

## **TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD**

**Minutes of the Tay District Salmon Fisheries Board meeting held at the Kelt Reconditioning Unit and Hatchery, Almondbank on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014.**

***Present:*** William Jack (Chairman)  
John Wood  
Thomas Steuart Fotheringham  
David Godfrey  
David Brown  
William Lindsay

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

***Apologies:*** John Apthorp  
Brian Roxburgh – SEPA  
Alastair Riddell  
Simon Furniss  
John Young  
Stephen Mannion  
William Jackson

### **Minutes of Board Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014:**

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

### **Matters Arising:**

#### **Smolt Tagging Project:**

DS had still been unable to arrange a meeting with John Armstrong, but it was hoped a meeting would be arranged in the near future.

**ACTION: DS to work up project for full consideration.**

### **Staff Update:**

DS updated the Board regarding the position in the Hatchery, stating that two candidates had been interviewed last week, but that neither one was suitable for the position.

As the necessity for a successful candidate to relocate ideally to the Almondbank area seemed to be a major consideration, DG suggested that perhaps we should pay a retainer on a nearby

flat in order to entice a suitable candidate. The flat has now been let by a letting company, so this is not an option at the present time.

Again, the Chairman voiced his concerns regarding the Hatchery Manager's working hours and whether these were too demanding. DS replied that one of the bailiffs had shown interest in the job, but as it was not a full time position, it may be unworkable with other bailiffing commitments.

The Chairman then asked whether running the bailiff team over the autumn to spring with only 5 bailiffs had been an issue. There was now an urgent requirement to appoint a new replacement bailiff with the summer approaching. The Board unanimously agreed to offer the job to a candidate who had been interviewed some time ago.

**ACTION: DS/IMcG to offer candidate the bailiff job, and resolve the Hatchery assistant role as soon as possible.**

JC asked whether the bailiffs kept records of their working day, to which DS replied that they kept detailed notes of incidents etc. It was suggested that trackers might be fitted to the vehicles for Health & Safety purposes. GC stated this was practice in SNH and it had had the effect of bringing down fuel costs too.

**ACTION: IMcG to look into tracker options, and report back at next meeting.**

**Sub letting of old offices:**

The Chairman had been in touch with the prospective tenants, but they were no longer willing to take on the lease due to personal circumstances.

**Budget 2014:**

This was handed out at meeting.

**ACTION: IMcG to email all with details of budget**

**Fishing Extension Payments:**

IMcG informed the Board that she was now in receipt of Ballathie and Cargill payments, as well as Dalmarnock 2013 payment. However, she had checked catch sheets against the 2012 payment, and found some discrepancies which she had enquired about with the East Haugh Hotel, with no satisfactory reply.

SF had sent an email in his absence asking whether the Dalmarnock beat should be banned from this year's extension, to which it was generally agreed this would not happen and Dalmarnock could fish this extension.

**Stronich Counter:**

AR had stated at last meeting that he would like to see this counter reinstated.

**ACTION: DS to speak to SSE**

## **Financial Report:**

### **Cash Account to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014:**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, the Accounts are showing a deficit of £108,874, which is perfectly normal for this time of year, as the assessment invoices are due to be sent out this week, and payments will then flow through. The overall bank balance stands at a healthy £168,357.

### **Income**

We have had a couple of electrofishing consultancy payments amounting to £6,200. Condis are continuing to chase the outstanding 2012 payments, and have now commenced with the outstanding 2013 payments.

### **Expenditure**

The Tay Foundation contribution for the biologist/hatchery is zero, as a replacement for the Trainee Hatchery Manager has yet to be found. Interviews have taken place this week, but both candidates were deemed unsuitable for the post.

The main subscription to the ASFB of £12,543 has now been paid.

To date, the Kelt Reconditioning Hatchery has cost £20,200, which includes salary costs of £5,356, relating to the Hatchery Manager's salary. There is also a heating oil charge of £8580 included in this figure.

The New Offices have cost a further £2,531 so far this year, and we have been in daily contact with the builder with a view to the works being finalised by the end of May. We are awaiting a new reception door, window in the Fishery Director's office, and a replacement window in the meeting room.

The Full Year Accounts for 2013 have now been prepared and are with the auditor at present.

The Chairman stated that we simply cannot hold assessment percentage anymore, and it has gone up to 53.2% for 2014. It has roughly been held for the last four years, and therefore we have had less money coming in in real terms. DS added that as part of the Fisheries Review process Scottish Government staff had been mentioning that previously, proprietors had paid rates to the council and had paid a percentage also to the Board. As business rates are currently running at 45%, the inference was that most of the money we raise could be construed as money forgone from councils rather than wholly proprietors' money.

### **Declaration of Interests:**

IMcG asked the Board members to declare any new interests since last meeting in the folder provided. There were no new interests to declare.

JC raised the point that this item should be brought up after apologies, in case any member had a new interest to declare that would cloud their voting or discussion on any of the agenda items.

**ACTION: IMcG to ensure this item is placed after the apologies on the agenda for future meetings**

### **Health & Safety:**

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

The Chairman pointed out that we do have a current Health & Safety policy, which is reviewed internally on an annual basis, and externally every 3 years.

### **Fishing Report:**

DS informed the Board that the rainfall for the season so far had been extraordinary, but despite this, it had turned into one of the most remarkable starts to the season since the 1980s. The Fishtay website was showing 399 salmon to the end of March, against a 5 year average of 270. The true catch figures may be closer to 500, as Burnmouth and some Loch Tay fisheries had still to report while their previous years' catches were included in the previous average.

In any case, it is clear there are a lot of fish in the system and that their quality is relatively good.

The Chairman asked where the fish went, to which DS replied that some seemed to have been delayed around the Stanley area but then hardly seemed to have stopped until they reached Loch Tay. This indicated that a significant proportion were heading ultimately for the River Dochart.

He added that as a greater proportion of the fish than usual appear to be 3SW fish, it may be that fish are deferring maturation and are coming back later in their lives. Indeed the Tay fish were historically unusual in this respect. In the past, while many other rivers were always dominated by 2 sea winter fish, the Tay had long periods when the spring catch was dominated by 3SW fish. This may partly be explained by genetics.

DG brought up the subject of prosecutions, and particularly a recent high profile case at Arbroath which resulted in only a £300 fine. DS explained the lead up to the prosecution, and the fact it was widely publicised was a positive thing, although the amount had been disappointing in relation to the effort involved.

DB then discussed another case last year, stating for the record that a man who had been prosecuted for using illegal methods had applied to join the Stormont Angling Club, but would not be permitted to join.

TSF brought up the subject of fish being killed at Burnmouth, to which the Chairman replied that both he and DS had visited the owner previously, but as Catch and Release is not mandatory, there is little that can be done to take the situation forward there.

### **Budget 2014:**

IMcG presented the Budget in detail. A discussion followed surrounding the Rebate figure, which had been budgeted at 5% total assessment income. This figure is largely speculative,

but going on the information provided by the Regional Valuer, this figure is more than adequate to cover any rebate appeals in the year.

Road Maintenance was another key issue, as under the lease conditions, it is our responsibility. An amount of £20k has been set aside in this year's budget for this purpose.

**ACTION: JC to ask Tayside Contracts for a quote**

**ACTION: DG to provide quote also**

### **River Garry Update:**

DS updated the Board on the River Garry, producing a map of the areas concerned and the water extraction points. He explained the ongoing issues surrounding the Garry, and the fact that SEPA were having difficulties obtaining a robust method by which to calculate expected flows.

He went on to explain the recent trials, whereby SSE released flow and the results were noted. The flows suggested may be insufficient for salmon to make it all the way up the river in summer and remain long enough to ultimately spawn. SEPA were to analyse the data and report back. The water flow has to be restored by the end of 2015, but for SSE to be able to do the work in summer 2015 a decision needs to be made now.

JW congratulated DS for keeping on top of the situation with SEPA, and the Chairman concurred that we were indeed very lucky to have DS to analyse the data and ask leading questions.

### **Malloch Trophy:**

The Chairman explained that he and DS had been in talks with FishPal to sponsor the trophy. FishPal had agreed to this, and in return would decrease our £6,600 pa contribution to them by half for this financial year, and would fully cease our contribution next year. It was believed that the House of Bruar had expressed an interest in hosting the event, but this was to be confirmed.

### **AOB:**

### **Fisheries Review:**

JW updated the Board on his recent attendance representing the Board at a fisheries review meeting chaired by Andrew Thin in Pitlochry. His overriding impression was that there would be radical reform and that the days of traditional Boards would be gone. Some of the topics debated included a central scientific advisory committee, funding, amalgamation, fishing on Sundays, and carcass tagging of salmon. DB asked whether we could see the minutes of the meeting, to which JW stated that there would be a monthly update on the fisheries review website.

The Chairman and DS were to attend a meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

### **Tummel Valley Leisure V SNH:**

GC raised the above case which had recently been covered in the “Trout & Salmon” publication. The Chairman stated that they had asked for the Board’s support, but the Board had declined.

GC stated that the article had been very one-sided in favour of Tummel Valley Leisure, and that SNH had not been approached for their view. He would like to have seen a fairer report.

### **The Ghillies Association Letter:**

The TGA had written to the Board, asking for clarity on the Catch & Release policy, as some beats were refusing to comply.

The Chairman had recently attended a TGA meeting, and had clearly stated our stance on this, which is, in order to have absolute 100% catch and release, we would need to make it mandatory, and this was not a decision the Board could take lightly.

**ACTION: IMcG to write to TGA and reassert our stance on catch and release.**

### **Chairman’s Election:**

The Chairman explained to the Board that he was now coming to the end of his second term as Chair, and that as of the end of this year, we would need to elect another Chairman. He asked the Board members how best to handle this, the options being:

1. He stand down as Chair at the end of the year
2. He go about trying to recruit someone willing to stand as Chairman at the election
3. He stands for re-election on the proviso that it be for one year only

DB commented that everyone had appreciated what the Chairman had done for the river, with particular reference to catch and release, and that he would favour the third option, as it would give stability in a time of change.

The rest of the Board were generally in favour of this option also.

### **Worming:**

DG brought up the contentious issue of worming, and asked whether it was allowed in Sept/Oct or not? As a Board, we had not agreed a policy on this at the last meeting, but it was agreed it should be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

**ACTION: IMcG to ensure worming is on agenda for next meeting**

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

**Next Meeting: 10:00am Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014 at our Hatchery in Almondbank**