

Minutes of IPA Meeting 22nd September 2021

Attendees

Steve Parker (SP) (by zoom)
Brian Pawley (BP)
Beshlie Pool (BeshP)
Rick Mitchelmore (RP)
David Morgan (DM)
Martyn Rogers (MR)
Nick Stone (NS) (by zoom)
Juliette Hatchman (JH) (by zoom)

Rachel Irish (RI)
Mat Mander (MM)
Sarah Clark (SC)

Apologies

Richard Fowler – no show

No Response

Alex Passmore

MM and SC welcomed members to the meeting.

Minutes

The minutes had been circulated after the meeting in 2020. All members were happy and agreed with the minutes.

There were some actions from the meeting. All actions for SC had been completed. MM had an action to seek for information about the electronic charts. MM informed the committee members that Seafish's project was near completion and electronic charts will soon be available to download and are compatible on most of the vessels' plotting systems.

Membership / Representation

SC gave an update on membership. Jim Portus is being replaced by Juliette Hatchman as CEO of SWFPO. Richard Fowler had been contacted and indicated that he would attend the meeting although he had not turned up. Jim Portus had suggested other towed gear members to replace those that had not been attending the meeting for many years. SC had contacted Alex Passmore and Derek Meredith by e-mail but neither of them had replied.

Brian Tapper had indicated that he wanted to step down from the Committee and the members discussed who might be approached from those operating in the west of the IPA area. It was suggested that SC contact those potters operating out of Plymouth and near by ports to ask if that actively fish in the IPA wish to join the committee.

Action for SC to contact Potting Permit Holders from Plymouth and nearby ports to encourage a potter who actively fishes in the IPA to join the Committee

Gear Conflict Reports

SC showed a chart of the areas where infringement had taken place since November 2020. Concerns were raised that many smaller vessels without IVMS/VMS are in the area of Zone 3 that sits outside the 6nm. There were reports of fishing happening in this area overnight coming from Brixham and landing to Plymouth. RI explained that it is difficult in enforcing that area and the level of evidence needed to prosecute is high. RI welcomed as much evidence as possible to investigate alleged infringements.

MM informed the committee that the likely timetable for the rollout of IVMS will be January for the 10-12 m vessels and by Spring for the 8-10m vessels. MM described the IVMS/Camera work that D&S IFCA is involved in and discussed the use of additional technology to help inform when fishing is taking place and allow for changes in management to aid the industry.

such as those scallop vessels that fish in and outside the district and currently have to switch bar length to accommodate additional dredges when fishing outside. Cameras will help eliminate this as it will be evident from footage how many dredges are being used whilst fishing. MM explained that the project will be 3-6 months in length and was starting on 24th September 2021. It has offered fishers a chance to be involved in the project.

SP aired the view that having cameras would cause a kick back from the industry. MM explained that the cameras would only start recording when the gear goes into the water (which the winches turned etc.). He said he was aware of these concerns and the project would address these concerns and use cameras in a balanced way. He also explained that there would need to be a stated purpose for the data and there will be a log kept. The process will be that a georeferenced area is triggered by a winch sensor ping along with the approximate speed of fishing which will be the trigger on the camera upload footage. The project is trying to identify, through technology, what can be done to improve fisheries and environmental protection. MM explained there would be an extensive consultation if this was to be rolled out. BeshP supported the project and wondered if it will look at the IPA in a holistic way. MM informed the committee that the project involved using cameras out to 6nm and used the Exeters as a pilot box. Fishers can go in and out, but the only derogation is the number of dredges used.

SP asked whether foreign vessels that fish in UK waters will need VMS. RI explained that most foreign vessels are over 10m/12m in length. MM said that as part of the national IVMS roll out project the MMO are contacting the EU to provide a date when the Statutory Instrument will be in place as EU vessels below 12m will need to have an IVMS fitted when the SI is in place. This will also apply to all other nations such as Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland/Ireland. Wales has already introduced IVMS on all vessels.

NS asked why if IVMS is part of the permit that some vessels are apparently turning the units off. MM explained that there are many active enforcement cases, and two current investigations are looking at instances of switching IVMS units off. NS compared this to AIS where for the over 15m vessels the AIS units must be functional.

Proposals for changes to IPA

1. No change to Corridor.

MR returned to the opening and closing of areas within the IPA.

He explained that the corridor used to be open for two months of the year until approximately three years ago. He would like to see the Corridor open for two months of the year as there are lots of vessels in there over the short period of time currently open. RM expressed the view that he did not want any change to the IPA chart at all. He wants it to be left as it is for the next year.

2. More protection needed for area outside 6nm.

RM raised the concern that vessels are switching off their IVMS as they do not wish to be tracked and this is of concern to the potters in the IPA. MR thought that possibly with a change of skipper the new skippers do not know all the regulations. MM explained that currently with IVMS on vessels in D&S IFCA's District, Officers can only view tracks for a stated purpose. Next year when IVMS is rolled out nationally all units will need to remain live, and any non-working units will trigger an alarm. MR was concerned that many boats do not have permits to fish in D&S IFCA's District and do not have IVMS fitted. MM replied that next year all vessels will be required nationally to have IVMS fitted and therefore vessels cannot fish, without IVMS, in D&SIFCA's District when they are declaring they are fishing outside the 6nm. Next year they will all be reporting all the time.

MR raised the point that visiting vessels do not have all the information they require when fishing in the IPA. MM said it is the owner's responsibility to ensure any skipper

has all the information they need to fish in D&S IFCA's District. BP stated that a vast majority of those vessel fishing illegally in the IPA and causing gear damage are local boats. MR expressed the view that whilst they may be local vessels, they may not have local skippers who know the area and rules.

3. Close the area outside the 6nm in Zone 3 all year to Mobile gear

This option was suggested due to the level of infringement in the area outside the 6nm. DM expressed the view that this would not work well for the mobile gear fleet who operate in Zone 3 inside the 6nm. SP asked if most of the infringements were by foreign vessels and whether the infringements involve D&S IFCA permit holder too? MM explained that from most of the intelligence received these are not French vessel as they tend to manoeuvre around the area. SP asked if there are permitted vessels that do not have IVMS. He suggested together, with JH, that a letter should be sent out to Permit Holders to inform them that the area would be closely monitored for infringements and the proposal to close the area of Zone 3 outside the 6nm to Mobile gear will be revisited at the IPA Committee meeting in 2022. The Committee agreed to this proposal and D&S IFCA will send a letter out with the IPA chart for 2022. BeshP asked if the MMO could identify the over 12m vessels that may operate in that area as the IPA is part of their Licence Condition and could text them a similar message re infringement and the potential consequences to access. RI said she would look into the better targeting of vessels through licence condition. MM expressed the view that contacting permit holders would be the most appropriate route and should reach the potential vessels that are not complying. JH felt that sending a letter to permit holders would be the most appropriate course of action. NS asked if there were a limited number of vessel that operate in the 6 to 12nm area and if so, this should be undertaken. SC confirmed that she will send a letter out to Mobile Fishing permit holders as proposed.

Action for SC to write a letter to all Mobile Fishing Permit Holders to explain that Zone 3 and the area outside the 6nm will be closely monitored during 2022 for any infringements and if there are, this may result in the area outside the 6nm in Zone 3 to be closed to Mobile Fishing.

4. Open up the Triangle/Zone 2 to pots one month earlier

BP discussed the proposal to open up the Triangle (Zone 2) a month earlier for potters. He felt that as the evidence from D&S IFCA Officers shows that vessels do operate in Zone 2 then this proposal should not be considered again. He added that if boats are currently using the Triangle, then if an extension on the time for potting was introduced it would likely fail due to infringements. BP explained that he would like to see it open up a bit earlier but as there have been several infringement in the IPA in 2020-2021 there would more than likely be an increased in infringements which would require thorough investigation. DM explained that in his knowledge there was very little activity throughout May 2021 but thinks that the current restrictions should remain. RM suggested that allowing access to potters a month early is a little too early for the fishery and would like to see it stay the same. JH informed the Committee that her members (of SWFPO) wanted Zone 2 to stay the same.

Electronic Chart Update

MM repeated that Seafish are progressing this and it is hoped the electronic charts will be available in the near future.

MPAs/HPMAs

SC described the MCZ assessment work for mobile gear in the Skerries Bank and Surrounds MCZ and that the assessment had been sent to Natural England for formal advice. MM explained that depending on the advice from Natural England it is the Authority decision as to whether to follow it and bring in changes in management if required and appropriate. MM also

informed the Committee members that the HPMA roll out has been delayed and would likely happen in 2022, but that there was little else to add.

AOB

RI explained that a large amount of IPA data and information had been lost from the MMO archives and asked if any member had any past information about the IPA and meetings. JH explained that Jim Portus is likely to have a lot of archived information and she will ask him if he does and if he is happy to share with RI.

Action for JH to ask Jim Portus if he has any past information and data regarding the IPA and meetings.

The IPA Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) were discussed and DM thought that the draft version is probably sufficient. He asked that the ToR are put on the agenda for the next IPA committee meeting. SC said that she would review the ToR and update where necessary. BeshP suggested that there is an additional meeting to talk about the ToR and introduce the New Member to the Committee.