



River Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Clerk: Will Cowie Administrator: Valerie Wardlaw
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Minute of Meeting of the Findhorn District Salmon Fishery Board

Held on Monday 14th December 2015 in the Long Room, Logie Steading, at 10.30am

Present: Alasdair Laing – Chairman Robert Hoskin
 Andrew Howard Billy Strathdee
 Ewen Brodie Julie Balgonie
 Anthony Laing Colin Cawdor

In attendance:
 Sean Mclean- Head Bailiff Robert Laughton – Director, FNLFT
 William Forrester- Bailiff Valerie Wardlaw – Administrator, FDSFB

	Item	Action
1.	<p>Apologies: David Sneddon, Philip Mackenzie, Mark Laing , Alastair Gordon Cumming</p> <p>Alasdair Laing informed the meeting that Seymour Monro has resigned as Chair of the FNLFT and Mark Laing has replaced him. ML will therefore be the co-opted member of the FDSFB representing the FNLFT. AlaL thanked Seymour for the work he has put in to the FNLFT over the years and for his contribution to the FDSFB.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Meeting held on 17th August 2015 Minutes were approved.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biosecurity- EB asked if any action had been taken about the angler biosecurity issues on the Spey. AlaL has spoken to Roger Knight who said he would follow up the report; however AlaL and RL have heard nothing further. AlaL will check if the ASFB plan to issue advice on biosecurity. AlaL will also check if Marine Scotland has participated in an exercise recently on testing the GS contingency plan. • Forres AA approach to Richard Lochhead- BS reported that the Forres AA had decided not to approach Richard Lochhead. • Findhorn DSFB reserves- R&R Urquhart advises that the FDSFB is not required to return any reserves to proprietors if and when the DSFB is transferred to an FMO. The Board agreed to set up a Trust for the reserves. VW to ask for a firm quote from Urquharts for the setting up of a Trust. AlaL asked for three volunteers to become trustees- CC volunteered. AlaL will seek additional volunteers. Any information on the Trust structure will be shared with the Nairn DSFB if they decide to move their reserves into a Trust. • Board members- there is currently a vacancy on the board due to the sad demise of Diana Usborne. The Board can co-opt another Upper Proprietor until the next triennial elections are due. AlaL will sound out potential Upper Proprietors. 	<p>AlaL</p> <p>AlaL</p> <p>VW</p> <p>AlaL</p> <p>AlaL</p>
4.	<p>Budgets and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts for 16th May 2014 to 31st January 2015 and shadow accounts 	

	<p>to 15th May 2015 have been approved by AH & PM, the board agreed that they are ready to be signed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coulmony & Dunphail beat- ownership is still unclear. VW to ask David Smart, as the representative of Dunphail Estate who have been paying the assessment historically, to agree ownership with JB/RH/EB/AntL so that it does not remain a debtor on the accounts. The board agreed to write off historical assessment as a bad debt. • Rathbones Investment Account- CC asked that the costs for managing the investment portfolio be listed separately from the income generated by the funds in future accounts. • Budget for 1st Feb 2016 to 31st January 2017 is anticipated to be similar to this year. The board will formally agree the budget and set the assessment at the next board meeting in May. Assessments will be sent out at the beginning of June 2016. 	<p>AH/PM</p> <p>VW</p> <p>JB/RH/EB/AntL</p> <p>VW</p>
5.	<p>Head Bailiff Report</p> <p>SMcL presented the catch data and said it had been an average year, but much improved on last year. 2296 salmon and grilse were caught compared with 1164 last year. There was an overall release rate of 82%. The bailiffs recorded 13 poaching call outs during the season, with 1 arrest and charge for a poacher on the Lossie.</p> <p>The seal quota is proving increasingly difficult to implement due to the public nature of Findhorn Bay.</p> <p>Training- bailiffs attended fish identification, spray training and a day with Police Scotland at Balmoral.</p> <p>The bailiffs have been re-establishing contacts with proprietors and estate staff- throughout the river. However they did not receive catch returns from Balnespick and Dunphail. Balnespick is now tenanted by James Beattie; CC will forward his contact details to AlaL. CC will ensure the Cawdor Head Keeper will have time to liaise with the bailiffs.</p> <p>The Board thanked the bailiffs for the good job they have been doing in the last year.</p>	<p>CC</p>
6.	<p>FNLFT Director Report</p> <p>RL reported that the wind farm monitoring of Berry Burn and Moy continued with no issues identified. RL was again unable to survey Coignafearn as the water levels were too high, however he is hoping to discuss longer term monitoring with them as part of a larger project.</p> <p>Licence to Kill- Conservation limits- RL is attending a meeting to discuss the model and has submitted a response to the consultation on behalf of the 3 boards and trust. He is concerned local data was not included in the model and that the impact of new conservation measures on angling associations has not been sufficiently taken into consideration.</p> <p>Predator control- regular seal counts continue with populations ranging from 250 to 350 at Findhorn. Sawbill counts continue and a licence to control numbers has been received- RL plans to take our quota in March during the smolt run. Please continue to send ad hoc sightings as these help to identify the range and species found in the river. Mink control continues, although funding has finished this year, with one capture at Altyre. RL thanked everyone who had helped with this work during the year.</p>	
7.	<p>Catchment Developments</p> <p>Hill of Glaschyle has commenced construction.</p>	

	<p>RL is in contact with the A9 and A96 upgrade teams, and is monitoring overhead power line upgrades.</p> <p>The FNLFT has monitoring contracts for further wind farm developments. RH was contacted about a possible hydro scheme above the Dulsie Bridge- he will pass the information to RL</p>	RH/RL
8.	<p>Wild Fisheries Reform</p> <p>AlaL updated the meeting about WFR developments- the functions of FMOs are being defined and DSFBs/Trusts have been asked to complete a critical analysis template to identify what resources they will need to become a financially sustainable FMO. There will be a severe funding shortfall if all the duties of FMOs are implemented. The board agreed to join the Nairn and Lossie DSFBs and the FNLFT in scoping the potential for a FNL FMO. AH/CC/ ML/VW/RL to populate the template before circulating a draft to the board.</p> <p>The Kill Licence has been changed to a conservation limits approach, with the Findhorn being assigned a Grade 1. This means there will be no additional compulsory conservation measures imposed on the river. The board agreed that the current voluntary Conservation Code would be amended to recommend 75% catch and release after the 14th May.</p>	<p>AH/CC/ ML/ RL/VW</p> <p>VW</p>
9.	<p>AOCB Annual Report- the board agreed that the annual report could be sent electronically.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam- RH reported he is removing and monitoring the HB spread by Highland Council maintenance vehicles. RH to send RL a note of where the HB is.</p>	RH
10	<p>Dates of 2016 meetings:</p> <p>Board Meeting Monday 23rd May 10.30am venue t.b.c</p> <p>Annual Meeting of Qualified Proprietors (AGM plus Triennial Elections) Sunday August 21st (venue Moray Estates with lunch t.b.c.)</p> <p>Board & Annual Public Meeting Monday 21st November, 10.30am venue t/b/c/</p>	