

Kyle of Sutherland District Salmon Fishery Board



MEETING TITLE: Board Ordinary Meeting
Meeting Date: Thursday 24th September
Meeting Time: 10.00am
Meeting Place: Kyle Fisheries Office Ardgay & Via Video Conference Call

MEETING MINUTES *(Draft)*

Chair/Facilitator: Ashe Windham

Minute taker: Jacqui Hamblin

In Attendance

Board	Attending
Ashe Windham (AW) Chair Richard Sankey (RS) Robbie Douglas Miller (RDM) Rob Whitson (RW) Keith Williams, (KW) Clerk Nicky Griffiths (NG) Alex Hunter (AH) John McCrorie (JM) Gary Gruber (GG) left meeting at 11am William Paterson (WP)	Steven Mackenzie (SM) KSFT Sean Robertson (SR) KSDSFB Ben Johnson (BJ) (Cooke Aquaculture)
Apologies	
John Green	

1. Welcome

The Chair (AW) welcomed all to the meeting. AW: Thanked everyone for the honour of being elected Chair and expressed his thanks to Richard, the outgoing Chair, and also to Robbie, who was chairman for 11 years prior to Richard.

2. Minutes of Ordinary Meeting held Friday 26th June 2020

- I. Adoption & Approval - agreed
- II. Actions and Matters Arising

No	Action Title	Open Actions	Owner	Raised	Complete by
1	CARRON GLEAN BEAG	Action KW - disseminate times and dates of plate being changed at next Carron proprietors meeting and to write a draft document explaining the present situation. Action KW/SR/IM - talk about the feasibility of introducing a	KW KW/SR/ IM	June 2019	Ongoing

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		sonar device to monitor movement of fish when the ground sluice is opened. KW Alternative strategy being developed i.e. compromise flow to negate need for plate changing. Sonar element therefore redundant. <i>KW still speaking to SEPA to establish a compromise flow.</i>			
2	HEALTH & SAFETY	Health & Safety policy to be updated Review undertaken. Requires final staff meeting to formally complete process. <i>Action KW Have virtual meeting with staff.</i>	KW/SR	October 2018	Ongoing
3	SSE AGREEMENT	Draft received was unacceptable and request made for more concise agreement. SSE advise it is with their legal department RS. Doubt we are vulnerable in meantime. <i>Action RS Keep putting pressure on SSE. We have a 5-year agreement informally agreed but are more than 3 years in and still no formal legal agreement in place.</i>	RS	October 2018	Ongoing
4	KEEP EM WET	“Keep em Wet” campaign seems to have lost momentum and new material still not available. Action SR look elsewhere. SR and Daniel Logie keen to do video on best practice. <i>SM advised that he has videos of best practice Catch and Release and will share with SR. Action SR produce suitable for website etc</i>	SR	October 2018	Ongoing
5	KEY MAN INSURANCE	Key Man insurance ensures the ability to pay salaries and cover the cost of bringing someone else in. Received quote from NFU through AIG.	KW/JH	June 2019	Complete

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		Business Protection on KW quoted at £67.28 per month, covers £50K Business critical Illness & £50K Business term assurance. Budget implication – Revisit 2021 budget			
6	VICARIOUS LIABILITY	Re-visited with David McKie and requested possible dates and or bolt on when in area. Introduce option to attend to neighbouring boards DMK suggested bolt onto Skibo in April, now postponed. Action JH Organise with DMcK through VC once technology installed. AW: email DMcK organise a remote seminar for November 2020	JH/AW	April 2019	Ongoing
7	CROICK ESTATE	KW will raise the fishing rights issue with James Hall at the next Carron proprietors meeting. KW Did not have chance to speak to James Hall. Action KW. Church not claiming ownership, now assumed owned by Croick Estate.	KW	June 2019	Complete
8	MSS GENETICS	Meeting took place and report within directors report. KW will speak on subject	KW	September 2019	Complete
9	FIAG TRAP	Trap can be a danger to staff. Action RS - Take up with FMS. Action KW – Revisit H&S our policy with SSE.	RS KW	September 2019	ASAP
10	NEW TRAP	Action KW notify SSE to provide a new trap for next season. Discussed informally with SSE. State of Fiag trap to be included in 2020 smolt trapping report. SR writing up summary and will include damage. SSE need to provide new trap.	KW	September 2019	December 2019
11	BANK SIGNATORY	Approval for Rob Whitson as 3 rd bank signatory. Action JH process with bank. RW moved	JH	September 2019	Immediately

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		out of area, signature not approved. Action JH Re-do forms and ask RW to complete and attend bank if necessary.			
12	CARRON RADIO TRACKING	Speak to Innes of Alladale and Carron proprietors regarding possible funding. Action KW to provide more detail. KW wrote a new project brief and brief report of 2019 tracking. Offers of external funding were received. Tracking currently suspended. Action KW/SR Potential to net and track fish late summer 2020.	KW	September 2019	Complete
13	LOUBCROY COIRE -FORESTRY CONSULTATION	<i>Not an acceptable application. Planting on peat and harvesting will cause havoc.</i> Action KW to continue to challenge. No formal confirmation of approval. Action KW To view next week as major road going in.	KW	April 2020	Complete
14	INVERAN BRIDGE	Deterioration of Inveran bridge – now in danger of further collapse. Go back to HC and ask for evidence that they do not own it. Action KW With our Legal representatives. We have agreed a modest fee with Gillespie MacAndrew.	KW	April 2020	ASAP
15	Video Conferencing	Action SR Move forward with implementing and explore charity status to reduce costs on software. Speak to Cameron about installation. Costs through the Trust Action KW/JH Apply for grant funding and explore best organisations to make application. Use MB for guidance.	SR KW/JH	June 2020	Complete
16	Assessments	Action KW/JH Produce letter to go with assessment invoices explaining reasoning and	KW/JH	June 2020	Complete

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		highlighting the cost savings the board have made.			
17	Freedom of Information Act & Environmental Information Regulations	Action JH send out FOI & EIR legal guidance document to all members. Complete Action KW/JH to explore and research further on how to manage this going forward.	JH KW/JH	June 2020	Complete for minute purpose. Ongoing project
18	Underwater video surveying in the Kyle for Fresh water Pearl Mussels.	Speak to Richard Davis, Pete Cosgrove etc. to look at feasibility. Approach SNH to partner the cost. Discuss at next Trust meeting. Action KW is working on this.	KW/MB	June 2020	Next Trust meeting

Actions 1, 9 & 10 RDM: SEPA Richard Fyfe only working 2 days a week. Is there any indication from SEPA as to who might fill the other 3 days a week? KW: Wrote to SEPA regarding this and we were assured that this would not impact on the delivery of what was needed. RDM: This should be escalated up the SEPA command. Examples are lack of progress on the Shin, Carron etc. AW: Can we apply subtle pressure to SSE board members? RS: John MacDonald of SEPA did offer that they would be providing someone. This has been taken to executive level.

BJ - Ben Johnson introduced himself as the new Environmental Development officer for Cooke Aquaculture (CA). He started in June this year and presently knows very little about Loch Shin or Salachy as he has been unable to visit due to Covid-19. RS: Our job is to protect wild fish and the aquaculture industry have a business to run. We are not comfortable with creating secrecy and silence and it is important to use good monitoring to properly understand genetic introgression and other issues. AW: BJ please liaise with KW and SR when next in area.

Action 17 RS: EIR: Groups have been looking for inappropriate communications between wild fishery entities and aquaculture. It is important that any communication is clear, appropriate, and unquestionable.

KW: Would like to give a clarification on the previous minutes 26/06/2020 (Item 4, other activities). This relates to speaking with Anthony Fraser about a season extension on the Evelix. He wished to make it clear that discussions regarding the season extension were part of a much wider conversation about the Evelix which had been initiated by the Marine Scotland consultation on proposed river classifications for the 2021 season. GG informed the meeting that he had to leave the meeting at 11am and asked if there are any more matters concerning the Evelix to be discussed. GG advised that currently there is not unity amongst the proprietors of the Evelix, however there are future meetings planned to at least take forward a more constructive dialogue.

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3. Standard Items

- I. Declarations of interest in agenda items to be discussed – none declared
- II. Health & Safety - no reportable incidents
- III. Complaints – no complaints received
- IV. Governance – no outstanding matters

RDM: Asked if there was an alternative to Dropbox? SR: Microsoft SharePoint and Google Drive are currently being investigated as an alternative to Dropbox. **Action (11) SR/JH Move forward with a working sharing platform ASAP.**

4. Directors Report

Directors report was circulated prior to the meeting and KW spoke to this.

AW: Can we send out the Covid-19 H&S document to Board, **Action (12) KW**

SM: Would like to give a huge thank you to the bailiffing team. They have worked extremely hard and did an excellent job under difficult and busy circumstances. Please pass this on.

KW: Aquaculture Interactions. As part of the SSE mitigation activities, licences have to be obtained. We apply to Marine Scotland (MS) for a licence for trapping and we effectively licence ourselves for the introduction of fish into the River Shin. These could include escapees and introgressed fish. We have been speaking to MS on how we deal with this as a risk to the River Shin population and the wider Kyle catchment. Genetics work with UHI and SSE looked at genetic introgression in the Tirry and Fiag. It identified little introgression in the Fiag but potentially some in the Tirry. MS have sampled on a much wider range of Loch Shin tributaries plus the River Shin. We have been told that the results are imminent and will be going out to publication soon. RS: Referred to a meeting with Polly Burns (PB), the newly appointed Aquaculture Interactions Manager at FMS; it may be helpful to make contact with BJ, as PB's specific role is managing aquaculture interactions with wild fish. KW to introduce PB & BJ. **Action (13) KW**

KW: Advised that Migdale have not submitted a suitable Environmental Management Plan (EMP) To Highland Council as far as he is aware.

BJ: Asked how communication had been between the industries in the past. KW: There are lines of communication and it is better than it was, but certainly they could be improved. BJ: Chris Webb is involved with compliance and there is a crossover between Chris Webb and himself. RDM: Asked BJ to explain his role. BJ: Developments, improvements, expansions etc. His main focus is seawater sites however he is trying to get a background on freshwater sites. Development does not necessarily mean expansion and could involve improvement. RDM: As a Shin proprietor he would welcome any improvements and asked if BJ were able to advise if there are any expansion plans for the Shin. BJ: Advised he had no information on that. RS: It is important to adhere to the recommendations from the salmon interactions working groups and we look forward to the new regulatory framework and working with it. WP: Are escapees an issue on other lochs' systems? What do you do to catch the escapees? KW: Advised that yes, it is a national problem. KW explained that it is not easy to catch escapees as Loch Shin is a very large body of water. When we catch escapees in our smolt traps, we pass them onto the Fish Health Inspectorate. We understand that Cooke Aquaculture (CA) have plans in place for mass escapes. CA and Migdale are obligated to

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report any escapes to MS. There is a further issue, once interbreeding happens, that the introgressed fish are likely to look like wild fish.

RDM: The results of Y1 of the Atlantic Salmon Trust tracking project showed that 50% of smolts do not get to salt water. In Y2, amongst other issues, we were going to examine the level of predation from piscivorous birds. How is the licence for shooting birds progressing and how do you feed into the predator group to increase licence numbers? KW: We have a licence to shoot a small number of birds. We request more than we typically obtain; they tell us how many we can have. RDM: We are trying to get more of our fish to reach the sea and control predators, including brown trout. Please would you try and push quite hard to increase that number. KW: They will only ask us to supply evidence. AW: Are autopsies being done on culled birds? KW: This has been done in the past and ghillies provided birds for examination. **Action (14) KW: Re-engage with the predator groups and keep pushing for more licences to cull piscivorous birds.**

KW: SSE mitigation on the Fiag and Tirry currently utilises rotary screw traps and we aim to get permanent traps in place. It is within SEPA's gift to force SSE to do that. We have recently received a report from APEM, commissioned by SSE, and are in the process of responding to this report. RS has been heavily involved in the process along with Sean and me. RS: We are meeting immediately after the close of this meeting to discuss the final response to the APEM report and will subsequently report back to this Board on progress.

5. Covid -19

We have to be very careful as a Board in adhering to legislation and guidance and we also appreciate how difficult this is for the proprietors. RDM: It has just been announced that 2 separate households cannot stay in self-catering accommodation together.

6. Budgets and Finance

a. 2020-2021 Budget

KW: Flagged up that the income side may differ slightly with the money that comes over from the Trust with regards to staff time. May need to draw down more on SSE money to get the Carron Tracking project moving forward because of the delays caused by Covid -19. Overall, we are still in a sound position and we continue to make savings where possible.

b. Temperature loggers

KW: Our conservation policy advises that if water temperatures go over 18 degrees then people stop fishing. We have temperature loggers in place on the Carron and Oykel, but kit is needed to download them and the ghillies are keen to get accurate information. We have been experimenting with other loggers that have better download capability through an app, meaning information can be shared over the website etc. much more easily. We would therefore like a network over the rivers. AW: Excellent idea. Best placed as a Trust activity. RS: I assume you will need a good few of these. KW: Better to be on ghillied stretches. **Action (15) KW/SR: Cost and process proposal for the Trust.**

7. AOCB

KW: Carron proprietors had a meeting and a key point for them is to look at the conservation policy and documentation sent out with their lets. It is time we looked at

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the overall conservation policy and ensure that it is fit for purpose and to work with the Carron proprietors. RS: A sub-group of the main Carron proprietor group has been formed with NG taking the lead. RS will supply policy information etc. from the Oykel. We need a baseline framework. RW: Advised that the Cassley has been fishing well and their conservation policy ties in with the board policy. **Action (16) KW/NG: Working group on amending conservation policy for both Board and Carron.**

WP: There has been a lot of coastal boat activity on the Firth. KW: We could not accommodate boat patrols due to the Covid-19 distancing restrictions; we were however able to do canoe patrols in the Kyle. As soon as we can resume coastal patrols we will do so.

Meeting closed: 11.47 pm

Nest meeting: 26th March 2021

Open & New actions C/Fwd.

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2	HEALTH & SAFETY	Health & Safety policy to be updated Review undertaken. Requires final staff meeting to formally complete process. <i>Action KW still to complete as felt virtual meeting would not work well.</i>	KW/SR	October 2018	Ongoing

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3	SSE AGREEMENT	Draft received was unacceptable and request made for more concise agreement. SSE advise it is with their legal department RS. Doubt we are vulnerable in meantime. <i>Alastair Stephen has informed KW that a draft is imminent. The five year lifespan of the agreement will commence from point of signing not from when negotiations were completed three years ago.</i>	RS	October 2018	Ongoing
4	KEEP EM WET	“Keep em Wet” campaign seems to have lost momentum and new material still not available. Action SR look elsewhere. SR and Daniel Logie keen to do video on best practice. <i>New material recently placed on Kyle Fisheries social media platform. Website will be updated shortly.</i>	SR	October 2018	Ongoing
5	VICARIOUS LIABILITY	Re-visited with David McKie and requested possible dates and or bolt on when in area. Introduce option to attend to neighbouring boards DMK suggested bolt onto Skibo in April, now postponed. Action JH Organise with DMcK through VC once technology installed. <i>AW: has emailed DMcK to organise a remote seminar for November 2020.</i>	JH/AW	April 2019	Completed
6	FIAG TRAP	Trap can be a danger to staff. <i>Action RS - Take up with FMS. Action KW – Revisit H&S our policy with SSE.</i>	RS KW	September 2019	ASAP
7	NEW TRAP	<i>Action KW notify SSE to provide a new trap for next season. Discussed informally with SSE. State of Fiag trap to be included in 2020 smolt trapping report. SR writing up</i>	KW	September 2019	Completed

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		<i>summary and will include damage. SSE need to provide new trap.</i>			
8	BANK SIGNATORY	Approval for Rob Whitson as 3 rd bank signatory. Action JH process with bank. RW moved out of area, signature not approved. Action JH Re-do forms and ask RW to complete and attend bank if necessary.	JH	September 2019	Completed
9	INVERAN BRIDGE	Deterioration of Inveran bridge – now in danger of further collapse. Go back to HC and ask for evidence that they do not own it. Action KW. KW has had virtual and face to face meetings with HC. HC now seeking to identify ownership.	KW	April 2020	ASAP
10	Underwater video surveying in the Kyle for Fresh water Pearl Mussels.	Speak to Richard Davis, Pete Cosgrove etc. to look at feasibility. Approach SNH to partner the cost. Discuss at next Trust meeting. KW spoke to SNH etc. on this topic. Unlikely to add much useful information as there are already records for the Kyle.	KW/MB	June 2020	Completed
No	Action Title	New Actions	Owner	Raised	Complete by
11	Alternative to Dropbox	SR/JH investigate, test & recommend new document sharing platform. Microsoft sharepoint	SR/JH	Sept 2020	Completed
12	COVID 19 H&S document	Share document with the board. Action point superseded by constantly changing Covid regulations.	KW	Sept 2020	Completed
13	Connect PB with BJ	Connect Polly Burns of FMS with Ben Johnson of Cooke Aquaculture.	KW	Sept 2020	Completed
14	Predator Groups	KW to re-engage with predator groups and push for more licences to control piscivorous birds. KW still	KW	Sept 2020	ASAP

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		<i>speaking to relevant parties re general issues of predation.</i>			
15	Temperature Loggers	Provide cost & process proposal for the Trust. <i>Basic network can be established within existing Trust budgets.</i>	KW/SR	Sept 2020	Completed
16	Conservation Policy	Review policy and ensure fit for purpose. Liaise with Carron sub-group	NG/KW	Sept 2020	Completed