

MINUTES
of the Meeting of the
River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board
Held at Bruce Hotel, Newton Stewart
On Thursday 8th September 2016 at 5.30pm

Present

(a) Board Members/Mandatories

Terence Flanagan – Chairman
Duncan Baillie
Murdo Crosbie
John Galloway
Jamie Hyslop
Tom Kenyon
Norrie McIntosh
George McShane
Iain Service
Steve Smith
Gene Fryatt

(b) Attendees

Billy McHarg (Treasurer)
Matthew Pumphrey (Clerk)
Jamie Ribbens (GFT)

(c) Members of the Public

There was 1 member of the public in attendance.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies had been received from Jim Davidson and Dougal Evans.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 15th June 2016

These were approved subject to it being clarified that Callum Sinclair was with SNH and not SEPA.

3. Matters arising from the Minutes not otherwise on the Agenda

The only matter arising was in relation to the permission for placing CCTV cameras on the land or river bank by bailiffs to detect poaching. Mr Crosbie said that the landowner was the relevant person who was required to give permission rather than the owner of the fishings.

4. Chairman's Report

Mr Flanagan started by saying that the good news was that the river had provisionally been put back into category 1 for the 2017 season.

Approximately 180 fish had been caught in the river so far this year.

Jamie Ribbens observed that it was always possible for the Cree to lose its Category 1 status.

Mr Flanagan reminded members of the Board that anyone seen fishing on the river would have to produce written permission from the owner of the fishings in order to be within the law.

The Chairman asked whether the Board had any views about allowing Sunday fishing. Steve Smith said that salmon like other species should be allowed a day of rest although whether it was Sunday or some other day may not matter. Mr Jamie Ribbens said that this was attitude taken by all other Boards. Murdo Crosbie thought that the issue might be one that could be taken to the Annual Public Meeting. This was agreed

5. Treasurer's Report

Billy McHarg said that the response to the 2016 levy notices had been disappointing with only £5,000 out of £17,000 having been collected so far. He had received some criticism from reluctant riparian proprietors who had asked why they should pay levies for fishings that did not exist. There was a particular problem with Creeside Farm where the alleged owners were maintaining that they no longer owned the fishings and there was some discussion as to how this could be established. It was agreed that Mr McHarg would look at the relevant Land Certificate and he could take it from there.

Mr McHarg said that he would produce a detailed account for the next meeting.

6. GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens circulated a handout and he spoke to it. He explained that the "grilse error" was advantageous in that it appeared that more people had identified salmon as grilse rather than the other way about. However, as indicated in his handout, the numbers of salmon in some rivers appeared to have been estimated over enthusiastically.

Steve Smith referred to a report written by Dougal Evans in 2004 with regard to the limestone effect and criticised the GFT for being apparently contradictory with regard to the limestone areas. There was a somewhat lively interchange between Messrs Smith and Ribbens and other on this without any conclusion being reached.

There was also some discussion about the presence of fish in the High Cree, Murdo Crosbie pointing out that the original strain of High Cree had probably died out. However others including Mr Ribbens felt that there was nothing intrinsically wrong with the High Cree and it could be stocked without detriment to the fish. It was agreed that a small number of fish should be put there as an experiment.

7. RCHHT Report

Murdo Crosbie had circulated a handout to the Board and spoke briefly to it. He mentioned that killing Japanese knotweed sometimes had the opposite effect in that instead of spreading upward it spread outward with a more stunted growth. Nothing competed with knotweed. There were better ways of dealing with the problem and he and others would be hopefully dealing with the problem more effectively.

The Chairman on behalf of the Board thanked Mr Crosbie for his continuing good work for the RCHHT.

8. Fish-Eating Birds: Information required by ASFB for relevant bird carcasses currently stored in DSFB freezers

The Chairman asked the Clerk why this had been put on the Agenda and the Clerk was not able to give at that time an effective response.

The Chairman noted that both the room and the table were both very small for those attending and when this had pointed out to the licensee of the pub, he had not reacted other than to say that he had always made it clear that if meetings were going to be on a Thursday the Board would always be saddled with that particular room. The Clerk advised that he had told the licensee that meetings had never previously been on a Thursday to which the licensee had said that he had not been aware of this. The Chairman said he would be looking around for alternative premises.

9. (a) Conservation Measures

The Chairman said that a response to a consultation was required by the end of this month and as there would not be another Board meeting before the end of September he would be looking for a sub-committee of himself and two others to meet and to advise on what the Board should be proposing. John Galloway and Jamie Hyslop volunteered and accordingly the sub-committee would consist of the Chairman and Messrs Galloway and Hyslop.

(b) Special Meeting of ASFB

There was to be a special meeting of ASFB where the main item of business would be the proposed merger of RAFTS and AFSB. The impetus for the merger was that RAFTS appeared to be short of money. In the Chairman's opinion however the two organisations were different and represented different bodies and organisations and therefore should not be amalgamated.

Mr McIntosh asked how the merger could take place when the ASFB was meant to be the parent body for District Salmon Fishery Boards and while they were still in existence a separate representative body should be there to represent them.

This view was shared among others and there were no dissenting voices. Accordingly the Chairman would attend the meeting and vote against the proposed merger.

(c) Consultation on FMOs and FMAs

The Chairman had circulated correspondence between himself, GFT, ASFB, Jim Davidson and Dougal Evans and expressed some displeasure at the fact that GFT had failed to pass on relevant emails to him or anyone else at the Cree Board with the result that the Cree Board had not been included in the consultation process.

He reminded Board Members that at the meeting in October 2015 the Board had by a significant majority voted for a Solway-wide FMO which would include all the Solway rivers including the Annan and the Nith. He was however aware that the Annan and the Nith now favoured a Nith/Annan FMO but that did not mean that the Government could not impose a Solway-wide FMO if they considered that it would be the best solution.

Mr Ribbens tried to explain that the document had not been prepared by GFT. Mr McIntosh said that the Cree Board had been betrayed by the Galloway Fisheries Trust. The Chairman felt that while betrayal might be putting it too strongly he did feel that the GFT had been at best negligent or incompetent. He sought an explanation from Mr Ribbens but Mr Ribbens did not feel that it was appropriate either to accuse GFT of betrayal or of negligence or incompetence.

The general view was hostile to the position adopted by GFT. It was felt that strong representation should be made. The Chairman asked for any volunteers to make those representations but it was felt that as Chairman he should probably make them himself. This was agreed.

10. Arrangements for AGM and APM

It was agreed that these meetings should take place in October as they had been in the past and Wednesday 26th October was selected, the start time being 6.00pm. He reminded the Clerk of the statutory time limits for advertising which were 21 days notice.

11. AOCB

There was none.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

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Chairman