MINUTES

Of the Board Meeting

of the River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board

Held at The Belted Galloway, Newton Stewart

On Wednesday February 7th 2024 at 5.30 pm

Present

1. Board Members/Mandatories

Jamie Hyslop – in the Chair

Murdo Crosbie

Terence Flanagan

Gene Fryatt

Adrian Paterson

Steve Smith

1. Attendee

Matthew Pumphrey (Clerk and Treasurer)

(1) Apologies for Absence

Jim Davidson, Norrie McIntosh, Jamie Ribbens, and Iain Service

(2) Approval of Minutes of Previous Board Meeting on 4th October 2023

Due to a mistake by the Clerk, the wrong version of the previous Minutes had been sent to Board members and accordingly the Chairman, who had previously printed off the correct version, duly circulated copies to the Board. Board members were given a chance to consider the amended version of the Minutes and these were approved without demur.

(3) Approval of AMP & APM Meetings on 23rd November 2023

These had been previously circulated and were approved without demur.

(4) Matters arising from the two aforesaid Minutes

There was nothing arising from the Board meeting Minutes that was not on the Agenda. There was no comment on the two November meetings.

(5) Chairman’s Report

The Chairman’s Report is covered in Items (7) to (10) below.

(6) Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer said that as at today’s date there was a balance of £11,771.18 at credit. Accordingly the Board seemed to be on course for a surplus of approximately £10,550 (which had been previously estimated) at the financial year-end. This showed a surplus of approximately £2000 for the year. However, a sum of £2,000 + had been earmarked for the RCHHT, and, depending when this was paid, would affect the accounting either this year or next.

The Treasurer said that he had had no success in finding a Savings Account apart from a possible Savings Account with Scottish Widows paying just over 1%. He was currently looking into an Active Savings Account through Hargreaves Lansdown. It was agreed that if HL could not offer anything, then the Scottish Widows Savings Account should be chosen as long as there was instant access and no onerous conditions.

It was agreed that there should be no change in the levy for the year.

(7) Flood Prevention

The Chairman reported that he had attended a Flood Prevention meeting with the Council on 14th Nov 2023.

The Council accept that there was inadequate detail in the published EIA or PEAR reports regarding migratory fish. At the meeting it was agreed that the Flood Protection Scheme would put together an additional “Environmental Briefing” to deal specifically with the impact on migratory fish. The Draft Environmental Briefing would be presented and discussed at the next meeting – scheduled for January 2024 (no meeting has taken place and there has been no date set). Access and egress from the river have also to be agreed – both the design and location

(8) Proposed Wind Farms at Glenvernoch and Blair Hill

The Chairman reported that there had been no planning applications submitted for either wind farm yet. The potential for pollution and increased run-off to the river could be very significant if the developments proceeded.

The Chairman informed the Board that a Community Liaison Group had been formed by RES the developer for the Blair Hill windfarm. The Chairman asked to be part of this group and was accepted. The Chairman was not able to attend the first meeting on 17th January, but would be attending future meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for 27th February

RES have stated that they will accept questions at the next meeting and the Chairman proposes to submit a number of questions regarding the proposed wind farm development and its impact on the Cree fishery. The Chairman asked if any board members, or fisher people outwith the Board have any questions they would like to raise – then please get in touch with him

Terence Flanagan said that there had been no correspondence or other communication with the Board. He felt that the Board should be consulted. This was agreed.

(9) Water Quality

The correspondence between Chris Morton of the HCGA and the Clerk had been circulated and the Chairman duly read out his exchange with Chris Morton. It was felt that, if possible, the HCGA should send a mandatory to the next meeting to discuss how the HCGA concerns might be addressed.

(10) Management Plan

The Chairman observed that it had previously been agreed to review the management plan periodically The existing Management Plan was the Management Plan 2022. The chairman asked that the review of the management plan start at the next meeting and board members should review the current plan before the meeting and have any suggestions at hand for this meeting.

(11) GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens had sent an email to the Chairman and Clerk and the Clerk had distributed this to all Board members who had not given their apologies. In this email, Jamie Ribbens had expressed concern about the Board’s attitude to his previous Report as expressed in the previous Minutes and in particular that the issue of skunk cabbage might not be of any concern to the Board. The Chairman explained that he had already responded to Jamie Ribbens to the effect that the wrong Minutes had been sent and that, while there had been a brief discussion at the previous meeting about there not being much skunk cabbage in the catchment (along with there being no known pink salmon).

Gene Fryatt intimated that there was a patch of skunk cabbage next to the Palnure burn – but it did not appear to be spreading. The chairman said he would ask GFT if there were any other known areas of skunk cabbage in the Cree catchment.

(12) RCHHT Report

Murdo Crosbie reported that the development of eggs and alevins in the hatchery was proceeding smoothly, although the large variations in water temperature were making development very stop-start. Murdo also said he had to clean out the central silt settlement tank in the hatchery. This is not normally required, but this winter a lot of silt had built up in the settlement tank and required to be removed. This was likely due to the large number of large spates experienced this winter. It had not impacted on survival within the hatchery as the eggs are regularly cleaned of silt.

Murdo Crosbie then distributed a chart showing the results from a Sonde located on private land in a tributary of the High Cree. The chart plotted temperature and pH, measured every 15minutes. Over the last 10 months the pH had been measure to a low of 4.06, a high of 6.71 and a mean of 5.42. The water temperature reached a maximum of 24.4 degC. The low pH is clearly very worrying and wild spawning would not be expected to be successful at such pH levels. Murdo explained it was hoped to present this data to SEPA to highlight the acidification issues still being experienced on some of the Cree tributaries. Adrian Paterson said he would speak with the SEPA Hydrology department to see who best to present this data to

Murdo Crosbie reported that tree planting and “beating up” of the existing trees planted would commence within the next week.

At the suggestion of the Chairman, Murdo Crosbie mentioned that he had been asked to be a guest speaker at a Salmon Hatchery conference in Yorkshire.

(13) AOCB

The Chairman reported that a license to scare & cull fish-eating birds had been granted for the same number of goosanders (7) and cormorants (3) as in previous years.

Authorised individuals would be on the river during the smolt migration to “shepherd” the smolts to sea and protect them from FEBs.

The opening ceremony for the river would be discussed at the next NSAA meeting on Tuesday 13th Feb.

(14) Date of next meeting

1st May at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm

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Chairman