

## **TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Birnam Institute, Station Road, Birnam, at 9.30am on Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2016.**

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

***In Attendance:*** Inga McGown - Clerk  
Dr. David Summers – Fisheries Director  
Nicki MacIntyre (SNH)  
1 member of public

***Apologies:*** Alastair Munro  
Brian Roxburgh  
Cohn O’Dea  
John Apthorp  
David Brown

### **Declaration of Interests:**

There were no new declarations of interest.

### **Minutes of Board Meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016:**

#### **Matters Arising:**

##### **Horseshoe Weir:**

DS explained that he had met the weir’s owner who agreed that essential repairs were ultimately their responsibility, but was referred to another member of the firm who would be dealing with this issue from now on.

##### **Parabolic Filter:**

DS explained that the filter had still as yet remained unsold.

**ACTION: DS to continue trying to sell filter, perhaps on ebay or gumtree.**

### **TGA Funds:**

The Chairman explained that no projects had yet been identified which would make use of the very generous TGA offer of funds. He would of course inform the TGA when the Board had identified such a project..

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

DS stated that the H&S manuals had now been delivered by Greens of Haddington, and were to be distributed in the near future. The lone working devices had as yet not been purchased, as they required checking against UK regulations.

**ACTION: DS to check with Greens that proposed lone working devices fit with UK regulations.**

The Chairman clarified the situation regarding driving licences, and the Board agreed that all employees should notify either IMcG or DS immediately should they receive any changes to their licences, and that this should be written into their contracts.

**ACTION: IMcG to amend contracts to reflect this.**

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

### **Financial Report:**

#### **Cash Account to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016:**

As at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Cash Account shows a surplus of £94,767, and the overall bank balance stands at a healthy £437k, with £100,000 of this being invested at a rate of 0.9%.

#### **Income**

Assessments continue to be paid steadily, with over 90% now having been paid. A reminder has gone out, and legal action will be taken against the remaining non-payers. IMcG noted that of the 59k outstanding, 39k of this is due in installments, leaving the remaining 20k to be chased.

Regarding Appeals, having spoken to the Assessor, there are currently eleven appeals in progress, all from the River Earn concerning their Category 3 status. Their cases will be heard in February 2017. They would normally expect up to 20% of their rateable value to be reduced were their appeals successful. However, as they are in an unprecedented situation, and if they can prove how much rent they are losing, the figure could be 50% or above. A worst case scenario provision has been made, which assumes that all eleven appeals are successful at a rate of 50%, which equates to just over £10k.

The tenants in the old hatchery have now been invoiced for the first month, and are due to pay another 2 months' rent, and associated bills.

The Forecast income is £12,036 behind budget largely due to the appeals provision coupled with the later leasing of our old offices than originally planned.

### **Expenditure**

Salary costs show a further saving of £3k due to a tax refund from the Government, which coupled with the Operations Manager saving, provides a total saving of around £6k for the year.

Yet again, it should be highlighted 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 there are easily enough funds to cover the cost should we be invoiced anytime soon.

The repairs forecast is now around £2k above budget, as more repairs to the Hatchery have been undertaken this year than first envisaged. The telephone forecast also shows a £2k overspend, which is largely due to the installation of a new telephone system earlier in the year, which was unbudgeted.

The legal and professional fees category is overspent by £1,187 which was due to the cost of setting up the lease of our old offices.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £25,009, of which £20,930 is salary related.

The Capital Expenditure of £11,900 relates to the purchase of a new Suzuki Jimny, and the forecast reflects the fact that no further capital expenditure is envisaged for 2016.

Overall, the Forecast stands at £823 ahead of budget at present.

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

DS reported that the only issue since the last meeting was a member of staff who was having back pain. He explained that IMcG had contacted an Occupational Health provider and the situation was in hand, with the member of staff having been assessed and receiving treatment.

### **Bailiff Update:**

DS explained that since a bailiff had resigned some months previously, there were now only four bailiffs plus the Operations Manager. He asked that the board consider whether to take on a new bailiff or not in the near future.

<b>ACTION: Board to discuss taking on new bailiff at next meeting.</b>
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### **River Garry Update:**

DS stated that he and the Chairman would be attending a meeting the following week, which should finalise the situation regarding the Garry. SSE had previously met with DS and produced a schedule of works, which is due to start in the spring. The next meeting with SEPA will hopefully finalise these plans and allow them to be implemented.

The Chairman stated that work on the Struan weir was to begin imminently, and NMcI concurred.

JW asked whether there were plans to announce this on Opening Day, to which the Chairman replied that this was certainly likely, but the meeting the following week would determine whether it could be announced or not. He went on to explain that alternative arrangements would have to be made for Opening Day, as the Dunkeld House Hotel have intimated they will not be able to host the event in 2017 due to refurbishment.

The Chairman reiterated that rewatering the Garry would be a major achievement and would hopefully give a boost to spring fish. CMN asked whether the project could be halted now, to which DS replied he thought it unlikely as the plans were so advanced. He went on to explain that there were still issues with how freshets would operate to be resolved, but that these could be overcome

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

DS updated the Board that the second smolt trap was now with us, and that we are awaiting the detector to be put into the fish pass at Pitlochry Dam, which will be done in late winter or early spring. He went on to explain that detectors will be installed in two chambers, and that the Operations Manager had been asked to provide an update on the project at the AGM following the meeting.

CMN stated that she was disappointed at the perceived level of communication between rivers regarding traps, as so many rivers carried out this work, and JW concurred. DS replied that in actual fact, rivers directors do communicate with each other, and are generally aware what other rivers are doing.

The Chairman stated that he wished to ensure DS was on the board of the new fisheries management body, in order to collate scientific data amongst other things.

#### **Kill Licence Update:**

DS stated that an order has now been laid in Parliament for 2017, which confirms that the Eden and the Earn are now Category 2 rivers. He went on to state that he had attended a biologists meeting with the Operations Manager the previous week, which had also been attended by representatives from all over Scotland. Marine Scotland Science had been present and had been asked to look into various areas of the categorisation process, and to amend where applicable.

#### **Hatchery Update:**

DS explained that, since the incidence of BKD earlier in the year, the movement order had now been lifted, but the broodstock had suffered a significant loss. The broodstock fishing for 2016 was now complete, with target numbers from the Garry and the Earn having been obtained, but with the Tilt proving difficult.

He went on to explain that the Hatchery Manager was still in the process of stripping fish, and that the number of eggs produced would not drop as significantly as had been initially feared, as the reconds from earlier years had been very productive.

The new Dochart fish have been quarantined in a separate tank as the hatchery manager suspected it may have been Dochart fish that carried in the BKD last year.

IMcL asked what the natural spawning had been like, given the low water, to which DS replied that the bailiffs had been unable to look into this as they had been busy broodstock fishing.

The Chairman stated that he believed the hatchery has been underperforming in recent years, and that it may be a good idea for the board to determine what it wanted to achieve.

**ACTION: Hatchery to be discussed at next meeting.**

**ACTION: DS to prepare and distribute hatchery review paper.**

CMN asked whether it would be possible to restock the Garry, to which DS replied that a major objective of the hatchery programme was precisely to kick start this river. Regarding getting adult fish up to spawn naturally SSE might have to do some experimenting with regards to the “freshet” releases.

AR enquired as to how the Lyon project was progressing, to which DS replied the bailiff team and the Operations Manager had attempted to collect samples but the water had been too high.

IMcL stated that it was great to have a hatchery and produce eggs, but of more importance were the natural wild producers. He asked whether the bailiffs could look at Buchanty Spout to see if there were any redds, to which DS replied they could.

### **Wild Fisheries Review:**

DS explained that he, the Chairman and JW, had attended the ASFB/RAFTS AGM, where it had been agreed that RAFTS would cease to operate, and the ASFB would become Fisheries Management Scotland, and that the trusts would be invited to join this body. The new structure will comprise 6 DSFB representatives, 3 trust representatives, and co-optees should they be required.

He went on to inform the board that Alan Wells, who had been seconded to the Scottish Government from ASFB, had now come back as the CEO of Fisheries Management Scotland, with a reduced staff. The TDSFB is the second largest contributor to the FMS. The Chairman reiterated that it was therefore essential for the TDSFB to be represented on the new FMS board, to which all agreed.

**AOB:**

***Vote of thanks to the Chairman:***

SM gave a vote of thanks to the Chairman

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