



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 22nd May 2017 in the Long Room, Logie Steading at 10.30am

Present: Alasdair Laing – Chairman, Andrew Howard, Tony Watts, Julie Balgonie, Robert Hoskin

In attendance:

Sean Mclean- Head Bailiff
 William Forrester- Bailiff

Robert Laughton – Director, FNLFT
 Valerie Wardlaw – Administrator, FDSFB

	Item	Action
1.	<p>Apologies: Mark Laing, Anthony Laing, Colin Cawdor, Graham Bell</p> <p>Alasdair Laing notified the Board that Billy Forrester will be leaving his position as Bailiff in July. Alasdair thanked Billy for his hard work during the time he has been with the Board.</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Meeting held on 21st November 2016</p> <p>Minutes were approved.</p>	
3.	<p>Matters arising</p> <p>Assessments- 1 assessment still unpaid for Clune Beat £153 Muckle Burn Catch Data- AH will find out what information is available</p>	<p>AH</p>
4.	<p>Budgets and Finance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft Accounts for the year ending 31.1.17 were presented. VW to amend spelling mistakes and confirm the following details: Breakdown of project costs (£4089.25 to FNLFT for electrofishing surveys, £1092 for INNS project funding contribution, £375 for MFTI project) Variation in ASFB subscription (2015 = £3522, 2016 = £1898, 2017= £3162) The Board agreed that AlaL and AH could sign the accounts once these queries were answered satisfactorily. VW circulated an updated budget for the current year- there have been no unexpected changes to the budget. Assessments for 2017-18- letters will be sent out in June for payment by the end of July. The Board agreed that assessment notices should be based on the current Valuation role. AntL requested information on the anticipated FNLFT deficit and what the potential Findhorn DSFB liabilities might be. AlaL will be attending a Joint Chairs meeting on the 31st May to discuss the future management of the DSFBs and FNLFT. The Board agreed that the services the Trust currently provides to the Board will need to continue, and that it is likely to be more cost effective for those services to be provided across the three rivers. AlaL hoped, however, that the Scottish Government will encourage board amalgamations. Board/Trust amalgamations would require new legislation. The Board agreed more detailed information was required, but authorised AlaL to discuss options further at the Joint Chairs. AlaL will circulate any proposals for board amalgamations in advance of the next 	<p>VW</p> <p>AlaL/ AH</p> <p>VW</p> <p>AlaL</p>

	meeting in August.	
5.	<p>River Matters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biosecurity- The Board agreed that awareness of biosecurity issues such as the spread of signal crayfish to the Nairn mainstem needed to be emphasised and the current system of biosecurity forms may need improvement. VW to email all proprietors asking them to confirm that they are receiving signed biosecurity forms from their anglers (by end June). This should indicate if the form system is effective. Other options are to provide spraying equipment to strategic fishing huts and to overhaul the biosecurity information included with the forms. RL to cost spray equipment for the next meeting. AlaL to respond to Ewen Brodie who raised this issue. • Fish handling- The Board agreed to encourage all anglers to handle fish as little as possible and return to the water expeditiously. VW to send all proprietors links to the FishPal catch and release videos and to request that anglers do not take fish out of the water for photographs. VW to email local fishing guides/tackle shops to ask them to encourage their anglers to take photographs appropriately (unless they are retaining their fish). • Dying fish- the board discussed the issue of returning fish which appeared likely to die to the river out with the statutory return period. In the interest of clarity for all involved they resolved to leave the guidance as at present. • Disease- RL reported that numbers of diseased fish have been seen in the Findhorn due to the low water and warm weather. A fish disease specialist visited the Findhorn on the 19th May, but did not find any evidence of disease other than related to the water conditions. Fish deaths are being reported from other rivers. RL has taken scale samples from 22 fish and will compile a report on the fish deaths for the next meeting. • Future Management Structure- discussed under Budget. • Health & Safety- Will Cowie has been approached for advice on liability in the event of a HSE prosecution- he suggested hiring a H&S consultant to review procedures, followed by legal advice if required. VW to circulate the research paper compiled by R&R Urquhart detailing the issues. RL to organise a H&S consultant to review the issues. 	<p>VW</p> <p>RL AlaL</p> <p>VW</p> <p>VW</p> <p>RL</p> <p>VW</p> <p>RL</p>
6.	<p>Head Bailiff Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sean McLean issued the Spring Catch Data figures which reflect the lack of water. The season started well and if the water levels had been good then the catch figures would have been better than last year. Sean reported that the river is full of fish. • The Bailiffs have organised sawbill counts with numbers of mergansers increasing. They have used noise scaring techniques, however birds return after one day. • Seal counts continue in conjunction with drone counts. Counts on land significantly underreport numbers seen in photographs from the drone (260 versus 374). The Seal licence continues to be implemented. • A 4' smolt trap was installed in the Divie in March, but the low water has hampered sampling. • The bailiffs are helping with Pilmuir and Logie school groups- teaching casting techniques and supervising fishing trips to Kellas Trout Fishery. • Sean has conducted coastal patrols and is training with MIRO. • Sean attended an evidence gathering training day with the IFM. 	

7.	<p>FNLFT Director Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RL reported that the data from last year's juvenile survey is entered into the database and a report is being compiled. If water levels continue to be low, then a survey of some mainstem sites will be organised. • Smolt Trap- the low water levels mean that the smolt sampling has been very intermittent. The 4' trap would have worked well in the site chosen on the Divie. RL hopes to be able to extend the loan of the equipment to next year. • INNS- giant hogweed control is going well- funded through the Scottish Landfill Communities Fund. RL has issued herbicide to landowners and organised contractors to treat the severe infestations. Treatment will be completed from above Daltulich Bridge to the A96. Dalvey and Mundole are seeing improvements for the first time after three years of treatment. Recent research has found that 98% of seeds are only viable for one year. However each flower can produce tens of thousands of seeds, so even 2% of viable seeds can have a significant impact. New plants have been seen at the upstream source at Coulmony, which is a worrying trend. AlaL mentioned that SNH are organising drone surveys of Logie and Darnaway which may help pinpoint the distribution of GH. • STV are filming the GH treatment of the cliffs at Broad reeds pool. Moray Council are treating GH on the Flood scheme section. New funding should be available from 2018 through the SISI project to treat INNS for four years- although the project will be more reliant on volunteer treatment than contractor treatment. • Schools projects- the casting tuition and fishing taster sessions are going well and RL intends to apply for further funding during the winter. Forres AA are reporting an increase in numbers of younger members. The Board discussed the relaxation of the fly only requirement for younger or new anglers. RL to investigate how to amend the 2004 byelaw banning bait fishing and spinning in the Findhorn Board district. 	<p>RL RL</p> <p>AlaL/ AH</p> <p>RL</p> <p>RL</p>
8.	<p>Catchment Developments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clash Gour WF- 60 turbines surrounding Berry Burn WF are scoping. Rothes WF is investigating further expansion. Ourack WF is continuing to scope options. Cairn Duhie WF is still under appeal to the Scottish Government. Tom nan Clach WF is at the road construction stage. • A9- starting to work on the Tomatin to Moy section. • A96- Nairn Bypass- RL has advised against the use of a box culvert on the Auldearn Burn. RL to ask the Nairn DSFB to put in a holding objection to the box culvert. The preferred options for the Forres section should be presented at public meetings in the near future. • Forres Railway station relocation- going well and have undertaken GH treatment. 	
9.	<p>AOCB</p> <p>Billy Forrester stated that this was his last Board meeting and thanked the Board for being a good employer. AlaL passed on the Boards best wishes for the future.</p>	
10	<p>. Dates of 2017 meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Meeting Monday August 21st 10.30am, venue t.b.c. • AGM (APM) Monday August 21st 12.30am, venue t.b.c. • Board Meeting Monday 20th November, 10.30am, venue t.b.c. 	

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