

Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust

Ordinary Meeting Minutes

**Thursday 12th March 2015, 6.30pm
Kyle Fisheries Office, Ardgay**

Present

Robbie Douglas Miller, Chair (RDM)
Michael Brown (MB)
John Green (JG)
Tom Inglis (TI)
Steven Mackenzie (SM)
Gregor Macleod (GM)
Richard Sankey (RS)

Apologies

None

Attending

John Audsley, KSDSFB
Philip Blowers, KSDSFB
Audrey Campbell, KSDSFB
Mark Coulson, UHI
Iain Gollan, KSDSFB
Alex Hunter, Dounie Estate
Neil McInnes, Forestry Commission Scotland
Hugh Mackenzie, KSDSFB
David Rankin, Benmore Estate
Nin Vestey, Benmore Estate
Ashe Windham, Upper Oykel Proprietors
Keith Williams, KSDSFB

Welcome

RDM welcomed everyone to the first Trust meeting of 2015.

Presentation – Neil McInnes, FCS

Neil gave a short presentation to the Trustees, highlighting FCS areas for future conservation action and showing changes made to their operations in order to reduce environmental impact. RDM thanked Neil and noted now delighted the Trust are that FCS are recognising and addressing common problems of the past. KW has been in discussions with Neil regarding possible collaboration on projects within the catchment. Once the extent of possible action has been quantified, they will look at appropriate funders. The Trust are looking forward to engaging with FCS, and also to seeing their area land management plan for next year.

Presentation – Dr Mark Coulson, Rivers and Lochs Institute, UHI

Dr Coulson gave an overview of the AS³IG project, just getting underway, which will look at integrating genetics in assessment of salmon stocks. A confidential project brief was circulated to Trustees prior to the meeting. The project will be looking to Boards and Trusts for funding. RDM thanked Dr Coulson for attending and confirmed that the Trust is very interested in the project. The Trustees will discuss and respond in due course.

Minutes of meeting held 27th November 2014 – Approval and adoption

Minutes were adopted as accurate without comment.

Action Points / Matters Arising

As the hatchery is still running, operation costs are not fully known. KW expects to be able to produce a cost analysis by the end of May.

As the majority of time spent this year has been on board activities, the suggested allocation of salary costs for KW and AC is 90% Board and 10% Trust. KW will seek approval of this split at tomorrow's Board meeting. The same allocation will be used for the 2015/16 budget and will be reviewed and adjusted towards the end of the financial year if necessary. KW noted there is a need to get projects underway that can attract funding and bring demonstrable public benefit. RDM

repeated that although one of KW's priorities is attracting funding, this is also a collective responsibility that the Trustees must apply themselves to.

KW has discussed the reporting responsibilities for the Shin smolt work with SEPA. TI expressed concern that data and interpretation have not been published by SEPA in the past. This is vital in order to present as evidence for WFD purposes.

KW requested that a solicitor could be engaged to draw up the lease between the Trust and Board as this is a complex issue. KW and AC will draw up heads of terms and present to the JMG for agreement before taking to Murchison Law to create a lease document.

All other actions discharged.

Directors Report

A report was made available in Dropbox prior to the meeting.

KW gave a brief summary of the current position following the Wild Fisheries Review. The Scottish Government have already consulted on some recommendations that can be carried out without changes in legislation, and are presently consulting on a possible kill licencing and tagging scheme. The next step is to consider potential FMO's and other management organisations that may be put in place; a consultation document is likely to be issued this spring with a bill draft expected by May 2016. KW will keep everyone up-to-date and stressed how important it is for individuals to respond to the consultation with their views.

KW is attending the Directors Group meeting at the ASFB conference next week and will bring up the question of FMO's for discussion. In particular, KW will seek clarification regarding the process of deciding who the 'shadow' FMO's are likely to be.

KW confirmed that he expects to circulate the Fisheries Management Plan draft within the next week.

2015/2016 Budget

The budget spreadsheet was made available in Dropbox prior to the meeting. RDM summarised 2014/15 costs and noted that the final deficit was much less than had been expected.

KW summarised the 2015/16 budget year, which is complicated by the outstanding fundraising for the office purchase. RS is still following this up. Office basement costs have not been included. Finishing costs will be identified and added.

Budget approved.

Funding Philosophy

This item was added to the agenda in order to discuss funding structure and responsibility. MB felt that fundraising was the responsibility of the director. RDM agreed, however pointed out the responsibilities of the Trustees to direct and support KW. RS emphasised the importance of developing an element of core funding, supplemented by additional support from anglers, proprietors and project funding.

MB expressed concern that the new KF structure was causing the Trust to lose focus and autonomy, the Director spending too much time on Board business. KW reassured him that now that important Board issues are being addressed, much more time will be spent on Trust matters.

JG wished to note that, having been involved with the Trust from inception, he personally feels that it is now in its best ever form. Significant improvements have been made and created a platform

that has not been available until now, putting the Trust in an excellent position to realise investment.

TI noted that the Board has made annual financial contributions to the Trust in the past and questioned if they might consider reinstating this.

Projects

KW is pursuing various projects that would be of benefit to the catchment and also bring in some funding, eg Diebidale.

With regard to Dr Coulson’s earlier presentation the trustees agreed that they did not wish to commit to the project financially until the views of Marine Scotland Science have been established. It was noted that contributions in-kind could also be offered to the project, for example electrofishing work.

AOB

MB wished to raise a board issue. He had been approached by a number of individuals who for a number of years have been fishing from the shore in the Dornoch Firth. They were distressed that they had been approached last season by the bailiff team to advise them that they were potentially fishing illegally. MB stated that, in the past, this activity was felt to be acceptable, in fact he and his family had historically fished in this area without harassment. MB felt that these people were doing no harm, the bailiffs were being heavy handed and should ‘back off’.

KW advised that bailiffs had spoken to a number of people who were fishing in this area, ostensibly for sea trout, particularly on a Sunday which is illegal. In addition, if fishing throughout the week, written permission from the landowner should be held. No formal warnings were issued or arrests made. The bailiff team were simply trying to educate people about the law.

RDM stated that the Board have a statutory responsibility to enforce the law and cannot ignore illegal activity. KW has already spoken to some landowners who were unaware that they should issue written permission or that Sunday fishing is illegal. Discussions are being held to solve the issue, for example it may be possible to issue a ticket at little or no cost to legalise fishing in this area. It is not the Bailiffs intention to create problems, rather to make it easier to police irresponsible behaviour.

RDM advised MB that he would report his concerns to the Board meeting tomorrow and revert back with a response.

Meeting Closed.

ACTION POINTS – carried forward			
No	Who	Action	Completed by:
1	KW	Assess hatchery costs	June meeting

ACTION POINTS – from this meeting			
No	Who	Action	Completed by:
2	KW	Seek approval of allocation of salary costs at Board meeting	13 th March
3	KW/AC	Draw up heads of terms for approval by JMG prior to creation of lease by solicitor	As soon as possible
4	AC	Add all basement costs to budget	immediate
5	RDM	Report MB bailiffing concerns to Board and revert with response	13 th March
6	KW	Circulate FMP draft	One week