

Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board

Ordinary Meeting Minutes

**Friday 26th September 2014
Kyle Fisheries Office, Ardgay**

Present

Robbie Douglas Miller, Chair (RDM)
John Green (JG)
Gary Gruber (GG)
Michael Hassan (MH)
Alex Hunter (AH)
Alistair Mathers, KOSAA Co-optee (AM)
William Paterson (WP)

Apologies

Nicky Griffiths
Richard Sankey

Attending

Charles Allan, MARLAB (CA)
Audrey Campbell, Administrator (AC)
Tom Inglis, KSFT (TI)
Hugh Mackenzie, KSDSFB (HM)
Steven Mackenzie, KSFT (SM)
Keith Williams, Director (KW)
John Woods, ASCT Trustee (JW)

Welcome

There being no other volunteers RDM was unanimously re-elected as Chair.
George Skinner was co-opted as a representative of the tenant netmen.
Alistair Mathers was co-opted as representative for the Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association.

As per the existing arrangement, the Trust will continue to send up to two Trustees to each board meeting as attendees.

Minutes of Meeting held 20th June 2014 – Approval and Adoption

Minutes were adopted as an accurate record of the last meeting and signed by RDM. No comments.

Action points

SM has asked KW for help to produce biosecurity advice posters for distribution. This will be done over the winter.

RDM noted that the Board are looking to AH to lead discussions with SSE on behalf of the Carron proprietors.

KW reported that there is the potential for sawbills to be shot in the estuary. Two bird counts have been carried out and KW will now co-ordinate an application, submitting count data and supporting information. If a licence to shoot is granted, the quota allocated is likely to be very low.

KW will prepare a plan for disposal of unnecessary equipment to be presented at the next JMG meeting. Board members agreed decisions on this will be delegated to the JMG.

KW & AC have now received a number of documents from Gordon Robertson and will establish an index of titles and documents over the winter months. This will be cross referenced with Jonathan Mason to establish if anything is missing.

KW has been in contact with SSE representatives regarding the Shin smolt issues and will now contact them to establish who will represent SSE in negotiations for Carron and Shin mitigation funding.

RDM again expressed the interest of the Shin proprietors to have the Board guide them through the RBMP process. KW has already put together a package of research covering the next 3 – 4 years which has been agreed in principle with SSE and SEPA. SSE has also agreed in principle to contribute funding and KW will now proceed with costings.

Declarations of Interest

New Board members are required to complete a Declaration of Interest form at the end of the meeting.

No amendments to current declarations noted. No declarations of interest in any agenda items declared.

Complaints

None received.

Health and Safety

No incidents reported.

Directors Report

The Directors report had already been discussed during the morning meeting. KW mentioned that the Grudie trap needs considerable work as detailed in Colin Carnie's report which has been made available to view in Dropbox. KW and HM will visit and risk assess the trap before deciding what additional H&S measures need to be put in place in order to continue to operate it. RDM requested that their recommendations be independently checked.

Forestry Commission Scotland are working very hard to extricate themselves and the Board from impossible tasks set in the Pearls in Peril project. If accepted by the Project Monitor, other tree planting options may be explored to include in the project using funds already secured.

Finance

RDM summarised the various income streams currently available to the Board. The current budget agreed at the June meeting is very prudent and should result in a surplus at the end of the financial year.

Although the budget is independent of the Netting Appeal, should the funds pledged not be honoured, the shortfall will have to be met by through the Board budget.

There was some discussion at yesterday's Trust meeting regarding the notional split of shared administrative and utility costs. At present the Trust are meeting all facilities costs. KW noted that at over the last few months much more time has being spent on Board activities than Trust. The Trust intends to have a full review of how costs are allocated early in the new year and the Board expect to refund the Trust for a proportion of their costs.

Nicky Griffiths has asked for a review of the timing of the assessment invoices. At present 50% of the annual amount is invoiced in June with the other 50% in September. NG had asked if it was possible to move the second invoice closer to the end of the year. RDM agreed this in principle as long as it did not create cash flow issues for the Board. KW agreed that, as a trial, the 2015/16 budget would be based on the assumption that the invoices would be sent June and November.

SSE – Proposed funding alterations

RDM suggested that he, Richard, Alex and Keith schedule a telephone meeting within the next month. AC will provide powwow details.

Netting Buyout Appeal Update

A brief update was posted in Dropbox prior to the meeting. The appeal is on schedule with the final payment of £83,000 due in September 2015.

Loch Shin Aquaculture Update

Recently it became apparent that the SSF Fish farm was being restocked despite the lack of planning permission and the Highland Council assuring the Board that the site had been mothballed. Highland Council were contacted and after investigation confirmed that the site had been restocked on the grounds that SSF 'had nowhere else to put the fish'. The EIA has now been issued and the Board have until the 15th October to respond. The board agreed that KW will now collate all available information, go through the EIA and highlight where we strongly disagree in the most scientifically robust manner. KW noted that Mark Coulson's work on genetic introgression has not been received, but he has been assured that he will have it in time for the response. KW will post the draft response in Dropbox as it progresses.

RDM asked Charles Allan to give an update on the escaped smolt work.

This season there were 371 smolts sent for analysis. 95% were confirmed as being of farmed origin, the other 5% being inconclusive. The Inspectorate assesses samples visually for condition, vaccine marks and stomach contents. Scales are then sent to the Freshwater Lab at Faskally and independently read by two staff. If both are in agreement the scale will be classed as either abnormal or wild. If they do not agree then they are classed as inconclusive. During FASMOP, Mark Coulson and Lucy Webster also examined escapees' genetics, which suggested that they were either Norwegian or Norwegian/Scottish crosses used by aquaculture.

CA confirmed that containment continues to be monitored and no significant issues have been raised. However it is recognised that whether or not there is an issue with genetic introgression, there is certainly an issue with escapees which will have an impact on habitat.

CA advised that there may be a decision to carry out further genetics work on Loch Shin if funding can be identified. CA feels there are positive signs that funding will be forthcoming and hopes to have a final decision before the end of the year.

CA asked if any other individual proprietors had stocked on Loch Shin or its tributaries, RDM confirmed that there were none.

CA will pass information about progress on sampling work to KW and RDM.

AOCB

AH had been approached by the Managing Director of FishPal, who wished to give a presentation to the Board. RDM felt that there was little scope locally for the type of service FishPal offers, however no one had any objection to listening to a short presentation at the March meeting. AH will advise him accordingly.

WP was delighted with the recent visit from the bailiff team to see his nets in action. He felt it was an excellent way to improve communication between netsmen and the Board. KW confirmed that the bailiffs had appreciated the invitation and felt it was a very valuable experience.

AM asked for clarification about how the netting buyout affects the KOSAA. He is very concerned about the future of the club and felt that unless there is flexibility in the lease of angling rights the club will fail. He was particularly concerned that the lease may be limited to a fixed time period, which would significantly affect the club's income.

RDM gave a categorical assurance that the Board does not wish to in any way disadvantage the KOSAA, rather it has a strong intention to help it improve. RDM suggested that AM discuss this more fully with Richard Sankey, who has been tasked with leading the buyout. RS is aware that there has been an unfortunate delay in getting to the stage of negotiating a lease with KOSAA but hopes to start this as soon as possible.

RDM referred back to the presentation by ASCT which was organised in order to help the Board decide where best to place the netting assets.

RDM summarised the three options:

- Set up a separate Trust to receive assets. This would involve significant cost and manpower.
- Pass the assets to the Kyle Trust. There is the potential that any changes made in the longer term could result in the nets being reactivated.
- Transfer rights to ASCT or similar organisation whose sole purpose is to preserve these assets.

It was suggested that the JMG should draft a proposal to be discussed at the March meeting. Meantime Board members should give this careful thought.

Date of Next Meeting

To be advised.

Meeting Closed

ACTION POINTS from this meeting			
	Who	Action	Completed By:
1	KW/SM	Produce biosecurity posters	March meeting
2	KW	Submit application to shoot sawbills	As soon as possible
3	KW	Prepare a plan for disposal of unnecessary equipment to be presented at the next JMG meeting.	Next JMG meeting
4	KW / AC	Establish index of titles	March meeting
5	KW	Contact SSE and establish who will represent them in Shin/Carron funding negotiations	As soon as possible
6	KW / HM	Risk assess the Grudie trap prior to seeking independent advice	As soon as possible
7	KW / AC	Prepare 2015-16 budget, taking into account revised assessment invoicing dates	March meeting
8	RDM/RS/KW /AH	Arrange telephone meeting to discuss Shin/Carron negotiations with SSE. AC provide PowWow details	Within a month
9	KW	Draft response to SSF EIA and make available in Dropbox. Submit response to Highland Council	15 th October
10	AH	Advise FishPal representative that he may give a short presentation at the March meeting if he wishes. Request that he confirm with AC	March meeting
11	KW/RDM/RS /TI (JMG)	Draft proposal regarding safekeeping of netting rights to be presented to the Board	March meeting