

Subject: Beaully DSFB Board meeting
Date: 8th December 2022
Location: An Lochran UHI & Video Conference
Present: M Spencer-Nairn (MSN); V Rotheroe (VR); F Spencer-Nairn (FSN); G Purdie (GP); N Cameron (NC); T Waring (TW); G Haywood (GH); J Braithwaite (JB)
In attendance: R Watts – Senior Biologist (RW); A Campbell – Clerk (AC); Alastair Skinner (AS)
Apologies: None

MINUTES

ITEM	ACTION OWNER
1.0 Register of interest	
1.1 There were no declarations made by Board members in respect of the items on the meeting agenda.	
2.0 Minutes of Board meeting 22nd September 2022	
2.1 Paragraph 7.1 - amend reference to e-fishing surveys under completion, not the final report.	CLERK
2.2 The minute of the previous meeting was otherwise approved.	CLERK
3.0 Matters arising	
3.1 <u>Seasonal Bailiff recruitment</u>	
3.1.1 It was confirmed two candidates had applied and interviews were due to be held in the following week.	
3.2 <u>NBFT Update</u>	
3.2.1 NC reported that the NBFT Board had met on 2 November. Current Board members are: - NC (Chair); FSN; TW; JB (three representing Beaully DSFB); G Mackenzie from Ness DSFB and M Stark from UHI Rivers & Lochs Institute.	
3.2.2 The Trust's current reserves are £25,000. £14,000 had previously been received from Ness Conservation Trust and was essentially ring-fenced for works on the Ness.	
3.2.3 **CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSION – NOT FOR INCLUSION IN PUBLIC MINUTE**	

3.3 Beaver Re-introduction Consultation update

3.3.1 RW confirmed she was awaiting a report from Trees for Life following their initial consultation. The Board had responded as previously discussed.

3.4 Operational Meetings review

3.4.1 Minutes from the operational meetings had been circulated. The operational group continues to meet every month to six weeks.

3.5 Staff Appraisals

3.5.1 It was agreed these should be undertaken. FSN / MSN to undertake these. 10th January scheduled.

FSN / MSN

3.6 Office Accommodation

3.6.1 A licence to occupy agreement with Beaully Fishing Syndicate now signed and in place and Board staff are now in occupation.

4.0 **BDSFB / SSE Liaison Group Meeting 8 November 2022**

4.1 The liaison group had met with SSE in person on 8th November. SSE had confirmed that a further contribution was budgeted for 2023, based on an inflationary increase from 2022. SSE was still aiming to put in place a 5-year agreement with all Boards to cover financial contributions and expected outcomes. A draft was not yet available.

4.2 SSE had committed to purchasing a 6ft smolt trap which would be leant to BDSFB and will be installed at Grants Pool (Upper Beaully) this spring, commencing 30 March. Box traps won't be in place on the Farrar as in 2022. It was agreed that one box trap on the Glass (Fasnakyle) and one on the Farrar would be installed for the first week of the smolt run to monitor the start of it.

4.3 Numbers of smolts found in the dam gate slots had been slightly higher in 2022 than 2021 (307 the highest recorded number at one time). RW would have preferred to see Phase 2 water flows commenced earlier and this had been raised with SSE. The information from a new smolt trap closer to the dams should assist with the accuracy of predicting smolt run timing through the dams.

4.4 SSE confirmed the new AI counters would be installed over winter at Aigas and Kilmorack and operational for the 2023 season (Beannacharan to be installed 2024).

4.5 The repair works to the Mullardoch – Beinn a Mheadhoin tunnel were reported complete. No other outages were anticipated by SSE Renewables at this stage.

4.6 JB commented that Beaully Angling Club (BAC) members were concerned about the high water experienced though much of the peak fishing season. This has meant much of the beat was unfishable.

5.0 **Review of 2022 Catches & Dam Counts**

- 5.1 AC confirmed reported catches to date were 876 salmon and 252 sea trout. Once all outstanding catches were reported, the total catch was anticipated to be around 1,000 salmon, which would be the best total catch for several years. It was noted that catches on the Glass had been low all summer and only picked up late season.
- 5.2 RW confirmed the most recent dam count figures received from SSE (provisional, unvalidated) were: - Kilmorack 4,013; Aigas 3,432; Beannachran 256. There were issues with data for some dates missing.

6.0 Financial Report & 2023 Budget / Proprietor Assessment

- 6.1 AC summarised the financial position as at 31 October 2022. Income was lower than budget due to the lack of NEPS income. Expenditure was also lower than budget as contract labour associated with NEPS had not been required. Net income / expenditure was some positive £16,757, slightly under budget by £1,249 for the year to date.
- 6.2 A draft budget for 2023 had been circulated prior to the meeting. RW & AS were asked to leave the meeting whilst staff salary reviews were discussed.
- 6.3 AC confirmed the proposed cost for secretarial services of the Clerk and book-keeping services was based on actual time incurred for 2022. Proposed revised terms of engagement had been forwarded to the Convener in October. AC was asked to look again at the element of time-based fee, as opposed to a fixed fee basis. **AC**
- 6.4 RW confirmed that an application had been made to Nature Scot for funding for a fisheries trainee for 6 months at a total of £9,000 funding.
- 6.5 RW confirmed a budget of £4,000 income was anticipated from FMS for production of a Fisheries Management Plan 'storyboard – an interactive on-line version of the FMP in GIS format.
- 6.6 It was noted the budget as drafted provided for an assessment on proprietors of £1.17 per £1 Net Annual Value (based on current NAV on Valuation Roll), a 4.6% increase on 2022. This was proposed by FSN & GP and approved by the Board. **AC**

7.0 Senior Biologist's report & Bailiff report

- 7.1 A written report had been circulated by RW prior to the meeting. This was taken as read. RW highlighted the following.
- 7.2 A meeting with Nature Scot was scheduled for 13/12 to discuss a trainee position, with candidates to be sought thereafter.
- 7.3 RW has been in discussions with Scottish Forestry concerning a co-operative grant application for several landowners for riparian planting in Glen Strathfarrar, Glen Cannich and at Cougie. It is anticipated that Trees for Life will be appointed to prepare grant applications and that there would be only limited further time input required by RW.
- 7.4 RW confirmed that SSE had been asked to extend fish lifts at Aigas beyond 30 November after fish were seen jumping below the dam. SSE had agreed to a further week of lifts to 9 December.
- 7.5 A written summary bailiff report for the year had been circulated prior to the meeting. AS confirmed a total of 1,106 patrols had been undertaken in the year, 6 warning letters issued,

33 verbal warnings given and one incident reported to police, who had decided not to report to the Procurator Fiscal due to lack of evidence.

8.0 2023 Conservation Policy

8.1 After discussion, the 2022 conservation policy was approved unchanged for 2023. It was noted that the policy already recommended treble hooks should not be used.

AC

9.0 AOCB

9.1 Date of next meeting: - 10.00am 16th March 2023

ALL