



Fisherman fined for failing to comply with Fisheries Officers and navigating a vessel in a dangerous manner

At Bournemouth Magistrates Court, Ben Cook of no fixed place, was ordered to pay fines and costs relating to failing to comply with directions given by Fisheries Officers and navigating his vessel at such a speed and in such a manner as to endanger lives or cause injury in an incident in Poole Harbour that occurred on 24 September 2015.

As a result of Mr Cook failing to appear at court on two previous occasions, on 17 August 2016 in Mr Cooks absence, the court heard how on the evening and in the hours of darkness on Thursday 24 September 2015 as Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) officers approached an unlicensed fishing vessel in Poole Harbour suspected of illegally clam fishing, the vessel made of at high speed. IFCA officers followed the vessel and recognised the person at the helm as Mr Cook and despite being given several directions to stop what he was doing in order for them to facilitate a boarding and conduct an inspection, Mr Cook made several high speed dangerous close passes to the IFCA patrol vessel that led to IFCA officers terminating the stop check attempts as they considered it too dangerous to continue.

Mr Cook had been charged with two counts of failing to comply with a reasonable direction given to him by IFCA officers and also charges laid under the Poole Harbour Commissioners byelaws for; i) navigating a vessel without care and caution and at such a speed as to endanger the lives or cause injury; and ii) navigating a vessel at a speed exceeding 10 knots. The court found Mr Cook guilty on all counts.

IFCA Officers are empowered under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 to board and inspect vessels, enter and inspect premises and vehicles and those being subjected to inspection, including the master and crew on vessels must provide assistance if it is requested

Commenting on the case, IFCA Deputy Chief Officer Ian Jones said, "This case is a good example of a joined up collaborative approach with Poole Harbour Commissioners resulting in including charges for breaches of their byelaws. Failing to comply with officers reasonable directions and putting IFCA officers in danger by navigating a vessel at such a speed and in such a manner as to endanger lives or cause injury will not be tolerated and we will pursue such matters vigorously through court."

Captain Brian Murphy, Poole Harbour Commissioners Harbour Master said "Dangerous behaviour in Poole Harbour will not be tolerated. Our 100% prosecution success rate continues, thanks in this case, to the joint working relationship we have with the Southern IFCA in Poole Harbour. Working with SIFCA and other authorities continues to be the most effective and efficient use of resources for byelaw enforcement".

On 8 December 2016 Mr Cook was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £2240 and in addition for his previous non – attendance pleaded guilty to failing to comply with a bail charge and fined a further £80.

Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

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Any information relating to illegal fishing activity can be reported to the Authority in confidence on 01202 721373

Ends.

Notes;

The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities vision is to:

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

The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority is one of ten IFCAs whose jurisdictions cover the entire coastline of England. The marine element of the IFCA District extends 6 miles seaward and the terrestrial element covers the constituent local Authority areas. Southern IFCA manage the coastal waters of Hampshire Dorset and the Isle of Wight.

The Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (IFCA) was created in 2011. Southern IFCA is a joint committee of the Councils which fund the Authority. Southern IFCA is tasked with the sustainable management of inshore sea fisheries resources in its District.

The IFCA is funded through its constituent local authorities by an annual levy. That levy is supported by central Government to enable the Authority deliver on national management objectives.

Further information

For further information please contact Southern IFCA on 01202 721373 or enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk

Or visit our website at

www.southern-ifca.gov.uk

