



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 20th August 2018 in the Long Room at Logie Steading at 10.30am

Present: Alasdair Laing – Chairman, Graham Bell, Robert Hoskin, Mark Laing, Tony Watts,

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

| | Item | Action |
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| 1. | Apologies: Andrew Howard, Anthony Laing, Julie Balgonie, Colin Cawdor. | |
| 2. | Minutes of Meeting held on 21st May 2018 Minutes were approved. | |
| 3. | Matters arising Forres AA Proprietor representation on the Board: GB is the Lower Proprietor and TW is a mandatory in GB absence. GB has signed a mandate form. | |
| 4. | <p>Budgets and Finance VW presented an updated budget for the year. There are two assessments outstanding from the previous year: £3060 for Lower Dounduff and £306 for Clune. In addition there are four assessments unpaid for this year: £2337 Lower Dounduff, £15580 Drynachan, £533 Findhorn Bridge and £369 for Clune. Assessments were due to be paid by 1st July 2018. AlaL will chase up Lower Dounduff payments. VW to send reminders to the remainder. If they are not paid by September, VW to inform AlaL. Some of the beats have appealed their revaluation and may decrease in rateable value, thus reducing the income for the board. The decrease in income should be covered by the contingency. The final rateable values are due to be decided in September.</p> <p>The deviations in expenditure from expected budget are as follows: Equipment includes £1850 for a spotting scope and £260 for a GoPro camera; Telephone includes £1068 for a Trackplot GPS system; Misc Admin includes £310 for the seasonal Bailiff advertisement. The Insurance premium is likely to increase as the insurers are reviewing their coverage. However a number of lines of expenditure are under budget which should cancel out the increased expenditure.</p> <p>The board agreed to investigate the future management of reserve funds and that £70K of the current surplus should be transferred to reserves. The chairman will discuss this with Colin Cawdor.</p> | <p>AlaL VW</p> <p>AlaL/ CC</p> |
| 5. | <p>River Matters Board Amalgamation- ML updated the board on possible mergers. The Nairn DSFB has decided not to investigate a board merger any further. RL submitted a bid to Scottish Government for funding for investigation of and possible implementation of a board merger and was successful (one of two applications- the other was the Dee and the Don). The FDSFB and the LDSFB have been awarded £12.5K to scope the feasibility of a merger, with £37.5K to be used to facilitate a merger if both boards decide to combine. RL advised that the board should appoint an outside independent facilitator to undertake the scoping exercise and has identified a possible candidate. The</p> | |

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| <p>board agreed to appoint an independent facilitator and all to suggest alternative candidates with a business background and interest in fisheries. The Board agreed to form a subcommittee with members of the Lossie DSFB to take this initiative forward. AH and GB have volunteered and RH is also available. First subcommittee meeting in late September to appoint a facilitator. The scoping exercise will identify the benefits of different management options and provide a business case to Scottish Government for a merger. Neither DSF board is committed to a merger; there will be a vote once the business case is scoped. ML reiterated that the FNLFT is in a challenging financial position and it would be helpful if a way forward has been decided by March 2019. If the FNLFT is no longer available to undertake the required fisheries work for the Findhorn DSFB, the board is likely to have much higher costs due to use of contractors. RL to confirm with the Lossie DSFB subcommittee membership and the use of an independent facilitator.</p> | <p>ALL AH/ GB RL</p> |
| <p>Biosecurity- VW has updated the forms with a privacy statement asking all proprietors to dispose of forms at the end of the season. RL raised the issue of the transfer of giant hogweed seed on equipment and vehicle tyres- please consider checking for GH seed when moving from infested areas. RL reported that the stop nets they have been using on the Lossie for the National Electrofishing Survey were full of GH seeds when they removed them from the water. Nets and all equipment were thoroughly cleaned before moving on to next site. RL is also considering using separate sampling kit in GH areas and non GH areas.</p> | <p>ALL</p> |
| <p>Disease- RL has not received any reports of disease other than red vent (a parasite), from Forres AA. GB raised the issue of fish handling with the current high water temperatures. FMS has issued advice for angling to cease when water temperatures are above 18°C to reduce fish stress. The Nairn AA has closed some pools and the Nairn DSFB has advised that angling should cease when water temperatures were found above 18°C throughout the river. SEPA are monitoring the impacts of the prolonged dry weather and producing weekly updates. RL to check if SEPA are recording water temperatures at their gauging stations and whether this information could be made available. The Board agreed to monitor the water temperature situation and provide advice to proprietors and anglers if required.</p> | <p>RL ALL</p> |
| <p>GB raised the issue of pike in Lochindorb- regular anglers are suggesting pike predation has severely reduced the resident trout populations. Pike are stillwater fish but could spread to backwaters in the Dorback and Divie. A netting survey could be undertaken to assess the pike populations in Lochindorb, but the only way to remove them would be to poison all fish in the loch and then restock. AlaL to ask Kevin Fletcher if they could put traps on the feeder burns to assess trout numbers, which could be compared with historical data to identify if fish numbers have decreased. Scottish Government has a consultation on pike conservation measures, RL to circulate the link.</p> | <p>AlaL RL</p> |
| <p>Health & Safety- RL reported that Greens of Haddington have carried out a review of H&S across the FNLFT and DSFBs, and provided a report with recommendations which RL is working through. Greens will provide a quote for updating the policy and procedures. The Trackplot GPS system is working well for the bailiffs. RH asked if anyone had knowledge of HSE inspecting</p> | <p>RL</p> |

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| | any Findhorn river paths – it was thought that inspections would only happen as a result of an accident. Third party Insurance cover may be more of an issue. | |
| 6. | Head Bailiff Report Postpone to AGM | |
| 7. | FNLFT Director Report RL is participating in the National EF Survey, which includes 12 randomly selected sites on the Findhorn and 4 on the Nairn. The Scottish Government is providing more funding for fishery related work, including the supply of historical fish data, suggesting they have recognised the need to pay for fishery related research over the long term. Remainder of report postponed to AGM | |
| 8. | Catchment Developments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clash Gour- no new developments • A96- the proposed routes around Forres and Elgin have been refined with the preferred route announced towards the end of the year. • A9 Moy to Tomatin section route advertised. • Cairn Duhie- no new developments • Tomatin Waste Water treatment works upgrade commenced • Riverbank reinforcement at Tomatin near the church commencing • Mosset Burn- new bridge to access sewage treatment plant • Tom Nan Clach- turbines being delivered | |
| 9. | AOCB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AlaL has received an email about Proprietor representation of the upper river and Proprietor attendance at board meetings. AlaL has approached one or two Upper Proprietors to ask if they would join the board, and will continue to investigate. Any Upper Proprietor who is interested in representing the river, or who could appoint a mandatory in their stead to contact AlaL. The Board agreed a guide that board members should attend at least two thirds of board meetings. • ML raised the issue of plastic litter along the river- e.g. wrapping from bales from agricultural activities. RL suggested it should be covered in a FNLFT newsletter or NFU newsletter. RL to check if there is any research on plastic pollution in reference to salmon. • GB has a junior angling session with Forres Scouts and asked RL to participate. | RL RL |
| 10 | Dates of 2018 meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 26th November, 10.30am, venue t.b.c. Board Meeting | |