Authority Meeting

Minutes
AGM
18th June 2026

Version & Date	Comments
Version 0.1 and Version 0.2	1st set of draft minutes from, prepared by F&AM Pepper for internal review 09/07/2026. Applied notes and comments from Officers and distributed to the Members for a review 17/07/2026.
Version 0.3	Feedback on accuracy of draft minutes received by Kate Sugar, Mike Williams, James Stewart, and Didi Alayli. Comments assessed, with some changes applied on 07/08/26. Draft minutes (0.3) published on D&S IFCA website (12th August 2026)
Version 1.0	Applied changes as per the Members' comments during the Authority Meeting on 17th September 2026 including spelling, punctuation and an incorrect word correction. Minutes published as final on the Authority's website.

Contents

Annual General Meeting
18th June 2026
Exeter Racecourse

Present:

Chair: Prof. Mike Williams
Vice Chair: Dr Pamela Buchan
Councillors: Steve Ashton (Somerset Council), Fi Hance (Bristol City Council), Louise Wainwright (Devon County Council), Jayne Stansfield (South Gloucestershire Council)
MMO Appointees/ Statutory Members: Alistair Dewhirst, Charlie Ziemann, Dr Emma Bean, Andy Bell, Mike Spiller, David Morgan, Simon Toms (Environment Agency), Kate Sugar (Natural England), Felicity Sylvester, Wayne Thomas, Didi Alayli
MMO Representatives: Rachel Irish
Officers: Simon Excell (Gloucestershire County Council), Chloe Nunn (Devon County Council)
D&S IFCA Officers: Sarah Clark (Deputy Chief Officer – DCO), Mat Mander (Chief Officer – CO), Olga Pepper (Finance & Administration Manager – F&AM), Neil Townsend (Principal Policy Officer – PPO), Dr James Stewart (Senior Environment Officer)
Public: Two members of the public present

Welcome

The Chair formally welcomed all to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

Action Items:

1. Election of the Chair

The current Chair, Prof. Mike Williams handed over this agenda item to CO Mander.
CO Mander invited the present Members to put forward their nominations for the Chair of the Authority. Alistair Dewhirst wished to nominate Mike Williams. There were no other nominations.

That Prof. Mike Williams is elected as the Chair of the Authority

Proposed: Alistair Dewhirst Seconded: Rachel Irish

In favour: 17
Against: 0
Abstain: 1

CO Mander thanked Mike Williams for continuing as the Chair of the Authority.

2 To approve D&S IFCA's Standing Orders

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item by explaining that it was unusual to take the approval of the Standing Orders as the second Agenda Item during an AGM. The reason for this order of Agenda Items was to acknowledge the changes agreed during the Authority meeting in June 2022. The Officers' paper set out the recommended changes, to reflect that the Authority previously agreed to have one Vice-Chair and not two Vice-Chairs.

The were no questions or comments.

That the Standing Orders are approved with amendments to points 4.1 and 4.2

Proposed: David Morgan Seconded: Alistair Dewhirst

In favour: 18
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

3 Election of the Vice Chair

The Chair invited the present members to put forward their nominations for the Vice Chair of the Authority. Alistair Dewhirst wished to nominate Dr Pamela Buchan. There were no other nominations.

That Dr Pamela Buchan is elected as the Vice Chair of the Authority

Proposed: Alistair Dewhirst Seconded: Cllr Wainwright

In favour: 17
Against: 0
Abstain: 1

The Chair thanked Pamela Buchan for her continuing support. The Chair also thanked Dr Emma Bean for her continued support to the Authority during the year as Chair of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee.

4 Apologies for absence

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

Jon Dornom, Cllr Wilson, Cllr Bowkett, Jessica Maunder, Sarah Holmyard, Guy Baker, Cllr McCarty.

5 Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited all Members to bring forward any declarations of interest and asked CO Mander if any requests for dispensations had been received prior to today's meeting. CO Mander advised that two dispensations had been requested by two MMO Appointees - Charlie Ziemann and David Morgan, and both resulted in a dispensation issued for their participation in the discussions in reference to Agenda Item 15. CO Mander advised the Members in question, that should a motion be developed for a vote, they would not be able to vote.

Cllr Wainwright wished to find out more about the process of granting such dispensations and how they are communicated with other Members, especially in the case of pecuniary interest. CO Mander explained that, as per the Standing Orders, any Member who wishes to request a dispensation, must contact the Chief Officers, who, in a Clerk's capacity, will consider if a dispensation can be granted. The Clerk then may issue a written permission to participate in discussions and to vote, or to participate in the discussions but not to vote. Any such correspondence would take place prior to a meeting and it will then be noted in the meeting's minutes. The record of any relevant correspondence is retained. The Chair noted that it would be helpful if there was a list of categories in which the interest needs to be declared. Cllr Wainwright agreed but highlighted that it would be useful to know when exactly all the Members are made aware of any declarations and dispensations granted to other Members. CO Mander advised that Members are informed verbally at the beginning of each Authority meeting and any dispensations are recorded in the minutes during each meeting.

The Chair wished to remind all Members to declare any standing interest including that regarding any connected persons. The Chair advised that should the Members have any questions, they should speak to

CO Mander or contact the Chair. CO Mander noted that this matter was discussed by the Association of IFCAs (AIFCA) and that the advice which followed was that all the IFCA's Members should provide information regarding any relevant interests and are legally required to disclose any pecuniary interests. Should any Member realise at any point in a meeting that that they may have a declarable interest, they must immediately make the Clerk aware. CO Mander will send guidance to all Members.

There were no further questions.

6 To consider and approve the draft minutes of the Authority meeting held on 19th March 2026

The draft minutes from 19th March 2026 were examined page by page. No amendments were suggested.

That the minutes from the Authority Meeting held on 19th March 2026 are a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Pamela Buchan Seconded: Alistair Dewhirst

In favour: 13
Against: 0
Abstain: 5

7 Matters Requiring Urgent Attention

The Chair briefly consulted with CO Mander, who did not have any matters requiring urgent attention to report. Cllr Wainwright wished to bring a matter forward; regarding an email received from the Seahorse Trust. The Chair suggested for the letter to be considered during Agenda Item 14.

8 Members of the Public – questions or comments for the meeting

The Chair briefly consulted with CO Mander. There were no questions or comments from the members of the public.

9 To note the update on D&S IFCA Funding

The Chair introduced this Agenda Item by expressing a hope that the new Minister of State at Defra, Stephen Morgan would continue the positive work initiated by his predecessor. Agenda Item 9 as well as the Annex accompanying it show much wider reorganisation of Local Authorities, leading to changes to these Authorities' levy contributions to organisations like the IFCAs. Devon and Severn IFCA stands out in terms of funding due to most of its funds being received via Defra funding. The Chair hoped for a further update from Defra officials to be given soon. The Chair was unsure how soon an update may be expected and CO Mander said that delays are to be anticipated. The Chair offered that he would write to the new Minister a letter of congratulations and to expresses hope that the work towards a new funding structure delivered by their predecessor as well as any further actions previously considered would be approved. Cllr Hance suggested to hold back with this correspondence for a week or two until things have settled under the new Minister. With no formal proposal required and no objections, the Chair accepted an action to write the letter as discussed by Members.

Simon Excell wished to point our two key issues in terms of funding. The first one was that D&S IFCA had been waiting for its funding structure to be addressed for a decade. Simon Excell was interested to see what the new Minister would announce and expressed hope that it would follow on from the previous one in reference to levies distribution and the New Burdens Funding, especially the latter which is a cause of uncertainties for the Gloucestershire County Council. Simon Excell expressed support for the Agenda Item 9 Annex and pointed out possible complications for the Gloucestershire County Council, should it, as a result of the re organisation, become divided into two parts - East and West. Only West Gloucestershire has any coastline and would therefore potentially become responsible for contributions to the D&S IFCA's funding. Simon Excell was interested to find out if this matter would be included on the Authority's future meetings' agendas.

The Chair responded to reassure Simon Excell that the topic of funding is a standing Agenda item.

Cllr Wainwright suggested inviting the new Minister to a fisheries themed day out in order to build a good relationship. The Chair noted that it was regrettable, how few Defra officials had visited the D&S IFCA District so far. The Chair accepted an action to issue an invitation to relevant Defra officials to visit the Devon and Severn IFCA's District.

10 To approve the Terms of Reference for the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee

The Chair introduced this agenda item by highlighting the functions of the B&PSC set out in the ToR. The Chair reminded the Members that the B&PSC, currently chaired by Dr Emma Bean, has delegated powers for decision making. The Chair also highlighted that the B&PSC may delegate the drafting of legislation to the Byelaw and Technical Working Group; however, this working group are not decision makers.

CO Mander reminded all that the B&PSC's Terms of Reference (ToR) are reviewed each year. This year, no changes were recommended by the Officers. CO Mander invited questions and comments.

Pamela Buchan identified that the ToR which currently read "Chair and Vice Chairs" should refer now to "Chair and Vice Chair".

David Morgan invited Members to discuss the number of Members currently required for the B&PSC to be quorate, which is six. David Morgan was not certain if this number is sufficient and wished to point out that six Members may not be viewed as an adequate mixture of Members, with different background interests to decide a potentially important course of action.

CO Mander addressed this matter by explaining that the quorum was at one time eight Members, however some past meetings were not well attended. To avoid a meeting not being quorate, and therefore a delay in work that requires decision making, the Members agreed for the quorum to be reduced from eight to six.

CO Mander added that currently the B&PSC has twenty-one members and the meetings tend to be well attended. David Morgan highlighted that he did not wish to form a recommendation, only to bring this matter to the attention of Members.

PPO Townsend said a non-quorate meeting could delay decision making and Officer work for potentially three months. The Chair agreed that this matter was worth discussing. However, none of the Members wished to suggest an alternative number for the quorum. Cllr Stansfield said that in her view there did not seem to be an issue to resolve, as although the quorum is set at six, more Members do attend the meetings. Other Members agreed.

Didi Alayli asked questions regarding the Membership section of the ToR, the role of Members and how the balance of interests of those Members on the B&PSC is managed.

In response to Didi Alayli, the Chair said that the B&PSC welcomes all IFCA Members with different skills and backgrounds to inform its work. The Chair clarified that each Member does not represent a sector and each must take a balanced view based on information and evidence considered at the meetings.

Another point made by Didi Alayli was to include in the ToR wording that the decision making of the Sub-Committee would be "based on scientific data". The Chair explained that the Authority operates according to using best available information and evidence. DCO Clark seconded this. Didi Alayli stressed the significance of the word "scientific" to be used. DCO Clark highlighted that various evidence is used, not solely scientific.

Regarding the role of Members, Felicity Syvester asked for some clarification on what is meant by "*provide a channel of communication between the B&PSC and their host organisations*". CO Mander explained that this relates more to the channel of communication between D&S IFCA and its Statutory Members appointed by Natural England and the Environment Agency. CO Mander added that the MMO also have representation from an Officer attending Authority and B&PSC meetings.

Pamela Buchan added that for the Statutory Members, it is the organisation that is a Member, not the individual representing it.

Didi Alayli and Cllr Wainwright had the view that the ToR should include more information surrounding basing decisions on best available evidence. Didi Alayli said that in her view the Byelaw Making Principles should be amended with reference to Principle (2) that was set out in the ToR in an Annex.

- To gather information and evidence regarding potential impacts on stakeholders by the implementation of management, for the purposes of the Impact Assessment;

PPO Townsend informed Members that the principles now transcribed as an Annex in the B&PSC ToR were a fairly new addition to the ToR and the principles transcribed were agreed by the B&PSC as part of a specific agenda item. Although now present in the ToR (as an Annex) this was only so they had a suitable platform where they could be viewed by Authority Members and a wider audience. PPO Townsend suggested that if changes to agreed principles were being considered by the Authority, it may be more appropriate to have a future agenda item for that specific discussion on those changes, separate to a review of the B&PSC ToR.

Members continued to debate word changes to principle (2) in the Annex to the ToR. Didi Alayli suggested that the role of Members could be expanded to include scrutinising the work of D&S IFCA Officers. Pamela Buchan said that some of these points could be added to the functions section of the ToR.

The Chair said that in his view, the functions section of the ToR already implies that best available information is used and the functions of the B&PSC already include "reviewing" which does therefore involve examination of Officer work.

CO Mander added that it is implicit that Officers and the B&PSC will use best available evidence and this is set out in Defra's Byelaw Making Guidance.

That the Terms of Reference for the B&PSC, as set out in this Officers' paper, are agreed by the Authority.

Proposed: Cllr Stansfield Seconded: Cllr Hance

The Chair asked the Members if anyone would like to suggest an amendment to the above proposal.

Didi Alayli wished to suggest an amendment to add the note about the role of Members as well as the note about making decisions based on the best available evidence to be inserted under the role of the Members. Pamela Buchan suggested adding this text to the functions section.

It was Cllr Stansfield's and Cllr Hance's view the document already encompasses Didi Alayli's suggestions.

Pamela Buchan suggested that the amendment should include the wording to "gather best evidence, including a potential impact on stakeholders".

Didi Alayli proposed an addition to Annex 1, Point Two, "to gather information and best available evidence including potential impact on stakeholders". Cllr Wainwright expressed the view that the wording should include biodiversity.

Based on the Members' discussions, CO Mander read out the suggested form of words which could be used in the amendment.

Proposed amendment
That the Terms of Reference of the B&PSC as set out in the Officers' paper are agreed subject to amendment to Point 2 of Annex1 to read: ' to gather information and best available evidence including potential impacts on stakeholders by the implementation of management, for the purposes of the Impact Assessment'.

Proposed: Didi Alayli Seconded: Alistair Dewhirst.

In favour: 14
Against: 2
Abstain 2

With the amendment to the motion agreed, CO Mander reminded the Members that a further amendment may be put forward. Should there be no further amendment, the Members would be invited to vote. No further amendments were suggested.

Substantive motion

That the Terms of Reference of the B&PSC as set out in the Officers' paper are agreed subject to amendment to Point 2 of Annex1 to read: ' to gather information and best available evidence including potential impacts on stakeholders by the implementation of management, for the purposes of the Impact Assessment'.

Proposed: Didi Alayli Seconded: Alistair Dewhirst

In favour: 17
Against: 1
Abstain: 0

11 To make appointments to the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item by summarising the Officers' paper and invited the Members to look at the content of page two where the current Members of B&PSC are listed, to ensure that the correct interest is listed beside their name. Should any correction be required, the Members are invited to get in touch with the Officers. The Officers will contact those Members who were not present today to confirm their area of interest. Pamela Buchan was interested to find out if there was a more detailed way to express interest. CO Mander explained that this is up to the MMO, who deals with the recruitment processes although the Members can contact the Officers if they would like to add any details to their list of interest. The Chair highlighted that the interest listed is viewed by the MMO as the area of expertise that this potential Member will bring to the table. Cllr Wainwright pointed out that as a Local Authority representative, no experience is listed at all.

A member of the public joined the meeting at 13:44

As per the Officers' paper, the Chair asked Andy Bell if he wished to join the B&PSC. Andy Bell agreed. The Chair asked if any other Members would like to join the B&PSC. No other Members came forward.

There were no other questions or comments.

That:

a) ***All the existing Members of the B&PSC stand for a further twelve months and should therefore be re-appointed en bloc.***
b) ***Andrew Bell is appointed to the B&PSC***

Proposed: Pamela Buchan Seconded: Wayne Thomas

In favour: 17
Against: 0
Abstain: 1

12 To approve D&S IFCA's Financial Probity and Financial and Administrative Regulations

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. Each year as part of the AGM's agenda the appointed Treasurer and Chief Officer review the Financial Probity and Financial and Administrative Regulations. This has been completed.

CO Mander invited questions and comments. There were none.

That the Financial Probity and Financial Administrative Regulations are approved with no amendments.

Proposed: David Morgan Seconded: Charlie Ziemann

In favour: 18
Against: 0
Abstain 0

The Members took a ten-minute comfort break and reconvened at 14:00

13 To approve the Outturn Statement of Accounts Report for 2025/26

In the absence of the DCC Finance Officer Jessica Maunder, CO Mander introduced the Agenda Item.

The Members were presented with a final report on the Authority's accounts for the financial year 2025/26. The final outturn position for the Authority resulted in a net transfer from general reserves of £6,571, rather than the originally budgeted £118,042 for 2025/26. This had been possible due to a one-off additional grant funding of £132,256 received from Defra. It was anticipated that not all IFCAs would receive all the SR Defra funding in the current financial year. CO Mander stressed that without the additional Defra funding, D&S IFCA would have a significant budget deficit. Members had previously agreed through the approval of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, that the Authority's base budget should be funded from the levies from the Local Authorities. In terms of the Reserves balance, which on 31st March 2026 was £755,017, CO Mander reminded the Members that although this amount may seem high, it would not take long for these funds to diminish, should they be required to be used to support majority of the operational budget.

The Members could see any budget variances with notes on the Officers' paper, including a decrease in the income from sales of the Waddeton Fishery licences. CO Mander explained that this was due to a confirmation from the Duchy of Cornwall that Pacific Oysters will not be allowed to be cultivated in that area which means that the Authority's licence and lease agreements would not be renewed. CO Mander added that Senior Environment Officer James Stewart is currently in the process of making arrangements with the Duchy regarding a handover of the area currently covered by the lease to the Duchy. CO Mander wished to note that the Duchy had been helpful during this transition however it must be mentioned that there is potentially a lot of work involved in clearing out the area to get it ready for the handover. CO Mander went on to explain that D&S IFCA supports the Pacific Oyster fishery in the Waddeton area of the Dart Estuary but is unable to continue without the support of the Duchy.

CO Mander invited questions and comments.

Cllr Hance enquired about a potential cost to the Authority in terms of returning of the Waddeton area to the Duchy. CO Mander confirmed that some of the cost would likely need to be covered by the Authority but the Duchy of Cornwall was also looking to financially support any necessary activity on the site.

Pamela Buchan asked about the underspend in the environment research budget due to the activities not undertaken as per the Officers' paper. CO Mander explained the reasons behind this underspend. The Officers were looking to secure a FaSS funding in addition to the research budget for specific projects, like that concerning Pacific Oysters (Invasive to Native), which had not materialised resulting in the project not being undertaken and the budget not spent.

Simon Excell wished to highlight the importance of the additional Defra funding and was curious to find out the reasons of why some other IFCAs ceased to receive this funding. CO Mander explained that the Defra's initial position was that the IFCA's should use these funds toward the work relating to the Fisheries Management Plans. Defra had made a decision to remove this part of the funding which is now being challenged by the Association of IFCAs (AIFCA). CO Mander reminded the Members that it was not prudent to rely on the additional Defra money to support the base operational budget.

Alistair Dewhirst asked for more details about the work related to the Razor Clam Fishery which the Officers' paper listed as not undertaken in the year 2025/26. It was Alistair Dewhirst's understanding that the project in question was the Invasive to Native, rather than the Razor Clam fishery which should be clarified and minuted , in case the Officers' paper contains as error.

Alistair Dewhirst was also interested to find out how the Razor Clam Fishery work relates to Agenda Item 10, in terms of balancing the needs of various users. CO Mander advised that Agenda Item 14 would be more suitable for this discussion.

CO Mander also clarified that 2025/26 Annual Plan did not include the Razor Clam fishery related work, but added that the 2026/27 Annual Plan, agreed by the Members, did include a plan to monitor the fishery, should it be open.

Alistair Dewhirst wished for more clarity in the Annual Plan and the relevant budget setting. CO Mander explained that the Authority's work is established often in response to specific events, which could mean that certain planned activities do not take place although they were planned for initially. Alistair Dewhirst asked if, in terms of planning expenditure, the same principle would be applied to a cause which affects a very small number of stakeholders, as to a cause which potentially impacts on a larger number of stakeholders. CO Mander, in response, outlined the relevant decision making processes involving annual planning and consultation, all reflecting a direction from the Authority Members

Alistair Dewhirst reflected that the Pacific Oysters related project is not impacting on other users of sea resources, where the Razor Clams fishery will have such impact.

There were no further questions or comments.

That Members:

1) ***Approve the outturn report for 2025/26***
2) ***Acknowledge Accounting Statement Appendix A***

Proposed: David Morgan Seconded: Emma Bean

In favour: 18
Against: 0
Abstain 0

14 To consider and approve the Monitoring and Control Plan for the Razor Dredge Fishery

The Chair informed Members that before a wider discussion he had two points to make. Before doing so, Felicity Sylvester said that the Authority papers did not include an update on the work of the B&PSC at the last meeting, which may make the discussion difficult for some not present at the last B&PSC meeting. CO Mander explained that typically the Authority does receive a B&PSC report at each meeting, but on this occasion, there had not been time to prepare one. Cllr Wainwright said that in the absence of a B&PSC Report and draft minutes from the B&PSC meeting from 4th June 2026 it was potentially appropriate to defer this agenda item. PPO Townsend said that he had not had time to prepare the B&PSC Report or the draft B&PSC minutes before the Authority Papers were circulated and published as he had been on annual leave.

The Chair began his opening statement once again and highlighted the following:

1. Due to a range of factors to be explained, he will be proposing that no decision is taken at this Authority meeting (18th June 2026) regarding the adequacy or inadequacy of the presented Monitoring and Control Plan.
2. That the B&PSC had agreed to open the razor clam fishery, subject to the approval of a Monitoring and Control Plan; therefore, a discussion on the merits of opening or not opening the fishery would not be appropriate. The Chair expanded further and highlighted Administrative Law and the need to avoid an *ultra vires* situation and the risks of legal challenge to the Authority.

The Chair clarified that D&S IFCA is not an extension of Natural England and is a Statutory organisation that has to seek to balance both fisheries and conservation. In doing so, Members that are the decision makers have their own roles and responsibilities. Regarding MMO appointed Members the Chair read out an extract from the Terms and Conditions for appointments:

"Appointees to IFCAs are legally required to take into account all the local fishing and marine conservation interests in the waters of the IFCA district, in a balanced way, taking full account of all the economic, social and environmental needs of that district. Appointees should recognise that they are part of a committee and should not regard themselves as representing solely one particular interest within the IFCA district".

The Chair then invited CO Mander to present the agenda item.

CO Mander began by highlighting an error in the Officers' paper and confirmed that the vote taken at the B&PSC meeting had been eight in favour, four against, and three abstentions, not one abstention as set out in the Officers' paper. CO Mander explained that the Officers' paper had the aim to explain what a Monitoring and Control Plan (M&CP) is, how they are used, and why they are used with specific reference to Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). CO Mander highlighted D&S IFCA's use of M&CPs in MPAs situated at Lundy Island and in Torbay. CO Mander explained that although the razor clam dredge fishery would not be permitted within an MPA, the same principles had been applied to its development to date. CO Mander said that since the publication of the Officers' papers for the Authority meeting, feedback had been received by Officers from Natural England on 17th June about the M&CP. CO Mander said that there had not been time for Officers to fully consider the information and suggestions (Natural England's Position) but that it was clear that it will have a bearing on how Officers proceed with developing the M&CP which could be re-presented to the B&PSC at a future date.

Kate Sugar from Natural England was thanked by the Chair for providing the written information to Officers and was requested to explain to Members what it contained.

Natural England Advice

Kate Sugar explained that the letter, which she was happy to send to the Officers (and Members) after the meeting, was divided into sections beginning with clarification regarding Natural England's Statutory Position. Members were informed that the proposed razor clam dredge fishery would not be within a designated MPA, and therefore Natural England's statutory duties regarding MPA protection would not be triggered. Kate Sugar emphasised that Natural England is able to provide wider advice and in this case the information provided to D&S IFCA includes sections relating to:

- Sustainable Management of sea fisheries resources (including Biological constraints)
- Wider Seas Consideration: Good Environmental Status (including habitat impacts)
- Management Considerations
- Recommendations

Kate Sugar highlighted that Natural England welcome the IFCA's proposal to put in place a robust M&CP for adaptive management in combination with considering the factors highlighted in the position statement. Kate Sugar highlighted the recommendation from Natural England that if the fishery is progressed, it is done under a clearly defined, precautionary management framework with monitoring, adaptive management, and safeguards to ensure alignment with wider environmental objectives. Robust adaptive management provides the opportunity to effectively monitor and respond to potential impacts associated with this new fishery.

Kate Sugar was thanked by Members and Officers. CO Mander said that Officers had recognised that the chart used in the formal consultation was potentially misleading giving the impression that the activity would take place in a much larger area that it will in practice. CO Mander explained that the M&CP is about mitigating risks and that clearly defining access areas must be part of the M&CP (and regulation), which could not be determined with complete accuracy at this Authority meeting. CO Mander had the view that defining areas and making others aware of the areas will provide additional confidence to Members and stakeholders about the robustness of the management approach, including the monitoring.

CO Mander said that although Members may choose to defer a decision as recommended by the Chair, and also his preferred course of action, a discussion on the presented M&CP would still be of value and that Officers can take feedback on board and try to answer any questions from Members.

Cllr Wainwright enquired if Officers could consider other sources of information from other organisations. The Chair said that Officers could, providing the information relates to the M&CP. From a process perspective, CO Mander clarified that additional information presented by Members was acceptable and could be of value to inform the ongoing work; however, D&S IFCA will not be formally consulting on a M&CP, and the formal consultation on opening the fishery had already been undertaken with the findings documented and considered by the B&PSC.

Didi Alayli said that she would support a deferral of any decision as in her view the process to date had been rushed, with Members not happy about the speed of decision making. Didi Alayli commented that the Officers' paper includes the words "agreed razor clam fishery" which should not be present as it is not agreed because it is subject to the approval of the M&CP. The Chair said that it was agreed with a vote, but also that it is a qualified agreement. The Chair suggested that discussion be brought back to the adequacy or inadequacy of the M&CP.

Didi Alayli said that in her view the M&CP looked rushed, was full of ambiguities and had too many gaps. Didi Alayli informed Members and Officers that she had acquired additional information from the organisations that had objected to the opening of the fishery in the formal consultation (that ended on 7th May 2026). In a meeting with these stakeholders, Didi Alayli highlighted that feedback relating to the M&CP had not been positive, and there is a lot of residual uncertainties with 11 points in all.

Didi Alayli said that the location (for potential access) was not yet determined, and all that is known is that it is likely to be in shallow sandy areas. The lack of certainty about the location of the activity is a significant concern to the people that she had spoken to and that it prompted the British Spearfishing Association to produce an evidence pack, where they gathered information through seabed photography along the shallow coast in the area of the proposed fishery. The evidence pack, including photographs of species, included seahorses that must be protected. The Research from Plymouth University showed 76 species in the Lyme Bay reserve. Didi Alayli said that the evidence provided to her clearly shows that sandy areas are not barren.

Didi Alayli said that another concern related to insufficient baseline data which is essential for establishing trigger points. Didi Alayli felt that a baseline was required to show impacts. Other points raised by Didi Alayli included:

- Consideration needed regarding a closed season, which Didi Alayli said stakeholders thought was essential.
- The suggestion that dredging will be in deeper water to reduce volumes of undersize razor clams with previous trials showing large percentages of undersize (34%)
- A lack of confidence in REM as cameras on deck and placement of cameras cannot identify bycatch or be used to identify small animals or variations in substrate types.
- Concern about the redefinition of the precautionary principle

PPO Townsend clarified that D&S IFCA's explanation of the precautionary principle had been developed and agreed in 2017, published on the website, and had not changed since November 2017.

Didi Alayli ended her comments by highlighting that a full baseline Impact Assessment is needed which could cost about £100K.

Pamela Buchan raised several points – the first relating to trigger points discussed in the M&CP. Pamela Buchan asked how a trigger point can be set to assess the damage caused by the fishery, if there is not baseline present and if there isn't a stock assessment how could the exploitation be assessed as sustainable. Pamela Buchan asked that more is included in the M&CP regarding habitat disturbance.

Pamela Buchan enquired how D&S IFCA would proceed if the baseline work involved was too expensive for the Authority to fund. Andy Bell commented that gaining good baseline data is essential, and that there was a need to understand the locations were the fishery would take place. He shared concern about the resources needed. Pamela Buchan also asked what will happen next in terms of procedure as to whether the decision would be deferred back to the B&PSC. The Chair explained that the consideration of an amended M&CP would be deferred to the B&PSC.

In response to Didi Alayli, DCO Clark asked if any of the information that Didi Alayli had could be forwarded to Officers so that it can be reviewed and be of benefit, depending on what it contained. Regarding photographs of multiple species DCO Clark hoped that these would be supported with times and positional data in latitudes and longitudes as this would be the best available evidence on where the species were found. Regarding the setting of a baseline, DCO Clark explained that setting a baseline would be difficult due to the areas being fished by other fisheries which would result in a shifting baseline, and finding a control area would be very problematic, but she would investigate these matters.

Regarding potential impact on seahorses, DCO Clark highlighted that seahorses are found in Torbay and the Exe Estuary and along the coast of South Devon in varying depths and in different habitats, and that other fishing activity, including potting and netting, could have the potential to unintentionally impact seahorses through entanglement.

DCO Clark said that although the fishery is not currently open and the M&CP was yet to be agreed, Officers had planned for this potential eventuality by including the work associated with the M&CP in the 2026/27 Annual Plan, agreed by Members. DCO Clark went on to say that the razor clam fishery research and M&CP are detailed as a key workstream in the annual plan.

The Chair said that D&S IFCA had already committed to work associated with a M&CP and if needed, the Authority's reserves could be used.

DCO Clark said that for the work associated with aspects of the M&CP, the assistance of students may be a consideration. DCO Clark explained the close links that Officers have with the Marine Conservation Masters Course and advised that placement opportunities may arise that can support Officers in the monitoring of the fishery, as a low-cost solution.

Alistair Dewhirst confirmed that he had also met with stakeholders who had objected in the formal consultation. Whilst he did not have any written information to pass on to Officers, he highlighted additional concerns raised which included:

- Time of Reviews (review of triggers at three months) – currently there was only one trigger relating to time
- REM: not able to examine the seabed impacts only those on the vessel.
- The need to understand what is happening after the bycatch is released.
- The need for the reference to 'physical' to be removed from Section 5.3.6, so that the recovery relates more broadly to species presence.

DCO Clark said that the way how the REM system would be used and the use of D&S IFCA's ROV to examine the seabed could be more explicit in the plan. DCO Clark pointed out that it is difficult to have baselines relating to bycatch, stock assessment and catch per unit effort until the fishery is up and running after which these can be established and monitored effectively. In terms of REM, DCO Clark explained that Officers would try and set the cameras up to provide the best evidence and when observers are on board, they will assess the catch.

Cllr Wainwright raised concerns regarding the three-month review period stated in the M&CP to which CO Mander explained that if any of the triggers set out in the M&CP are met prior to three months that these would trigger an earlier review. Cllr Wainwright also raised concerns regarding the impact of any sediment plume caused by the razor clam dredge and what could potentially be done about that. DCO Clark said that this will be difficult – any fishing activity that involves contact with the seabed will result in some form of plume in the type of habitat where the fishery is to take place.

Didi Alayli asked if there is value in working closer with the organisations she had spoken too. CO Mander clarified that in terms of working with other organisations, there is nothing wrong with Members gaining additional information to help inform their decision making, providing it does not undermine set processes already established. Regarding the opening of the fishery, this related to a change in management measures (permit conditions) and therefore a consultation was required and there was opportunity for all stakeholders, including other organisations, to provide information relating to the opening of the fishery. CO Mander clarified that D&S IFCA will not be formally consulting on the content of the M&CP (to be further developed), but information gathered independently by Members may have value to inform that work alongside the information now provided by Natural England.

The Chair reiterated that he was prepared to set out a motion for voting based on deferring the decision on the M&CP. Cllr Hance asked if the deferred decision would be one for the Authority, or if it went to the B&PSC, in which case it would in fact be a referral rather than being deferred back to the Full Authority. The Chair confirmed that the relevant future Officers paper to approve a revised M&CP would be a consideration for the B&PSC who have delegated powers for decision making.

There were no other question or comments.

That consideration of this matter is referred back to the B&PSC and Officers will review Natural England's input and prepare a revised M&CP.

Proposed: Mike Williams Seconded: Alistair Dewhirst

In favour: 18
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

15 To note the report on Octopus and Potting

CO Mander invited the Members to note the report as per Officers' paper.

CO Mander informed Members that Cornwall IFCA had recently announced the making of an emergency byelaw to restrict vessels potting for Octopus. D&S IFCA will monitor the effects of this Byelaw that will come into force on 1st July and whether it creates any impacts in the D&S IFCA District. Further monitoring of the Octopus presence, life cycle and movement is important and the Officers are able to use the fishers' experience and knowledge to gather information and data.

CO Mander invited questions and comments.

The Chair wished to clarify whether the action for the Members is to vote or just to note the report. CO Mander advised that the recommendation was for Members to note the report, which could be noted without a vote.

Alistair Dewhirst enquired about the following paragraph. "The B&PSC deferred a decision on how to proceed and requested a full range of options for management and detailed information about the make-up of the potting fleet - types of vessel, size of vessel, landings information, pot numbers, and locations of activity."

CO Mander confirmed that the information had been presented to the B&PSC during the review of the Potting Permit Conditions.

DCO Clark left the AGM to attend a meeting regarding octopus related matters.

David Morgan reported the crab catches in the Salcombe area had reduced by 95% and a potential decrease in the octopus stock poses a question of what to do if there is no octopus and no crab left to catch.

16 To note the update on Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power Station

Senior Environment Officer James Stewart presented to the Members an update on Hinkley Point C Nuclear Power station. The main points included the confirmation that the developer (EDF) is now working with a company called FishTek Marine to develop high and low frequency AFD (Acoustic Fish Deterrent) technologies. The high-frequency AFD is working well on some species like Shad but the concern remains about other species, including marine species.

SEO Stewart invited questions and comments.

Cllr Hance expressed the opinion that EDF was not being honest in their approach to the AFD requirement and effort should be made to find the mechanisms which would allow to hold EDF accountable.

Alistair Dewhirst was interested to find out if any trials had been conducted without the AFD. SEO Stewart explained that EDF tried to action a removal of the requirement for the AFD instead offering compensatory measures, for example creation of large-scale saltmarshes in the Severn Estuary. SEO Stewart went on to explain that trials were being undertaken by EDF and partners in the Severn Estuary and with a University to understand AFD effectiveness.

Felicity Sylvester was disappointed that EDF was not in conversation with the D&S IFCA. Felicity Sylvester was interested to find out an update on any actions taken by the Somerset Council regarding the Hinkley Point C. Felicity Sylvester was concerned about flaws in the decision making and expected the Local Authorities from the North of the District to be involved.

SEO Stewart advised that it is a requirement that EDF consults with any relevant bodies. These consultations are reviewed by the MMO.

Cllr Ashton, representing the Somerset Council advised that Somerset Council had contributed to any relevant consultations. Cllr Ashton would be able to get back to the Members with a more detailed update.

Cllr Wainwright enquired about whether the original planning application for Hinkley Point C needed an environmental impact assessment. SEO Stewart advised that the original planning application back in 2013 did include a requirement for AFD, which the EDF has since tried to remove. EDF is now exploring the new technology as a way to fulfil the original requirement.

Cllr Hance thanked the Officers for their efforts.

Agenda Items for Information:

17 To receive the AIFCA Officers' Report

The Chair advised that the AIFCA Officers' Report gives an idea of the current national agenda.

18 Date of the next meeting

The date of the next meeting is 17th September 2026.

End.