Authority Meeting

17th September 2026

Draft Minutes

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Version & Date	Comments
Version 0.1 02/10/2026	First version of the minutes prepared by F&AM Pepper and shared with the SMT Officers for comments.
Version 0.2 08/10/2026	Additions and edits by CO Mander and PPO Townsend. Draft minutes sent to the Members for comments 13/10/2026
Version 0.3 02/11/2026	F&AM applied corrections suggested by Members. Draft Minutes published on D&SIFCA's website.

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Authority Meeting 17th September 2026
Exeter Racecourse

Present:

Chair: Prof. Mike Williams
Vice Chair: Dr Pamela Buchan
Councillors: Sara Wilson (Devon County Council), Fi Hance (Bristol City Council), Steve Ashton (Somerset Council)
MMO Appointees/ Statutory Members: Rachel Irish (Marine Management Organisation), Kate Sugar (Natural England), Guy Baker, Steve Parker, Andy Bell, Dr Emma Bean, Charlie Ziemman, Wayne Thomas, Alistair Dewhirst, Felicity Sylvester, Mike Spiller, Didi Alayli
Officers: Angela Stirland (Devon County Council Finance), Josh Bennett (Devon County Council)
D&S IFCA Officers: Mat Mander (Chief Officer – CO), 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.

Action Items:

1. Apologies for absence

F&AM Pepper stated that the following apologies had been received: Jessica Maunder, David Morgan, Simon Excell, Cllr Smith-Roberts, Cllr Wainwright, Sarah Holmyard, Cllr Bowkett, Sarah Clark, Stephen Dury, Jon Dornom, Cllr McCarty, Simon Toms.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair briefly consulted with CO Mander. No declarations of interest had been received.

3. To consider and approve the Draft Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on 18th June 2026

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. In reference to the minutes from the Authority Meeting held on 18th June 2026, the Officers received suggestions of substantive corrections from Members which could not be reconciled with the Officers' notes. CO Mander explained that it had been a similar case with the recent Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC) meeting minutes from June 2026. The Officers thought that it was appropriate to record the Authority and B&PSC meetings henceforth. CO Mander explained that the minute taking processes would remain the same, with the addition of a voice recording to be used as required to reconcile the Members' and the Officers' notes. CO Mander invited questions and comments.

Pamela Buchan asked about the retention period regarding the recordings. CO Mander explained that the recordings would be stored by the Officers only until the final draft of the minutes has been approved by the Members and that the Standing Orders would be amended as appropriate.

The Chair examined the Minutes from the Authority Meeting on 18th June 2026 page by page and invited questions and comments.

The Members suggested a few minor corrections noted by F&AM Pepper to action.

That the minutes from the Authority Meeting held on 18th of June 2026 are a true and accurate record.

Proposed: Dr Pamela Buchan Seconded: Rachel Irish

In favour: 15
Against: 0
Abstain: 2

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. To note the report for Budget Monitoring 2026/2027 – Month 4

Angela Stirland introduced this Agenda Item. In December 2025, the Authority agreed to use £67,078 of reserves to balance the 2026/27 budget. The approved budget assumed no additional grant funding would be received during the year. At Month 4, an overspend of £2,600 is forecast, increasing the projected transfer from the General Reserve to £69,678. Details of any variances over £1000 were available to view in the Officers' Paper.

Angela Stirland recommended that the Members note the projected outturn and the projected general reserve balance as per the Officers' Paper and invited questions and comments. CO Mander explained that there was a certain level of forecasting involved in the preparation of the Authority's quarterly monitoring reports to make the best effort in informing the Members of any significant upcoming expenditure. Cllr Hance asked if the bank interest was being generated on the funds currently in the general reserve account. Angela Stirland confirmed that the Treasurer's deposits do generate interest and that this would be the case for the funds held in the Authority's general reserve account. CO Mander highlighted that the general reserve account's bank interest contributes the majority of the recorded Authority's income, fees and charges.

There were no further questions or comments.

7. To consider additional appointments to the B&PSC

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. Steve Parker had been appointed to the Authority as a Marine Management Organisation Appointee. The Authority is allowed to appoint any Member to become a Member of the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee (B&PSC), as per the Standing Orders. The Officers' Paper assumed that Steve Parker had been appointed to the Authority before today's meeting and that Steve Parker wished to join the B&PSC. The Chair asked Steve Parker if he wished to join the B&PSC. Steve Parker agreed.

That Steve Parker is appointed to the B&PSC

Proposed: Charlie Ziemann Seconded: Wayne Thomas

In favour: 16
Against: 0
Abstain: 1

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8. To consider the adoption of the D&S IFCA's Standards of Performance, Conduct and Behaviour Policy (for Members)

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. D&S IFCA has multiple policy documents in place, with most applicable only to D&S IFCA's Officers, rather than Authority Members. Policy documentation has largely been produced for D&S IFCA by human resource specialists, such as HR ONE (Devon County Council), with much of it last reviewed externally in 2018. Since 2018, some policy documentation has been refined, and where possible merged, by D&S IFCA's Senior Management Team. This is not to lose the underlying content, but to improve presentation or to adapt to changes in the workplace, which have occurred over time. CO Mander hoped that the Members had had a good chance to familiarise themselves with the Officers' Paper and thanked PPO Townsend for his help drafting it. CO Mander reminded the Members that they were able to take the document away for further reviews if required and invited questions and comments.

Alistair Dewhirst asked if the Policy was being adopted by all the other IFCAs. Additionally, Alistair Dewhirst asked for clarification regarding "*insubordination*" listed alongside other examples of misconduct on page six of the Policy. It was Alistair Dewhirst's understanding that the Members are not employees of the Authority therefore "*insubordination*" may not be the most suitable word to use as it may be unclear whom the Members were insubordinate to. CO Mander explained that it is very likely that other IFCAs have a similar Policy, however there is no standard version across all IFCAs, as it is the case for Declarations of Interest. The Officers based the Policy on the HR Policies relating to Standards and Performance of Officers and screened the original document in order to remove any parts which were not relevant to the Authority Members. The use of the word "insubordination" could be one of the words which needed to be removed or modified but was missed in the drafting. The Chair suggested the removal of the paragraph including the word "*insubordination*", unless there was a clear objection from the Members. Cllr Hance agreed that the word "insubordination" suggests that a hierarchy is in place, which is not relevant to the Authority. There were no objections and the Officers noted an action to remove the paragraph including the word "insubordination" on page six.

Kate Sugar highlighted pages five and six where the words "negligence" and "inappropriate use of computers" were more appropriate to an office environment and did not relate to the way in which the Members worked with the Authority. The Chair agreed that it would be reasonable to provide explanation of what exactly is expected of the Members. Alistair Dewhirst wanted to know about the use of the word "vexatious" and who would decide if an action classified as vexatious. It was Alistair Dewhirst's assumption that it would be up to the Members to decide what constitutes vexatious behaviour. Didi Alayli seconded this question. Emma Bean provided a dictionary definition of the word "vexatious" in a legal context as "an action purely to cause annoyance to the defendant". CO Mander advised that, in terms of Freedom of Information requests, repeatedly asking the same question in bad faith could be deemed vexatious. CO Mander quoted an example where a member of the public made Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to the Authority which, due to their nature, were recorded as vexatious. The Chair explained that any reports of vexatious actions would be reported in the first instance to the Chair of the Authority and in the next instance to the Ombudsman.

Alistair Dewhirst referred to page seven of the Policy where a requirement was mentioned to adhere to policies both "published" and "not published" and asked for an explanation in reference to the unpublished policies – how would the Members be aware of these. CO Mander explained that this refers to any policies which the Members would have been made aware of, but which were not available to the public. Alistair Dewhirst suggested that this explanation should be added to the Policy for clarity. Pamela Buchan suggested use of the phrase "*in the public domain*" after the references to "published" and "not published" to make this clear.

Cllr Hance referred to page six of the Policy where the use of alcohol and substances was mentioned and suggested that this should be modified to allow a use of medication for conditions like diabetes. The Chair

suggested a change of wording to "*abuse of substances*". CO Mander highlighted that any behaviour referred to in the Policy would always be considered through the context in which it occurred, with a possibility of an appeal. CO Mander reminded the Members that the Policy can be amended as per the Members' suggestions.

Pamela Buchan suggested that the wording "*a failure to accept decisions*" on page five should be replaced to highlight that, although a member should not undermine the Authority's decisions, it is possible that, morally, Members may not accept all decisions made by the majority. Alistair Dewhirst also had concerns regarding this paragraph. The Chair explained that the wording in the paragraph in question had been provided by the MMO. D&S IFCA's rules cannot be different to the MMO's rules. Alistair Dewhirst pointed out that not all the Members are MMO Appointees. The Chair agreed and advised that in reference to the Elected Members, Defra had realised the need for clarity around this topic and is currently in discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding the status of the Elected Members. The Chair advised that should a complaint be made concerning an Elected Member, this would be reported to the Monitoring Officer at the relevant Local Authority and noted that some circumstances may be covered by the D&S IFCA's Policy, which are not covered by the council's policy.

The phrase "*poor decision making*" also on page five, was in Pamela Buchan's opinion too vague. The Chair offered that the relevant paragraph could be expanded to include the words "*failure to follow decision making rules set out in section 4*". Didi Alayli was supportive of the removal of phrase "*poor decision making*".

Pamela Buchan asked for clarity regarding the part of the Policy referring to "*circulation of inaccurate information*", as such inaccuracy can be perception based and a more suitable word should be found rather than the word "*inaccurate*". Kate Sugar offered that the wording could mention the "*circulation of deliberately misleading information*". CO Mander noted that the use of the word "*deliberately*" means that the intention needs to be proven, but sharing information that is clearly inaccurate would be an example of poor standards even if the person who is sharing it claims that this was not their intention.

CO Mander invited the Members to contact the Officers for clarification. CO Mander reminded everyone that although the Officers are aware that all Members have got the Authority's best interest in mind, it was nonetheless unacceptable for the Members to repeatedly spread information that is inaccurate. Wayne Thomas observed that it can be difficult to recognise what information is correct and what is not and it may be useful for the Members to, when sharing information, add a note to record the source of that information, especially when any data is involved.

The Chair reminded all Members that providing potentially inaccurate information to others constitutes negligence. The Chair offered that he would discuss this matter with the Officers. Guy Baker suggested that the wording could quote "*circulation of information without exercising appropriate care to ensure its accuracy*". The Chair suggested that it would be useful to bring forward an example of behaviour which resulted in an inaccurate information having been shared. CO Mander offered an instance where a Member would advise another person that a Byelaw has been signed off, where it has not. CO Mander did not believe that the current Members would do that but recommended adopting the relevant part of the Policy as good practice.

Rachel Irish mentioned a possible instance of a behaviour where one Member would contact another Member in an attempt to influence them. Pamela Buchan observed that the Authority Members do communicate with each other, in a similar way to the Members of a council and that it was important to establish where to draw the line between communication and potential harassment.

Pamela Buchan referred to a paragraph on page nine "*Unless new information or evidence of sufficient weight is provided to the Authority or the B&PSC in the formal consultation by the closing date, the logical outcome is that changes will be applied as proposed in the formal consultation*". Pamela Buchan observed that sufficiency may be subjective. Emma Bean pointed out that the Authority makes decisions via its

Members and it is the Members who weigh up if the evidence is of a sufficient weight. The Chair suggested wording: “evidence considered by the Authority to be sufficient”.

Pamela Buchan talked about point 4.5 on page 10 - “Un-planned actions or requests from Members for additional information may delay the workstreams/decision making process. However, this can be built into revised timetables for action” - this paragraph, in Pamela Buchan’s opinion, did not sound right because informed decision-making requires time.

Emma Bean enquired if the discussions around the content of the Policy taking place during the Authority meeting were untimely; should the Members have submitted any suggestions prior to the meeting? Emma Bean highlighted that the Members do not meet before the Authority meetings and asked if it would it be advisable for the Members to submit their questions regarding this Officers’ Paper in advance.

The Chair provided an example of a situation in the past where Members continued to request for the evidence to be revisited many times, which resulted in the decision-making process taking a long time.

CO Mander reminded the Members about the Authority’s decision-making process, which must be adhered to, including observing deadlines for submission of comments in reference to formal consultations. Failure to adhere to the decision-making processes poses a risk of the entire decision-making process being undermined.

There were no further questions or comments.

CO Mander observed that considering the number of amendments already suggested, the best course of action would be for the Officers to take away the Members’ suggestions and revisit the Standards of Performance, Conduct and Behaviour Policy.

The Chair offered a conclusion that it was not possible to fulfil the Officers’ recommendation and suggested that the Officers incorporate the Members’ comments and reintroduce the Policy at the following Authority meeting. The Chair asked the Members if they had any objections. There were none and the Chair formally confirmed that the Officers’ Paper regarding Agenda Item 8 would be brought forward to the meeting on the 10th of December 2026.

No vote took place.

9. To consider changes to the Standing Orders and the introduction of an updated Declarations of Interest Form

AIFCA had commissioned an independent reviewer and approached all the ten IFCAs to share any recommendations received. One of the matters was the use of dispensations in relation to disclosable pecuniary interest, particularly relevant to any Members who are active commercial fishermen.

It was the Officers’ recommendation that the Members consider adopting the learnings of the AIFCA’s review and incorporate them in the Authority’s own Declaration of Interest, specifically the broader declaration of interest which is to be made public for all Members. D&S IFCA does currently have a declaration of interest form which is shared with any new Members to complete and update as necessary. Not all Members had completed the current forms. The main addition to the declaration would be that of the legal requirement for the Members to complete and return the form to the Officers within twenty-eight days from receipt. Provided the new form is approved at today’s meeting, the deadline for the D&S IFCA’s Members to complete and return the declaration of interest would be by the end of October 2026. Any received forms would then be published on the Authority’s website. For transparency, the Officers will declare their interests as well, and this information will also be published. As part of the communications, clarity will be provided to specify

what is required from the Members. CO Mander highlighted the significance of the Members being open about any other interest which could be considered important by the members of the public. The declaration of interest form will need to be completed by all Members, including the Elected Members. Any Member who fails to return the completed declaration of interest form would be unable to participate in the Authority's meetings.

CO Mander invited questions and comments.

Wayne Thomas asked about one of the questions on the form - "*do you hold membership of relevant charity or trust?*" and enquired what should a Member declare if they belong to numerous clubs of the same type, for instance angling clubs. CO Mander advised the best approach to take for the Members is *"if in doubt, declare it*". Any completed forms will be received and considered by CO Mander as Clerk.

Pamela Buchan wished for greater clarity in the part of the form which talks about "*Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the D&S IFCA's District*" which can be confusing because none of the Members own seabed.

Kate Sugar enquired if the declarations of interest would need to be resubmitted by the Members prior to each Authority meeting. CO Mander advised that only new pecuniary interest will need to be declared in reference to specific agenda items before each meeting at which point a dispensation to take part in discussions and/or vote can be issued by CO Mander. A Member would need to remove themselves from discussions in a meeting if they failed to request a dispensation in time.

Steve Parker enquired about an example of a Member who is a director of a commercial fishing company and asked if would they need to declare that interest even though they do not receive a salary? The Chair advised declaring this interest, as it means that an individual is connected to a company.

CO Mander encouraged the Members to adopt the new Declarations of Interest forms in today's meeting to ensure that D&S IFCA is meeting its legal obligations and contact the Officers with any questions afterwards in terms of what to declare and at which stage.

14:00 The Members took a ten-minute comfort break.

CO Mander acknowledged the following points:

- A suggestion to include a field on the form to provide a signature.
- It would be useful to have a guide in relation to land and licences related declarations.
- A correction is required in the Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality section as it refers to a "*member of the Council*".
- Although the Authority's District covers the land within its territory, not just water, there is no need to declare that a Member is an owner of a property within the District, unless it is relevant to the operations of the Authority.
- A removal of the reference to the "outside bodies" is required.
- An amended for the word "landlord" to "Devon and Severn IFCA" is required.

Both CO Mander and the Chair strongly encouraged the Members to adopt the Declarations of Interest form today as compliance with the Localism Act 2011 was a priority.

That Members agree to amend the Standing Orders to reflect the requirements of the Localism Act 2011

Proposed: Dr Pamela Buchan Seconded: Dr Emma Bean

In favour: 17
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

10. To consider the adoption of the D&S IFCA's Complaints Policy

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. The Defra IFCA Conduct and Operations Report 2018–2022 identified complaints handling as an area where greater consistency and accessibility would be beneficial. The policy has been co-developed with IFCA Chief Officers. The resulting draft provided a practical template that individual IFCAs may adapt to suit their own constitutional, staffing and local authority arrangements.

It is the Officers' recommendation that the Authority adopts the Complaint Policy as per the Officers' Paper. CO Mander invited questions and comments.

The Chair took the opportunity to explain, for the benefit of the new Members, the work of the AIFCA as well as provide some background regarding the Defra's reviews of the IFCAs. Each of the ten IFCAs had the opportunity to apply their own requirements, although attempts are being made to achieve a standardisation of processes where possible.

Pamela Buchan suggested that an amendment was needed in paragraph 2.3 point 5 where the word "*and*" at the end of the sentence may need to be removed. Other Members offered an explanation that this is a known way of formulating a list within a document where the penultimate point finishes with the word "*and*".

Emma Bean observed that the language in square brackets at Stage 2 part of the document should be amended as it appears to be aimed at the relevant IFCA staff dealing with a complaint and not at the audience for the complaints policy. Additionally, on page nine it is quoted that a complaint would be acknowledged within five days, which should be amended to five working days. CO Mander agreed with Emma Bean's suggestions.

There were no further questions or comments.

That the Authority agrees to implement the Complaints Policy (as amended) as set out in Agenda Item 10 Annex A

Proposed: Wayne Thomas Seconded: Guy Baker

In favour: 17
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

11. To:

Note the AIFCA produced National Enforcement Strategy, National Enforcement Policy and National IFCO Code of Conduct and Adopt D&S IFCA's Enforcement and Compliance Guidance

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. The Authority's Governance Working Group worked in the past to conduct a review of the D&S IFCA's own Enforcement and Compliance Strategy. This work was placed on hold whilst all the other IFCAs reviewed their own policies. Three documents developed by the National Inshore Marine Enforcement Group (NIMEG), Eastern IFCA, and the AIFCA were adopted by the IFCAs' Chief Officers at their group meeting on 12th August 2026. All the documents are relatively light on detail as they consider the approaches taken by all the IFCAs. It was the Officers' intention to have a document which highlighted the way the D&S IFCA works for the benefit of its stakeholders, which is reflected in the document that the Officers invited the Members to adopt as part of this Agenda Item. CO Mander invited questions and comments.

The Chair encouraged the Members to note the core content of the three documents already adopted by the IFCAs' Chief Officers Group, and to agree to the added parts which were relevant to the Authority's work as reflected in D&S IFCA's Enforcement and Compliance Guidance (Agenda Item 11 Annex D).

Rachel Irish suggested a correction on page twelve of the Agenda Item 11 Annex D of the order of action. CO Mander agreed to move the paragraph "Verbal Warning" before the paragraph "Advisory Letter"

The Chair noted that he had had shared some minor wording corrections with CO Mander.

That the Authority agrees to adopt D&SIFCA's Enforcement and Compliance Guidance (subject to amendments)

Proposed: Andy Bell Seconded: Dr Emma Bean

In favour: 17
Against: 0
Abstain: 0

12. To note the Byelaw and Permitting Sub-Committee Report

CO Mander introduced this Agenda Item. The most recent B&PSC meeting took place on 4th June 2026. The Officers' papers from this B&PSC meeting are published on D&S IFCA's website, along with the draft minutes (version 0.5). There was no date scheduled for the following B&SPC meeting.

There were no questions or comments.

Agenda Items for Information

13. AIFCA's Officers' Report

The Members had an opportunity to read the AIFCAs report as part of the Officers' Papers.

14. Date of the next meeting – 10 December 2026

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