



NESS DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Time: 14:30

Date: 12th December 2013

Location: Kingsmills Suite, Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club

Board Members Present:

Michael Martin: Dochfour, Mandate (MM) (Chairman)
Andrew Duncan: Ness Castle, Mandate (AD)
William Armstrong: River Oich, Mandate (WA)
Ken Gowans: Highland Council, Mandate (KG)
Bob Morgan: River Gary, Mandate/Alternate (BM)
Ryan Rutherford: Ness Side, Mandate (RR)
Alan Scott: Angling Club, Co Option (ASc)
Alexander Patience: Tenant Netsman, Co Option (AP)
Angus MacGruer: Loch Ness Anglers, Co-Option (AMcG)
Graham MacKenzie: Anglers, Co-Option (GMcK)
Neil Cameron: Ness & Beaully Fisheries Trust (N&BFT), Co-option (NC)

Non-Voting Attendees:

Chris Conroy: Director/Clerk to the Board (CC)
April Conroy: Secretary to the Board
Alastair Stephen: SSE, (ASt)
Bob Olivant: SSE (BO)
John MacColl: Head Bailiff (JMcc)
Keith Williams: (N&BFT), (KW)

Public Observers:

Mike Campbell (Inverness Angling Club President)

Apologies:

Annie Girvan: River Moriston, Mandate

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

MM thanked the Board for electing him and thanked Andrew Duncan for his efforts as the Chairman for the last 3 years. Apologies were noted from Annie Girvan, River Moriston Mandate.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

MM invited review of the minutes from the previous Board Meeting. It was agreed that Donald MacDonald, David Sutherland and Don Mackay should be removed from the apologies. ASc proposed that the Minutes were approved and this was seconded by GMcK.

The Minutes from the Triennial election were reviewed. NC proposed that the Minutes were approved and this was seconded by RR.



The Minutes of the Inaugural Board Meeting were reviewed. It was agreed that Donald MacDonald, David Sutherland and Don Mackay should be removed from the apologies. NC proposed that the Minutes were approved and this was seconded by RR.

3. ACTIONS

JMcC was asked to report on progress with regards to issuing permits in the Moray Firth for Sea Trout Fishing. There was discussion about the ownership of fishing rights at dormant netting stations. MM and CC took an action to clarify ownership of fishing rights with a view to investigating opportunities for issuing permits.

KW reported that he can now issue a final version of the first part of the FASMOP Genetic Report published by Marine Scotland. The second part relating to the influence of Norwegian genes on the Ness and Beaully catchments will form part of a separate document is currently under review by Mark Coulson. KW will continue to seek the second report.

CC reported that he had shared a poster with ASc which describes the difference between a sea trout kelt and fresh run fish. KG suggested a simple illustration with a tick and a cross to remove language barriers. Perhaps made available at tackle shop or sent out with permits. Action carried forward.

CC reported that the fish counter data and photos of fish held more than 18 inches above the water had been removed from the NDSFB website. He also thanks Board members for reviewing the website and their suggested changes.

4. H & S REPORT

There were no reportable H&S incidents. CC reported that the chainsaw procedures have recently been revisited and discussed with JMcC. MM reiterated that JMcC and CC have the Board's full support regarding taking the upmost care and attention to H&S.

5. GOOD GOVERNANCE

Complaints Procedure

Page 2, stage 2, of the complaints procedure was discussed. It was suggested that an advisor should be given the opportunity to attend a meeting with the complainant. BM suggested stage 2 was invalid. KG suggested the Highland Council procedures could be adopted. KG suggested CC contact Michelle Morris in order to see whether the Highland Council Complaints procedures might be suitable.

Register of Interests

CC reminded the Board of the importance of the Register of Interests. CC took an action to call each member to confirm whether they have a nil interest or what interests are yet to be noted. CC also took on an action to determine whether a non-voting attendee would also be required to fill in a register of interests form. KG suggested once again that the Highland Council procedures might be suitable.



6. DIRECTOR/CLERK'S REPORT

CC provided a presentation on the Provisional 2013 Season Catch data. There was a discussion about the differentiation of grilse, spring and summer/autumn salmon on the Ness and elsewhere.

ASt highlighted the importance of Catch & Release on the recovering population. MM requested CC to prepare a correlation between the improvements in catch & release and the subsequent catch data for the system.

Fisheries Assessments

An outstanding debtor was discussed in private given the sensitive financial nature of issue.

Business Address

A number of options were discussed including using a PO Box, using the N&BFT Office, or taking up an offer from AD to use his office in Ballifeary Road. The Board agreed it was important to find a permanent office address. CC took an action to consult others and secure a suitable, permanent and non-home office address for the Board.

Project Updates

ASt provided a brief update on progress with the Upper Garry Project. CC noted that the Board will need to review and approve consents for various aspects of the work. MM asked whether the Board were happy for CC to competently review and determine consents on their behalf. The Board agreed.

Ness Scoping Study

AD, ASt, GMcK questioned the value of items 1 and 2 in the proposal. KW noted that the data requires organising before external use and suggested this is a precursor activity. GMcK identified that the analysis of this data might be better carried out by KW and CC collectively. BO suggested the focus should be put on items 1 & 3 at this stage in order to assess whether further stages are actually required. ASt suggested that a comparison to other local rivers should be carried out.

The Board agreed not to approve the proposal as it stands. An initial work package is required to first answer the question of whether Ness system is under performing within the context of the rest of Scotland. MM requested that the work be split into smaller packages so that the Board are not committing more resources than required. CC and KW took action to consider what elements of the Ness Scoping Study could be delivered by the NBFT/NDSFB and subsequently discuss splitting the study into smaller packages with Eric Verspoor. Further to this, ensure that the study considers how trends on the Ness system compare to other local river systems. MM will report back on progress as the work may need to commence before the next meeting.

Directors Report

CC invited questions on any other matter in the report. KG clarified the background to the Inverness Flood Alleviation Scheme Art installation and other initiatives along the river which have been commissioned via ICR.

MM highlighted the Inverness Salmon Festival and noted the proposal to celebrate salmon in the broadest context, including angling but also aquaculture, netting interests, food, heritage, culture and arts. He clarified that we have not yet formally signed up to the project. KG suggested further opportunities for funding including Sport Scotland, Creative Scotland, Homecoming fund and National Lottery. KG took an action to investigate the potential for partnering the Salmon Festival



with another similar project he is working on. BO committed to contact the Inverness Office of SSE regarding involvement and support. MM asked the Board for approval for continued development of the festival. The Board gave their support.

Vehicle Strategy

MM/AD/CC will move forward with this and make a decision.

7. FINANCE

AD reported that the budget was in surplus year to date. AD reported that he had identified a couple of areas of higher cost and had asked CC to take action to reduce the vehicle and phone costs. AD reported that the project spend was behind therefore he carried out a projection to year-end. He concluded that if all planned project expenditure was incurred by year end, then the finishing balance would remain reasonable.

8. HEAD BAILIFF'S REPORT

The Head Bailiff report was reviewed. JMCC provided an update on the recent Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) case. Whilst the defendant pleaded guilty and received a fine of £600, the ASBO was not upheld. He believed the fine the defendant received last year was not paid and explained that there did not seem to be a procedure for recovering this. MM took an action to review alternative actions, including considering whether taking a civil action against the individual might be appropriate.

JMCC explained that last year a side of smoked salmon was given to each angler that returned a spring salmon. After a round the table discussion the decision was taken to discontinue this process.

9. NBFT BIOLOGISTS REPORT

KW suggested that scale reading could be employed to gain a better understanding of age/weight relationship in the Ness System. CC suggested that the discontinued £600 budget for smoked salmon be redirected to this effort. Approval was given for KW and CC to proceed with developing a scale ageing programme for the Ness system within this budget. GMCK suggested a pack be made available to allow an angler to fin clip, take scale samples and tag fish caught so that all 3 results marry up to the same fish.

10. REVIEW OF STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES & KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2014

CC provided a presentation on the proposed key priorities for 2014. ASc requested an assessment of the economic value of the Ness Fishery. KW noted that the Rivers and Fisheries Trusts for Scotland were perusing a similar project. All agreed this would be helpful and MM committed to return with a proposal.

11. NETTING BUYOUT VALUATION – (ITEM TO BE COVERED IN PRIVATE)

This matter was discussed in private given the sensitive financial nature of issue, with Alexander Patience (Tenant Netsman, Co Option) being asked to leave the room for the item given a conflict of interest.



12.AOCB

MM asked for the Board to elect a vice-chairman. AD offered to take this position for the next year. The Board approved this.

CC reported that he had been contacted by Kenneth Knott (Forestry Commission) regarding his potential involvement on the Board. CC said that he would arrange to meet with Mr Knott. ASt asked to join the meeting. The Board approved the principle that the Forestry Commission could be invited to send an attendee to future meetings in a 'non-voting' capacity.

MM concluded the meeting and noted the next meetings would be:

- The Public Meeting on the 23rd January 2014; and
- The next Board Meeting on Thursday 20th March 2014.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 17:10