

MINUTES

Of the Board Meeting
of the River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board
Held at Linloskin, Newton Stewart
On Thursday August 12th, 2021 at 5.30 pm

Present

(A) Board Members/Mandatorys

Terence Flanagan – in the Chair
Murdo Crosbie
Jim Davidson
Jamie Hyslop
Norrie McIntosh
Iain Service
Steve Smith

(B) Attendees

Matthew Pumphrey (Clerk and Treasurer)
Jamie Ribbens (GFT)

(1) Apologies for Absence

Duncan Baillie.

The Chairman said that everyone already knew that Tom Kenyon had died but he wished to pay special tribute to him as he had served very well as a Board member for a considerable length of time and his contributions had always been helpful and constructive. The Board, unanimously, endorsed these sentiments.

Both John Galloway and George McShane had resigned from the Board. J & J Scott had appointed Rory Crosbie as their mandatory in place of John Galloway. Likewise, NSAA had appointed Rory Crosbie as their representative in place of John Galloway. They also wished Kenny Allan to replace George McShane as co-opted member representing salmon angling interests but it was noted that this could only be legally done at the Triennial elections – which were due very shortly. Neither could attend this evening's meeting for different reasons, but hopefully would attend future meetings.

(2) Approval of Minutes of Previous Board Meeting (held on 5th February 2020 and 21st January 2021)

These were both approved without demur apart from one typographical error in each. Both these were duly rectified.

(3) Matters arising from Previous Board Meeting Minutes

The Chairman raised the question of the proposed motion, mentioned in the February 2020 Minutes, to reduce the donation to GFT. This motion had fallen by the wayside as a result of Covid, but it was agreed that it should be renewed and discussed at the next Board Meeting. The motion is in the following terms:

“It is proposed that the Board’s donation to GFT is reduced to £1,000 per annum with immediate effect, to be paid by monthly instalments and subject to review from time to time. Provided that this shall not affect any donations in excess of £1,000 previously made in the current financial year.”

The effect of the motion, if carried, would be to reduce the donation to GFT in a full financial year from £4,500 to £1,000.

Norrie McIntosh would chair the discussion on the motion.

(4) Chairman’s Report

He had asked members to refer to the website for his draft annual report 2020 which described events up to 30th September 2020.

As from that date, the news was that the rod-catch so far had been disappointing mainly due to the lack of rain, and while there had been more fish caught very recently, the season would probably be a poor one.

He reported that he had obtained a licence for controlling fish-eating birds on the same terms as last year, which was particularly pleasing, as it had not been possible, for Covid reasons, to carry out a bird count.

He related what he considered was the unsatisfactory consultation that Marine Scotland were carrying out on their proposed new salmon stocking policy. It was in effect a “pre-consultation consultation” and a formal consultation was to follow, though no time-scale had been indicated. They had refused to answer a question that had been posed by the Board in relation to our particular circumstances.

He mentioned applications by Iain Service relating to woodland planting schemes. The sub-committee appointed by the Board had responded to the proposals and unfortunately did not feel able to support the proposed schemes. He nevertheless thanked Iain for revisions made to the original scheme, which would have less potential impact on water quality in the upper Cree. He mentioned that the Board’s default position was that it did not like conifers.

He mentioned the Board’s privacy policy which was now on the website.

Finally, he said that the Conservation status of the River was still proposed to be Grade 1 for 2022 and that the Cree was the only river in Dumfries and Galloway which was proposed to be Grade 1. The Luce was proposed to move up from Grade 3 to 2 but otherwise there were no proposed changes on the Solway.

(5) Treasurer’s Report

Montpelier’s accounts were approved. The current situation, following the Treasurer’s report, was duly noted. The feeling was that a loss could be borne this year but could not be sustained thereafter. It was not intended that the raising of the levy should be discussed at either this or the next meeting.

(6) GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens circulated two handouts: the first contained 6 headings viz: Conservation Limits, Water Quality Management, Eldrick Forest Plan Consultation, 2021 Electrofishing Survey, Habitat Works and National Adult Sampling project (ASSESS). On the last of these – ASSESS - he asked whether the Board would like to be involved. Members, generally, expressed support for the scheme, but felt that the Board should not be actively involved.

(7) RCHHT Report

Murdo Crosbie circulated his Report. This dealt with the Hatchery, Forestry Project, School visits, Fish-Eating Birds, Electro-Fishing and Tree removal.

(8) Conservation Code

This was on the agenda merely as a reminder that it would have to be dealt with after the end of the season.

(9) AOCB

The Chairman asked that the Board approve a sub-committee of Murdo Crosbie, Jamie Hyslop, Jamie Ribbens and himself to look into the Board's stocking policy and approve same without the need to come back to the Board for further authority. This was agreed.

Jamie Hyslop mentioned the issue of the proposed flood prevention scheme for Newton Stewart but the Chairman observed that the Board had no statutory powers or duties in relation to flood prevention. He would not, however, be averse to the Board supporting any comments by relevant proprietors in exercise of the Board's duty to protect salmon fisheries in the District, but thought that in the first instance it was for the proprietors affected to make their own representations in relation to the proposed scheme.

(13) Arrangements for Future Meetings

The next Board meeting would be on 13th October 2021 at 5.30 pm. The venue would be the Belted Galloway, assuming that any coronavirus restrictions, prevailing at that time, permitted a meeting without face masks needing to be worn except on entry and also assuming that the proprietor was able and willing to accommodate the Board. The triennial elections will immediately follow the meeting. Arrangements for the APM and the AMP would be made then. It was agreed that the meeting on the date chosen, which would probably be in November, would encompass meetings for both 2020 and 2021 as there had been no APM nor AMP since 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

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Chairman

