

## **TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Hatchery, Almondbank on Tuesday, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2016.**

***Present:*** William Jack (Chairman)  
Claire Mercer Nairne  
Geoff Coates  
John Wood  
Alastair Riddell  
David Godfrey  
Simon Furniss  
John Apthorp  
Steve Mannion

***In Attendance:*** Inga McGown - Clerk  
Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director  
1 member of public

***Apologies:*** Alastair Munro  
Brian Roxburgh  
Gavin Clark  
Cohn O’Dea  
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)  
Iain McLaren  
David Brown

The Chairman welcomed Geoff Coates to the meeting, and explained that, as Eric Starke had been unable to attend the Board meetings for a number of months, Geoff had been nominated as the replacement Mandatory for Taymount Fishings.

### **Declaration of Interests:**

There were no new declarations of interest.

### **Minutes of Board Meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016:**

#### **Matters Arising:**

#### **Horseshoe Weir:**

DS explained that it looked as if the costs for repairing the weir could be substantial. The Chairman asked whether the work was absolutely necessary, to which DS replied that the work has to be carried out at some point in the near future, as it threatens our supply of water

to the hatchery, as well as the functionality of a private hydro scheme. He stressed that it is the responsibility of the hydro operator but because of various reasons the operator did not appear to be in a position to take the initiative at present, so it was in our interest to start the process moving. DS had already had an outline quote of around £20k, but the Operations Manager, Mike Brown had set up a second quote, for which we are awaiting the figures.

DG expressed his surprise that the quote could be so much, and had indeed suggested a figure of around £8k some time ago. The chairman asked whether he would be prepared to submit a written quote but he stated that he no longer had the time to carry out the work. He would, however, be more than happy to advise on the work required and the likely costs.

**ACTION: DG to advise what is required and report to DS**  
**ACTION: DS to gather quotes for comparison by next meeting in October 2016.**

**Parabolic Filter:**

**ACTION: DS to continue trying to sell filter.**

**Health & Safety Report:**

To be discussed later in meeting under Health & Safety report.

**Lyon Update:**

To be discussed under Tay Foundation update.

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

**Financial Report:**

IMcG first asked that the Board complete some housekeeping with regard to cheques being made out to “TDSFB” and “Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board”. The Board unanimously agreed that cheques made out to “TDSFB” should be honoured by the Bank of Scotland.

**ACTION: IMcG to send resolution to the Bank of Scotland.**

**Cash Account to 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016:**

As at 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016, the Cash Account shows a surplus of £86,203, and the overall bank balance stands at a healthy £413,031, with £100,000 of this being invested for 6 months at a rate of 0.9%.

**Income**

Assessment payments continue to be paid steadily, with over two thirds now having been paid. A reminder will go out shortly for the remaining amounts.

As intimated last meeting, we will only have an understanding of the appeals figure towards the end of the year, as the Valuation Assessor has asked those seeking appeals to wait until after the season has closed before they measure any economic downturn.

The rental income forecast for our old offices has been revised down to £2,125 from last meeting, as we have just signed the lease to commence this month. We have waived the first two months rent, as the new tenants have had to carry out expensive works in order to adapt the building to their needs. This includes laying a concrete floor, heightening the existing door and building a fence between the building and the neighbouring properties so as to comply with noise pollution planning rules. They will therefore start paying rent in October to December of this year.

### **Expenditure**

Salary costs still show a slight saving from budget of almost £3k due to our operations manager being budgeted to start in January, but actually starting work in February.

Training stands at £2,471 at present, with a total budget of £5k. This includes the cost of the bailiff's Electrofishing team leader course in September, but not accommodation and subsistence. It is likely the £5k budget will not be exceeded therefore.

We have purchased a new Jimny in preparation for replacing our older model, as agreed at the last Board meeting. It is listed in the cash account under capital for £11,900. Owing to the fact we now have a relatively new fleet of vehicles, the forecast shows a saving of £5k against budget which I feel we will manage to achieve comfortably, given we will not have a high level of repair bills.

Yet again, I should highlight that we have still not received a rent invoice (now £101k to the end of 2016). A provision is made in the statutory accounts, and we have easily enough funds to cover the cost should we be invoiced anytime soon.

We are still awaiting a quote from Kings regarding the road repairs at the top of the road. The forecast will be adjusted as soon as we have the relevant figures. We met with Kings recently, where their quote for under £1,000 did not include the full stretch from the top of the road to the top of the turn off. We are still awaiting a revised quote and hopefully this will be ready for our next meeting.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £20,374, of which £13,640 is salary related. There is an unexpected cost of £3,849.33 relating to breathing apparatus for treating the fish, but most of this can be covered by the contingency budget of £3k, and the remainder is shown in the forecast.

Overall, the Forecast stands at £4,514 ahead of budget at present.

The Chairman stated that although the Board is in a relatively good financial position, our thoughts must go to the future and the likely projects we will be looking to spend on. Furthermore, he went on to say that Buchanty Spout may require significant expenditure in the future.

### **Health & Safety Report:**

The Chairman stated that the Health & Safety Audit report had been sent out to all Board members, and that although the action points looked rather onerous, there were in fact not that many of them.

IMcG proceeded to explain the 17 points raised by the Audit and what was being done to mitigate any perceived risks. It was agreed that DS and IMcG would produce a list of when the items would be implemented by the end of August 2016.

**ACTION: DS/IMcG to produce list of H&S audit implementation times by end August 2016.**

### **Staffing:**

The Chairman informed the Board that one of the bailiffs had resigned as of last week. It was agreed that we should tighten up on HR procedures for appointing staff.

**ACTION: DS/IMcG to look into independent HR advice.**

DG enquired as to whether there would be a new bailiff appointed to fill this role, to which the Chairman replied that we were waiting to see how the Wild Fisheries Review would impact our catchment before taking a decision.

### **River Garry Update:**

Following a meeting with SEPA and SSE that he and DS had attended the Chairman expressed his delight that major progress was being made with regards to rewatering of the Garry. CMN asked whether this information could be made public, to which the Chairman replied that all parties had agreed that an official announcement would be made at the appropriate time once final agreement had been reached.

### **River Tummel Smolt Project:**

DS stated that another smolt trap had been ordered from Canada and would be arriving shortly.

### **Kill Licence Update:**

DS explained that there wasn't a huge amount to update on, but that an early draft of a "conservation plan" had been circulated by Marine Scotland Science to river biologists, a copy of which had been forwarded to Board members prior to the meeting. It appeared that there had been considerable concern expressed by some biologists that major improvements were required before these plan templates were ready to be sent out for use.

DS then went on to state that we are now starting electrofishing studies on both the Eden and the Earn (both Category 3 rivers) to build up information on salmon populations. He went on to state that scale packets have been ordered and will be distributed on the two rivers to

anglers, in the hope that they will take scales from each fish caught, along with approximate weight and hopefully a photo of the fish, which will then be collated by DS and MB (Operations Manager) to give a better picture of the salmon population to feed into the categorisation model.

DG asked whether the category 3 status was reviewed on an annual basis, to which DS replied in the affirmative.

Ian Young (from the Eden) stated that they had a particular problem with this, as once they had received their category 3 status, less people were inclined to fish for salmon and therefore the catch statistics would fall, and the river would forever remain in category 3 status.

DS stated that it was most important to gather relevant information to further the case for the Eden, and that a fish counter was another option. He had written to MSS to see if they would help with funding, but had yet to hear back from them.

DS went on to state that, what with “Brexit” there may of course in time potentially be no need for the measures should the EU Habitats Directive cease to have force. He again stated that the best way for the Eden and the Earn to overturn their category 3 ruling was to gather data and present it to Marine Scotland. To this end, we will endeavour to electrofish about 6-8 sites on the Eden and more on the Earn, to gather information. SF suggested that Ian Young keep a note of the number of anglers in previous years, compared to this year, and DS added that ticket sales would also provide a guide.

#### **Wild Fisheries Review:**

DS informed the Board that a joint working group composed of representatives of ASFB and RAFTS had been looking at the amalgamation of DSFBs to create fewer new FMO structures. His feeling was that the Tay was adequate in size and therefore would be subject to very little change in boundaries although there had been suggestions from some neighbouring districts that we might give up some peripheral areas. The Chairman stated that it wouldn't make much differences if we conceded some small areas, particularly those close to the Esks, but that the Tay catchment would in all probability, remain virtually the same.

#### **Hatchery Update:**

The Chairman explained that the hatchery had been subject to an outbreak of Bacterial Kidney Disease (BKD) and that a number of adult fish had been lost. The deaths had mainly been in the new brood stock brought in in autumn 2015, and that the older broodstock were largely unaffected.

AR asked what impact this would have on our brood program, to which DS replied it had a wide effect, as the fish that had died had come from several different tributaries rather than just one. We would do our utmost to bring numbers up again this autumn. On being asked whether the hatchery was closely monitored now, DS replied in the affirmative, adding that he would need to ascertain when the current movement order imposed by Marine Scotland would be lifted.

**ACTION: DS to confirm when movement order will be lifted with MSS.**

SF asked whether BKD was only triggered when the fish started to eat again, and whether it was something that came in with the fish on their return from the sea, to which DS replied he would find out.

**ACTION: DS to ascertain whether BKD is present in fish coming from the sea.**

### **Tay Foundation Update:**

JW updated the Board as to the recent works of the Tay Foundation, namely:

#### **Salmon in the Classroom:**

JW stated that the schools' entries were to be judged at our next meeting, and that there was possibly about a year of Vaillant sponsorship monies left, but that the project would go ahead regardless.

#### **River Lyon:**

JW explained that Eric Verspoor (a Tay Foundation Trustee representing UHI) had embarked upon a genetic testing project, which it was felt would greatly benefit the River Lyon. The object was to sample several hundred parr from above and below Stronuch dam, to ascertain how many adults had spawned.

In addition, it was hoped to look at survival rates above and below the dam to ascertain whether fish benefited from ascending the dam or not. The project will cost in the region of £15k over two years, and the Tay Foundation has agreed in principle to fund £7.5k of this total, providing the Lyon proprietors can fund the other half (there has already been a generous donation from one Lyon proprietor). The aim is to contact the Lyon proprietors as soon as possible to find out if they would be willing to contribute.

#### **Scone Lease:**

JW explained that Scone Estates was in the process of granting a new lease of their net fishings for a further 15 years, and that the Tay Foundation would be foolish not to take advantage of such a generous proposal. The Tay Foundation will however pay for the legal costs involved.

#### **River Earn:**

JW stated that he and DS had looked into a potential issue occurring on the Earn regarding a weir. It was thought by some that the weir was preventing upstream passage for fish, and therefore the Foundation had asked an engineer to produce a report, which he had done. It was felt that some improvements might be made but there were significant differences of opinion on the Earn as to how significant the issue was. Therefore, while the Tay Foundation would not see this as a pressing issue the owner would be approached for a view.

**ACTION: CMN to give details of owner's address to DS for contacting regarding weir.**

**Malloch Trophy:**

JW stated that the junior Malloch would be awarded this month.

**ACTION: IMcG to ascertain when Junior Malloch Trophy was to be presented.**

**AOB:**

**TGA Funds:**

SF stated that he had been asked by the Tay Ghillies Association to see whether the Board had any projects or equipment that required funding to a maximum of £25k.

The Chairman on behalf of the Board, thanked the TGA and said that the Board would consider which project or equipment the monies could be used for, before getting back to the TGA by the end of the month. Again, he thanked the TGA for their generosity.

**ACTION: DS/The Chairman to ascertain possible projects or equipment, and get back to the TGA by the end of the month.**

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