

Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board

Minutes of

Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors

Friday 6th November 2015, 9.30am

Kyle Fisheries Office, Ardgay

Present

Robbie Douglas Miller, Chair (RDM)
Nicky Griffiths (NG)
Alex Hunter (AH)
Calvert Stinton, KOSAA Co-optee (CS)
Ashe Windham, Co-optee (AW)

Apologies

John Green
Gary Gruber
Michael Hasson
Richard Sankey
N Forman Hardy, Glencalvie
Hamish McFarlane, Cornhill
Nin Vestey, Benmore
Anthony Watkins, SEPA

Absent

William Paterson
George Skinner

Attending

John Audsley, KoSDSFB
Philip Blowers, KoSDSFB
Audrey Campbell, KoSDSFB (AC)
Crispian Cook, NWDSFB (CC)
Richard Fyfe, SEPA (RF)
Iain Gollan, KoSDSFB
Alasdair Laing, ASFB (AL)
Jonathan Mason, Glencalvie (JM)
Finlay McCulloch, Braelangwell
Steven Mackenzie, KSFT (SM)
Alastair Stephen, SSE (AS)
John Wightman, NW Graesser Trustees (JW)
Keith Williams, Director (KW)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone present, noted apologies and introduced guests Alasdair Laing, Richard Fyfe, Crispian Cook and Alastair Stephen

Minutes of Meeting held September 2013 – Approval and Adoption

Minutes of the last meeting were approved without comment and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising

1. Discharged. Rod and fish counter data were at odds last season, the fish counter numbers being much better than the catch data. AS confirmed that this was the case in multiple counter areas.
2. Completed.
3. Seal management plan review is in progress. This is being led by Roger Knight, Spey Board. Unfortunately with WFR consultations taking up a great deal of his time, progress is slow.
4. Discharged.
5. Dependant on reviewed management plan.

ASFB – Wild Fisheries Reform Update

RDM introduced Alasdair Laing who attended the June 2015 Board meeting to discuss Wild Fisheries Reform. AL summarised the situation to date and the expected timeline of legislation and subsequent change. AL and Andrew Wallace, RAFTS Chair, are attending as many Board and Trust meetings as they can in order to inform and gather opinion during the WFR process. They are asking

organisations to give careful consideration as to how they will fit in with the proposed new fisheries structure. ASFB and RAFTS have strong representation on various stakeholder groups within the WFR process, AL was pleased to report that at the moment it is being driven by management not politics.

Some excellent work has been done by the NDSFB and LDSFB investigating a possible merger. During this process they have developed templates to evaluate best options, it is hoped these templates will shortly be available for other Boards to use. NSDFB and LDSFB calculations show a huge gap in funding which they have flagged up to the Scottish Government (SG).

Initial indications were that finance would be heavily centralised, however opinion now seems to be moving away from this. At the moment the levy rate is highly variable and it is anticipated that this may need to be standardised. Funding will be critical, particularly core activities and the proposed wider species remit. Rod licencing is also being considered.

RDM repeated that the Kyle Board are completely open to forming a new FMO in our area. The Board are currently developing their preferred option which will hopefully fit in with the wider plan.

RDM advised AL that the length of time the Board are given to respond to consultations is often woefully short and it is sometimes difficult to give a considered response within the timescale. AL accepts that this is an issue but the situation is improving. KW noted that general communication from ASFB/RAFTS has improved considerably.

RDM also voiced concern about the mechanics of the reform process. The Board are happy to embrace the new FMO structure but SG are giving no indication how practical issues of merging organisations, e.g. staffing, will be managed. RDM felt that finance and expertise should be made available to help Boards through this aspect of the process. It is also not clear how Trusts will fit within the new structure. Guidance would be helpful in order that Trusts can understand their options. It is also unclear how FMO's will integrate with Central Fisheries Unit and where RAFTS and ASFB will fit in the structure, if at all. RDM strongly felt that the lack of information and guidance from SG is disabling decision processes. More focus and leadership is required from SG.

AL assured the Board that these issues are recognised. Regarding leadership, ASFB feel that this is improving. SG have allowed Boards to lead the first part of the process but this will change in the next phase. ASFB and RAFTS are also planning their future within the new structure, however no decision can be made until draft legislation is published. Trusts cannot be affected by SG however some are heavily reliant on Boards for funding.

RDM is concerned about the dilution of proprietorial interests in the new FMO's. AL believes a mechanism will be found whereby the proprietors will have a large minority share. Other seats on FMO's will be available to local authority, SNH, SEPA etc. AS felt that SG were not giving proper consideration to involving industry such as SSE.

There was some discussion about geographical options for mergers; CC outlined the geography, function and plans of the NWDSFB. It is his hope that the national strategy will have a narrow focus, with broader ranges being decided at local level.

JW asked whether consideration is being given to the social aspect of wild fisheries. AL and RF confirmed that angling development for community benefit is high on the agenda.

RDM thanked AL for attending and for the support of ASFB.

Chairmans Report

RDM was pleased to report that the new office and Kyle Fisheries structure have improved co-ordination and communication. The Joint Management Group has proved extremely useful in resolving issues and providing guidance and support to KW.

Directors Report

A brief report was made available in Dropbox prior to the meeting. KW intends to produce a full annual report shortly in order to properly communicate the activities of the Board and Trust.

Adoption of Draft Accounts to Financial Year End 31st May 2015

Draft Accounts were adopted as accurate and signed by the Chair.

Elections

No co-options or resignations.

AOB

None proposed

Date of next Annual meeting of Qualified Proprietors – 4th November 2016

As November does not seem to suit a high number of proprietors AC will arrange a more suitable date.

Meeting Closed.

ACTION POINTS		
Who	Action	Completed By:
AC	Arrange new date for Annual Proprietor Meeting	As soon as possible