

MINUTES

Of the Meeting of the
River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board
Held at The Belted Galloway, Newton Stewart
On Wednesday 18th July 2018 at 5.30 pm

Present

(A) Board Members/Mandatory

Terence Flanagan – in the Chair

Duncan Baillie
Murdo Crosbie
Jim Davidson
Gene Fryatt
George McShane
Steve Smith

(B) Attendees

Billy McHarg (Treasurer)
Matthew Pumphrey (Clerk)

(1) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Jock Galloway, Jamie Hyslop, Norrie McIntosh Jamie Ribbens and Iain Service.

(2) Minutes of the Meeting of 18th April 2018

These were approved without demur.

(3) Matters arising from the Minutes of 18th April 2018

The Chairman reported that the Board's response to the salmon farming consultation had been submitted and thanked the members of the sub-committee for their assistance. He had also received information about a "Salmon Interactions Workstream" set up by the Scottish Ministers, to explore interactions between farmed and wild salmon. It was to be chaired by John Goodlad, of Fisheries Innovation Scotland.

There were no other matters arising which would not be covered by later items on the Agenda.

(4) Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported that, due to the lack of rain, the fishing had been slow to non-existent. However both Steve Smith and Murdo Crosbie said that there were fish about in the lower river. The Chairman said that the recently published official catch statistics from Marine Scotland were slightly better for the Cree than expected namely 310 rod-caught salmon and grilse and 237 sea trout with 32 salmon and grilse caught by net and coble. They showed 81% catch and release for salmon and grilse and 88% for sea trout.

(5) & (6) Treasurer's Report and Rate Levy

Mr McHarg produced statements which showed that there was a small surplus in running costs for the last financial year, but, having ascertained from Murdo Crosbie that there were still £600 bailiffs' fees due, there would be a shortfall of around £500. That would be after the overdue fees for the Treasurer and Clerk were paid for 2017 those being, in total, £1800. The view of the Board was that, while it was always better to have a financial cushion, there was enough money in the bank (£7,300) to enable the Board still to operate without a rise in the rate levy provided that the existing levies were paid in full. So far £6,088.75 had been collected; there was still £8,489 due to be collected. With the poor season so far this year, there was little appetite for an increase in the levy at this time but the issue of the levy would remain live and would be on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr McHarg reported that there was a problem with the accountants which he and the Chairman would need to get resolved. At the moment their figures and their method of calculating them was a mystery.

(7) GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens had provided a written report which had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting.

The Chairman said that electro-fishing of the stocked sites was done in approximately the following proportions viz: one third by GFT and two thirds by RCHHT. Steve Smith questioned why no fish were stocked into the Eldrick Hill Burn this year, though GFT had recommended that 15,000 fry should be stocked. Duncan Baillie thought that he had missed the point about the non-stocking of certain tributaries.

(8) RCCHT Report

Murdo Crosbie circulated a handout which was duly addressed by him and considered by the Board. He reported that the Stocking Sites & Numbers for 2018 had not been affected by the hot weather. He said that Japanese Knotweed was becoming difficult to eradicate completely and the situation on the lower river was in danger of getting out of control. In that the problem may be being caused by grass cuttings which included knotweed, it was suggested that he might consider approaching the person mainly thought to be responsible for the depositing of the cuttings into the river. He said he would consider doing this. The problem with Himalayan Balsam was also very bad – much worse than last year. The school visits were encouraging he thought and hoped that some of the children might become committed fishermen in the future.

(9) Consultation on Conservation of Pike

It was agreed that a Sub-Committee consisting of the Chairman, Murdo Crosbie and Jamie Hyslop should be asked to draft a response.

(10) AOCB

(a) It was agreed that the Stocking Sub-Committee (consisting of the Chairman, Murdo Crosbie and Jamie Ribbens) should be authorized to finalise the Board's Stocking Policy Document for 2018/19 without having to refer further to the Board.

(b) Mr McHarg reported that River Watchers would be covered under the Board's insurance. Accordingly the Board would advertise for River Watchers on the Board's website. The urgency for this arose as a result of Jock Galloway's imminent retirement as bailiff.

(11) Date of Next Meeting

17th October 2018 at 5.30 pm, the triennial elections would take place then. The AGM would provisionally be on 21st November 2018 at 6.00 pm

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm

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Chairman