



Authority Meeting 11th December 2025

Draft Minutes

Version & Date	Comments
Version 0.1 05/01/2026	First draft of Minutes prepared by F&AM and sent to the Senior Management Team (SMT) for comments.
Version 0.2 19/01/2026	Amended as per SMT's comment. Minutes shared with Members for comments.
Version 0.3 06/02/2026	F&AM applied corrections suggested by Members.

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**Authority Meeting
11th December 2025
Exeter Racecourse**

Present:

Chair: Prof. Mike Williams.

Vice Chair: Dr Pamela Buchan.

Councillors: Josh McCarty (Plymouth City Council), Jayne Stansfield (South Gloucestershire Council), Sara Wilson (Devon County Council).

MMO Appointees/ Statutory Members: Simon Toms (Environment Agency), Mike Spiller, David Morgan, Wayne Thomas, Charlie Ziemann, Alistair Dewhirst, Felicity Sylvester, Didi Alayli, Mark Day

Officers: Jessica Maunder (Devon County Council Finance Team), Simon Excell (Gloucestershire County Council).

Marine Management Organisation: Neil Smith (deputising for Rachel Irish)

D&S IFCA Officers: Mat Mander (Chief Officer – CO) joined remotely, Sarah Clark (Deputy Chief Officer – DCO), Olga Pepper (Finance & Administration Manager – F&AM), Neil Townsend (Principal Policy Officer – PPO)

Public: No members of the public present.

Welcome

The Chair formally welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. The Chair invited all to introduce themselves for the benefit of any new Members.

MMO's Neil Smith who attended the meeting deputising for Rachel Irish was reminded that he would not be allowed to vote in his capacity.

Action Items:

1. Apologies for Absence

F&AM Pepper stated that the following apologies had been received:

Cllr Frank Biederman, Cllr Fi Hance, Sarah Holmyard, Guy Baker, Jon Dornom, Meg Hayward – Smith, Cllr Annemieke Waite, Cllr Martin Horwood, Beverley Phillips, Dr Emma Bean, Cllr Louise Wainwright.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited all to bring forward any declarations of interest. None had been received prior to the meeting and none were declared in the meeting.

3. To consider and approve the draft minutes from the Authority Meeting held on 18th September 2025

The Members reviewed the minutes from the Authority meeting held on 18th of September 2025 page by page. Alistair Dewhurst pointed out an error. On page fifteen the word “my” was used instead of the word “by” – to be corrected by F&AM Pepper.

That the minutes (as amended) from the Authority Meeting held on 18th of September 2025 are a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Alistair Dewhurst

Seconded: Charlie Ziemann

In favour: 10

Against: 0

Abstain: 4

CO Mander supplied information following an action assigned as per page six of the minutes. During the Authority Meeting on 18th of September, Felicity Sylvester requested that information was provided on how the £10,000 received from the AIFCA had been utilised by the Authority. CO Mander explained that he was the appointed IFCA lead for Recreational Angling and had in his role participated in a number of different workstreams including participating in the Celtic Sea and Western Channel Demersal FMP working group, participating in one the Bass FMP working group, represented IFCA as a member of the Recreational Sea Fishing Forum and FISP pollack project.

There were no questions or comments.

4. Matters Requiring Urgent Attention

The Chair briefly consulted with CO Mander; there were no matters requiring urgent attention.

5. Questions from the Public

The Chair briefly consulted with CO Mander; there were no questions from the public.

6. D&S IFCA Funding Restructure

The Chair introduced this Agenda Item. Since becoming Chair, Prof. Mike Williams said that he has made it his priority to address issues surrounding the Authority’s funding. Since Defra became more engaged in the process in 2022, extensive correspondence between the Chair and Defra followed but no concrete answer has yet been received. Progress has now paused due to delays caused by the Local Elections, changes in Councillors on the Local Authorities, and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)’s review on how local government grants are to be delivered from 2026/27 onwards. The Chair explained that the MHCLG does not affect funding for IFCA’s but that he had been informed that related

submissions had been outlined adding to the delay but that he was unsure what the related submissions were. The Chair said that the current plan is to hold back on any actions until mid-January 2026 and then he will write to Defra to request another update. It was the Chair's hope that a response from Defra would be received in time to share with the Members during the next Authority meeting in March 2026. Depending on the outcome, the Chair said that he will consider writing another letter to the Secretary of State.

The Chair invited comments and questions.

Simon Excell was interested to find out what Terms and Conditions exist between the Authority and Defra in terms of time scale to provide a response. Simon Excell provided an example of Gloucestershire County Council which has got a duty to respond to any correspondence within specified timelines and an extended time of no response is not acceptable; and the Authority must keep the pressure on Defra.

The Chair reminded all that the Authority's last Annual Report made it clear that the Statutory Duties were not being met due to the lack of resource.

There were no further questions or comments.

7. To note Budget Monitoring 2025/26 – Month 6

Jessica Maunder introduced this Agenda Item. In December 2024, the Authority agreed to the use of General Reserves of £118,042 to balance the budget for 2025/26. The approved budget was prepared on the basis that the Authority would not receive any additional grant funding for the year.

At month six, there is currently a projected transfer to general reserve of £12,758, rather than the original budgeted transfer from general reserve £118,042. This is mainly due to receiving a one-off additional grant income of £130,000 from Defra.

Variances over £1,000 were listed as follows:

Rents and other landlord charges were underspent by £2,400 due to the rental charges for office lower than budgeted. Byelaw advertising budget of £6,000 has not been spent due to no new byelaws advertised this financial year. Enforcement budget was overspent by £3,500 due to the installation of REM (Remote Electronic Monitoring) system which was not budgeted for and the Succorfish data storage cost, which was meant to stop at the end of 2024/25, but continued for three months in 2025/26.

As of 31st March 2026, there was a projected balance of the General Reserves of £631,608.

Jessica Maunder invited questions and comments.

There were none.

8. To note the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2026/27

Jessica Maunder introduced this Agenda Item. The Members were invited to consider the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2025/26, including the financial risks to the Authority of no longer receiving additional grant funding from Defra. Also to be considered were the projected balances of the General Reserves and the increases in levy needed to maintain the General Reserves' level above the minimum 25% of expenditure, whilst ensuring the Authority remains operational through to the end of the 2029/30 financial year. There

was a recommended increase of 7% in the levy for year 2026/27 as outlined in the MTFP that the Authority noted at its meeting in December 2024.

Jessica Maunder invited questions and comments.

CO Mander noted that it was important to recognise that a substantial budget increase is required and the MTFP 2025/26 maintains current expenditure in line with inflation. The level of the operational budget translates to the fact that the Authority is still not meeting its Statutory Duties and that the Authority is still not filling 1.5 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) posts. It was CO Mander's hope that during the period referred to in the MTFP, there will have been progress towards restructuring of the D&S IFCA's funding formula. The MTFP can be revised as required, should Defra resolve the current funding issues. There is no such certainty at this time, therefore the worst-case scenario is being considered with a caveat that the MTFP can be reviewed as required. There has been no indication to suggest that the Defra review had been successful but delays can be expected. CO Mander anticipated that some level of clarity should be offered by Defra before the financial year 2029/30.

Cllr Wilson was interested to find out how the levy proportions had been agreed.

The Chair explained that the process was based on each of the funding Local Authority's length of coastline, as well as the number of rateable value band D properties in the relevant area.

Cllr Wilson wished to make the Members aware that the current restructuring, which some Councils are undergoing, may have an impact on the levels of funding for organisations like D&S IFCA.

CO Mander commented further on that topic stating that so far there had not been such indication, however it is hoped that this matter will be addressed as part of discussions between Defra and the funding Local Authorities and through that process any risks would be identified. CO Mander noted that a step change to the amount of funding that D&S IFCA receives is needed. D&S IFCA has the largest district, the biggest mobile fishing fleet but the lowest budget amongst the mainland IFCAs.

The Chair acknowledged the above risk as well as a threat of further delays in dealing with the D&S IFCA's funding issues.

Cllr McCarty agreed with CO Mander and took on board the points about the Local Government Review (LGR). Local Government is currently undergoing the biggest change in a long time which may mean further delays amending the Authority's funding formula. Cllr McCarty was interested to know how the Officers were responding to this uncertainty in the nearest future. In terms of the levy amounts, Plymouth City Council is a deprived community and to deliver services is a challenge due to a lack of resource. It was Cllr McCarty's belief that the UK depends on the fisheries as a food source and therefore it was important to make a clear statement to Defra setting out why the Members think it is essential for D&S IFCA to secure a better funding deal. Cllr McCarty added that there is more deprivation around the coast and within the fishing community compared to inland wealth.

The Chair reassured Cllr McCarty that the position of D&S IFCA, the size of its mobile fleet and the number of the Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) covered, as well as the fact that the Authority is unable to meet its statutory duties, have been communicated to Defra. Regarding the importance of the fishing community as a strategic industry, it was the Chair's understanding that this will be mentioned in the next AIFCA Inshore and Small-Scale Fisheries report. D&S IFCA's funding structure is a matter between the funding Local Authorities and Defra. The Chair said that it would be inappropriate for D&S IFCA to favour one Local Authority over another, but a list of the work being delivered to both coastlines had been supplied to Defra ensuring impartiality. Simon Excell seconded the fairness of the processes involved.

CO Mander reminded all that 55% of D&S IFCA's funding is received from Defra, compared to some other IFCAs, for which that figure is between 25% and 30%. D&S IFCA strives to seek funding from alternative

sources, through external funding like the Fisheries and Seafood Scheme (FaSS), European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), or the Fisheries Industry Science Partnership scheme (FISP). However, the project applications and management involved pose a challenge to the Officers who are having to manage the additional resourcing and where necessary employ a temporary officer, which is challenging due to the level of experience needed to fulfil a short-term post. The Officers continue to pursue potential additional funding opportunities through the Fishing and Coastal Community Fund and the Nature Recovery Fund.

Alistair Dewhirst wished for the Members to be aware that whatever the outcome of the Devon County's restructuring, any emerging government district will be burdened with great organisational debts (£180 million) which will make the situation tough for all involved. Value for money will be looked at but securing any funding is bound to be much more difficult which may cause D&S IFCA to become more reliant on Defra for funding. The Chair seconded this view.

Simon Excell stated that the Gloucestershire County Council is experiencing similar issues to those referred to by Alistair Dewhirst and it will be important to establish what is quoted in the Statute regarding D&S IFCA. Should Gloucestershire County Council cease to exist, Simon Excell questioned where D&S IFCA is intending to obtain the funding from. Simon Excell advised approaching AIFCA to alert the Association to this risk and ask how the funding will work in the future.

The Chair reassured all that the AIFCA is aware of the issue mentioned by Simon Excell although it is not certain what the eventual resolution will be. Other IFCA's have found themselves in a similar situation although it is too early in the process to be considering formal representation. The Chair will keep the Members aware of any development.

CO Mander mentioned that Southern IFCA has had an amendment to its Statutory Instrument (SI) to reflect a boundary change which involved discussions about the levels of contributions. Such process would possibly not be at the same scale to that required by the D&S IFCA, but it could be achieved, from a legal perspective.

Alistair Dewhirst wished to refer to Agenda Item 14 stating that he had met with Alistair Carmichel MP and Caroline Voaden after the fishing industry meeting in Brixham and was under the impression that Alistair Carmichael did not take on board the seriousness of the deficit in D&S IFCA's finances, outlining that D&S IFCA was doing a good job and possibly on the basis that all local organisations are currently struggling in terms of funding.

The Chair noted that following his and CO Mander's meeting with Caroline Voaden, it was hoped that the concerns were taken onboard by Caroline Voaden. Alistair Dewhirst remained dubious.

Cllr McCarty suggested that a meeting should be arranged between the Chair and the local Members of Parliament (MPs) as there are many newly appointed MPs in the District who are taking a proactive approach in terms of fisheries.

Cllr Wilson enquired if it would be possible to have a template letter which the Elected Members could use in communications with the MPs regarding D&S IFCA's funding issues. The Chair accepted this as an action.

The Chair offered to share with Cllr Wilson a copy of the letter previously sent relating to funding issues which may be of use when drafting any communications to the Ministers. It was the Chair's intention to send a further letter to Defra, set to be sent in the 3rd week of January to seek clarification on the next steps. CO Mander confirmed that a letter referring to D&S IFCA's funding structure issued by Gloucestershire County Council had been shared with the Elected Members with an option to use it as a template, although

the Local Authorities were encouraged to write their own letters. The Officers can re-distribute the letter on request. CO Mander noted that D&S IFCA cannot undertake direct lobbying itself.

There were no further questions or comments.

9. To approve the Budget for 2026/27

The Chair noted that the Officer Paper regarding this Agenda Item had been titled incorrectly within the header area of the document. It states "Authority Meeting September 2025" where it should have stated "Authority Meeting December 2025".

Jessica Maunder introduced this Agenda Item with the key points being:

- No further additional Defra funding is expected to be available to the Authority past the financial year 2025/26.
- It is recommended for the Members to approve a 7% levy increase for year 2026/27. Detailed budget adjustments were available to view in Appendix A of the Officer Paper.
- It is recommended for the Members to approve a transfer from General Reserves of £67,078 to support the Budget for 2026/27

Jessica Maunder invited questions and comments.

Alistair Dewhirst put forward three enquiries:

- Since the Research Budget is not being increased in line with the inflation, it can be deemed that in relative terms it is being decreased year on year which is a concern and he would like to know the reason.
- Why is the vehicle insurance budget not being increased since year on year a rise in policy cost can be expected?
- Why has there been no increase forecast regarding the bank interest on the General Reserves?

DCO Clark responded to the first question about the Research Budget. DCO Clark explained that the Officers have been able to deliver work by using the additional Defra funds for projects relating to, amongst other workstreams, the Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) and MPAs. DCO Clark reassured the Members that the Officers would very much welcome an increase in the Research Budget but due to the general lack of funding, reduced Officer numbers in the Environment team and lack of a research vessel, the capacity to utilise a higher budget has been lost. DCO Clark explained that the Officers strive to be as efficient as possible and to meet as many Statutory Duties as is achievable by working with the fishing industry and with other IFCA's to meet the research needs of D&S IFCA. More detailed research with fishing industry may require providing financial support to fishermen when allowing the Officers onboard of their vessels.

Alistair Dewhirst appreciated the use of the relevant grants but highlighted that this shows a wrong direction in which the Authority is going, because it demonstrates that it is possible to manage with less funding which in turn can pose an issue to other IFCA's. It was also Alistair Dewhirst's understanding that D&S IFCA is not managing financially which is shown through incomplete workstreams. Alistair Dewhirst did not wish to criticise the Officers but rather insist that the financial issues are communicated appropriately.

The Chair stressed that the Authority is not managing to meet its Statutory Duties.

CO Mander highlighted that data gathering is key for the Officers. Other IFCA's are better placed as they have their own research vessels. An Officer paper to be discussed in Agenda Item 13 (IVMS and REM), mentions the REM strategy which may in the future allow D&S IFCA to gather more data, supplementing any work in that field being delivered by D&S IFCA's Officers through cooperation with the local fishermen. The use of REM is expected to be transformative nationally, from the enforcement point of view but also for research purposes. It is time to consider how the use of REM can potentially benefit research in terms of the data gathered. CO Mander emphasised that D&S IFCA has a small research team and any planning must be done with that in mind. Consideration needs to be given to a question of how to utilise funds in a situation when an increase in the Research Budget was secured. An additional point made by CO Mander was that in the current situation, any increase in the Research Budget would need to be covered by taking the funds away from other budget lines.

CO Mander also mentioned the project on the Exe Estuary working with fishers on how to manage wild Pacific oysters settlements and that this project will provide good quality data and outputs that are transferable to other areas.

The Chair summarised the above by pointing out that the D&S IFCA is not meeting its Statutory Duties as the Officers must work with the budget available to them, which must be made clear to Defra.

Cllr McCarty wished to commend the Officers for their pragmatic approach. Cllr McCarty stated his concern that the environment research capability is decreasing but he added that the way the Officers were dealing with the Octopus influx, Exe Estuary matters and Lyme Bay Project shows that a new approach is emerging, based on cooperation with individuals who have a vast knowledge of the fisheries.

Felicity Sylvester wished to add to the previous comments made by DCO Clark. It is necessary to point out the negative that is the loss of the Research Budget. Due to budget cuts, there is no longer a D&S IFCA office situated on the North Coast which, in her view, has resulted in the loss of trust of the Northern Local funding Authorities in the service that they receive from the Authority, and who make large contributions to the D&S IFCA's budget.

The Chair reassured the Members that Defra is aware of the funding related negatives and of the work which is not being delivered. The letter, which Gloucestershire County Council's Elected Members sent to the Ministers, and which can be used as a template by other Local Authorities, made that clear. How much concern this caused within Defra remains unknown.

Mark Day agreed with the above, and reinstated the point made earlier about the importance of highlighting the partnership with the fishing industry. The lack of funding is unacceptable. Mark Day observed that research effort has stopped at the government level and is now being pushed back to the IFCA's to deliver. D&S IFCA's Officers have got an option of not delivering the work due to financial restraints but they are not choosing such an option. An adjustment of the Research Budget is important but the Members need to be realistic in terms of what can be achieved. Mark Day added that D&S IFCA needs to highlight that it is doing well with the limited resources and are engaging well despite of the budget limitations.

It was the Chair's opinion that it was important to seek new solutions, like REM, but this is not an acceptable alternative to better funding. D&S IFCA enjoys the reputation of being one of the innovative IFCA's but the price for that is the lack of increase in funding. The Chair recommended holding back in terms of any action before the next round of communications to Defra at which stage all the Local Authorities will be able to join in, although the Chair was open to suggestions of approaches.

Jessica Maunder responded to Alistair Dewhirst's question about the bank interest income which has been indicated to not increase in the next financial year, as per Officer Paper. The bank interest budget line will be reviewed depending on the level of funds in the General Reserves. It is likely that it will continue to reduce as the levies are received by D&S IFCA in instalments rather than upfront. So far, the budget is on target in terms of the bank interest. Should higher bank interest be received, an adjustment will be made.

Jessica Maunder also responded to Alistair Dewhirst's third enquiry about the lack of increase in the vehicle insurance budget line – this cost was calculated based on historical fees.

Simon Excel enquired about the fact the 2026/27 budget paper had been drafted on the basis that no additional Defra funding will be received. In a situation where additional funding is received after all, will the funds be transferred to the General Reserves or will they form part of the Revenue Budget? CO Mander responded by referring to point 2.3 of the Officer Paper. It is the Officers' intention to identify through the 2026/27 Annual Plan any additional projects which will support delivery of the three national workstreams. Should there be a clear regional benefit to a project, the Officers will reach out to the Members for the cost to be underwritten by the General Reserves. The additional funds from Defra have been historically received late in the financial year and have been accepted as income, therefore reducing the levy on the funding Local Authorities. Once the projects have been identified, any surplus would be paid over to General Reserves. This is the only way to use the funds. In terms of the work performed in relation to the additional funds received from Defra to date, as part of an audit conducted on FMPs work, the Officers managed to show successfully how they contributed, although D&S IFCA has been unable to hire any additional employees. The Senior Management Team (SMT) delivered most of the work, which took their time away from other areas. The Officers have developed a better strategy for the year 2026/27 reflected for examples in the contribution of over £20,000 to support the Invasive to Native Project. Defra funds would be earmarked to cover the cost of that project.

Jessica Maunder informed the Members that Peter Lappin, of Devon County Council Finance Team, would be retiring in January 2026. CO Mander wished to record thanks to Peter Lappin, who throughout the years had delivered an incredible level of support to the Authority together with Jessica Maunder and Amy Booth. The Chair echoed this.

There were no further questions and comments.

The Chair suggested that the Recommendations 1.1 to 1.4 as per the Officer Paper are taken en bloc for the purpose of voting. There were no objections to this suggestion.

That the members approve the Revenue Budget outlined in Table 1.

That the members approve the increase to the levy of 7.00% for 2026/27.

That the members approve the transfer from reserves of £67,078 to support the budget for 2026/27.

That the members approve the Fees and Charges set out section 5 of the report.

Proposed: Mark Day

Seconded: Alistair Dewhirst

In favour: 14

Against: 0

Abstain: 0

10. To consider an amendment to the Standing Orders and Appointments to Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee.

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. As per the current Standing Orders, the ability for any new Members of the Authority to join the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC) is restricted to the June AGM. It is the Officers' recommendation that the Standing Orders are amended to allow for any Member to join the B&PSC by being appointed at any full Authority meeting.

Any Member is welcome to join the B&PSC and CO Mander highlighted the importance of the work that the B&PSC delivers. An amendment to the Standing Orders as per the Officer Paper would mean that an earliest opportunity exists to appoint new Members to the B&PSC.

The Officers highlighted that the meeting was an opportunity to appoint the two new General Members - Mike Spiller and Sarah Holmyard, who indicated that they wished to join the B&PSC.

CO Mander invited questions and comments.

Cllr McCarty deemed the amendment logical.

That the Standing Orders are amended as set out in the Officers' Paper.

Proposed: Cllr McCarty Seconded: Pamela Buchan

In favour: 13

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

The Chair asked Mike Spiller if he wished to join the B&PSC. Mike Spiller agreed.

The Chair enquired whether Sarah Holmyard (not present in the meeting today) wished to join the B&PSC. DCO Clark indicated that yes, to the Officers' best knowledge. There would be no obligation to join, should Sarah Holmyard not want to.

That new General Members are appointed as Members of the B&PSC.

Proposed: Pamela Buchan Seconded: Cllr McCarty

In favour: 13

Against: 0

Abstain: 1

11. To consider a new policy regarding contact details for permit applications.

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. Each of the D&S IFCA's permit based byelaws requires a permit applicant to provide certain information for D&S IFCA to be able to issue a permit. This includes postal

address, among other relevant details. The B&PSC developed policies specifying the need for the applicants to provide either an email address or a mobile telephone number for the permit holder, and (where applicable) for any named representatives. It is the view of the Officers that supplying both a functioning email address and a phone number for the permit holder and any named representatives (where applicable) becomes a mandatory requirement.

CO Mander invited questions and comments.

A discussion followed during which the following mixed views associated with the Officers' recommendations were made by Members:

- It is expected that in a modern society applicants are able to provide an email address when making business related arrangements.
- The approach to the use of modern technology may vary between the recreational and commercial permit applicants.
- Efforts should be made to ascertain if there are any permit applicants without access to a phone.
- A decision should be made on how to process permit applications from these community members, who do not have an email address or a phone number and any policies should ensure inclusivity.
- Text within the application forms can be amended to add clarity and any applicant can contact the office at any time to receive advice regarding an application.
- In the modern world it is everyone's duty to keep up with any expected norms and standard.
- All commercial vessel owners need to be able to provide a mobile number in order to comply with landing obligations (a requirement by other organisations, not D&S IFCA).
- Communication by phone is often more successful and welcomed by fishers, compared to an email.
- A permit application will generally be processed quicker if the missing information can be obtained by phone.

Based on the points above, Pamela Buchan raised the issue of access diversity and wished to make an amendment to the original Recommendation. Suggestions from Pamela Buchan and other Members included adding text to the application forms informing the applicants what to do if no email address or phone number is available as well as consideration of special circumstances in which a permit would be issued even though these contact details could not be provided. After some discussion, no decision was made regarding the wording of the amendment. The Chair decided that further discussions should be conducted outside of the meeting and it was best to withdraw this Agenda Item and revisit it as required.

No recommendation was made and no vote took place.

12. To note the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee Report (December 2025)

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item by listing the main points of the Officers' Paper and invited questions and comments.

Felicity Sylvester enquired regarding the Category Three Permit Conditions related engagement with permit holders who listed Clovelly as their base port. Felicity Sylvester asked if other non-powered vessel permit holders who listed Salcombe and other relevant ports have been contacted?

PPO Townsend responded quoting page two of the Officer Paper. The Officers are currently working on the communications with the non-powered vessel owners, none of which listed Salcombe as their base port. Other vessel owners could be based in Sidmouth, Exe Estuary area and Minehead but mainly the key audience is based in Clovelly and the northern parts of the District, including a family operating a mud horse

as a form of apparatus to access commercial stake nets and who the Officers are keen to start a conversation with soon.

Felicity Sylvester asked if Officers will be consulting with all twelve operators of non-powered vessels. PPO Townsend said that this was not the original expectation of the Officers as not all have been considered to be involved in heritage fishing activities. To date the engagement has been limited to fishers known to participate in the coastal heritage herring fishery at Clovelly and that from four fishers contacted, three responses had been received. PPO Townsend said that it was possible for the engagement to be widened to all operators of non-powered vessels with Category One Netting Permit, and if this is what Members want, Officers will plan on that basis.

Cllr Wilson left at 14:45

The Members took a 10-minute comfort brake at 14:45

13. To note an update on IVMS and REM

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. Thirty-five IVMS Rewire devices have been installed following currently unresolved issues with Succorfish devices. The Officers are now able to monitor the vessels involved. The cost of the operation so far has been approximately £7,000. External funding which the Officers had applied for to cover that cost has not yet been confirmed. The Officers are pleased with the outcome of the process as effective remote monitoring is central to D&S IFCA's enforcement work, including the protection of MPAs and to other aspects of D&S IFCA's work.

CO Mander explained that D&S IFCA has been trialling the Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) since 2022 in cooperation with up to nine fishing vessels in total. Currently, four vessels have got REM onboard. Other organisations, including Kent and Essex IFCA, are also trialling REM using the same low-cost solution as D&S IFCA. CO Mander praised the quality of the data collected using REM. CO Mander updated on the communications from Defra regarding use of REM technology in conjunction with the draft updated Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw currently awaiting Defra's approval. During a phone call on the day of the meeting, Defra's officials apologised for the fact that D&S IFCA's Byelaw had not yet reach the Ministers' box for approval; but that it would hopefully be submitted for processing in January 2026. The new Mobile Fishing Permit Byelaw has the scope for the Authority to introduce permit conditions for REM in the future. The IVMS and REM strategy, as detailed in the Agenda Item 13 Annex A has been supplied to the Defra's REM team.

CO Mander invited questions and comments.

The Chair reported that, as per the request of the Members during the last Authority meeting, a letter has been sent to the Minister highlighting the ongoing issues with the Succorfish devices. The Chair had received a response, as per the Officer Paper.

Pamela Buchan enquired about the access to the relevant data directly via the UK VMS hub, since the Marine Management Organisation's (MMO) roll out. CO Mander advised that the Officers have access to data through the UK VMS Hub, but at this stage integrating Rewire devices to hub had not been achieved. Additionally, Officers can access real time data through the Rewire hub. The data are required to go through the UK VMS hub, but the issues are still being finalised between D&S IFCA and the MMO and the Officers are currently waiting for the MMO's decision. MMO has not yet agreed that the Rewire devices can transmit the data through the UK VMS Hub, although D&S IFCA's Officers provided a response to the issues raised by the MMO in September this year.

Mark Day noted the low price of the Rewire devices allowing some users to purchase two in case one becomes non-functioning. The ease of installation has also been mentioned as a positive.

There were no further questions or comments.

14. To note an update on the Octopus fishery and its impact.

DCO Clark introduced this Agenda Item. In the Officer Paper, a brief update on the issue of the recent Octopus influx was provided for the Members.

DCO Clark invited question and comments.

Felicity Sylvester wished to obtain more information about the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund, for instance what sort of categories there are and when the information will be available on any upcoming projects. Felicity Sylvester found the current lack of action disappointing.

Mark Day expected that there would be no grant funds available in 2025 from the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund as there is still no guidance available in terms of who can apply and what the application forms will involve. Any funds are bound to be released gradually rather than as a one-off payment. The recent experience with the FaSS funding application process was disappointing as the application window only opened for a period of six weeks not allowing for many applications to be processed.

CO Mander recommended a webinar, the last one in the series talking about the Fishing and Coastal Growth Fund which was to take place on 16th of December 2025. CO Mander offered to share details with the Members.

The Chair reported an article in the Fishing News which downplayed the significance of the loss in the crab and lobster population suggesting that it had been balanced by the profit gained from the Octopus catch. It was the Chair's understanding that the Octopus issue is gaining momentum with Defra, however.

DCO Clark stated that a further update on the matter would be available for the next B&PSC meeting in February 2026. DCO Clark also noted as action to find out from the MMO what next steps are planned specifically, as that part of the text used in the Officer Paper was a direct quote from the MMO.

A discussion followed regarding the possible timeline of the recovery of the lobster and crab population concluding in an agreement that it would take a long time for the stock to recover and that the issue is a real concern.

There were no further questions.

Agenda Items for Information

15. AIFCA Officers' Report

The Chair encouraged the Members to read the report.

16. Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 19th March 2026

The Chair concluded the formal meeting.

The Chair expressed thanks to Vice Chair Dr Pamela Buchan, Chair of the B&PSC Dr Emma Bean and the D&S IFCA's Officers for their support in this challenging year.

The Chair thanked the Members for their work and wished everyone all the best for the festive break and the New Year 2026.

Members received training provided by CO Mander regarding the D&S IFCA's Governance, Policies and Procedures.

End.

DRAFT