

Subject: Beauly District Fishery Board Meeting  
Date: 5 September 2019  
Location: The Lovat Arms Hotel, Beauly  
Present: Jock Miller (Chair), Frank Spencer-Nairn, Victoria Morley, Neil Cameron, Paul Pacey (Beauly Angling Club), Alastair Campbell (Clerk)



## MINUTES

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ITEM	ACTION OWNER
<b>1.0 Apologies</b>	
1.1 Apologies were received from George Purdie, Nick Jackson, Michael Spencer-Nairn.	
<b>2.0 Minutes of Board meeting held 18 June 2019</b>	
2.1 The minutes of the Board meeting held on 18 June 2019 were approved by those present and confirmed for publication.	CLERK
<b>3.0 Matters arising</b>	
3.1 The Clerk confirmed he had received updated register of interest sheets from some Board members but not all. The Clerk to recirculate to those not yet replied.	CLERK
3.2 Neil Cameron confirmed that Chris Conroy was still available to assist with preparation of an updated fisheries management plan, notwithstanding the changes in respect of Ness and Beauly Fisheries Trust (see below).	NBFT
3.3 In respect of item 4.2 of the previous minutes, the Clerk confirmed he had received a response from the River Glass Syndicate concerning bailiffing costs, which were stated at £[REDACTED].	
3.4 In respect of item 5.1 of the previous minute, the Jock Miller confirmed he had received no reply to his letter to SSE concerning the problems of very low spring flows in recent years.	
3.5 In respect of item 6.7 of the previous minute (request of results from Marine Scotland tagging programme), it was confirmed that this item remains outstanding.	CLERK
3.6 In respect of item 6.4 of the previous minute and a query from Paul Pacey, it was confirmed that the Angling Club should contact Chris Conroy in respect of collection of scale samples in the short term, until such time as clarification on the future of the Trust was obtained.	
<b>4.0 Board member co-option</b>	
4.1 Jock Miller confirmed that he had spoken to Simon Lovat, who was willing to be co-opted as a representative of lower proprietors until the next triennial election. The Board members present confirmed this proposal.	CHAIR/CLERK

## 5.0 Future of Ness and Beaulieu Fisheries Trust

- 5.1 Jock Miller reported that at a recent Trust meeting it had been agreed that the Trust would be put into an initial period of temporary abeyance and that no staff recruitment would be pursued at present. Further consultation will take place with the Trust's stakeholders concerning future direction. Board members present then queried who the stakeholders were; this was not entirely clear, but it was confirmed that the Trust had requested the Board consult with proprietors on this matter.
- 5.2 It was noted that the Ness DSFB might well discuss the topic at their forthcoming Board meeting on 10 September and until their views on the future of the Trust were known, there was little point in conducting wider consultation.
- 5.3 The Board then discussed potential options in the event that Ness and Beaulieu Fisheries Trust was to be wound up, including setting up an independent Beaulieu Fisheries Trust, or the Board employing additional staff over and above the proposed fisheries officer previously approved in principle. It was queried whether the Beaulieu Board should be directly employing a biologist, or whether scientific support could adequately be provided through third party contracts.
- 5.4 Neil Cameron expressed the view that a directly employed scientist was critically important not only for providing credible responses to consultation requests on proposed works in the river environment, but also as he believed SSE would look for the direct engagement of a biologist as part and parcel of a well-run River Board.
- 5.5 Paul Pacey stated that the emphasis should be on practical river management rather than pure science.
- 5.6 Frank Spencer-Nairn suggested there was still greater benefit in pursuing a joint Trust with the Ness DSFB from the perspective of economies of scale. He also stated that the original perceived benefit of a Trust still remained, that it was potentially independent of any statutory changes to the Board's remit that might come forward in future.
- 5.7 Following discussion, the Board agreed that their preferred way forward, in order of preference was:
- To continue with the Ness and Beaulieu Fisheries Trust under independent directorship
  - To consider setting up a Beaulieu Fisheries Trust
  - For the Board to undertake all matters directly, employing all staff as required and also outsourcing any contracts that could not be fulfilled in-house.
- 5.8 It was agreed that the Chair or Clerk should write to the Ness DSFB confirming the Beaulieu DSFB's position on the above and that as soon as possible proprietors should be informed of currently developments, although noting it was important the Board had a clear plan to propose to proprietors. **CLERK / CHAIR**
- 5.9 Frank Spencer-Nairn then proposed a vote of thanks to Neil Cameron for his time and efforts over a number of years in chairing the Ness and Beaulieu Fisheries Trust.

## **6.0 SSE funding / Fisheries Officer recruitment**

- 6.1 Further to discussions held at the previous Board meeting, an example job description was circulated by the Clerk. It was recommended that this should specifically mention the requirement to follow unsocial hours from time to time. **CLERK**
- 6.2 It was agreed that adverts should be placed for recruitment towards the end of September, beginning October. **CLERK**
- 6.3 It was agreed that an interview panel for recruitment should comprise the Chairman, Frank Spencer-Nairn, along with the Clerk.

## **7.0 Insurance renewal**

- 7.1 The Clerk presented details of a proposed renewal of the Board's Trustee indemnity and public liability insurance policies on the same premium as the previous year. The Board confirmed that they were content for this to be renewed through the current brokers Lycetts. **CLERK**

## **8.0 Any other business**

- 8.1 Jock Miller confirmed that he would be attending a meeting with Fishery Management Scotland in the next week and would specifically raise with Brian Davidson the potential options for future provision of scientific and fisheries management functions, in the event that this could not be pursued through Ness and Beaulieu Fisheries Trust.
- 8.2 Frank Spencer-Nairn reminded the members present that it was proposed the Beaulieu District be awarded Grade 1 conservation status once again for the 2020 season. It was agreed that a response should be submitted on behalf of the Board confirming agreement to this. **CLERK**
- 8.3 Paul Pacey reported some concerns within the Beaulieu Angling Club over any potential conflict that might arise should a substantial donation be made from SSE to the Board, in the event that any future conflict might arise over the impact of hydro schemes on river system. Jock Miller responded that, notwithstanding such issues could potentially arise, it was undoubtedly best for the two organisations to try to work together as that approach was certain to achieve far better outcome in tackling any concerns, than conflict. Frank Spencer-Nairn also commented that in the event of any significant issues arising, SEPA was the statutory undertaker in respect of SSE's hydro schemes.
- 8.4 In response to a query, the Clerk confirmed that obtaining accurate and regular up to date dam counts remained a problem, not helped by the loss of staff at Ness and Beaulieu Fisheries Trust to undertake any download and analysis.
- 8.5 Jock Miller asked Neil Cameron whether, in light of his resignation as Chair of Ness and Beaulieu Fisheries Trust, whether he was willing to continue on the Board as a co-optee. He confirmed that he was willing to do so many Board members present expressed their gratitude for this.

## **9.0 Date of next meeting**

- 9.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 5 December 2019 at 10.00am.