

Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust
Minute of Ordinary Trustee Meeting

Friday 20th June 2014, 1.30pm
Invershin Hall, Invershin

Present

Robbie Douglas Miller, Chair (RDM)
Tom Inglis (TI)
Steven Mackenzie (SM)
Richard Sankey (RS)

Apologies

Michael Brown
Gregor Macleod

Attending

Keith Williams, Director (KW)
Audrey Campbell, Administrator (AC)

Welcome

The Chair welcomed those present and noted apologies. It was thought that Michael and Gregor may possibly prefer later meetings as the majority of previous Trust meetings have been held in the evening.

It was noted that all Trustees present had also been present at this morning's Board meeting and so had already discussed many points in detail.

Minutes of Meeting held 28th March 2014

Draft minutes were approved as accurate and signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising / Action Points

Action points were reviewed, the majority have been completed, but some cannot be addressed until the new office situation is resolved.

Directors Report

Much of the report had already been discussed at this morning's Board meeting.

Diebidale

A site meeting was held in conjunction with SEPA and RAFTS representatives in early April. A course of action was agreed and progress has started on a number of points to be completed by Kyle staff, including habitat and electrofishing surveys.

Smolt Trapping

This season's work is now complete, although there are always substantial operating costs, the repair and maintenance budget this year was largely unused. KW is negotiating with SSE with a view to them contributing to this project in the future. It was agreed that ownership of the project should remain with the Trust.

Contract Work

There are some opportunities to carry out contract survey work this summer on various developments in the catchment. It was agreed that this work should be bid for and carried out by the Trust, who should recompense the Board for any staff time or resources used.

A resources schedule should be developed which could be referred to in future. Figures charged for

contract work should be based on those recommended by RAFTS.

Carron Proprietor Group Meeting

KW felt that there is still some unease about the purchase of the office. Concerns were expressed that funds might be better spent elsewhere, particularly by those proprietors who donate funds regularly to the Trust. It was pointed out that contributors can restrict donations solely to activities they wish to support, should they choose to do so.

Budget / Finance / Fundraising

Again it was pointed out that the cash position is steadily dwindling and funding needs to be identified.

It is hoped that once the office is established it will become a focus for all activities; however sources of funding must be identified. RS suggested that a schedule of proprietors might be created to commit modest sums over an extended period of say 3 to 5 years. This would create a steadier stream of income. Membership should also be developed to bring in regular income.

Trustees need to be assured that any assets transferred from the Board as part of the restructuring review will not create any liability. For example SSE mitigation payments must cover the cost of operating and maintaining the hatchery and stocking activities.

KW will start evaluating costs of running the hatchery and identifying possible issues which may affect its future operation.

Governance

Discussed in detail at the earlier Board meeting. No further comments.

New Office

RS felt that the sellers handling of the process had been less than satisfactory. Planning issues which Alladale have failed to address have stalled the process.

Highland Council have requested that an architect and structural engineer visit the premises to assess whether basement work carried out without permission is both safe and compliant, prior to them issuing retrospective permission.

The Trustees can either wait for this to be dealt with before renegotiating the payment period prior to purchase and entry. Or purchase the property now at a reduced price and deal with the issue themselves. There is a small risk that the solution may cost more than the reduction in price, or that the Council may impose an enforcement notice on the property.

The Trustees felt that the risk was very small and agreed that further delay was unacceptable. RS will respond to the Alladale Trustees with a lower offer in order to gain an immediate sale and entry to the property. The Trust will then take responsibility for resolving the planning issue.

Netting Buyout Appeal Update

Discussed at this morning's Board meeting. No further comments.

Current/Ongoing Projects

Discussed earlier in the meeting as part of the Directors report. No further comments.

Wild Fisheries Review

Discussed at this morning's Board meeting. No additional comments.

Loch shin Aquaculture

Discussed at this morning's Board meeting. No additional comments.

AOB

Carnie Report – Grudie Trap

The report raises a number of serious issues to be addressed with the Grudie trap, which is currently the responsibility of the Board.

RS suggested that a detailed risk assessment be carried out on the structure prior to operation next season. Additional measures such as safety wires etc. could be implemented to ensure the safety of staff.

KW asked if the Board have an obligation to run the trap as part of mitigation measures. RDM felt that this was tied to the whole programme although RS was not convinced it is specified.

It was noted that proprietors do not necessarily want the hatchery, however until fish passage has been demonstrably improved, hatchery stocking must continue.

KW advised that Hugh Mackenzie took fin clips and scale samples from broodstock last year. This could be repeated again with the addition of samples from rod fisheries in order to assess the contribution of hatchery stock to the fisheries. The Fiag and Tirry could also be included in an assessment, particularly as PIT tagging is planned on both in 2015.

It was agreed that the Board cannot afford to ignore the problem and should assess their obligations, plan how to resolve the situation and detail associated costs. SSE should be consulted during this process. It is felt that any intermediate repair works would waste precious funds and merely perpetuate the problem.

Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in the evening on Thursday 24th September. RS tendered his apologies.

Meeting Closed.

ACTION POINTS – carried forward			
No	Who	Action	Completed by:
1	KW/AC	Set up procedure for regular audit of budget and bank accounts	Once established in new office
2	AC	Advise Navertech to reproduce Falls of Shin Information Boards – Providing photo of new office	Once established in new office
3	Trustees	Advise RDM if you wish to attend the September Board meeting	Before 25 th September
4	AC	Contact Andrew Graham Stewart re press release about new office	Once purchase complete

ACTION POINTS – from this meeting			
No	Who	Action	Completed By:
1	KW	Develop resources schedule	Next meeting
2	KW	Assess hatchery costs	Next meeting
3	RS	Respond to Alladale Trustees with revised offer	Immediate