

**MINUTES of the MEETING of the NORTHERN DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD held on  
TUESDAY 12th MAY 2015 at 2.30PM at the BETTYHILL HOTEL**

**Present:** Mr Toby Ward (Convener)  
The Hon G Lopes  
Mr J Gray  
Lord Iliffe  
Mr S Green (Mandate - Mr M Stone)  
Mrs A Nicholson (Mandate - Mr A Nicholson)

Mr P Gwyn  
Mr J MacKay

**In attendance:** Mr D Hurst-Brown  
Mrs S Lopes  
Mr D Buchan  
Mr J Mason  
Mr M Heeps  
Mr P Bakker  
Mr A Laing (Chairman, ASFB)  
Dr K Williams (Director, Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries)  
Mrs A MacAuslan (Clerk)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr F Drummond, Mr D Lindsay, Mr M Stone, Mr A Nicholson, Mr P Butterworth. Mr V Hackel had hoped to attend the meeting via Skype however it had not been possible to connect therefore his apologies were noted.

**2. BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

The Convenor confirmed that at the Annual Public Meeting held immediately prior this Meeting, he had duly been appointed as Chairman of the Northern District Salmon Fishery Board and Mrs Alexa MacAuslan had duly been appointed as Clerk to the Northern District Salmon Fishery Board.

The Convenor proposed that Mr D Hurst-Brown be appointed as a Board Member to represent the interests of the Halladale River. Lord Iliffe advised that the Board was technically full with the number of Upper and Lower Proprietors however Mr Hurst-Brown could become a co-opted member of the Board if approved. This was proposed by Mr P Gwyn and seconded by The Hon G Lopes.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No adjustments were required to the existing members declarations of interest. The Clerk undertook to circulate a declaration of interest form to Mr Hurst-Brown to complete.

4. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 23rd SEPTEMBER 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd September 2014 were confirmed as an accurate record, having previously been approved by the Board via email following the September 2014 meeting.

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Clerk confirmed that all action points agreed at the meeting on 23rd September 2014 had been completed. There were no further matters arising.

6. **NORTH COAST PATROLS AND BAILIFF LIAISON GROUP**

Mr M Heeps, Superintendent for the River Naver, provided the Board with a verbal update on the Coastal Patrols and Liaison Group.

There has been one coastal patrol using a rib carried out to date this year.

The Bailiff Liaison Group met at the end of March 2015 prior to the commencement of the Coastal Patrol Programme on 1st April. The Group has representation of Bailiffs from the Rivers Naver, Halladale, Kinloch and Borgie and one of its key aims is to facilitate the flow of information between members and also with Police Scotland.

All Bailiffs have been issued with blank Police Scotland Intelligence Report Forms for completion as applicable. These will then be submitted to M Heeps before being submitted to the local Wildlife Crime Officer. Coastal Boat Patrols and Water Bailiff Foot Patrols will all be logged with Police Scotland and an incident number generated, in case further assistance is required.

The Coastal Patrols will cover both the Western extremes (working in conjunction with H Montgomery) and the Eastern extremes (in conjunction with W Grant) this year. There are no formal foot patrols being carried out this year.

The Water Bailiffs will continue to keep in close contact with each other throughout the season, with each Bailiff organising their own river patrols, with co-ordination of joint patrols and information sharing carried out through M Heeps.

7. **FLOW COUNTRY RIVERS TRUST UPDATE**

Mrs S Lopes provided the Board with a verbal update on the Flow Country Rivers Trust.

The FCRT has been operating for one year, chaired by Mr James Fleming and now has its own website ([www.fcrt.org](http://www.fcrt.org)).

Alan Youngson is the Trust's appointed scientific advisor and is liaising closely with the Pentland Salmon Initiative which has been set up to look at the impact of marine renewable energy on the migratory patterns of salmon. This includes a proposed smolt tagging project at Berriedale to further inform migratory patterns.

There was further discussion about tagging, and Mr J MacKay advised that he had proposed to the RACCE committee in February 2015 that every fish should be

tagged, however it was noted that this is a separate tagging proposal to the smolt tagging work proposed at Berriedale.

Mr M Heeps advised that Matt Brown, a PhD student at the University of Glasgow, is currently undertaking a smolt tagging project in Londonderry.

The Trust currently has funds of £22,000 thanks to the generosity of donors, including the NDSFB, and £5,000 was raised from a raffle earlier in the year. The Trust currently has 178 'Friends of FCRT'.

Further pieces of ongoing work being taken forward by the FCRT include liaison with the Peatlands Partnership with regards to drain blocking and deforestation projects. In addition, there is work being undertaken to record historical information and stories from local netmen.

Lord Iliffe noted that it was agreed that Board members would receive copies of the minutes of the FCRT meetings. The Clerk confirmed that the FCRT annual report had been emailed out to members in March 2015, and Mrs S Lopes agreed to arrange for FCRT meeting minutes to be circulated. Mrs S Lopes also noted that J Fleming is planning to produce FCRT newsletters and he is keen to involve contributions from the NDSFB and CDSFB therefore J Fleming should be contacted if anyone has any suggestions for content.

## **8. FINANCIAL REPORT**

### **8.1 Draft Accounts for Year Ending 31st December 2014**

The Clerk presented the draft accounts for the year ending 31st December 2014. There were no questions regarding these accounts.

### **8.2 Revised Budget for Year Ending 31st December 2015**

The Clerk presented the draft budget for the year ending 31st December 2015. Mr J Mackay raised the issue of whether the Board should be VAT registered. Mr Mackay suggested that the Coastal Patrol (via the River Naver Fisheries) could charge each proprietor individually in order that each proprietor could recover the VAT. A concern was raised that there was no statutory contract between individual proprietors and the Patrol which may cause a problem in the event of non-payment. Dr K Williams confirmed that some Fishery Boards and Trusts are VAT registered. The Clerk undertook to look into the process for the Board becoming VAT registered so that an informed decision could be made.

The rateable value for 2015 was discussed and it was agreed by the Board to reduce the assessment poundage from the proposed rate of 47p per RV pound to 38p per RV pound.

The Clerk confirmed that she would issue assessment invoices with this revised rate and would re-issue the revised draft budget for the year ending 31st December 2015.

### 8.3 **Statement of Income & Expenditure - Year to Date**

The Clerk presented the statement of income and expenditure from 1st January 2015 to 27th April 2015. There were no questions regarding this statement.

## 9. **PLANNING CONSULTATIONS/APPLICATIONS UPDATE**

The Clerk provided the Board with a verbal update on planning consultations which the Board have had input to since the meeting in September 2014.

### *Strathy South Wind farm Proposal*

Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) applied for planning consent to Scottish Ministers under S.36 of the Electricity Act for 77 turbine at Strathy South in 2007. They submitted an addendum to their application in July 2013 to reduce the turbines to 47. The Highland Council rejected the application in June 2014. This rejection has led to a public enquiry. The application has since been reduced further to 39 x 135m high turbines.

Following a pre-examination hearing attended by Crispian Cook on behalf of the Board in January 2015, the Board submitted on 16th March 2015 a further written submission on the impacts of salmon and sea trout, with input from Alan Youngson. A further addendum to this submission was submitted by the Board on 6th May 2015, again with input from Alan Youngson, and the applicant and relevant bodies have until 22nd May 2015 to respond to this addendum.

Hearing sessions as part of the inquiry were held on 23rd and 24th April however an inquiry session into ornithological impacts has been postponed until 9th June 2015.

### *Strathy Wood Wind farm Proposal*

E-on is proposing to develop a wind farm near Strathy which would include 26 turbines with an installed capacity of 78 MW. As the proposed wind farm has a generating capacity of over 50 MW it falls under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and requires planning permission from the Scottish Government. After taking the advice of Alan Youngson the Board lodged an objection to the development with the Scottish Government Energy Consents and Deployment Unit and the Highland Council on the 6th February 2014.

In April 2015 Atmos Consulting (consultants for E-on) produced Supplementary Environmental Information and a draft Water Quality Management Plan, based on the concerns raised by the Board in February 2014. On the advice of Alan Youngson, the Board replied to Atmos Consulting confirming they were happy with the content of the supplementary environmental information.

## 10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### 10.1 *Electro-Fishing Survey Applications*

The Clerk reported that she had received applications from both the River Naver and the River Halladale to undertake electro-fishing surveys in 2015. Consent was duly given by the Board to both of these applications, subject to consulting with SNH where applicable in respect of the applications impacting upon SAC's.

10.2 *Introduction of Youngstock*

The Clerk reported that she had received applications from both the River Halladale and the River Borgie to introduce Youngstock. Consent was duly given by the Board to both of these applications, subject to consulting with SNH where applicable in respect of the applications impacting upon SAC's.

10.3 *Complaints Procedure*

The Clerk advised that the Board's Complaint Procedure requires to be reviewed on an annual basis. The complaints procedure has been amended to include updated contact information for the Clerk. With this change noted, the complaints procedure was approved and duly signed by the Chairman.

The Clerk advised that she would upload the revised procedure onto the NDSFB website.

10.4 *Banking Arrangements - Authorised Signatories*

The Clerk proposed that the banking mandate was changed to remove Crispian Cook as an authorised signatory and add herself to the account as an authorised signatory. She proposed that Mr J Mason remain as an authorised signatory. This proposal was approved by the Board and the Clerk undertook to complete the necessary paperwork.

10.5 *Wild Fisheries Review*

Mr J Mackay asked Mr A Laing for further information about the proposed licensed killing of salmon. It was agreed that this issue would be discussed in further detail out with the Board meeting when members of the Caithness DSFB, the Helmsdale DSFB and the Flow Country Rivers Trust would be joining the meeting to have a more general discussion regarding the Wild Fisheries Review.

10.6 *Data on Salmon Catches*

The Hon G Lopes raised the point that the Board does not report on the number of salmon caught within the Board's district. It was confirmed that this information is made available through Marine Scotland however the figures for the previous season are only released in around May the following year.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Qualified Proprietors and Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday 29th September 2015 at the Bettyhill Hotel. The Annual Meeting of the Qualified Proprietors will start at 2pm followed by the Board Meeting at about 2.30pm.

## **LIST OF ACTIONS ARISING FROM MEETING**

Issue a declaration of interest form to Mr D Hurst-Brown	ATM
Arrange for FCRT Meeting Minutes to be circulated to Board Members	S Lopes
Investigate advantages/disadvantages of Board becoming VAT registered	ATM
Issue 2015 assessment invoices	ATM
Revise and re-issue draft budget for year ending 31st December 2015	ATM
Upload revised Complaints Procedure onto NDSFB website	ATM
Complete Bank Mandate paperwork for changing signatories	ATM
Arrange venue for the next meeting	ATM