

Subject: Beaully DSFB Board meeting  
 Date: 30 March 2022  
 Location: Video Conference  
 Present: Jock Miller (JM); Tom Waring (TW); Victoria Rotheroe (VR);  
 Frank Spencer-Nairn (FSN); Michael Spencer-Nairn (MSN);  
 Neil Cameron (NC);  
 In attendance: Ruth Watts, Senior Biologist (RW); Alastair Campbell, Clerk  
 (AC)

## MINUTES

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ITEM	ACTION OWNER
<b>1.0 Apologies</b>	
1.1 Apologies were received from George Purdie and Jim Braithwaite.	
<b>2.0 Approval of Minutes of Board Meetings – 8 December 2021 and 1 February 2022</b>	
2.1 The Minutes of the Board meetings held on 8 December 2021 and 1 February 2022 were agreed as an accurate record and approved by those present.	
<b>3.0 Matters arising</b>	
3.1 Minutes of 8 December 2021.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Item 2.2). Discussions with Ness DSFB regarding netting stations, Inner Moray Firth. <b>Remains outstanding.</b></li> <li>• (Item 7.2). Angling permits. <b>Remains outstanding.</b></li> <li>• (Item 7.3). Circulation of annual bailiff report. <b>Confirmed done.</b></li> <li>• (Item 5.4). Liaison over bailiffing of Middle Beaully. <b>Confirmed done.</b></li> <li>• (Item 8.2). Conservation policy amendments. <b>Remains outstanding.</b> RW to confirm to AC appropriate text relating to water temperature at 18°C.</li> </ul>	<p>RW/JM TW</p> <p>RW/AC</p>
3.2 Matters arising in relation to the Minutes of 1 February 2022.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Item 2.3). Is showing of annual levy. AC confirmed that the first tranche of proprietor assessments would be issued in April.</li> <li>• (Item 3.5). Specification and quotes for works to Corff Buildings. <b>Confirmed done.</b></li> </ul>	<p>AC</p>
<b>4.0 Register of Interest</b>	
4.1 There were no declarations made by Board members in respect of the items on the meeting agenda.	
<b>5.0 Financial report year to date</b>	
5.1 The Clerk had circulated a copy of the Board's management account as at 28 February 2022. It was noted that the Board's cash reserves as at 28 February stood at £75,0471.	

- 5.2 TW enquired if there was further update on the apparent overspend relating to vehicles in the 2021 management accounts. AC to obtain a breakdown of this sum. **AC**
- 6.0 Senior Biologist's report**
- 6.1 RW confirmed that, following a formal tender process, Bob Smart had been reappointed as Seasonal Bailiff for the 2022 season. RW also confirmed that Louise Senior had been taken on as a Fisheries Biologist Trainee on a short-term contract running for three months and funded by NatureScot.
- 6.1.1 RW reported that A Skinner had reviewed the operational basis for bailiff patrols and that a revised operational programme would be instigated this season. The programme needs adequately to cover the catchment and should focus on known sensitive areas in as efficient a manner as possible, whilst not overly requiring the Board's staff to work excess hours.
- 6.1.2 Bob Smart's mobile number to be noted on the Board's website. **RW/AC**
- 6.2 Fisheries Management Plan
- 6.2.1 A draft updated Fisheries Management Plan had been circulated to the Board for discussion. It was noted that a lot of work had gone into preparing this.
- 6.2.2 NC noted the aims and objectives focused on salmon and sea trout only. RW confirmed this is where the Board's statutory remit lies though where other wider benefits could be derived, these should be considered.
- 6.2.3 Board members had no further comments on the draft plan. RW reported there is a possibility (though unconfirmed) of funding through Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS) for updating District Fishery Boards' management plans. It was agreed to ascertain more information about potential funding prior to finalising the Fisheries Management Plan, but that the draft plan should be circulated to proprietors. **RW**
- 6.3 A written Biologist's report had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting. This was taken as read, however RW commented on a number of points.
- 6.4 RW reported that Marine Scotland Science was not funding the National Electrofishing Programme for Scotland (NEPS) in 2022. FMS is seeking to identify alternative projects that might enable funding to be distributed to Boards. In the meantime, the £15,000 income budgeted for NEPS will not happen. This may have an impact on the Board's ability to recruit seasonal contract staff as originally been planned. As an alternative, RW is investigating the possibility of using student interns from UHI or volunteers.
- 6.5 RW commented on the 2021 Electrofishing Report, now available on the Board's website. This highlighted questions about the hydro-morphology of the Rivers Cannich and Affric. Future investigation may be required on the effect of Mullardoch and Beinn A Mheadhoin dams on hydro-morphology. This to be discussed with SSE. **RW**
- 6.6 RW had circulated an updated action plan. Highlighted points were the proposal to undertake an oral history project using Louise Senior; proposed hydro-morphology surveys, potentially using drones and the potential for limited electrofishing surveys given the loss of NEPS funding. Any Board member with comments on the updated action plan to feed those back to RW as soon as possible. **ALL**

6.7 The input of Board staff to clearance of potential barriers to fish in tributary burns was discussed. RW to establish initial capacity amongst local proprietors and landowners to provide staff to assist with clearance. RW

## **7.0 Bailiff report**

7.1 An updated bailiff's report had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

7.2 RW noted that the river had been fairly quiet in the early part of the year. NC commented that by contrast the Ness bailiffs had found it busy with a number of incidents, including in the Firth.

7.3 TW enquired whether the bailiff team had sufficient equipment to undertake their work. Various items of potential equipment were discussed, along with the potential for sharing equipment such as drones with neighbouring Boards. NC stated that the cost/benefit of any expenditure should be assessed, based upon the likelihood of it assisting in preventing or apprehending poaching. RW to discuss with AS and the Cromarty and Ness District Fishery Boards. RW

## **8.0 Report on SSE liaison meeting – 22 March 2022**

8.1 JM gave a brief update on matters discussed at the above meeting.

8.2 SSE stated they were currently undertaking night time releases of water to enable kelts to pass the dams, with three such releases undertaken up to 22 March.

8.3 SSE had confirmed that the problem with the dam gates had been fixed in January and that the fish counter software was to be updated in the next month. SSE had also confirmed they would be trialling their latest artificial intelligence (AI) programme at Kilmorack Dam. This programme used images of fish to assess size and predict amongst other things egg deposition, as well as improving overall counting.

8.4 The smolt season protocol had been updated for 2022 in consultation with RW.

8.5 Further works are to be undertaken to the Mullardoch to Beinn A Mheadhoin tunnel in September to November 2022. This will result in more natural flows within the Rivers Cannich and Affric during this period.

8.6 Concerns raised by River Glass proprietors about low flows had been raised. SSE was not willing to amend generation patterns purely to accommodate angling interests and it was thought there was little further could be done on this matter.

8.7 JM reported that Alastair Stephens was retiring from SSE at the end of March 2022 after many years' involvement.

8.8 RW noted that the schedule to SSE's CAR licence still stated a minimum of two fish lifts per day, although SSE had now programmed for three programmes. It was questioned whether the CAR licence schedule required to be changed. MSN thought it important to verify that three passes was better than two and therefore that this should be monitored for a further two seasons before seeking formal changes to the CAR licence. It was agreed to defer matters meantime.

## **9.0 Office accommodation – Corff Building**

- 9.1 Further to the email exchanges of 24 March, the Board confirmed the instruction for TW to proceed with arranging works to the Corff Building, capped at £10,000 as detailed in the Corff Building tender document circulated by email. **TW**
- 9.2 The Board agreed that it was in order for the Lower Beaulieu Syndicate to instruct Bidwells to prepare a License to Occupy Agreement, with costs to be shared between the parties. **AC**
- 10.0 Any other business**
- 10.1 The Board approved the appointment of A9 Accountancy Ltd to undertake an independent examination of the Board's accounts and preparation of final year end accounts. **AC**
- 11.0 Date of next meeting**
- 11.1 It was confirmed the next Board meeting would be held on 9 June 2022, along with the Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors. Time and venue to be confirmed. **JM/AC**