

# **TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at Cromwell park, Almondbank, on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2018.**

**Present:** Iain McLaren (Convener)  
David Godfrey  
Steve Mannion  
Tom Monaghan  
Jim Perrett  
John Ross (TGA Representative)  
Mike Smith  
Alec Stewart  
Allister Wallace

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

**Apologies:** Councillor Bob Band  
David Brown  
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)  
Lord Mansfield  
Claire Mercer Nairne  
Cohn O'Dea  
Brian Roxburgh (SEPA)

The Convener welcomed Allister Wallace to the Board.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

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

## **3. Minutes from Meeting held 12<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

MS asked that the bird count figures be circulated to Board members.

**ACTION: DS to circulate bird count figures to Board.**

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

## **4. Matters Arising**

### **Luncarty Weir**

DS explained that he had been in touch with SEPA, and had been informed they were waiting for a report from one of their hydromorphologists, which would be available shortly. In the meantime, SEPA had expressed concern regarding the regrading of the step once the weir is removed, and particularly its financial impact. DS asked them what exactly would be required regardless of cost, and is awaiting a reply. MS thanked DS for his update.

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

### River Braan

DS stated that he had met with John Swinney recently but that Mr. Swinney thought such a project might attract a lot of local opposition. He did see the need for better quality tourist attractions in the area, but did not feel this might be the one. There followed a short discussion and it was agreed to contact SNH regarding a fish lift.

**ACTION: DS to contact SNH regarding a fish lift/pass.**

### River Garry

MS thanked DS for his summary and map.

### Finance – FMS Expenditure

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

### Eden Electrofishing/Broodstock

DS explained that he had contacted the Ness and had been informed they catch smolts in the Spring, which are held in pens before moving to freshwater tanks where they start feeding. Approximately 50% survive the process and are now producing in the region of 150k eggs per annum, but these eggs are relatively small and they are yet to ascertain the juvenile survival rate when stocked out. They will be carrying out electrofishing surveys soon so should have more data shortly. Therefore, in summary DS stated this could be done, but would be hard work and the fish would be small.

AS asked if it would be expensive, to which DS replied it would. The Convener wondered if the juveniles would be viable and suggested waiting for the Ness electrofishing results as an indication. DS stated that there were few fish in the Eden, and it would therefore perhaps not be a good idea to damage stocks by carrying out broodstock fishing. However, it may be more viable to follow the Ness by utilising smolt stock.

**ACTION: DS to update on Ness work at next Board meeting.**

## 5. Financial Report

### Cash Account to 31st July 2018:

As at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018, the Cash Account shows a surplus of £58,872, and the overall bank balance stands at £487,833, of which £150k is invested.

### Income

- The assessment and appeal figure in the forecast column remain the same as budget, as the Assessor will process all outstanding appeals by October, so final figures will only be available then.
- The Actual appeals figure of £6,381 relates to the Eden/Earn category 3 status from 2016, and we are expecting the figure to total £8,368.
- The SISI project is now well under way, and a forecast of £2,500 has been added to reflect the monies we will claim in mileage and staff time with regards to this project.

### Expenditure

- Salary and pension figures are pretty much in line with budget.
- The training forecast is £688 above budget due to the drone course being slightly more expensive than originally budgeted. This figure also includes a first aid course for one of the bailiffs in September.
- The vehicle cost at £18,625 comprises roughly £6k repairs bills, £4k insurance and the rest in fuel costs.
- The rent, rates and general insurance total of £18,198 is predominantly made up of our annual insurance charge (£13k) as well as our monthly rates charge.
- The road repairs dispute with a neighbour has now been taken up with the Government, who will hopefully have an answer shortly.
- The repairs forecast has increased by another £4,800 to include our share of repairs to the lade.
- Hatchery spend is £39,186 to date, of which £25,289 is salary related and of the remaining £13,897, £9.7k was spent on fuel, £1.2k on food, £719 on chemicals and the rest on sundries.

- Fishtay and website spend of £6,660 largely relates to the Fishpal invoices.
- The cost of Opening day, Pitcastle project, smolt project and drone surveys total £2,082 against the £2k projects budget. The forecast has been adjusted to reflect the slight increase.

Capital Expenditure of £31,389 relates to £12,750 cost of new Jimny, £16,664 for the new hatchery boilers and £1,975 for the drone.

We are now looking to be £981 ahead of budget, but this may all change once the appeals figures are processed later in the year.

DG asked whether there was a provision for the payment of rent, to which IMacG replied there was.

## **6. Health & Safety Report**

DS reported no notifiable H&S incidents nor near misses since the last meeting.

## **7. FMS Stocking Policy**

The FMS stocking policy document had been circulated previously and was taken as read.

SM commented that the report was deficient in many areas and objected to its adoption in its current form. In particular, he felt that the omission of the kelt reconditioning work and predation by bird populations was very poor and dangerous in a time when we are faced with a declining salmon population. He had read the RAFTS stocking policy document and thought it rather more enlightened. In short, he did not want to adopt the FMS paper.

MS concurred with SM's sentiments, stating further that the FMS's silence on issues such as fishfarm escapes and pike impact was unacceptable.

The Convener stated that the TDSFB stocking policy is as robust as any other but does not necessarily fit with the FMS vision, to which DS agreed.

**ACTION: DS to formulate response to FMS Stocking paper.**

## **8. Complaints Received**

IMacG stated there had been two complaints received lately. The first from a neighbour in Almondbank regarding the bailiffs accidentally cutting branches from trees. The complaint had been answered and had now been resolved.

The second complaint was from an angler regarding the work of the Board and its employees. The Convener made the point that he was unhappy that his personal email address had been disclosed and that a Board employee had been subjected to an aggressive, intimidating phone call. ALL agreed this was unacceptable.

The Convener stated that he would send the complainant a reply shortly.

## **9. Mike Smith Queries and replies**

A copy of 28 queries raised by MS and replies from the Board had been circulated to all Board members prior to the meeting and were taken as read. A copy of MS queries had been circulated by MS to "Others".

MS stated he was thankful to the Board for supplying him with a reference document as he had been harbouring a number of queries for the last 19 years.

The Convener stated that he found the queries destructive, and asked that MS be more constructive in future to allow the Board to move forward. He stated that he would answer each of MS's queries in order to put the matters to rest.

Query 1 – related to a past employee of the Board, and after some discussion MS agreed the query had been answered to his satisfaction.

Query 2 – related to another Board employee's conduct, which was then answered to MS's satisfaction.

Query 3 – relating to Luncarty Weir – MS agreed this had already been discussed and in Matters Arising and had been answered to his satisfaction.

Query 4 – relating to bird counts. There was some discussion, and it was agreed that DS would look into taking bird predation issues forward with FMS, and look into having more collaboration with the Tay Ghillies Association regarding bird counts.

**ACTION: DS to liaise with FMS regarding bird predation of salmon stocks.**  
**ACTION: DS to look into possibility of TGA co-operation for bird counts.**

DG interjected that it may be a better use of Board time to ask MS what answers he was not happy with and tackle these. The Convener stated that he wanted all the queries to be answered to MS satisfaction. MS had no further comments and ALL decided to leave the subject and move on with the agenda.

The Convener did however state that the allegations of vote rigging by IMacG in query 26 was wholly unacceptable and the supplied list of all candidates and votes was embarrassing for the Board and unnecessary. MS denied any allegations had been made and stated he had merely wanted to see all co-optees and their votes.

#### **10. Steve Mannion Paper**

A paper had been written by SM and circulated to all Board members prior to the meeting and had been taken as read. SM explained that as he saw it, everything was channelled through the Fisheries Director, making his job onerous. SM would like to see more use of Board member skills to enable the Board to help inform policy and be more informed. Although not a fan of committees, he outlined a plan to have areas of responsibility which were headed by Board members. He acknowledged that this would initially involve more work for DS but that this should fall to an acceptable level in time.

The Convener thanked SM for his positive contribution, and explained that as a first step the Board should be educated on what the employees do on a day to day basis. He stated that perhaps the Fishponds project could be handled by way of a sub group gathering and presenting information so the Board could make an informed decision.

There followed some discussion surrounding the topic, with ALL agreeing it would be worth trying out over the forthcoming months.

#### **11. Finance & Administration Presentation**

A copy of the F&A presentation had been circulated previously and was taken as read. IMacG gave a brief presentation on her roles within the Tay Foundation and the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board. SM suggested the Convener should be on the F&A sub group.

AW asked what would happen should IMacG disappear, to which IMacG explained she had a manual in the office of her duties (which required some updating).

As an aside, the Convener mentioned query number 22 on MS list regarding a vice chair. He explained there was nothing in the Act about appointing a vice Chair, but thought it a good idea. He asked if anyone would like the role, and JP was nominated by MS and seconded by TM.

#### **12. Fishponds**

IMacG explained she had asked Lord Mansfield for further details on the project such as history and rough costings, but LM had not been able to attend the meeting and had not submitted any further details.

ALL agreed to defer the item until there was sufficient detail to discuss.

### **13. AOB**

#### **Gene Strengthening of Salmon Stocks on Tay**

A member of the public pointed out that stocks had dipped due to overfishing, and that more competition was required between cock fish to produce a stronger gene pool. He stated he had been on touch with the Scottish Parliament and asked them for help in the matter. The Convener thanked the member of the public for his time.

#### **Strategic Plan**

The Convener stated that DS had in the past produced a strategic plan and that this would be an excellent opportunity to read it over and revise as necessary. ALL agreed this was a good idea.

**ACTION: DS to update plan and present at next meeting**

JR, on behalf of the TGA asked that they be kept in mind to help out in terms of money and manpower. ALL thanked him for his offer.

#### **Categorisation Update**

TM asked what was happening with the river categorisation method, to which DS replied it was being revised but may still be flawed, with a bias to over estimating numbers of fish in rivers with main runs in summer and underestimating in rivers with later runs.

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