

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Kelt Reconditioning Unit and Hatchery, Almondbank on Tuesday, 11th February 2014.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
John Wood
Thomas Steuart Fotheringham
Alastair Riddell (late arrival)
Simon Furniss
David Godfrey
John Young (late arrival)
David Brown
Stephen Mannion (late arrival)
William Jackson

In Attendance: Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director
Inga McGown - Clerk
Jack Coburn – P&KC

Apologies: John Apthorp
Brian Roxburgh – SEPA
Gavin Clark – SNH
William Lindsay

Minutes of Board Meeting of 10th December 2013:

The Minutes were taken as read, approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising:

Governance – Complaints Procedure:

Dr. Summers distributed the revised procedure for the Board's consideration, and this was agreed upon.

ACTION: DS to update website with revised Stage II.

Smolt Tagging Project:

DS had been unable to hold a meeting with John Armstrong, due to personal circumstances on Mr. Armstrong's part, but it was hoped a meeting would be held in the near future in order to work up the project details for submission both to the Board and the Tay Foundation.

ACTION: DS to work up project for full consideration.

Finances:

IMcG gave a full list of all outstanding debtors and agreed that Condie be instructed to serve legal notice on any outstanding 2012 and 2013 debts.

ACTION: IMcG to contact Condie.

Staff Update:

DS updated the Board regarding the replacement for Trainee Hatchery Technician role. We have put an advert on ASFB website, and have had a number of CVs to date. The closing date is next week and therefore we will collate and interview as appropriate.

There was some concern over the Hatchery Manager's working hours and whether these were too demanding, but DS assured the Board that the bailiffs were helping out where possible, and that this would take priority over bailiffing work until a replacement was found.

DB suggested an interim measure, whereby we employ someone part time to help in the busy periods, to which JC replied that there was a Youth Scheme which could give financial help and this was open to people up to the age of 25. The Chairman stressed that the new role would have to be filled by someone who was willing to live locally.

ACTION: JC to provide IMcG with details for consideration.

Visitors to the Kelt Reconditioning Unit and Hatchery:

The Chairman informed the Board that the King of Norway had visited us a couple of weeks ago, and had been met by himself, Dr. Summers and the Hatchery Manager.

David Brown, who had been instrumental in the meeting, went on to inform the Board that King Harald V and his entourage had spent close to 2 hours at Almondbank and had thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and been impressed by our work here.

There then followed a discussion surrounding the likelihood of us dispensing our knowledge for a fee in order to fund the Hatchery further and run it slightly more commercially. AR proposed a subcommittee to look into possible applications and work up business models.

Financial Report:

Cash Account to 31st December 2013:

As at 31st December 2013, the Accounts are showing a deficit of £20,356, although it should be noted that the contribution from the Tay Foundation towards the Hatchery has not yet been calculated and will be paid this month. The overall bank balance stands at a healthy £241,111.

Income

This year's assessment income to date stands at £422,459, which represents 96% of the total payable. A third reminder was sent out in December, and there are now only 11 payments outstanding.

Of the 2012 Assessment, we are still awaiting £1,176 from 4 proprietors, despite a legal letter being sent by Condis. This is still being chased.

The Appeals figure remains at £15,491. The Assessor has been in touch, and it is estimated that there is a further £2k of appeals to come in, which will be covered by our provision from 2012.

Expenditure

The Salaries figure shows a saving of £10,130, being largely due to a bailiff leaving during the year but not yet being replaced.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £73,656, which includes salary costs of £30,948, relating to the Hatchery Manager's salary, as well as 50% of the Assistant Hatchery Manager's, the rest being met by the Tay Foundation. The Forecast is almost £7k above budget, as we have incurred some unbudgeted expenditure in the year, namely £2.5k in fire fighting equipment, an additional £2k insurance, and almost £2k in alarm costs.

The New Office refurbishment has cost £50,323 to date, of which £32k of this will be met by a very generous donation from John Apthorp. We are awaiting a building warrant to put in a window and new reception door to complete the project.

Transfers to deposit have resulted in interest of £2,384 being gained this year.

Update on sub letting of old offices:

IMcG updated the Board as to the current situation regarding our leasing out of the old office building. Basically, we had a tenant lined up and were in the process of producing a sub-lease which had to be agreed with our landlords. However, owing to the time this process has taken, this proposed tenant has now become disenchanted, so much so that they were now reconsidering their position on accepting the lease. This would leave a hole in our 2014 budget.

ACTION: The Chairman to meet with prospective tenant and attempt to come to an agreement.

Fishpal:

The Chairman informed the Board that he had met with Mark Cockburn from Fishpal in an effort to reduce the annual fee of £6,600.

Declaration of Interests:

IMcG asked the Board members to declare any new interests since last meeting in the folder provided. There were no new interests to declare.

Budget 2014 and Assessment:

IMcG informed the Board that although the final budget figures had yet to be published, it looked likely that the next assessment levy would be somewhere in the region of 53% to cover all ongoing costs. This is partly due to rebates on rateable values which erode the assessment income.

ACTION: IMcG/DS to finalise budget and send out prior to next meeting.

Season Extension:

DS distributed a draft copy of a summary report of the first three years of the trial which will eventually be sent to the Scottish Government at the conclusion. As 2014 is to be the last year of the trial, it was agreed that if there is interest in seeking to make the change permanent we will hold an EGM in November 2014 in order to give all proprietors a chance to vote on the issue.

A discussion arose surrounding the payment of a third gross income to the Tay Foundation for participating beats, and whether this could be continued were there to be a permanent extension. Most were in favour of this, and DS pointed out that it was an interim measure, as a revaluation will take place in 2017, which will use season extension data, and those fishing in the season extension will have a higher levy to pay.

Opening Day/Fisheries Review:

The Chairman informed the Board that the Opening Day had gone reasonably well, and that a decision will be made regarding the Garry by the end of March under the European Water Directive. SEPA have not presented anything as yet, but should do so in the near future.

DS informed the Board about the impending Fisheries Review to be headed up by Andrew Thin. To date, there has not been too much information on the review.

AOB:

Fishing Extension Payments:

SF brought up the extension payments topic, as there are a couple of beats yet to pay.

ACTION: DG to see Simon Clarke regarding cheque
ACTION: DS to see J Milligan 12/11/2014 and remind
ACTION: IMcG to send Dalmarnock an invoice

Catch & Release:

The Chairman brought it to the Board's attention that fish had been killed within the season extension, and that this was not just breaking with our recommendations, but was actually illegal.

ACTION: DS/IMcG to ensure this is clear in all future communications.

Fishing Methods:

DG informed the Board that although worm fishing was not recommended after August, some beats had been worming in September and early October. He stressed that we need to agree a common policy, either a complete ban to which everyone adhered, or reverting back to the previous code, where worming was only banned in the autumn in those tributaries where spring salmon were waiting to spawn.

There followed a debate, whereby most Board members agreed with DG. The Chairman stressed that it was the catch and release policy that was important and not how the fish was caught. This would be subject to future review therefore.

Freshwater Inland Fish Farms:

TSF pointed out that planning permission had been obtained over in Argyll by another organisation for an inland close containment freshwater salmon farm facility. If this proved successful this might benefit rivers by eliminate the need to rear salmon in cages in the sea.

Health & Safety:

AR proposed we resurrect the Health and Safety agenda item to be included in every Board Meeting, to which all agreed.

ACTION: IMcG to ensure H & S on every future agenda.

Stronuich Counter:

AR brought up the issue of the counter at Stronuich Dam on the River Lyon asking whether we could lobby to have it reinstated. DS said there had been technical difficulties.

ACTION: DS to talk to SSE regarding this issue.

Malloch Trophy Sponsorship:

JW wondered who the next sponsor would be for the Malloch trophy, to which the Chairman replied that as yet, there wasn't but we were in negotiations.

TGA Fish of the Month:

SF presented the Board with posters for the above and a brief description of the concept. All very encouraged by this initiative.

Date of next meeting:

The Chairman asked whether we could change the next meeting date to Tuesday, 15th April at 10am to which all agreed.

Staff Matters:

DS & IMcG then left the room as did Councillor Coburn. The Board members discussed the above as a closed agenda item.

No Other Business was brought up and the Chairman closed the meeting.

Next Meeting: 10:00am Tuesday, 15th April 2014 at our Hatchery in Almondbank