

# **AIFCA Survey - Celebrating 10 Years**



# Introduction

This report details the results of a questionnaire, distributed to the members of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs) in England. The survey was undertaken by the Association of Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (AIFCA). As part of a series of events to mark the 10-year anniversary of IFCAs.

The survey was conducted with the support of Marketing PProjects' Jane Harrad-Roberts using the online survey platform Survio. The survey was conducted between April and May 2021, and distributed to IFCA members by the individual IFCAs.

The purpose of the survey is to engage feedback from the IFCA membership on their experience as an IFCA member and to seek IFCA members views on the role of and potential improvements to the Association of IFCAs.

The report will be used to inform the future strategy of the AIFCA and form the basis of recommendations to the Members Forum of the AIFCA.

The survey was in three parts, the first part concerning the experience of IFCA membership, the second the role of the AIFCA and the third part regarding future engagement with the IFCA members.

## General

	Survey name	AIFCA Survey - Celebrating 10 Years
	Author	Jane Harrad-Roberts FCIM & Robert Clark
	Survey URL	<a href="https://www.survio.com/survey/d/D3F6N3E1E9X6I5O5V">https://www.survio.com/survey/d/D3F6N3E1E9X6I5O5V</a>
	First response	04/30/2021
	Last response	06/04/2021
	Duration	36 days

## Survey visits

**201**  
Total visits

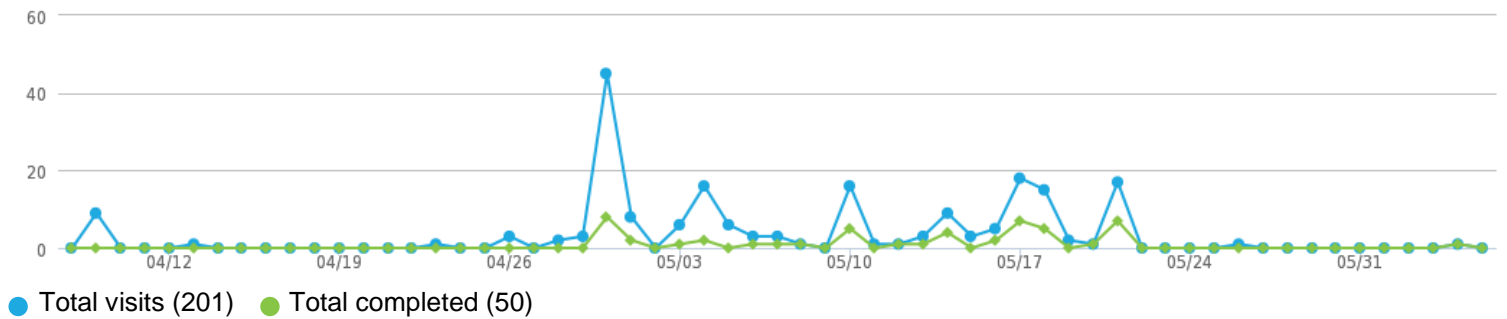
**50**  
Total completed

**0**  
Total unfinished

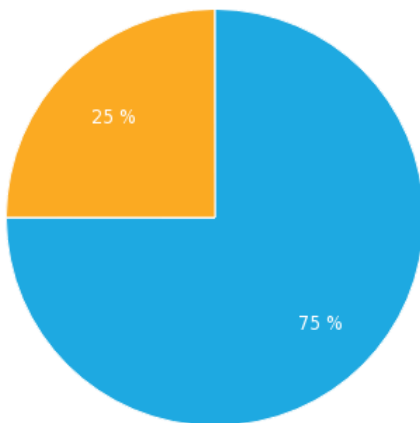
**150**  
Displayed only

**24.9 %**  
Overall completion rate

### Visit History (04/30/2021 - 06/04/2021)

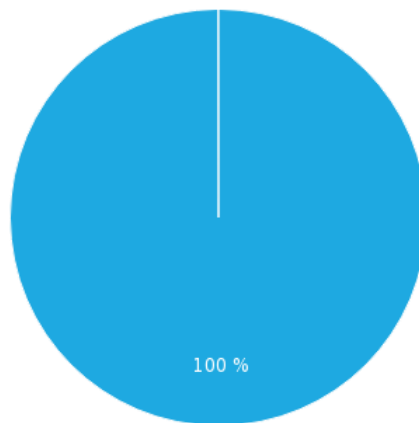


### Total Hits



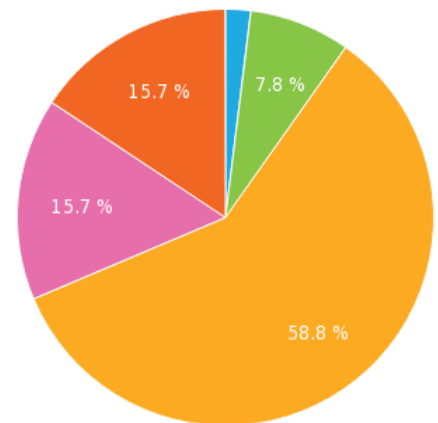
- Displayed only (75 %)
- Unfinished (0 %)
- Completed (25 %)

### Visit Sources



- Direct link (100 %)

### Average Time of Completion



- 2-5 min. (2.0 %)
- 5-10 min. (7.8 %)
- 10-30 min. (58.8 %)
- 30-60 min. (15.7 %)
- >60 min. (15.7 %)

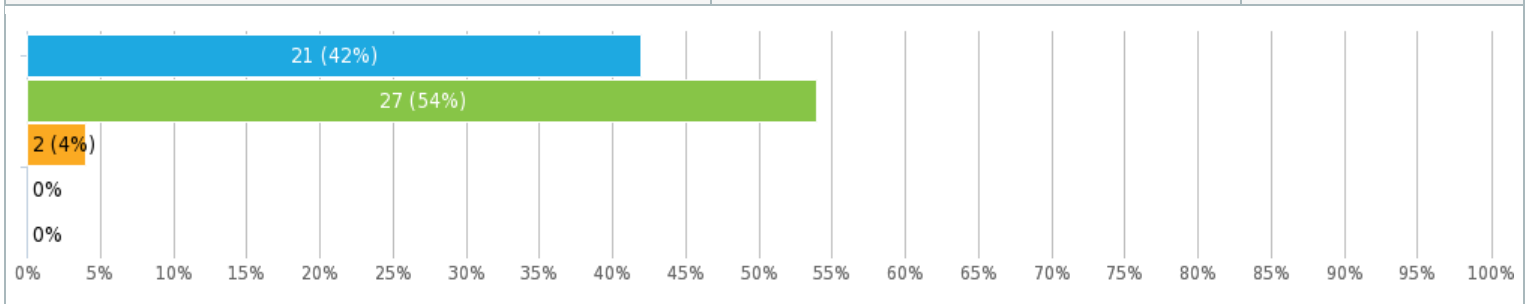
# Results

1. Please describe how you feel about the following statement: 'Through my membership of the IFCA I am able to contribute to healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and viable industries':

Single choice, answers **50x**, unanswered **0x**

96% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "Through my membership of the IFCA I am able to contribute to healthy seas, sustainable fisheries and viable industries".

Answer Choices	Responses	Ratio
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Agree Strongly	21	42 %
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Agree	27	54 %
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Neutral	2	4 %
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Disagree	0	0 %
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Strongly Disagree	0	0 %



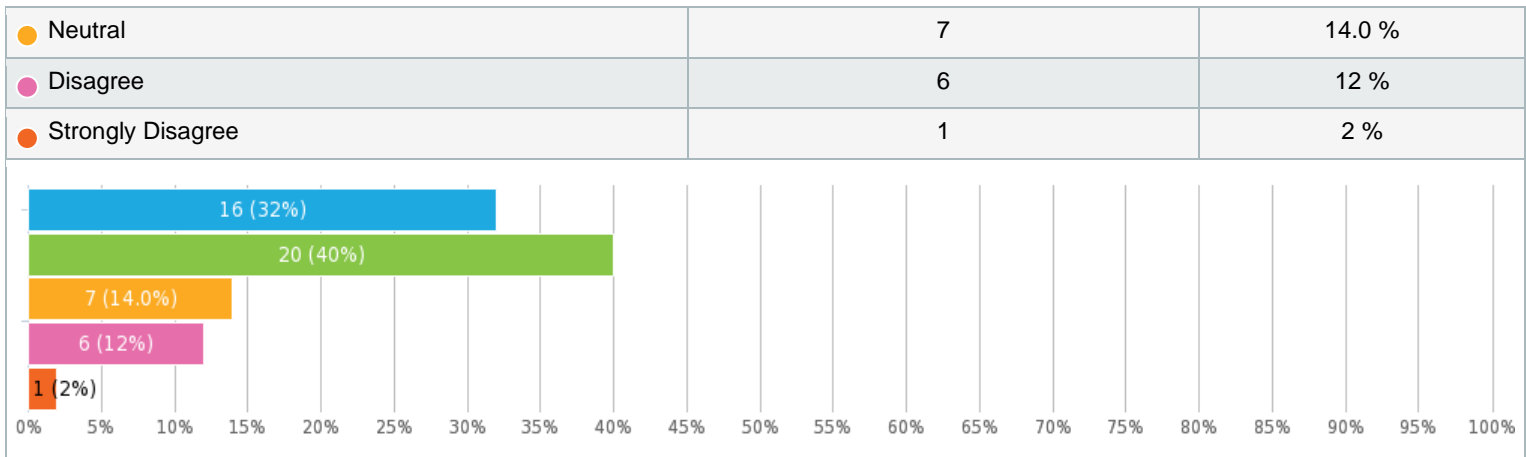
2. Do you have any comments about this?

Approximately 60% of respondents had no further comments. Of the 20% of respondents who expressed a view, the challenge of achieving a balance was referenced; with contrasting comments; some noting there is a need for more commercial interests, others identifying that there is a need for greater representation from conservation groups. Other comments concerned the lack of financial resources constraining the ability of the IFCA to deliver its duties.

3. Please describe how you feel about the following statement: 'IFCAs are making progress towards successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits in your IFCA District'.

72% of respondents either agreed or agreed strongly that: 'IFCAs are making progress towards successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits in your IFCA District'. 14% were neutral and 12% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed. All points have been considered for further action.

Answer Choices	Responses	Ratio
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Agree Strongly	16	32 %
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Agree	20	40 %



#### 4. Do you have any comments about this?

Comments on the statement that 'IFCAs are making progress towards successfully securing the right balance between social, environmental and economic benefits in your IFCA District' ranged in views.

The majority of views were comments on the progress made by their individual IFCAs, for example; "X IFCA seems to have got the balance perfectly right (in my opinion). They lead the way in some of their ambitious conservation management but also have a thriving and well supported local fishery." To general comments including; "Inshore fisheries and conservation authorities have made huge advances in the management of our coastal waters and are doing a brilliant job with limited resources."

Of the minority who did not agree with the statement, there was a common theme that a particular interest was not adequately represented; this view was provided from a contrasting perspective, characterised as either too little attention being paid to conservation interests, to too little paid to fishing interests. Qualifying these concerns were comments on a lack of funding and guidance / direction from Defra hampering the role of the IFCAs. All points have been considered for further action.

#### 5. Thinking about the IFCA's shared vision: "Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities will 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 viable-industries" What would you describe your IFCA's greatest achievement?

This question elicited a range of views regarding the IFCAs greatest achievements, these include; avoiding a fully precautionary route through the use of evidence, shared working with all parties, co-management, effective compliance, bringing people together, working with local stakeholders, taking a balanced view, working closely with industry, credible fisheries management, increased collaboration, closures of sensitive habitats to damaging activity, raising the work of the IFCAs in local community, managing to function at all given our totally inadequate budget.

One member was concerned that there were no benefits to Gloucestershire and another commented that there had been a general decline in commercial fishing activity over the corresponding time.

## 6. What have been the three most significant challenges for you as a member of an IFCA?

There were a number of themes that emerged, these included;

- Achieving a balance between the different users and the challenge of enabling engagement vs. the need to avoid vested interests. This challenge of reconciling different interests and perspectives was a significant theme.
- The issue of how to engage commercial fishing industry in the decision making where pecuniary interests exist.
- Delivering the IFCA functions with very limited resources.
- A lack of support from Defra and the MMO and in particular the competition between national priorities and local priorities.
- A lack of ability to learn from other IFCAs and share members interest between IFCAs emerged as an issue.
- Other comments included the complexity of the IFCAs decision making process and the length of the papers / time taken to reach decisions (which in turn may be linked to the challenge of balancing the needs of the different members).
- More immediate issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic – and the lack of personal contact that has resulted, were expressed (though this was not a significant theme).
- In the case of Gloucestershire, the comment there has been a failure of DEFRA to review the IFCA and remove Gloucestershire from the current arrangement. This theme runs through this response.

Again, all points have been considered for further action, especially communications, skills and leaning opportunities between IFCAs.

## 7. In three words how would you summarise your experience as an IFCA member?

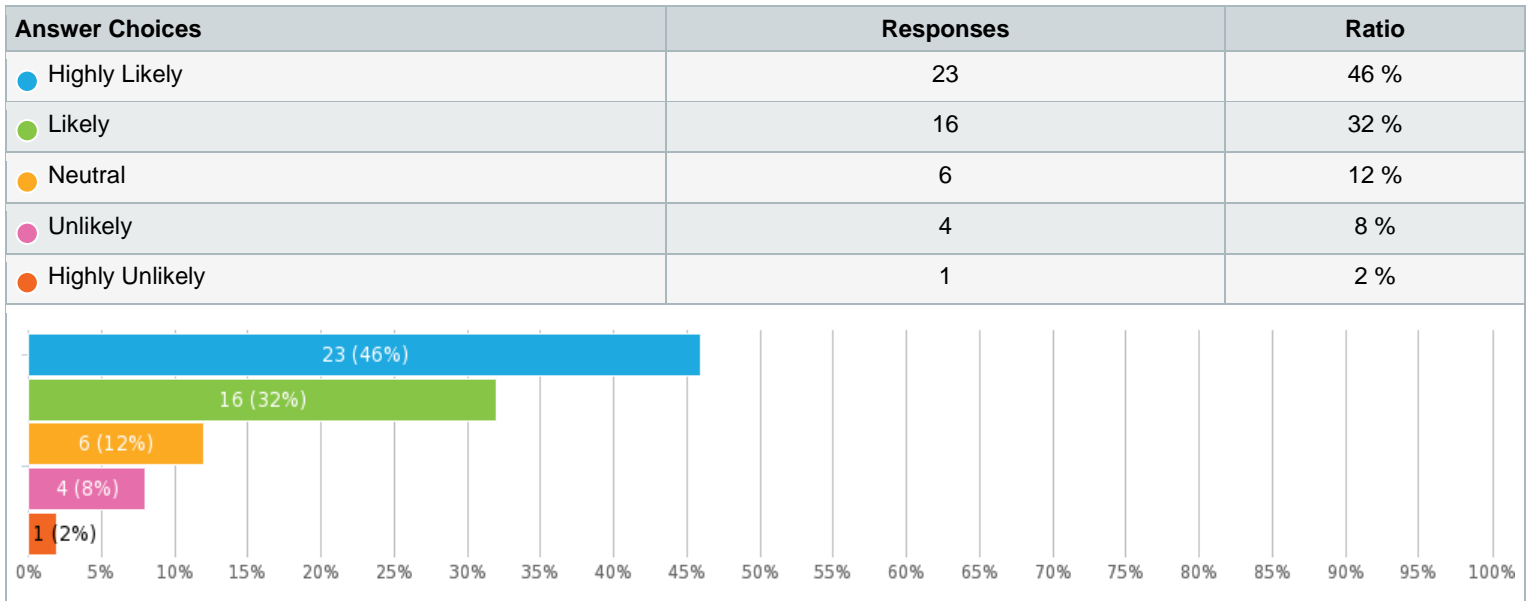
Text answer, answers **50x**, unanswered **0x**



The wordcloud presented above weights the words, according to the frequency that they occurred in the feedback. The vast majority of the key adjectives used were rewarding, interesting and challenging. The word frustrating was also a frequent occurrence; and its use could be both attributed to answers elsewhere in this questionnaire which refer to the speed of decision making, the need for individual interests to be heard and the funding issue.

## 8. How likely would you be to recommend becoming an IFCA member to a relevant friend or colleague?

*78% of members would be likely or highly likely to recommend becoming an IFCA member to a relevant friend or colleague.*



## 9. What do you see as the main opportunities for the IFCAs in the next 5 years?

The answers received to this question grouped around a number of themes, and these themes may be broadly characterised to include;

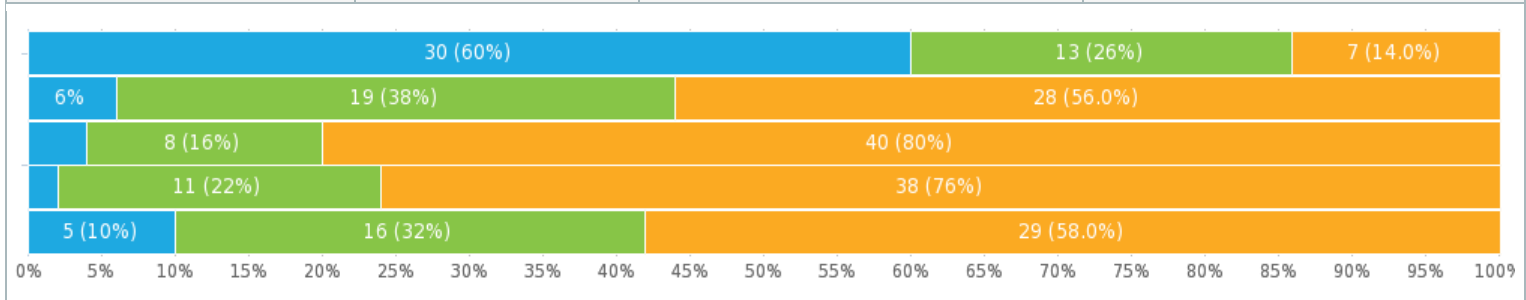
- Building stronger relationships with commercial fishing interests and with working with fishermen.
- Enabling the fishing industry to adapt post EU Exit.
- Delivering effective enforcement.
- Securing sustainable funding for the IFCAs.
- Raising greater awareness of the role and work of IFCAs.
- To work more closely together under the renewed AIFCA.

## PART TWO

Part two of the survey concerned the role of the Association of IFCAs (AIFCA). Members of IFCAs were asked a series of questions regarding they engage and receive information from the AIFCA and how the AIFCA might improve its engagement and communication.

### 10. How do you receive information about the work of the AIFCA?

	● <b>Mostly</b>	● <b>Occasionally</b>	● <b>Rarely/Never</b>
IFCA Reports	30 (60 %)	13 (26 %)	7 (14.0 %)
AIFCA Website	3 (6 %)	19 (38 %)	28 (56.0 %)
Telephone	2 (4 %)	8 (16 %)	40 (80 %)
Social Media	1 (2 %)	11 (22 %)	38 (76 %)
Other ways	5 (10 %)	16 (32 %)	29 (58.0 %)



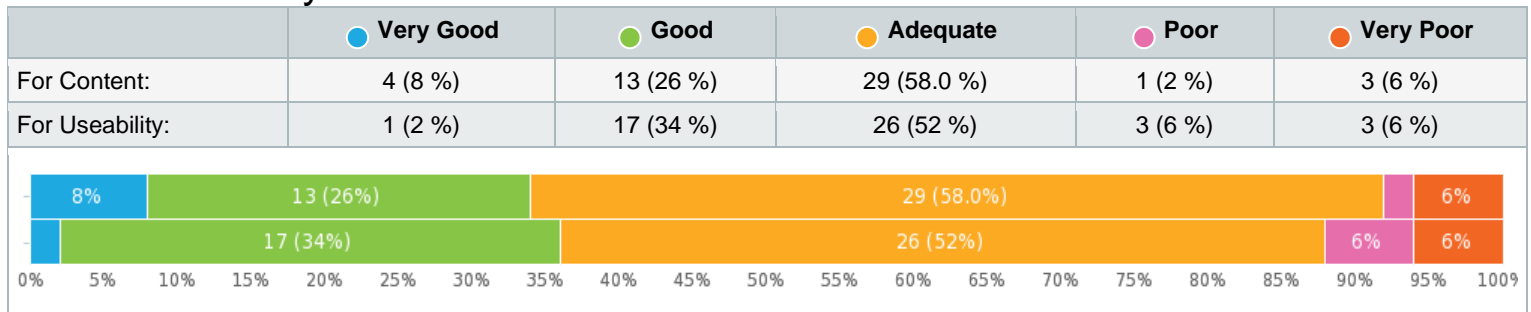
### 11. Do you have any comments on the information you receive or the other ways you receive information?

The majority of respondents commented that they would wish to see more information from the AIFCA, and there was a theme which emerged from the feedback that the information should be easily accessible – using signposting and bullet points, avoiding long reports.

A number of respondents commented on the professionalism of the AIFCA. There were a number of comments which either referred to the need for the AIFCA to improve the frequency and amount of communication with IFCAs, including the opportunity to share information between IFCAs. A number of the IFCAs commented on the positive development of the AIFCA more recently.



## 12. How would you rate the AIFCA website?



## 13. How can we improve the AIFCA website?

Just under a quarter of respondents had no comment or did not feel able to make suggestions. Of the remaining respondents a number referred to the fact that they did not use the website, or that they rarely used computers. Some detailed responses suggested improving and increasing the links to other sources of information.

More regular news stories were suggested, improvements to the layout were suggested. One respondent commented on that the website was designed for technical users, and that consideration might be made as to other users of the site to make it more accessible. One respondent suggested more use of mapping, another commented that they particularly liked the interactive mapping already on the site.

Two participants commented that the website looked somewhat dated and could be updated to a more modern appearance and it was suggested that the website could be integrated with the AIFCA social media feed. All points have been considered for further action.

## 14. What do contacts outside the AIFCA most frequently say about the organisation?

Around 20% of respondents either did not comment or stated that they were unable to say. A number of respondents referred to a general lack of awareness of the AIFCA outside of the IFCA themselves. There were three negative comments which suggested that the IFCA could function without the AIFCA and that the AIFCA does not listen. Others comments were positive comments suggesting that the AIFCA was seen as important and provided important training.

## 15. How can the AIFCA improve?

Funding and publicity were seen as key areas where the AIFCA should focus its activities. A number of respondents suggested that the AIFCA should provide greater awareness and information sharing between the IFCA, one commentator said; "Communication and there seems to be a need for more collaboration / sharing of best practice between IFCA to co-ordinate activity and make better use of resources." This summarised the main feedback received.

A number of respondents suggested that an annual members conference would be beneficial and several suggested that in person attendance of the AIFCA at IFCA meetings would be beneficial. Again, All points have been considered for further action.

## 16. What do you see as the main priorities for the AIFCA, when representing the 10 IFCAs in England?

Funding emerged as a key theme for the priority of the AIFCA to focus upon, ensuring that the IFCAs are adequately resourced; “achieving a fair financial settlement”. Several commentators identified the need for the AIFCA to develop a closer understanding of the needs of commercial fishers and to build better relationships with that sector.

A large proportion of those who answered this question highlighted the opportunity for the AIFCA to provide a unified or consolidated voice on the IFCA inshore fisheries policy issues to raise awareness and to “be a clear voice representing to government and relevant statutory bodies any issues IFCAs have” and to “Promote a coordinated approach presenting a united front”.

Other individual comments received included the need for greater transparency within the organisation, to provide training, to lobby for an extension of the IFCAs to 12nm. And improve the general members recruitment process. All points have been considered for further action.

## 17. Given limited budgets, what changes would you like to see from the AIFCA?

In contrast to other questions there was a far greater diversity of suggestions for change.

One broad outcome was a focus on the need for more communication and comments received included; more information, better publicity, expert knowledge exchange, improved engagement with stakeholder, greater social media presence, more public presence, greater transparency, a newsletter and greater communication, more direct contact with members and responses encouraging a joined-up approach.

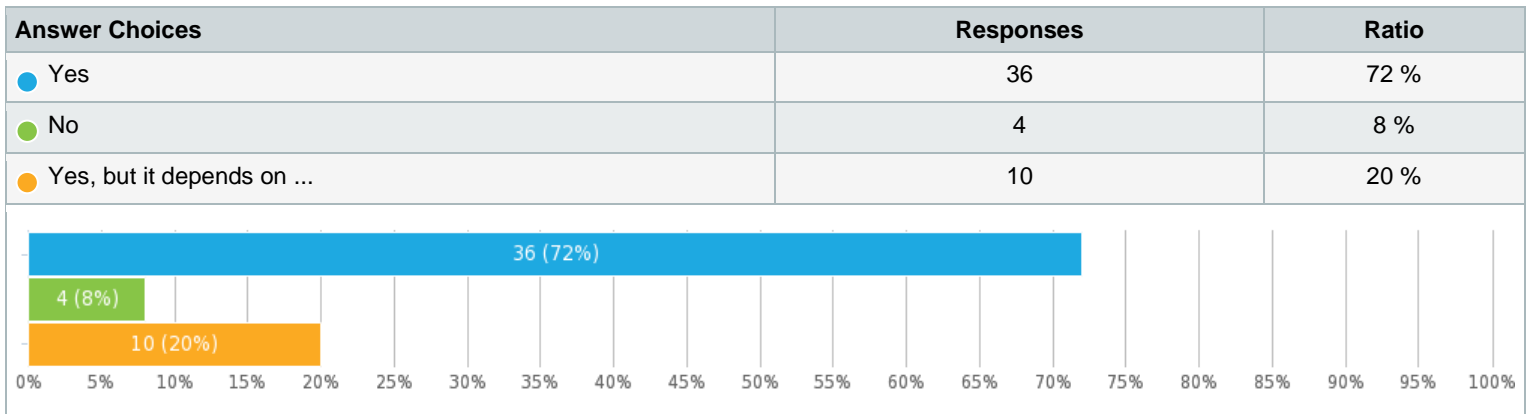
## 18. What of our operations/activities could be done better?

Better and more communication and dissemination of information and best practice emerged as a key theme. Publicity and engagement with stakeholder groups was suggested; “Developing the website is not enough - development of mutual respect by well-considered outcomes - especially for new Bye Laws is essential”. Training for non-staff was highlighted. Two commentators suggested that less administration and more outcome was important “use time at meetings better; less waffle” said one. Again, all points have been considered for further action from this and the previous question’s responses.

## 19. The AIFCA would like to start a quarterly members online newsletter. Is this a good idea?

72% of respondents felt that a newsletter would be a good idea. This rose to 92% when a further 20% provided caveats to their support for the production of a newsletter.

Of those who made suggestions, it was felt that there would be need to ensure good content and to not view it as the only improvement that could be made. Comments were made on costs and the need to avoid duplication / balance the need for detail with accessibility to a wide range of audiences.



## 20. If we go ahead, what would you like to see in the AIFCA newsletter?

**Format** - Several members highlighted that they would not wish to receive the newsletter in an online only format.

**Content** - Some respondents indicated that bullet points with links to articles would be helpful. The sharing of best practice from the IFCA's emerged as a theme. Balanced comment was seen as important, relevant Defra publications could be helpfully included. Topical issues with best practice highlighted was identified.

Announcements and appointments were seen as valuable. Information on how the IFCA's is working together, and summaries of activities of the IFCA's were all offered as suggestions.

Briefings on relevant developments in both the government, fishing and NGO community would be helpful. Forecasting and the identification of emerging issues was seen by one respondent as important. Interviews with fishermen and research conclusions were seen as important.

Hopefully you will react positively to the imminent Summer edition for the newsletter.

## 21. How would you see your IFCA's role in the AIFCA's newsletter?

There was a lot of support for the inclusion of information from each of the IFCA's; the provision of content and information, including the sharing of best practice and case studies.

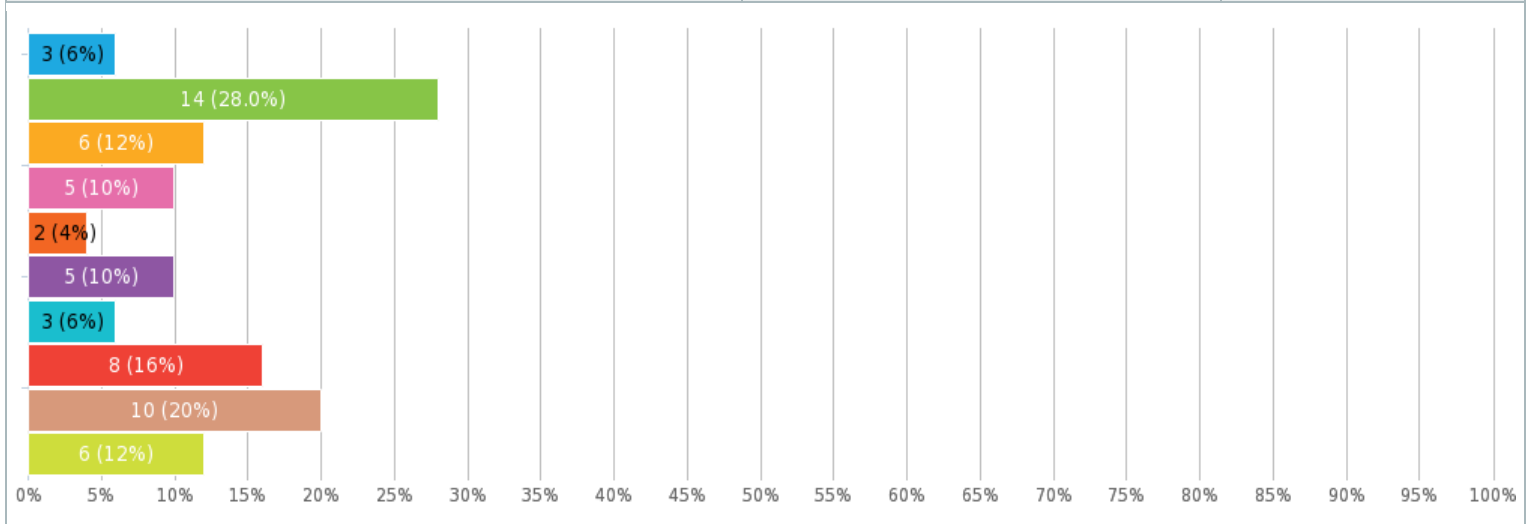
## PART THREE

Part Three of the survey concerned the breakdown of participation from each IFCA and the participants willingness to engage further with future surveys and to receive updates.

### 22. Which IFCA/s are you involved with?

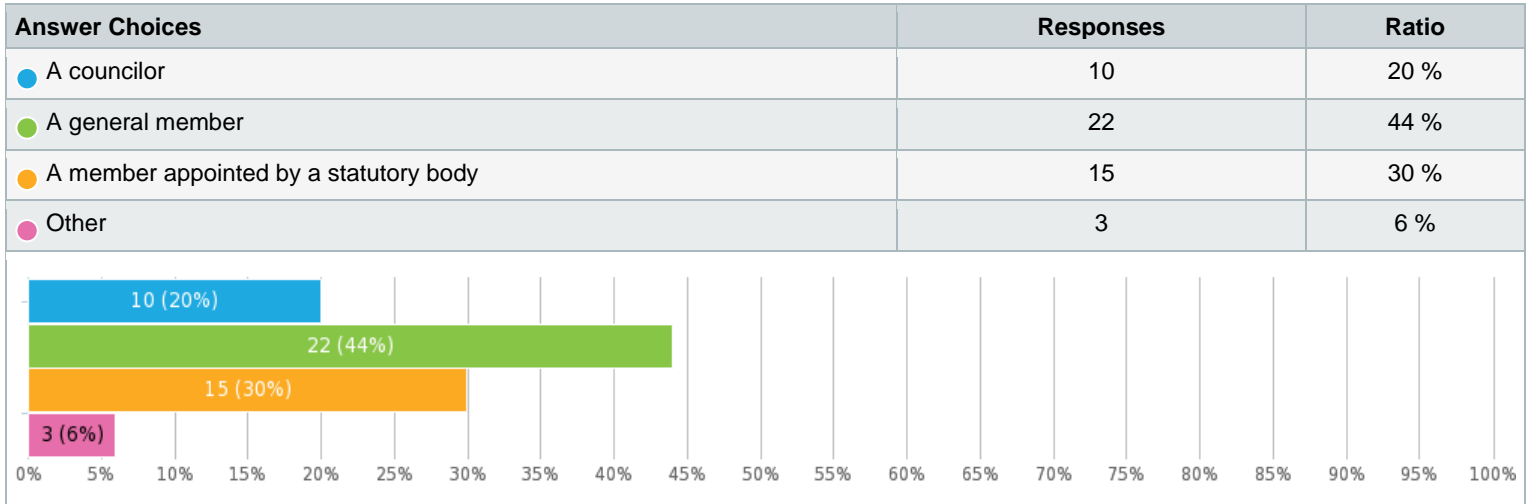
Multiple choice, answers **50x**, unanswered **0x**

Answer Choices	Responses	Ratio
<span style="color: blue;">●</span> Cornwall	3	6 %
<span style="color: green;">●</span> Devon & Severn	14	28.0 %
<span style="color: orange;">●</span> Eastern	6	12 %
<span style="color: pink;">●</span> Isles of Scilly	5	10 %
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Kent & Essex	2	4 %
<span style="color: purple;">●</span> North Eastern	5	10 %
<span style="color: cyan;">●</span> North Western	3	6 %
<span style="color: red;">●</span> Northumberland	8	16 %
<span style="color: brown;">●</span> Southern	10	20 %
<span style="color: yellow;">●</span> Sussex	6	12 %



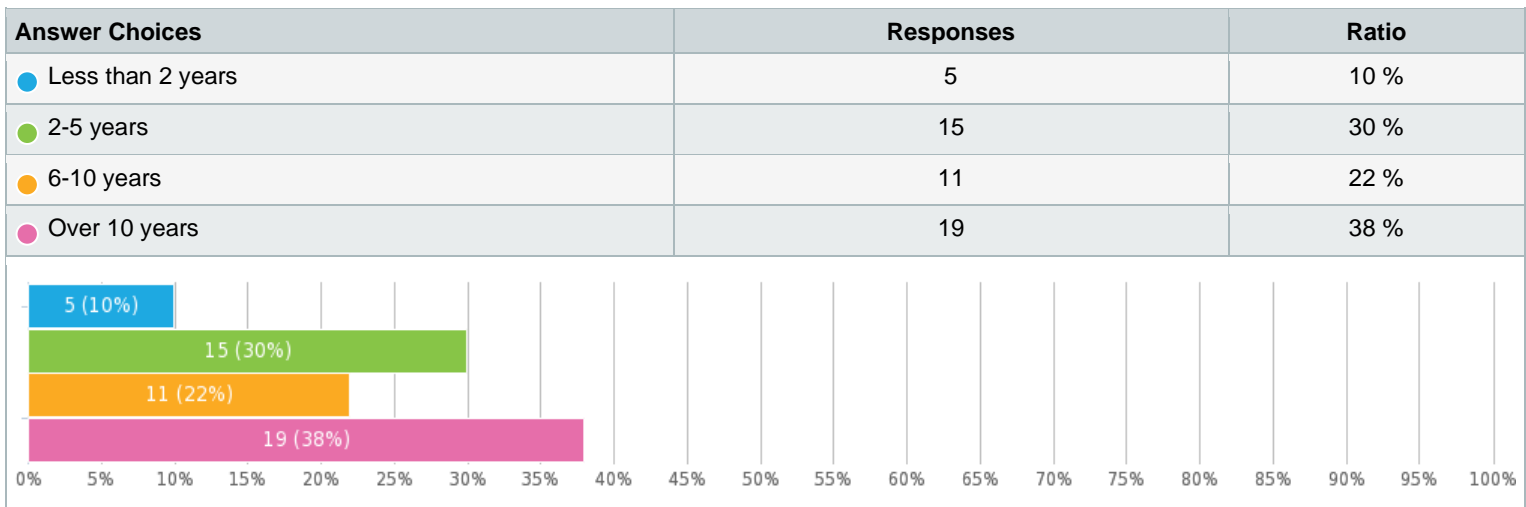
## 23. What is your role?

Single choice, answers 50x, unanswered 0x



## 24. How long have you been involved with the IFCA?

Single choice, answers 50x, unanswered 0x



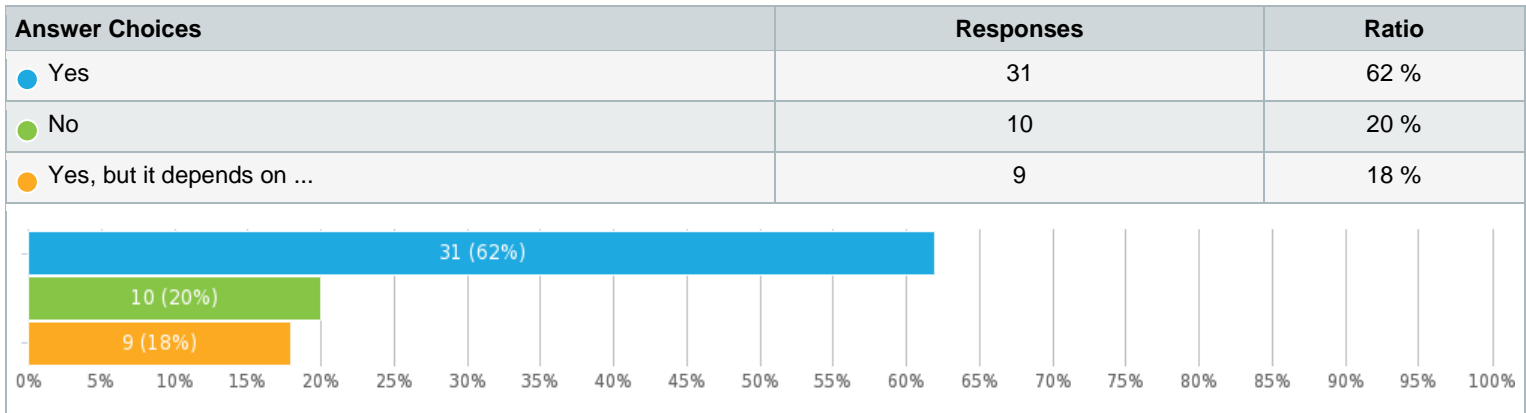
## 25. Are there any other comments for the survey you would like to add?

50% of respondents provided further comments. These comments included positive comments about the role of IFCAs and the improvements to the AIFCA engagement.

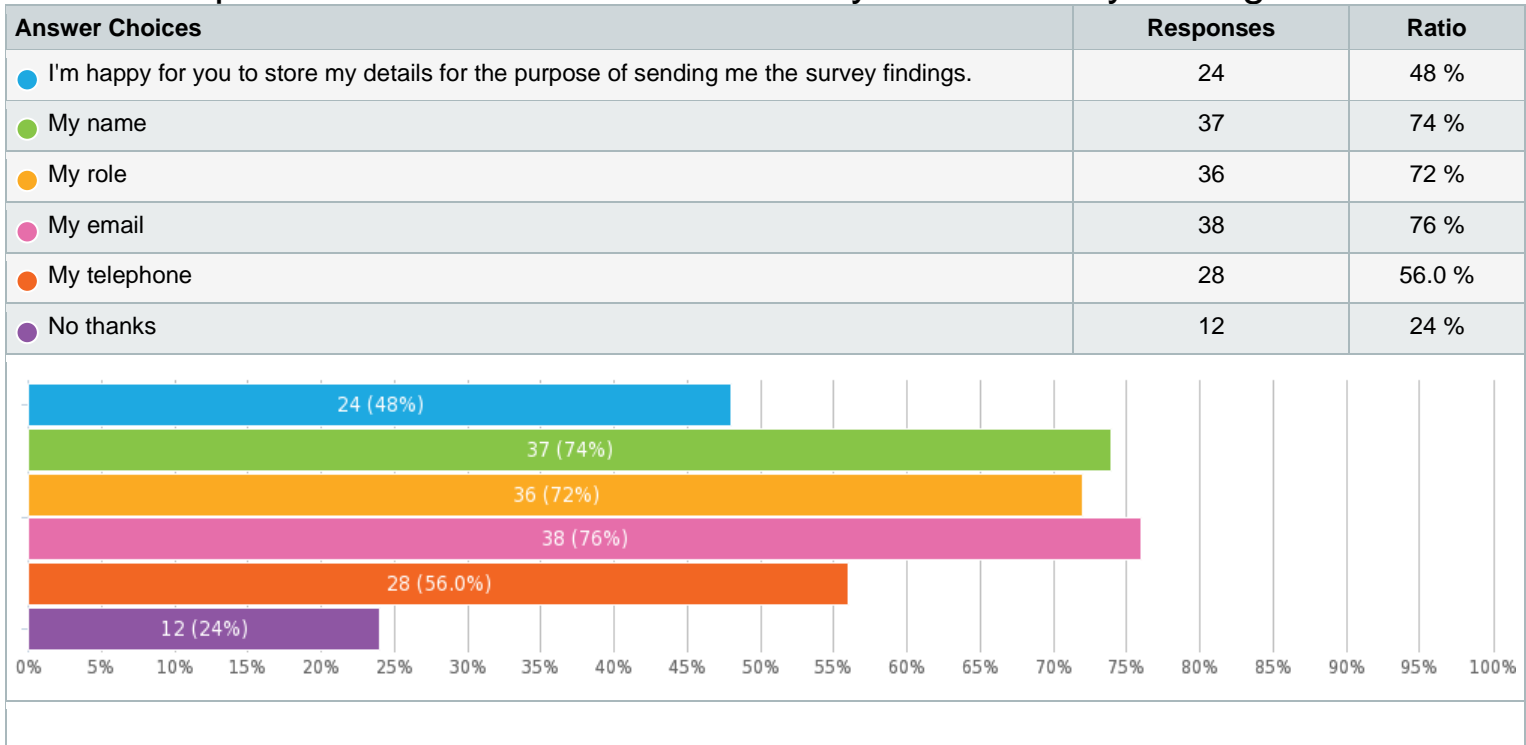
One commentator said that the survey was not the best that they had participated in, another asked that the comments provided by the survey be acted upon. One member highlighted that “replacing committee members after a certain amount of time is counterproductive. The wealth of knowledge and understanding is lost. If a member of the IFCA is well regarded and a productive member, why should they be replaced.” Another expressed concerns about the decline in fishing opportunities in a particular IFCA District.

## 26. Would you be prepared to participate in future research to support the development of the AIFCA?

Single choice, answers **50x**, unanswered **0x**



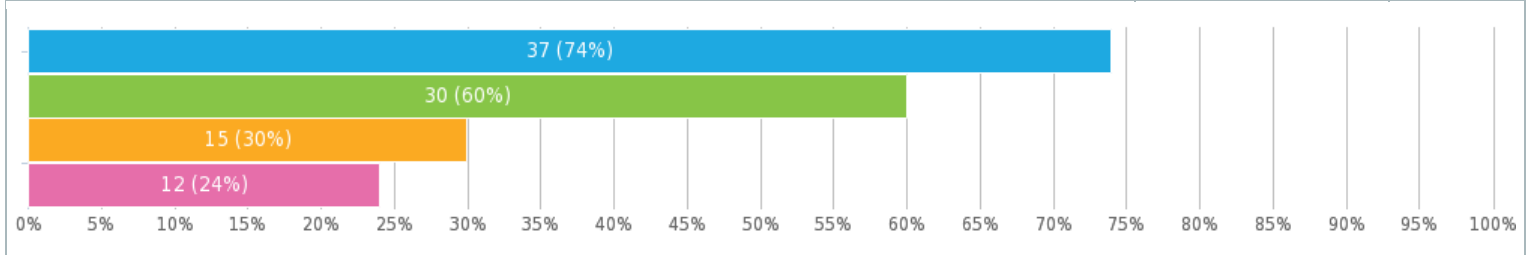
## 27. Please can you confirm you are happy for us to store your contact details below and please add them so we can send you the survey findings.



## 28. Would you like to receive news and updates on the work of AIFCA

Multiple choice, answers **50x**, unanswered **0x**

Answer Choices	Responses	Ratio
<input type="radio"/> I'm happy for you to store my details, as above, to be sent occasional news and updates from AIFCA	37	74 %
<input type="radio"/> I'm happy for this to be sent by email	30	60 %
<input type="radio"/> I'm happy to be contacted by AIFCA occasionally by phone	15	30 %
<input type="radio"/> No thanks	12	24 %



Because of GDPR requirements all those who provided their information and permission in the survey will have received a copy of this report direct. Anyone else is able to receive a copy via their IFCA.

Overall we were really pleased that 25% of members took the time to complete the survey and want you to know all your points will be considered and as many as possible will be actioned.

If you would like to make any further comments about anything in the survey, please do get in touch with me.

Thank you!

Rob

Robert Clark, Chief Officer



email: [robert.clark@association-ifca.org.uk](mailto:robert.clark@association-ifca.org.uk)

phone: 07736509725