

Country and Marine Parks Board
Confirmed Minutes of the 89th Meeting

Date : 6 March 2026 (Friday)

File Ref: AF CPA 01/1/0

Time : 3 p.m.

Venue : Room 701, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Headquarters

PRESENT

Chairman

Professor Kenneth LEUNG Mei-yee, BBS, JP

Members Attending in Person

Dr Jeffrey HUNG Oi-shing

Ir Dr LAU Chee-sing

Professor LI Xin

Mr LO Pui-lam

Dr Jasmine NG So-shan

Dr Angie NG Ying-sim

Professor QIU Jianwen

Mr Henry YAU Yik-chung

Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming, JP

Mr Patrick LAI Chuen-chi

Mr Desmond WU Chia-chun

Director, AFCD

Deputy Director, AFCD

Principal Assistant Secretary (Nature
Conservation), Environment and Ecology
Bureau

Mr Mike YAU Sai-yuen

Chief Leisure Manager (Management), Leisure and
Cultural Services Department

Members Attending via Zoom Video Conferencing

Miss Natalie CHUNG Sum-yue	
Professor James FANG Kar-hei	
Dr Caroline LAW Man-yee	
Mr Elton NG Chun-ting	
Miss Carmen CHAN Ka-man	Assistant Director/Port Control, Marine Department
Ms Jenny CHAN Wai-man, JP	Assistant Director (2), Home Affairs Department
Miss Sapphire LO Pui-yiu	Assistant Director (Specialist 2) (Lands Administration Office/Headquarters), Lands Department
Mr Edwin CHAN Wing-chow	Senior Engineer/Planning (Special Duties) 2, Water Supplies Department
Mr Brandon HUNG Chi-wai	Town Planner/New Territories District Planning Division Headquarters 2, Planning Department
<u>Secretary</u>	
Ms Lily CHEUNG Man-lee	Assistant Secretary (Boards)1, AFCD

IN ATTENDANCEAFCD

Dr Jim CHU Chun-wa	Assistant Director (Fisheries and Marine Conservation)
Dr Esther TO Man-wai	Assistant Director (Country Parks)
Dr Janet LEE Ka-wai	Senior Marine Conservation Officer (East)
Dr Allen TO Wai-lun	Fisheries Officer (Planning and Management) 2
Ms Anna SITU Ying-yi	Marine Conservation Officer (Education and Monitoring) East 1

ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES

Ms LAU Kam-fung
 Mr Ian LEUNG Kin-wai
 Mr SHUM Si-ki

Mr Alex WONG Lap-kei

OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

1/26 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Dr Esther TO Man-wai, Assistant Director (Country Parks) of the AFCD and Mr Edwin CHAN Wing-chow, Senior Engineer/Planning (Special Duties) 2 of the Water Supplies Department, who attended the meeting for the first time.

2/26 The Chairman also thanked Dr Jackie YIP Yin, former Assistant Director (Country Parks) of the AFCD, for her contributions to the Board over the past years.

3/26 The Chairman informed Members that, as an established practice, an audio recording would be made during the meeting to facilitate the taking of minutes. It would be destroyed after the confirmation of the minutes.

AGENDA ITEMS

I. Confirmation of Minutes of the 88th Meeting held on 10 October 2025

4/26 The minutes of the 88th meeting held on 10 October 2025 were confirmed without amendments.

II. Matters Arising

(a) Annual Board Visit 2025 (Para 95/25)

5/26 With a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Lily CHEUNG Man-lee reported on the Annual Board Visit 2025 held on 9 February 2026.

6/26 A Member commended the AFCD's active promotion of nature conservation and suggested that the AFCD continue to explore the application of technology to improve the management effectiveness of country parks.

7/26 The Chairman considered that the current location of Shing Mun Country Park Visitor Centre was less prominent and suggested strengthening the visual design at the entrance to attract visitors' attention.

8/26 A Member suggested providing a barrier-free access directly from Shing Mun Road to the visitor centre, and proposed placing tables and chairs in the activity room for visitors to take a rest when it was not in use.

9/26 Dr Esther TO Man-wai of the AFCD said in response that the AFCD would use technology more extensively in the management of country parks in future, such as using drones and surveillance cameras. Regarding barrier-free facilities, there were technical challenges in providing barrier-free access due to the steepness of the ramp leading to the visitor centre. The AFCD would study the feasibility and other alternatives and would, at the same time, consider putting the activity room for other uses flexibly.

10/26 A Member was concerned about the external promotional strategies following the renovation of the visitor centre.

11/26 Dr Esther TO Man-wai said that enhancement of the signage and directional signs at the entrance of the visitor centre could be considered and online promotion would be strengthened.

12/26 The Chairman suggested that the AFCD work with stakeholders, such as hiking groups, schools, or travel agencies, to organise seminars and roving exhibitions at the visitor centre to enhance the promotional effect.

13/26 Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming, JP of the AFCD stated that the AFCD attached great importance to its promotional efforts, and that its current publicity work on mainstream media and platforms had achieved satisfactory hit rates. In future, the AFCD would continue to target schools and specific groups with its promotions, and would continue to promote the facilities and activities of country parks through various media platforms. Regarding the application of technology, drones were currently used in country parks for patrols and data collection, and automatic visitor counters were installed in some country parks. The AFCD would also explore the use of drones and robots for transporting supplies, as well as surveillance system equipped with artificial intelligence for monitoring and management. The AFCD would continue to take a proactive and open attitude towards the use of technology to manage country parks.

14/26 A Member pointed out that there were education or visitor centres of some government departments organising half-day extracurricular activities with schools and non-profit organisations. He considered the AFCD's programmes attractive to students and suggested making good use of the activity room in the visitor centre to organise activities to promote environmental education.

15/26 A Member suggested recruiting student ambassadors to provide docent services for regular guided hiking tours, making reference to the co-operation model between the City University of Hong Kong and the City Gallery of the Planning Department.

16/26 A Member suggested training volunteers who were familiar with natural ecology and surrounding ecological environment to provide docent services to visitors.

17/26 A Member said that there were organisations in Lau Fau Shan training the elderly as volunteer ecotour guides with Oxfam, and suggested that the Shing Mun Country Park Visitor Centre follow such an approach and invite the elderly to participate.

18/26 The Chairman pointed out that tertiary students had a strong demand for internship opportunities and suggested that the AFCD consider providing internship quotas in this regard.

19/26 Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming, JP thanked Members for their suggestions, and said that there was already a country park volunteer scheme. The expansion of co-operation with volunteers from different sectors and students would be examined in future. He added that the promotion of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan was closely related to the work of country parks, and that the AFCD would continue to promote relevant work.

III. Mirs Bay in Hong Kong Selected as “Outstanding Example of Beautiful Bays”

(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/1/2026)

20/26 With a PowerPoint presentation, Ms Anna SITU Ying-yi of the AFCD briefed Members on the announcement of Mirs Bay in Hong Kong being selected as an “Outstanding Example of Beautiful Bays” and the relevant conservation work carried out by the AFCD.

21/26 The Chairman added that there was a section on the development of Beautiful Bays in the white paper on “Marine Eco-Environmental Protection in China” released by the State Council Information Office.

22/26 A Member enquired about the validity period and revalidation mechanism of the “Beautiful Bay” recognition, and expressed concern about the work or management measures the AFCD had to implement to maintain the recognition.

23/26 A Member pointed out that promoting Mirs Bay in Hong Kong might attract tourists from all over the country. She enquired about how to address the environmental footprint caused by the increasing number of tourists and opined that the AFCD should carry out long-term planning of the tourist carrying capacity of the area to avoid negative impacts of tourism activities on the ecology of the area.

24/26 A Member opined that long-term maintenance work was crucial after Mirs Bay earned the “Beautiful Bay” recognition. He suggested strengthening education and publicity to promote the message of joint marine conservation to the public and tourists.

25/26 Regarding the maintenance of the recognition of “Beautiful Bay”, Ms Anna SITU Ying-yi said that the assessment of the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) was extremely rigorous, which encompassed self-assessment and field visits by experts. While there was no validation period set for the recognition so far, the MEE might conduct surprise assessments through follow-up visits in future. The AFCD would continue to conduct relevant management work to ensure continued compliance with the standards of “Beautiful Bays”.

26/26 Dr Janet LEE Ka-wai of the AFCD said that the AFCD had always attached great importance to marine ecological conservation, and had been enhancing fisheries resources and increasing marine ecological value consistently through the deployment of artificial reefs and restocking exercises. At the same time, coupling scientific restoration of natural habitats with conservation efforts to fully enhance ecosystem protection and marine resource management. Regarding publicity and education, the major target audiences were the general public of Hong Kong and inbound tourists. In addition to the usual publicity and education efforts, the AFCD also worked with partnering organisations in the Mainland (including official organisations and voluntary groups) to jointly promote the message of nature appreciation and protection. Currently, Mirs Bay was only accessible by boat. The AFCD would closely monitor visitor flow and deploy additional staff for crowd control if necessary.

27/26 A Member suggested broadcasting promotional videos at major venues, on large advertising screens, and at the airport. He enquired about whether students or individuals interested in diving could participate in Citizen Science Programmes to foster a deeper understanding of marine ecology among the public. Regarding eco-tourism, he opined that comprehensive supporting facilities, such as those for catering, camping and stargazing, should be provided in Mirs Bay to enhance visiting incentives. Regarding the management, he suggested that consideration should be given to implementing a reservation and quota system.

28/26 A Member opined that a holistic consideration should be given to the carrying capacity of eco-tourism, and suggested that government departments should collaborate with the Hong Kong Tourism Board to conduct a comprehensive planning on Hong Kong's abundant ecological resources and the carrying capacity of various districts (including private land lots, attractions, and public transport), while taking into full account the views of stakeholders. She asked whether such studies or plans were currently undertaken by government departments.

29/26 A Member pointed out that the Shenzhen section of Mirs Bay was also recognised as "Beautiful Bay". She enquired whether there were plans for long-term cross-boundary co-operation on environmental management and water quality improvement between the two sides. On promoting tourism, she considered that Mirs Bay might not be well-known to the general public and suggested working with eco-tourism organisations or non-governmental organisations for brand management. For instance, the information on the recognition of Mirs Bay as "Beautiful Bay" could be included in local tourism activities at Lai Chi Wo and Yan Chau Tong to enhance the awareness of local visitors and overseas tourists of Mirs Bay.

30/26 A Member suggested that, in addition to the Mainland market, Mirs Bay and the countryside of Hong Kong should also be promoted internationally by highlighting their ecological functions and biodiversity. Citing a study in 2017, he pointed out that despite Hong Kong's small marine area, representing merely about 0.03% of the national total, it was hosting approximately 6 000 marine species, which was about 26% of all those found in the nation. He suggested employing the environmental DNA (eDNA) technology to update the relevant data, so as to provide scientific validation of the level of international excellence that Hong Kong's ecological environment had reached.

31/26 Dr Jim CHU Chun-wa of the AFCD remarked that as Citizen Science Programmes involved coral surveys, diving experience was required for participants. Interested individuals who did not know how to dive could assist with data compilation and analysis instead. The Shenzhen section of Mirs Bay was recognised as "Beautiful Bay" in 2022. Hong Kong would

deepen its co-operation with the Ecology and Environment Bureau and the Marine Development Bureau of Shenzhen Municipality in co-organising publicity activities to promote “Ocean-friendly Etiquette”, and educating the public on how to appreciate and conserve the nature. Special Panels had been set up between Guangdong and Hong Kong, as well as Shenzhen and Hong Kong, to maintain regular exchanges on a wide range of co-operation areas, including environmental governance, pollution prevention, and fisheries and marine resources. On international promotion, with the co-ordination by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Government had been broadcasting Mirs Bay’s promotional videos in various countries and regions to extend its outreach since 2026.

32/26 Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming, JP emphasised that public education was of paramount importance, and the public must be made aware of the marine environment and biodiversity to foster a sense of treasuring marine resources among them. The AFCD would implement diversified educational activities for target groups, such as students, the general public, and Mainland visitors. The Government had been conducting long-term monitoring of water quality, fisheries resources, and biodiversity in Mirs Bay to collect data for establishing a management mechanism. When necessary, decisive management measures, such as crowd control and diversion measures, would be adopted. He stressed the need to balance tourism promotion and nature conservation, ensuring that the public could enjoy Hong Kong’s beautiful countryside and marine environment while conserving the natural environment.

33/26 A Member expressed concern over the current condition of fish culture zones (FCZs) in Mirs Bay (such as O Pui Tong, Kat O, and Wong Wan) set up in the past. She enquired whether there were still mariculturists operating, and proposed exploring the possibility of developing an upgraded model aligned with the “Beautiful Bay” concept to incorporate green tourism elements while enhancing the mariculture operations. Regarding fisheries resources and fishing operations in Mirs Bay at large, she raised concerns about whether bright light fishing operating outside the marine parks would affect the environment, and suggested that the Government should step up patrols and educate fishermen on minimising ecological nuisance and pollution during their operations.

34/26 A Member was concerned about how to engage villagers living along Mirs Bay in joining the publicity work for ecological conservation and education.

35/26 A Member suggested strengthening promotional efforts in areas with heavy pedestrian flow in Hong Kong and at various boundary control points. Emphasising the importance of education, he remarked that visitor flow management plans should be formulated

early while promoting tourism diversification. He proposed modelling on the promotional strategies for country parks by working with key opinion leaders (KOLs), and advised that the launch of new attractions or tourism routes in an orderly manner, early strategic planning and stakeholder engagement would be conducive to effective visitor diversion and crowd control.

36/26 A Member proposed organising day tours to Lai Chi Wo and Kat O and inviting villagers to provide relevant supporting services. He opined that such sightseeing-based tours would basically not cause adverse impact to the ecological environment, and suggested making use of Story Rooms as focal points for publicity and promotion.

37/26 Dr Jim CHU Chun-wa pointed out that the AFCD launched the “Fish enJoy” Scheme to promote the development of local leisure fisheries. Under the Scheme, existing FCZs could offer various ancillary activities, including leisure fishing, sales of self-cultured fisheries products, and sales of dishes mainly with their own fisheries products and non-flame cooking methods, to enrich the eco-tourism experience of visitors. The AFCD had been providing aquaculture technical support to fish farmers to facilitate their transformation. Regarding the enforcement against fisheries irregularities, the AFCD maintained close collaboration with Shenzhen authorities to conduct joint operations and exchange intelligence. To address the issue of bright light fishing, the AFCD collaborated with the Marine Department to educate fishermen on the proper use of bright light so as to avoid affecting maritime safety and the environment. Fishermen in need of equipment retrofitting might apply for subsidies under the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund.

38/26 Dr Esther TO Man-wai said that the AFCD had already established connections with local villagers, set up Story Rooms at Lai Chi Wo and Ap Chau, and launched the Kat O Heritage Trail to present fisherman culture by way of oral history. These projects successfully attracted some villagers who had moved away to return to the village, thereby promoting the sustainable development of the Geopark communities. Meanwhile, the AFCD had also been promoting the island-hopping visiting mode for effective diversion of visitor flows.

39/26 A Member pointed out that Mainland tourists, particularly the younger generation, primarily gathered tourism information through Xiaohongshu rather than official channels. She advised that the AFCD should proactively collect feedback and comments from tourists on Xiaohongshu to enhance tourist services and meet their needs.

40/26 The Chairman suggested that the AFCD should set up a WeChat official account, and invite and work with KOLs on Xiaohongshu to roll out strategic publicity programmes.

He remarked that, in comparison with the sheer volume of visitors, the quality of visitors would be more critical in terms of impacts on the environment, and focus should be put on educating the public to appreciate and conserve the nature accordingly.

41/26 Dr Esther TO Man-wai responded that the AFCD had planned to launch its official Xiaohongshu account in the middle of this year to leverage the platform for disseminating conservation messages, and had already initiated promotional collaborations with KOLs. The Department would continue to monitor tourism information and visitor feedback posted on social media platforms.

IV. Marine Parks 30th Anniversary Celebration Programme (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/2/2026)

42/26 With a PowerPoint presentation, Dr Janet LEE Ka-wai briefed Members on the programme to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of marine parks and the marine reserve (MP30).

43/26 The Chairman stated that mere reliance on the traditional fishing method to monitor fisheries resources was susceptible to random factors, hence the varying effectiveness. The adoption of the eDNA technology for monitoring from 2023 onwards confirmed the rich diversity of fish species as well as the abundance of fish with higher economic value at Cape D'Aguilar, demonstrating the effectiveness of the marine reserve strategy. The monitoring of marine parks revealed a highly even distribution of species diversity. In ecology, this symbolised that the ecosystems were healthy. Data from the past 30 years proved that the marine reserve had contributed positively to enhancing biodiversity and fisheries resources. He suggested publicising these research findings to fishermen, while strengthening scientific research to offer robust support for the Government's management policy with objective data. Besides, the Chairman mentioned the surveys conducted in 2006 and 2023 on Hoi Ha Wan, and the results showed that Hoi Ha Wan was the soft shore with the highest biodiversity in Hong Kong, proving that management measures had been effective. He suggested consolidating data from different research teams to illustrate the positive impact of marine parks. Meanwhile, as regards the issue with the identification of certain coral species in earlier studies, he suggested leveraging the 30th anniversary of the establishment of marine parks to update the entire marine resources inventory of Hong Kong waters.

44/26 A Member said that not-yet-formally-described coral species were discovered in Hong Kong waters. He pointed out that there was immense potential in Hong Kong's biodiversity, which merited further scientific research.

45/26 A Member suggested organising incentive-based competitions and inviting various sectors to participate. On publicity, apart from the education and ecotourism sectors, the fisheries industry might be invited to co-organise activities by leveraging their resources and networks to expand their influence.

46/26 A Member suggested organising large-scale exhibitions in collaboration with other government bureaux and departments such as the Education Bureau, and organising competitions tailored to different target groups. Through inter-departmental co-operation and cross-promotion, the message of conservation could achieve a greater reach.

47/26 A Member supported furthering studies on biodiversity. He pointed out that according to the results of the decades-long monitoring of the change in water quality in Hong Kong, Hong Kong's water quality was improving continuously, and the data supported the sustained enhancement in marine parks and the overall environment. He said that The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) could lend AFCD 3D-printed coral models for exhibition. Besides, he mentioned the current use of underwater smart robots by some institutions for observation, and suggested incorporating the technology into snorkelling activities to enable the public to observe the underwater environment through high technology, thereby showcasing the application of artificial intelligence and high-end technology in marine ecology. Finally, he suggested holding an exhibition at the airport targeting international travellers, which would be beneficial for future applications for relevant international awards.

48/26 Dr Jim CHU Chun-wa thanked the Member for the willingness to lend exhibits and the valuable comments, and stated that the Department would actively explore the feasibility of the various proposals, subject to the allocation of government resources. He agreed that publicity efforts should not stop at the level of public promotion, but should showcase the actual achievements of marine parks and the marine reserve from a professional and scientific perspective.

49/26 A Member enquired about the reason for the relatively few celebratory events for Yan Chau Tong. He noted that the AFCD's current promotional activities were largely focused on physical exhibitions and events, and asked whether the Department had any digital

initiatives. He suggested introducing gamification elements to enable the public to learn about marine ecology in a more interesting way.

50/26 A Member considered that expanding the scale of the kayak eco-tours would help more students to learn about marine ecology. He said that the volunteer organisation he was serving could lend kayaks and speedboats and provide manpower support. Furthermore, he was concerned about the long-term promotional plans following the celebration programme, and suggested that the display panels be organised into themed resources for roving exhibitions in schools.

51/26 Dr Janet LEE Ka-wai thanked the Member for lending resources and support. She said that eco-tours would continue after the celebration programme had concluded, and that the Department would explore the feasibility of raising the quotas of participants for these activities. While the celebration programme did not specifically target promotional activities for Yan Chau Tong, the Citizen Science Programme had been running there on an ongoing basis. [Post-meeting update: The fish restocking exercise would be held in Yan Chau Tong Marine Park on 6 June 2026.]

52/26 The Chairman suggested that co-operation across organisations should be strengthened. In addition to fishermen, the Department could co-operate with diving associations, marine ecological volunteer organisations and relevant stakeholders to save government resources and maximise the publicity effect. Furthermore, he suggested consolidating the outcomes of consultancy studies conducted over the years and reviewing the achievements through the organisation of symposiums or the production of thematic display boards, and promoting the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan in tandem.

53/26 A Member asked whether the Department had made any arrangements to enable non-divers to appreciate the beauty of marine ecology.

54/26 Dr Janet LEE Ka-wai thanked Members for the valuable comments. She responded that the AFCD had organised a range of activities that did not require travelling on vessels or getting into the water, including roving exhibitions, workshops and interactive virtual reality games held in shopping centres with high pedestrian flow, allowing members of the public to experience the underwater world as if they were there. Besides, the Hoi Ha Visitor Centre provided a wealth of information on exploring the local ecology.

55/26 A Member supplemented that PolyU housed an immersive experiential classroom equipped with large-scale projector facilities capable of playing footage of underwater ecological videos. PolyU had utilised the facility for environmental education, which could serve as a useful reference.

**V. Summary Report of Country Parks Committee
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/3/2026)**

56/26 Mr LO Pui-lam, Chairman of the Country Parks Committee (CPC), briefed Members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/3/2026, which provided a summary of the issues discussed at the CPC meeting held on 31 October 2025. Members noted the report.

**VI. Summary Report of Marine Parks Committee
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/4/2026)**

57/26 Professor QIU Jianwen, Chairman of the Marine Parks Committee (MPC), briefed Members on Working Paper WP/CMPB/4/2026, which provided a summary of the issues discussed at the MPC meeting held on 25 November 2025. Members noted the report.

58/26 The Chairman suggested, drawing on the experience of the Environmental Protection Department, using drones to monitor the performance of cleaning contractors after they had completed clean-up work on beaches, and detect and identify beaches or areas requiring enhanced cleaning. With regard to pollution black spots, he suggested using smart lampposts to monitor litter accumulation in real time. Once the volume of litter reached a pre-set threshold, the contractor would be notified automatically to arrive on site and do clean-up.

**VII. Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report
(Working Paper: WP/CMPB/5/2026)**

59/26 Dr Esther TO Man-wai presented the Country and Marine Parks Authority Progress Report for the period from 1 September to 31 December 2025 (Working Paper: WP/CMPB/5/2026).

60/26 The Chairman pointed out that visitor numbers at Cape D'Aguiar had exceeded 4 000 during the report period, and he asked whether the AFCD had increased manpower accordingly to provide supporting services.

61/26 Dr Jim CHU Chun-wa responded that the AFCD had arranged staff to man the area for extended periods during long holidays to carry out patrols and education work.

62/26 A Member asked about the reason for the reduction in the number of visitors to country parks compared with the same period last year.

63/26 Dr Esther TO Man-wai said in response that it might be weather related, and the Department would compare the data to further analyse the causes in detail.

VIII. Any Other Business

64/26 The Chairman pointed out that some of the display panels at Victoria Peak were soiled and damaged, rendering the text difficult to read and the images blurred, while some of the panel supports were rusted. He suggested taking the opportunity of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the establishment of country parks to refurbish and clean all the relevant facilities so as to present a fresh new image to the public.

42/26 Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming, JP thanked Members for their views and contributions, and stated that the AFCD would further examine the various proposals in greater depth, and proactively engage different stakeholders to work together to ensure the effective use of resources and maximise the publicity effect.

IX. Date of Next Meeting

65/26 The Chairman informed Members that the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 28 May 2026 (Thursday) at 3 p.m.

66/26 The meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.