

## **TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Hatchery, Almondbank on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2015.**

***Present:*** William Jack (Interim Chairman and Chairman)  
David Godfrey  
Alastair Riddell  
Simon Furniss  
Eric Starke  
Claire Mercer Nairne

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

***Apologies:*** Jack Coburn

The Meeting began with proprietorial Board members only, as a discussion regarding a potential co-optee appointment was required in order to settle a matter.

The Interim Chairman explained the situation regarding the potential co-optee. The Board, upon careful consideration, unanimously decided that the potential co-optee in question should not be allowed to become a full co-optee, and that the candidate with the next highest number of votes should be contacted and offered the position instead.

<p><b>ACTION: DS to contact potential co-optee to update him on the situation.</b> <b>ACTION: IMcG to contact candidate with the next highest number of votes.</b></p>
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The meeting was then joined by the following co-optees, and one member of the public:

***Present:*** Iain McLaren  
Mike Brown  
Steve Mannion  
John Wood

***Apologies:*** John Apthorp

### **Election of Chairman:**

The meeting was handed over to the Clerk, who invited nominations for a Chairman. William Jack, on a proposal from Steve Mannion and seconded by John Wood, was unanimously voted Chairman.

**Declaration of Interests:**

There were no new declarations of interests from the retained Board members. The Clerk explained the Declaration of Interests to newcomers.

**ACTION: IMcG to send out Declaration forms to CMN, ES, IMcL, JC and MB**

**Health & Safety Report:**

DS stated that there had been no health and safety issues reported since the last Board meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014. He informed the Board that 8 members of staff had successfully completed an Association of First Aiders Qualifications Level 3 Award in First Aid at Work recently.

**Minutes of Board Meeting of New Board 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014:**

The Minutes were taken as read, approved unanimously and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk asked whether it was appropriate, given that SNH and SEPA had attended very few meetings, to then ask both organisations whether they wished to appoint new representatives, to which all agreed.

**ACTION: IMcG to contact SEPA and SNH regarding new representatives.**

**Minutes of Board Meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> December 2014:**

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

**Matters Arising:**

**SEPA Presentation:**

**ACTION: IMcG to ask SEPA again for copy presentation**

**Smolt Tagging Project:**

To be discussed later in the meeting.

**Horseshoe Weir:**

This is still ongoing and will require further reparation.

**ACTION: DS to see Ian Fullerton to discuss reparation in spring.**

**Season Extension Results:**

To be discussed later in the meeting.

**Salmon Netting rights:**

The Chairman explained the netting rights issue for the benefit of the new Board members, and DS informed the Board that the netting rights have been valued at £475k. John Wood (Chairman of Tay Foundation) explained the issue from the Foundation's point of view. There was no clear consensus as to how this issue should be taken forward, and therefore it was thought it should be put on the "back burner" until there are any further developments.

**Mansfield Estates Netting Lease:**

The Chairman informed the Board that he had met with a representative of Scone Estates regarding the lease, but that no real progress had been made on the issue.

**Financial Report:**

The main discussion centred around the 2015 Budget. The Clerk proceeded to explain the budget to the assembled Board.

CMN asked why the "Appeals" figure was much less than prior year, to which the Clerk replied that the last revaluation was in 2011, and since then, most of the beats had already made their appeals and therefore we could expect no more than the actual 2014 figure of £1,800. She did stress, however, that this figure was a "moveable feast" and could change depending on any appeals raised.

CMN asked about the Tay Foundation funding, to which the Clerk explained that as there was no fishing extension for 2015, and the Foundation were not actively raising funds at present, then perhaps there would be no funding, and that this was the worst case scenario. This would have to be formally discussed and agreed between the Board and the Foundation.

The salary increase was unanimously agreed at 2%.

**ACTION: IMcG to inform staff of wage increase and make necessary adjustments to pay and pension figures.**

ES pointed out that rates relief may be claimed on warehouse part of old offices.

**ACTION: IMcG to contact rates assessor for further advice.**

There was some discussion surrounding the Fishpal and website charges budgeted. It was generally agreed that Bob White, who is currently paid by the Board, should do more to promote all beats more equally on his website.

**ACTION: The Chairman/DS to follow this up with Bob White.**

There then followed a discussion surrounding the amount paid to Fishpal. The Chairman and DS gave a brief history of the Board's involvement with Fishpal, and why the payments had

been made in the past. There was a general feeling that perhaps Fishpal should be self-financing now, or that the Tay Foundation should donate to the Board the £5k that Fishpal currently pay the Foundation to sponsor the Malloch Trophy.

**ACTION: The Chairman/JW to have a discussion surrounding Fishpal payments.**

The budget was then agreed, with the proviso that IMcG rerun the numbers with the 2% pay increase and circulate. The Chairman stressed that although the Budget was fine in its present form, it may have to be reviewed once Board priorities had been decided.

**ACTION: IMcG to rerun budget with 2% salaries increase and circulate.**

### **Review of Board Priorities:**

DS circulated two papers, the first being a review of the long term strategy which the Board agreed in 2012, the second showing those same strategies with an additional annual salmon catch weighting added to them, as well as colour coding (green being easy for the Board to achieve, with amber being slightly more difficult and red being very difficult to achieve).

DS urged the Board to study the papers more thoroughly with the view to having a discussion surrounding the prioritisation of objectives at our next meeting in April.

He asked for any burning issues to be brought forward, to which SF replied the Garry was indeed such an issue. DS then updated the Board, stating that SEPA had signed up to having flow restored to the Garry by the end of this year. Indeed, SSE are keen to progress matters also.

AR asked whether it would be helpful to form a sub-committee to tackle this task, to which most members seemed agreeable, and it was decided to discuss this at the next meeting.

The Chairman summarised by saying the Board need to decide priorities and look at the staff that are currently employed and whether they meet the needs of these priorities. Funding has to be a consideration, and we may have to utilise funds in a different manner.

**ACTION: ALL Board members to study papers 1 & 2 and identify key priorities as well as any new ones they think relevant and appropriate. This should be fed back to DS in readiness for next Board meeting in April.**

JW was keen to know what the bailiffs did as they accounted for roughly half the budget, and could potentially be used for project work.

**ACTION: DS to summarise bailiff workload and circulate to Board members.**

The Chairman then asked DS to explain the smolt tagging project and how this may become part of the Board's priorities.

**Smolt Tagging Project:**

DS informed the Board that the Tay Foundation had some years ago received £40k from Marine Scotland to fund the capital equipment required for the project, and this was still available. The main obstacle has been the cost of the manpower to get the project up and running. Marine Scotland Science is also keen to see this project progress.

The main purpose would be to ascertain survival rates of smolts at sea. There have been large losses in recent years, but it would be of great benefit to quantify these from year to year which may then help improve understanding of the threats to salmon survival at sea. The Board would also be interested in using this technology to ascertain smolt survival rates through the various hydro schemes in the Tummel system.

DS went on to explain that manpower was the main limiting factor in starting the project, and went on to detail contractor fees as opposed to a full-year biologist contract, both of which were similar, although a biologist would be employed for a year, doing other things for most of it, while the contractor would only be employed for a matter of weeks during the course of the project. Other sources of funding and manpower should be considered. SSE had said it would be unlikely to contribute to such a project in its present form and Marine Scotland Science had been approached to ascertain whether it could commit to providing some manpower each year.

The Chairman asked that this be considered at the next meeting and discussed along with the Board's priorities and objectives.

**ACTION: ALL to consider the priority of this project for next meeting.**

**Season Extension:**

IMcG gave the facts that on the first round of voting, 28% of all proprietors had voted (154 votes) with 40% voting no, 40% voting yes, and 20% voting yes with a donation to the Tay Foundation. The second round of voting produced 56% no and 44% yes, with 49% of all proprietors voting (234 votes).

The Chairman accepted that perhaps the voting system could have been more robust and asked whether the Board had any comments.

CMN voiced the fact that she was very disappointed with the result, as were many other small local businesses. She then suggested we lobby external bodies such as Visit Scotland to urge the Board to rethink their decision. In particular, the Tay Foundation would now lose out on £30k income per annum.

The Chairman then asked whether there was enough momentum to reopen this issue, given that the second vote had been 56% in favour of no extension, to which most replied that it would not be a good idea to proceed with this at least at the present time. IMacL commented that it would be disastrous to go back to the proprietors now, and that in his opinion many of the “no” voters had been due to their displeasure at certain beats using the extension purely for financial gain.

**River Ericht Court Case Update:**

DS explained the history of the case to the assembled Board. An angler had been charged with keeping unseasonable salmon, but after the Procurator Fiscal dropped the charge, the angler sought damages from the Board, arguing that the Board staff should have known the charge would not have been upheld because of a precedent set in a previous case on the River Dee in the 1990s. A hearing date has been set for 26th February 2015 at Perth Sheriff Court. Negotiations were continuing between the lawyers acting for the Board and the angler’s lawyers with a view to some form of out of Court settlement.

Consideration was also given to how the Board’s staff could ensure similar issues do not arise again.

**ACTION: DS/IMcG to inform Operations Manager of changes in practice required.**

**AOB:**

**Cormorant Licence:**

SF enquired whether the Cormorant licence had been received yet, as had been received 1<sup>st</sup> Feb last year, to which DS replied that it had been applied for around the same time and thus was expected shortly.

**ACTION: DS to chase Cormorant Licence**

**Burn Walking:**

SF enquired as to whether the bailiffs still carried out burn walks and if they had found any beaver blockages. DS replied that the bailiffs had cleared the Shochie, but burn walking had been restricted due to the new Catch & Release legislation and the need to police it.

**Meeting Date:**

SF asked that the October meeting be put back a week to Tues 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015, to which all agreed.

**ACTION: IMcG to inform all Board members of new meeting date.**

**Bailiff Work:**

JW asked whether the bailiffs had been patrolling the Loch Tay area, to which DS replied they had indeed.

**Tay Foundation Representatives:**

JW asked whether the Board would like to elect new Tay Foundation representatives now the Board had been renewed, or whether AR and JW would continue. All agreed that AR and JW should continue.

**Signatories:**

IMcG asked for a new signatory to replace Will Lindsay. SF was nominated and agreed to be the new signatory.

**ACTION: IMcG to obtain all necessary paperwork and arrange change of signatory.**

**Carcass Tagging:**

DS explained to the Board that the consultation on carcass tagging has now been issued, and that the Board should make a reply. With this in mind, he asked that all Board members read the literature and respond with their views to himself before the next meeting, with a view to formulating a response at the next meeting.

**ACTION: ALL to review carcass tagging literature and respond to DS**

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