

Action Points/Notes from NIFF Internal meeting held at the Maldron Hotel, Oranmore, Co. Galway on 3rd March 2020

1. Welcome by NIFF chair/Apologies and Declaration of Interest.

The NIFF chair welcomed all to the meeting. Two apologies were noted. The Chair informed the NIFF members that Charlie Featherstone from SE RIFF has resigned from the NIFF. The members thanked Charlie for his service to the NIFF over the last number of years. No Declarations of Interest were noted. The NIFF chair added two items under AOB to the agenda: Adverse Weather Compensation Scheme put in place for Vessels due to loss of Earnings over recent 12 weeks and the issue of public liability insurance for the NIFF/RIFF members.

2. Approval of action points and meeting notes from NIFF meeting held on the 28th November 2019.

A number of amendments were suggested to Point No. 4 SFPA Health Certificates for Brown Crab by the NW RIFF member and Point No. 5 Update on deterrent measures for Crab clawing by the SW RIFF member in the Action Points for the meeting with Minister Creed. These amendments to also be reflected in the meeting notes. The amendments were agreed by the NIFF. Clarification was provided on the difference between the action points and the more detailed meeting notes. The action points should note the actions that NIFF need to carry out before the next NIFF meeting to progress issues whereas the meeting notes give a more detailed account of what occurred at a meeting. **Action Point:** NIFF secretary to make amendments to the draft action points before circulating to the RIFF secretaries and uploading to the Inshoreforums.ie website. It was agreed that NIFF members should reply when draft action points/notes are circulated for approval with yes or no and comments. NIFF secretary to send out a text message to let members know that an email with the draft action points/notes have been sent out for approval.

3. Update on RIFF Renewal

BIM provided an update on the RIFF renewal progress to date. Five RIFFs have completed their renewal. The NE RIFF experienced some delays, but the renewal process is on track and should be completed by end of March. The NIFF Chair announced that she will be resigning as NIFF chair as soon as we have a full complement of NIFF members. She explained that the responsibilities as NIFF chair were too great and that she only took the Chair role on at temporary basis. She would however like to stay on as a NIFF member.

4. Review of committees that NIFF members sit on

NIFF Chair asked the NIFF members to review the list of committees NIFF members sit on and who sits on them. It was noted that more committees needed to be added to the list for example INFOMAR Advisory Group and the Molluscan Shellfish Safety Group which a NIFF member also sits on. It was also noted that there is a lack of alternates if a member can't attend. **Action Point:** In addition to the reports that NIFF members send to the NIFF secretary to circulate to the NIFF members the NIFF has also requested that reporting from these meetings becomes a standing agenda points for NIFF meetings going forward to keep everyone informed. NIFF secretary to update list with additional committees that NIFF members sit on. NIFF members to become more proactive on the committees they sit on as a lot of important things happen at these meeting where feedback in needed both prior and after meetings.

5. Recent Governance training

SW RIFF brought the following action point to the NIFF “Could governance training be incorporated into an annual RIFF event”. All NIFF members agreed that this was a good idea going forward. **Action Point:** Annual RIFF event to take place with governance training as part of it.

6. Dates for NIFF Diary

Pre-planning NIFF meetings on a quarterly basis for the year was discussed. This would help the RIFF in scheduling their RIFF meetings to take place before a NIFF meeting and to forward any actions points or proposals to NIFF in a timely manner. **Action Point:** The following dates have been proposed for NIFF meetings in 2020:

Week beginning the 11th May 2020

Week beginning 7th September 2020

Week beginning 23rd November 2020

It was noted that there may be Ministerial meetings in between those dates. All dates are subject to change.

7. Position on Aquaculture License Appeal Board

This request has come from the SW RIFF after an individual fisherman in Kenmare Bay asked the SW RIFF to investigate the possibility of a position on the ALAB. As positions on this committee are a Ministerial appointment this request has come to NIFF. A discussion took place on the merits of the NIFF seeking a position on another committee and many questions were raised in regard to the ALAB during the discussion. **Action Point:** NIFF to seek further information on the ALAB with assistance from BIM and come back to the NIFF for further discussion.

8. Update on management of landing of crab claws

NIFF secretary updated the members on the proposal for the management of landing of crab claws. The new proposed wording replacing “approved” establishment has been forwarded to the DAFM. The DAFM are revising the proposal at the moment, when revised it will be sent onto the IMG for consideration before going out to the RIFF for review and comment. **Action point:** NIFF secretary to forward revised proposal to the RIFF secretaries for circulation to the RIFF members as soon as it is received.

9. Update on meeting with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on Windfarms.

At the previous NIFF meeting the Minister was asked if he would assist the NIFF in organising a meeting with the DHPLG on windfarms which he agreed to do. NIFF secretary recently spoke to the DAFM and no meeting has been arranged with the DHPLG as yet. BIM also informed the NIFF that he attended one of the recent public events on the NMPF and he raised the issue of windfarms. The DHPLG explained that at the present time they are awaiting the introduction of a new consents framework from the Department of Communications, Climate and the Environment and will not be approving any new windfarms at the moment. They are only licensing for site investigation works and are dealing with a number of legacy consents and applications (i.e. Codling and Arklow banks). Members also expressed concerns about other types of offshore renewable energy as well as under water cable laying.

Action Point: NIFF Secretary to contact DAFM to see if there has been any progress with organising a meeting with the DHPLG.

10. Setting up of a sub-group for Windfarm applications

As the number of consultations in relation to windfarm applications is increasing rapidly the NIFF chair questioned if we need to set up a sub-group and come up with a draft template reply to deal with this. The majority of NIFF members felt that as these applications are regional with different regional issues and that a sub-group would not work. It was also noted that it goes beyond just windfarms as some RIFFs are dealing with consultations on undersea cables, wave energy installation etc. The importance of consistency in the way each RIFF deals with these consultations and meetings with the FLOs of these energy companies was discussed. It was also emphasized that if a consultation is ongoing it is important not to just highlight your concerns to the FLO but that there is a written submission of the concerns submitted to make sure these issues are recorded. A NIFF member asked if it was possible to be included on the list of statutory consultees by the DHPLG. BIM explained that although the DAFM is on the list BIM are not. BIM went through the different statutory consultees on Head 52 (pg. 132) of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill and we are not one of them (either BIM or NIFF). The MPDM Bill seeks to establish in law a completely new regime for maritime areas which will replace existing state and development consent regimes and streamline arrangements on the basis of a single consent in other words one state consent (Maritime Area Consent) to enable the occupation of the Maritime Area and one development consent (planning permission) with a single environmental assessment. **Action Points:**

- a.) NIFF to exam the heads of the MPDM Bill in the context of the consultation of the National Marine Planning Framework which closes for submissions on the 9th April 2020;
- b.) NIFF/RIFF needs to compile a list of how each RIFF should deal with consultations and meetings with the Energy companies and their FLOs. It should be made clear that for any consultation with the FLOs and energy companies that although the RIFF will facilitate the 1st consultation meeting the FLO needs to make contact directly with the actual fishermen affected. This list should also highlight the importance of not just outlining RIFF concerns to the FLO but recording the concerns in writing and submitting these concerns to the consultation or energy company. As the SE RIFF have the most experience in this area, they have agreed to draft up a list what steps they have taken so far in relation to wind energy application/consultation and FLOs. This list needs to exam how to handle these consultations in the short, medium and long term. This list to be circulated to all RIFFs. BIM also suggested that maybe a RIFF could seek permission from the fishermen to hold their contact details and provide then to the FLO to consult with these fishermen directly.

11. Communications

General communications. There was a discussion on communications recapping what we do at the moment and how we can improve and get the information out to the inshore sector. The difficulties of navigating the BIM website particularly when you are looking for funding options was discussed, and it was noted that the inshore sector does not know what is available. Options to improve both the BIM and the inshoreforums.ie website were discussed to make the websites easier to navigate and find what you are looking for. It was also noted that in regard to funding opportunities that BIM coastal staff can and do help in this regard. An article in the marine press on funding opportunities was also suggested. **Action Point:** NIFF secretary to update inshore

forums website and feed into the overhaul of the BIM website in regard to funding for the inshore sector.

Action points/Notes

The action points/notes and minutes of the NIFF meetings were discussed and the NIFF made decisions on what should go into the action points/notes and the minutes of the meetings. Timelines for approval of both action points/notes and minutes were also decided as follows: If there is an item in the action points/notes that is delaying the approval of the action points then this item to be excluded and the rest of the action points to be approved. This excluded item to be added to the action points when the issue is resolved. The action points/notes would be circulated to the NIFF members for approval within a week of the meeting and the Members would have a week to come back with any comments and/or their approval. Once approved these would be sent out to the RIFF secretaries to circulate to the RIFFs and would be uploaded to the website within 2 days of circulating the RIFFs. It was also decided that the minutes of the meeting would be a more detailed account of the NIFF meeting and include who attended.

Letter from Anonymous fishermen on Skipper's Facebook page.

The letter was discussed by the NIFF members. The NIFF members expressed their outrage and annoyance at the number of inaccuracies, lack of facts as well as no right to reply. A discussion took place on how the NIFF should address this issue and others like it. **Action point:** It was decided that the NIFF would draft up a positive article on RIFF renewal after it is completed. This article would explain the changes to the renewal process, how transparent and open it is and how it will work from now on. This led onto a discussion on behaviour and sanctions in the code of conduct and to the following **Action points:**

- a.) The code of conduct to be amended to include a section on behaviour and sanctions on breaches of the code of conduct;
- b.) Communications – BIM to look into organising a communications person to run a workshop on how to deal with difficult issues like the letter on the Skipper Facebook page and other difficult situations that may arise.
- c.) A letter to be drafted to the Skipper expressing NIFF's disappointment with the publication of an anonymous letter with no right to reply. It should state that the communications strategy for the Inshore Forums is undergoing changes and communications will be improved. Draft letter to be circulated to the NIFF for approval before submitting to the Skipper.
- d.) The issue of public liability insurance for NIFF/RIFF members to be followed up on by NIFF secretary.

12. AOB

[Adverse Weather Compensation Scheme for vessels due to loss of Earnings over recent 12 weeks.](#) BIM explained that the only option at the moment is the Mutual fund under the EMFF which operates on a one to one basis with a clear set of rules for taking the money in and out of the fund. The issue of compensation due to bad weather and the COVID-19 issue were discussed in detail by the NIFF members. BIM noted that assessing compensation can be tricky. It was noted that the COVID-19 situation may surpass the issue of bad weather at the present time and the NIFF need to be pre-emptive and assess the potential impact on the inshore sector. NW RIFF suggested undertaking 2 days of training followed by beach clean-ups to get funding to fishermen during tough times instead of compensation. **Action point:** NIFF to draft a letter to



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the CEO of BIM requesting that BIM investigate the effects of COVID-19 on the inshore sector. This letter to be followed by a letter to Minister Creed highlighting the inshore sectors concerns over COVID-19, bad weather and the Chinese market with examples. BIM to look at feasibility of setting up NW RIFF suggestion of training and a beach clean-up. It was noted that this may take time to set up.

NW RIFF proposal on Quota for Mackerel Hook and Line Fishery

At the last NIFF meeting the Minister offered to increase the current cap of 500kg per landing for line caught mackerel to 750kg per landing. This offer went back to the NW RIFF for consideration. **Action Point:** The NW RIFF have accepted this increase and intend to look for more in the future. NW RIFF to revise their proposal with the 750kg and send back to the NIFF secretary to forward to the QMAC for consideration at their next meeting.

