

MINUTES

Of the Board Meeting

of the River Cree District Salmon Fishery Board

Held at The Belted Galloway, Newton Stewart

On Wednesday October 4th 2023 at 5.30 pm

Present

(A) Board Members/Mandatory

Jamie Hyslop – in the Chair

Murdo Crosbie

Rory Crosbie

Jim Davidson

Terence Flanagan

Gene Fryatt

(B) Attendee

Matthew Pumphrey (Clerk and Treasurer)

(1) Apologies for Absence

Norrie McIntosh, Jamie Ribbens, Iain Service and Steve Smith

(2) Approval of Minutes of Previous Board Meeting on 19th July 2023

These were proposed by Gene Fryatt and seconded by Terence Flanagan subject to a change from “John” to “Jim” for Mr Coates of the Trout and Salmon magazine in item (8) and thereafter approved without demur.

(3) Matters arising from Previous Board Meeting Minutes

The Chairman reported that there had been 59 objectors to the proposed Flood Defences Scheme but, despite this, the Council had recommended it to proceed without any modifications. The Chairman has been advised that due to the objections the scheme will now proceed to a public enquiry, either at local or national level. There were no further details at present. The Chairman had indicated that he would be happy to engage with the Council's officials but he had as yet had no response from them. GFT had also objected to the proposed Scheme and had recommended against the hard engineering approach.

(4) Chairman's Report

The Chairman informed the Board that a licence to capture 65 salmon for broodstock has been granted by The Marine Directorate. He had written to all proprietors where broodstock would be taken and all have agreed, with the exception of Glentroll Estates, where John Grantchester has not responded to any of the emails sent from the Chairman. The Chairman intends to continue to try and engage with Glentroll Estates.

The Chairman commented on the rod catch on the Cree and estimated it would be around 250. Although this was lower than recent years, it has been a very poor season over the whole of Scotland with rod catches down on nearly all rivers.

(5) Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer said that as at today's date there was a balance of £13,404.20 at credit. Assuming Andrew Stewart paid his balance of £1,000 in November this would become £14,404.20. The Payment of £1,000 to GFT had already been made as the Stocking Agreement had been approved. The only outstanding expenses for the financial year were the remaining 6 payments of £625 each month and Steve Smith's website expenses. This would mean that at 31st March 2024, there should be around £10,550 at credit unless there were unexpected expenses in the intervening period.

(6) Stocking Policy

The agreed Stocking Policy Document was presented to the Board members and agreed.

The Stocking Policy Document was broadly the same as the previous year with some minor changes being adopted, but without affecting the substance of the Document.

(7) GFT Report

Jamie Ribbens had sent an email to the Board and the Chairman referred to it. Much of it concerned subjects which are covered elsewhere in the Minutes. The Chairman did highlight the anomaly of being allowed to replant conifers on deep peat for existing plantations. The current regulations on new planting of conifers in deep peat do not apply to existing plantations – this means existing conifer plantations can be harvested and then replanted in exactly the same way – regardless of current legislation. If this anomaly can be changed it would provide significant benefits to the habitat

and water quality on the upper Cree catchment. The Cree Board would support GFT in lobbying for these rules to change.

(8) RCHHT Report

Murdo Crosbie gave a verbal report.

There were still approximately 1500 fry in the Hatchery. He had evolved a strategy of grading the fry to give them a better chance of development and this had resulted in a better quality of fish overall.

Electrofishing had gone well. He reported that the stocked fry in the Clachrie Burn have survived in reasonable numbers.

He had taken about 40 primary school children out fishing and the day had been a great success notwithstanding that the weather had been too hot and not so many fish had been caught as on previous occasions.

Knotweed had been sprayed and Himalayan Balsam picked. Terence Flanagan would thank those who had assisted in this not only on behalf of RCHHT but also the Board. The assistance had been much appreciated.

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(9) Windfarms at Glenvernoch, Balunton Hill and Blair Hill

The Chairman said that he had been asked for the Board's view on the three proposed wind farms. However, there had not been a Board meeting prior to the one this evening and he therefore could not give a view. The Chairman felt that it was important for the Board to express a view. There had been a presentation by the developer RES in the McMillan Hall to the CVCC, to which the Chairman was invited. However the developer had not turned up due to (alleged) threats to their safety if they did. The Chairman had attended public consultations at Glentool Hive and the McMillan hall for the windfarms at Glenvernoch and Blair Hill respectively.

Murdo Crosbie asked whether there were any positives for the river in the Windfarm proposals. It was unanimously agreed that there were none. There were, however, many negatives. The infrastructure necessary to install the pylons, which were just short of the height of the Eiffel Tower, would materially affect all the watercourses serving the Cree causing significant disruption, potential pollution and long term damage/changes to the river and its tributaries, many of which are important spawning burns for salmon and seatrout.

The Chairman proposed he write to the energy companies involved in the Glenvernoch and Blair Hill wind farms and request that the River Cree DSFB be included as a non-statutory consultee. This was agreed by the Board members.

The Chairman asked the meeting if anyone was supportive of the wind farm proposals. No Board members were supportive. The Chairman then stated that the Board would oppose/object to the two wind farm proposals when a Planning Application was submitted for either/both windfarms. In

the meantime, Board members were free to express the view that the River Cree DSFB oppose/object to the three wind farm proposals.

(10) Electrofishing Equipment

The acquisition of the additional Electrofishing equipment for RCHHT had already been approved by the Board through an exchange of emails. The request was approved with 5 votes received in favour and none against. Murdo Crosbie and Terence Flanagan abstained from the vote through conflict of interest. There was no response from Jim Davidson. The Chairman did not require to cast his vote. However, there would be a delay in the equipment being ready for delivery to the Board which might not happen until the New Year. It was not known whether this would affect the cost. The money should be held over meantime.

Murdo Crosbie said that the Spey and the Tyne were currently using similar equipment with very positive reports on its effectiveness.

(11) Arrangements for AGM

The AGM would consist of the AMP followed by the APM. They will take place on 23rd November 2023 at 5.30 pm.

(12) AOCB

The Chairman suggested that the Conservation Code should remain the same but with the rider that the Board would have the right to change it during the year should conditions change. This was agreed.

The Treasurer reported that he had had no success in contacting the AJVC about the 2 non-payers on the Ayrshire stretch of the river. The Dumfries and Galloway Assessor had, helpfully, agreed to try and find out what was going on in Ayrshire.

The Treasurer further reported that he had no success in finding any institution who was prepared to open a Savings Account in the name of the Board. More or less all had suggested that such account be opened in the name of an individual member of the Board on its behalf. After some discussion it was agreed to further consider this matter at a later meeting of the Board.

(10) Date of next meeting

To be fixed at the AGM

The meeting closed at 6.40 pm

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Chairman