

Minutes of Board meeting 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013  
Meeting commenced at 4-00 pm

Percy Weatherall – Chairman  
David Kempself - DK  
Tom Florey - TF  
Peter Landale - PL  
Mark Coombs - MC  
Nick Wright - NW  
Nick Brown - NB  
Wally Wright - WW  
Tom Brown - TB  
Robbie Cowan- RCo  
Ronald Clark - RCI  
John Kingan - JK

The Chairman opened the meeting stating that the meeting needed to be concluded by 5-45 pm at the latest as there was a meeting of the Celtic Sea Trout Project starting at 6-00 pm.

JH Apologies for absence from Rob Davidson, Roddy Styles, John Miller and Jim Gregory

Minutes of the last meeting of 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013 were approved.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

JH Fishery Director's Report

Highlighted the SEPA Flood Management Project and advised of the implications in terms of plans to flood parts of the valley

MC Stated that compensation would need to be available in respect of land flooded.

Chair Advised that the current flood protection measures were put in during the early part of the twentieth century but are ineffectual as the Whitesands still floods regularly.

JH Said that he had attended consultation meetings. Questions were asked regarding where the flood plains are and where the flood protection was in place. JH advised that he had made the point that the areas comprised of working estates and that compensation money should form part of any discussion.

TCF Commented on Straid Farm Drainage scheme. He said that this had been discussed with SEPA. Had any agreement been reached?

JH Stated that SEPA may be relaxing some restrictions so that certain works may be allowed provided they were outside of salmon spawning times. Straid may become a test case.

JH Informed the Board members regarding a grant that NCFT has applied for. This is to provide education for young people in respect of the rural environment and fishing. This is a Fishery Trust project, not a NDSFB project. However, if the grant was approved, payments would be quarterly, in arrears and there would potentially be a cash-flow problem which would result in a request to the Board for a loan.

Chair Explained the need for the Board to support this project. He stated the maximum exposure that the Board would be faced with would amount to a figure of £25,000. He stressed that the involvement of the Board was solely in respect of the cash-flow issue and that none of this would stop the Board from functioning. He suggested that the project should be approved and there were no objections.

JH Commented on the Northern Periphery Project, stating that the Nith matched against all the criteria, including sustainable growth, renewable energy, forestry and mining. JH asked

whether the Board were willing to release him to work on the project and stressed that they would not be committing to money.

Chair Asked where the money was to come from.

JH Stated from European funds. JH also said that he had the time available as the Celtic Sea Trout Project had come to an end.

Chair Asked how much the Board had contributed to the Celtic Sea Trout Project.

JH Replied £40,000.

Chair Said that it would be a good idea to go through stage 1 of the project in order to find out what it was about and to then put the Board in the picture.

JH Replied that it only amounted to committing a couple of days' time.

Chair Suggested that JH should go ahead and keep the Board informed.

JH Raised the subject of coal mines. He stated that Scottish Coal were in liquidation and that Hargreaves Surface Mining were looking at taking over the business. JH said that House of Water site had been very closely monitored but the last invoice to Scottish Coal for this work had not been paid. JH had applied for the money and had discovered that a financial bond had not been put in place. There was therefore a sum of £4,500 outstanding. A question was raised as to whether the Board should continue monitoring.

JH Stated that the Board had an obligation to monitor, for the sake of the fish.

TF Suggested that Hargreaves Mining be contacted regarding monitoring.

JH Stated the need for a fall-back in respect of monitoring. That it should be continued, but at a less intensive level.

NB It was suggested that Ayrshire Council? Be approached with a "Freedom of Information" request to establish how it has happened that there is not a bond in place. It was stated that Kier Mining are currently building another diversion. It was thought that the company is financially sound.

Chair ATH Glenmuckloch site was discussed and the fact that Buccleuch now own the site and are in partnership with Hargreaves. The Chairman stated that he did not foresee a conflict of interest as Buccleuch sat on the Board and now were in partnership with others at the Glenmuckloch site. MC stated that the mine will continue to operate for 2 years producing coal.

#### Co-option/replacement of Board Member

Maxwell Keggans from Upper Nithsdale AA had resigned and that he was being replaced by Danny Marshall from Upper Nithsdale AA who had expressed an interest in becoming a member of the Board. This replacement was agreed.

David Matthews has resigned from his position on the Board.

#### Staff Recruitment.

No intelligence of any major poaching taking place. Staff are working well and there have been surveillance cameras installed in some locations which are giving very good images. Discussion took place as to whether it was a legal requirement to obtain permission to use surveillance cameras and whether there was a requirement to advertise their use. It was decided to post an advisory notice on the NDSFB website.

#### Renewable Energy

JH Said that he and Debbie had attended a conference where they were astounded at the lack of information on the effects of vibration and noise from the construction of offshore turbines. JH then read from a Scottish Government paper, quoting that there is a one in five chance of the Robin Rigg development reducing Solway salmon runs by 40% and stating that there will be 4000 turbines in the North Sea by 2020. JH advised the Board of the possible vibration effects during turbine construction work and the magnetic field effect generated when the turbines are running.

## AOB

- Chair Informed the Board the he and JH are going on a trip to Iceland to learn about smolt rearing and fisheries management, the trip was hosted by Orri Vigfusson and funded by the Chairman.
- JH Stated that he felt there was a need to re-vamp the website to make it more user friendly and less dull. JH stated that the maximum cost would be £3,000
- PL Thought that the site should be able to accept Tweets and that this would be a useful tool for posting updates
- JH Said that he agreed. That Social Media such as Twitter and Face book was an important area and would make things easier to update.  
A general discussion took place to the effect that this was a powerful tool which could be used to promote the river and fishing and also to work with accommodation providers.
- NB Stated that this could become very time consuming and that there was the danger of the Board having to employ a dedicated person to carry out the administration of any postings.
- DK Questioned whether it would be possible to control negative postings and made the point that there were always individuals who would make negative statements to the detriment of the fishery.

## Galloway Country Fair.

- Chair Stated that this would take place on the weekend of 17/18<sup>th</sup> August and that there was a need for volunteers to ensure a successful event
- MC Enquired about the Board's Fishery Management Plan for the next five years and whether this would be available by the year end. He enquired regarding the objectives and that among other items, it had to embrace Conservation Policies, Catch and Release, and the number of anglers on the river.
- JH Referred to the Fishery Management Plan and stated that as previously agreed at the last Board meeting the Plan would be ready for comments In October and published by end of the year. JH stated that certain aspects of the plan were restrictive for example predator control, and that he would like to cull more predators such as cormorants and goosanders but had to abide by any licences issued by SNH.
- PL Stated that the Land Reform Group are "having a pop" at Salmon Fishery Boards JH responded stating that ASFB were aware of this.
- JH Stated that it was more than just the Land Reform Group and this was the reason why there had to be openness and transparency in everything that the Board does.
- TF Asked whether there was plenty of invertebrate life, and plenty of fry and parr in the river.
- JH Assured him that this was the case and was confirmed by the biologist.

The meeting closed at 5-45pm