

MINUTES OF MEETING
of the
River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board
Held at Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart
On Wednesday 27th November 2013 at 5:00pm

Present

Terence Flanagan – Chairman
Steve Smith – Mandatory
Murdo Crosbie
Duncan Bailey
Jim Davidson
Tom Kenyon
John Galloway

Also in attendance:-

Peter Murray – Clerk
Billy McHarg – Treasurer
Jamie Ribbens – GFT
Matthew Pumphrey

Apologies

Apologies were intimated from:-

Dougal Evans
Jonathan Haley
George McShane

The Chairman then introduced Matthew Pumphrey as a solicitor with Messrs. Primrose and Gordon in Dumfries but due to retire in March 2014 who had indicated that he would be prepared to take on the role of Clerk following the retirement of Peter Murray.

Minutes of the Annual Public Meeting

These were circulated Murdo Crosbie proposed approval, John Galloway seconded it and there be no objections, the Minutes were duly approved and signed by the Chairman. The Clerk was authorised to submit them to the Scottish Ministers.

Good Governance

1. Complaints

The Clerk advised that the Board had to determine a suitable procedure for dealing with complaints and thereafter maintain adequate records. This was discussed and it was agreed that the complaints should be acknowledged within 7 working days by either the Clerk or the Chairman and dealt with at the next meeting. The complainant would be advised of the next meeting and would have the opportunity to attend. The Clerk would keep a record of all complaints.

2. Registers of Members Interest

It was noted that the Clerk would prepare a draft Record of the interest of all members, these would indicate whether members were also members of the GFT or the RCHHT whether they ran commercial fishings and in the case of the lower proprietor operated commercial nets.

3. Publication/Publicity

The Chairman advised that every meeting now had to be advertised and be open to the public. It required to be advertised or published as the Clerk thought fit and the Minutes of the Meetings also published. He suggested that ideally the Board should have its own website as recommended by the Association of Salmon Fishery Boards. Steve Smith offered to set up a website at a cost of approximately £33 per annum and this was gladly accepted. It was noted that the Chairman, the Clerk and Steve Smith would liaise in setting this up. It was agreed that the name should be RiverCreeDistrictSalmonFisheryBoard.com.

New Clerk and Treasurer

Billy McHarg indicated that he was prepared to remain as Treasurer and the Chairman advised that the Clerk had suggested that his firm would be prepared to continue allowing Mr McHarg to carry out this work within their time at a fee of £500 per annum. A.B. & A. Matthews were happy to remain as the Board's solicitors and to operate the Board's funds through their clients account.

Matthew Pumphrey was then proposed by Terence Flanagan as the new Clerk at a retainer of £1,200 per annum as from 1st January. This was seconded by Steve Smith and there being no objections or alternative names put forward Matthew was duly appointed. He confirmed that the fee of £1,200 was inclusive of his travelling expenses.

River Cree Hatchery and Habitat Trust

Murdo Crosbie reported

1. Broodstock

The numbers are not as they should be. 12 hen fish had been obtained from the Minnoch producing 40,000 eggs, the main stem of the Cree only 7 producing 36,000 eggs., the Penkiln Burn was much better, 16 hens producing 40,000 eggs so far but should get up to about 60,000 or 65,000.

Noting this was the second year running that the main river had been very poor.

2. Habitat Work

The Trust had now obtained funding for work on the Challoch Burn covering a two year period. He also indicated that GFT would see to electro fishing the main stem.

Galloway Fishery Trust Report

Jamie Ribbens then reported on behalf of the Trust advising that he had provided the Chair with back dated electro fishing results for the last 5 years and also produced further tables for the Board. At the Chairman's request Jamie confirmed that the 2013 results would be reformatted to the similar format as previous years which the Chairman felt were more readable.

1. Consultation

The Trust had responded to Marine Scotland's Consultation on tidal renewable energy applications the main one affecting the Cree was likely to be the proposed Luce Bay site. Copies of the Consultation document were available.

2. Forestry and Water Guidelines

This had been ongoing for 4 years and whilst the Trust had made many objections over the period all the responses were now through and at the moment it looked as though biological tests as well as chemical tests would be taken into account in the guidelines and the 300m rule altered however the document is not yet signed and sealed.

3. Stocking

He advised that there was a conference this week in Glasgow regarding stocking and best practice which he would be attending. It would also be available for viewing on the internet. It was noted that Marine Scotland were now responsible for issuing the Licences and they had tightened things up considerably; in addition SNH Consent was required for stocking any water above an impassable waterfall. Jamie advised that he would speak to the SNH representative at the conference to see if he could be of any assistance.

He confirmed that wild fish stocks were very low all up the West Coast of Scotland especially late running fish. In addition the cock to hen ratio was extremely low.

The limestone project continues and the Trust would be happy to show any Board Members round who are interested. He confirmed that monitoring would continue.

Black Clauchrie pipe bridges – GFT were still trying to obtain funding to remove these and replace them with more fish friendly bridges but at the moment SEPA treated them as being commercial in which case they would not offer financial support. However they have agreed to come and look at this particular case again.

Finally Jamie handed out notices regarding the spread of crayfish as this was still a major concern.

Funding for RCHHT

The Chairman advised that the original agreement for funding the River Cree Habitat and Hatchery Trust expired this month. He advised that as he was a Trustee of that Trust he had an interest and accordingly would leave it to other Board Members to consider a proposal.

Duncan Bailey intimated that Lord Grantchester was currently reviewing the matter and it may be that he would withdraw consent to catching broodstock from his water. At Murdo's request Duncan advised that he would ensure Lord Grantchester had sight of the results of the electro fishing in the Kirriemuir Burn. Some discussion took place regarding future funding but at the end of the day a proposal was put forward by Tom Kenyon to continue the same funding for 2 years, seconded by Steve Smith. There being no alternative motion, the proposal was carried 3-0 on a vote.

Conservation Code

The Chairman then read to the meeting the letter from the Newton Stewart Angling Association regarding bait fishing. A discussion took place and it was decided that the Associations proposal to permit worm fishing using only minimum size 2/0 circle hooks should be adopted on the whole river system from the 15th April to the 30th September as part of the Board's recommended rules. It was noted that the conservation code would be considered again at another meeting.

Japanese Knotweed

The Chairman had received an email from GFT indicating the presence of Japanese Knotweed on four sites. It was discussed and decided that it was up to each individual beat owner to deal with any such weed as appeared on his beat.

Additional Bailiff

Duncan Bailey indicated that he felt the Board should consider appointing an additional bailiff to concentrate on the upper waters towards Glentool. It was noted that the two existing bailiff's simply got paid £300 to account of petrol costs and it was agreed to ask Jim Nichol if he would be prepared to take on the post of bailiff. He is already a qualified bailiff and is in the area two or three times a week. The Chairman undertook to telephone him.

Duncan Bailey then enquired whether the Board would be interested in having the new wildlife office inspector McCallum come and speak to the Board and this was agreed for the next meeting.

River Management Plan

It was too late in the evening to discuss this in any detail however the Chairman gave a brief resume of proposed revisals to the draft which had been prepared at the beginning of the year. He undertook to finalise a redraft for consideration at the next meeting.

AOCB

None

Next meeting February 12th 5:30pm at The Bruce Hotel Newton Stewart.