

8 December 2021, 11am – 3.30 pm

Minutes

No.	Topic	Action	Who	Comment / Completed
1.	Governance of the IFM	Action: DB to add an index to the IFM's objects and governance documents to make them easier to navigate.	DB	
2.	Trustees' Report	Action: LT offered to help progress the Training Officer Business Case.	LT	
3.	Fellows	Action: PC to put Fellows page on the website, including rules and a few case studies to illustrate what the IFM means and does for people.	PC	
4.	Fellows	Action: DB to write to the new Fellows. BM said it would be good to make an occasion of Fellowship awards.	DB	

1. Welcome, apologies, introduction and purpose of meeting

Apologies were received from Scott West, Rob Clark, Eamon Cusack, Robert Rosell, Peter Spillett, Chris Mills, Karen Twine, Ted Potter and Shaun Leonard. The attendees are listed at end.

2. Declarations of interest for items on the agenda

None.

3. Minutes of last meeting and actions arising

All actions completed or in progress.

4. Governance of the IFM

a) A reminder of our Constitution

Paul Knight (PK) asked about the IFM becoming a charity and how that might affect its approach to lobbying and influencing matters such as the NASCO performance review? David Bunt (DB) highlighted that the IFM couldn't lobby individual political parties but otherwise its fine. Jonathan Swan (JS) said that lobbying is perfectly possible as well as setting the debate but it can't be aligned to any political party. Engagement should be issue driven. Jim Lyons (JL) we should focus on fish. DB said that the main objectives of the IFM as a charity are purposefully broad, which was echoed by Steve Axford (SA). Hannah Barclay (HB) asked who checks that the IFM is meeting its charitable objectives? DB said that is done by the Charities Commission. JS confirmed this. Ben Marshall (BM) confirmed that the legal responsibility rests with the Trustees. DB said that the IFM's Exec are responsible for driving the business forward. Bill Howarth (BH) highlighted that the IFM needs to reference public benefit and he suggested that the objectives look right. The provision of public information could be an important part of the IFM's role. Steve Colclough (SC) highlighted the important role of IFM to influence. Lawrence Talks (LT) suggested an **Action: DB** to add an index to the IFM's objects and governance documents to make them easier to navigate. Adrian Smith (AS) suggested lobbying is a question of

taking the right approach. BM said the issue is whether it gets party political. Richard Noble (RN) suggested it's an issue of the level of independence. SC said that it's important the IFM's voice is heard. It was concluded and agreed that the Institute can continue to make its opinion known on environmental and fisheries management matters to the government and all political parties, but it cannot 'lobby' on behalf of any particular political party.

b) A reminder of our new Governance structure and Terms of Reference for the Advisory Council

RN questioned the size of Council and who could vote, noting that the Exec and Trustees can't vote. DB highlighted that the Council was a way of getting everyone together for good communication and if everyone was in attendance the number would be about 35.

5. Trustees' Report

The report was circulated. The application for charitable status was submitted on 22 October and we should hear in 12 weeks. Many of the IFM's standards and policies and procedures have been reviewed or developed thanks to much hard work from Valerie Holt (VH). The Business Plan 2021 has been reviewed with RAG scores and the 2022 Business Plan is in development. The Conference was well received and was well attended. There was some negative feedback concerning the conference dinner, which we should reflect on. The appointment of a CEO is in progress. A business case is being developed for a Training Officer role. **Action: LT** offered to help progress the Training Officer Business Case. DB briefed everyone that Peter Spillett isn't well and in hospital. LT had brought a card for everyone to sign to send Peter all best wishes.

6. Finance Report – Ian Dolben

Membership now accounted for a good percentage of income. The overall surplus was looking like £20k. Ian Wellby thanked Paul Coulson and Iain Turner for all their hard work. RN asked about presenting the accounts through Girlings and in two formats. Ian Dolben produces both normal accounts and charity accounts. DB thanked Ian for doing such an excellent job in managing the accounts.

7. Membership Report – Paul Johnston

The Annual Conference included 1 year 'free' membership. There is now going to be more streamlined membership categories from 7 to 4. The emails informing members is due to go out in December and then also in renewal communications.

The membership action plan is bedding in with details on the website, an article in FISH and the group is working closely with Marketing and Comms. We want to renew and reinforce contacts with organisations. There is a deficit of women members. RN said that it is recommended that post event surveys are undertaken and follow up is done with non-members. BM said that this was part of Marketing and Comms. PJ said that half of the responders to the members' survey were non-members. PC said that 11% of members are joint members with the Fisheries Society of the British Isles (FSBI). Nigel Milner (NM) said that joint membership was straightforward for student members but more complex for other membership categories.

DB thanked PJ for his report. The initiative of signing up new members through the conference was welcomed but obviously the challenge is keeping them. In promoting the IFM the language to use should be "advantages" or "offer" of being an IFM member not "benefit". Offering monthly membership payments was discussed as crucial to attracting under 35-year olds.

7b) Fellowships

Nominees were Adrian Taylor and John Ellis of the Canal and Rivers Trust. They were unanimously supported.

Action: PC to put Fellows page on the website, including rules and a few case studies to illustrate what the IFM means and does for people. **Action: DB** to write to the new Fellows. BM said it would be good to make an occasion of Fellowship awards.

8. Operations Report – Paul Coulson

Paul outlined the varied and full programme of training and activities, including a fisheries course for Natural Resources Wales (NRW), working with Thames Water, the uptake of Certificate and Diploma courses, a new partnership with “WATR”, which is a water quality monitoring product. Another possibility is joining with the website “catch” a fishing booking app, which enables you to book specific swims. It is planned to reinvigorate the salmon conference. LT mentioned the S&TC’s review of IUCN status for Atlantic salmon. The outcome is expected in the autumn of 2022. Could be announced at the 2022 Annual Conference? RN said that Hull has been asked to be involved in the IUCN assessment.

9. 2022 Business Plan – David Bunt

DB presented the draft business plan for 2022 and the process for developing and finalising it. Members of the Exec team responsible for different areas would be asked to edit / add their priority actions for 2022, aligned with ensuring progress with the 5 Year Strategy. When Exec is happy with the content, the aim to be within the first 2 weeks of January, it will be submitted to the Trustees for approval.

DB reflected that 12 years ago the IFM had no employees and through employing both Paul and Iain and Scott before them, the Institute had made much progress. Now we are in the process of recruiting a part time Chief Executive, and we are developing a business case for a Training Officer post. DB expressed his thanks to Paul and Iain for all their hard work, which is much appreciated.

JL mentioned the fisheries monitoring accreditation scheme, which it is hoped will be soft launched in Ireland next year to notify people of the initiative. The aim is to launch the scheme fully at next year’s Annual Conference. IW said that “catch” wants to partner with the IFM to be able to offer fisheries management advice. We need to consider whether there are issues with promoting a particular product. Emma Keenan said she wants to abandon the concept of CEnv in a day as it has been found not to work well. SC said that it would be good to learn from the FSBI. There is a large potential market for members in Europe. It would be good to have UK representation at European Inland Fisheries Advisory Commission EIFAC. RN welcomed the Strategy and Business Plan, which are a much more professional approach. AS said that Corporate Social Responsibility may present an opportunity for partnerships with businesses. The Trustees fund raising skills may also be helpful. SC said there will be many opportunities with becoming a charity. JL suggested that the business plan should highlight resource gaps. IW said that the business plan provides a helpful framework to work with.

10. Update from partners

a) Salmon and Trout Conservation (S&TC) – Paul Knight

PK said the S&TC have been pretty vocal on **salmon farming**. They want policy change to force closed containment, which is the only way for a sustainable approach. Open net salmon farming is not acceptable. S&TC is developing an interactive map on the impacts of salmon farming with a media campaign involving chefs and supermarkets.

The smart rivers project with species level invertebrate monitoring has ongoing support from the Esmée Fairbairn Trust. This is a really good example of citizen science with river groups and rivers trusts.

Water. S&TC were vocal on the poor performance of the water companies. They wanted an amendment to the Environment Bill but this didn't get through. It was felt that there is enough environmental legislation but there is a need for political commitment from Defra and the EA.

NASCO. Paul Knight is co-chair the NASCO NGOs group. The next 18 months is important with an external performance review. Aquaculture and influencing are key areas that are key issues.

PC asked whether there had been a review of the International Year of the Salmon? PK said Norway gave their NGOs £250k. The Tromso Symposium provides a really good summary. PK said that NASCO somehow needs to be more impactful on home countries. DB said that S&TC had been clearly vocal on salmon farming and raw sewage going into rivers. PK said it was vital that the IFM is more vocal. S&TC is about fish and their environment. It is important that the IFM's policy side shows its teeth. Harriet Alvis (HA) said that FISH included content on the impact of sewage discharges on fish.

b) **Rivers Trust – Barry Bendall (BB)**

Wyre catchment – this is green investment finance project, which includes natural flood management and capital funding. There are similar projects being developed round the country.

Storm overflows. Didn't get amendment but helped generate significant public interest.

Ireland. Appointed Constance O'Toole to represent the Rivers Trust in Ireland and we are now looking to recruit two further officers.

OFWAT. A bid for £7.1m for monitoring was successful. This involves United Utilities and seven other water companies.

Environmental Land Management System (ELMS) continues to be a disappointment.

Plastics is gathering pace and we have developed a consistent methodology for surveying plastic and litter.

Our **State of our rivers report** was published and well received.

Our work on the **Water Industry Environment Programme (WINEP)** programme is focussing on nature-based solutions.

Woodlands for water project.

Some overall metrics include 88 barriers to migration worked on and 12,000 volunteers involved. Working with schools.

SC highlighted citizen science in freshwater, estuaries and marine waters. BB said the Rivers Trust wants to see a link between citizen science and statutory monitoring. Such monitoring training could be delivered by the IFM. JL highlighted link with the fisheries monitoring accreditation scheme. BB mentioned the state of rivers report and the chalk streams strategy which has support from Minister Powell.

c) **Fisheries Society of the British Isles (FSBI) – Nigel Milner**

NM said that the IFM and FSBI had agreed a plan of action and it is going well. There is an issue with joint full membership, which is more complex but joint student membership is OK. We have publicised the links on our website, FSBI newsletter and also on the IFM website etc.

11% of IFM members are FSBI members. The two organisations are two sides of the same coin. FISH is going to be made available to FSBI student members. Discussions and ongoing with FSBI, IFM and Wiley the publishers about making the online version of the Journal of Fish Biology available.

Progressing well. FSBI's training grant committee will be available to IFM student members as will the Annual Conference. Perhaps 2023 presents an opportunity for a joint IFM and FSBI conference in Scotland? The theme suggested is fish science to fisheries management.

BM asked about student enrolment and gift aid. FSBI provides tertiary education. DB thanked PC and NM for all their hard work. Miran Aprahamian (MA) mentioned 11% joint membership. NM said that FSBI provides different services to IFM.

AS asked about the IFM's relationship with the Angling Trust (AT). DB suggested that they could be a strategic partner. PC works closely with Martin Salter and AT work with IFM when it suits. AT members are angling based interested in predation etc. If you want fisheries management, the IFM is the place to go. AS said that the AT has strong links with angling clubs. Could be good to approach them to develop working relationships? The AT's relationship with anglers though isn't always good. There is an issue with angler's willingness to pay. Perhaps initiatives could include a gold standard for a fishery, quality marque. What is the pain point for committing to pay?

SC said that Defra didn't engage with recreational sea anglers and now they do with the help of the IFM. BM said that we need to distinguish AT and IFM in the minds of anglers. RN said that the IFM and AT haven't always seen eye to eye.

d) Wild Trout Trust – Shaun Leonard (SL)

Though SL couldn't make the meeting he provided the following written report:

WTT now has 9 Conservation Officers (7 FTEs), scattered from Cornwall to Dumfries. We've survived Covid well to date, in part thanks to furlough support, from which we claimed £33K in total, for staff salaries. Advisory work through Covid continued largely as normal, with a short cessation last spring, though work with volunteers has been limited. We're taking on some increasingly large projects, in partnership with local EA teams, funded through the Water Environment Improvement Fund. On-the-ground work largely focuses on England, with an encouraging upturn in Ireland, some in Scotland, none in Wales. One of the nine, Jonny Grey, is part-time Prof. at Lancaster and supports our research and translation of science to English. We've recently struck up a partnership with Eric Verspoor at Rivers & Lochs Institute, to progress his trout genetics work & will do more with other researchers, e.g. at Swansea, Glasgow. We could and should do more in partnership with sister NGOs, inc. IFM – there is a heap of challenges to which we could rise better in cohesion.

11. Training Report – Ian Wellby (IW)

It has been another successful year, concluding with developing a proposal to recruit a Training Officer. Looking ahead, initiatives in the pipeline include: a fisheries course in Northern Ireland, the development of a fisheries management course for coarse fishing clubs, the fisheries monitoring accreditation scheme, RS Aqua tagging and telemetry workshop and the development of material for teachers. The new GCSE in natural history presents an opportunity for the IFM to develop a fish specific module, which could include history art and cultural aspects relating to fish and fisheries. Succession planning is an issue.

BM mentioned the concept of product for prospect with the development of a pre-level 1 e-learning course which would be an online access point aimed at the amateur person and given away as a free product, as an entry point and taster for higher level courses. AS was very supportive of the additional training officer post. The role of the training officer is largely administrative to free up the team to deliver and develop the IFM's training offer. PC said there is market in Europe covering water quality and fish health as examples. AS said it was good to see the ideas and proposals.

12. Marketing and Communications – Lawrence Talks

A marketing consultant, Ned Wells, has been taken on to advise the Marketing and Comms Group to undertake a stage 1 review of the IFM's approach to marketing and comms. The focus is on taking a strategic look at personas who we should target to join as members. Stage 1 is to:

- 1) Define our target audiences and their personas.
- 2) Taking a reverse engineering approach, does our offer meet our personas' expectations and 'pain points'?
- 3) What do we need to do to meet our personas' expectations and grow our membership taking a 3-tiered approach of
a) a product(s) for prospective members,
b) an improved members' offer and
c) building an IFM figurehead.

Closely allied to the above is consideration of what additional resources are needed to deliver an improved offer.

Two workshops are organised for later in December to progress our thinking.

DB thanked LT for taking this important area of work forward.

13. Policy Forum – Gurpreet Padda (GP)

We are developing a process map and a policy and influencing strategy, which links to Marketing and Comms. We also plan to horizon scan and want to develop links with specialist sections. AS highlighted that it would be helpful to have briefings for Trustees.

14. Branch Reports

a) Scottish Branch Update - Keith Williams

Branch Activities

There has been little activity in terms of branch meetings this year largely because most members of the committee have been exceptionally busy delivering projects postponed or delayed in 2020 due to Covid. However, a short branch meeting is planned for the 7th December. It is anticipated that the date of the branch AGM will be set at the meeting. The intention is for the AGM to be combined with a talk, or talks, in a similar manner to the previous one which proved to be very popular. It will be undertaken online. We will be ensuring that our accounting periods etc. are in line with the main body of IFM as this will be particularly important once charitable status is fully in place. Once accepted at AGM, the accounts will be forwarded to the relevant people in the main body of IFM.

Training

An online bailiff exam has recently been delivered and marked. The online approach is still being developed as it is clear that some of the candidates are struggling with the second section of the exam. We are also in discussion with Fishery Management Scotland regarding the production of filmed training material for water bailiffs.

Charitable Status

Keith has written to OSCR, the Scottish charity regulator in an attempt to clarify whether there is a requirement for IFM to register as a charity in Scotland. Once a response has been received, Keith will liaise with Steve Axford.

b) Welsh Branch – Harriet Alvis

Unfortunately, the aquaculture visit was cancelled due to Covid. List of activities being developed.

c) Yorkshire and NE Branch – Paul Coulson

Activities impacted by Covid.

d) **Ireland**

Planning a tagging and telemetry workshop in 2022.

e) **London and SE Branch**

Eel conference 2019 and Sturgeon conference. Covid impacted since then. AGM planned in the New Year.

f) **Anglian Branch**

Still active.

15. Specialist Section Reports

a) **Freshwater and environment specialist section** – Jim Lyons

JL mentioned the fisheries monitoring accreditation scheme. And beaver consultation.

b) **Marine** – Steve Colclough

Involved in Tidefest, bass workshop, sturgeon/. Natural England finally after 10 year looking more closely at sturgeon as a native fish species. Working with the Blue Marine Foundations.

c) **Angling and recreation section** – Mike Lee (presented by Paul Coulson)

Concern about round gobie and developing a IFM position statement.

16. Any other business

a) Dates for future meetings to be agreed. Note previous link between Council meetings and training meeting in December.

b) Westminster Forum, 26 January. David Bunt speaking for IFM.

c) Feedback on meeting for such a hybrid meeting it would be good to have at least two microphones to enable people logging on to hear the discussion. We have since decided to purchase the 'Owl' product, to make hybrid Zoom meetings much more user-friendly.

Attendees (see over)

Attendees

No.	Name	Attended in person	Attended by Zoom	Apologies
1.	David Bunt	Yes		
2.	Lawrence Talks	Yes		
3.	Paul Coulson	Yes		
4.	Iain Turner	Yes		
5.	Ian Dolben	Yes		
6.	Ian Wellby	Yes		
7.	Paul Johnston		Yes	
8.	Chris Mills			Apologies
9.	Peter Spillett			
10.	Valerie Holt		Yes	
11.	Steve Axford		Yes	
12.	Eamon Cusack			Apologies
13.	Miran Aprahamian		Yes	
14.	Jim Lyons	Yes		
15.	Richard Noble	Yes		
16.	Nicola Teague			
17.	Shaun Leonard			Apologies
18.	Barry Bendall			
19.	Paul Knight		Yes	
20.	Hannah Barclay	Yes		
21.	Mike Lee			Apologies
22.	Scott West			Apologies
23.	Steve Colclough	Yes		
24.	Emma Keenan	Yes		
25.	Nigel Milner		Yes	
26.	Robert Rosell			Apologies
27.	Keith Williams		Yes	
28.	Harriet Alvis	Yes		
29.	Karen Twine			Apologies
30.	Rob Clark			Apologies
31.	Adrian Smith	Yes		
32.	Jonathan Swan		Yes	
33.	Ben Marshall	Yes		
34.	William Howarth		Yes	
35.	Ted Potter			Apologies
36.	Gurpreet Padda	Yes		
37.	Ed Noyes			Apologies