheries and rebuild depleted fish stocks by linking and managing the fish that were harvested with the habitat they used and needed to survive and flourish. Planning currently did not take into account fish habitat. However, the South East Marine Plan did give an opportunity for this to be developed. Officers had contacted the MMO to try to make sure that this concept could be developed within the SE Marine Plan area. Data was available for the Thames as there was a long history of small fish surveys carried out by the Environment Agency, Cefas surveys as well as data for London Gateway.

Members were provided with details of some of the marine work that was being carried out in the district. The CFO informed them that the byelaws passed by the IFCA had taken a significant

amount of bottom towed gear pressure from the area. The proposed impact of aggregate dredging in the area negated that work. In particular, there was a proposed capital dredging project planned close to the Medway nursery area. If this went ahead then there would be significant pressure on the site which had been designated as a no take zone and was protecting internationally designated habitats.

The CFO had looked through the environmental statements provided for these works and it appeared that the process for updating cumulative effect had not improved. The MMO had commissioned a report in 2014 to consider the use of Cumulative Effects Assessments (CEA) which he felt could be used to develop a Cumulative Impact Assessment for the Kent and Essex district. He felt that it could be useful to send a delegation to the MMO board to make a presentation to them to highlight the issues and possible solutions with the outcome reported back to Members at the next IFCA meeting.

Members discussed the matter in detail and made the following comments:

- The Thames Estuary was the biggest offshore building site in the world. Damage had already been done. It was necessary to do something about the amount of aggregate dredging and maintenance dredging that was being undertaken
- Habitat, current and future was being affected. Disappointed that no action had been taken before now.
- This was a long-standing issue and it appeared there was a reluctance for planners and the MMO to put any red lines in place. It was disappointing that suggestions had not been taken on board and it would appear that all was heavily stacked against the smaller industries.

Members **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) Kent & Essex IFCA should work with the MMO and local stakeholders to use the Essential Fish Habitat approach and to develop its use within the South East marine plan area;
- (ii) Kent & Essex IFCA should work with the MMO and local stakeholders to use the Cumulative Effects Assessments approach and to develop its use within the South East marine plan area; and
- (iii) The Chairman, Vice Chairman and CFO approach the MMO board to provide a presentation to them highlighting the issues and suggested solutions

13. HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE (B10)

Members were provided with an update of the work carried out to date to ensure that Health & Safety requirements and legislation were complied with. In particular the ACFO drew their attention to the incident that had occurred with regard to the RIB Nereus and the actions that had been taken since then to review the procedures together with those findings.

In response to a question from a Member that asked if there was any intention to formalise Health & Safety procedures with other IFCA's, the ACFO stated that this was a standing item at NIMEG meetings with a central record kept of any notable incidents.

Members **NOTED** this report

14. APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL PLAN 2018-2019 (B11)

The Plan had been provided to Members at the previous meeting when they had been asked to contact officers with any changes they wished to have made.

Members **APPROVED** the Annual Plan

15. MATTERS FOR REPORT

Members received:

- Quarterly Report of the Kent IFCA (C1)
- Quarterly Report of the Essex IFCA (C2)
- Quarterly Report of the Patrol Vessel 'Tamesis' and 'Blue Jacket'(C3)
- Quarterly Report of the Patrol Vessel 'Nerissa' (C4)
- Compliance and Enforcement Report (C5)
- Sea Angling Report (C6)
- Lead Scientific and Conservation update (C7)

105. AOB

Ms Molly Tucker from the Port of London Authority advised Members that they had run a study with fishermen regarding the litter that they collected and how best to dispose of it. The feedback from this study would allow them to now carry out a more targeted survey.

Members asked if they could be provided with feedback regarding the Medway Byelaw at the next meeting

12:30 Meeting closed to the public

Members resolved that the exempt minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2018 were correctly recorded and were signed by the Chairman.

12:35 Meeting closed