

MINUTES

of the MEETING of the NORTH AND WEST DISTRICT SALMON FISHERY BOARD held on Wednesday 26th October 2016 at 11.00am at Reay House, 17 Old Edinburgh Road, INVERNESS

Present:

Mr D Davies (Vice Convenor)
Mr J Allingham
Mr G Osborne
Ms C Acheson

Mr D Lindsay

Mr A Balfour
Mr C Marsham

In attendance:

Mr C Cook (Clerk, Bell Ingram)
Dr Shona Marshall (WSFT)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from; Mr R Vestey, Mr R Bradford, Mr C MacLeod.

2. MEMBERS DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Marsham recorded that he was no longer a Proprietor of Salmon Fishings within the District and was now a Board Member representing Salmon Anglers at least until the Board elections next year.

Mr Balfour recorded that he was no longer a director of Loch Duart Limited but held its Mandate to continue in the role as a Representative of Tenant Netsmen.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17th MAY 2016

Mr Balfour proposed and Mr Allingham seconded approval of the Minutes. The Vice Convenor signed the Minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

5. FINANCIAL REPORT

A financial report was tabled. The Clerk advised that the only outstanding assessment when the meeting papers were issued was from the Sarah N Barr Trustees.

(There was some concern at the meeting that one of the Budget and Actual assessment figures might be wrong – they are actually both correct)

6. WEST SUTHERLAND FISHERIES TRUST - REPORT

A report by the WSFT had been circulated with the meeting papers and was taken as read by Members.

Dr Marshall confirmed she had received some scale samples from Proprietors following the request in late summer.

Looking ahead Members heard that the WSFT expected to break even this year and had reserves to allow operations to continue for about a year – 18 months reserves. This said, the WSFT remain uncertain about the extent of its income next year, compromised as it is by the continuation of the WFR and the uncertainty that stems from it.

7. ASSOCIATION OF SALMON FISHERY BOARDS - REPORT

The main areas of discussion centred around the proposed alterations to the ASFB constitution initially attempted at an EGM at Birnam in October and to be proposed again at the November AGM *(and for which the Clerk has given his apologies)*.

The proposal includes:

1. a name change from ASFB to Fisheries Management Scotland (FMS)
2. the addition of Fisheries Trusts (that are Charities) as members on payment of an annual £1,000 subscription. The budget for FMS for next year indicates a hope that 18 of the 26 Trusts will subscribe.
3. provision to ensure that Trusts do not vote on matters that may impinge on a DSFB's statutory duties and that DSFB's do not vote on issues that may impinge on a Trusts charitable duties
4. a change of the aim of FMS to influence relevant policy as may be desirable for the protection, preservation and development of Scotland's wild salmon, freshwater fish and fisheries and their environment.

Members discussed the state of RAFTS and its imminent demise which has in part led to the changes in the ASFB to accommodate Trusts. Dr Marshall commented on the original purpose of RAFTS and the generally good support it had been to Fishery Trusts but explained that Project funding scale and approach had changed, the Wild Fishery Review had had a hand in this, and the result, put simply, is that RAFTS is now too expensive to run.

8. WILD FISHERY REVIEW

As requested by Members the Clerk had had dialogue with the Director of the Kyle Fisheries to attempt to develop support for a Fishery Management Organisation (FMO) to cover the Kyle, Fleet, Brora and North West. Disappointingly the Kyle Fisheries did not share the same vision.

The Clerk explained that the dialogue had been taken as far as it could go and that the ASFB had now summarised the position in a report to Marine Scotland of all Boards in Scotland and their efforts to create proposed FMO's.

The Board shared the frustration of the Clerk in his attempts to have the ASFB accurately summarise the position of the North West in their report, namely,

N & W DSFB wish to form an FMO with the KoS & Fleet and Brora. There are some management differences but, possibly through the employment of an FMA for each of the three areas, they believe these differences can be accommodated.

The Board discussed the alternative collaborations that could take place, i.e with the WRASFB/Skye DSFB or with the NDSFB/CDSFB/HDSFB and their various merits and drawbacks.

The Clerk observed that, based on 2011 – 2015 5 year average catches (as a very rough means of assessing what the level of income the proposed FMO combinations might have), the Kyle etc. preferred configuration looked weak, the WRASFB etc. preference very weak and the NDSFB etc. version already quite well funded:

WRASFB/Skye:	1051	WRASFB/Skye/NW	2357
Kyle/Fleet/Brora	3772	Kyle/Fleet/Brora/NW	5078
North/Caithness/Helmsdale	7960	North/Caithness/Helmsdale/NW	9266

As a very rough measure, the total 5 year average (*source ASFB*) is 73159. Allowing for the idea that roughly 15 FMO may be formed and that at least 5 will have salmon return levels in the region of 10,000 fish it follows that from a financial perspective the remaining FMO's will advisedly be as large as possible.

Members discussed that the greatest priority for them was the ability to retain local control over the management of their fisheries and that a fishery management plan covering their area would be the best outcome. They reflected upon and resolved they could probably accept an FMO that covered all the mainland fisheries north of Inverness if that meant the scale of organisation would allow it financial security and IF a Fishery Management Area (FMA) and devolved management to the locale was developed for their area.

In concluding the item Members asked the Clerk to keep lines of communication open with all neighbours and to prepare a short summary of the Boards position that would be shared with Marine Scotland and also neighbours as appropriate.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members asked if the Clerk had received any update from the Assessors viz a viz the revaluation of the Proprietors Roll. Members confirmed that they had received Return of Information forms from the Assessor but the Clerk had received nothing from the Assessor and undertook to check on progress.

(the Assessor will shortly be issuing reminder forms to Proprietors – and with negotiations and appeals still to do is some way off revaluing the Proprietors Roll)

The Clerk confirmed the NWSMG and NSMG were both active and that applications would be made for the licences to manage seals in 2017. In the case of the NWSMG the Clerk reported that the SMRU produced ‘SROC Main Advice 2016’ resulted in an increase in the Potential Biological recruitment for both Harbour and Grey Seals in the West Scotland Region (incl. the NWSMG area). They reported that for Orkney and North Coast Region (the NSMG area) prolonged declines of Harbour Seals but as in all Regions sustained growth of Grey Seals.

Dr Marshall was asked to update members on the proposed categories into which the rivers and fisheries districts of the North West Salmon Fishery District will be put, all in terms of the proposed Conservation of Salmon (Scotland) Regulations 2017.

Dr Marshall said that she and the Clerk had collaborated on responses to the consultation process. She said that, notwithstanding some Proprietors will be pleased with the change from Category 3 to Category 1 proposed for some rivers, she did not have nor could she advise members and salmon fishery proprietors to have any confidence in the categorisation or the process and data used to determine them. She called into question the decision to categorise some rivers separately from their fishery districts but not all. A case in point is the River Polla, which has ample data to enable a separate category to be given to it. Based on his reading of the proposals and his work with Dr Marshall, hers was a position the Clerk was very happy to endorse.

Dr Marshall said that the Conservation plan templates were apparently nearly finalised by Marine Scotland but she had not seen an example yet. Conservation plans would be required for all rivers and fishery districts. She said she very much hoped that the WSFT would be employed by the NWDSFB/Proprietors as appropriate to complete the Conservation Plans, there would inevitably be a cost but one she would only be able to assess once the extent of the work was known.

Mr Allingham advised that the Allingham share in the Gualin Estate was on the Market for sale. When it sells he will need to stand down as a Board Member.

Mr Allingham also asked to be relieved of the role of ASFB representative. The Vice Convenor thanked Mr Allingham for filling the role so ably and accepted his decision. The Clerk agreed to take on the role.

Lastly Mr Allingham offered to the WSFT the Dionard scale sample records to assist with the work to improve the data sets used to categorise rivers and fisheries in the District. Dr Marshall accepted the offer on behalf of the WSFT.

The Vice Convenor advised the Scottish Sea Farms proposed a new fish farm near Horse Island by Ullapool. The proposal is in the Wester Ross ASFB District and asked the Clerk to keep contact with the WRASFB and offer support as necessary.

12. DATE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING

The date of the next Board meeting and the Annual Public meeting was set as Tuesday 23rd May 2017 and to be held at the MacPhail Centre, Ullapool. The Annual Public meeting to start at 1.00pm with the Board meeting to follow on from it at about 1.30pm.

There being no other business there was a vote of thanks to the Convenor and the meeting closed at 12.30pm

ACTION PLAN

Prepare a WFR position summary for the Board	RV/CRWC
Notify ASFB of a change of NWDSFB Representative	CRWC
Supply Scale sample records to WSFT	JA/SM
Organise May's meetings	CRWC