

Nith Catchment Fishery Trust

Meeting No. 23

6pm Thursday 11th December 2014

NCFT office, Auldgirth

Present

Percy Weatherall – Chairman
Jim Henderson
Peter Hutchison
David Kempself

In Attendance

Debbie Parke – Operations Manager

1. Apologies

Jim McKie
Brian Lord
Thomas Florey
Andrew Wood

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of both the AGM and the previous Directors meeting were taken as true and accurate.

3. Matters Arising

The matters arising from the last meeting were reviewed.

4. Wild Fisheries Review

Jim Henderson updated the Directors on the progress with the Wild Fisheries Review (WFR) and the proposed changes to legislation, including new legislation that has been brought in to ban the taking salmon before the 1st April and the consultation in Spring 2015 to ban the killing of all salmon. If passed this would come into effect in 2016. Peter Hutchison requested the details of the legislation under which the ban on taking salmon before the 1st April has been brought in and raised the issue of the increasing restrictions being placed on fisheries and the fact that rights are being taken away. The mechanisms surrounding the licencing to kill salmon and carcass tagging were discussed and whether this should be mandatory.

Jim Henderson has met with Alex Fergusson to discuss the WFR. Alex Fergusson has requested the Jim present to Government's Rural Affairs Committee to put forward our views on the WFR. Arrangements are being made to meet with Aileen McLeod to discuss the WFR further. Alan Wells from ASFB is being seconded to the Scottish Government's Wild Fisheries Department to advice on

these issues. It was generally felt that this was a positive step as he is well placed and has a good relationship with Boards throughout Scotland.

The future of the Board and the Trust was discussed as currently no one is sure what will constitute a Fishery Management Organisation (FMO) as recommended in the Review or which region/s they would cover. Jim Henderson recommended that the Board and Trust continue to run to the best of their ability and spoke about the challenges facing the Trust financially to do this. It was agreed that the Trust should not take on any long term commitments that could become a liability to Trustees in the future.

It was agreed that the WFR did not deal with the real problem out in the marine environment and that some of the recommendations would actually have a negative impact on the amount of fishing throughout Scotland.

The issue of the Solway Act was raised and clarity was sought on its purpose. The key section of the Act states that in any River (except the Annan) one must have permission to fish for any fish. This affords the landowner and regulatory bodies some control over who fishes. Progress Updates

Jim Henderson updated the Directors on the progress with the Wild Fisheries Review (WFR). Percy Weatherall, Jim Henderson, Roderick Styles and Thomas Florey had recently attended a RAFTS members meeting where the WFR was discussed at length. Peter Hutchison expressed his displeasure about the whole review and this was shared by all of the directors present, expressing concern about the way it was being handled.

5. Progress updates

Debbie Parke updated the Directors on the progress of the work of the Trust, specifically in relation to the Fishing for the Future project. Debbie Parke informed the Directors that Emily Iles had handed in her notice and would be leaving at the start of April.

Fishery Management Plan - The FMP Quarterly report was presented and questions were invited.

Fishing for the Future project – Debbie Parke spoke about the success of the Fishing for the Future project throughout its first year during which 447 participants took part. There are another 15 groups signed up to take part in 2014/15 and so far 400+ children have taken part in Session 1. A Family Fishing Day was run on the Nith on the second last day of the season. The Fishing for the Future interim report was distributed and can be found on the Nith website www.river-nith.com.

Invasive Non-Native Species project – This year was the last year of the five year funded INNS project. Every Japanese knotweed stand along the River Nith and its tributaries has been treated but will still need to be monitored and if required, retreated on an annual basis for the next 5-7 years, as will Giant hogweed. Funding is being sought to assist with this and to tackle the Japanese knotweed present on the New Abbey Pow and other coastal burns. None of this funding has been confirmed yet. Overall it was agreed that the programme had been a success and that we are now at the stage of care and surveillance. The INNS final report was distributed and can be found on the Nith website www.river-nith.com. The issue of the new biological control agent “rust” was discussed and the results of its use down south will be watched with great interest.

6. Finance

The accounts for 2014 were presented along with the budget and cash flow for 2015. Debbie Parke spoke briefly about the salient points arising –

The budget at the start of 2014 showed a £5000 deficit – it is anticipated that this will in fact be a £5364 profit by the end of December. Additional money has been brought in from consultancy and although there has been some variation on the agreed budget there is nothing of major significance.

The issue of the Dinner Dance was raised and it was suggested that in the future that any funding raised event should be underwritten before it is authorised to proceed.

The budget for 2015 was discussed. Two budgets had been presented one which included unconfirmed funding for INNS work in 2015 which showed a £5000 profit and a second budget that did not include the unconfirmed funding. This second budget showed a £6000 loss. The details of this were discussed amongst the Directors. It was highlighted that there would be cash flow issues in August and September 2015 if funding wasn't confirmed. We may need to call on a loan from the Board to assist us during that period.

7. Future works and funding

A report detailing potential future work streams and projects was presented to the Directors by Debbie Parke. These included what would happen beyond the Fishing for the Future project and costs per school were discussed as were local funding streams. Other potential projects included setting up a Youth Angling Club. It was agreed that this should be approached with caution due to the associated liabilities but that we could try running a pilot scheme during 2015 and that we should involve angling associations. David Kempell stated that DGAA currently looking at introducing free fishing for kids on their water. This was greeted with enthusiasm.

Potential funders for 2015/16 should include the Holywood Trust as they have already supported the project and know what we are doing. It was agreed that the Trust should pursue local funding sources rather than larger funding streams due the amount of resources required to administer large funding sources and the financial commitment associated with retrospective funding packages.

8. A.O.B

BL had requested that Jim Henderson raise the issue of restocking on his behalf. He asked for the Trust to reconsider what we are doing with regards to hatcheries due to the state of the wild stocks this year. It was felt that as juvenile salmonid densities in the river are at reasonable numbers that we recommended that the Board continue to re-stock at the current levels and for monitoring to continue. This issue is to be reviewed on a regular basis.

It was agreed that the dates for future meetings to be agreed in conjunction with the Board. Debbie Parke to send dates out to Directors.

PH suggested setting up a sub-committee with the Board and the Trust to develop preliminary frameworks for any future FMO and to look at the resources required to support such an organisation.

Meeting closed 19.35

Actions resulting from Trust Meeting No. 23

Action points	Action by	Action completed
Distribute dates of future meetings to Directors	DP	

Signed.....

Date.....

EPK Weatherall, Chair