

TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Hatchery, Almondbank on Tuesday, 18th October 2016.

Present: William Jack (Chairman)
Geoff Coates
John Wood
Alastair Riddell
David Godfrey
Simon Furniss
David Brown

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

Apologies: Alastair Munro
Brian Roxburgh
Gavin Clark
Cohn O’Dea
Iain McLaren
Claire Mercer Nairne
John Apthorp
Steve Mannion

Declaration of Interests:

There were no new declarations of interest.

Minutes of Board Meeting of 9th August 2016:

Matters Arising:

Horseshoe Weir:

DS explained that he had now received a quote from a potential contractor for £8,420 + VAT, which included scouring the area, the cost of stonework, concrete and steel, and the use of the necessary equipment.

The Chairman asked what the objective was, and why it was so important, to which DS replied that if the hole is not sorted, it would eventually get bigger and ultimately cause the weir to collapse. If this were to happen, the water supply to the hatchery would be cut off, so

it was imperative that the work was undertaken at some point. He stressed that it was necessary for the Board to get the agreement for the works from the owner of the weir. The Chairman asked DB whether the Stormont AC still had funds in place for work on this weir, to which DB replied that there was £6k set aside which could perhaps be utilised for repairs, and that there was to be a meeting on 1st November which he was to attend and would request that the monies be used on this project.

ACTION: DS to write to the weir owner with suggested work and quotes.

Parabolic Filter:

DS explained that he had spoken to the manufacturers again and was awaiting their reply, although he stressed he didn't expect to hear back soon, as it was not a priority for them.

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

Health & Safety Report:

To be discussed later in meeting under Health & Safety report.

Staffing:

ACTION: IMcG to look into independent HR advice regarding the appointment of staff.

Hatchery Update:

DS stated that the movement order had now been lifted and parr had now all been stocked out.

The Chairman enquired as to whether we would be testing the new broodstock for BKD, to which DS replied this was a possibility, although we would have to kill the fish that were to be tested.

DS went on to explain that BKD can be present in both sea and fresh water and therefore, fish can pick it up anywhere. He had done some research and thought it unlikely the fish had caught it in the Hatchery, and must therefore have been infected before they arrived at the hatchery. It was difficult to attribute a single tributary to the outbreak as there was a mix of fish in each tank, and the disease was not immediately recognisable, as it took from October 2015 to April 2016 before the infection became evident and fish started to die.

DS went on to say that the captive environment may have added to the stress, and that BKD tends to be more prevalent when water temperatures begin to rise in the spring.

River Earn:

DS had now spoken to the owner of the weir, who stated he was prepared to discuss the potential for works, but would not be prepared to consider anything that would have a significant impact on the structural integrity of the weir.

TGA Funds:

The Chairman again thanked the TGA for their generous offer, and stated that no significant project had been identified to date, but that this would continue to be discussed, and the Board would get back to the TGA as soon as it had a proposition.

ACTION: DS/The Chairman to ascertain possible projects or equipment and get back to the TGA.

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

Financial Report:

Cash Account to 30th September 2016:

As at 30th September 2016, the Cash Account shows a surplus of £111,391, and the overall bank balance stands at a healthy £448,000, with £100,000 of this being invested for 6 months at a rate of 0.9%.

Income

Assessment payments continued to be paid steadily, with over 85% having been paid. A reminder went out, with another to follow.

Regarding the appeals, it is still too early to say what the figure may be, as the assessor has asked that proprietors await the end of the season to measure any economic downturn. The administrator will be in touch with the assessor shortly to ascertain the beats that have appealed, and will report back as soon as there is any news.

The new tenant which is leasing the old offices and hatchery building, will be invoiced for rent as of this month.

The “other income” figure of £550 relates to a compensation payment from the bank regarding their failure to update the Board’s signatories despite prolonged and repeated requests.

Expenditure

Salary costs still show a slight saving from budget of almost £3k due largely to the Operations Manager being budgeted to start in January, but actually starting work in February.

Training costs stand at £3,165 at present, with a total budget of £5k. This includes the recent bailiffs electrofishing team leadership course, which they all passed. The accommodation bill has yet to be paid, but the £5k budget will not be exceeded.

Yet again, it should be noted that we have still not received a rent invoice (now £101k to the end of 2016). A provision has been made in the statutory accounts, and there are easily enough funds to cover the cost should we be invoiced anytime soon.

The repairs figure at £5,150 is slightly over budget, and the forecast has been adjusted to incorporate a £1k overspend by the end of the year.

The telephone forecast also shows a £1k overspend, which is largely due to the installation of a new telephone system earlier in the year.

Again, we are still awaiting a quote regarding the road repairs at the top of the road.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £24,723, of which £17,286 is salary related.

Overall, the Forecast stands at £2,264 ahead of budget at present.

Pensions:

IMcG had previously circulated a paper on workplace pensions to the Board, and explained that as of January 2017, the Board would have to comply with autoenrolment.

She went on to explain how the new scheme would work, with particular reference to employer, Government and employee contributions, and the likely cost implications.

The Board agreed unanimously that they would continue paying in 3% of employee salary (and 6% of Fisheries Director salary), and they would match the employee contribution over and above the necessary legal requirements by up to 3% for all employees.

The Chairman stated that he had not been aware that employees would have to make a 4% contribution by 2019, but the Board agreed to match up to 3% anyway.

GC commented that it was imperative to offer a sound pension package in order to retain good staff. DG asked if the scheme would apply to all employees, to which the Chairman replied it would.

Health & Safety Report:

DS had previously circulated a paper to the Board regarding the Health and Safety Review report, and proceeded to explain to the Board that the H&S consultant, Greens of Haddington did much work with estates and Boards, and had been pleased overall with our Health and Safety policies. He proceeded to go through the following points:

- H&S Manuals – Had now been completed and would be finalised by end of month.
- Contractor Procedure – DS had circulated draft policy, and Board agreed to adopt it.
- Lone working – DS had approached a potential supplier of remote satellite tracker / communication devices and they had suggested a device which could signal from anywhere using satellite technology. The cost was £488.76 (incl VAT) for each

device, and he suggested one per vehicle, a total of 3. Everyone agreed this would be a good idea.

ACTION: DS/IMcG to progress

- Driving risks – IMcG explained that a driving licence review was carried out annually for insurance purposes, but the Board felt more should be done.

ACTION: DS/IMcG to provide more detail on what is required and what can be done.

- Fire Alarm System – DS explained that we had inherited a complex system and were still trying to locate a suitably qualified local contractor to service it.

ACTION: DS/IMcG to ascertain contractor and have system checked.

- Lifting Equipment – DS explained that the hatchery lifting equipment had to be certified on an annual basis, and suggested a Board member may be in a position to carry out such a task. DG explained that they operated a similar procedure in their place of work, and that it was a visual check, which he thought the Operations Manager would be capable of, to which all agreed.

ACTION: DS to inform Operations Manager of checks to be completed.

- Occupational Health Provision – DS explained that this area required more thought.

ACTION: DS/IMcG to follow up.

Bailiff Update:

DS explained to the Board that since the resignation of a bailiff during the summer, there had been no immediate need to search for a replacement, as the season was near completion and workload was reducing, but that we would look into the situation again in the Spring. In the meantime, he asked the Board to keep him informed of anyone they thought may make a good bailiff.

He went on to state that as the season was now over, the main focus for the bailiffing team was to collect broodstock in the coming weeks, carry out hatchery work, as well as collecting samples of juvenile salmon from the Lyon, and routine maintenance and training.

River Garry Update:

DS stated that he and the Chairman had attended a meeting some weeks ago with SEPA and SSE, which had been encouraging, and a follow up meeting was scheduled in the next

fortnight. He went on to explain that SSE were hoping to start work on the Garry intake in March 2017, and that there was a significant amount of engineering work to be carried out, but that this would hopefully be finalised in the summer of 2017.

Issues relating to the release of freshets have still to be resolved and concern was expressed that this should not result in delay or postponement of the process. It had been agreed that it would be desirable for an announcement to coincide with the river opening in January 2017.

DS added that the proposed works Anndier tributary has yet to be finalised, but that SSE might be prepared to put in a smolt screen provided the TDSFB would stock the tributary, which DS said we would be prepared to do.

AR enquired as to how the smolts would be protected above the Garry Intake from going into Loch Errochty, to which DS replied it was not part of this plan to allow salmon above Garry Intake and any such requirement would have to be part of some future Phase two of the project, were there to be one. NMCI voiced concern over the timescale, as she stated that SEPA would have to go to consultation on the proposed plans and this would take approximately 4 months. She wasn't sure whether SEPA did need to go to consultation, but if they did, then March may be an unrealistic date.

River Tummel Smolt Project:

DS updated the Board that a second smolt trap had now arrived from Canada, and both traps would be working next year.

Kill Licence Update:

DS stated that Marine Scotland had now circulated their new proposed arrangements for 2017, and had amended their methodology for categorisation. In terms of the Tay catchment, this means that the Eden and the Earn have now been recategorised as category 2 rivers, which was a result of a number of improvements to the categorisation system. However, he believed that more improvements could still be made to it. In particular, DS went on to say that habitat quality had not been factored in, and that errors were caused by relating monthly catches upstream of fish counters to the counts for the respective months, when by autumn, catches might also include fish that had crossed the counters over a number of months, not just the same month.

Ian Young, of the Eden AC enquired as to whether his association would be receiving official notification of the recategorisation to Cat 2. DS replied that it was on the Marine Scotland website, and that presumably could be taken as notification.

Wild Fisheries Review:

DS explained that he and JW had attended the RAFTS/ASFB joint working group. It had been explained that there was no mention of a fisheries bill in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government for 2016/17, although the PoG document did suggest there would be one at some time in the future.

In the meantime, RAFTS is to wind up in the forthcoming year, and it is proposed that ASFB is to become Fisheries Management Scotland, which will represent DSFBs, and that trusts can also join this group. DS went on to explain that Alan Wells, who had been seconded to the Scottish Government, would be coming back to work for the ASFB in the next month. DS, the Chairman and JW had attended a meeting in Birnam, and had ascertained that there was still much thinking to be done on how the ASFB could incorporate the trusts.

Regarding FMO areas, it looks as if the Tay is relatively straightforward and the area covered would not change too much if at all. Indeed, a pilot scheme for FMOs has been suggested, and the Tay may be a possible contender.

The Chairman reminded the Board that with Alan Wells joining the ASFB again, our subscription will increase, and the bulk of the cost is borne by the four main rivers. He stressed that it was imperative the Tay had representation within the new FMS.

Hatchery Update:

DS stated the restriction order had now been lifted, and that fin clipped parr had now been stocked out in the upper Lochay. Fin clipped fish which could be identified in future were stocked there so as not to compromise monitoring the success of natural spawning following fish pass improvements by SSE in the area. The Upper Lyon had also been stocked at a site where long term electrofishing has been conducted to determine how well such fish might survive there. Others had also been stocked in the lower Tay at Catholes after a remark at the ghillies lunch in January requesting that the lower Tay be stocked too. This is very much an experiment to see how well such fish will perform there.

AOB:

Burn Pollution::

SF asked whether recent pollution in the Millhole Burn had been due to silage or spray, to which DS replied he understood it may have been some form of chemical. The Chairman asked whether it had been significant, to which DS replied he understood it had been detrimental to 2-3 miles of burn.

Ordie Pollution:

SF asked what the outcome of a pollution incident in 2015 had been, to which DS replied he hadn't heard anything but would find out from SEPA.

Malloch Trophy:

JW stated that Fishpal would no longer be sponsoring the Malloch Trophy, and that the Foundation were looking for a new sponsor, but in the meantime there would be a meeting in December to decide the winner of the trophy.

7 days a week fishing proposal:

Ian Young of the Eden AC stated that they had been contacted by Fishpal to see if they required help on for their club, as part of the Government's initiative of awarding Fishpal

£100k to help angling clubs promote catch and release. IY stated that they had applied for aid, and Fishpal offered to put their club on the website, but it was already on the website.

Fishpal then apparently enquired as to whether his Club would support salmon fishing on 7 days a week. The Chairman said he was not aware of any such proposal, but would contact Fishpal to ascertain their position, and the topic would be on the Board agenda as and when necessary, as it would merit a full discussion.

Website reports:

DG questioned whether the Board was getting value for money by paying for angling reports on Fishtay. The Chairman replied this would be a matter to look into.

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