

Subject: Beauly District Fishery Board Meeting
Date: 18 June 2019
Location: The Lovat Arms Hotel, Beauly
Present: Jock Miller, Frank Spencer-Nairn, Mike Spencer-Nairn, Victoria Morley, George Purdie, Neil Cameron, Chris Conroy, Diego Del Villar (NBFT), Paul Pacey (Beauly Angling Club) Alastair Campbell (Clerk),

MINUTES

ITEM	ACTION OWNER
1.0 Apologies	
1.1 Apologies were received from Nick Jackson.	
2.0 Minutes of Board meeting held 4 December 2018	
2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 4 December 2018 were approved by those present.	CLERK
3.0 Matters arising	
3.1 The Clerk to circulate updated register of interest sheet to Board members.	CLERK
3.2 In respect of item 5.1 of the previous minute, the correct expiry date for the current Fisheries Management Plan was noted as being 31 December 2019. Chris Conroy reported that work on a replacement plan was yet to commence.	NBFT
3.3 Frank Spencer-Nairn noted that no lower proprietors had been available to stand for election at the triennial election in 2018. He suggested an approach be made to Lovat Estate as the only registered lower proprietor, to put forward a representative to be co-opted until the next triennial election.	CHAIR
4.0 SSE funding proposal	
4.1 Reference was made to the paper circulated prior to the meeting concerning the offer of funding received from SSE and the implications for the Board's annual budget in respect of potential employment of a fisheries officer etc.	
4.2 P Pacey queried whether reference to the costs of a part time bailiff on the 'River Glass' should be made in the figures for existing proprietor expenditure. The Clerk to contact J Wotherspoon to confirm what such costs are.	CLERK
4.3 P Pacey noted that current contribution by the Board to NBFT of £20,000pa had historically included the undertaking and preparation of an electro-fishing report. In 2018 the NBFT had received £12,000 from Marine Scotland for undertaking an amended suite of electro-fishing sites. N Cameron pointed out that the £12,000 payment replaced other annual contract work historically undertaken by the Trust, without which the Trust would not be financially viable. The £20,000 contribution from the Board should not be seen as a direct payment for	

undertaking specific works and the commercial value of the electro-fishing work, were an independent contractor to be instructed, would be significantly higher.

4.4 F Spencer-Nairn suggested that the definition of fisheries protection on page 2 of the paper should include reference to the impact of adverse waterflows on fish migration arising as a consequence of SSE infrastructure and operations.

4.5 The Board then considered the three financial options set out in the paper. At this point N Cameron, C Conroy and D Del Villar left the room.

4.6 Following confidential discussion, the Board then agreed that option 2 on the paper should be pursued for an initial trial period of one year. Option 2 states:-

Fisheries Officer Employed by Beaulieu DSFB but Managed by Ness DSFB would require a management fee of £5,000 per annum. There would also be an additional cost to Bidwells of £1,200 for operating payroll, pension etc, plus an initial set-up fee of £500. Total additional annual cost (net SSE contribution):- £21,200.

4.7 The following actions were agreed:-

CHAIR/CLERK

- 1 Chair to confirm the decision with SSE.
- 2 Chair to take forward discussions with Ness DSFB concerning a service level agreement for management of a new fisheries officer.
- 3 Following these two, recruitment of such an officer to be undertaken.

4.8 The Board to be kept updated of progress at each of these stages.

5.0 SSE liaison committee report

5.1 The Chair confirmed a meeting of Board representatives and SSE had been held the previous day (17 June). The following had been discussed:-

- SSE is reviewing the waterflow policy in the upper Farrar with a view to reducing the flow in the Misgeach from 30m gallons to 20m gallons per day, with the balance 10m gallons being redirected down the Monar. This will have the benefit of making the Misgeach more suitable for juvenile fish. The proposal is subject to confirmation by SSE's civil engineers.
- SSE reported intermittent issues with IT communication to the new fish counters. This may have knock-on implications for the regular reporting of fish pass data. Board representatives had expressed concern about this.
- The Board is to write to SSE Head of Hydro Generation concerning the problems with very low spring flows in the river in recent years.


CHAIR/CLERK

5.2 NBFT reported on the recent smolt entrapment in the dams and the rescue operation. 866 smolts had been recovered, however the condition of these was significantly worse than those recovered in 2018, albeit numbers were far smaller. It is considered likely that a large number of these recovered smolts will have subsequently died. D Del Villar recommended that, should a similar incident happen in future, records should be kept of fish condition such as fin erosion, scale loss etc.

6.0 Ness and Beaully Fisheries Trust Report

- 6.1 A written biologist's report was circulated prior to the meeting.
- 6.2 C Conroy stated that for future years the bird control licence should be amended to be addressed to the Board. **CLERK**
- 6.3 The Clerk was asked to forward the recent information received from FMS concerning diseased fish to all proprietors. **CLERK**
- 6.4 It was noted that when scale samples are collected for forwarding to NBFT, recording of fish length is a very important component of the data. Ghillies and anglers to be encouraged to ensure this is recorded. **ALL**
- 6.5 N Cameron confirmed that D Del Villar was shortly to leave the Trust. In addition C Daphne had recently also left, leaving the Trust temporarily with no biologists. Recruitment was currently ongoing. In the meantime completion of the 2019 electro-fishing surveys was being reviewed. A suggestion had been made that a limited number of sites be surveyed on both the Ness and Beaully by Ness DSFB staff in part fulfilment of the Marine Scotland contract. **NBFT**
- 6.6 C Conroy confirmed that Marine Scotland had agreed to fund another year of fish tagging in conjunction with two netmen in the Inner Moray Firth.
- 6.7 It was suggested the Board should request results from the tagging programme from Marine Scotland. These results should help demonstrate where the fish in the Inner Moray Firth are destined. This may help demonstrate that the netting stations should be considered mixed stock fisheries under the Scottish Government compensation programme. **CLERK**

7.0 Enforcement and Bailiffing

- 7.1  **CLERK**
Redacted – sensitive information
- 7.2 C Conroy reported that the individuals arrested for poaching in 2018 had recently appeared in Court and had pled guilty to the offence. Sentence was expected on 24 June.

8.0 Any other competent business

- 8.1 The Chairman on behalf of the Board expressed thanks and good wishes to Diego Del Villar. Diego in turn thanked the Board and Trust for the opportunity and time spent working on the Ness and Beaully.

9.0 Date of next meeting

- 9.1 It was proposed to hold an interim Board meeting on 5 September at 10.00am with the principal purpose of reviewing the new fisheries officer employment progress, along with arrangements with Ness DSFB and with SSE. The next full Board meeting will be held on 5 December 2019 at 10.00am.