

KYLE OF SUTHERLAND FISHERIES TRUST



MEETING TITLE: TRUST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Date: Wednesday 23rd September 2020
Time: 4.00pm
Place: Kyle Fisheries Office, Ardgay & by Video Conference

MEETING MINUTES *(Draft)*

Chair: Richard Sankey
Minute taker: Jacqui Hamblin

In Attendance

Trustees	Attending
Richard Sankey, Chair (RS) Ashe Windham (AW) Robbie Douglas Miller (RDM) Steven McKenzie (SM) Michael Brown (MB) Finlay McCulloch (FM)	Keith Williams (KW) Director Sean Robertson (SR) Member Michael Baird (MBrd) Member
Apologies	Guests
John Green	

1. RS welcomed those present to the meeting and noted the apologies.
2. The minutes of the AGM held on the 26th September 2019 were approved without amendment.
3. Action points and matters arising

ACTION POINTS			
	Who	Action	Completed By:
1	All	Responsibility of all to find new Trustees to meet skills set gap. Very difficult under current conditions. KW Spoke to Peter Routledge, he may consider being a trustee in the future. MB would like to speak Jim McGilvery the local councillor as a possible candidate.	Ongoing

4. Chairman's Report

As the Covid-19 crisis started to unfold at the beginning of the season the wider challenges of 2020 were something none of us could have predicted. Within a couple weeks of fishing starting on the rivers everything was suddenly locked down. It was not until the Scottish Government started allowing limited travel from 3rd July that some fisheries were able to open, although most fisheries were unable to fully operate until well into July.

July mostly provided decent fishing conditions for the Kyle of Sutherland region anglers, but this was then followed by a prolonged drought in August. With so few decent fishing days overall, there is no way of estimating the size of run we have had in the Kyle of Sutherland this year. However, initial reports from further south in Scotland, where more rain fell, are that runs have overall been better than in recent years.

Despite just about everything else closing in the wider economy the work of the KSDSFB continued, albeit with our office closed and our staff adapting to mostly working from home, or within social distancing guidelines when outdoors on fieldwork. I have been impressed at just how well our staff have coped, and importantly managed to deliver our statutory obligations and responsibilities throughout the Covid-19 crisis. This has been an extremely challenging year for our staff so I would like to thank them for their effort and commitment. Enforcement in particular, during and also post lockdown, proved to be demanding as the region experienced increased pressures from illegal fishing and especially from rod and line anglers. Our staff were also able to ensure the Shin 'trapping & trucking' operation continued successfully. In recent weeks, our team has managed to carry out most of the electro-fishing plan for 2020.

The long period of lockdown and restricted working has meant that some of the planned projects and workstreams for the KSFT and the KSDSFB could not be undertaken. These included the second year of the AST's Moray Firth Tagging project which had to be abandoned but will hopefully resume in 2021.

In common with many regions in Scotland, the economic impact of Covid-19 on our regions fisheries has been enormous, and I am sure the effects will be felt for some long time to come. Because of this, the KSDSFB has very carefully reviewed its budgets for the current year and has done its best to make savings wherever possible. These savings have been reflected in a 'one-off' reduction in this year's annual assessment rate. Maintaining resources and capacity for both the KSDSFB and the KSFT, for when we do get back to some sort of normality, was also an important part of the decision making when setting budgets.

5. Director's Report Trust AGM 2020

Highlights of the Trust's year include the continuing collaboration in Marine Scotland's NEPS electro-fishing programme and STRM temperature monitoring

network. Increasingly, we are increasingly integrating the tools developed by these projects into the management of fish populations.

Results from the Missing Salmon Project which tracked salmon smolts across the Moray Firth region in the spring of 2019 were interesting and also highlight the fact that a collaborative approach allows us to access resources and skill sets that we could never achieve in isolation. This work needs to be repeated in order to allow us to properly assess the losses in the freshwater component of the smolt migration. Additionally, for the first time we now have some knowledge of the migration pathways our fish take in the sea. This is vital given the likely proliferation of offshore renewable energy installations.

The Trust has been the lead partner in a project with Argyll Fisheries Trust and Galloway Fisheries Trust which successfully applied to SNHs Biodiversity Action Fund for habitat improvement activities. In the Kyle region the funding has been using for riparian native tree planting at Dalchork, an important tributary of the River Tirry.

The Covid-19 pandemic has stalled many of the planned activities for this calendar year such as NEPS monitoring. This has financial implications but was somewhat buffered by a grant received from Highland Council. The Trust remains in a strong financial position. Fund raising will be challenging going forward, but we have ideas in mind to increase income to the Trust.

Climate change remains a key issue that we need to address more with habitat remediation. More emphasis needs to be placed on this, albeit staff capacity has finite limits as to what can be achieved. Other plans for the future include increasing engagement with local young people and the local community in general.

RDM: Moray firth tracking project 2021. Have we identified all the issues we require with Mark Bilsby? KW: Yes, it was dealt in a recent meeting. Issues appear to be mainly in river and top of the Kyle. RDM: Hopefully, we have got two more years of this work to do. RDM encouraged KW & SR to make sure our interests are recognised. KW: Keen on looking at mortality of tagging and know that AST are looking very hard at this. RDM: Focus on what information we can get from the tags rather than an issue with the impact of the tags and do not get too bogged down. RS: We are trying to understand mortality in a localised environment and are concerned that there is 70% mortality rate leaving the rivers. The data needs calibrating. RDM: The tags are widely used in USA and the technology is generally accepted as having a low impact and is robust. He felt that it is for the AST to worry about. AST have satisfied Marine Scotland etc.

6. Adoption of draft accounts to year end 31st May 2020

Agreed.

7. Articles of Association

No changes.

8. Election/Re-election of Trustees

Robbie Douglas Miller retired by rotation and was re-elected.

Steven MacKenzie retired by rotation and was re-elected.

9. Appointment of Auditors / Company Secretary

Goldwells of Tain were re-elected as auditors.

Keith Williams was re-elected as company secretary.

10. Any other business

No other business.

Meeting closed: 16;31

Date of next AGM - TBA

Actions C/Fwd.

ACTION POINTS			
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1	All	Responsibility of all to find new Trustees to meet skills set gap. Very difficult under current conditions. KW Spoke to Peter Routledge, he may consider being a trustee in the future. MB would like to speak Jim McGilvery the local councillor as a possible candidate.	ASAP