

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board Offices, Cromwellpark, Almondbank, on Tuesday, 14th February 2017.

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

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

Apologies: Alastair Munro
Brian Roxburgh
Cohn O’Dea
John Apthorp
Steve Mannion

The Chairman began the meeting by thanking CMN for her help in organising the Opening Day ceremony. He then went on to thank DS for his contribution towards the rewatering of the River Garry.

Declaration of Interests:

There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of Board Meeting of 13th December 2016:

Matters Arising:

Parabolic Filter:

The Chairman asked that the filter be reported on only if it had been sold, to which all agreed.

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

Financial Report:

IMcG explained that she did not usually produce a cash account in February, as there was only 6 weeks of expenditure to report on. Instead, she focussed on the 2017 budget, and circulated a draft copy to all attendees.

She explained that the budget was in draft form, as there were many factors which were unknown, and that a proposed budget would be produced for the next meeting. In particular, she highlighted the fact that the revaluation would not be complete until the end of March, and that this would have a major impact on the budget. She asked that the Board consider whether they wished to agree upon a pay increase for Board employees, and the Board unanimously agreed to a 1.5% pay increase.

ACTION: IMcG to collate data and present budget at next meeting.

Health & Safety Report:

DS explained that the H&S handbooks had now been distributed amongst all staff members, had been signed for (with the exception of one), and that the bailiff team had met to discuss any changes or updates, of which there were none. The Chairman asked that a copy be made available to the Board members.

ACTION: IMcG to ensure copy of H&S manual printed and available for next meeting.

Bailiff Update:

DS explained that another bailiff was required in order for the team to function properly. The Board agreed to this, and IMcL asked that the Operations Manager be involved in the process, to which DS replied that of course he would be. There then followed a discussion surrounding the various attributes a bailiff should have, and mainly concentrating on whether it would be more beneficial to employ a bailiff with experience, or train up a younger recruit.

ACTION: DS/Operations Manager to discuss and work up a job description and advert for the position.

River Garry Update:

The Chairman expressed his pleasure that SSE had now formally announced on Opening Day that engineering work to allow the River Garry to be rewatered would commence in a few weeks time and that Struan Weir had been breached before Christmas.

Hatchery Update:

DS had previously circulated a paper regarding the hatchery to all Board members. He went on to explain the paper, giving the main reasons why the hatchery had failed to meet its initial targets. This was mainly due to a poor catch of broodstock in 2015, coupled with the BKD outbreak in 2016. He went on to say that in order for the hatchery to meet its targets, it would

be beneficial to have two teams for broodstock fishing, and that we needed to review our method of fishing to make sure it was as efficient as possible.

DG asked whether we could really justify the expenditure and whether we actually needed to recondition. DS replied that without kelt reconditioning it would not be possible to obtain anything like sufficient broodstock to restock areas where we wish to kick start new populations like the River Garry nor would the effect of removing spawners from donor rivers be acceptable. Unlike a traditional hatchery operation where kelts are not presumed to have much of a chance of survival, in order to carry out reconditioning, the fish must be in pristine condition when brought in. Therefore DS stressed the methods we use to catch the fish should be reviewed to ensure we are doing all we can to avoid damage. We also try to separate the fish as far as possible to prevent cross-infection.

The Chairman mentioned that we used to pay £12,000 per annum to the Government for 750,000 eggs and that we now paid far more, but DS replied we were not comparing like with like. As kelt reconditioning was then a joint project with Marine Scotland Science it was heavily subsidised by the Government but as we were now wholly responsible for the project we had to bear the full costs. We now had a good genetic mix of fish from our catchment and were able to be more selective with our broodstock, leading to an improved stocking out.

There then followed a discussion surrounding the budget for the hatchery, whether it provided value for money, and what the Board expected from the hatchery. The Chairman summarised and asked DS to head a group which would look at the Board's main concerns, namely the main purpose of the hatchery; if it justified the spend; revision of the stocking policy; and how do we measure whether the hatchery is successful or not.

ACTION: DS to form group to look into these issues and report back in May 2017

Wild Fisheries Review Update:

The Chairman explained that he and DS had spent the previous day with the new civil servant now heading the WFR process. DS summarised from the meeting that the Government still wanted to push ahead with the Fisheries Management plans, which would be signed off by the Government. Although exact requirements still seemed vague, they may in due course be looking for boards to participate in trials. There was talk of the requirement for fisheries management plans to be enshrined in a Bill, but the overall contents of any such Bill and its timetable appeared vague at the moment.

The Salmon House:

DS explained that this had been brought up by the Tay Foundation at their last meeting, and they had stated they would brief the Board for information purposes. Basically, Alastair Wallace has been trying to gather support for a project to build a "Salmon House" in Scotland, rather like the Norwegian Salmon House on the River Laerdal. The Tay Foundation Trustees had no problem with the concept, and Bob White had now become

involved. They had visited a derelict building at Stanley Mills to see whether that might be suitable and the project is looking for funding to produce a business case. There followed a short discussion on the financing of the project and its scope.

The Chairman then stated that this was not a project the Board wished to pursue at present, to which all agreed.

AOB:

Fisheries Management Scotland:

DS explained to all that the ASFB had been superseded by Fisheries Management Scotland, that he had secured a place on the board and that the next meeting would be on the 22nd February 2017.

Fisheries Directors Report:

IMcG handed these out to the Board members.

PIT Tag Detector:

JW asked when the PIT tag detector would be installed in the fish pass at Pitlochry Dam, to which DS replied it was in hand and the company would liaise with SSE to determine a suitable date.

Water Extraction charges:

DB asked whether we were paying too much for water extraction, as he knew of another abstractor who only had to pay £3000 per year to SEPA. DS explained that the £3,000 referred to would have been the cost of a SEPA CAR licence but in addition to paying SEPA we also had to pay the owner of the water rights which is a separate matter.

Broodstock Fishing Volunteers:

DB stated that many angling clubs would love to be involved in the broodstock fishing. DS replied that we would need to ensure their commitment, and The Chairman voiced an insurance concern.

Cormorant Licence:

DG asked whether this had been sought, to which DS replied it had and that it was due imminently.

Board Meeting Dates:

IMcL asked whether the June and August dates could be put back a day, to which the Chairman replied we would discuss and get back to the Board.

ACTION: IMcG to discuss with DS/The Chairman and inform the Board

Gravel Extraction in the Tummel:

IMcL asked whether SEPA had given a licence for this, to which DS replied he understood they had.

Beavers:

SF asked what was happening with beavers, to which NMCI replied that although the Minister had announced that she intended for beavers to be officially protected the formal process to do this, which would include consultation etc, had not yet commenced. Consequently the legal status of beavers had not changed yet.

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