AIFCA MEMBERS FORUM MINUTES

2nd December 2025 ONLINE

The meeting commenced at 10:34

Attendees

Tony Tomlinson MBE
Prof Mike Williams
Mat Mander
Prof Mike Elliot
David McCandless
Sam Davis
Phil Capper
Mark Taylor
Mark Southerton
Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick
John Lamb
Dr Will Wright
Cllr Paul Fuller
Pia Bateman

Also Present

Robert Clark
Tim Smith
Emily Bulled
Simon Pengelly
Paul Williams

1. Apologies for absence

Julian Gregory
Prof Peter Jones
Amelia Henderson
Cllr Andy Guy
Colin Trundle

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared

3. Chairmans Announcements

None

4. Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Draft Minutes of the September Members Forum Meeting
Members APPROVED the minutes subject to an amendment relating the Coastal Health agenda item.

5. Progress Reports

The following updates were NOTED

a) CORRIS – Senior Technical Officer
Members received an update and minutes of the Conduct and Operations Report Implementation Steering Group. The members discussed the actions undertaken by the AIFCA and COG.

b) FMP updates – Senior Policy Officer
Members heard about the reporting and engagement that the AIFCA has coordinated with the Defra FMP programme. The importance and value of the reporting and engagement was welcomed by members.

c) AIFCA Delivery Projects Update – Senior Technical Officer
The wide range of delivery projects was presented and a draft video output of one of the projects was presented. Members welcomed the update and the video. The distribution and dissemination of the materials were discussed and members heard that the videos would be launched at Coastal Futures 2026.

d) Coastal Health Programme Updates - Senior Policy Officer
Members heard that work with Cefas on the programme was progressing well. That the programme is working to develop a multi-agency response to events of unknown origin in the marine environment. The first of the AIFCA workshops was held in London and it had received good engagement from IFCAs. Two future events are planned in the New Year to enable national participation in the programme.

e) Scotland Inshore Fisheries Management DRAFT Knowledge exchange – Comms and Engagement Manager
Members heard that an initial meeting, with the IFCAs bordering Scotland was planned in early January. Further and wider engagement will be planned in the next financial year.

PRESENTATION

Members received a wide-ranging presentation from the Communication and Engagement Manager. The presentation will be circulated with the minutes. Members thanks Ms Bulled for all her hard work in the 2 months since she started in the role.

ITEM(S) FOR DECISION

6. AIFCA 2026/27 Draft Budget and Subscriptions

The Chief Officer presented a draft AIFCA Budget for 2026/27 which set out subscription options for Member IFCAs.
A proposed 3.5% subscription was APPROVED.
Members heard that the budget anticipates a managed draw on reserves, in line with previously agreed strategy. Members reviewed a risk assessment and agreed that the budget incorporates £67,734 of likely external income from the Defra MPA programme but excludes a further £56,000 of uncertain FMP-related income. Members debated the risk analysis and heard that the AIFCA can absorb even the unlikely worst-case external funding loss using existing reserves, but long-term sustainability would require action in future years. The members also discussed and agreed with the rationale that the Senior Technical Officer be redeployed for the delivery of the MPA programme.

7. Budget Control Statement

After detailed discussion and interrogation, the Budget Control Statement was approved.

8. REM Policy

Members approved the REM and AI policy.

ITEM(S) FOR INFORMATION

9. Officers Reports

The members NOTED the report and thanked the officers for their hard work.

10. Dates of Meetings 2025/6

The dates of the meetings were NOTED.