

Minutes

Client: **Beauly District Fishery Board**
Project: Board Meeting
Venue: Lovat Arms Hotel
Our ref:
Date: 5 June 2014
Present: J Miller; F Spencer-Nairn; M Spencer-Nairn; P Pacey

In N Barker (Ness & Beauly Fisheries Trust); N McAndrew; A Campbell (Clerk)
Attendance:
Distribution:

Description	Action
1 Apologies	
1.1 Apologies were received from Lady J Whitbread, Hon K Fraser.	
2 Minutes of the Board Meeting of 5 December 2013	
2.1 The minutes of the Board Meeting of 5 December 2013 had been circulated previously amongst Board members for approval and had subsequently been published on the Board's website.	
3 Matters Arising	
3.1 The Clerk confirmed that he had received positive responses from most Board members concerning the proposed contribution towards the 2014 netting station buy-out. There had been no objections raised. Accordingly, the Board approved the contribution of £2,376.25 to the Ness District Fishery Board as part payment for the 2014 buy-out.	Clerk
4 Good Governance	
4.1 There were no relevant declarations of interests arising in respect of the agenda for the meeting.	
4.2 The Clerk confirmed that he was still awaiting an initial declaration of interest from one Board member in order to complete the statutory register. The Clerk to chase this up.	Clerk
4.3 The Clerk confirmed that the Board had received no formal complaints since the last Board meeting.	
5 Ness & Beauly Fisheries Trust (NBFT) Report	
5.1 A brief report from NBFT had been circulated to Board members by e-mail immediately prior to the meeting. The Clerk was asked to forward this on to all proprietors.	Clerk

Minutes

Beauly District Fisher Board
Board Meeting
5 June 2014

Description	Action
5.2 On the subject of electro-fishing surveys, the Chairman commented that spawning fish appeared to be reaching most places that they physically were able. There was considerable difficulty in obtaining consent to remove any natural barriers to migration and recent advice circulated by ASFB indicated that under the terms of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011, no stocking should be undertaken above natural barriers to fish migration.	
5.3 With regard to man-made barriers, Nick Barker confirmed that removal of the barrier at Culburnie burn was now finally moving forward, as detailed within his report. Also as detailed in his report, the removal of the Bridge-end burn culvert within Beauly village was now in the hands of Highland Council, as there is a requirement to realign the Core Path alongside.	
5.4 Nick Barker was asked to forward to the Clerk the maps showing the location of Invasive Non Native Species (INNS). The Board noted that funding for an eradication programme was likely to be successful, although confirmation was awaited on the final fund that may be awarded.	NB
6 Beauly District Fisheries Management Plan 2014 - 2020	
6.1 The above document had been circulated to the Board in April 2014 for consideration and comment.	
6.2 The Board confirmed their approval of the Management Plan, which builds on the previous plans up to 2013. The proposed programme of action points and timing for these, detailed at the rear of the Plan, were noted. It was agreed that the Management Plan should be published on the Board's website.	Clerk
6.3 NBFT was asked to monitor implementation of the Plan on a quarterly basis and to provide progress updates to the Board on the various action points arising.	NB
6.4 As an addendum to the discussion on the Management Plan, Paul Pacey questioned whether the Board should have the stated aim to reverse the long term decline in the number of fish running the system, as a consequence of the estimated decline in marine survival from 20% to 6% of migrating smolts. He queried whether the system was capable of dealing with a greater number of fish and whether the Board should have a plan in place to increase juvenile fish production.	
6.5 In response, Nick Barker stated it is not possible to establish a precise carrying capacity for the system, albeit that a best estimate had been made within the 2009 habitat survey. The electro-fishing survey results did not indicate a decline in juvenile numbers within the river system since 2000 and if anything, a marginal increase had been seen. He further stated that there were two ways to increase the number of smolts going to sea; namely by increasing spawning production and / or by reducing loss to predation and other causes. With regard to the latter, there are a number of ongoing initiatives to improve survival of juvenile fish, including the discussions on a Sawbill Management Plan, the reduction of non-native plant species and subsequent habitat improvements. He also stated that the Trust would be seeking to increase its focus on improving riparian farm management within the district with a view to improving habitat in those areas bordered by farm land.	

Minutes

Beauly District Fisher Board
Board Meeting
5 June 2014

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<p>6.6 The Chairman confirmed that the stated objectives of the Board as set out in the Management Plan were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ To maintain or increase the density and distribution of juvenile fish populations■ Stabilisation or enhancement of the number of resident or returning adults■ An increase in the socioeconomic value of fisheries within the Beauly district	
<p>6.7 Mr Pacey proposed that the Board's recommended conservation policy be amended for a trial period of two years during which all fish should be returned (100% catch and release). Frank Spencer-Nairn and Michael Spencer-Nairn both voiced opposition to this proposal on the basis that it would not be possible to attribute any perceived increase in fish numbers directly to such a policy and the difference would be unlikely to be seen within a two year period. In their view, such a policy would go against the ultimate principle of angling, to retain one or two fish for consumption.</p>	
<p>6.8 The Board agreed to defer any decision on the proposal put forward by Mr Pacey. The Board noted that alternative measures might be available such as total bag limits on fish retained and / or tagging of fish carcasses.</p>	
7 SSE Liaison Meeting Report	
<p>7.1 The Chairman reported that a meeting of the SSE liaison committee had taken place in May 2014. Draft minutes of that meeting had been circulated immediately prior to the Board meeting. The Chairman commented that there were a number of amendments required to the draft minutes and there had been a discussion on turbine operating speeds, which was omitted from the minutes. This was to be the subject of a presentation being given by Alastair Steven at the public meeting later that evening.</p>	
<p>7.2 The Chairman confirmed there was not a great deal more to report arising from the meeting. It had been noted there was likely to be ongoing disruption to water levels on the River Glass as a consequence of the Beauly-Denny power line construction works; this was likely to last into 2015.</p>	
<p>7.3 Alastair Campbell reported that, subsequent to the liaison committee meeting, further discussions had taken place with SSE on a protocol for water management at Kilmorack Dam. This had arisen due to an incident where water levels had dropped rapidly, potentially stranding juvenile fish at the river's edge. It was anticipated the protocol would also cover the dangers to fishermen from rapid rises in water levels.</p>	
<p>7.4 It was suggested that the protocol should also include measures relating to downstream passage of kelts.</p>	Clerk
<p>7.5 The Clerk was asked to confirm with SSE the current starting date for the fish passes on all three dams.</p>	Clerk

Minutes

Beaulieu District Fisher Board
Board Meeting
5 June 2014

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8 SG Wild Fisheries Review	
8.1 A copy of the Board's response to the WFR consultation was circulated at the meeting. The Chairman reported that this response had been influenced by the comments received from proprietors and also by initial public statements made by Andrew Thin.	
8.2 During discussion, the Board reiterated their view that local management was best for each individual river, although a central body could improve coordination at a higher level, particularly in relation to fisheries science.	
8.3 The Clerk was asked to write to Andrew Thin requesting a specific meeting with representatives from the Beaulieu Board. It was agreed that such representatives would be the Chairman, Frank Spencer-Nairn and Paul Pacey.	Clerk
9 Financial Report – Year to date	
9.1 The Clerk gave a brief summary of the Board's finances for the current year to date. As no levy invoices had been raised, income to date was zero. Total expenditure to date was £2,944, primarily made up of subscription to ASFB, insurance premium costs and general accruals.	
Total cash at the bank as at the end of April 2014 was £22,104.	
10 Enforcement and Bailiffing	
10.1 The Clerk stated that he had received notice of two minor incidents of poaching so far in the year and that these had been dealt with by the Bailiffs.	
10.2 The Board confirmed that in future all incidents involving the warranted bailiffs should be logged with the Clerk in order that a comprehensive record could be maintained.	Clerk
11 Date of next meeting	
11.1 It was proposed that the next Board meeting should take place on 4 December 2014.	All