



Institute of Fisheries Management

## **Annual General Meeting 2019**

### **Chairman's Report**

This is the Chairman's report to the 2019 Annual General Meeting of the Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM). It is structured according to the business areas in our Development Plan. The objective(s) for each business area are provided as a reminder to what the Institute is aiming to achieve in each.

#### **Governance**

##### Objective:

- To maintain the best possible structure and practices to ensure the Institute runs professionally and cost-effectively.

Council (30 members) met its usual three times in the year, setting the direction for the Institute, and the Executive Committee (12 people) met its usual four times to follow the business plan and direction set by Council. My thanks to Council Members and Executive Committee for their hard work to provide the best for the IFM.

The Institute has been reviewing the option of seeking Charitable Status. That option is a motion to the AGM to help make the final decision on if we should proceed down that route. It is likely to require a change of governance, by having, amongst other changes, a Board of Trustees.

A huge thanks to Peter Spillett who is retiring as IFM President at the end of this year.

#### **Finance**

##### Objectives:

- To manage our budgets carefully
- To achieve a surplus each year and annual growth

The Director of Finance has produced a separate report for the year. This is a summary:

##### **VAT Liability**

The Institute continues to review its VAT liability as turnover is more than £84k. This is being reviewed in conjunction with our accountants, Girlings, and interpretation of HMRC guidance.

##### **2018 Accounts**

The Institute receives around a quarter of our income through subscriptions and commercial accounts, the remainder being training (41.5%) and conferences and workshops (32.5%).

In conclusion, we continue to move to a better financial position following several years of a very high deficit and a critical look at expenditure, making several changes to save money as well as increasing our income through conferences and courses.

This has only been possible through the efforts of our two full time staff, Paul Coulson and Iain Turner, and the work of the IFM Training team led by Ian Wellby, assisted by the team of tutors delivering quality fisheries training. Ideally, we also need to stabilise and increase our membership.

I am grateful to Ian Dolben for managing and monitoring the Institute's accounts so diligently.

## Staff & Officers

### Objective:

- To employ competent full time staff and honorary officers who reflect the diversity of the Institute, are motivated and rewarded, to provide the best possible services to the Institute, its members and customers.

We now have 2 full time staff – Paul Coulson as Director of Operations and Iain Turner as Development Officer.

Jim Gregory is standing down as Executive Director and I'm pleased to announce that Lawrence Talks, currently editor of FISH, will take over from 1 January. So, we are seeking a successor for editor of FISH. This has since been announced as the duo of Karen Twine and Harriett Alvis.

Adrian Taylor is standing down as Director of Marketing & Communications, so we have a vacancy to fill there too.

The Institute has 35 officers and 10 committees to perform its duties, and 9 Branches to provide services and activities to members across Ireland and the United Kingdom. Thank you to you all for your often voluntary service to the Institute and its members.

## Marketing & communications

### Objective:

- To promote our services and achievement to our members, customers, partners and policy makers, to raise our profile and be more visible

FISH Magazine, was produced its usual four times in the year. It is now distributed 95% digitally, with savings for the environment and postage. Thanks to Lawrence Talks for editing a consistently high quality production.

The use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook are becoming much more the norm now, and IFM uses those outlets more and more to publicise events – before and after. Thanks to Harriet Alvis, our Communications Officer, and Paul Coulson and Iain Turner who make extensive use of social media to maximise IFM's exposure.

We are reviewing our website, which is getting unreliable and clunky. This is our main window for members and customers and is often the first contact people have with IFM – so it is important for it to be effective and professional. Paul Coulson and Iain Turner are reviewing suppliers and a recommendation on a new service will be made to Council in December 2019.

## Training

### Objective:

- To provide an increasing suite of training courses and workshops to provide professional training to meet a wide variety of customer needs

## **IFM Certificate course**

There were 35 new enrolments in 2019.

To give the students enrolled on the IFM Certificate Course some practical experience we now run a weekend training course each March. Over a weekend the students cover a mixture of subjects ranging from Water Quality to Fish Health as well as undertaking two practical exercises. The first afternoon sees the group visit a local fish farm to help with harvesting. The second afternoon is a demonstration of electric fishing and netting.

The course is delivered by a number of the IFM Training Team and has proven very popular with people enrolled on the course.

Some statistics on the Certificate course since re-launch in 2013:

• <b>Total students.</b>	<b>255</b>
• Haven't taken exams	31 (12%)
• Have taken exams, but not complete.	18 (7%)
• Completed and passed	103 (40%)
• Dropped out	103 (40%)

## **IFM Diploma course**

12 new students enrolled in September 2019 with 5 moving onto their second year.

2019 saw the launch of two new modules - Transitional Waters and Migratory Species Management - and the redevelopment of the Freshwater Biology Module.

## **IFM award**

9 started the full course for 2019 with a further 9 moving forward to Year 2.

There are a further 20 students taking various units over the two years

IFM Training team are also working on the development of further modules for this course.

## **Environment Agency Weekend Fisheries Management Workshops**

IFM Training will be delivering a further 8 of these workshops across the country in 2019.

## **Weed Workshop**

After the success in 2018 IFM Training will be delivering a further weed workshop in Kettering in 2019.

## **Short Courses**

IFM Training continue to deliver various short courses, such as our popular 2 day Electrofishing course.

IFM Training continues to support the Angling Trust Fisheries Enforcement workshops and the Fisheries Improvements Workshops.

My thanks to Ian Wellby and the IFM Training team for their efforts in providing so many high quality courses and developing the fisheries managers of the future.

## **Conferences & Workshops**

### Objective:

- To provide one annual conference and several specialist conferences or workshops per year

The 2018 annual conference was held in Hull, with the theme 'Thriving or Surviving? – Creating Resilient Fisheries'. 128 delegates attended. There were 137 at this year's Nottingham conference.

## Workshops and Events 2018-19:

- Lamprey workshop with Bournemouth University (BUG)
- Aquatic Weed Control Workshop
- 6 Fishery Management Workshops on behalf of the EA
- 5 X Angling Trust Fishery Improvement Workshops (H&S)
- IFM Specialist Conference. Fish, Flows and Climate Resilience

## Membership

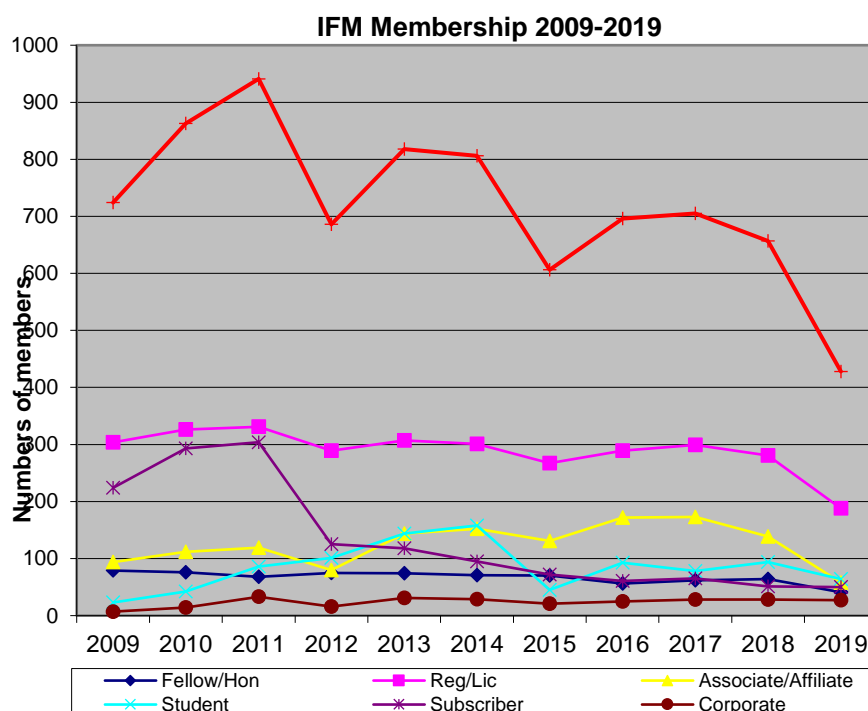
### Objectives:

- To provide good value and quality services to members
- To increase the level and engagement of members

Like many membership organisations, we are concerned at the continued downward trend in our membership as the graph below shows. This, despite the provision of more and better services, discounted to members.

At face value membership for 2019 has fallen by 35% compared to the total for 2018. However, this isn't the complete or final picture as final reminders are about to go out. We expect the actual figure to be around 550 instead of 428.

To view this over the last 10 years or so - we had 941 members in 2011 and we now have about 550, a decline of 42%% (see graph). This is a worrying situation for the Institute to find itself in and must be urgently addressed if the decline in membership is to be reversed.



We believe the main reasons for the decline are:

- Reduced numbers employed in fisheries management
- Reduced tendency towards membership in our society

Nevertheless, IFM is a membership organisation and we will continue to focus in and maximise our services to members and to represent their interests. To aim to reverse the downward trend in membership we have undertaken the following measures:

- Fisheries sector analysis – to determine the numbers of fisheries professionals working in the freshwater fisheries sector in UK and Ireland as an estimate of the existing potential market for IFM (in progress);
- Survey of fisheries professionals – survey of members and non-members to invite views on IFM in order to provide a better service for members and potential members (to be initiated before the end of 2019);
- Membership strategy and Action Plan – a clear and focussed plan on development membership over the next 10 years (in progress);
- Promotion & Marketing – development and implementation of a range of initiatives to increase membership (to be initiated during 2020).

To conclude on a positive note – the years 2012 and 2015 with membership declines of 27% and 25% were each followed by a recovery of 19% and 15%. We should not necessarily expect a similar recovery next year but, with a focussed recruitment drive, our target should be an increase of at least 25% as a first step in the restoration of membership.

## Professional status

### Objectives:

- To promote and enhance the professional status of fisheries managers
- To be the market leader / go-to organisation for the provision of CPD for fisheries professionals

The Chartered Environmentalist Award (C.Env) continues to be available via the Institute. Most IFM activities carry Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points to help develop and maintain C.Env status for members. Three new C.Envs were awarded to IFM members in 2018, bringing the total to 114.

The C.Env assessment process is long and cumbersome and seen as a barrier to many. So, our C.Env Co-ordinator, Emma Keenan has developed and is trialling a 'C.Env in a Day' assessment process. If successful, and acceptable to the Society for the Environment, this will be made available to members.

## Branches

### Objective:

- To provide a network of thriving and active branches to provide local IFM services, activities and networking

Activities over the past year:

- SW branch is active and held 2 events so far in 2019
- Southern branch has reformed and are hosting the 2020 annual conference in Southampton next year
- London & SE branch continue with their successful regular programme (4 times per year) of events
- Welsh branch continues hosting events and have successfully combined with Cardiff university for joint occasions.
- Scottish branch has been quiet since Simon's passing and are currently reforming the committee.
- Ireland branch looking to reenergise the branch and start hosting events again since the Annual Conference in Belfast in 2017
- Midlands branch holding regular events and have been key in planning the 50<sup>th</sup> annual conference.
- North East is still active but not held an event since Hull 2018

- North West and Anglian branches still to reform new committees

Geographical restrictions often hamper some regions such as Wales and SW. The key to overcoming these issues is to move venues around to allow members from all over the region to attend at least one event per year.

Iain Turner is in touch with the two non-functioning branches and is making progress, (albeit slow) to form two new committees. He has supplied some basic guidance on running branches to demystify the processes involved.

## Specialist sections

### Objective:

- To maintain relevant specialist sections to develop and provide technical expertise

We have five specialist sections to advise and lead on fisheries management topics, those are, with their chairs:

▪ Estuarine & Coastal	Steve Colclough
▪ Fisheries & the Environment	Jim Lyons
▪ Culture & Health	Ian Wellby
▪ Angling & Recreation	Mike Lee
▪ Administration & Management	Steve Axford

## Policy development

### Objective:

- To provide credible and compelling evidence to government and agencies in developing new legislation and policies

Over the past year, IFM has responded to consultations or developed position statements on the following topics:

#### Complete:

- Coarse fish close season consultation
- Salmon hatcheries

#### Drafts:

- Tidal Power
- Invasive Species
- European eel
- Fish Disease

Something we aim to improve is to get agreement across the 4 administrations (England, Scotland, Wales and N.I.) and Ireland. At the moment our positions are very England focused.

Our statements help to inform and influence government policy and also help to increase the Institute's reputation as an evidence based, professional, independent and objective non-government organisation. Our membership of the Wildlife and Countryside Link increases the coverage and exposure to influencing government policy.

## Partnerships

### Objective:

- To work with other organisations, where there is mutual benefit, to progress our objectives

We work with a large number and wide variety of fisheries and conservation organisations around Ireland and the UK. At the Council workshop last year we considered how we might develop partnerships better to maximise the IFM's effect with its limited resources. A strategy is being developed to put that thinking into action.

Thanks to Nigel Milner who attended the NASCO\* meeting in Tromso, Norway in June this year and provided a comprehensive report to Council on NASCO's progress. \* North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation.

## Business development

### Objective:

- To identify and make the most of new opportunities to provide services to customers

IFM is constantly seeking opportunities to develop its business – to maintain its viability to provide the best for fisheries management and services to members and customers. For example, we are regularly identifying gaps in the market for training – for example to water companies to boost our income, particularly as membership income declines.

The Institute is reaching the end of a 10 Year Strategy and 2 Year Business Planning period. So, Council and Executive are preparing a new strategy and plan to prepare ourselves for and focus our efforts on our future business.

## Thank you

My thanks to all members, officers and staff for your support to the Institute.



**David Bunt**  
**Chairman**