

## **TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Hatchery, Almondbank on Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016.**

***Present:*** William Jack (Chairman)  
Claire Mercer Nairne  
Iain McLaren  
John Wood

***In Attendance:*** Inga McGown - Clerk  
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)  
1 member of public

***Apologies:*** Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director  
Eric Starke  
Alastair Riddell  
Alastair Munro  
David Godfrey  
Brian Roxburgh  
David Brown  
Simon Furniss  
John Apthorp  
Gavin Clark  
Cohn O’Dea  
Steve Mannion

The Chairman expressed his displeasure at such a low attendance figure. It was decided that the meeting should go ahead, although there was not a quorum and therefore no decisions could be made.

**ACTION: The Chairman/IMcG to contact all Board members to express disappointment in low attendance numbers.**

### **Declaration of Interests:**

There were no new declarations of interest.

### **Minutes of Board Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016:**

Ian Young from the Eden would like minuted from the last meeting that the Eden had submitted a plea to the Board to reinstate their original fishing calendar in order to give the Eden a longer fishing season. The Board had rejected this plea, but had offered to help with fish counters and any appropriate measures within their means for both the Eden and the Earn.

**ACTION: IMcG to amend the Minutes and circulate to reflect this.**

**Matters Arising:**

**Horseshoe Weir:**

IMcG explained to the Board that the Operations Manager had recently invited a contractor in to ascertain exactly what work was required. The contractor had visited the site the previous day and had reported that it would take steelwork and a huge amount of concrete to fix the weir. He will come back with a quote shortly.

**ACTION: DS/IMcG to advise at next meeting.**

**Parabolic Filter:**

DS had contacted the filter's manufacturer, Gap Technology, and was awaiting a response from them as to whether they knew of anyone willing to purchase the filter.

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

**Health & Safety Report:**

IMcG informed the Board that the Audit by Greens of Haddington was now complete and that she and DS had yet to meet to finalise. She pointed out that the main area the audit had picked up was on lone working, and she was yet to look into the various options to mitigate lone working risks.

**ACTION: DS/IMcG to meet and finalise H&S audit.**

**ACTION: IMcG to analyse lone working tools available and report back at next meeting.**

**Garry Update:**

The Chairman announced that he had been in touch with SEPA, and a meeting had been set up for Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, which he and DS would attend. As far as he could see there were two outstanding issues to be resolved, namely surrounding the compliance point for the River Garry. SEPA would like to set a compliance point as a matter of urgency, however SSE would prefer to see what happens once the Garry is rewatered and come to an acceptable compliance point at a later date. Secondly, regarding flow to be released in the Garry under high water conditions, the Chairman believes SEPA should take a stance on this and not be vague.

**Tummel Smolt Project:**

Mike Brown, Operations Manager, presented on this topic later in the meeting.

### **Wild Fisheries Review**

The Chairman pointed out that there was not much to discuss as things had been relatively quiet since the last consultation response had been submitted. He added that IMcG had now been accepted onto the Finance Committee for the Government.

IMcG then pointed out that DS had now been accepted for the Joint Working Group, and that should he not be able to attend any meetings, then perhaps a Board member should go in his place. She also stated that Mike Brown, Operations manager, was also trying to join the Biologist group.

### **Hatchery Update:**

IMcG explained that AR had sent some correspondence to DS in order to further setting up a meeting with Lyon proprietors.

**ACTION: DS/AR to have a further discussion to finalise plan.**

### **Financial Report:**

#### **Cash Account to 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016:**

As at 6<sup>th</sup> June 2016, the Cash Account shows a surplus of £111,103, as the effect of the assessment revenue begins to kick in. The overall bank balance stands at a healthy £441,398.

#### **Income**

Assessment payments are coming in steadily, with just over half paid already. A reminder will go out shortly for the remaining amounts.

Having spoken to the Valuation Assessor, it appears that the Eden and Earn appeals will not be recompensed until at least early 2017. The Assessor has asked those appealing to provide evidence of economic downturn, for example proof of loss of angling club membership or falling catch statistics. Most appeals will only have a true picture by the end of the season. The Assessors have been given until December 2017 to finalise the appeal process, and given that they have a more pressing agenda to revalue the beats before September 2016, they will have little time to address appeals until at least the beginning of 2017. We will have more information towards the end of the year and will decide if a provision is appropriate at that time.

#### **Expenditure**

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

Training stands at £371 at present, with a total budget of £5k. The bailiffs are looking at Electrofishing team leader courses in September, and our biologist is looking to commence a scale reading course shortly. Costs for both have yet to be finalized, but may be slightly over budget. Information should be available for the next meeting.

Vehicle costs are looking relatively healthy at present, but our 2010 Jimny has just been MOT'd and we have been informed that it will not last much longer without a significant

outlay in terms of cost. This, coupled with us having an extra member of staff could lead to a shortage in vehicles. It is suggested that the Jimny perhaps become the hangar/"spare" vehicle, whilst we seek a new vehicle for our Operations Manager.

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.

Yet again, I should highlight that we have still not received a rent invoice (now £82.5k to the end of 2015, with further £18.5k for 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.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £12,099, of which £9,790.54 is salary related.

Overall, the Forecast stands at £611 ahead of budget at present.

IMcG also mentioned that the Blairgowrie weir would need some work shortly, and that both the council and SEPA were looking at funding for this.

### **Pensions:**

IMcG explained that the Government was bringing in a new work-based pension scheme, whereby employees were being encouraged to save for their retirement. We are due to be phased in on January 2017, when employees will be bound to pay a minimum of 1% into a pension plan, and the employer will also pay in a minimum of 1%. This rises to 2% respectively in 2018 and 3% respectively the following year.

Currently, we pay 3% of salary and employees can then contribute as much as they like. Even with the new legislation, it is thought the employees will still not be contributing enough to gain a meaningful pension on retirement. Therefore, the Chairman suggested the Board contribute our current rate of 3%, and then match the employee contribution up to 3% to encourage saving. Therefore, the minimum the Board would contribute in year 1 is 3% plus 1% to match employee contribution (4% total), rising to a maximum of 6% being the current level of 3% plus a further 3% should the employee contribute that amount. As there was no quorum at the meeting, this proposal could not be voted on.

**ACTION: The Chairman/IMcG to meet with bailiffs and explain situation and ascertain what they were likely to do, before feeding back to next meeting.**

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

Covered under Matters Arising.

### **River Garry Update:**

Covered under Matters Arising.

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

Mike Brown, Operations Manager/Biologist gave a presentation on the smolt project, explaining the project principles and findings, which was well received by all. He stated that he had not tagged smolts below 100mm in length. IMacL suggested tagging down to 90mm, and MB said he would look into it. IMacL then went on to ask whether the smolts had been fin clipped, to which MB replied in the negative.

**ACTION: DS/MB to decide whether to fin clip future smolts.**

MB suggested he would like to repeat the tagging procedure during the autumn run, which all thought a good idea.

The Chairman asked whether there was a case for a similar project to be run on the Garry.

**ACTION: MB to make up case for the Garry.**

**ACTION: MB to send copy of presentation to IMcG for circulation to Board members.**

**ACTION: MB/CMN to include project on the new website.**

IMcG asked whether the Tay Ghillies Association had been interested in funding another rotary screw trap, to which MB replied they had, provided it would monitor autumn fish only, which doesn't really fit in with our remit.

CMN suggested SSE pay for further smolt traps.

### **Kill Licence Update:**

The Chairman had nothing further to report on this topic.

### **Wild Fisheries Review:**

This was covered under Matters arising.

### **Hatchery Update:**

IMcG reported that the Hatchery Manager would now be training up 3 other members of staff to be competent in all hatchery procedures.

### **AOB:**

Fish Counter:

Ian Young (Eden) asked whether there had been any further news on a fish counter for the Eden, to which The Chairman replied that the Board do intend to put a fish counter on the Eden at some point.

The Chairman closed the meeting and asked that only the Board remain for a closed meeting.