

Draft

MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE
FINDHORN DISTRICT SALMON
FISHERY BOARD held at Moray Estates
Office, Darnaway on Monday 3rd June,
2013 commencing at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Alasdair Laing – Chairman
Julie Balgonie
Lord Cawdor
Rob Hoskin – representing Ewen Brodie
Anthony Laing
Seymour Monro
Billy Strathdee – representing David Sneddon

In attendance: William Cowie – Clerk
Albert Duffus – Superintendent
Robert Laughton – Director/Biologist, Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries
Trust
Andrew Wallace – Director of RAFTS
Valerie Wardlaw – Administrator, Findhorn, Nairn & Lossie Fisheries
Trust

Item	Action
<p>1 Introductions and Apologies – apologies had been received from Ewen Brodie who was represented at the meeting by Rob Hoskin, Diana Osborne, Philip Mackenzie, The Dowager Countess Cawdor, Andrew Howard, Sir Alastair Gordon Cumming and David Sneddon who was represented by Bill Strathdee.</p> <p>The Chairman introduced Valerie Wardlaw who was newly in the post of Administrator of FNLFT and Andrew Wallace the Chair of the RAFTS organisation who was here principally to help on updates relating to the Agricultural Bill and RAFTS matters generally.</p>	
<p>2 Minute of Meeting held on 26th November 2012</p> <p>Lord Cawdor indicated that details of when the budget was to be produced and the Board's possible exposure to the Trust had not been fully reproduced in the Minute. Although the Clerk had not prepared the last Minutes he would revisit his notes to adjust as necessary. Otherwise it was noted that the Budget item should be high on the Agenda of subsequent meetings.</p> <p>There were no other comments as to accuracy and the Minute was approved for signature.</p>	<p>WRC</p>
<p>3 Matters Arising</p>	

3.1 – Season extension

The general position was that there would be a continuation of the collection of data at the end of the season and this would be analysed in detail. There were various issues with obtaining photographic evidence but overall it was felt that unless there was strong evidence to support an extension it would not be progressed with, although it would remain under consideration. Offers of assistance in gathering data for analyses were accepted.

4 Bailiff's Salary

The Board discussed the assistant Bailiff's salary and Superintendent's salary. It was noted that Albert Duffus would be due to retire at some point. It was recognised that the Assistant Bailiff was now qualified and working in a fulltime role. His salary would require to be increased to reflect increased hours and experience. The Chairman proposed increased salary levels for the Superintendent and for Sean McLean with power to the Chairman to finalise terms. The Board approved the rates proposed

It was noted that there may be a possibility of a requirement for a Junior Bailiff when the current Superintendent retires particularly on Health & Safety grounds to maintain a ratio of two.

5 Aquaculture Bill

The paper on Aquaculture had been previously circulated and Andrew Wallace was invited to talk to it.

Andrew Wallace advised that this had been the fourth piece of fisheries legislation he had been involved with and felt that the ASFB representatives had made a strong case for a series of amendments which had fallen due to heavy whipping.

He did however advise that the main points were as follows:-

- Openness of transaction of business.
- Strategic review of fisheries management.

In summary he advised that although the current Scottish Government had other pressing priorities, there remained an ideological belief that the current system of fisheries management was in some way lacking and they were still seeking a credible alternative. ASFB, supported by RAFTS had lobbied strongly that the current system had inherent strengths and there was a division of day to day management and charitable and research functions. However, he indicated that a persuasion job still required to be done against those critics of the DSFB system. He indicated that in his

view Boards, working with their local fisheries trust should be focusing on evolving into credible catchment management organisations to persuade Government that Boards and the Trust can deliver high quality river and fisheries management working with Government and its agencies

The particular issues for the future were:-

- The possibility of Regional Boards through amalgamation of existing Boards
- The possibility of the relief of Sporting rates being reviewed.

These two matters would likely form part of the discussion of the Strategic Review and whilst they might not happen quickly it would be important for all Boards to be seen to be on the “front foot” and compliant with the existing Code of Good Practice and operating as effectively and credibly as possible.

The Chairman then turned to the questions on the Aquaculture Bill paper and in response to numbered questions it was suggested as follows:-

1. The annual Public Meeting should be held at the same time as the AGM and possibly in August.
 - This was agreed.
2. What constituted invitation to the Public?
 - Details and an invitation to the AGM would be advertised on the Board’s website.
3. What minutes would be published?
 - Minutes would be prepared and published on the Board’s website.
4. Could Sub-committees be used?
 - Sub-committees could be used to make recommendations to the Board and possibly involving different people with different skills in the catchment
5. Complaint’s procedure
 - Further clarification would be sought on the Complaints procedure.
6. Register of Interests
 - Again, further clarification would be sought.

The Chairman then invited other comments from the Board.

The Board recognised that the Boards and the RAFTS organisations worked in tandem and Andrew Wallace agreed that it would be useful for the Association of Fishery Boards to produce papers showing the

relationship between the RAFTS and the Association of Fishery Boards.

It was also recognised that there might also need to be some discussion regarding the closer working relationship of Boards of Boards and Trusts but Andrew Wallace felt that this should wait until there had been clearer direction from Government following the proposed Strategic Review of Freshwater Fisheries.

6 AGM

It was noted that the Triennial Elections were due to be held and there had been no change to the procedure in the Aquaculture Bill. The Clerk would be inviting candidates from proprietors prior to the meeting and there was then discussion about dates and location of the meeting.

The Chairman had suggested that the Long Room at Logie Steading wing should be available and after discussion it was suggested that the AGM be held on the afternoon of Wednesday, 21st August, 2013 commencing at 2 p.m. A Board Meeting would be held prior to it and the AGM would dovetail as a Public Meeting to which members of the public would be invited.

7 Budget

7.1 The Budget was circulated and displayed and particular points were notes as follows:-

- Salary costs – these had increased due to Sean Maclean’s anticipated increased involvement.
- Inflationary increase – there had been an inflationary increase built into the Budget.
- The remainder of the Budget reflected the expenditure from previous years.

The Chairman noted that the FAA was negotiating for a compensation payment from the Moray Council due to the Flood Prevention work at Forres which had decimated their catch. They would not however be seeking a reduction in the assessment from the Board. It was noted that the final version of the Budget would be adopted at the Board meeting prior to the AGM in August.

7.2 Equipment

Bob Laughton spoke to the requirements for equipment and after discussion it was agreed that the purchase of the rotary screw trap would not go ahead until funding was clearly available.

- As far as electro fishing was concerned there would be a technical discussion between the Chairman, the Director of FNLTT. The Superintendent and the Chairman were given leeway to determine

appropriate expenditure accordingly.

- The expenditure on Survey Gill Nets was approved.
- Scale reading equipment – it was determined not to proceed with this meantime.

8 Early Season 2013

A paper had been circulated prior to the meeting and, on enquiry it was noted after review of the figures it was felt that the declining catch numbers could partly be due to the reduction in fishing effort at that time of the year and anecdotally it was felt that the Spring run was occurring later in each year.

9 Berry Burn Wind Farm update

The Director gave a presentation which focused principally on water quality control and the monitoring plan. There had been a couple of incidents in low flow times but, generally it was felt that the control measures and working relationship with the Berry Burn contractors had been very good and the whole system should serve as a blueprint for future developments. It should also inform the Board on how to negotiate agreement terms with future contractors.

10 Director's Report

The Director indicated that the priorities for the Trust over the year would be to recommence the Juvenile Survey after a two year gap and also:-

- To continue with the scale sample analysis.
- To assist with the UDN research being carried out by the PHD student.
- To continue with the Sawbill count in September/October and through the winter.
- To continue with the mink project.
- To persevere with the hogweed control arrangements.
- To monitor river works such as the Moray Flood Elevation and Wind Farm to ensure minimum damage.

Seymour Munro on behalf of the Trust indicated that there would need to be a “step up” of contributions from Proprietors to the trust levy to ensure the deficit was made up. To this end he suggested that donation to Auctions should be encouraged.

11 Bailiff Report

Albert Duffus reported that the hatchery at Corrievorrie was operating well but there had been a late hatching because of the cold weather.

Patrols had continued throughout the season to look for nets and poaching activity.

12

Hatchery Policy

The Board recognised that there had been considerable debate regarding hatchery policy on a number of rivers recently and it was felt that the Board would need to be responsive to what was suggested on a scientific basis. The Board would continue to monitor the impact of the hatchery policy on the Findhorn but it was recognised that the Board could not continue on the assumption that hatchery operation would continue indefinitely.

13

Development update

It was noted that there had been no significant updates to report in respect of the proposed Wind Farm other than an application for a further turbine at Corrybrough. It was noted however that the Glen Kirk and Tom-nan-Clach were due to be reported on very shortly.

14

AOCB

On enquiry it was confirmed that the better organised rafting and canoeing associations did indeed contribute to the financial costs of the FNLTL.

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Close of Meeting

The meeting then closed at 12.50 p.m.