

Subject: Beaully DSFB Board meeting  
 Date: 8 June 2023  
 Location: Laxford House, Inverness & by video conference  
 Present: Frank Spencer-Nairn (FSN); Victoria Rotheroe (VR); Neil Cameron (NC); Mike Spencer-Nairn (MSN); Tom Waring (TW); Gavin Haywood (GH); Jim Braithwaite (JB);  
 In attendance: Rob Whitson (RWh); Ruth Watts (RW); Ali Skinner (AS); Alastair Campbell (AC); Sarah Farquhar (SF)

## MINUTES

ITEM	ACTION OWNER
<b>1.0 Apologies</b>	
1.1 Apologies were received from Nick Jackson.	
<b>2.0 Register of interest – agenda items</b>	
2.1 FSN declared an interest in respect of agenda Item 9 – proprietor 2023 assessment invoices, the outcome of which could potentially have a significant bearing on his proprietor assessment for 2023.	
<b>3.0 Minutes of last meeting</b>	
3.1 The minutes of the previous Board meeting held in March 2023 were proposed by FSN and TW and approved by those present. <u>Action</u> – Clerk to arrange for approved minutes to be published on Board’s website.	<b>CLERK</b>
<b>4.0 Casual vacancy on the Board</b>	
4.1 The Clerk reported that he had written to all proprietors to inform them of the casual vacancy on the Board arising from the resignation of George Purdie. It was confirmed that any nominations should be submitted to the Clerk by 1 August 2023. It was agreed that appointment of a new Board member would be discussed at the Board meeting in September 2023. It was noted that the appointment would be for the remaining term until the triennial elections in June 2024.	
<b>5.0 Matters arising</b>	
5.1 RW requested feedback on the draft staff manual by the middle of August.	<b>ALL</b>
5.2 In relation to Item 7.5 of the minutes of the Board meeting of March 2023, it was noted that no further survey is necessary but a general follow up with SEPA/housing estate developer is required.	<b>RW</b>
5.3 Seasonal Bailiff update. FSN confirmed that G Coleman had resigned as Seasonal Bailiff. It was agreed that attempts should be made to fill the vacancy as soon as possible. It was noted that should a qualified bailiff not be available, it may be necessary to appoint an unwarranted river watcher. <u>Action</u> - it was agreed that TW would take the lead on recruitment, liaising with AS and AC as required.	<b>TW/AS/AC</b>

- 5.4 Valuation Roll update. The Clerk confirmed that the valuation notices had been sent to all proprietors by the Local Assessor in March 2023. As a consequence of this the total valuation roll for the fishery district had increased marginally from £68,050 to £71,100. It was noted that the revised figures may be subject to appeal by individual proprietors. Action - following discussion, the Board requested that the Clerk contact the Assessor to enquire whether the average catch data for the district used in arriving at the revaluation showed an increase or decrease in catches for the previous revaluation and also to enquire whether catch returns had been submitted by all proprietors.

CLERK

FSN

## 6.0 Senior Biologist and Bailiff's report

- 6.1 Bailiff's report – AS referred to the summary of activity over the last year provided within the Board's Annual Report. He confirmed that he had been in touch with Marine Scotland with a view to organising joint patrols of the Firth again in 2023. These patrols would also be undertaken in liaison with Police Scotland.
- 6.2 RW referred to the written report that had been circulated to Board members prior to the meeting.
- 6.3 In reference to the recent smolt monitoring that had been undertaken and as detailed in the written report, RW confirmed that the numbers of smolts captured in the trap at Grants Pool had been low, but that the results had still given an indication of run timing. The box traps at the River Farrar and at Fasnakyle had indicated the run was slightly later on the Farrar in 2023 compared to 2022, but very similar on the Glass. Indications were also that there was around two weeks difference in the run timing between the top and bottom of the catchment. Based on this it was estimated that smolts might not arrive at Kilmorack Dam until late May, early June and that it may be worth requesting an extension to the smolt protocol programme from SSE in 2024. Action – RW to raise this with SSE.
- 6.4 RW proposed that, despite a considerable effort required and the low numbers this year of smolt trapping, three consecutive years on the middle Beaully will ascertain a pattern. An alternative site for the smolt trap had been identified at the Upper Beaully fishing hut. It was suggested that comparative smolt timing data for the Conon and Ness catchments should be sought in order to establish any similarity as, if confirmed, this could be used in the longer term to confirm run timing on the Beaully,. Action – RW to request data from Conon/Ness.
- 6.5 RW confirmed that Marine Scotland Science had stated that the National Electro-Fishing Programme (NEPS) was now happening. However as an intern trainee had not been recruited there were potential issues with staff capacity to deliver this contract. It was noted that external contracts maybe required and RW had already spoken to Ness DSFB to ascertain if they could assist.
- 6.6 RW reported recent issues with communication responses by SSE, in particular in relation to smolt numbers within the dam gate slots and access for Board staff to the dams to check on this.

RW

RW

## **7.0 Financial report – year to date**

7.1 AC apologised that, for technical reasons, it had not been possible to circulate a printed income and expenditure report prior to the meeting. He confirmed that income year to date was considerably below budget due to proprietor assessment invoices still to be raised and income still awaited from SSE, however this would catch up shortly. He confirmed that expenditure year to date was broadly in line with budget.

## **8.0 Proprietor assessment invoices 2023**

8.1 The Clerk referred to the discussion at the previous Board meeting concerning the basis for calculating the individual proprietor assessments for 2023, taking into account the revaluation referred to above. He noted that the wording of the 2003 Act suggested that the invoices had to be based upon the Valuation Roll extant at the time they were raised. However on discussion with other Boards, it had transpired that different approaches were taken by different Boards elsewhere, with one Board raising invoices based upon the previous Valuation Roll existing at the time the budget for the year was set and another Board raising invoices using any new revaluation and then making subsequent adjustments if necessary in the following financial year. Following discussion, the Board agreed to continue with invoices in 2023 based upon the older Valuation Roll entries as had been extant at the time the 2023 budget was set.

**CLERK**

## **9.0 Any other business**

9.1 There was no further business.

## **10.0 Date of next meeting**

10.1 It was confirmed that the next meeting of the Board would be held on Thursday 28 September 2023 at 2.00pm.