TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

MINUTES FROM MEETING

9:30am Tuesday, 13th December 2022

Present:	Toby Metcalfe (TPM Convener), David Godfrey (DG), Claire Mercer Nairne (CMN), Jerry Saunders (JS), Nicola Thompson (NT), Bobby White (BW), John Nevin (JN), David Sands (DSa), Mike Smith (MS)
In Attendance:	Dr. David Summers (DS) Fisheries Director, Inga MacGillivray (IMacG) Clerk to the Board, No members of the public attended the physical meeting.

1. **Apologies**
   Apologies were received from Calum Innes (CI), Andrew Parrott (AP), Jonathon Muir (JM), Anne Woodcock (AW) and Nicki MacIntyre (NMcI) NatureScot representative

   Before the meeting commenced, the Convener officially welcomed DSa to the Board.

2. **Declaration of Interests Update**
   CMN declared the Tay Opening Day would benefit her business.

3. **Minutes of Meeting held 25th October 2022**
   The Minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and were taken as read. The Convener asked that the Minutes be changed to reflect that NMcI had been asked to check if NatureScot would be willing to support funding of beaver management costs in the Tay catchment, and she had been actioned to undertake this task.

   All agreed the Minutes then showed a true and fair reflection of the meeting.

   ACTION: IMacG to change Minutes as requested and arrange for the Convener to sign them.

4. **Report on Matters Arising from Meeting held 25th October 2022**
   The report had been circulated previously and was taken as read.

   Health & Safety:
   The Convener remarked that in addition to the report, he had an action regarding the Health & Safety manual and that he would follow this up promptly.

   ACTION: The Convener to feed any comments to DS regarding H&S Manual

   (BW entered the meeting)

Fillan Bank Project:
The Convener commented that DS should produce a project plan. DS explained that he was awaiting feedback from SEPA and the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority and would produce a plan as soon as was practicable.

ACTION: DS to produce Fillan Bank Project Document for circulation to the Board

Remuneration Committee:
MS reported that the Remuneration Committee comprising himself, the Convener, JN and DSa had met via Zoom. The Convener added that the committee was agreed on principles and MS would flesh out the detail at their next meeting.

Buchanty Spout Progress:
JS informed the Board that he had met both owners of Battleby Loch by chance and that they had both been interested in meeting DS to discuss any improvements which could be made. He hoped a meeting could take place before Christmas. The Convener thanked JS for his efforts.

5. Financial Report
The Financial papers had been circulated previously and were taken as read. IMacG presented the financial situation which showed a bank balance of £331,543 to 8th December 2022 with a net cash increase of £22,480.

Replacement Fisheries Officer:
The Convener asked that the recruitment process for a replacement Fisheries Officer be carried out as soon as possible.

ACTION: IMacG to ask candidates who submitted cv's if they are still available

CMN suggested advertising the position with the Scottish Gamekeepers Association in Perth, and BW seconded this suggestion.

ACTION: DS to contact Scottish Gamekeepers Association re advertising replacement FO position.

Charging out Costs:
DSa asked what the procedure was for charging out TDSFB costs. IMacG explained that recharges to TRT for her and DS time were made at cost and were salary only. She explained there was an uprise in charge for external contract costs. DS added that the fish rescue and electrofishing work undertaken recently would all be charged out the following week and he would provide the Board with a breakdown of each charge.

ACTION: IMacG to send DSa the financial procedures document.
ACTION: DS to circulate the consultancy charges to the Board.

The Convener stated the Board should agree a percentage to charge on all external consultancy work. He had discussed the matter with JN and was surprised by the mark up which could be achieved.

DS explained that consultancy advisory work was not routinely undertaken by the staff and that it was mainly for fish rescues or electrofishing. He added that if the staff were carrying out work for Marine Scotland such as the ASSESS project, then there had been a standard rate calculated which had been agreed across all Boards by FMS.

ACTION: Board to agree percentage rate to be applied on external consultancy services provided by Board staff.

(JN entered meeting)

6. **Management Plan - Director Report**.
DS had circulated the paper prior to the meeting.

Beaver Licence at Battleby:
CMN asked under which scheme the beaver licence had been granted at Battleby. DS replied the licence was not for eradicating the beavers but was for removing a dam to allow fish passage. He was concerned that the licence had taken weeks to process when it is supposed to be issued within days. Fortunately, due to water levels, it had not been so much of an issue this autumn.

ACTION: DS to raise beaver licence timing issue with NMcI and highlight to FMS.

DS continued that he had held a useful discussion with Antje Branding during her visit to the hatchery. He explained that Antje and some members of her team had visited the Tay catchment, taking in the hatchery and the Ericht. During this time, DS had alerted her to the beaver damming issue at Battleby dam and the fact it was continually eating into TDSFB staff time to monitor and maintain the passage for fish.
The Convener pointed out that the Board should continue to pressure NatureScot on the issue and should not have to shoulder the cost.
DS replied that this very point had been raised regularly at the Scottish Beaver Forum group but with little resolution at present.
BW pointed out there were horrendous problems at Dupplin and that NatureScot had offered little by way of solution except relocation options.
The Convener suggested DS contacted NFUS as they may have more information on the beaver issue.

ACTION: DS to contact NFUS regarding beaver issues and ask for any feedback.

Loch Lomond & Trossachs Meeting:
The Convener asked that the Loch Lomond and Trossachs Authority be put on the next agenda for further discussion on their planned Nature Strategy.

ACTION: IMacG to ensure Loch Lomond and Trossachs Authority on next agenda.

DS briefly explained that the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park had run workshops with stakeholders to produce a nature strategy. One part of the strategy is concerned with water and indeed riparian works on the Fillan already appear in the strategy. The Convener asked that DS ensured the Board had input to the strategy.

ACTION: DS to ensure he has ongoing input to Loch Lomond National Park strategy.

7. Operations Manager Report

The Operations Manager report had been sent out prior to the meeting and was taken as read.

Hatchery:

JS asked that the team push production in the hatchery to its fullest potential. DS replied the team were on board with this and that he had furnished Antje Branding with all the facts about the hatchery and the effects of the stocking policy on her recent visit. The policy limits stocking as no enhancement stocking can be carried out in the SAC areas, only mitigation or restoration stocking. He pointed out that the Earn was not within the SAC and therefore stocking opportunities were greater.

DS warned that the Garry stocking project would be ending in the near future, and this would lead to very limited stocking opportunities on the Tay and could indeed bring the hatchery's future into question.

DG asked when Marine Scotland would be open to a discussion about stocking. BW remarked that Marine Scotland had promised further consultation on the matter two years ago, but that nothing had come of it. CMN commented there could be a use for the hatchery as a DNA bank.

DS stated he had obtained a licence to stock parr on the Lochay above the uppermost fish pass on the basis this was the only lifestage that could be marked via fin-clipping. However Marine Scotland had stressed this was provisional depending on the outcome of their review of their stocking policy.

CMN asked what the results were from the Dee hatchery consultation to which DS replied he had not heard but he did not think the Dee had many cases for restoration stocking.

On being asked, DS stated there were hatcheries on the Spey, Tee, Cree, Conan, Carron and others. JN mentioned a private hatchery on Mull and DS replied this had some issues.

JS proposed all boards with hatcheries rallied together to prevent closure. DS stated that there was a possibility that some hatcheries had not worked so well. In our case, however, the Garry monitoring was second to none.

The Convener asked the Board whether they wished to strive to keep the hatchery running and they all agreed they did want it to continue running.

The Convener added that there may be a new argument to keep the hatchery open with regards to the Scottish Government having a disaster recovery plan should anything happen to the river systems, with the ever-present threat of the spread of Gyrodactylus being a case in point.

Furthermore, he pointed out that the hatchery facility and skills were of national importance. He had written to Antje branding explaining the situation and suggesting the Scottish Government co-funded the hatchery as part of their disaster recovery plan.

JS pointed out that the hatchery would be at risk if Gyrodactylus spread to the Almond but that perhaps the old office building could be utilised as a gene banking facility. TRT had been looking into a feasibility study on this very subject.

CMN asked if any surveys had been carried out in Norway. DS replied that hatcheries had been studied ad infinitum. The impact of hatcheries is well documented in that they appear to work well in

situations such as the Garry where there were no fish. In situations where fish are in the river, the benefit of hatchery intervention diminishes.

BW asked when the Scottish Government Wild Salmon Strategy was due to be released. DS replied that FMS seemed to think it had been delayed.

There followed a discussion on how people connected to salmon were viewed and the effectiveness of Government agencies, with no action points being agreed.

8. Hatchery Report

The Hatchery Report had been sent out prior to the meeting and was taken as read.

9. Health & Safety Report

DS advised there had been no reportable incidents since the last meeting.

10. **TRT Update**

CI (TRT Chair) had been unable to make the meeting but had emailed in a brief report which was taken as read.
DG asked if the lease on the hatchery had been finalised. The Convener replied the heads of terms had been agreed and that a new lease was due to be drawn up by TRT solicitor.

11. TRT/TDSFB MoU & Lease Update

See item 10 on Agenda.

12. Marketing Update

The Marketing report had been circulated previously and was taken as read.
There was a discussion around how to keep social media current given AW's departure. It was decided that CMN should approach AW officially to agree terms. The meeting agreed that marketing under AW's guidance had developed very satisfactorily and this momentum needed to be maintained. How this should happen to be a key point for discussion at the next board meeting.

ACTION: CMN to approach AW officially re social media updates until the TRT recruit a development officer.

13. Meeting Dates for 2023

ACTION: IMacG to circulate potential meeting dates for 2023

The Convener suggested that given the formalised working relationship between TDSFB and TRT that one of the meetings should be held jointly. All agreed.

ACTION: The Convener to liaise with CI regarding joint TDSFB/TRT meeting.

14. AOB

There were no matters to be considered under AOB.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the Open section of the meeting came to a close.

The following items were discussed in private by the Board due to the fact they are of a commercially sensitive nature.

15. Minutes of Closed Meeting held 25th October 2022
16. Financial Report – Debtors Update
17. Staff Contracts & Procedures
18. Stage 3 Complaint
19. AOB

End of Open Meeting Minutes

The next meeting is yet to be scheduled