

## **TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at Cromwell park, Almondbank, on Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> April 2018.**

***Present:*** Iain McLaren (Convener)  
Councillor Bob Band  
David Godfrey  
Steve Mannion  
Claire Mercer Nairne  
Cohn O’Dea  
Jim Perrett  
Mike Smith  
Ian Young

***In Attendance:*** Inga MacGillivray - Clerk  
Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director

***Apologies:*** David Brown  
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)  
Lord Mansfield  
Tom Monaghan  
Brian Roxburgh (SEPA)  
Alec Stewart

### **Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

**ACTION: IMacG to chase Board members for Declarations where not received.**

### **Minutes from Meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

The Minutes were taken as being read, agreed unanimously and signed by the Convener.

### **Matters Arising**

#### ***Electrofishing data on River Eden***

DS explained he would give an electrofishing data presentation later in the meeting, which the Eden would form part thereof. He stressed that the Board held no long term data for the Eden.

### Luncarty Weir

DS explained that he had met with SEPA and they had no objection to the removal of the weir in principle, potentially dependent on the results of a morphological survey. A SEPA hydromorphologist from Aberdeen had looked at the Shochie in connection with other issues is to report on whether SEPA should require a more detailed morphological report or not. SEPA will advise in due course. It would presumably then be up to the Board to move the project forward seeking appropriate permissions. Early indications suggested landowners are likely to be amenable.

**ACTION: DS to continue talks with SEPA.**

### River Braan

**ACTION: DS to progress.**

### Biosecurity

**DS to progress.**

### River Lyon

DS explained that he had spoken to SSE regarding problems with the fish counter at Stronuich Dam and then proceeded to give the Board some background information on the problem. He concluded that SSE were now replacing the fish counter with a newer “Mark XII” version and hopefully this one would operate more effectively.

### River Garry

The finalised Garry adaptive management plan had been previously circulated and hard copies were given out to the Board. DS explained that this plan would form an official attachment to the variation in SSE’s licence. The plan included monitoring and stocking. He explained that the Board had been stocking the river for years and in the rotary screw trap that was being operated on the rewatered part of the Garry this year around 450 smolts had recently been caught in one night. DS added that it was very reassuring to have such a high figure captured.

IY asked if the latest Scottish Government initiative to produce 20% more power from renewable energy sources would affect the Garry, to which DS replied that SSE had now committed to the Garry project and such commitments would not affect it.

### Tay Foundation Representatives

It was agreed that the Convener and CMN would act as Board representatives on the Tay Foundation.

**ACTION: IMacG to send Board members a copy of TF constitution.**

### Website

There was some discussion surrounding the current TDSFB representation on Fishpal, with C'OD and DG saying the Tay Ghillies Association could save the Board £3k by doing the weekly Tay article themselves. It was agreed that the TGA should present a mock up of their proposed new weekly Tay update at the next meeting, when the Board would decide which way they would proceed. It was agreed that there would need to be assurances that the report would be done on a weekly basis and would be of high enough quality.

**ACTION: C'OD/DG to present new Tay weekly article at next Board meeting.**

### Smolt Tagging

SM brought up the fact that he and MS had attended a meeting held by PDAA, and there had been an interesting presentation on smolt tagging by Matt Newton, which he described. There was some discussion around the topic, particularly findings of high levels of mortality of migrating smolts in rivers, although DS cautioned that because a number of such studies found mortality shortly after tagging it might just be that the tagging method itself was an issue. The discussion continued until the Convener moved on to the next agenda item.

### Financial Report

Prior to IMacG's financial presentation, IY asked how the 2016 Category 3 rebates were to be paid to the Eden and Earn, to which IMacG replied she had recently issued the 2018 assessment notices and had included credit notes to the beats affected, which they were to subtract from their levy total.

IY then asked whether the Crown estates invoices pertaining to Eden AC could be copied to himself.

**ACTION: IMacG to copy Crown Estate invoices for Eden AC to IY.**

### Cash Account to 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018:

As at 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018, the Cash Account shows a deficit of £141,009, and the overall bank balance stands at a healthy £282,265. IMacG noted it was perfectly normal to be showing a deficit at this time of year, as the annual assessment invoices have only just been sent out and therefore very little income has been generated thus far.

### Income

The assessment and appeal figure in the forecast column remain the same as budget, as there have been no updates on appeals. IMacG stressed to the Board that the appeals figure was the largest unknown in the budget but would hopefully become clearer in the coming months.

The prior year figure of £12,944 relates to last year's assessment payments still coming in, which are being chased. Rent income figure of £1,045 relates to sublet rental for January, with another invoice due out soon.

## **Expenditure**

The budgeted salary and heat & light figure have been changed to reflect the agreed method of reporting from last Board meeting – i.e. the Hatchery Manager, plus a percentage of the bailiff salary has been included in the hatchery budget, as has the heat and light portion.

The training figure of £860 relates to a First Aid course for all staff plus training and study materials for our newest recruit to pass his bailiffing exams (which he did), and an electrofishing course for him.

The rent, rates and general insurance total of £15,355 is predominantly made up of the annual insurance charge (£13k) as well as the monthly rates charge.

The road repairs figure of £1,665 is largely made up of gritting costs over the last couple of months, and the purchase of a whacker plate to enable us to fill minor potholes as they occur.

The heat and light expenditure of £6k has been inordinately high this year, largely due to the prolonged low temperatures. Some electric heaters have had to be kept on in the building to prevent pipe damage, and this unfortunately has racked up the electric costs.

Annual Meeting costs of £584 relate to the recent Open Meeting and include the cost of room hire plus advertising costs.

Subscriptions and levy budget largely relates to our FMS subs of £14,939, and the £504 spend relates to Ordnance survey, TV and accounts package subscriptions for the year. IY asked why we pay money to FMS, to which DS answered that a formula was agreed relating to 5 year catch averages and each Board paid a percentage of the FMS budget depending on catches. JP asked if the FMS represented value for money, to which DS replied it did. DS suggested inviting Alan Wells, CEO of FMS to a future Board meeting, to which ALL agreed.

**ACTION: DS to invite Alan Wells to future Board meeting.**

Health and Safety spend of £2,659 is largely made up of fire extinguisher audit and replacement of equipment of £1,266, and £806 of alarm maintenance.

Hatchery spend is £22,763 to date, of which £12,742 is salary related and of the remaining £10,021, £7k was spent on fuel over this unseasonably cold spell, £620 on food, £530 on chemicals and the rest on sundries. On discussion with the Hatchery manager, for the period Jan-March 2018, the assistant hatchery salary has been charged and budgeted at 70% of his salary cost. This falls to around 10% for the following 6 months, then back up to around 70% again. The budget also includes 2 weeks of bailiff wages for 6 men during broodstock fishing time.

Website spend of £1,691 largely relates to the Fishpal invoice of £1,612 for the first quarter.

The cost of Opening day, smolt project and drone surveys total £1,604 against the £2k projects budget. Opening day costs of £726 included £350 press release costs (previously covered by ASFB – now FMS), a charge for travelling costs for Marina Gibson, and a share of costs to host the event with Meikleour.

The smolt project cost of £758 was all for consumables used during the tagging process.

Capital Expenditure of £21,082 relates to £12,750 cost of new Jimny and £8,332 for work incurred so far on fitting the new boilers in the hatchery. The £3,749 shortfall against budget can easily be covered by our £6k contingency budget and is a relatively small amount.

It was agreed that the Convener and JP would become the new bank signatories.

**ACTION: IMacG to arrange for bank signatory details to be changed.**

### **Health & Safety Report**

DS reported that there had been no notifiable H&S incidents since the last meeting. JP added that we should include near-miss reports also into H&S reporting.

**ACTION: DS/IMacG to include near misses in H&S report**

### **Bailiff Update**

DS explained that egg stocking was now largely complete and fry would be stocked out in the near future. Smolt trapping had kept the whole team busy.

### **Hatchery Update**

DS stated he had previously circulated a report and was pleased to announce the hatchery had now produced in excess of 1 million eggs.

### **Website Update**

This agenda item was dealt with under Matters Arising

### **Electrofishing Update**

DS stated he would give the electrofishing update at the end of the meeting. IY asked if it would prove difficult to catch adult broodstock in the River Eden, how feasible would it be to electrofish Eden salmon parr in August/September and grow them on in the hatchery to become adult broodstock. DS was aware of projects elsewhere which used this approach and he would look into it.

**ACTION: DS to ascertain how successful other areas have been at using salmon parr to grow on for broodstock, and report at next Board meeting.**

### **Drone Surveys**

DS explained that we had hired a drone pilot to carry out some work in the winter on the Earn. This had proved very useful, and DS asked that the Board consider purchasing a drone. Co'D stated that he thought drones were essential for counting redds and surveying the river, to which ALL agreed.

JP asked that the legal requirements of flying a drone be looked into and met by the Board. There was a possibility that the TGA could help with funding.

**ACTION: DS to look into purchase of drone and possible TGA funding.**

### **Fishponds**

C'oD asked that the Fishponds, a facility that had been used to rear smolts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century be reopened, to which MS agreed. DS stated that he would circulate a paper regarding smolt releasing to ALL.

**ACTION: DS to circulate smolt releasing paper to ALL.**

C'oD then asked if there was any merit in stocking closer to the estuary, to which the Convener replied that the Board had very limited resources and that there would need to be evidence that this was a worthwhile project. That said, the Convener followed on to say that redd counts with a drone were required for the main river as electrofishing was unsuitable in most areas, and then we could identify potential areas that may need stocking.

### **Board Priorities for next 3 years**

DS listed possible priorities such as Fishponds, Eden parr to broodstock and boosting the main stem of the river with stocking and asked for further consideration to be given to this topic.

### **Tay Foundation**

This agenda item was discussed in Matters Arising.

### **Electrofishing Update**

DG asked if DS could send out the presentation, to which DS agreed.

**ACTION: DS to send out electrofishing presentation to ALL**

DS went on to explain that the Scottish Government wanted to roll out a national electrofishing tool and were willing to contribute £200k to its implementation. He stated that the Board stood to gain £12k through the development of an electrofishing model, which would cover 30 sites in summer 2018 but is still in the development phase.

### **AOB:**

#### **Letter from Blairgowrie & Rattray Angling Club**

CMN asked if there was an update regarding concerns of BRAC over water abstraction at Blairgowrie, to which DS replied he had agreed to a site visit and would ask SEPA to come along also.

**Lack of fish**

The Convener lamented the lack of fish in the system and stated that the Board may need to reconsider its catch & release policy.

**Open Meeting**

SM asked whether the pressure could be taken off DS regarding the Open Meeting, and perhaps some other members of the Board could give presentations.

There were no further items, and the Convener thanked the Board for attending, and closed the meeting.