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**Second fine for unlicensed Poole Fisherman in as many months whilst a second man fined for transportation of undersized shellfish**

At Bournemouth Magistrates Court, Ben Cook and Luke Sharman both of Hamworthy, Poole were ordered to pay fines and costs relating to failing to comply with directions given by Fisheries Officers and landing and transporting undersized shellfish for offences that occurred on 3 February 2016.

On 18 January 2017, the court heard how Fisheries Officers were conducting a night time patrol of Poole Harbour when they heard the unique sound of a shellfish pump scoop dredge in the Wareham Channel. Officers became aware that an unlicensed vessel known to them was not on its mooring and suspected that vessel might be engaged in illegal fishing. Later that evening they observed the unlicensed vessel enter Moriconium Quay with two persons on-board, one of which they recognised as Ben Cook. Officers watched the vessel come out of Moriconium Quay and onto a mooring at Lake Road. There was now only Mr Cook on board who rowed ashore in a small tender and left the area shortly thereafter.

As Officers approached Moriconium Quay by land they saw Mr Cook and a male person now known to them as Luke Sharman carrying a white fish box containing shellfish towards an open garage in the residential area of the complex. There was also a dredge and auxiliary pump near to the garage. Officers identified themselves and both men dropped the fish box and despite being given directions for Mr Cook and Sharman to remain where they were to assist with an inspection of the shellfish, Mr Sharman closed and locked the garage door and both men then left the area.

A subsequent inspection of the fish box revealed a mixture of manila clams and cockles (predominantly manila clams) valued at approximately £400 where 94% of the clams and 100% of the cockles were under the minimum legal size. A sample of the shellfish together with the dredge and pump were seized as evidence and the remaining shellfish were returned to the water.

Shellfish dredging in Poole Harbour is managed through Southern IFCA's Poole Harbour Dredge Permit byelaw, a limited access permitting scheme designed to support sustainable fishing whilst protecting nationally and internationally important bird species and their habitat. Shellfish dredging in Poole Harbour is only permitted to permit holders, who must comply with a series of permit conditions that include equipment specifications, closed seasons and catch reporting that are designed and regularly adapted to ensure the fishery is operating in a responsible manner.

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 or any person in or on premises must provide assistance if it is requested.

## Southern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority

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Commenting on the case, IFCA Deputy Chief Officer Ian Jones said, “Officers conduct enforcement patrols at all times of the day and night that include weekends and this case should give confidence to legitimate operators that everything is being done to ensure there is a sustainable shellfish fishery in Poole Harbour. Minimum size legislation is an essential management tool to ensure that there is enough stock left on the grounds to support the fishery and the fishermen in the region who rely on them. Southern IFCA is committed to protecting the fishery to ensure healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and a viable industry. This type of illegal activity puts legitimate operators at a disadvantage and by taking these offenders to court we aim to support and protect the local fishery”.

Mr Jones further added “Failing to comply with Officers reasonable directions will not be tolerated and we will pursue such matters vigorously through court”.

This is the second time in as many months that Mr Cook has appeared before the Courts for similar offences and in addition to fines imposed on him in December 2016 totalling £2240 Mr Cook was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £1580 for this matter. Mr Sharman was ordered to pay fines and costs totalling £480. Forfeiture of the dredge and pump valued at £1000 was also granted by the Court.

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

Ends.

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### 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](mailto:enquiries@southern-ifca.gov.uk)

Or visit our website at [www.southern-ifca.gov.uk](http://www.southern-ifca.gov.uk)



Photo of shellfish

