

MINUTES

Of the Meeting of the

River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board

Held at The Belted Galloway, Newton Stewart

On Wednesday 25th September 2019 at 5.30 pm

Present

(A) Board Members/Mandatories

Terence Flanagan - in the Chair

Jim Davidson

Gene Fryatt

Jock Galloway

Jamie Hyslop

Tom Kenyon

Norrie McIntosh

George McShane

Iain Service

Steve Smith

(B) Attendees

Matthew Pumphrey (Clerk)

Jamie Ribbens - GFT

Jessica Rodger - GFT

(1) Apologies for Absence

Duncan Baillie, Murdo Crosbie and Billy McHarg

(2) Minutes of Meeting of 19th June 2019

These were proposed by Jock Galloway and seconded by Gene Fryatt and approved without demur.

(3) Matters arising from previous Minutes

There were no matters arising which were not otherwise on the agenda.

(4) Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported as follows:

- Rod Catches

There seemed to have been fewer Sea Trout caught, and more grilse than salmon. The current rod catch was in the region of 277 grilse and salmon.

- Marine Scotland

- Simon Dryden of Marine Scotland had met four members of the Board to discuss how Marine Scotland's new salmon stocking policy might affect the Board's stocking programme. The slightly surprising conclusion was that Boards had the power to licence introductions that Marine Scotland would not licence. He confirmed that the Board would be able to continue with its stocking programme as presently operated, including the stocking of fed fry.

- Letter from/to NSDAA

The Chairman read out a letter from the Secretary of the Newton Stewart and District Angling Association which appeared to be critical of the Board's lack of communication with the Association as regards its stocking policy. He then read out his reply refuting this. The Board, including the two members of the Board who represented NSDAA as proprietors approved the response from the Chairman.

- Forestry and Land Scotland

The sub-committee appointed at the last meeting had responded to the consultation on the FLS draft corporate plan.

- GFT & Jessica Rodger

The Chairman had asked Jamie Ribbens for a copy of their grant application for the funding of Jessica Rodger's research but he had declined to provide same.

- Murdo Crosbie - Bailiff

Everyone had been sent a copy of Murdo Crosbie's email indicating his intention to step down as a bailiff. It was agreed that bailiffs' expenses should be paid each year and Murdo had been right to complain that he had not had his payment for longer than a year. It was agreed that the Chairman should try and persuade him to withdraw his resignation as a bailiff particularly as he had done all the relevant training and had got his certificate. It was agreed that his expenses for the current year should be paid to assist in this regard.

(5) Treasurer's Report

In the absence of the Treasurer, the Chairman read out Billy McHarg's written report and circulated the audited accounts for the year to 31st March 2019. There were 5 proprietors who had not paid their levies. Steve Smith had got a cheque for one of these and one of the others had died. A suggestion was made to "name and shame" the other 3 but this suggestion was, after discussion, withdrawn.

(6) GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens circulated a report, containing electrofishing results on 5 burns and from repeated High Cree sites, and reports on the National Electrofishing Programme Scotland, Sediment fingerprinting project, their response to a SEPA consultation "Forestry and wood processing sector plan", which was most interesting perch in the Palnure Burn, new forestry planting near Dalnaw, the Cree remaining a Category 1 river, and lesser knotweed - which was considered not to be particularly invasive - on the Black Clauchrie Burn.

Jessica Rodgers then gave a presentation on her project which she had started on the Fleet. In answer to a question from the Chairman, she stated that she would be looking at the Cree before the end of the year and should have her report ready by the spring of 2020. Jamie Hyslop observed that there had been numerous reports in the past without any notable improvement in the state of the river and he hoped that the report would have teeth which would enable effective improvements to be made.

(7) RCHHT Report

Murdo Crosbie had prepared a written report on the activities of the Trust since the last meeting, which was, in his absence, circulated to members for their information. It detailed work carried out in relation to hatchery operations, dealing with Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam, removing trees from the river and electro-fishing surveys.

(8) River Management Plan

The Chairman stated that this had not been looked at since 2017. He considered that a few changes should be made, viz:

- The question of bailiffing should be left until he had had his discussion with Murdo Crosbie.

This was agreed.

- The Conservation Code was considered but it was agreed that it should be left the same unless the river lost its Category 1 status. The Chairman would circulate to proprietors.
- As a result of the licences which had been granted for the shooting of fish-eating birds, the section on predator control should be amended accordingly.
- The stocking policy should be left as it is.

The Board gave authority to the Chairman to rewrite the River Management Plan incorporating these points.

(9) Review of Contribution to GFT

The Chairman declared his interest as a trustee of the RCHHT and would not take part in the discussion of this item. He also offered to stand down as Chairman for this item. Steve Smith said that he had no objection to the Chairman chairing this issue and there was no dissent from other members to his continuing to chair this item

Steve Smith said that he had raised this issue because he felt that GFT had had blatant disregard for the interests of the Board. He mentioned the GFT position on the proposed FMO's. This was strongly opposed by Jim Davidson and Tom Kenyon. Jamie Hyslop questioned whether GFT provided value for money although conceded that GFT had, at least partly, been responsible for the river getting and keeping its Category 1 status. Iain Service thought that the problem was the amount of the Board's reserves which, although standing at over £12,000 at the moment would be depleted fairly soon by amounts still owing. Norrie McIntosh said that part of the problem was the absence of either Jamie Ribbens or anyone else from GFT attending the Board's meetings. Jamie Ribbens denied the allegations. He explained that when he had been unable to attend meetings he had always submitted a written report. He found it disagreeable, however to have to face the hostility of some of the members of the Board.

Steve Smith proposed that the contribution from the Board should be reduced to £1,500. There was no seconder for this. Gene Fryatt proposed that there should be no change. After discussion, it was agreed that the issue should be raised again at the next ordinary Board meeting when Jamie Ribbens would set out exactly what GFT had done over the previous 12 months. Also the Treasurer would be asked to advise on the financial outlook for the future, generally, and with reference to the contribution to GFT.

(10) Arrangements for AMP/APM

The 2 meetings would be held at the earlier time of 5.30 pm on 6th November 2019. The Chairman would draft the Agenda and Notices to be sent to the Scottish Ministers.

(11) AOCB

None

(12) Date of next Meeting

This would be determined at the APM

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

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Chairman