

Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board

Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors Minutes

Friday 4th November 2016, 9.30am

Kyle Fisheries Office, Ardgay

Present

Robbie Douglas Miller, Chair (RDM)
Richard Sankey (RS)
Alex Hunter (AH)
Calvert Stinton, KOSAA Co-optee (CS)
Ashe Windham, Co-optee (AW)
Michael Hasson (MH)

Absent

William Paterson
George Skinner

Apologies

John Green
Gary Gruber
Tom Inglis
Nicky Griffiths
N Forman Hardy
John Wightman
Steven Mackenzie
Michael Brown
Colin Gilmour

Attending

Michael Baird
Richard Fyfe, SEPA (RF)
James Vestey, Benmore
Keith Williams, Director (KW)
Jonathan Mason, Glencalvie (JM)
Finlay McCulloch, Braelangwell
Charles Allan, MSS (CA)
Alastair Stephen, SSE (AS)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone present and noted apologies.

Minutes of Meeting held 6th November 2015 – Approval and Adoption

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

Matters Arising

1. Discharged.

Chairmans Report

Overall 2016 had been a year dominated by politics with Brexit and ongoing wild fisheries reform dominating proceedings particular in relation to funding. There appeared to be little clarity forthcoming from the Scottish Government in relation to the direction of travel in terms of wild fisheries reform and particularly the formation of a central unit. Funding for both boards and trusts remains a fundamental concern given the levels of uncertainty. It was likely that ASFB and RAFTS would soon become a single body provisionally entitled Fishery Management Scotland.

The Chairman invited AS and RF to provide any additional thoughts they may have on the wild fisheries reform process to the meeting. AS stated that funding remained a major stumbling block with alternative sources of funding such as a development levy and grant in aid likely to be considered by the Scottish Government. He felt that it was vital that a central unit be set up first to guide the formation of prospective Fishery Management Organisations at a local level. RF noted that from SEPAs perspective maintaining positive relationships with fishery boards and trusts and

ensuring continuity was vital. SEPA had expressed this view to relevant parties when wild fisheries reform was originally mooted.

The Chairman thanked AS and RF for their input. In terms of the potential inclusion of the Kyle of Sutherland area in a future Fisheries Management Organisation (FMO), current focus was on a potential Brora, Fleet and Kyle FMO. Kyle Fisheries remains flexible in outlook towards the future and both the Board and Trust continue to endeavour to operate effectively. This will continue in the future albeit presently this was frustrated by the macro picture out with our control.

Directors Report

Review of Activities

An annual report on the activities of both the Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board and the Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust is available from the website for the 2015 calendar year as well as the *Kyle Lines* newsletter which provides regular updates on project activities.

Enforcement

The bulk of the Board's resources are expended on enforcement activities. There were a number of incidents in 2016 including the seizing of nets and continued issues related to rod and line fishing. One incident was reported to the police and additionally a number of warnings have been issued. The bailiff team continues to develop its skills and training remains a key part of the process of ensuring the efficiency of enforcement activities. Improved communication with police, particularly the wildlife crime officers, has been a key feature of 2016 to date

Hatchery

Hatchery use is currently restricted to limited stocking on the River Tirry using fish captured from the main stem of the River Shin. Salmon fry were stocked out in late spring 2016. The present aim is to introduce between 100,000-150,000 fry annually, although stocking practice remains under constant review. Advice was sought regarding hatchery practice in 2015 in order to maximise genetic diversity in the progeny of the collected broodstock.

Field Work

The operation of the rotary screw traps on the Upper Shin system met with mixed success. In excess of 7,000 smolts were captured in the Fiag trap which was the most recorded to date. The Tirry trap figures were very low in comparison to normal figures. A limited amount of electro-fishing surveys have been undertaken in the summer largely restricted to dealing with direct management issues. Actions under the *Pearls in Peril* project have also been delivered.

Assets

Reviews continue regarding the Board's assets, particularly in light of the wild fisheries reform process.

Future Activities

Effective enforcement will remain the core activity of the organisation. A thorough review of data requirements, particularly juvenile surveys will be undertaken over the winter months.

Adoption of Draft Accounts to Financial Year End 31st May 2016

The draft accounts were presented by the Chairman. He noted that there had been a modest surplus. JM asked if any money had been received by the Board due to participation in the Pearls in Peril Project. KW responded that a modest amount of income had been received from this source although it was less than had originally been anticipated at the start of the project due to changes in tasks undertaken. AS asked who purchased the ova and fry. KW responded that the only fry produced were on behalf of SSE. AS further questioned why the sum of money shown against sales of ova and fry was not the full amount of money provided by SSE. KW replied that it was likely an artefact of the historical method of presentation of money received based on the way VAT was charged. AW queried the rise in staff costs. KW responded that recruiting was still being undertaken in the 2015-16 financial year. RDM noted that the increase in expenditure had been budgeted for. The accounts were accepted by the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Elections

No co-options or resignations. A discussion took place as to the lack of attendance by netsmen. KW reported that he felt that the lack of attendance was largely as a result of the cessation of netting outside estuary limits as instigated by Marine Scotland. He further added that the Board had stressed in its representations to Government that the netsmen should be employed to catch fish for scientific research purposes in order to maintain the local knowledge required to operate the stations. It was agreed that KW would speak to William Patterson and George Skinner and also ascertain if attendance at a proportion of meetings was required in the appropriate governance procedures.

AOB

None proposed

Date of next Annual meeting of Qualified Proprietors

TBA

Meeting Closed.

ACTION POINTS				
Nº	Who	Action	Raised	Completed by:
1	KW	Arrange new date for Annual Proprietor Meeting	November 2016	As soon as possible
2	KW	Liaise with netsmen. Check procedures on meeting attendance.	November 2016	As soon as possible