



## Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust

### Minutes Ordinary Trustees Meeting at Kyle Fisheries Office 6.00pm, Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2017

#### Present

Robbie Doubles Miller – Chair  
Steven MacKenzie  
Gregor MacLeod  
Michael Brown

#### Attending

Keith Williams  
Michael Baird

**Minutes:** Jacqui Hamblin

#### Trustee Apologies

Richard Sankey  
Tom Inglis  
John Green

#### Absent

None

#### Welcome

Robbie Douglas Millar welcomed everyone to the meeting and offered a warm welcome to Jacqui Hamblin.

#### Minutes of Meeting held 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017

The minutes were adopted without amendment.

#### Action Points and Matters Arising

1. KW had completed a draft report on River Carron fish counter use which he will shortly circulate. It is understood that MSS is considering fish counter use on SACs which has potential implications for the Oykel. The report concluded that the use of genetics and portable counters should be considered. UHI were undertaking projects looking at the use of genetics to estimate the number of breeders. RDM advised that he recently visited the Frome in Dorset. They have a new fish counter with a surface curtain and flat-bed receiver that can read PIT tags. It cost circa £40K. KW noted that Marine Scotland Science commissioned a lengthy report which involved case studies on a number of rivers. Installation and running costs of counters for 10 years ranged from between £100K to £3 million. Counters had been proposed on the Carron previously at Glenalvie and Gledfield. KW considered that a fact-finding trip to the Frome might be very useful. RDM asked KW if the Lower Shin is suitable for a similar arrangement to the Frome. KW replied that he would look into this. KW undertook to consider more investigations on the use of genetics, in particular sampling strategy. **Action KW.**

2. KW confirmed that there was not a MFTI final report as the project was truncated at the end for various reasons. However, staging reports were available and Marcus had put together a list of the final work he undertook. GM was concerned that data etc. produced by the project would be lost or not properly utilised. MB suggested a UHI project for a student could be useful to collate data etc. KW noted that Marcus had sent data back to the trusts that gathered it along with scale samples etc. KW to explore possible project with UHI using MFTI data. **Action KW.**
3. Eric Verspoor and the PhD student had visited the office to provide an update on the Henry Morrice Project. A framework MOA was in place but the first payment had yet to be made. Initial indications suggest that Henry's notes contained references to work done on Shin including turbine passage by smolts. MB asked how long the project would last. KW replied that the project was for two years. The first phase was to catalogue the notes and the second phase was expected to involve the use of some of the data the notes contained. RDM noted that on the Frome, work was undertaken to correlate the sizes of smolt with subsequent marine survival. Declining smolt size was thought to be linked to lower survival rates. KW replied that similar work had been undertaken on the Conon. It was hoped that Henry's notes would contain information that would allow a comparison between the present and the past in a number of key areas of interest.
4. A preliminary report had been issued by MSS. The item was to be discussed in full elsewhere on the agenda.
5. Budget sheet amended.
6. A review of Governance policies was almost complete. Policies are to be split into General Governance, Operations, Employee Handbook and Health and Safety in order to simplify how they are reviewed and utilised. These will be placed in Dropbox as soon as possible. **Action JH.**
7. The office lease is awaiting signatures. MB asked if insurance covers Trust for letting space to Board. JH to inform NFU mutual. **Action JH.**

### **Governance**

RDM suggested that the issue of who sits as trustees and the length of tenure of office be considered. He felt that it was good practice to rotate positions of office and to replace trustees periodically. It was agreed that KW and Tom Inglis would produce a paper on this topic and distribute to trustees for discussion.

**Action KW & TI.**

### **Directors Report**

A copy of the Director's report had been placed in dropbox prior to the meeting. RDM asked KW to expand on the proposal by Marine Scotland Science to track salmon in 2017.

KW explained that the plan was to catch 1000 adult salmon at Armadale on the North Coast and tag the fish with acoustic devices. A request for assistance to deploy two receivers in the Kyle and possibly two on the Helmsdale had been received. RDM stated that the Trust would want to be a part of this project and this was agreed. Circa £300 a day can be recovered so work should be cost neutral. MB stated that we do not fully understand movements of water and currents in the North Sea. RDM noted that oceanographers are working on obtaining a better understanding of this issue in relation to salmon movements. GM asked if the offshore wind farms, particularly the cabling, is likely to affect fish

migration. KW replied that fishery boards and trusts had ensured that cables will be buried wherever possible and lagged with material that will restrict the range of electromagnetic fields produced by the cables.

KW noted that there was a proposal being mooted by Marine Scotland to introduce compulsory fishery management plans for district fishery boards. He considered that the proposal was not likely deviate significantly from the plan presently in place for Kyle Fisheries. He also felt that the plan offered the potential to highlight pressures on fish stocks for which remedial action was presently outside of the Kyle Board's actual sphere of influence.

### **Budgets & Finance**

RDM noted that the Trust started year with £71K and finished with 82K. However, he questioned the efficacy of the work currently being undertaken by the trust. KW added that much of the work being undertaken in 2016 and early 2017 related to projects he had inherited such as Diebidale and Shin smolt investigations. These projects were now coming to a natural conclusion. KW considered that discussions surrounding the direction of travel of the Trust were important. He was looking for new projects but it was clear that core funding was difficult to obtain. At recent meetings it has become clear that a number of fishery areas are having similar conversations in light of the continuation of the fishery board structure as the main management vehicle. MB stated that at the outset of the Trust it was felt that it would be able to tap into funds and projects that the Board would not be able to. RDM agreed but asked if that remains the case or are we just perpetuating an unsatisfactory arrangement? KW agreed to speak to other Boards and trusts as well as Fishery Management Scotland. It was felt that Richard Sankey would also be able to usefully input into a paper on the Trust's future. **Action KW/RS.**

MB asked if there had been regular Gift Aid reclaims. KW replied in the affirmative.

RDM asked if the budget had been signed off at the previous meeting. KW replied in the affirmative.

### **Projects**

- i. Diebidale – Progress was slow but a draft report had now been received. MB felt that everybody was making heavy weather of the removal of a small barrier. KW stated that a final report should be available in next couple of weeks. The original river channel is damaged in the area now forming the lochan. RDM stated that the Trust should not be involved in the removal of the obstacle and that the report etc. be handed over to Mr Forman Hardy.
- ii. Henry Morrice  
No further update than earlier discussion.
- iii. Shin smolts  
Genetics report from Marine Scotland Science looking at 2016 smolt run sampling has been produced but not fully circulated. MSS are likely to

arrange a meeting to discuss the findings in the near future. KW to advise when meeting is to take place.

SSE undertook the Loch Shin tributaries trapping in 2017. Initial indications suggest circa 2,000 smolts were captured on the Tirry and circa 2,500 on Fiag. Capture rates look to be circa 70% on Fiag and 20-25% on Tirry but calculations remain to be completed. On the Tirry the rotary screw trap was not operational in low water and box traps were deployed. RDM felt that the capture rates on the Tirry were not acceptable. He noted that a meeting was to take place next week at which SSE, SEPA and Kyle Fisheries were to be present but unfortunately he was not able to attend. It was agreed that it is the view of Kyle Fisheries that a different trap type needs to be deployed on the Tirry and that any trap deployed should maximise the capture rate of smolts as far as possible. This message was to be conveyed to the SSE/SEPA meeting by KW.

SSE collected tissue samples from smolts captured in 2017 for potential genetic analyses. Amongst other important management questions, the issue of introgression with farmed strains of salmon could potentially be investigated. It was agreed that, in principle, a financial contribution from the Trust for this work would be made available subject to a full proposal being put to trustees.

iv. Peatland restoration

KW informed the meeting that he had been in discussions with Forestry Commission and the Peatland Restoration Fund regarding the potential to undertake a feasibility study in this area looking where there is hill drainage and to try to get estates involved in restoration activities. There are funds potentially available for such studies. It was agreed to pursue this. **Action KW**

**AOCB**

No other business

**Next Meeting**

**Meeting closed 2005 pm**

<b>ACTION POINTS</b>				
<b>Nº</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Raised</b>	<b>Completed by:</b>
1	KW	Distribute Carron counter report. Consider use of genetics and other techniques to enumerate fish numbers for Kyle Rivers.		As soon as possible.
2	KW	Consider UHI project using MFTI data.		September Meeting.
3	JH	Place governance policies in Dropbox.		As soon as possible.

4	JH	Ascertain insurance status of office for Trust.		As soon as possible.
5	KW/TI	Produce paper on trustee and office bearer rotation.		September Meeting.
6	KW/RS	Produce paper on future role of Trust.		September Meeting.
7	KW	Apply for funds for peatland restoration study.		September Meeting.