



Communication & Engagement Report

Financial year 2015-16



Eastern IFCA's mobile aquarium at the Cromer & Sheringham Crab & Lobster Festival © Eastern IFCA 2015

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Foreword

The annual communications and engagement report provides an overview of the key actions that the Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority carried out to achieve stakeholder engagement objectives during financial year 2015-16.

The creation of the Authority on 1 April 2011 provided a real opportunity to engage with and encourage the involvement of local people in the management of the marine environment within its district. This change was a unique opportunity to establish a centre of excellence, recognised locally, nationally and internationally for the development and implementation of best practice in relation to the local management of the marine environment.

Now in its fifth year, Eastern IFCA has the assets and experience to maintain engagement across the breadth of those who use the marine environment. A specific focus in 2015-16 was to achieve similar levels of engagement as 2014-15 utilising these assets and social media to improve our efficiency in reaching new stakeholders whilst maintaining the interest of those who already know who we are. In addition, driven by the need to close the gaps in understanding highlighted by the bench marking survey of 2012, priority was given to the educational sector to promote the sustainable use of the marine environment and to be recognised and heard.

The Authority is majority funded through a levy on the County Councils of Suffolk, Norfolk, and Lincolnshire. The establishment of the Authority at the most significant period of fiscal austerity for a generation has provided significant challenges but Eastern IFCA has succeeded in delivering the Communication & Engagement Plan on time and on budget.

This is the Authority's third Communication and Engagement report. We welcome feedback on this document from individuals and organisations interested in our work so that we can meet your needs in the future.



Julian Gregory
Acting Chief Executive Officer



Councillor Tony Goldson
Chairman

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Overview

The Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority was created under Section 150 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MaCAA 2009) and was fully vested on 1st April 2011. The IFCA District was created under Section 149 of the Act.

The Authority district extends seawards six nautical miles from the Haile Sand Fort off the coast of Lincolnshire to Felixstowe in Suffolk. This includes The Wash embayment and river estuaries including the Stour and Orwell in Suffolk, totalling almost 3,800 km². The district encompasses the full suite of both UK and EU Marine Protected Areas including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Special Protected Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, as well as Ramsar and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There were twelve key communication and engagement priorities for the Authority during 2015-16:

Ref	Project
CE2014A	E Newsletters
CE2014B	Stakeholder database
CE2014C	Social media
CE2014D	Community engagement
CE2014E	Good news stories
CE2014F	Engage with Educational establishments
CE2014G	Attend relevant public events
CE2014H	Partnership working encouraged
CE2014I	Communication and Engagement Strategy
CE2014J	Communication & Engagement Plan 2015-16
CE2014K	Communication & Engagement Report 2015-16
CE2014L	Website content

These priorities were established to effectively work towards the relevant Defra success criteria and their associated high level objectives (HLOs).

Delivery of priorities for the year

The following tables set out progress made against each of the communication and engagement activities that the Authority planned to conduct during the 2015-16 financial year.

Project	Progress in 2015-16
CE2014A E Newsletters	Following the departure of the Communities and Development officer (CDO) in January 2014, a review of the IFCA staff highlighted the need for officer resource to be deployed to support statutory output requirements. The review recommended that the CDO role was not replaced but that some of the functionality was re-distributed amongst existing staff. Whilst it had been intended to produce an E Newsletter the potential utility of this media was reviewed and it was judged that key stakeholder information could be routinely passed using both social media and the website.
CE2014B Stakeholder database	A new stakeholder database is being developed to compliment the new IT system which will enable better remote access. Biannual reviews of the database will be performed as 'business-as-usual' during 2016-17.
CE2014C Social media	Social media outlets are used to alert stakeholders to our news and other pertinent information. This means tends to service the younger sector of the stakeholder base and also Non Government Organisations who track the output. Tweets and other posts routinely achieve feedback from stakeholders so can be judged to be having a distinct communications effect.
CE2014D Community engagement	Having previous discontinued quarterly meetings around the district this priority was primarily addressed through 'business as usual' for example during byelaw consultations, attendance at fisher and other meetings, daily engagement by the three Area Officers and the development of the role of the DCEO in adopting a roving commission throughout the district during the summer of 2015. The display trailer procured during 2014-15 continued to provide a useful platform with which to engage and was used at RSPB Titchwell, Kings Lynn and Cromer, all to beneficial effect. It was also used at public displays as described at CE2014G below.
CE2014E Good news stories	In the absence of a dedicated PR officer, a limited number of stories have been distributed to media outlets. A good example was the publicity achieved as a result of the naming ceremony for

	<p>FPV Sebastian Terelinck, which achieved extensive coverage in local print and radio media. The cost/benefit analysis of generating press articles suggests that alternative means such as social media and website based articles achieve the same effect for less input.</p>
<p>CE2014F Engage with educational establishments</p>	<p>The following schools were visited in 2015-16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gresham School • Great Dunham School • Heacham School • Aylsham School • Open Academy school • The Coastal Champions Conference <p>The educational activities included educational lesson plans and the production of educational material. All school visits were highly praised by teachers and students. The gap identified during this years' educational events is that the age groups targeted were exclusively between 4-11 year olds – it is felt that this potentially limited the expansion of the social media audience with secondary school and higher education students more likely to follow and share Eastern IFCA social networking material.</p>
<p>CE2014G Attend relevant public events</p>	<p>The following events were attended in 2015-2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cromer crab and lobster festival • RSPB Titchwell • RSPB Frampton • Cromer carnival • Norfolk Food and Drink Festival, Holkham • King's Lynn Heritage day • Suffolk Coastal Forum
<p>CE2014H Partnership working encouraged</p>	<p>Outreach events have encompassed partnership working with several organisations including the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and the RSPB. Social media has been used to publicise joint activities such as shark-by-watch, Natural England and the IFCA Technical Advisory Group meetings. The DCEO continued to chair the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group, which brings together colleagues from the MMO, EA, Cefas, NE and Defra to develop and promote good practice. An</p>

	extensive programme of joint working with the MMO was agreed nationally and adopted by the Authority, with the CEO chairing the Programme Board in his role as Director of Operations with the MMO (on secondment) and the DCEO acting as a Senior Technical representative.
CE2014I Communication and Engagement Strategy	The strategy continued to guide activity but will be subsumed in the proposed business planning process for 2016-17 onwards.
CE2014J Communication & Engagement Plan 2016-17	The plan has been incorporated in the new five year Business Plan (2016-21), which will be presented to the Planning and Communication sub-committee on 27 Feb 16.
CE2014K Communication & Engagement Report 2015-16	Complete
CE2014L Website content	Whilst the website format and content was reviewed and partially updated during 2014-15 this work was delayed due to staff abstractions. This work has been re-invigorated by the employment of a temporary member of staff and a new website design has been developed by an external supplier to make it as user friendly and appealing as possible. It is envisaged that this work will be complete early in 2016-17.

Case Study 1 – Coastal Champions Conference (May 2015)

Coastal Champions Conference was an event organised by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust as part of the Coastal Champions Project (part of the Lottery Money Funded 'Touching the Tide' project) which aims to further the understanding of the marine environment and associated issues for children aged 5-11. Six schools from the Felixstowe area are taking part in the project.

The touch tank was used to show children, who are currently learning about the marine environment, marine life up close and learn about the key traits of the crabs and lobsters displayed. Officers also explained the important balancing act between exploiting the sea and protecting it – something these future stakeholders will hopefully be mindful of as they progress their own careers.

The Eastern Daily Press published an article (June/July 2015) about the project and photos of Eastern IFCA's contribution to the conference are featured on the 'Touching the Tide' project website.

In addition, positive feedback was received from Suffolk Wildlife Trust in a letter and officers made new contacts with the Cefas pollution team, the Landguard Point Ranger and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust which has encouraged partnership working.



Financial Implications

The budget for financial year 2015-16 was set at £5,000. This represents a reduction of a little over 63% on the 2014-15 budget, which was itself greatly reduced from financial year 2012-13 budget which was set at £50,000. This significantly reduced budget was judged appropriate to fund attendance at the forecast activities and provide for sufficient support in terms of display infrastructure and promotional materials.

The costs associated with events and schools attended during 2015-16 were £981, the majority of which was associated with the costs of equipment including show supplies. Overall, the out-turn on the budget for 2015-16 was £1,674 which includes the cost associated with the development of the refreshed website (which is only a partial payment) and is a substantial reduction of that expended in 2013-14 and reflects a drive to maintain well developed linkages with regional stakeholders whilst assuring value for money for the public purse.

Infrastructure

The display trailer and aquarium trailer procured in previous years form the mainstay of our outreach infrastructure and ensure that Eastern IFCA is able to attend events in a professional manner with an engaging, interactive stand. The infrastructure routinely receives positive feedback and actively encourages media attention. Such is the impact that a neighbouring IFCA has requested the loan of the aquarium trailer for one of their events.



Case Study 2 – King’s Lynn Heritage Day and vessel Naming Ceremony

As part of the Outreach activities for the year, King’s Lynn Heritage Day was identified as an opportunity to combine a stakeholder engagement event with the naming ceremony for the new enforcement vessel – *FPV Sebastian Terelinck*.

With this in mind it was decided to populate the event with all display infrastructure and all three Authority vessels. Research Vessel *Three Counties* berthed alongside the leisure pontoon in King’s Lynn along with Fishery Protection Vessel (FPV) *John Allen* and the newly purchased *FPV Sebastian Terelinck*. As part of the ceremony, the family of the late Mr Terelinck – who died in service as a fishery officer more than 100 years ago and whom the new vessel was named after - were invited to the ceremony. The event was also marked by the restoration of Sebastian’s grave memorial.

All display infrastructure was co-located adjacent to the vessels and provided a very impressive hub to allow our business to be explained to the public. The use of the aquarium as a means to bring local marine flora and fauna to members of the public helps to generate a dialogue which, aside from the general wonderment at the breadth of local marine species, prompted discussion of key topics of concern such as: the sustainability of local fisheries, the impact of renewable energy installations, the timescale for delivery of Marine Protected Areas, the amount and pace of siltation and sand accretion in the Wash.

The Heritage Day intentionally engaged the majority of officers but on the short term basis. This allowed the opportunity for them to be recognised professionally in the IFCA’s home town along and take time to enjoy a family day out.

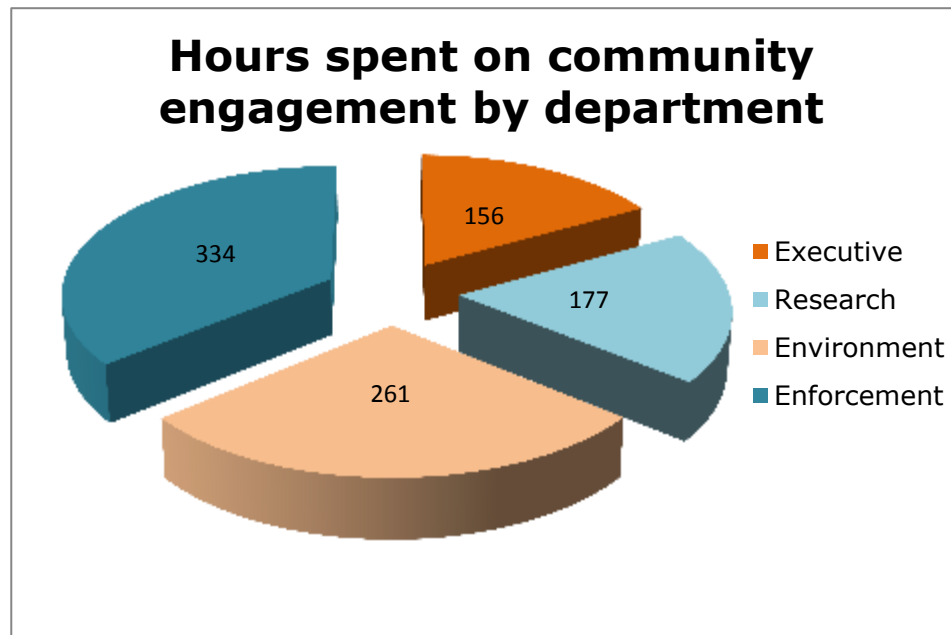
The event provided a very good public relations opportunity to further embed knowledge of the IFCA’s work within the district to deliver Marine and Coastal Access Act mandated outputs. Furthermore, a many stakeholders had the chance to air opinions and to inform the Authority of local concerns.



People Resource

The main resource required to carry out the Communication & Engagement Plan for 2015-16 was staff time. Approximately 927 hours or 117 officer days was used over 14 events. The hours spent by each team can be seen on the graph below. Using the experience of 2014-15, community engagement was shaped to avoid the busiest business periods for officers such as the cockle and mussel survey effort and cockle fishery enforcement activity. Whilst striving to de-conflict activity in this way there were challenges in providing sufficient staff and there were some 'knock on' effects in rostering for subsequent duties as officers had accrued time off.

Whilst here is benefit in engaging with stakeholders and the wider public the methodology employed to date has been relatively resource intensive and this will be taken into account when planning activity for future years.



Case Study 3 – Social Media

Eastern IFCA has a relatively humble social media following but the benefits are disproportionately large to the resources required and the network is growing.

- The number of followers of the Eastern IFCA Twitter account rose from 597 to 727 in the financial year 2015-16 – an increase of 22%;
- The posting from the RSPB Titchwell event was viewed 1,366 times, massively extending the effect of that event with virtually no additional resource used;
- In May 2015, tweets posted by Eastern IFCA that month alone were viewed 3,617 times;
- Joint working with other organisation has led to stakeholders hearing about us for the first time – for example the tweet from Cefas (which our account was mentioned in) exposed thousands of other Twitter users to us for the first time;
- Officers make a considered effort to post thought-provoking, interesting stories on social media, but it is also a useful tool to make stakeholders aware of important fishery information – the Facebook posting regarding new bass measures for example, reached 914 different Facebook accounts in August informing stakeholders of the increased landing size – a significant amount of people engaged with very little officer resource taken up!

Twitter	Facebook
Tweets	12
Tweet Impressions	3,617
Posts	261
Post Views	10
New Followers	31