

Subject: Beaully DSFB Board meeting
Date: 28 March 2023
Location: Elm House, Cradlehall, Inverness & by video conference
Present: Mike Spencer-Nairn (MSN); Victoria Rotheroe (VR); Frank Spencer-Nairn (FSN); Jim Braithwaite (JB); Tom Waring (TW); Gavin Haywood (GH); Ruth Watts (RW); Alastair Campbell (AC)



MINUTES

ITEM	ACTION OWNER
1.0 Apologies	
1.1 Apologies were received from Nick Jackson, Neil Cameron and Ali Skinner.	
2.0 Matters arising	
2.1 FSN noted that George Purdie had resigned from the Board following the recent sale of his fishings. AC confirmed that it had been agreed at the last triennial election that the Board should comprise of six elected proprietors and that a casual vacancy therefore now existed. ACTION – It was agreed that a note should be sent to all proprietors along with the formal notice of the annual meeting of qualified proprietors, with a request that any nominations to fill the casual vacancy should be submitted to the Clerk.	BIDWELLS
3.0 Register of members' interests	
3.1 No declarations of interest were made in respect of items on the agenda.	
4.0 Minute of the Board Meeting of 8 December 2022	
4.1 The minutes of the Board meeting of 8 December 2022 were approved as an accurate record. A final copy to be published on the Board's website.	BIDWELLS
5.0 Matters arising from the previous meeting	
5.1 It was confirmed that George Coleman had now passed the IFM bailiff exam and was in post. Independent of that it was noted that in future recruitment the need for disclosure checks should be reviewed in each case.	
5.2 FSN reported that a meeting of ghillies and bailiffs within the District had been held in recent weeks. Twelve ghillies / bailiffs had attended and it was proposed to repeat this each year.	
5.3 It was confirmed that staff appraisals had been undertaken.	
5.4 The Board's Facebook page was discussed. MSN felt the output could be broadened to generate more angling interest in the river and this was agreed in principle. Members were encouraged to send content to RW or MSN for publication and to put out the word amongst their angling contacts to do the same. GH also offered to act as a site administrator.	

5.5 AC reported that he had taken a telephone call from the local Assessor concerning revaluation for the Valuation Roll. It was anticipated that revaluation notices might be sent to proprietors soon. AC noted that revaluations may be subject to appeal by proprietors and that this could have implications for any assessment invoices raised by the Board. The Board agreed that for expedience assessment invoices for 2023 should be based on the extant Valuation Roll.

6.0 Senior Biologist's report

6.1 RW confirmed that the smolt trap had been installed at Grants pool and monitoring had started. Box traps had also been installed on the River Farrar.

6.2 RW referred to the comments in her written report concerning water temperature data for the last two years. The possibility of extending the season for operating the fish pass lifts had been raised with SSE, who were reluctant based on their interpretation of numbers of fish passing through the fish lifts late in the year.

6.3 RW highlighted that a storyboard format of the Fisheries Management Plan had been created and was available on the Marine Scotland website. A link had been placed on the Board's own website. Funding of £2,000 was available from Marine Scotland for the time incurred. **ACTION** – RW to circulate the link.

6.4 RW reported that six candidates had been interviewed for the post of fisheries management trainee but unfortunately none had accepted. A further month's advertising would be undertaken. If unsuccessful, RW noted that the Board may need a contractor to assist with electro-fishing, though this would be paid for from the funds received from NEPS.

6.5 RW highlighted some matters arising from the recent electro-fishing report:-

- The Bridgend burn near Beauly had been found to be very silted and also affected by issues from domestic septic tank outfalls. **ACTION** – RW to liaise with SEPA.
- There were issues in Tomich burn arising from cattle access to the banks. This had been discussed with the farmer but was difficult to resolve as a consequence of a lack of financial assistance being available for remedial work.

The Board agreed that both these items should be kept to the forefront of the priority list.

6.6 It was noted that Trees for Life and Forestry Land Scotland were applying for a licence to reintroduce beavers but that this would apply only above the Beinneavean dam in Glen Affric.

6.7 It was reported that Struy Estate had agreed to proceed with riparian woodland planting and that Braulen Estate was still considering this.

6.8 RW noted that the staff manual needed reviewed and that this would be done prior to the June Board meeting.

RW

6.9 It was agreed that a decision on a replacement vehicle should be made by RW and the operating group. It was noted that a 4-wheel drive vehicle was considered essential.

OPS GROUP

7.0 SSE Liaison Group report

7.1 A meeting of the SSE Liaison Group had taken place on 7 March.

7.2 SSE had reported that works to the Mullardoch tunnel were now complete.

7.3 SSE had reported that AI technology would be installed at Aigas Dam for this season's fish counting. Trials at Kilmorack and elsewhere in 2022 had shown that the technology works, but that some tweaks were required to the software to improve accuracy. The existing Mark 12 counters continued to operate at the same time, though are known to be inaccurate.

7.4 It was reported that the smolt passage protocol had been reviewed and agreed for 2023.

8.0 Financial Report

8.1 AC ran through a summary financial report for the year to 31 December 2022. Audited accounts will be made available for the annual meeting of qualified proprietors. It was noted that the Board made a small surplus over the course of 2022 notwithstanding the fact that proprietor assessments had been frozen that year.

9.0 Date of next meeting

9.1 It was agreed that the next Board meeting would be held immediately after the annual meeting of qualified proprietors to be held at 2.00pm on 8 June 2023. The likely venue to be Bidwells office in Inverness.