

MINUTES OF MEETING
of the
River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board
Held at Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart
On Wednesday 3rd September 2014 at 5:30pm

Present

Terence Flanagan – Chairman
Duncan Baillie
Jim Davidson
John Galloway
Jonathan Haley
Johnnie Johnstone
Tom Kenyon
George McShane
Dougal Evans

Also in attendance:-

Billy McHarg - Treasurer
Jamie Ribbens – GFT
Matthew Pumphrey – Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies were intimated from:-

Murdo Crosbie – RCHHT
John Gorman
Christine Welsh

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th June 2014

These were approved save for (1) an omission earlier pointed out by Murdo Crosbie to the Chairman that the RCHHT report had been omitted and that (2) although reference in the Minutes had been made to certain pronouncements by Tom Kenyon he was not noted as having been present at the meeting.

The Chairman read out a new item 6 for the Minutes which was headed up 'RCHHT Report' and this was approved. The revised Minutes were then signed.

3. Matters Arising

There would be a meeting immediately after this meeting between the Chairman, Jim Davidson and Steve Smith to discuss the proposed letter to Alex Salmond.

4. Chairman's report

He mentioned the meeting of 9th June attended by a number of organisations. Various works to the riverside path in Newton Stewart had been agreed but SEPA

(who had called the meeting) had subsequently indicated that more time would be needed. The Board's remit was limited. In essence the meeting (of 19th June) happened but nothing else had happened.

The Chairman mentioned the concern of Jim MacDonald about flooding and that in Mr MacDonald's opinion, doing nothing was not an option. It appeared that Mr MacDonald was blaming the Council rather than the Board. Mr. Kenyon indicated that it was really the Forestry Commission's fault and that 50 years ago without all the forestry development there would have been no problem.

The Chairman mentioned that the complaints procedure would have to go on to the website and be intimated to the Scottish Ministers under Section 46 of the 2003 Act (as introduced by the 2013 Act). He also said that it should be made public that Board Members' declaration of interests could be made available to anyone by application to the Clerk.

5. Financial Report.

Mr McHarg said that he had sent out the levy notices at the end of July. The total sought was around £17,000 but only £2800 had been paid so far. There was £5500 in the Bank but with the levies to be paid to RCHHT and GFT the account would be overdrawn if more levies were not received in the interim.

Dougal Evans agreed to send reminders to Andrew Stewart and Glentrool Estates both of whom were large contributors. The Angling Association should be similarly prompted.

It was agreed that the bailiffs should be paid their expenses for the 2013/14 financial year.

6. Wild Fisheries Review

The Chairman mentioned that his representations had been submitted but appeared to have been ignored. It now appeared that the Review favoured FMO's overseen by Marine Scotland, which would take over from River Boards. The Review was due to report in late October with the proposals open for consultation in early 2015. Their bulletins were on the WFR website.

7. GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens circulated a four page 'summary of Galloway Fisheries Trust (GFT) work' together with a map. He also displayed some photographs of diseased fish.

Mr Ribbens said that a more detailed report would be available for the AGM. He reported that Red Vent Syndrome was still a problem on the Nith.

In answer to a question put to him by Mr Haley Mr Ribbens said that sea lice were deemed by scientists not to be the cause of any of the problems of diseased fish.

In relation to the Glenhead Burn study outlined in the report, it was agreed that GFT should endeavour to obtain SEPA consent to restore flows which appeared to have been lost to the burn.

8. RCHHT Report.

In Murdo Crosbie's absence the Chairman circulated a handout detailing work done since the last report to the board. This included work to eradicate invasive non-native species and phase 2 of the Challoch Burn project, chiefly fencing over 1km. of banking. Mr Haley considered that Mr Crosbie had done and was continuing to do an excellent job and this was agreed.

9. Stocking policy document.

The Chairman extended his thanks to Mr Ribbens for producing this document which had been agreed at an ad hoc sub- committee meeting between Messrs Crosbie Ribbens and himself with two minor alterations. The Board duly approved the duly amended stocking document.

10. Catch Returns

The Chairman asked that these should be sent to him as soon as possible after the end of the season. He undertook to keep individual beat tallies confidential. He conceded that it would be unlikely to have all the Catch returns in by the time of the AGM.

11. Counts of fish eating birds.

There was considerable discussion on this issue with the reports of a very greedy cormorant spotted by the Chairman in the middle of Newton Stewart to an absence of fishing eating birds elsewhere. Mr. Smith said that despite the misgivings of some of the Board it had already been agreed at an earlier meeting to carry out the count and having agreed to do it it should be done. Anything that would help improve the numbers of salmon and sea trout in the River Cree should be encouraged.

Members generally however felt that it will be very difficult to get a licence from SNH and even if a licence was given it would be very limited and of negligible effect.

It was agreed that because of the concerns raised by some members of the Board the issue should be put to the AGM and if there was any enthusiasm for carrying out the count volunteers should be sought and a programme thereafter arranged if approved.

12. AGM.

The Annual Meeting of Proprietors would be at 6pm (not 5) on 22nd October followed immediately by the Annual Public Meeting. The Chairman reminded the Board that the notice of the meeting had to be in prescribed form and was not entirely straightforward. 21 days notice had to be given. The notice would need to be publicised in the Galloway Gazette and intimated by email to the Scottish Ministers. He would do the report.

13. Date of next meeting.

The next ordinary Board meeting would be on 26th November 2014 at 5.30pm.

14. AOB

Mr. Galloway raised some interesting issues on bailiffing and gave some statistics.

Mr Smith suggested that there should be some smolt tagging. Mr. Flanagan said that wearing his RCHHT hat there was no funding for this and Mr. Ribbens said that the value of such tagging would be limited because there would be no way of knowing what had happened to the smolts while at sea.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

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Chairman