

MINUTES OF MEETING
of the
River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board
Held at Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart
On Wednesday 12th February 2014 at 5.30pm

Present

Terence Flanagan – Chairman
Steve Smith – Mandatory (Lord Crampton)
John Galloway - NSAA
Jim Davidson
Tom Kenyon
Dougal Evans – Mandatory (Lord Granchester and Andrew Stewart)
Duncan Baillie – Angler Representative
Johnnie Johnstone - NSAA
G Fryatt – Mandatory (Peter Jones)
Jonathan Hayley
George McShane – Angler Representative

Also in attendance:-

Matthew Pumphrey – Clerk
Billy McHarg – Treasurer
Jamie Ribbens – GFT
Christine Welsh – SNH
Inspector David McCallum – Police Scotland

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th November 2013

These were approved. However Steve Smith raised an issue about the decline over 25 years in the number of fish in the River Cree and indicated that this had been raised at the previous meeting without any mention of it having been made in the Minutes. It was agreed that this matter would best be rectified by being mentioned in these Minutes. Steve Smith said that the Board should be seeking assistance from other Boards and other sources in order to try and firstly to reverse the downward trend and secondly to improve the fishing on the River for the benefit of all the proprietors. This motion was proposed by John Galloway and seconded by Johnnie Johnstone. Neither Jonathan Hayley nor Jim Davidson had received the previous Minutes nor the Agenda for this meeting. It transpired that the Clerk had the wrong email address for Jonathan Hayley.

3. Matters arising

(a) Complaints

It was agreed that if Peter Murray had not produced or finalised the necessary complaints procedure then Matthew Pumphrey should deal with this after liaison with Peter Murray.

(b) Registers of Members Interest

The same as (a) above.

(c) Treasurer

Billy McHarg would confirm whether his remuneration of £500 was inclusive or exclusive of VAT. He confirmed that VAT would be payable on his remuneration.

(d) Jamie Ribbens produced the 2013 electrofishing results for the stocking sites in the normal format. The Chairman thanked him for that.

(e) Conservation Code

A handout was circulated by the Chairman. Steve Smith suggested that there should be a maximum of one salmon/grilse to be killed per angler/day and a maximum of two per week. The consensus however was that the Conservation Code should remain as previously agreed for the coming year but would be reviewed in the light of the experience for the coming season.

(f) Bailiffing

Jim Nichol had agreed to act as an additional bailiff with an expenses payment £300 per annum. The Chairman would write a formal letter of appointment.

4. Police Scotland Presentation

A warm welcome was extended to Inspector McCallum. He explained that since April 2013 there was no longer Dumfries & Galloway Constabulary but rather Police Scotland. 101 calls would be taken in Govan but he was optimistic that this would not impact on the high level of service which he hoped that members of the public felt they were getting at the moment and previously. The Dumfries & Galloway Division came under the command of the Station based at Gartcosh with the Deputy Station in Motherwell. He said that it was essential that he liaised with all Boards as the local Police Officer in charge of wildlife and environmental crime and that Boards and members of the public should have no hesitation in reporting to him anything that would be relevant to the prevention of wildlife or environmental crime. He also informed the Board that the local police officer with particular responsibility for wildlife crime was PC Nicola McFadzean.

He informed the Board that there were particular provisions within the fisheries legislation which could be of assistance to the Board in connection with controlling poaching on still waters in multiple ownership and which drained into the Solway.

He said that the National Wildlife Crime Unit which applied to the whole of the UK was based in Scotland and the website could be viewed although the links available for members of the public as opposed to Police were different. He explained that there would be a hyperlink for the Board to use if and when necessary.

There was a different culture within the Police towards wildlife crime as a result of the 2013 Act in that the Police did not appear in a blaze of glory and blue lights but rather would use more subtle methods at detection and prevention.

There were many questions from the floor and there would have been many more had time permitted. The Chairman thanked the Inspector for agreeing to attend and for providing such an interesting and informative presentation.

5. River Management Plan

A further draft was circulated by the Chairman. Following some discussion and subject to two minor amendments the plan was unanimously approved.

There was some discussion about fish-eating birds and it was observed that it would be helpful to have a count of such birds the first count being in April, the second in October and the third in April (2015). It was further observed that although the Forestry Commission could prevent people shooting on their land they could not prevent people walking on it in order to count birds.

6. RCHHT Report

In the absence of Murdo Crosbie the Chairman related his brief report. In the hatchery, the eggs of the Minnoch fish were hatching. Trees had been removed from the Penkiln Burn. Rhododendron clearance continued on the Penkiln. SEPA had confirmed that CAR licences were not required for the proposed works on the Challoch Burn. An application had been made to SNH for a licence to stock salmon fry above impassable falls on three burns.

7. GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens provided a handout which was circulated to the meeting. In addition to the seven points contained in the handout he mentioned three others viz:-

8. Celtic Sea Trout Project

The results were not out yet. The impact of sea lice would be relevant.

9. Swedish Fish Tagging Paper

The difficulties of tagging fish even with a gun were outlined and the harm done to fish by tagging was ever present if the tagging was not done properly.

10. Hatchery Conference

The Minutes were available.

8. "Value for Money" Audits

The Chairman said that this item was on the Agenda following a request that was originally made by Roger Sharples at the annual public meeting. Although "audit" may not be the appropriate description, the fact was that the good governance requirements in the 2013 Act required the annual report "to summarise the key activity and outcomes delivered and planned". He therefore suggested that GFT and RCHHT should each summarise their activities and outcomes accordingly so that they could be incorporated into the report. Dougal Evans said that it was unfair in principle that the River Cree Board should expect more work to be done by GFT when the Cree alone of the Rivers served by GFT has not increased its subscription. There was a suggestion (which was disputed) that the Cree Board were expecting less from GFT now rather than more – the proposition was that 90 man days per annum had been saved by virtue of the RCHHT carrying out all hatchery work. It was agreed that the two trusts should summarise their activities and outcomes for inclusion in the report.

The Chairman indicated that there had been some adverse comment on the order within the Agenda of numbers 6 and 7. He had admitted that he had prepared the Agenda on this occasion but would leave it to the Clerk to do so on the next.

Dougal Evans said that in no circumstances would he reply to Roger Sharples and if any response was required it would have to be made by the Board.

9. Salmon Netting Petition

The Chairman reported a request by Andrew Stewart that the salmon season should be extended on the River Cree to the end of October to be in line with the Bladnoch. Jamie Ribbens indicated that he would be very wary of going down this route. It was further observed that the Minnoch fishing stopped at the end of September. It was agreed that the season should remain as it was.

A petition against salmon netting commencing earlier in the year was mentioned. It appeared that board members had already responded to it.

10. Any other Competent Business

The Chairman mentioned:-

- (a) The bailiffs conference at the Fenwick Hotel, Kilmarnock. It was free to attend but the Board would pay reasonable travelling expenses.
- (b) John Gorman of SEPA had offered to give a presentation to the Board concerning their forestry project. It was agreed that the Chairman should ask John to come to the next meeting.
- (c) Correspondence between himself and Mary Nicholson. Copies of this correspondence were handed round at the meeting.

11. Date of Next Meeting

This would be on 16th April 2014 at 5.30pm at The Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart.