

NESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD

MINUTE OF MEETING

held at the Beaufort Hotel, Inverness on 15 December 2010

Present:

Andrew Duncan, Chairman (AD)
Paul Williamson (PW)
William Armstrong (WA)
Ryan Rutherford (RR)
Don MacKay (DM)
Sandy Patience (SP)
Graham MacKenzie (GM)
Neil Cameron (NC)
Rod Andean, Clerk (RA)
John MacColl (JM)
Michael Martin (MM)

Apologies:

Annie Girvan
Keith Williams
Alastair Stephen
Ben Leyshon

The Board Meeting is opened by the Chair who welcomes all.

The Chairman first thanks Hughie Campbell Adamson for his efforts in bringing the new Board together and all the hard work he did leading up to that.

Minutes of the last Meeting

The first page has Graham MacKenzie (GM) down under "Minutes of last Meeting" . This should be Don MacKay (DMK).

Matters Arising

Holmburn

MM explains that the Board informed the Council that they would be prepared to discuss the bridge development but SEPA had already decided not to allow any works to take place. The matter is therefore closed.

Loch Ness Proprietors Fishing Association

GM cannot remember being asked to look into this. DM asks if Andy McGruer could form part of the new Board as a representative of loch fishers. AD, the Chairman, asks the Board if they would like Mr McGruer to be invited to join the Board as a co-option to represent fishing on Loch Ness. The Board agrees. AD asks the Clerk to approach Mr McGruer to join the Board.

Profiting from the season extension – Ness Castle

AD hands over to MM. MM explains the situation and that he investigated it. Basically MM contacted those that let the lodge at Ness Castle and was informed by a woman that only accommodation was let, not the fishing. MM also approached the ghillie at Ness Castle (Gordon) to discuss. Gordon only wanted to ensure that the beat was fished properly as it would if it was let throughout the rest of the season. He never meant for it to come across as letting the fishing but wanted rods there to fish appropriately. In order to get rods, they let the accommodation at a cheap rate to ensure there were rods there to fish it as there would be throughout the rest of the season. David Sutherland also emailed MM and explained the situation. It is noted that Gordon spoke to Keith Williams in the summer of 2010 to explain what they intended to do as well. The Board is happy with the explanation and the situation.

Statutory Controls

WA asks why the statutory controls have been dropped? RA and NC explain that Keith Williams and RA have been liaising with Marine Scotland to get it through but are having to wait for confirmation of a date in Parliament. WA, GM, DM and PW are concerned that this is dragging on (been ongoing for approximately two years). Why has it not been/being advertised? RA explains that the Board/Trust hands are tied until Marine Scotland gives the go-ahead. AD explains why he produced a new Catch and Release Policy document and asks if the Board is happy to broadcast it. The Board is happy with it. AD also asks if it is OK to add in a paragraph relating to escapees. The Board is happy with this. RA also explains that the new website should and will provide information on Catch and Release Policies.

Future Strategy

AD explains that MM suggested at the last Board Meeting that a strategy should be created. From that AD, through discussions with members of the Board, produced a Strategic Plan 2011/13.

Strategic objectives identified (1 – 9)

1. Ensure accurate returns. Looking for two returns a year. This will allow spring fish to be separated from the rest of the year. DM asks if returns could be made electronically? AD and PW answer, yes it is intended to have a page on the new website for returns to be made electronically.
2. Catch and Release. This is partially discussed previously in the meeting.
3. Develop a working hatchery. The Board acknowledged that SSE are looking at resurrecting the Garry Hatchery. PW points out that the hatchery and the money was supposed to be compensation for the Garry Dam and thus the effect on the Garry. He believes the Garry has never really seen any benefits from the money.
4. Re-stocking.

5. Remove fish farms. WA asks who Marine Harvest (in Loch Garry) pay a rent to? PW explains that he believes it is Abercalder Estate. PW also explains that the bio-mass held by the farm was doubled in the past.
6. Work with SSE. GM explains his personal point of view that he feels SSE got away with putting Glendoe in place with nothing coming back to the Board or Trust and so the Board must not allow SSE to construct Balmacaan without compensation in some way to the Board. PW also believes that they have got away with too much, as do WA and DM.
7. System remains unpolluted. GM explains that there were issues at Urquhart Castle in the past and that someone was caught pumping/dumping sewage waste into the Moriston. WA also identified that the smolt farm on the loch produces high volumes of waste. GM and JM highlighted that there is a fish farm on the Moriston which JM has reported to SEPA for waste problems/discharge. He believes nothing has ever happened with regard to dealing with this. RR and DM identify issues with giant hogweed on the lower sections of the River Ness. MM identifies Malaysian Balsam is also in the system. NC states that the Trust has a valid security plan. It is noted that the strategy wording (No. 7C) should be changed to “maintain their bio-security plan”.
8. Other bodies. AD asks SP if the netsmen have a group/association and, if so, would they like to work more with the Board? Sandy explains there is and they would like to do more work with the Board. They would also like to look into, for example, a tagging system. This would help reduce or stop poaching/illegal fishing and the selling to the public of illegally caught fish. It is identified that Keith Allan is the Secretary for the local Netting Association. Sandy will email details to RA. PW believes tagging can work and help a fishery. PW presents documents relating to a tagging system on the Forth.
9. Development/Methodologies to implement the strategic objectives. Key and ultimate question – is it affordable? MM suggests that we look to find out what the remits are of other chief executives on other river systems.

AD asks, in the main, are the Board happy with the future strategy. There is an overall “yes” from the Board. AD explains that the amendments will be made and then sent out to the Board in due course. The rest of the Board thanked AD for his hard work in composing and producing the document.

Sub-Committees

Garry (or the Upper System)

AD explains that MM was asked and agreed to chair this Committee. AD asked if PW, WA, GM and Keith Williams will join MM to form the Garry Committee. PW, WA and GM agree.

Website

AD asks PW to chair this sub-Committee. He accepted. RR and DM are asked to join the Committee. Both agree. AD sees it as an ongoing roll.

Bailiffing

AD to chair. AD would like Annie Girvan, NC and SP to join him along with JM on this sub-Committee. NC, SP and JM agreed. Annie Girvan to confirm.

All three sub-Committees will report back to the Board. It is noted that feedback from each sub-Committee will become a standard matter on the forthcoming Board Meeting Agendas.

Trust Report

The Trust asks if the Board is happy to apply for the season extension in 2011. The Board is happy with this. It is noted that this will be the last year of a three year period. See the Trust Report attached.

Assessments

RA explains the situation with the District Valuer. Due to a lack of information the District Valuer was struggling to provide a new assessment. It is hoped that he will provide figures early in the New Year. DM and GM state that assessments usually go out in September. RA is to liaise with District Valuer and ask when the Board will get the assessment to review from which point the Board will impose its own levy should it feel it is required.

Bailiff's Report

AD thinks it is a very good report. AD is horrified that a bailiff was assaulted and the authorities did nothing about it. AD asks if the Board is happy for him to speak to the Procurator Fiscal and Chief Constable? JM explains that Northern Constabulary seem very lax in helping out. The Board is happy for AD to speak to the PF and Chief Constable. SP is disappointed with JM's remarks about the netsmen. He would like further discussions on this. JM asks what points he is not happy with. SP states that a netting proprietor mentioned approached SP as he did not know what was now expected of him. AD states that this can be taken up and discussed at a sub-Committee meeting.

Website Presentation

PW gives the Board a presentation on the proposed new website. It is identified that the main name should be "Ness District Salmon Fishery Board" (NDSFB) as opposed to "Ness District Fishery Board" (NDFB) as it currently is. PW asks if the Board could fund a Google-sponsored link when the website is up and running. The Board is in agreement with this though further discussions may be required in the sub-Committee. The Board thanks PW for his hard work and his company's work in producing the site.

Catch Returns

It is identified that returns are not complete as the Clerk is still awaiting numerous returns.

A.O.C.B.

AD explains that NC asked if two Members of the Board will sit on the Trust. AD and DM confirm that they will sit on the Trust Board as representatives of the Ness District Salmon Fishery Board. SP brought up issues relating to renewable developments. He will liaise with AD on this. DM attended a meeting (open) relating to the Inverness West By-Pass. There seems to be three possible options on the table. One will be to cross the beat known as the MacIntyre and it will be a construction with legs. It is noted that this would completely ruin any fishings at the MacIntyre. DM states the Angling Association will be making representation on this. The Council stated that works will be complete by 2017. RA to write to

the Director of Transport and ask why the Board has not been consulted and the Board should now be fully consulted going forward. The Board should be allowed and will want to make representation on this.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, 17th February 2011 at 2pm. RR suggests the next meeting could be held at Ness-side Rod Room at no cost. The Board agrees to this.