

KYLE OF SUTHERLAND FISHERIES TRUST



MEETING TITLE: TRUST ORDINARY MEETING

Meeting Date: Thursday 23rd September 2021

Meeting Time: 3.35 pm

MEETING MINUTES *(Draft)*

Chair/Facilitator: Ashe Windham

Minute taker: Jacqui Hamblin

In Attendance

Trustees	Attending
Ashe Windham, Chair (AW) Richard Sankey (RS) Steven Mackenzie (SM) Finlay McCulloch (FM) Ron Boothroyd (RB)	Keith Williams (KW) Director/Member Sean Robertson (SR) Member Atty Macdonald (AM) Member Phil Blowers (PB) Member
Apologies	Guests
John Green Robbie Douglas Miller Michael Brown	Hugh Chalmers

1. Welcome and apologies.

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and accepted apologies.

2. The minutes from previous meeting of 17th June 2021 were amended with the Ron Boothroyd biography abridged and then approved. **Action JH (9)** Amend Minutes of 17/6/2021 and republish.

3. Open Actions B/Fwd; and matters arising.

No	Action Title	Actions	Owner	Raised	Complete by
1	SANDS	KW Contact local angling clubs, educators, and potential interested parties to determine interest. KW has spoken to local anglers. RS Iain Robertson is taking a more regional approach.	KW	April 2019	Ongoing

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		Parked due to Covid. Meeting in Ullapool with Ian Robertson. Another meeting due in December in Ardgay. Financial support extended for a year by FMS.			
2	HERITAGE NETTING PROJECT	SR advised that Development Trust is keen to be partners in the project and take an active role. SR visited the Ness to observe the netting and tagging. SR suspects that for our purposes it will be a combination of sweep netting and the old style. Parked due to COVID. Coble needs work, bailiffs winter work. 2022 project. Short window between March & June. Scientific purpose needed.	SR	April 2019	Ongoing
3	Shin Habitat project	Hamish Muir Study recommends possible options; modelling, introducing gravel and more water. Action KW ask HM for more examples. Action RS broach with SSE and SEPA Action further up the tree. Awaiting result of BCF application. BCF funding application was granted and design process underway. Delay to commencing, awaiting BCF decision on extending funding.	SR/KW	September 2019	Ongoing
4	Carron Radio Tracking – Carron Management Plan	Require more tags & receivers. Remind river workers/anglers on the Carron not to take fish. Action KW project description. KW to provide Carron management plan for review by AW. Arrange proprietors meeting. Produced draft plan, superseded by Riverwoods project. Now up and running got 13 fish tagged so far.	KW	September 2019 March 2021	ASAP

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5	Schools Project	The Salmon's Journey, lifecycle with Bonar Bridge School and teacher Lisa Mackenzie. Require funding for minibus to take kids to smolt sites. Action SR explore grant funding for minibus. The Trust will fund if not forthcoming. School's project postponed to 2023 due to the maternity leave of key contact. Include Rosehall in future project. <i>Lisa happy to help if wanted to deliver in 2022. Include tree planting. Combine with Development Trust.</i>	SR	September 2019	May 2019
6	Migdale Smolt	KW continue to work with Highland Council & Polly Burns of FMS (Polly left, now Charlotte). Document now with HC and believe with Migdale. <i>Waiting to hear back from HC on their feedback from Migdale Smolts.</i>	KW	Sep 2020	ASAP
7	Norwegian Presentation	MB to provide to KW and JH to circulate. MB unable to find original presentation.	MB	March 2021	Completed
8	Reserves Policy	KW to produce draft reserves policy to include restricted funds to JMG. Re-visit and base on fixed liabilities only. <i>Review in winter.</i>	KW/JH	March 2021	ASAP
9	Auction 2021	SR to advise on timetable of actions. Now a JH project, to provide strategy and RAG. RB to assist on project. JH to produce poster for fishing huts to encourage anglers to donate.	JH	June 2021	Completed
10	Succession Planning	Recommend new trustees to approach	All	June 2021	Completed
11	Tirry Bank erosion	SMK to take a look and advise.	KW/SMK	June 2021	Completed
12	Trapping Report	SR to provide report on trapping.	SR	June 2021	Completed

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13	CBEC design	<i>SR to provide RS with sight of design before any construction begins.</i>	SR	June 2021	ASAP
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4. Riverwoods project – Hugh Chalmers gave a presentation on the work he had undertaken to date producing plans for tree planting. This included areas of the Oykel and Carron catchments – **Action JH (10)** provide presentation to trustees after meeting. RS – The Scottish Temperature River Monitoring Network data sets have provided maps showing the most vulnerable areas and where mitigation is likely to be most successful. If we fail to act, we risk elements of the catchment becoming unsuitable for salmon. There are constraints trying to get trees planted in some of those high-risk areas. There are also risks in just targeting the low hanging fruit by planting trees in moderate risk areas and where you can get consents and funding easily. What is your experience elsewhere of avoiding this and how do we get round those challenges? HC – the experience on the Tweed is the realisation that the rivers are in deep trouble. We can show what we can do under the current circumstances and if we can't change land use we have got to be realistic as to the results. There is often good soil next to river with plenty of places to plant trees but saplings will be eaten by deer. RS – We are blessed on the Oykel with enthusiastic proprietors. We have to avoid the belief that if some trees are planted then the job is completed when in reality it is hardly scratching the surface of the problem. How do we deliver at scale so that in 30 years' time we are not dealing with the death of the rivers? We need to engage with the Government on the rules and engage with landowners with a step-by-step approach, but at scale. It is not going to be easy. It is clear that we really need to model where the benefits are and target that way rather than settle for the easy fixes. HC - Willows will grow fast, there could be a difference in 10 years. RB - Asked what are the alternatives to the plastic sleeve tree protectors? HC- it is deer fencing and mammal (particularly voles) control. Dense planting of willows could be one tactic.
5. Directors Report – shared prior to the meeting and items discussed by exception.
- Staffing levels, workloads and overall structure will be under review over the winter.
 - SMK may be able to provide adult scale samples - 30 samples next week.
 - RS - What is the plan if NatureScot agree to rolling the funds for the Shin Gravel project over? SR - the plan would be to work backwards from the deadline; one of the benefits is having a lot more time to iron out issues. Roads can be constructed to get machinery into sites. In-river works would hopefully be completed by mid- October 2022. RS What is the impact on anglers? These things often take longer than contractors say. SR advised that he has a progress meeting with CBEC and the Greenwoods next week. He is mindful of their concerns and hopes to address them.
 - Environmental DNA trial. AW - Can it distinguish between sea and brown trout? KW no it will not do that. It can be used for biosecurity e.g., knowing if pike are present in Loch Shin as an example. RS - is there a marker for freshwater pearl mussels (FWPM)? SR - Yes, but additional costs would be around £100 per

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sample. eDNA study would be quicker than doing an extensive survey on FWPM. RS - At the moment we are reacting to developments so this technique could be very useful. SR - still has some sampling to do and can include FWPM as proof of concept. RS stated that this would be worthwhile. SR - Sample processing takes around 10 days.

- Consultations. KW been speaking to forestry contractors recently and what they appear to class as riparian tree planting is creating a 30 metre buffer zone open area with native trees planted well away from the watercourses. The guidelines to foresters need to be amended to ensure the correct trees are planted in the areas that will provide shade.
- SEPA remain a major concern in terms of enforcement. KW recently had a meeting with John Macdonald and Nathan Critchlow-Watton from SEPA along with Allan Wells of FMS. This was to discuss the lack of progress in trap provision for the Tirry and Fiag.

6. Budgets & Finance - Covered in directors report. **Action JH (11)** Current WIP budget to be shared with Trustees after the meeting.

7. BCF – River Shin – SR brief update.

The project hasn't gone to the expected timescales as we only received an outline site design on 2nd September 2021. We are relying on CBEC's experience. We have applied for a CAR licence, and we undertook FWPM surveys which has resulted in two locations being scoped out of the design. We have spoken to NatureScot about translocating mussels but that is best avoided if possible. CBEC are still to produce a final design. A site meeting with contractors was held along with the invitation to tender. This was very useful and highlighted some issues that need a lot more thought. The decision was taken to cancel the tendering process. There was no realistic chance of getting the work completed before the end of October. SR spoke to NatureScot and asked for funding to be carried over until next year. Feedback is that CBEC is involved in a lot of similar projects at the moment. He will engage a local contractor to give us some advice on practicalities on various aspects of the project. This is contingent on funding getting carried forward until next year. The meeting with the Greenwoods and CBEC is important. We will not be able to tick all their boxes but we hope to finalise the design and get something that everyone is happy with. There will be lots of issues in terms of access to land etc. It is good that it is paused as we will be able to finalise the design. SR advised that he is much more aware of the scale of the project that was previously the case.

RS – There is a reasonable chance that funding will be carried over. He asked SR to share the final design with him. **Action SR (3)** SR said that this would make him more comfortable.

8. NEPS & NIPS – SR gave a brief update

This year has been an interesting one. We received funding for 30 NEPS sites chosen via random selection. The idea is that this might be able to feed into the conservation classifications in future. The panel encompasses the Oykel, Carron, Cassley and Evelix but the Shin is excluded due to Lairg Dam being considered a barrier to fish migration. We requested an extra panel of 15 sites be added above Lairg dam where the issue of

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genetic introgression is relevant, as well as monitoring how well the restoration efforts are progressing in relation to the Smolt trapping. It has been challenging, as some sites are very remote. We have only 2 left to do on the Shin catchment. SR gave credit to Leanne, who has been crucial in the success of this.

9. Auction 2021

- a. JG managed to secure a matched funding pledge from Alladale. AW emailed Innes MacNeill a week ago for more detail but was yet to get a response. KW advised he had spoken to Innes recently and will brief AW after the meeting.
- b. AW advised that the letter to proprietors was almost ready to go. Will provide a copy to SMK. **Action AW (12)**
- c. SMK had not received the link to Auction holding page. **Action JH (12)**
- d. JH advised that the building of the auction website is underway and listed the lots already received. The RAG has been updated and available to see in the sharing platform.
- e. KW has contacted some media outlets to advertise the auction to their members.

10. Date of Summer & Autumn meetings. **Action JH (13)** Send out save the dates and meeting invitations

Summer – Thursday 23rd June 2022 5pm

Autumn - Thursday 22nd September 2022 5pm

11. AOCB

Meeting closed at: 17:35

Date of next meetings:

Thursday 24th March 2022 at 5pm

Summer – Thursday 23rd June 2022 5pm

Autumn - Thursday 22nd September 2022 5pm

Open & *New Actions* C/Fwd.

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9	Amend minutes	JH to amend RB Bio in minutes of 17/6/21	JH	Sept 2021	Immediate Completed
10	Riverwoods Presentation	Provide HC presentation to Trustees	JH	Sept 2021	Immediate Completed
11	Trust Budget	Provide Trustees with WIP Trust budget	JH	Sept 2021	Immediate Completed
12	Auction 2021	JG managed to secure matched funding from Alladale. Have not got further update. Emailed Paul Lister a week ago for response. KW advised he had spoken to Innes recently and would brief AW in after meeting. AW			

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13	Meeting Invites	Send out invites for 2022 meetings	JH	Sept 2021	Immediate