

MINUTES  
of the Meeting of the  
River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board  
Held at Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart  
On Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 5.30pm

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**Present**

(a) Board Members

Terence Flanagan – Chairman  
Duncan Baillie  
Jim Davidson  
Dougal Evans  
John Galloway  
Jonathan Haley  
Tom Kenyon  
Norrie McIntosh

(b) Attendees

Jamie Ribbens - GFT  
Matthew Pumphrey - Clerk

Apologies for absence:-

1. Apologies had been received from Murdo Crosbie, Billy McHarg and Steve Smith.
2. Minutes of the Meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015

With the exception of one typo (ADSFb rather than ASFB) these were approved without demur.

3. Matters arising not specifically on the Agenda.

The Chairman mentioned that he had written to Ms Lusk to say that the Board did not agree with her contention that there was no evidence that any sea lice emanating from fish farms had an impact on wild fish numbers.

4. Chairman's Report.

a) Fish numbers.

The Chairman said that fish numbers were up which was encouraging. Over 70 fish had been caught.

Jonathan Haley said that while this was indeed encouraging the weather this year had been better than last year and that may have contributed.

b) Ventress letter.

The Chairman mentioned that permission had been sought for some work to be carried out on bankside rhododendron control. The Chairman had replied to say that the Board encouraged the removal of rhododendron from the banksides of waters so long as SEPA requirements were complied with.

## 5. GFT Report

Mr. Ribbens circulated a handout which contained reports on Rowantree Burn water sampling update, the Castle Burn, salmon scale reading (samples provided by Duncan Baillie) Solway Tweed River Base and Management Plan Consultation, Riverfly Partnership river invertebrate monitoring workshops, salmon in the classroom and new trout stocking regulations.

Jonathan Haley expressed pleasure at the information provided about the removing of 471 hectares of conifers. Jamie Ribbens said that although one of the objectives of the Scottish Government was not just to retain existing forestry but to increase it wherever possible this was encouraging indeed. Peat restoration on many catchments had been actively encouraged also by GFT with some considerable success.

## 6. Treasurer's Report

In the absence of Mr McHarg (in the Western Isles) there was no Treasurer's report.

## 7. RCHHT report.

In the absence of Murdo Crosbie the Chairman gave a verbal report. The cold Spring and fluctuating water levels had led to a much later programme of stocking this year compared to last year and previous years. The parr and fry numbers observed in the burns being stocked had been very good. Both rhododendron control and Japanese knotweed spraying had been quite effective although more needed to be done.

## 8. Wild Fisheries Review

The Chairman had had circulated the draft response to the Scottish Government.

He opened up by saying that the Clerk had written to some of the local Boards (Annan Bladnoch Nith and Urr) and both the Annan and the Nith had replied, favourably, with the proposal that there should be a joint Dumfries & Galloway approach to the ASFB. Richard Bellamy (of the Urr) said that he would not be available until the beginning of July. The Chairman said that after the meeting he would liaise with the various Boards who were interested and try and set something up.

There was considerable discussion about the proposed new FMOs and in particular the numbers that there would be in Scotland and what areas they would comprise. There had been a proposal that there would be just 10 FMOs for the whole of Scotland but this had not found favour and various other numbers had been proposed without any clear consensus of opinion as to what the final figure would be.

Dougal Evans felt that the FMO covering the Cree should include the Rivers between the Luce and the Urr inclusive but no further east than that. If the Nith and Annan were included then it would mean that the Cree would be the poor relation without the influence it needed to protect its own interests. There was general agreement on this.

There was also considerable discussion about the funding of the new FMOs with a preference being that the responsibility for collection should be with FMOs rather than the Scottish Government.

Tom Kenyon (among others) thought that the proposed response by the Chairman was absolutely spot on. After discussion it was agreed that the answers to questions 12, 17 and 18 should be looked at again. Further in connection with question No. 1 the Clerk should try and ascertain the correct legal position of wild fish as in the Chairman's opinion the Scottish Government may have misunderstood when fish came within the ownership of proprietors of the fishings where they happened to be. Jamie Ribbens indicated that there was a legal expert at ASFB and guidance could be obtained from him.

It was agreed that the final draft of the response should be circulated by email only. There was a deadline at the beginning of August and though it was necessary to have the consent and approval of the whole Board it was felt such could be obtained through exchanges of email.

9. Application for licence to kill fish-eating birds.

The Chairman apologised that no application had been submitted because of paperwork which still had to be completed. He had hoped by the next meeting he would have got on top of this and the application would have been submitted.

10. AOCB

Jock Galloway mentioned that there had been a flood prevention scheme the report for which extended to some 50 pages or so and had cost £32,000 to produce.

The Chairman said he would like to see a copy of the proposed flood prevention scheme proposals.

Mr McIntosh said that there would be financial consequences for river proprietors.

The Chairman had indicated that the Board's position was, formally, that the Board would not get involved with flood prevention schemes. However he would like to see the proposals and if there was anything detrimental to fishings in them there might be some way of making non-controversial representations.

Mr Tom Kenyon indicated that the guilty parties were unquestionably the Forestry Commission but he imagined that they would not be mentioned in the report.

11. Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Board would be on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at 5.30pm.

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Chairman