

## Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board

### Ordinary Meeting Draft Minutes

12<sup>th</sup> April 2017, 10.30am

#### Present

##### District Salmon Fishery Board

Keith Williams, (KW)  
George Skinner (GS)  
Richard Sankey (RS)  
John Green (JG)  
Ashe Windham (AW)  
Peter Routledge (PR)  
Michael Hasson (MH)  
Alex Hunter, by telephone link (AH)  
Nicky Griffiths (NG)

#### Public

Sandra Skinner (SS)  
William Thomson (WT)  
Charlie Brooke (CB)  
Michael Baird (MB)  
Nicholas Forman Hardy (NFH)  
Steven MacKenzie (SMK)

#### Apologies

Robbie Douglas Miller  
Tom Inglis  
Colin Gilmour  
William Patterson  
Richard Fyfe  
Charles Allan  
Stephen Gilchrist  
Gary Gruber

#### Absent

None

#### Welcome

RS acting as Chair in the absence of Robbie Douglas Miller opened the meeting and particularly welcomed Peter Routledge to the Board. He informed the meeting that Mr Routledge represented the Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association and replaced Calvert Stinton on the Board.

#### Minutes of Meeting 4<sup>th</sup> November 2016

The minutes were accepted without amendment.

#### Matters Arising/ Action Points

1. Contacting Atlantic Salmon Conservation Trust was no longer required following the Scottish Government's announcement that DSFBs were not now to be abolished.
2. A thorough review of governance procedures etc. was being undertaken and would be discussed as a full agenda item.
3. The sawbill licence template had been looked at by KW.
4. KW and RS were now looking at the issue of vehicle costings. RS explained that it was likely some capital would be used to resolve the vehicle situation as quickly as possible.
5. The repair of the ice house was ongoing.

6. PR said that the issue of members of the Kyle of Sutherland Angling Association registering for a boat number had been addressed via newsletters and at the AGM of the Association. KW and PR would continue to liaise to ensure any new system worked properly.
7. RS explained to the meeting that unfortunately one or two recalcitrant proprietors had yet to contribute to the netting buyout. MH explained that missives directed at a Cassley proprietor continue to be met with silence. KW and MH would continue to liaise on this matter.
8. The issue of a non-salmon proprietors list was no longer relevant.
9. KW informed the meeting that he had recently spoken to William Patterson regarding netting issues. It was understood that a meeting had been recently held between Marine Scotland Science and netting interests. It transpired that it was intended for research to take place at a limited number of locations on the Scottish Coast. SS added that it appeared that no final decision had taken place. KW noted that he had stated at a number of meetings that netting stations should be used for research purposes e.g. tracking and tagging as much as is possible.
10. It transpired that SSE now intends to replace the screens at the Shin tailrace with physical screens rather than electric ones.
11. No update regarding the genetic testing of putative farm escapees had been provided. KW felt that the present situation was intolerable. The Board had recently been consulted on the issue of smolt introductions by SSE into the River Shin without the genetic information being available. NG asked if it was difficult to tell wild/farmed smolts apart. KW confirmed that it was getting increasingly difficult. AW felt the situation SSE and the Board were being placed in was unsatisfactory. It was agreed that the matter would be considered by the Joint Management Group with a view to trying to obtain the information via a FOI request. AH suggested that an Environmental Information Regulations request may be a better route.
12. The date of the next meeting had been fixed.

### **Standard Items**

#### **Declarations of Interest in agenda items.**

None. It was noted that as a new member of the Board PR would be required to complete the appropriate paperwork for good governance purposes. In the first instance PR informed the meeting that he was a trustee of the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust.

#### **Complaints**

None

#### **Health and Safety**

KW noted that he had been slightly hurt in a recent vehicle accident but that this was not a notifiable incident.

#### **Wild Fisheries Reform**

RS updated the meeting on the recent developments in relation to the Scottish Government's wild fisheries reform programme. It had now been announced that District salmon fishery boards were not now to be abolished but would continue to operate. It was unclear as to what other legislative changes may take place.

KW noted that the process had considerably weakened the fisheries sector as a whole with personnel and skills lost by many organisations. The opportunity cost of the process to directors and members of fishery boards was very large.

PR noted that a considerable amount of information was available on the new Fishery Management Scotland website.

AH asked if communication with the Fleet aimed at exploring potential future links was continuing. RS confirmed that this was indeed the case.

### **Governance Policies**

KW informed the meeting that the policies were being reviewed by himself and Kathryn Bennet. Ultimately the aim was to separate general policies out from ones that needed constant review such as health and safety and those reflecting employment law. It was expected that the process would be complete by the June meeting. Policies would be placed in dropbox when this was completed.

### **NASCO Rod Catch Assessment Tool**

KW had undertaken the NASCO rod catch assessment procedure on the 2016 salmon catches. The autumn component of the catches (September) failed for the second time in three years. Investigations into the number of salmon killed in September showed that only six fish were killed. It was considered likely that the majority of those six would have been fish that would not have recovered from capture or were predator damaged. As such it was considered unlikely that compulsory catch and release measures would make a material difference to autumn fish survival. It was agreed that the conservation policy would be altered to include the recommendation that all salmon in September be returned. The situation would be kept under constant review.

### **Director's Report**

The Director's report had been made available prior to the meeting. RS asked the meeting if there were any questions regarding the report. PR asked if the new assessment valuations would be available in the near future. KW replied that he was in communication with the assessor and that a meeting was planned shortly. In particular a number of issues relating to the Kyle itself had been identified and needed to be resolved. RS asked if extra signage would be required in the Kyle as a result of the category three status and associated requirement to release all salmon east of Bonar Bridge. KW and PR would liaise on this matter.

### **Budget and Finance**

RS noted that a considerable surplus was now predicted for the 2016/17 financial year. This was as a result of payments received in support of the netting buyout and staff leaving. RS cautioned that some capital expenditure was likely to take place prior to the end of the financial year, however, as the vehicle situation needed to be resolved as quickly as possible. This was not currently shown in the predictions.

The proposed budget for 2017/18 was discussed. KW noted that it included a 2% increase for the bailiff team. AW asked if pay increases were included for other staff members. KW replied that pay rises had not been included at this stage as it was felt the salaries were competitive although the Joint Management Group would no doubt keep these under review. A seasonal bailiff salary had been included as extra help was needed in the summer particularly in light of the category three status. KW also noted that the assessment income was based on the present valuations and was subject to change when the District Assessor provided the new valuation. It was intended that the total assessment income for the 2017/18 financial year would be broadly in line with 2016/17 although individual amounts due from proprietors would certainly change. The budget was agreed.

SS asked if the assessments reflected the capital value of the rod and net fisheries. RS confirmed that this was the case to some extent. SS stated that the capital value of the net fisheries was under threat because of the restrictions on fishing put in place by the Scottish Government. GS supported this view. RS and KW sympathised with this situation and stated that the Board would support the netting interest in their representations to Government as much as possible. It was important, however, that the Board was kept apprised of any concerns from the netting interest. It was clear that discussions were taking place between the netting interest and Marine Scotland that the district salmon fishery boards were not involved with directly.

### **AOB**

None.

### **Next Meeting Date**

8<sup>th</sup> June

**Meeting Closed.**

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>				
	<b>Who</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Raised</b>	<b>Complete By:</b>
1	KW	Repair Ice House.	November 2016	June 2017
2	KW/PR	Finalise boat numbering system. Consider need for signage.	November 2016	June 2017
3	MH/KW	Continue to liaise with proprietors regarding outstanding netting buyout contribution.	November 2016	June 2017
4	KW	Send forms to PR to complete register of interests etc.	April 2017	June 2017
5	Joint Management Group	Consider options in relation to obtaining Loch Shin farmed salmon genetics.	April 2017	June 2017
6	KW	Liaise with district assessor regarding assessments.	April 2017	As soon as possible