

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Birnam Arts & Conference Centre, Birnam on Friday, 12th December 2014.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
John Wood
Stephen Mannion
Thomas Steuart Fothringham
David Godfrey
Alastair Riddell
William Lindsay

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

Apologies: William Jackson
John Young
John Apthorp
David Brown
Gavin Clark – SNH
Simon Furniss
Brian Roxburgh – SEPA

The Chairman welcomed all attendees and stated that this would be the last Board Meeting of the present Board.

Declaration of Interests:

There were no new declarations of interests.

Minutes of Board Meeting of 7th October 2014:

JW asked that the Minutes be changed to reflect the following:

1. He was a Trustee of the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust, and not Chairman.

The Minutes were then taken as read, approved unanimously and once updated, will be signed by the Chairman.

ACTION: IMcG to execute changes to Minutes and circulate.

Matters Arising:

SEPA Presentation:

It was thought the presentation given by SEPA did not contain information that was of a sensitive nature, and that this should be requested from SEPA again.

ACTION: IMcG to ask SEPA again for copy presentation

Smolt Tagging Project:

DS handed out details of project costs, and outlined the project in more detail, highlighting that the main issue with tagging smolts is the timing. Basically, people would potentially need to be available on a daily basis from March to mid-May for tagging purposes and this could be costly. The Chairman asked whether the project would run just for one year, to which DS replied this would be an ongoing project on an annual basis, and that this could be the sort of thing a future Central Fisheries Unit might see as a priority. At the moment we don't have the manpower resources to take this project to fruition, and may need to either consider taking on a member of staff, who could be deployed the rest of the year on various other tasks, or utilising a contractor.

The capital required to buy the equipment is already in place, through a £40k grant to the Tay Foundation.

DS stated that the project would probably not be able to be run in 2015, due to having to secure the level of funding required on an annual basis. A quote that had been received from a contractor suggested this would be in excess of £30k. JW suggested approaching SSE or Marine Scotland for help with funds.

The Chairman then asked the assembled Board whether they thought this project was of significant importance to justify it being taken forward, and it was unanimously decided to progress the project.

ACTION: DS to draw up a more detailed costed proposal for the next Board meeting

Horseshoe Weir:

DS spoke to Ian Fullerton regarding the repair works to the weir, and it was decided there was no point starting works at this time of year. The bailiffs have however mended an area that was overspilling

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

Season Extension Results:

IMcG informed the Board that of the 234 votes cast, 131 favoured no extension, and 103 voted for an extension. Therefore, the Board will not apply for an extension as the no vote had won.

Salmon Netting rights:

It was agreed to discuss this under Item 9 on the agenda.

Parr Stocking:

DS has written up most of the results from parr stocking trials in 2014, and this can be found in the Annual Report.

Financial Report:

The Annual Statutory Accounts have been incorporated into the Board Report and circulated.

Cash Account to 4th December 2014:

As at 4th December 2014, the Accounts are showing an increase of £52,005, and the overall bank balance stands at £328,838, of which £100,000 is being invested to generate further income.

Income

The Assessment payments are 93% paid to date, with second reminder letters to be sent out in the near future.

The process of finding a tenant for the old offices will begin in the new year.

The Forecast is some £33k ahead of budget, largely due to almost £15k in prior year Assessments being paid, together with an £18k drop in the appeals figure.

Expenditure

The rent and rates figure at almost £28k is below budget and forecast, as again we have still not received a rent invoice from the Scottish Government. However, this has been provided for in the Statutory Accounts.

The printing, stationery, advertising, and postage costs have increased from budget due to the increased and unbudgeted costs of holding the EGM and subsequent postal voting.

The Legal and Professional fees at £10,268, are some £8k above budget and forecast, which is due to our covering the costs for both ourselves and Scottish Ministers on our recent lease agreement, as agreed. Please note, this figure could have been much greater due to our ongoing Court Case with an angler who has now started civil proceedings against the Board. This is currently ongoing and all legal costs and settlements will be covered by our Insurance policy.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £61,814, of which £20,738 is salary related. There is still a full year saving of £12,215, which is mainly salary related as a biologist is not to be employed this financial year. The road repairs, which cost £20,993 have come in roughly on budget.

The New Offices have cost £2,531 to date. An invoice for £5,160 is due to be paid later this month to ELES who are completing the works, and this is reflected in the forecast.

Overall, the forecast is showing a £11k saving on budget, mainly due to the reduction in appeals figure of £18k, and the hatchery £12k, offset by spend on the new offices of almost £8k and the legal fees of £8k.

Health & Safety Report:

There were no Health & Safety issues to report since the last Board meeting.

Season Extension:

This was covered under “Matters Arising”.

Fisheries Review Update:

DS stated that the Wild Fisheries Review was published in October, and a Government response was expected but had not yet appeared. However, the fisheries minister, Paul Wheelhouse MSP, had been replaced by Aileen MacLeod MSP in the recent cabinet reshuffle and this might be expected to delay things.

According to the ASFB, they had been briefed by officials that it is intended there will be a consultation in spring 2015 on broad options with a detailed consultation for a proposed Bill later on in the year. However, any Bill would have to be introduced following the 2016 Scottish Parliamentary election.

DS continued that it appeared likely that the Scottish Government would look to bring in carcass tagging and licensing for the killing of salmon in 2016. The requirement for this stemmed from the EU Habitats and Species Directive which states that a licence should be required for the taking of specimens of protected species, which salmon in the Tay are.

DS also reiterated that the Government are now in the process of introducing mandatory catch and release up to and including 31st March to start in 2015.

JW strongly suggested strict guidelines be given to the bailiffs regarding this change, to which DS replied this was in hand.

ACTION: DS to ensure bailiff team up to speed on new C&R measures.

Salmon Netting Rights:

JW again explained to the Board that, should the boards be disbanded under the Fisheries Review, the netting rights owned by the Board could be appropriated by the Government, and perhaps the Board should look to safeguard these assets. Fishlegal have commented that should the Board disband, the assets should be apportioned to the proprietors.

DS gave the Board members some history, stating that Crown Estate had sold sea fishings from St. Andrews Harbour to Fifeness, two sections in the Eden estuary, a bit of the estuary

near Castle Huntly, a bay at Carnoustie and a section from just north of Arbroath to Auchmithie, to the Board in 1994 for £5k.

Since our last Board meeting, CKD Galbraith have quoted £1,700 (ex VAT) to value all angling and netting rights owned by the Board.

JW stated that the Tay Foundation had put funds into buying fishings in Glenshee, to which DS replied that the TF had donated £10k of the £30k the Board had paid.

The Chairman intervened by stating that no decision could be taken on these fishings until a value was put on them. JW stated that he wanted the netting rights kept on the agenda, and that we would know more as the WFR progressed. All agreed to instruct CKD Galbraith to perform the valuation.

ACTION: DS to instruct CKD to undertake valuation.

DG then brought up the Mansfield Estates netting lease which expires in 2017. The Chairman stated that there had already been contact with Chris Gordon of the estate, and that issue was only at an early stage. JW stated that he believed the lease involved the Tay Foundation and that he would like to be kept in the loop.

ACTION: The Chairman to keep JW informed regarding the Mansfield Lease.

AOB:

Catch & Return:

IMcG asked regarding our policy on catch and release for 2015, to which the Chairman replied it was the same as 2014, with the exception of the mandatory catch and release till end of March.

The Chairman then thanked the Board for the last three years.

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