

MINUTES

Of the Meeting of the

River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board

Held at The Belted Galloway, Newton Stewart

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at 5.30 pm

Present

(A) Board Members/Mandatories

Terence Flanagan - in the Chair

Duncan Baillie

Murdo Crosbie

Jim Davidson

Gene Fryatt

Jock Galloway

Jamie Hyslop

Norrie McIntosh

Tom Kenyon

Steve Smith

(B) Attendees

Billy McHarg (Treasurer)

Matthew Pumphrey (Clerk)

(1) Apologies for Absence

Iain Service, George McShane and Jamie Ribbens

(2) Minutes of Meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

These were proposed by Jock Galloway and seconded by Gene Fryatt and approved without demur.

(3) Matters arising from previous Minutes

There were no matters arising which were not otherwise on the agenda.

(4) Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on the rod catch figures produced by Marine Scotland for the Cree and commented that not only were they slightly better than the Board's own estimate but compared very favourably with the catches on the other Galloway rivers. The figures were:

Cree	278 (87.4% released)
Luce	86
Bladnoch	69
Fleet	3
Dee	17
Urr	112

Catches for the current season were holding up well, given the long periods of low water.

Marine Scotland had introduced a new Stocking Policy which did not bode well for the River. Although each case was to be considered on its merits, there was a presumption against stocking anything other than ova or unfed fry and that brood stock should not account for more than 2% of adult returners. The Board felt that representations should be made against this policy in the case of the Cree and, in particular, to stress that the reason for mitigation stocking on the Cree was acidification. Ova and alevins were particularly susceptible to the effects of acidification, whereas fry were not. There were therefore particular reasons on the Cree for stocking out at later life stages. It was also considered that it should be possible to stock autumn fry, since evidence suggested they survived well.

The Chairman reported on correspondence between the Assessors' office and the Clerk about the derating of two Crown Fisheries at Borrowmoss and Kirkmabreck. The Chairman referred the Board to the Conservation of Salmon Regulations 2016 which prevented the retention of fish caught in coastal waters but pointed out that neither of the two fisheries

concerned were within coastal waters as defined in the Regulations. The Clerk was instructed to take this up again with the Assessors' office.

The Chairman raised a consultation regarding the 27 page Draft Corporate Plan issued by Forestry and Land Scotland which sought views on the apparently contradictory targets of more planting on the one hand and more biodiversity on the other. It was agreed that there should be a sub-committee of the Board to consider appropriate representations and that the members of the sub-committee should be himself, Jamie Hyslop and Murdo Crosbie. The consultation closed on 5<sup>th</sup> July.

In relation to fish-eating birds, the Chairman thanked his agents for dealing with the scaring and shooting as mentioned later in the meeting under the RCHHT Report. Steve Smith mentioned gulls, sitting in a line, taking smolt from the river in the middle of Newton Stewart. Given the location, it was felt that nothing could be done about this.

#### (5) Treasurer's Report

Levies of £4013 had been received since the last meeting. The Treasurer reported on discussions with Simon Redman who claimed that the previous owner had retained the fishing rights and so he would not be liable. He also reported that Glentool Estates still had not paid their levy. Duncan Baillie said that he would take this up with them in about two weeks' time when he was due to meet them.

In answer to a query about payment of outstanding bailiffs' fees, it seemed that both Murdo Crosbie and Jock Galloway were due back payments and in Murdo Crosbie's case, there were two payments due. Murdo Crosbie said he would speak to Jim Henderson about the question of the renewal of his bailiff's warrant card.

#### (6) GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens had circulated a report, because he could not attend personally, containing six separate heads. On the proposed Clauchrie Wind Farm the Board felt that they, too, should have been consulted. A brief objection had however been made by the Board.

There was a certain amount of discussion on the Jessica Rodger project (GFT prioritised salmon habitat restoration). There seemed to be a miss-match between what the Board had been told about this project and what appeared on the GFT website. The website stated that discussions had been held with key stakeholder organisations and all had been supportive of the project. However, members of the Board expressed concern that no discussions had been held with the Board prior to the project having been announced to the Board. The Board had also been led to believe that the project would be largely a desk-bound project dealing with data, which also differed from the website version. It was agreed that the Chairman should invite Dr Rodger to attend the next Board meeting to give an update on her project. He was also instructed to request from GFT a copy of the funding application for the project, as there was some concern about how the support of the Board for the project might have been represented to the funders. .

#### (7) RCHHT Report

Murdo Crosbie circulated a written report on the activities of the Trust since the last meeting. This consisted of five separate heads.

It detailed the stocking sites of the some 149,000 salmon fry stocked to date. The autumn fry were doing well.

The forestry project had cleared 2.3 miles of Sitka from both banks of the upper Minnoch. 2,000 broadleaf trees had planted in their stead.

The school visits had been successfully concluded.

As previously mentioned by the Chairman, scaring of fish-eating birds had been carried out and five goosanders and two cormorants had been shot.

Electro-fishing of the fin-clipped sites had shown good numbers of parr and smolts.

Incidentally, two fin-clipped fish of 10/11 lbs had been caught by Jamie Hyslop. At the time of their capture they accounted for about 10% of the rod catch. It was not known whether any other fin-clipped fish had been caught on the river.

#### (8) Stocking Policy Document

A stocking policy sub-committee consisting of Murdo Crosbie, the Chairman and Jamie Ribbens was appointed. The sub-committee was authorised to agree the stocking policy document without any further approval of the Board as a whole, so that an application to Marine Scotland for broodstock capture could be made prior to the next meeting. The motion to approve was proposed by Norrie McIntosh and seconded by Gene Fryatt. The sub-committee would meet prior to the draft stocking policy document being prepared.

#### (9) AOCB

(a) Steve Smith said that he had certain issues with the performance and reliability of the reports and information coming from GFT and considered that there should be a review of the contribution made to GFT by the Board. Duncan Baillie said that no decision should be taken without hearing what GFT might wish to say by way of response to this. The Board felt that this would be an item for the next meeting's agenda and this was agreed.

(b) Also on the agenda would be the River Management Plan.

(c) The question of the number of tags issued to Netting Stations on the Cree was discussed. The Chairman would request details from Marine Scotland of the tags issued.

(d) Murdo Crosbie mentioned reports of diseased salmon particularly in Scotland, Ireland and Scandinavia. There seemed to be contradictory advice on what to do if one was caught, but they should be reported if encountered. He also mentioned Marine Scotland guidance in relation to pink salmon, which could be expected to re-appear this year.

Although it was a criminal offence to retain any pink salmon the advice was to kill and retain any pink salmon caught! The capture should be reported to the Board.

(e) Duncan Baillie mentioned an incident involving a digger at Palgowan on the Minnoch. It had been reported to SEPA.

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(10) Date of next Meeting

The next meeting would be held at the same venue at 5.30 on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm

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Chairman