

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board Offices, Cromwellpark, Almondbank, on Tuesday, 13th June 2017.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
Geoff Coates
John Wood
Alastair Riddell
Claire Mercer Nairne
Cohn O’Dea (TGA rep)
Simon Furniss

In Attendance: Inga McGown - Clerk
Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)

Apologies: Perth and Kinross Council Representative
Brian Roxburgh
John Apthorp
Steve Mannion
David Godfrey
Iain McLaren
David Brown

Declaration of Interests:

There were no new declarations of interest. ALL agreed it would be a good idea to refresh their declaration sheets.

ACTION: IMcG to email sheets round to ALL for completion for next meeting.

Minutes of Board Meeting of 18th April 2017:

Matters Arising:

Health & Safety:

ACTION: DS/IMcG to ensure H& S on bailiff agenda at least once a quarter.

Bailiff Update:

DS explained he had sent out the job description to colleges, FMS, and other locations, but that no suitable candidates had been found as yet. The Chairman asked if the bailiffs had been coping without the additional bailiff, to which DS replied they had adapted well, but have had some issues.

ACTION: IMcG to email bailiff job description to ALL.

Road Repairs:

IMcG stated she was still on the case, and was ideally looking for 3 quotes for the road repairs at the top of the road.

ACTION: IMcG to get 3 road repair quotes.

The Minutes were agreed unanimously and were signed by the Chairman.

Financial Report:

Cash Account to 7th June 2017:

As at 7th June 2017, the Cash Account shows a surplus of £20,965, and the overall bank balance stands at a healthy £426,946, with £100,000 of this being invested.

Income

To date, 36% of 2017 assessments have been paid. The forecast and budget are still standing at 7.5% of total for appeals. IMcG explained that this was still the riskiest portion of the budget as quite a few appeals had been lodged from larger beats.

ACTION: IMcG to report more fully on appeals at next meeting.

Expenditure

Yet again, it should be noted that the rent invoice has not been received (now £101k to the end of 2016). A provision is made in the statutory accounts, and there are easily enough funds to cover the cost.

The £19,314 spend in rent, rates and general insurance largely relates to the insurance bill of £17k for the year.

The subs cost of £17,149 is largely made up of a contribution to the FMS of £14,496.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £12,538, of which £9,755 is salary related.

The spend of £1,149 under projects is all related to the smolt project and is mainly made up of expenditure for the second trap (shed, ropes etc).

SF asked whether we would legally have to pay the rent invoice if it ever materialised, as such a long time had passed, to which the Chairman replied that he did not wish to challenge it, and it would be prudent to keep funds in the bank to cover the invoice.

Health & Safety Report:

DS noted that there had been no reportable H&S incidents since the last meeting.

Bailiff Update:

This was covered in Matters Arising.

River Garry Update:

DS explained that the work was now well underway, with AMCO being contracted to carry out a portion of the works, with the rest being completed by SSE. DS had heard that AMCO apparently aimed to complete work at Garry Intake by 4th August 2017. No water is as yet going down the Garry from Garry Intake as a coffer dam has been built to maintain a dry working area. The flow is still being directed to Loch Errochty.

DS had met with SSE, who have produced a draft monitoring plan for future guidance. DS has made comments on the draft and it has now been passed to SEPA, who will respond regarding monitoring the process. DS explained that he had suggested a range of monitoring approaches that could be used but was not sure whether anything other than electrofishing surveys might be required.

SF asked whether big spates would affect the Garry in future, given it would largely be controlled by SSE, to which DS replied that spates would continue to affect the Garry in the same way they do now. Peak spate flows are not much affected but the abstraction causes spates to tail off quicker than natural. The purpose of the freshet allowance would be to extend these spate tails to help fish migration. DS stressed how positive it was that work was actually taking place.

Smolt Trap Update:

TDSFB Operations Manager, Mike Brown then joined the meeting to give a smolt trap project update, and proceeded to hand out his presentation in paper format. 1647 smolts had been tagged in the Errochty Water this year and 293 in the River Garry near Killiecrankie. A mark-recapture estimate suggested the Errochty smolt run to be of the order of 4584.

JW asked what the number of smolts in the Errochty told us, to which DS replied these numbers were in the region of what was expected bearing in mind some smolts will have left before trapping commenced in March and indicated that the Errochty is healthy, but that more electrofishing of the area would need to be carried out to ascertain further information. He added that the Errochty had been chosen as it was believed to have good numbers of smolts coupled with good flow conditions for catching them.

JW asked if we could use a fish counter in the Errochty, to which DS replied he had discussed this with SSE in the past when SSE considered reducing the flow there, as it would be useful to know when adult salmon entered the Errochty. These discussions had ceased since the proposal to alter flows in the Errochty seemed to no longer be an issue.

GC asked if the report was in the public domain, to which DS replied that MB had still to work up the graphs, so it would be best to wait until that was ready.

ACTION: DS/MB to place smolt trap study in public domain once finalised.

Director's Report:

DS had previously circulated his Directors Report, and the Chairman asked whether DS had anything he particularly wanted to mention regarding the report. DS replied that he would like to discuss the Marine Scotland Science acoustic detectors mentioned in the report. Basically, MSS plans to catch adult salmon in bag nets at Armadale on the north coast of Scotland and attach acoustic tags to them this summer. However, they don't have the resources to place tag detectors in all rivers and have called on the help of the Boards and Trusts around Scotland. They would like us to place 2 detectors, one at the head of tide, and the other further up river. The Chairman stated that he didn't mind one being placed at Almondmouth, but it would have to be done before mid July.

AR asked whether the tags were individual to the fish, to which DS replied they were.

Hatchery Update:

DS explained that he, AR & IMcL had met regarding the Hatchery Review, and had reached a conclusion (the paper had been circulated prior to the meeting). He summarised that the main problem facing the hatchery was broodstock collection, and to this end the subcommittee had recommended a second broodstock collection team be deployed. Co'D intimated that the TGA had already pledged funds to purchase a second broodstock collection kit.

DS stated that the hatchery also required more manpower during peak times, and commended the work of bailiff, Craig Duncan, who had been helping the Hatchery Manager. He suggested that this role might be formalised.

DS continued that the subcommittee had produced a risk assessment document for the hatchery, and proceeded to explain the most pressing risks.

The Chairman asked whether ALL were willing to proceed with the recommendations made by the subcommittee, to which ALL agreed they would like to proceed.

Wild Fisheries Review Update:

DS stated that IMcG had circulated an email several weeks ago regarding the latest Government thinking, and that the main message was that the Government was keen on DSFBs producing management plans, of which he himself was supportive in principle, although some DSFBs appeared not to be.

AOB:

Lyon Project

AR asked what the progress was regarding the Lyon Project. The Operations Manager entered the meeting and stated that he had collected 200 samples from below the dam, but had failed to do the area between the two dams due to high water. AR stated that he thought the areas to be electrofished were above the dam, between the two dams, and below the dam, and wondered if we were perhaps too late now.

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