TAY DISTRICT SALMON FISHERIES BOARD

MINUTES FROM MEETING

9.30am Tuesday, 6th December 2023

Present:	Toby Metcalfe (TPM, Convener & Chair), David Godfrey (DG), Calum Innes (CI), Claire Mercer Nairne (CMN), Bobby White (BW), Jerry Saunders (JS), John Nevin (JN), Mike Smith (MS), Nicola Thompson (NT)
In Attendance:	Dr. David Summers (DS) Fisheries Director, Lee Harvey (Admin Assistant), Nicki MacIntyre (NMcI) Nature Scot representative. Two members of the public attended the meeting.

Prior to the meeting commencing, all parties present were asked if the meeting could be recorded for purposes of the minutes only. There were no objections.

1. **Apologies**
   Apologies were received from; Andrew Parrott (AP), David Sands (DSa) and Inga MacGillivray (IMacG)

2. **Declaration of Interests Update**
   There were no new declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes from meeting held 17th October 2023**
   The Minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting and were taken as read. All agreed the Minutes showed a true and fair reflection of the meeting and the Chair signed the Minutes.

4. **Report on Matters Arising from Meeting held 17th October 2023**

   Marketing: JS asked a question regarding whether Sam Datta was working on our social media, marketing and updating our website. DG Stated that he had not seen any evidence that she was and queried whether she had been paid. DS suggested checking this with IMacG.

   ACTION: DS to ask IMacG if Sam Datta has been paid to do marketing and social media.

5. **Financial Report**
   DS read out the prepared financial statement from IMacG.
   Q1 – MS pointed out that they had not yet had the bailiff training and so the amount shown in the accounts should be removed. DS advised that they contact IFM as they are to arrange the training.
   Q2 – MS Pointed out that the cash in our account is not gaining any interest. DS advised that IMacG had been looking into this.
   Q3 – TM asked what has happened to the old Jimny after the new one was purchased. DS advised that we still have it. TM asked that the old Jimny be sold.

ACTION: DS to arrange the sale of the old Jimny.

6. Management Plan – Director Report

Catch Data:

DS stated that the data highlights that beats like Stobhall and Taymount have had better summer fishing than 10 years ago. In the autumn, there has been a collapse over a wide part of the river and the autumn salmon run has switched to a summer salmon run.

Seal Scaring: A seal sonar detector has been trialled at Scone by SMRU from St Andrews University. A Marine Scotland funding application has been made by FMS for seal scarers on the Tay, Earn and Eden, and they have suggested that they are hopeful to secure this.
JS would like us to acknowledge and thank Stormont Angling Club for all of their help and assistance with to SMRU carrying out the trial. It was the club's electricity and hut that was used.
TM asked when DS should find out if the seal detector has been successful? DS thinks he will find out later today.
BW pointed out that seal scaring has been unsuccessful on the Dee. He was rogue seals will become even more of a problem if the scaring is not successful. DS advised that the idea behind the new sonar scarer being trialled is that it blasts only when a seal is present, that way the seals do not get habituated.
DG offered to trial further down the Tay in his area. It would prevent the seals getting further upstream. DS unsure whether this would work if estuary is too wide.

Broodstock Licence: DS confirmed that the licence arrived at 5pm on 17th October after the last meeting. The numbers have fallen, as an example; The Garry – 60 last year now down to 12, The Errochty, 28 last year down to 4 this year. The Tilt has dropped from 60 last year to 18 this year. 60 from the Earn - 30 to stock the Ruchill and 30 for Iain Law and volunteers fishing in the lower Earn at present.

DS thanked BW, Iain Law and volunteers for removing the Shochie beaver dam under licence from NatureScot.

Low Flows Software: TM asked DS to explain the importance of the investment in flow estimation software for the Lochay. DS explained that SEPA use software to predict the flow under a natural scenario in abstracted rivers. Wallingford Hydrosolutions have incorporated the catchment characteristics into the model which then predicts what the natural flow should be, although on the Garry it greatly underpredicted. With the new software, DS can work out at any point in Lochay what the flow should be. Our equipment is manual and SEPA's more advanced version cost £20K+. SEPA have predicted the worst abstracted area and suggested restoration based on there. But further downstream, the cumulative abstraction may be less, but could still be more significant in its impact on salmon. The software allows DS to demonstrate that the river is still very significantly impacted further downstream. TM agreed that we need good data as a board to respond to SEPA. This was not in this year's plan but we have managed to bring it forward and hopes the rest of the board are happy with this.

ACTION: DS to report on whether the seal detector has been successful.

7. **Hatchery Report** - Taken as read
JS asked what the reduction was with the Marine Scotland licence for brood stock fishing and wondered whether the Pitlochry Angling Club's letter may have not helped. DS confirmed that numbers have dropped. The fish counter at Pitlochry Dam counted 700, which was a basis for PAC's concerns. The real count is nearer 2000 and Marine Scotland have accepted this. MS feel that we have been stocking the mainstem of the Garry long enough but are still allowing stocking in the Glas Choire tributary.
TM suggests that the new board should invite the Pitlochry Angling Club to the hatchery to discuss.
BW asked if there has been a discussion with Marine Scotland on stocking. DS advised there had not been but the science committee that DS sits on has been discussing this, but is still some way of concluding. The Wild Salmon Strategy delivery group met the previous week, the first time since July
TM, Convener, made a strong statement in his report that the Scottish Government should be getting on and ensuring all agencies are capable of delivering the Wild Salmon Strategy.

ACTION: New Board to consider inviting Pitlochry Angling Club to the Hatchery.

8. **SISI *Officer Report***- Taken as read

9. **Health & Safety Report**
There had been no reportable accidents since the last meeting.

10. TRT
CI reports that Andy Sides, their new PDO is very effective. The project they are concentrating on is the Upper Shee planting and salmon in the classroom. AS had met with landowners and has another meeting in January to go through plans and the way forward with them.
Some changes to TRT's constitution were now complete. TRT have money after fundraising for making the projects a reality.

11. Triennial Election Recommendation
The Annual Meeting of Proprietors was be held at 11am. There would be a short format agenda – approving the Annual Report and Accounts. That would be followed by the election when the board standing down.

DG recommended to the floor that the board should comprise 5 upper, 2 lower and 4 co-optees. That seemed sensible as too many are unmanageable. DS reminded the board that in the past there had been occasions when there have been no election and everyone standing joined the board. That was then considered unmanageable. TM asks the board for other views. NT agreed that 5:2:2 was a good size and would function well allowing both a wide range of views but still small enough to hear views. Unanimously the board agreed that 5 upper, 2 lower and 4 co-optees should be the recommended size of the board to take to the Annual Meeting of Proprietors

12. AOB
MS asked that the new board are aware that he has the Fishpal contract which will need reviewed by the new board.. He also asked if we could give a thought for the catch and release flyer as it would be prudent to put this out sooner than later. DS agreed.

ACTION: DS to circulate catch and release flyer for comments then issue

JS thanked the Convener for steering the board through the last 3 years. It has been a big ask for the volunteers who do this purely for the love of the river. The rest of the board gave their thanks.

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

(The members of the public left the meeting)

The following items were discussed in private by the board as they were of a commercially sensitive nature.

13. Financial Report – Debtors Update

14. AOB

End of Open Meeting Minutes
The next meeting will be scheduled by the new board in due course