

# 17th Eastern IFCA Meeting

*"Eastern IFCA will lead, champion and manage a sustainable marine environment and inshore fisheries, by successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry".*



A Meeting of the Eastern IFCA took place at The Boathouse Business Centre, Wisbech, Cambs, on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at 1030 hours.

## Members Present:

Cllr Tony Turner MBE JP	Vice-Chair	Lincolnshire County Council
Shane Bagley		MMO Appointee
Stephen Bolt		MMO Appointee
Roy Brewster		MMO Appointee
Connor Donnelly		Natural England representative
Cllr Richard Fairman		Lincolnshire County Council
Paul Garnett		MMO Appointee
Cllr Tony Goldson		Suffolk County Council
Roger Handford		Environment Agency representative
Dr Ian Hirst		Environment Agency representative
Neil Lake		MMO Appointee
Ceri Morgan		MMO Appointee
Tom Pinborough		MMO Appointee
Rob Spray		MMO Appointee
John Stipetic		MMO representative
Koen Vanstaen		MMO representative
Stephen Worrall		MMO Appointee
Cllr Margaret Wilkinson		Norfolk County Council

## Eastern IFCA (EIFCA) Officers Present:

Philip Haslam	Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Andrew Bakewell	Head of Finance
Frances Burrows	MEO
Jason Byrne	IFCO
Nichola Freer	Head of HR
Luke Godwin	IFCO / Project Officer
Julian Gregory	Deputy Chief Executive Officer (DCEO)
Ron Jessop	Senior Research Officer
Judith Stoutt	Senior MEO
Robin Strigner	Research Officer
Stephen Thompson	Research Officer
Ady Woods	IFCO

## Other Bodies Represented:

Emma Thorpe	Natural England
Dr Will Wright	KEIFCA

## Minute Taker:

Jodi Hammond

## EIFCA15/01 Item 1: Welcome by Chair

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. He announced that Mr Worrall was unavoidably delayed but would be attending and Mr Vanstaen would need to leave by 1300 hrs.

**EIFCA15/02 Item 2: Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from: Cllrs Baker & Cox (Norfolk County Council), Cllr Patience (Suffolk County Council) and Mr Barham (MMO Appointee).

Members considered the reasons given for not being able to attend and formally agreed to accept the apologies.

**It was agreed to accept the Apologies for Absence**

**EIFCA15/03 Item 3: Declarations of Members Interest**

In addition to the Declarations of Interest already recorded both Messrs Lake and Garnett declared an interest in matters relating to the whelk fishery.

**EIFCA15/04 Item 4: Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> EIFCA Meeting, held on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

**Members agreed to sign the minutes as a true record of proceedings.**

**Proposed: Councillor Goldson**

**Seconded: Mr Pinborough**

**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/05 Item 5: Matters Arising**

14/97: BASS STOCK MANAGEMENT - The CEO advised this matter would be discussed as part of the meeting agenda.

**EIFCA15/06 Item 6: Health & Safety**

Since the last meeting there had been two issues: An officer was experiencing neck and shoulder pain which may be a result of display screen equipment deficiencies or posture. The issue was being monitored with incremental adjustments being made to the working environment to complement physiotherapy. Following the opinion of the officers' GP, a second opinion was being sought by EIFCA.

The second issue related to concerns regarding an officer falling asleep on a regular basis. The concern had been taken seriously and referred to an occupational health specialist. The assessment confirmed there was no underlying medical reason for this and advice was given on lifestyle and healthy living.

The assessment regarding safety risk at Sutton Bridge moorings had been revised to an amber risk rather than red as plans are in place for new mooring facilities which should be effective during the second quarter of the next financial year.

**Members Agreed to note the content of the report.**

**Proposed: Dr Bolt**

**Seconded: Cllr Goldson**

**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/07 Item 7: Meeting of the Regulation & Compliance sub-committee held 25<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Members were advised the sub-committee had agreed to a more forward looking approach to the byelaws which would allow for emerging issues.

The sub-committee had agreed to the

- Regulation & Compliance Strategy
- Annual Strategic Assessment
- Development of Management Measures
- A housekeeping exercise on current byelaws to tidy them up.

The first strategic assessment had been carried out which resulted in items on the agenda relating to bass and whelk.

The review process for regulatory notices was also approved which had been published on the website.

A review of Rights in Common holders to ascertain the impact of their activities on Protected Areas had been requested by Defra, this would be carried out as part of the work scheduled to be undertaken in the Research & Environment Plan 2015.

Mr Donnelly felt the Strategic Review should provide confidence that issues would be looked at appropriately.

Mr Vanstaen questioned whether there had been discussion amongst IFCA's regarding common issues. The DCEO advised he would be attending a National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG) meeting which would be looking into ways to promote and embed joint working.

**Members Agreed to note the content of the report**

**EIFCA15/08 Item 8: Finance and Personnel Sub-committee meeting held 16<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

Members were advised that in line with the MMO appointee system being reviewed the MMO had offered IFCA's an opportunity to review its membership. The F&P sub committee acknowledged that the current set of members lacked representation from commercial fishermen with a working knowledge of Suffolk and North Norfolk fisheries and, a member who was qualified to consider and advise on marine archaeology. A paper was presented to, and was approved by the sub committee to remedy these shortfalls.

Mr Pinborough enquired whether there had been any feedback from the MMO. The CEO advised that the submission regarding members had been welcomed. The recruitment process has been contracted out to Hayes Executive, with the instructions that if there were not sufficient applicants with the requisite skillsets then IFCA's could proceed with gaps in their membership until suitable applicants were received.

Under HR matters it was noted that following the IIP assessment the standard had been achieved and EIFCA had a certificate valid until November 2016.

Finance matters had covered the Estimates and Forecasts of expenditure which would be discussed as items on the agenda.

It was noted the public sector pay award did not apply to points beyond 49, the sub-committee had therefore formally agreed that the award recently given should be applied to any posts which fell into this bracket.

The cost of modifications to *John Allen* had been revised and as they were substantially more than had initially been agreed they were reconsidered by the sub-committee, these had been agreed to and it was noted the majority of the cost would be covered from the current financial year's budget.

Having decided not to move the offices to Lincoln Court it was decided to make the best use of the current office space. Expenditure in the region of £15,000 was agreed for this project.

Members were advised the terms of the contract for the Moorings at Sutton Bridge had been received, for a £150,000 investment EIFCA would receive a 20 year lease which represented a saving on current expenditure.

**Members Agreed to note the report.**

**EIFCA15/09 Item 9: Provisional budget for 2015/2016 and forecast for 2016/2019**

The budget for 2015/2016 was put to members for approval to set the levy for Constituent Councils. The proposed levy would represent a standstill budget, however it was advised that beyond this timeframe there may be an increase in expenditure.

**Members Resolved to approve the Provisional Estimates for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, and to note the Provisional Forecast of Estimates for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019.**

**Proposed: Cllr Goldson**

**Seconded: Mr Vanstaen**

**All Agreed**

*At this point Mr Worrall arrived.*

**EIFCA15/10 Item 10: Payments made and monies received during the period Oct 2014 to January 2015**

It was noted that receipts during this quarter were quite low which was to be expected as Levy payments were received during the early part of the financial year.

**Members Resolved to approve payments of £310,589 and receipts of £4,739 during the period 16<sup>th</sup> October 2014 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014.**

**Proposed: Cllr Goldson**

**Seconded: Stephen Worrall**

**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/11 Item 11: Quarterly Management Accounts**

Members were provided with figures to compare actual expenditure for the first three quarters of the financial year against the main budget headings. Salaries were indicating a saving which was largely due to there not being

a full complement of staff until October. There was also a saving in advertising as the anticipated expense had not occurred. Whilst the figures suggested expenditure was about £100,000 behind budget the expected expenditure during the final quarter was likely to absorb most of this.

**Members Resolved to formally note the Quarterly Management Accounts.**

**Proposed: Cllr Goldson**

**Seconded: Dr Bolt**

**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/12 Item 12: Mussel Fishery 2015**

The Senior Research Officer gave a short presentation on the findings of the mussel surveys. Whilst two additional small beds had been identified unfortunately the overall stock levels had declined on the previous year and were below the levels set in the conservation objectives.

There were only 6 beds with stock densities which exceeded 25 tonnes/hectare and even these were showing recent declines in stock levels.

The majority of the beds had suffered major declines in stock since 2010, with mortality exceeding recruitment.

In combination with declining stocks the beds had become a poor fishery resource with densities too low to attract new settlement. The cause of the die off was unknown it was thought it could possibly be due to the stress of spawning when the mussel was already weakened by disease.

In view of the total adult stock having failed to reach conservation objective targets and the poor 2014 settlement making it unlikely that the stock would recover the Senior Research Officer felt it was not appropriate to open a mussel fishery. The only exception to this being Welland Bank which had approximately 210 tonnes of mussel growing on the rocks. This tonnage was excluded from the SSSI conservation objection target as the area was treated discreetly to the rest of the Wash.

The nature of the Welland Bank was such that it effectively managed itself, receiving regular spatfall. The rocky nature of the area prevented dredging or over fishing. It was therefore suggested this bed should be opened for a handwork fishery, and should remain open until the surveys were carried out later in the year unless the CEO deemed it necessary to close it sooner.

Following the presentation members questioned whether other areas were encountering the same level of stock dying off, they were advised that there had been a report of a mussel bed in a river in Devon having been lost.

Members questioned whether Cefas were actively looking into the reason for the die off, whilst it was not part of their workload the SRO advised that Cefas were always willing to analyse any samples he sent to them, however Cefas only have two virus tests which they carry out so if the cause is not one of those then nothing will show up, Cefas would be better placed to recognise parasites.

The SRO advised that there were numerous elements which could lead to the decline of stocks and other factors combining, it would be difficult to pin down what the problem was.

The SRO recognised that there may be a need for more investigation into the cause but also questioned what could be done if a disease was identified as it is not possible to immunise mussel stocks. Paul Garnett felt that as most of the mussels which were dying were 3 years olds at the

point of spawning, which was similar to the cockle situation, there was a need for further investigation particularly as it was not just a fishery resource but also part of an SAC. The CEO suggested that rather than looking for what was wrong with the stock perhaps there was a need to look at what was right and seek to capitalise on the resilient mussels that remain post the 3year threshold. The SRO also felt that if it was possible to identify trends and occurrences then management could be adopted to exploit those stocks which it was anticipated may die.

Acknowledging that a fresh set of eyes looking at viruses or parasites may be beneficial Dr Hirst suggested the possibility of funding a PhD student.

Mr Lake believed the problem was recruitment of stock and believed the recruitment from the lays had been underestimated in the past.

Mr Worrall felt that as the Welland Bank was a 3D bed which seemed to remain stable perhaps there would be some benefit to carrying out trials with a matrix elsewhere, which would offer similar protection to the mussels.

**Members Agreed to:**

- **Note** the results of the 2014 autumn surveys
- **Note** that the survey results showed the total mussel biomass and the adult mussel biomass were both below the SSSI Conservation Objective targets, and as such did not provide a buffer above Conservation Objective targets with which to operate fisheries or absorb natural die-offs.
- **Note** that several of the beds were in a state of continued decline and in poor condition.
- **Note** that there had been a poor settlement during 2014 that was likely to delay future recovery.
- **Note** that in January 2014 the Authority consented to open a small seed mussel fishery on the understanding that there would be no fishery in 2015 unless the surveys were able to show significant recovery had occurred.
- **Agree** that as there had been a continued decline rather than a recovery, there were insufficient mussel stocks to support either a harvestable fishery or a seed mussel relaying fishery without having an adverse impact on the sustainability of the stocks and the favourable SSSI condition of the site.
- **Resolve** to open the Welland Bank until such time as the 2015 mussel surveys began or earlier if the CEO deemed it necessary

**Proposed:** Cllr Goldson  
**Seconded:** Stephen Worrall  
**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/13 Item 13: Mussel Regeneration Project**

The Research Team had identified that whilst the mussel beds were not readily regenerating, those areas which did show signs of settlement were usually in areas of cockle shell. Consequently they had instigated a project to explore a possible method of attracting seed to facilitate the recovery of mussel stocks. 72 tonnes of cockle shell had been put down in 3 20m x 20m sites which along with 3 control areas were monitored monthly. All of these areas had previously been heavily fished. The outcome had seen the

cockle shell sink into the ground and whilst the outcome was not as great as had been hoped for the settlement on these three areas was better than in other areas of the public beds. It was estimated that the experiment had attracted approximately half a tonne of mussel. These areas would continue to be monitored throughout the year.

Whilst the experiment had not been conclusive as there had been insufficient settlement on the public beds to compare it to, the SRO suggested taking a further area of ground which had recently been a mussel bed and covering ½ hectare with 200 tonnes of shell to attempt to regenerate a piece of mussel bed. In order to carry out this experiment he was seeking the Authority's approval to continue the project and use WFO funding to finance the project.

Mr Lake questioned how much the project had already cost, he was advised the initial phase had been approx. £5,000 and the proposed continuation would be approx. £15,000. Mr Donnelly felt that if the project could enable recovery of the fishery it was a good use of resources.

Mr Goldson questioned whether there would be any benefit from putting the shell in bags to try and create a wall. The SRO advised that whilst he did not believe that would be a suitable method he did anticipate creating topography by putting shell into ridges and furrows and in a long block which would give any settlement an opportunity to grow.

Mr Stipetic questioned whether consideration had been given to the possibility of the project requiring a marine licence, which the CEO was able to advise had been taken into account and a marine licence would be applied for. Mr Vanstaen then questioned the long term viability if the project was a success and was rolled out to large areas, would this need permission from NE. The CEO felt that as the cockle had originally been sourced from the Wash it should not be a problem to redeposit the shell. Mr Donnelly advised this would still need a Habitats Regulation Assessment and the scale of the deposit would need considering. The CEO emphasised the need to promote sustainability and the need to do something to encourage growth.

The SRO advised that the UEA had contacted him with regard to work experience for Masters students, so he was trying to get some core samples of the areas taken in order to monitor the site to ensure no damage was being done.

Mr Lake questioned the viability of the experiment compared to the expense. The SRO believed the potential return was worth the investment.

#### **Members Resolved to:**

- **Note** that scientific literature suggests a raised matrix of live mussels and dead shell bound together with byssus threads provides an important habitat for recruiting fresh settlements of mussel seed.
- **Note** that the mussel coverage on several of the beds was insufficient to enable these raised matrixes to develop.
- **Note** the results from the Authority's 2014 mussel regeneration project indicate the project had had a moderate success at attracting mussels to the experimental areas, even though there had been a poor settlement on the inter-tidal beds during the study period.
- **Approve** Authority officers to continue and expand the mussel regeneration project during 2015, to attempt regeneration of a small area of mussel bed.
- **Direct** officers to consult with the Wash fishing community to discuss further funding for the experiment.

**Proposed: Cllr Goldson**  
**Seconded: Mr Worrall**  
**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/14 Item 14: Wash Lay Applications Update**

The MPA sub-committee had directed the Project Officer to finalise a few issues to speed up the lay application process. In line with this the lease had been updated, the issue with regard to "death of a layholder" had been clarified and mitigation measures had been put in place for lack of food availability. All of which had been checked over for legality by EIFCA solicitors.

It was hoped the covenant relating to death of a layholder would provide a sense of security and assurance that the stock belonged to the family, and unless there was a good reason the lay would be passed onto a family member for the duration of the lease remaining.

Members discussed the trigger levels for food availability, it was explained that should such a level be reached there would be a need for stock on the lays to be reduced. It was stressed this would only be an emergency measure for use if the wild stocks of cockles and mussels were at risk.

Mr Brewster queried what level of reduction would be required, the Project Officer advised this would depend how much stock was on the lays and how drastic the situation was. Mr Lake advised that razor fish were also a filter feeder taking food and could add to the pressure on food availability but currently there was no fishery to manage these stocks, he questioned whether there should be a fishery in place for this species. The CEO advised that currently there was no fishery permitted on razor fish and to survey them would be an enormous task. Mr Lake advised the stock was currently under the EU MLS. The CEO advised he would take action to investigate the razor fish fishery.

**Members Resolved to:**

- **Note the progress made regarding lay applications.**
- **Agree to adopt the updated lease agreement**
- **Agree to adopt the process for dealing with the death of a lease holder**
- **Agree to adopt the mitigation measures relating to food availability**
- **Agree to the CEO investigating the feasibility of a razor clam fishery in the Wash.**

**Proposed: Mr Donnelly**  
**Seconded: Mr Spray**  
**All agreed**

*The CEO advised members that the Project Officer had done a tremendous job in the last 18 months and wished to thank him publically for this.*

**EIFCA15/15 Item 15: Bass Management**

The CEO advised that initially it had been considered that an emergency byelaw was required to manage the protection and exploitation of bass stocks. However, recent action by the EU Commission to prevent the use of mid water trawls, which would be effective until the end of April 2015



suggested there was less urgency to the situation. He also advised there were reports that a 3 fish per day bag limit may be brought in for anglers and that the MLS for Bass would be raised to 42cms.

Bass were considered one of the most important species in value within the EIFCA region for recreational fin fish. The current level of fishing was way above maximum sustainable yield limits. There was also reportedly a lot of unlicensed and unregulated fishing taking place. With stocks declining management measures were required before the situation got any worse.

Mr Pinborough felt the paper provided some really useful information but was concerned that the EU ban which was effective until 30 April 2015 for pelagic trawling only would have a very minimal effect on the EIFCA District. He felt there could be a delay of 18-24 months to get a MLS in place and the bag limits being discussed were in a very early stage with the consultation phase only just starting.

The CEO advised that he did not feel the scenario for implementing an emergency byelaw still existed as the fundamental criteria of urgency and the unforeseen nature of the crisis no longer existed as EU measure were being implemented. However there were proposals for the introduction of local management measures to be implemented at a slightly slower rate. These included the introduction of nursery areas and an increase in the MLS in accordance with contemporary scientific advice; regulation of recreational netting activity and the introduction of bag limits for recreational anglers. There had been a mixed reaction amongst the industry to these suggestions.

Mr Holborn (sitting in the public gallery) was invited to comment. He acknowledged the ban on pelagic trawling was a good start but agreed with Mr Pinborough that it would have little effect in the EIFCA district, and went on to say that if action was not taken he believed the future breeding stock would be lost. He therefore hoped the Authority would use their ability to put in place emergency measures.

The DCEO advised that the use of an emergency byelaw would have to meet scrutiny, with the minister having the ability to cancel it as well as it being open to challenge through a judicial review. He therefore felt legal advice would need to be sought prior to instigating an emergency byelaw, particularly as he had spoken to fishermen who had landing of 36-42cm bass as part of their business plan. Mr Pinborough advised there were recreational businesses that rely on bass as part of their business plan. The proposed minimum net size was questioned by Mr Stipetic who felt that a 100mm mesh would not be sufficient to protect larger fish. The CEO advised the intention was for the Minimum mesh size increase to be incremental to prevent undue expense for businesses.

Dr Wright (KEIFCA) advised that in their district the bass fishery was more mature. He acknowledged that nursery areas could be good regional management measures but felt there would need to be an evidence base for the locations selected. He felt the introduction of a MLS would be more effective on a national level.

It was noted that the river Stour was split between EIFCA and KEIFCA, when asked if KEIFCA would be supportive of an emergency byelaw Dr Wright advised that he did not have the mandate to comment but advised that KEIFCA were waiting to see what EU were doing before taking any action themselves.

Mr Pinborough, highlighted the River Stour was the only cross boundary and EIFCA have other rivers and estuaries to protect.

Mr Spray was concerned there was a risk attached to doing nothing as it could mean netting may happen during the important summer season, he would prefer to have an emergency byelaw in place, and believed it would be reasonably secure against a judicial review. This view was supported by Mr Pinborough who felt going down any other route would involve consultation and would realistically take 12 months.

Mr Donnelly felt there was a need to balance the risk on the basis of what was presented to members, which he felt was acceptable to go down the route of an emergency byelaw. He questioned the suggested MLS of 42cm as he was not sure it would protect 50% of the female bass and thought a larger MLS would be more effective. The CEO advised the proposed MLS was based on scientific advice appropriate for the area.

The DCEO felt that banning netting could be a difficult issue to address in an emergency byelaw. However, Mr Worrall felt there was a need to act on all fronts to have an effect on future adult stock, he supported the emergency byelaw approach.

*At this point Mr Vanstaen left the meeting*

The CEO asked members whether they would like to wait or act swiftly. He advised that the standard byelaw process would be 9-12 months, if Authority members wanted some measures put in place more quickly, which would they like done first.

Whilst some members wanted the whole package put in place as an emergency byelaw it was felt it more prudent to look at what would have the most immediate effect, it was thought these would be a prohibition on recreational netting and the introduction of nursery areas.

**Members Resolved to:**

- **Direct the CEO to develop and implement the short-term measures with a view to achieving them in in the shortest possible timeframe.**
- **Direct the CEO to expedite the prohibition of recreational netting activities and the instigation of regional Bass Nursery Areas by means of an emergency byelaw.**
- **Establish an emergency byelaw panel consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, Chair of the Regulation & Compliance sub-committee, the CEO and DCEO**
- **Delegate authority to approve the introduction of management measures for Bass to the Emergency Byelaw Panel.**

**Proposed: Chairman**  
**Seconded: Mr Morgan**  
**All Agreed**

*At this point the meeting was adjourned for half an hour for lunch.  
Dr Wright and Mr Bakewell both left the meeting.*

**EIFCA15/16 Item 16: Whelk Management**

The Project Officer provided a brief presentation on the issues facing the whelk fishery. These included:

- Increase in landings
- Increase in effort
- Susceptible to overfishing
- Data deficient in terms of stock and effort
- One of the top 10 species landed

As a consequence of these issues the industry had put pressure on EIFCA to taken action with particular regard to a MLS and nomadic vessels moving into the area from offshore.

Members were advised the increase in landings was the first concern but there was no management data available to act sooner.

Whelk was considered to be slow growing with sexual maturity not reached until 3-8 years. They were also noted for not being a migratory species so any decline in stock would take several years to recover. The lack of information available on areas fished and the number of pots being deployed means this species were susceptible to a boom and bust culture, suggesting there was a need for management objectives to be put in place.

The DCEO advised members the proposal was to put in place a permitting scheme, on the back of which would be a range of management measures. These measures would include a requirement to provide detailed fishing data, and a limit on the number of pots being worked.

The difficulty would be a balance to achieve a sustainable fishery without affecting the fishing industry too greatly. The DCEO suggested a limit on the number of permits to the number of vessels fishing as of the date of this meeting. He also suggested an increase in MLS to 65 mm and a fixed riddle size.

With regard to the possibility of instigating an emergency byelaw the solicitors had been contacted for legal advice and a response was expected by the end of the week.

Members considered the proposal. It was questioned what happened in terms of the number of pots being deployed beyond 6 miles, this would be beyond the remit of EIFCA.

Mr Stipetic questioned how the riddle size would be measured and also whether this would mean visitors to the area would be excluded, the DCEO advised that a permitting scheme would prohibit visitors fishing for whelk.

Dr Bolt advised that KEIFCA had been down a similar route, during the process they had been accused of discriminating against different groups of fishermen, so he suggested speaking to them to enquire how this matter was dealt with.

Mr Lake enquired about the pot level that would be set and expressed concern that if it was set too low it would cause additional pressure to be put on the crab and lobster fishery.

Mr Donnelly questioned whether allowing permits for all vessels currently fishing was a sufficient control. The DCEO advised there was a need for a mechanism to cap the level of fishing, which combined with pot limitation should be sufficient to control effort.

Mr Garnett advised that he did not think the 300 pot limit mentioned would be sufficient. He would like to see a 1000 pot limit allowing smaller vessels to work 500 pots per day on two consecutive 12-hour days, or larger vessels to work 1000 pots in a single 24-hour trip, and in both cases allow adequate soak-time between trips. He believed the effort had increased recently because stocks had increased to areas around the North Norfolk

Coast and the Wash. He felt the previous decline could have been due to the TBT chemical rather than overfishing. Mr Garnett then went on to question whether the MLS would apply to the whelk or the bar spacing, he felt bar spacing would be better.

There was then discussion regarding whether whelk could be measured by width rather than length, historically all literature relates to length whereas riddling will take account of the width.

**Members Resolved to:**

- **Note the contents of the paper**
- **Agree in principle to the implementation of management measures through a permitting scheme**
- **Agree that the urgent requirement for management of whelk fisheries warrants application of the emergency byelaw procedure to introduce immediate measures,**
- **Agree to establish an Emergency Byelaw Panel consisting of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Authority, Chair of the Regulation & Compliance sub-committee, the CEO and DCEO.**
- **Delegate authority to approve the introduction of management measures for whelk to the Emergency Byelaw Panel.**

**Proposed: Mr Spray**

**Seconded: Dr Bolt**

**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/17 Item 17: Revision of WFO licence tolls in line with inflation for the 2015-2016 financial year**

**Members Agreed to the inflation of WFO licence tolls in line with inflation for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.**

**Proposed: Mr Worrall**

**Seconded: Cllr Goldson**

**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/18 Item 18: Stakeholder community meeting report**

The CEO advised that during a recent community meeting in Boston a member of the industry had asked that his request for a WFO licence entitlement be reconsidered, despite there being a waiting list. On investigation this gentleman was 8<sup>th</sup> on the waiting list with others further up the list having been on it for a longer period. This coupled with the fact that there is a moratorium on issuing entitlements, it was recommended that this exceptional request could not be accommodated at this time. In order to test previous assumptions the CEO sought permission to review the moratorium on the issue WFO licenses.

**Members Agreed that at the current time it was not appropriate to exceptionally grant the entitlement requested. They also directed the CEO to review the moratorium on issuing WFO Entitlements to test previous factors and assumptions and to report back to the Authority.**

**Proposed: Mr Stipetic**

**Seconded: Mr Pinborough**

**All Agreed**

**EIFCA15/19 Item 19: Recording your Inshore Fishery Activity**

This presentation was left until after the conclusion of the meeting and those members of the public and Authority who wished to hear it were invited to remain at that time.

**EIFCA15/20 Item 20: Quarterly progress against Annual Plans**

This was a matter for information. Members Agreed to note the report.

**EIFCA15/21 Item 21: Marine Protection Quarterly Reports**

This was a matter for information. Members Agreed to note the report.

**EIFCA15/22 Item 22: Marine Environment Quarterly reports**

It was noted there was reference to the fact that areas set aside for the protection of *Sabellaria Spinulosa* reef may be increased. Mr Donnelly advised the core areas were based on information in 2010. This information was being updated using survey data since 2010, the initial indications were that some core areas had moved whilst others remained the same, this may mean there were implications in terms of the management of these areas but more discussion was required with NE and EIFCA.

Referring to MCZs, Dr Bolt advised that the consultation period for Tranche 2 was expected to go live by the end of the week.

**EIFCA15/23 Item 23: Update of HR Activity**

This was a matter for information. Members Agreed to note the report.

**EIFCA15/24 Item 24: Any Other Business**

**EIFCA/Seasearch East Diving Memorandum of Understanding:**

Following a successful diving expedition using an EIFCA vessel as a diving platform, the intention was to take this to the next level, to help improve the evidence base for the EIFCA region through film footage of what is beneath the surface. SeaSearch East already dive in the region voluntarily for recreational purposes and they had indicated that they were willing to share their findings with EIFCA. The CEO stressed that this was an entirely voluntary arrangement and did not constitute any element of contracted works. EIFCA would be solely responsible for the provision of vessel services on an opportunity basis and SeaSearch East would be solely responsible for diving operations. Members were asked to approve the use of an EIFCA vessel to support the services of the diving team.

As an emergency contingency some EIFCA staff would be trained to administer oxygen in the event that no other diver was available.

Dr Bolt enquired whether there would be any conflict with Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Mr Spray advised he had spoken to them to advise them that all diving operation would be conducted by volunteers under recreational codes of practice. DCEO would also speak with HSE to seek guidance to manage liabilities and responsibilities borne by the Authority.

**Members Agreed to note the intention to provide vessel support services to Seasearch East diving operations and Resolved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding.**

**Proposed: Mr Morgan**

**Seconded: Mr Donnelly**

**All Agreed**

There being no other business the meeting closed at 1446 hours.