

Beaully District Fishery Board – Minutes of Board Meeting

Date: 6th March 2025

Location: Bidwells, Ness Meeting Room/By Microsoft Teams

Attendees: Alastair Campbell (AC), Charles McAndrew via Teams (CM), Eugenie Haniel via Teams (EH), Donald Fraser (DF), Jim Braithwaite (JB), Ruth Watts (RW), Ali Skinner (AS), Victoria Rothroe via Teams (VR), Hamish Hope (HH).

1 Apologies

Tom Waring was unable to attend.

2 Minutes of Board Meeting 10 December 2024

VR needs to be added to attendees.

Wording in Section 5 needs to be amended.

No other matters raised and minutes approved.

Action: HH to make amendments and finalise minutes.

3 Senior Biologist Report

3.1 Seal Licence

Seal licence submitted but would likely only apply for the dates 1st January to 31st March 2026. It is thought that the seal issue would remain outwith these dates, more specifically in April and the autumn. AC asked if there is anything further we can do regarding dates but there isn't for the 2026 season.

Additional marksmen training should be available this year.

Results of application expected to be heard by mid-April.

3.2 Conservation Policy

Gordon Armstrong has permission to utilise the bird licence. AS raised the fact that more birds are seen at the Glass than Beaully.

RW has sent 3 quote requests for hydromorphology.

Actions: HH to speak with Mike Spencer Nairn regarding the used of the bird licence for 2026.

3.3 Catch & Release

FMS are pushing for 100% catch and release. The updated catch and release policy was agreed. FMS guidance on catch and release is already displayed in all fishing huts.

Actions: HH/RW to update the policy and upload to the website and share with all proprietors.

3.4 Monitoring Strategy

RW provided an update on monitoring methods as per the Senior Biologist Report.

Smolt monitoring is planned for a 2.5 week period to see if improvements to trap efficiency can be made. This will guide whether a PIT tagging or acoustic tracking study can be carried out in 2026 or 2027.

There are now bigger AI harddrives at Aigas and Kilmorack dams. The Aigas count is missing 400 hours of video and processing is on hold until Ross Glover at SSE has been replaced.

RW awaiting data from Marine Directorate before continuing with electro-fishing report.

Drone flyovers downstream of Kilmorack dam and below Beannacharan dam are planned for early 2025 to assess sediment and redd distribution ahead of any improvements to sediment management.

Actions: RW to continue work on electrofishing report.

4 Bailiff Report

Reece Paton starting as seasonal bailiff on 1st April 2025. The Board will keep the requirement of a seasonal bailiff for future years under review.

AS noted the spawning of fish at Teannasie was at a level he had never seen which may explain the dam account difference.

A pre-smolt run check of burns was carried out.

5 SSE

There is no update regarding a replacement for Ross Glover at SSE.

RW said we need to have a process in place to allow the Board staff to act as a contractor for SSEN. AC confirmed that additional contract work would not affect SSEs contribution.

RW has met with SSE regarding adherence to the smolt protocol and they've agreed to provide some one off information. If the Board are to do a smolt survival study, SSE will need to provide additional information.

JB raised that the angling club may make a complaint to SSE regarding flows. AC suggests any complaints should be made through the Board and discussed with SSE.

There have been various issues with SSE not fulfilling some of their duties. Evidence is required to make a justified case to SSE or to have SEPA involvement. Any future agreement will supersede the 50 year historic agreement with SSE.

It was highlighted that SSE are still doing many positives and the main concern is lack of engagement.

Action: RW/HH to work on list to discuss with Ross Glover's replacement to improve relationship. If issues are not resolved, evidence is to be collated and taken to higher level staff within SSE.

6 2025 Budget

2025 is to be a weak year. A 0% increase in proprietor levies were agreed for the first payment of 2025, if required the second payment will be reviewed and could be increased.

Action: Continue monitoring of budget to see if an levy increase will be required in the latter half of 2025.

7 Operational Matters

7.1 A new truck has been ordered. Roof racks still required for the van.

Action: HH to speak with Arnold Clark about roof rack.

7.2 Bell Ingram are now the bookkeepers in place.

8 Revised Board Priorities

RW has updated the board priorities in the FMP. FMP is to be edited to show all changed.

Stocking to be listed as something to keep under consideration.

We need more data to see if a trial stock augmentation programme is justifiable/licensable.

Action: RW to update FMP.

9 AOCB

The website will be updated over time.

There will be a Board visit to the Orrin on 20th May 2025 for those who can attend.

The Board approved £360 of the budget to be allocated to printing 20 copies of the Oral History Project by Louise Senior. A copy will be provided to all participants, one to the library and one to archive.

Action: HH to check how many visits the website gets.

RW to arrange the printing of the Oral History Project